

Stamp



Chatter

Volume 55 - Issue No. 1 w336

January - March, 2024

Sequoia Stamp Club

APS #687-54588

Club meetings are held every **second and fourth Tuesday** of each month at the Community Activities Bldg., 1400 Roosevelt Ave. Redwood City, at 7:00 PM.

Mailing Address:
P. O. Box 235
San Carlos, CA 94070

Refreshments are served and visitors are always welcome.

More info at:

www.penpex.org/ssc



President's Message

Hello fellow members of the thriving Sequoia Stamp Club. This message is being written in December as we all prepare to close out the year 2023. Looking back at this year in philately for the Sequoia Stamp Club, we all can share the pride of how our club has navigated the year as we transitioned out of the pandemic.

2023 saw an increase in our membership, a strong showing for our in-person meetings twice a month, while also allowing members to join us each month during our hybrid in-person and Zoom video conferencing option meetings. Most meetings had over 30 and as many as 40 members in attendance.

PENPEX was once again a huge success. Thank you to all of the volunteers who make the show a weekend to cherish.

The programs throughout the year were first class with a variety of interesting topics. I often reflect upon the amazing skills of our members as they share their passion for philately with informative presentations. Your elected Governing Board has managed to keep our club moving forward by taking input from all of our members, so that we can stay relevant to your needs. Your feedback is appreciated.

The live and silent auctions, throughout our program year, generate a great way for us to improve our stamp collections. We plan to have many auctions throughout 2024.

I would like to close this message by recognizing the many friendships that we have each developed with our fellow Sequoia Stamp Club members.

Jay Strauss
Sequoia Stamp Club President



Stamp Calendar: Club Meetings (in black) & Other Events (in green)

- ♦ Jan 9: Past Presidents Present. Inauguration of Officers. Silent Auction.
- ♦ Jan 13: **PENPEX Wrap-up & Appreciation Brunch, 10 AM, Sizzler, 2855 Augustine Drive, Santa Clara**
- ♦ Jan 23: **6 PM SSC Board Meeting (all welcome).** 7 PM "Selling Your Collection at Auction" by Steve Frumkin. Silent Auction.
- ♦ Feb 13: "Design Your Own Love Stamp" by Tom Hayes. Silent Auction.
- ♦ Feb 17: **Western Philatelic Library Open House, Redwood City, Buy-It-Now, Nickel-a-Stamp Table, \$5 Mystery Boxes**
- ♦ Feb 27: Members' Live Auction. Wally Jolliff, auctioneer.
- ♦ Mar 12: "Stamps of King Edward VII 1901-1910" by Alan Smith. Silent Auction.
- ♦ Mar 26: Swap Meet.

The complete schedule can be found online at www.penpex.org/ssc/calendar.

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Picture Gallery

Western Philatelic Library

Open House, November 4, 2023



Just look at that newly refurbished floor!



At the Open House, the library held a silent auction and book sale.

Left and far left: Stamps and supplies in the silent auction.

Above: Literature for sale in the background, more auction items in the foreground.

Library photos courtesy of Ed Jarvis

Holiday Party

December 12, 2023



Did someone win a Penny Black in the gift exchange?!?



Yummy chocolate cake covered with white frosting!

Holiday Party photos courtesy of Ken Perkins



Jay Strauss asked Goyo Alvarez to draw the winning tickets for the Holiday Party raffle. He was lucky enough to draw his own and his mother's tickets!

New Members

Alan Smith joined the club in September. He collects Great Britain and Egypt pre-1953.

Norman Bardsley also joined in September. He collects British Commonwealth, Greece, Egypt, and Japan.

Bob Simoni joined our club in October. He collects U.S., France, Sweden, and Italy.

Welcome to the club, Alan, Norman, and Bob!

At PENPEX in December, seven people submitted applications for membership. We will vote on them in January and welcome them to the club in the next newsletter.

Newsletter Staff: Co-Editors: John Corwin and Jim Giacomazzi; President's Message: Jay Strauss; Feature Article: Marsha Brandsdorfer; Photographer: Ken Perkins; PENPEX Caboose: Kristin Patterson; and Printing & Distribution: John Corwin.

The *Stamp Chatter* is published quarterly by the Sequoia Stamp Club. Visit our website at:

www.penpex.org/SSC or email us at sequoiastampclub@yahoo.com.

The Wright Brothers

By Marsha Brandsdorfer

It had been deemed impossible for man to fly. For years, many tried to figure out flight with various "flying machines," but none were successful and often they were ridiculed. But the failures of others did not discourage the Dayton, Ohio Wright brothers, Wilbur and Orville. Wilbur took up bird watching to understand flight, noting that birds used the wind to help them fly. The brothers then built a glider to depend on wind to see if it could fly. They searched for a area to conduct experiments. Kitty Hawk, a remote area in 1900, about 700 miles from Dayton on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, had the steady winds and sandy beaches they would need. The brothers initially flew their glider like a kite, with lines hanging down to the ground so they could steer it. Many experiments followed, and with one test, Wilbur stood inside the glider and took to the air for a brief period.



Scott #3182g



Scott #C45

While they made several trips to Kitty Hawk, their sister Katharine, along with help from the brothers' mechanic friend Charlie Taylor, would manage their bicycle shop which they owned back home in Dayton. In January 1902, Charlie built a motor for the brothers' latest glider, The Flyer. The brothers next built a propeller, having to create their invention solely based on the only information they had regarding boat propellers. With the propeller and the engine, the brothers had the means to be able to have more control of the glider. They applied for a patent in 1903 for The Flyer. After success with the Flyer, wherein they were able to go up into the air for minutes at a time, they built Flyer II, which had a more powerful and effective engine. To save on expenses, they found land in Dayton at a cow pasture called Huffman Prairie to do test flights. They flew Flyer II in circles, straight lines and in S-shapes. Next, they built Flyer III, which was sturdier and had an even more powerful motor than its predecessors. After successful flights, and being able to stay in the air for over an hour, they realized that they had a practical flying machine they could market.

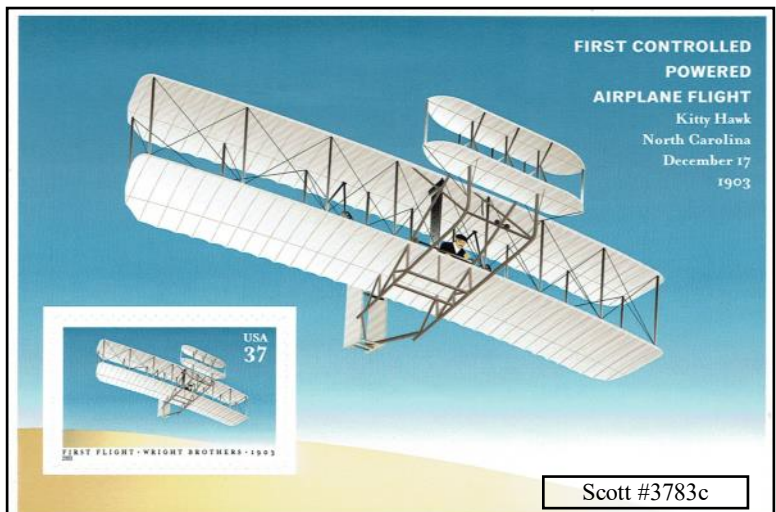


Scott #649

On May 22, 1906, the patent the brothers had applied for in 1903, was issued number US821,393. With an agreement that the brothers would continue to be the sole owners of the patent, they contracted with the German organization, Flint & Company to sell their first fifty Wright flyers. The brothers performed flight demonstrations before the public. President Theodore Roosevelt requested flying in the air with the brothers, but he was told flying was still quite dangerous as it was still new and experimental. It turned out to be a good decision for this denial, because on September 17, 1908, at Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia, while performing a demonstration before more than 2,600 spectators, Orville and his passenger Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge, had a crash after a piece of propeller broke off with heavy force while they were in the air. Orville sustained a fractured leg and hip, and four broken ribs. Lieutenant Selfridge passed away that evening from a fractured skull. More demonstrations would follow, initially by Wilbur only, while Orville was recovering from his injuries. The brothers became financially well-to-do from contracts and prizes. Their accomplishments in the field of aviation made them famous.



Scott #C91 & #C92



Scott #3783c

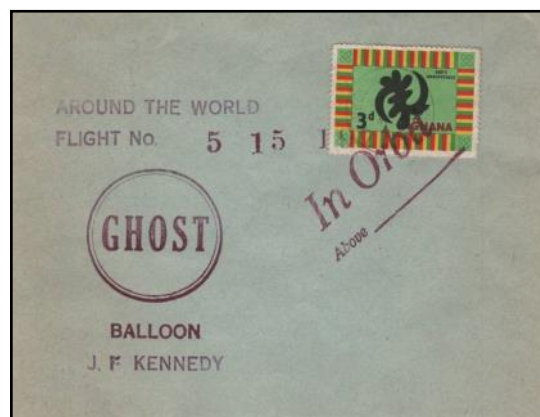
References for my article are from The Wright Brothers by David McCullough.

Cover of the Month

By Jim Giacomazzi

I discovered this cover at an auction held at the Western Philatelic Library in Redwood City. The word "GHOST" in the cachet made me think that perhaps it was related to Halloween. Upon closer inspection, I found that it actually dealt with ballooning and meteorology. The cover is an Around the World flight on the GHOST balloon named "J. F. Kennedy" launched from Begaro, Ghana, on May 15, 1973, cancelled "In Orbit".

Balloons are ideal for gathering meteorological information and have been used for that purpose throughout history. The first meteorological balloons were flown in France in 1892. These balloons were relatively large, several thousand cubic feet. Weather balloons carry instruments to record wind speed, barometric pressure, temperature, and humidity data from the upper atmosphere. These measurements are essential ingredients for accurate weather prediction. Weather is experienced on the earth's surface, but is caused by conditions high in the atmosphere. It is not fixed, but a continuous sequence of change, and is not just a local matter, but a global phenomenon.



The development of Mylar plastic and advances in electronic miniaturization made constant altitude balloons possible. These balloons could be launched to remain aloft at specified altitudes for weeks or months at a time. Satellites could be used to track and request data from balloons to obtain a picture of atmospheric conditions all over the globe. The GHOST method (Global Horizontal Sounding Technique) was the system developed for the collection of weather data. GHOST was a worldwide system of free-floating, semi-rigid balloons connected electronically to monitoring stations. Each balloon was fitted with sensors and instrumentation and became an unmanned constant-altitude semi-permanent artificial earth satellite that circles the globe. Their area of observation was the entire world.

The GHOST program began in 1966 when 88 balloons were launched at Christchurch, New Zealand. The balloons could not be flown in the Northern Hemisphere because the Soviet Union would not permit overflights at the time. Hundreds more were launched from New Zealand and several tropical stations to test their ability to remain aloft for long periods. In 1966, a GHOST balloon circled the Earth in 10 days at 42,000 feet. By the end of the program in 1977, the longest duration was 744 days at the highest altitude with 63 circumnavigations of the southern hemisphere. Balloons at lower altitudes suffered in varying degrees from ice or frost accumulation, which limited flight durations to months, weeks, or even a few days, respectively.

In 1960, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) was established to better understand the system of weather formation and forecasting. On April 1, 1960, the first weather satellite, TIROS was launched into orbit. The TIROS-1 Program's first priority was the development of a meteorological satellite information system. Weather forecasting was deemed the most promising application of space-based observations. For the first time man would see his earth from above instead of seeing weather from below.



Sources:

Round the World Flights: <https://www.wingnet.org/rtw/RTW004O.HTM>

Ballooning and Meteorology in the Twentieth Century:

https://www.centennialofflight.net/essay/Lighter_than_air/meteorology/LTA13.htm

The \$5 Columbian, an American Philatelic Icon

By Robert Brilliant

There are some stamps whose rarity and popularity elevate them to the status of philatelic icons. Among U.S. stamps, the \$5 Columbian (Scott #245) – the top value of the famed Columbian Exposition issue of 1893 – holds this status. As Lester Brookman noted in his definitive multi-volume work *The 19th Century Postage Stamps of the United States*: “This stamp, the top value of the whole Columbian series, certainly can be said to represent the very peak of desire for a great many stamp collectors.” What Brookman wrote in 1947 is undoubtedly even truer today. What then accounts for this stamp’s unique mystique and enduring popularity?



As with all collectibles, scarcity and demand are the driving forces. From the day it was issued on January 2, 1893, the magnificently engraved Columbian Exposition series has always been among the most popular of all U.S. issues. For many collectors, the completeness of their Columbians is a benchmark of the quality and value of their collection. As the top value of the series, the \$5 value has been in high demand from the day it was issued, despite its exorbitant face value (which in 1893 was totally unnecessary for mailing anything other than the largest and heaviest parcels) and subsequent high market value.

Scarcity also comes into play with this stamp. Brookman reported that only 27,350 stamps were delivered to postmasters for sale to the public, with 5,500 unsold copies later returned to the Post Office Department and incinerated. That would leave a little less than 22,000 copies available to collectors, a number that is likely decreased by some extent with the passage of time. As a result, there have never been enough \$5 Columbians to satisfy collectors’ demands, and that will likely always be the case.

Aesthetics is another factor. The \$5 Columbian, like the other Columbians, is a strikingly beautiful stamp executed by master engravers. Printed in dark black, it exudes understated elegance and importance. The central design of Columbus’s profile was taken from a medal struck in Madrid, Spain. This same design was used in the Columbian Commemorative Half Dollar coin that was struck in honor of the exposition. Flanking Columbus are seated female allegorical figures. On the right is the figure of America, represented by a native American woman wearing a crown of feathers. On the left is the figure of Liberty, holding an olive branch in one hand and a pole topped with the Liberty Cap in the other. Existing die proofs showing the progressive build-up of the design elements speak to the care and precision invested by modelers and engravers in the final approved die.

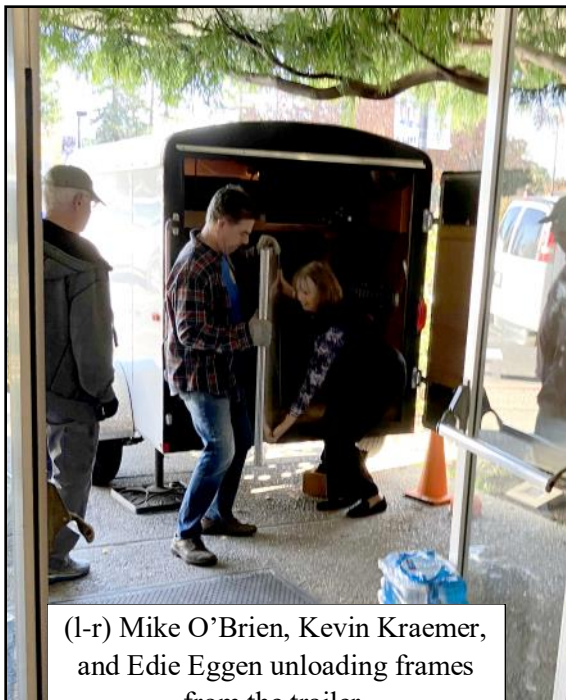
Multiples and plate blocks exist of the \$5 Columbian, but they’re rare. The finest known plate block, a mint never hinged block of 8 with imprint and DD selvage lettering, catalogs in Scott at \$325,000. The largest known multiple is a unique unused block of 14 found stuck to the back of a block of ten \$2 Columbians. With great care this incredible item was “bathed” to separate the two large blocks, sacrificing the gum but preserving the multiples.

There are also 36 known \$5 Columbian covers. Almost all of these are philatelic in nature, the result of collectors or stamp dealers creating and mailing covers to other collectors and special friends. Among the most coveted of these covers are those postmarked at the Columbian Exposition post office. The earliest known use of this stamp is a cover to Germany postmarked January 6, 1893.

If the \$5 Columbian remains on your want list, take comfort in knowing that you are not alone. There will simply never be enough examples to please everyone. If you are fortunate enough to own a \$5 Columbian, enjoy your privileged status and please exercise the proper custodial care this iconic stamp deserves. And if you’re in the active market for this stamp, be sure to buy a copy certified by the Philatelic Foundation, PSE, or other recognized expertising body as genuine and defect free. Needless to say, this stamp is a prime target for those unscrupulous types who repair, re-perforate, or re-gum stamps and then try to pass them off as originals. There exist far too many such doctored \$5 Columbians in the marketplace.

PENPEX CABOOSE

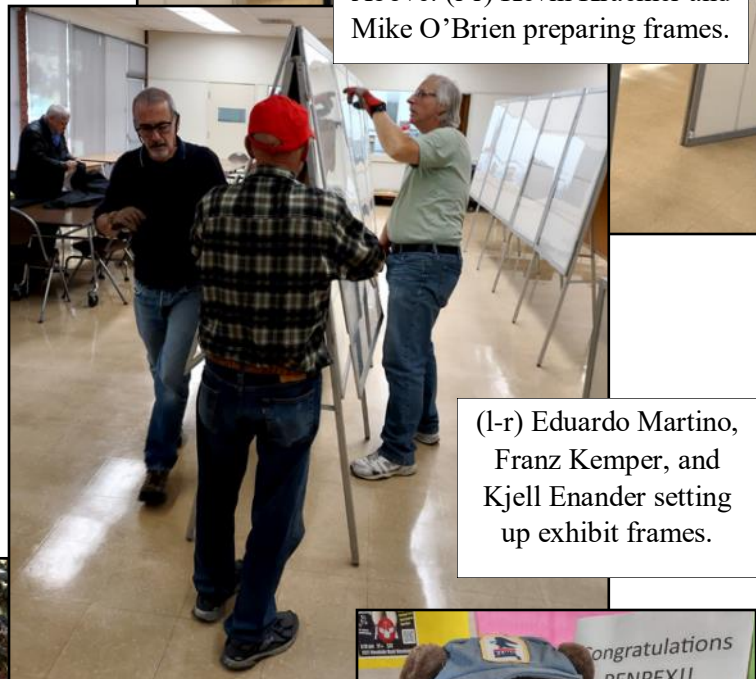
This year's PENPEX Stamp Show was again a great success plus it only rained at night, so people could attend the show without getting wet. We had many volunteers who chipped in to make PENPEX 2023 run smoothly. PENPEX will be showing its thanks by hosting a **Wrap-up and Appreciation Brunch** at Sizzler, 2855 Augustine Dr., Santa Clara (near 101 and Bowers) on Saturday, Jan 13, 2024 at 10:00 am. Please RSVP to Kristin Patterson, email: PENPEXRedwoodCity@yahoo.com or call or text 408-267-6643. The photos on this page courtesy of Kristin Patterson and John Corwin.



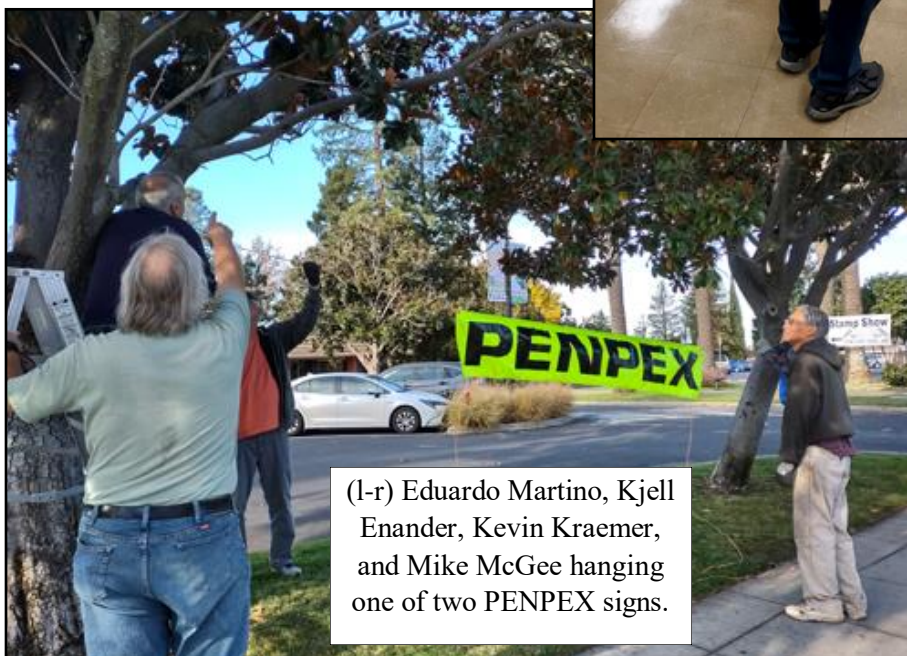
(l-r) Mike O'Brien, Kevin Kraemer, and Edie Eggen unloading frames from the trailer.



Above: (l-r) Kevin Kraemer and Mike O'Brien preparing frames.



(l-r) Eduardo Martino, Franz Kemper, and Kjell Enander setting up exhibit frames.



(l-r) Eduardo Martino, Kjell Enander, Kevin Kraemer, and Mike McGee hanging one of two PENPEX signs.



Postal Teddy Bear owned by Arnie Miller.

DURING THE PENPEX SHOW

The show was well attended and dealers were pleased. Shown here are more photos that were taken during the show by John Corwin, Tom Hayes, and Ken Perkins.



Goyo Alvarez, who oversaw the Youth Area, encouraging future young collectors.



Silent Auction room, busy as usual.



Kjell Enander at right, greeting people as they enter PENPEX.



Flea Market run by Jim Giacomazzi in right back.



Miriam Thurston selling PENPEX cachets.



Vivek Chopra, Reserve Grand Multi-frame Award winner, presented certificate by Kristin Patterson.



Dealer Ed Dimmick busy at his table.



20 plus PENPEX attendees enjoying the Banquet Party at Harry's Hofbrau.

The Benefits of Stamp Collecting, According to Artificial Intelligence

Compiled by Robert Brilliant

Like a lot of people, I'm intrigued by artificial intelligence (popularly known by its initials, AI) and its impending profound impact on our world. So, the other day, just for fun, I went online to ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) to ask the popular AI app to describe the benefits of stamp collecting. Below is what I got back in less than 5 seconds.

Collecting stamps, also known as philately, can offer a range of personal, educational, and cultural benefits. Here are some of the benefits derived from collecting stamps:

1. **Cultural and Historical Exploration:** Stamps often feature images that reflect a country's culture, history, and heritage. Collecting stamps can provide insights into different cultures, historical events, important figures, and landmarks from around the world.
2. **Educational Value:** Stamp collecting can be an educational hobby, as it encourages research and learning about various subjects. Collectors often delve into geography, history, politics, art, and other fields to better understand the context behind the stamps they collect.
3. **Geographical Knowledge:** Stamp collections can help improve geographical knowledge by exposing collectors to different countries, their regions, and their landscapes. This can be particularly valuable for young collectors and those interested in global affairs.
4. **Fine Art Appreciation:** Many stamps feature intricate designs, illustrations, and artwork. Collectors can develop an appreciation for graphic design, printing techniques, and artistic styles by examining the details of stamps.
5. **Attention to Detail:** Stamp collecting requires careful attention to details such as perforations, watermarks, colors, and designs. This attention to detail can help develop and hone observation skills.
6. **Patience and Organization:** Building a comprehensive stamp collection takes time and organizational skills. Collectors learn to categorize, catalog, and organize their stamps, fostering patience and orderliness.
7. **Networking and Community:** Stamp collecting has a vibrant community of enthusiasts, both online and offline. Collectors can connect with others who share their passion, exchange stamps, attend exhibitions, and participate in forums and discussions.
8. **Financial Investment:** While not the primary motivation for all collectors, some rare stamps can appreciate in value over time. Collecting stamps with a focus on investment requires careful research and knowledge about the philatelic market.
9. **Mental Engagement:** Stamp collecting involves research, decision-making, and critical thinking as collectors make choices about which stamps to acquire and how to organize their collections.
10. **Hobby for All Ages:** Stamp collecting can be enjoyed by people of all ages. It's a versatile hobby that can be pursued individually or as a family activity, fostering intergenerational connections.
11. **Travel Inspiration:** Stamps often depict iconic landmarks and beautiful landscapes. Collectors may find inspiration to travel to new places based on the images they see on stamps.
12. **Preservation of History:** Collecting stamps contributes to the preservation of historical artifacts. Stamps are tangible representations of a country's history, culture, and identity.

Overall, stamp collecting offers a unique blend of historical, cultural, educational, and personal enrichment. It's a hobby that can be tailored to individual interests, and the benefits go beyond just amassing a collection of stamps.

Of course, as collectors and philatelists, we already know the benefits of stamp collecting. But I thought this list would be helpful to anyone encountering those who denigrate our hobby as "trivial," "childish," or "boring." If that's the case, use this list to hopefully change a few erroneous perceptions held by unenlightened folks. And there's nothing artificial about growing that kind of intelligence!

Sequoia Stamp Club members may submit advertisements for no charge. Full details are available at <https://www.penpex.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Rules-for-Classified-Ads.pdf>