



# Stamping Around

## Newsletter of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club

**Arlington Meetings:** First Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.

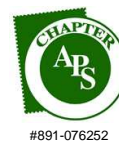
Bob Duncan Center, 2800 S. Center St.

**Eulless Meetings:** Third Wednesday @ 7:30 p.m.

12750 S. Pipeline Rd, #1C (Central Station Marketing)

**Lake Granbury Meetings:** 4th Tuesday @ 7:00 p.m.

Bentwater Activities Center (adjacent to Bentwater Marina)



CHAPTER  
MEMBER



#90

#53-3364

Volume 33, Number 12

<http://www.mid-citiesstampclub.com>

December 2020

## Mid-Cities Stamp Club EXPO 2020

By Peter Elias

November 13 & 14, 2020 marked the 33rd edition of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club's annual EXPO. Despite the current pandemic, the club was able to put the annual show, albeit pared down in a couple of areas.

According to Stan Christmas, we had 266 visitors during the 2 days of the show (and pretty much split evenly across both days), and an additional daily 28 people when attending club members and dealers were taken into account. So a bit less than previous years, but still very decent considering the current situation, and considering that the attendees are in potential high-risk groups (i.e.: elderly) and either couldn't or wouldn't attend as a result.

The show did seem a bit "empty" to me, but that's probably because I didn't attend until around the last 2 hours of each day. As usual, due to my somewhat "eclectic" collecting areas, I didn't find much that I needed, although I found a couple of interesting items in Jonathan Topper's "dollar cover" boxes!

In querying some of the dealers, the general consensus was that it was a good show, and the only stamp "show" (bourse & exhibition) in not just North Texas, but all of Texas, since the Houston show for September was cancelled. All of the TSDA bourses in Dallas have been cancelled, although a Houston TSDA bourse was held just prior to the MCSC EXPO.



Left: Marcos Elias is helping with exhibit frame set-up  
Center: Club President Rich Hildebrand is probably wondering why I'm taking a photo...  
Right: Ray Cartier is mounting one of his exhibits.

Amongst the various changes this year:

- Only 48 frames of exhibits (instead of the 68 that were planned for at the beginning of the year).
- All full-frame exhibits were non-competitive.
- Only 1 APS judge. Patrick Walter returned this year; despite the exhibits being non-competitive, he provided personal review of the exhibits at the frames for those exhibitors that were present.
- The "giant mixture pick" was moved to the hallway by the entrance.
- The US Postal Service did not attend.
- The Silent Auction was not held (despite having material).
- There was no Awards Dinner (due to both the room being too small given Covid-19 restrictions, having a buffet style dinner and that the exhibits were all non-competitive).

The only awards that were given out were cash awards for the TSDA "most-popular exhibit" Award tallied from votes of

attendees (and which went to Ray Cartier's "Jules Verne" exhibit) and the "Best 1-page" and "Best 4-page" mini-exhibits, both of which were won by Peter Elias for his "Covid-19 Postal History" (1 large page) and "Counterfeit NetStamps" (4-page) mini-exhibits.

Despite the show theme being "Orchids" (chosen early in the year due to Orchid stamps being issued this year), there were no exhibits with that topic. Given the pandemic, only Peter Elias had 2 mini-exhibits (1 page each) with that theme. Since various countries have issued stamps regarding Covid-19, I imagine that this would be a great subject to get started on now and hopefully have a good topical or thematic exhibit in 2021 ...

We were lucky enough to have been able to put on a stamp show in a year where practically everything ground to a halt, and that it was a reasonable success.

Judy Christmas reported that financially, the show had a small number in the black. If we would have the normal complement of 3 judges, the bottom line would have been a loss. Not having a silent auction also contributed to the lack of income. While the table fees for dealers help pay for the show, the cost of the exhibition portion is NOT covered by frame fees for the exhibitors. The proceeds from the silent auction really helps a lot in defraying the cost the exhibit & awards portion of the show.

While many people call the current situation the "new normal" ... I do hope that we get back to the "old normal" as soon as possible! Here's to EXPO 2021!

Article Index	Page #
EXPO 2020 Recap	1, 5
Editor's Forum & "Webs.com" To Go Away	2
Calendar & Secretary's Report	2
1,500 Articles	3
Been There - Done That (Ljubljana River)	3
US Navy Ship Comfort	3
Meeting Minutes	4, 7, 10, 14
Fake Elvis Stamps	5
US Priority Mail Envelopes & Boxes	6, 7
Helpful Advice for Collectors on Airplanes	8
Freaks & Errors	8
2021 Membership Renewal Form	8
Member & Dealer Ads	9, 13, 15
Comic Strip - Blondie (Talk About Stamps)	9
German Brilliance	11
USPS "A.R." Receipt Goof-Up	12
Frank Your Mail With Baby Elephants	12
Drug Free USA Stamp	13
USA 2020 ATM Holiday Stocking Stamp	14
Meet & Eat Info	15

# Stamping Around

## Newsletter of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club

Peter Elias, Editor ([news@mid-citiesstampclub.com](mailto:news@mid-citiesstampclub.com))

*Stamping Around* is published monthly by the Mid-Cities Stamp Club. Material in this [newsletter](#) may be reproduced in other philatelic publications if the source is acknowledged. Opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club or its officers.

## 2019 - 2020 MID-CITIES OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – Richard Hildebrandt  
First Vice-President – Ray Moyer  
Second Vice-President – Gene Pfretzschner  
Secretary – Skip Ely  
Treasurer – Judy Christmas

### Board of Directors (voting):

Peter Elias      Alliene Franklin      Ken Wills  
Immediate Past President: Ray Cartier

Membership in the Mid-Cities Stamp Club is available to anyone of good character interested in philately. Feel free to attend any of our 3 different meeting sites in the greater Dallas / Ft. Worth area! Dues are only \$12 per year (higher for mailed newsletters). For more information, the editor is reachable during business hours at (972) 671-0077 or : [editor@mid-citiesstampclub.com](mailto:editor@mid-citiesstampclub.com)

For a membership application write to:

**Mid-Cities Stamp Club**  
**P.O. Box 2158**  
**Arlington, TX 76004-2158**

or visit: <http://www.mid-citiesstampclub.com>



## Editor's Forum

By Peter Elias

Maybe a small change might be helpful. Notice anything different? Yup, my mugshot is shown above. Many philatelic newspapers & journals (not to mention regular newspapers and magazines) regularly put a small photo of the author of an article near the top. Why can't we? So if you write an article for the newsletter, feel free to send me a current (or at least somewhat recent - less than 10 year old) photo to use. Don't worry about cropping it, I'll do that to keep it at a headshot (but don't send something with a background that is too distracting...). In my case, the above photo is around 15 years old (notice my hair color?), so even I'll need to find something more current.

## Webs.com To Go Away

By Peter Elias

I have been using webs.com to host the club's "newsletter website" that is publicly accessible for many years. It has cost the club nothing, since that was webs.com's basic service: a free website. You could of course pay for additional features and storage space if needed.

A couple of years ago, VistaPrint (printers of business cards, calendars, etc) purchased webs.com, but didn't otherwise change the service. On November 9, they announced that as of end of March 2021, all webs.com sites will migrate to VistaPrint, and there will be no more free sites, all will be on a subscription basis of only \$5 (and up) per month. Well, I've got over 15 websites (both philatelic and non-philatelic) at webs.com, so, that would cost me well over \$900 per year! Not all of my sites there are very active though, but I will have to re-think about what to do about this. I'll have to back up a lot of the text in case I need to redo these sites somewhere else later, because it would be tedious for me to have to totally re-type 17 years worth of entries!

## Coming Attractions

### 2020

—> Due to COVID-19 and city / county / state / national emergency ordinances, the following may or may not occur; some meetings may be held virtually via Zoom, for MCSC meeting status, please contact Skip Ely.

**NOV. 24 MCSC—LAKE GRANBURY Meeting**

Program: EXPO Wrap-up, via Zoom

**DEC. 2 MCSC—ARLINGTON Meeting**

—> In-Person meeting is CANCELLED, however, there will be a Zoom meeting at 7 PM at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4871401300>

**DEC. 4-5 TSDA Stamp Dealer Bourse**

—> CANCELLED (by City of Richardson) <—

**DEC. 16 MCSC—EULESS Meeting**

—> No Meeting, see you in January 2021 !

**DEC. 22 MCSC—LAKE GRANBURY Meeting**

—> No Meeting, see you in January 2021 !

### 2021

--> No definitive information yet for 2021 meetings, hopefully the January newsletter will have more information available)

**JAN. 6 MCSC—ARLINGTON Meeting**

Possibly in-person meeting; see January newsletter.

**JAN. 20 MCSC—EULESS Meeting**

**JAN. 26 MCSC—LAKE GRANBURY Meeting**

Zoom meeting



## Secretary's Report

By Skip Ely

### Applications Received

Roland A. Haedge (#631)

Sai Madhavapeddi (#632)

Steven J. Turechek (#633)

### New Members

Marshall J. McFarland (#630)

### Deceased

n/a

### Reinstatements

Keith Parris (#559)

### Membership Summary – November 15, 2020

Membership as of October 21, 2020	89
Applications Received	3
New Members	1
Dropped for non-payment of dues	( 0 )
Resignations	0
Deceased	( 0 )
Reinstatements	1
Membership as of November 15, 2020	91

## 1,500 Articles

By Peter Elias

We have reached 1,500 ! As of last month's (November 2020) issue of **Stamping Around**, according to my count, there have now been 1,500 "philatelic" articles published in Stamping Around since 1986. By this I mean articles about stamps and philatelic subjects. I do NOT count all the "club-related" articles, such meeting minutes and others as part of this total.

All of these 1,500 articles are tracked in an Excel spreadsheet, generally by issue number. However, I can also quickly resort this list by author, article title or article subject matter. I fairly often have to go back and find some information from an old article (or just to make sure

John Barrett	27
Ken Wills	30
Rick Howell	31
Art Von Reyn	55
Ben Termini	59
Ken Aldridge	70
Pat & Robert Weidman	98
Ray Cartier	116
Peter Elias	796

I'm not writing about the same subject again!), and given that it's somewhat tedious to manually flip through the approximately 2,300 different newsletter pages that I have published since July 2001, I'm glad to have this resource!

1,282 of the 1,500 articles were written by 9 people as shown in the table above.

... But don't forget that hundreds of additional club-articles have been written by the club president (12 per year), the secretary reports (membership & meeting minutes reports), and other general club articles (such as for EXPO volunteers, Christmas parties, etc).

Another important thing to remember is the philatelic articles (at least during my tenure) have all been written originally for Stamping Around! We generally do not publish articles that have previously been published elsewhere. I don't think that any of club newsletter has as much original content as **Stamping Around** !

About two years ago, former editor Art Von Reyn gave me a box with some older MCSC paperwork in it, including various older issues of **Stamping Around**, as well as predecessor newsletters that had no name or were called "Philatelically Yours". I have scanned all of these items and recently (in mid-October), uploaded them all to the club's "Groups.io" site at: <https://groups.io/g/mid-citiesstampclub>. Only club members can become a part of this group, since it also serves as a "discussion forum", not just a place to park all of the newsletters, and I don't need spammers & scammers joining the group (as I don't moderate any postings).

Currently, the group site only has 23 members (even though when I created this group a year ago, I sent an email invitation to every member of the club). If you wish to join (and are club member), please let me know and I'll send you another invitation.

## *Been There, Done That*

## Ljubljana River

By Pat & Bob Weidman



On our 2017 vacation to the Balkan nations, one of the places we visited was the capital city of Slovenia (formerly Yugoslavia), which is Ljubljana. It is an important center of rail and road communications between Italy, Hungary, Austria and Croatia. While there, we took a walking tour of the city. It was December, winter time, and cold, but well worth it.

The picture shown is of the Ljubljana River, which runs through the city. Our tour guide took us down to the river and across to the other side, where I was able to take this photo.

Shown to the right is Yugoslavia Scott #522 that shows the Tromostovje (Triple Bridge) which crosses the river. It was constructed after the violent earthquake of 1895 which destroyed most of the area.



The stamp was issued in 1958 along with others showing places in and around Yugoslavia. At the time it was issued, Slovenia was one of the republics of Yugoslavia. Slovenia declared its independence on June 25, 1991.

## US Navy Hospital Ship Comfort

by Ken Aldridge

Shown below is a special cachet post card commemorating the March 30, 2020 arrival of the US Navy Ship "Comfort" at New York City's harbor. I spotted a small ad for this commemorative card on one of the stamp web sites and ordered it for \$10, including S&H. It's from Will Appel, Brooklyn, NY who has been making these types of historical post cards for many years.



The ship arrived to help provide needed beds and health care due to the novel Coronavirus outbreak. It departed New York City one month later, on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

MCSC Arlington Meeting Minutes  
(including the “Annual” Meeting”)  
November 4, 2020

By Skip Ely

**Attendance:**

15 members participated in the meeting.

**ANNUAL MEETING:**

- President Rich Hildebrandt began the annual meeting at 7:04 PM. The first order of business was the results of the election of officers. Skip Ely said he received 14 ballots, and all (unopposed, by the way) nominations were selected on every ballot.
- Rich said we were in need of someone to assume the responsibility for the librarian in the absence of our regular one (due to the pandemic). We also need a program chair for Arlington.
- Skip Ely gave a report on sales for 2020. He said in spite of the lack of in-person meetings, the sales department showed a gain of over \$150 due to miscellaneous sales of covers and country collections, and club books prepared by Stanley Christmas. He said the APS has announced they will not be collecting the five percent commission on sales next year; neither will they be charging ten dollars to offset mailing and handling of the books to the club. Also, the fee for insurance will be waived.
- Peter Elias asked about the status of the update of the club's website; Rich said he will check into it.

**Adjournment:**

- The annual meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.

**REGULAR MEETING:**

**Announcements:**

- **President** - Rich Hildebrandt mentioned we were not having our annual Christmas party in December, nor were we having an in-person meeting. He asked about a zoom meeting, and it was generally agreed this might be feasible (Skip will check with Rich Howell, our Zoom coordinator). A discussion about including a link in the meeting announcement followed; Skip said he would work with Rick to try and do this. It was decided not to do a Euless meeting this month, since

an Expo review would be the program for Granbury November 24. Rich said that the next in-person meeting in Arlington was scheduled for January 6, 2021.

- **Secretary** – Skip Ely said our membership stood at 91 with the reinstatement of former member Keith Parris, who moved to Tyler in 2019, but has decided to renew his membership in our club anyway. He said we already had 25 renewals, with 11 donors.
- **Treasury** – Judy Christmas reminded everyone that Gift Certificates expiring this year will be good until December 2021, seeing as there has been little opportunity to use them this year.

**Committee Reports:**

- **EXPO** – Ralph Poore said everything was still in place for EXPO next week. He said he had received a number of inquiries about the show, and hoped that attendance would be good.
- Judy Christmas said we had fifteen people who have volunteered to help with Expo in various capacities.
- Rich Hildebrandt reminded everyone there would be no snacks or drinks (or coffee) this year.

**Newsletter:**

- Peter talked about the number of articles authored by various members over the years.

**Announcements:**

- Stanley Christmas talked about some surplus club items for sale in the back.
- Ken Aldridge also had some philatelic material for sale.

**Show & Tell (Program):**

- Ken Aldridge had some covers with a modern Canadian stamp error and the corrected version to donate to anyone interested.
- Ray Cartier showed some covers and other tidbits related to the comet Kohoutek that was visible in 1973.
- Skip Ely showed a “Hidden Objects” coloring book on Stamp Collecting and Bird Watching that member John Withers had sent him after talking about it at the October Granbury Zoom meeting.
- Peter Elias showed a box he had obtained from the USPS for sending cremated remains.
- Bob Thompson talked about a charity envelope he received that announced “live” postage inside. He said he was aware of mint, used, and unused postage, but didn't know stamps lived. He said the one in the envelope were “dead” now, because he used them.

**Gift Certificates:**

- Were awarded to Bob Thompson, Stanley Christmas, Ray Cartier, and Gene Pfretzschner.

**Adjournment:**

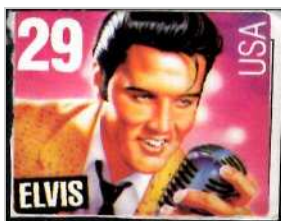
- The meeting adjourned approximately at 7:55 PM.

--> Editor Note: To the left is a photo of the November 4 meeting. Since I usually sit near the back of the room, that means mostly “back of head” shots ...



## Fake Elvis Stamp

By Peter Elias



While going through a box of stamps that I received from the APS (meant to be given away to beginning collectors) to weed out obvious junk, such as damaged stamps or those on-paper and where the perforations were all clipped off as well ... I found the item you see here.

First I figured, "sad", someone clipped the perfs off the stamp while trimming it off the envelope (part of the envelope is still visible on the right side (including



the box that says something about "place stamp here").

Luckily, I didn't throw this away at the time, something seemed "odd" about it. So, I found a copy of a mint version of this stamp, and this is how it compares:

First I thought that this fake stamp (the one on the right above) had the perforations clipped off when the stamp was cut from the envelope corner, but that's not the case at all! There's lots of stuff going on here, so the recap is: this is a counterfeit or fake of some sort!

Why do I think this? Well:

- The dimensions are not the same between the real (left) and the fake (right) stamp.
- The vertical text inscription on the left side of the real stamp is not on the fake example. And no, it didn't get trimmed off, since a bit of the envelope paper is still visible on the right stamp!
- The stamp paper of the fake has a weird "pearlescent" shimmer effect to it; the real stamp paper is kind of dull/matt, the paper on the fake has a very "shiny/glossy" effect.
- The "29" on the fake stamp is larger.
- Conversely, the word "Elvis" in the black block is smaller on the fake stamp!
- The stamp isn't actually clipped, what you see on the fake is that it has "rounded corners" that appear to be die-cut (on the real stamp, the main design has 90-degree corners). I doubt very much that anyone would be making tiny rounded corners when trimming a stamp off an envelope using scissors!



And there's one more thing: the real stamp has fluorescent/phosphorescent paper, meaning it "glows" under UV light (specifically short wave UV = 254 nm waves).

Above is a photo of both the real (left) and fake (right) stamps showing that the real stamp has a nice "green" glow of the paper, while the right stamp has no glow!

So what exactly is this stamp? I personally don't recall ever hearing about a counterfeit/forgery/fake of this stamp, which this definitely appears to be. It kind of has the appearance of a self-adhesive "sticker", but whoever produced it (assuming it was done as a sticker without postal value), is required by law that any full-color reproduction of a valid US postage stamp would have to be either less than 75% or greater than 150% of the actual stamp size (as per 18 U.S. Code § 504 in section 1Dii). Usually a black line is put through the denomination as well.

*This is a the booklet version of the stamp, but it says "Elvis Presley", not just "Elvis". -->*



## From the MCSC Expo General Chair

The 33<sup>rd</sup> MCSC Expo succeeded despite Covid-19 thanks to the heroic efforts of volunteers. I'd like to especially praise the efforts of Tom Cunningham whose persistence in obtaining new dealers and in retaining the vast majority of our previous dealers made the event possible.

I appreciate and understand that some of our regular volunteers were at too high of a risk to participate in person, although many of them worked behind the scenes in the run-up to the event.

For those who did participate in person, thank you. The reduced staffing made each of your contributions essential to our success.

That the event had a net retained income to the club completes the 2020 miracle.

Thank you to all who attended, made contributions, or added your prayers for a safe and successful Expo!

Ralph Spencer Poore  
General Chair  
MCSC EXPO

## USPS Priority Mail Envelopes & Boxes

By Peter Elias



We have all seen Priority Mail envelopes before, either by receiving them in the mail, or by seeing them stacked up at the post office for us to use, such as the one shown to the left. It is the current (May 2020) version of the standard Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope; shown below that is the October 2018 version of the same envelope,

which carries the designation of "EF14P".

While it looks like these two envelopes are similar, but they have changes to just about every design & font element (other than the 3 thick horizontal bars).

These envelopes are updated regularly, but they are just two of many types of Priority Mail envelopes & boxes.

I just reviewed the listing of these online, and there are quite a few different envelopes & boxes:

### Non-Prepaid Flat Rate Priority Mail Envelopes

EP14B	Small Flat Rate	10	x	6"
EP14F	Flat Rate	12.5	x	9.5"
EP14GT	Gift Card Flat Rate	10	x	7"
EP14H	Window Flat Rate	10	x	5"
EP14W	Window Flat Rate	12.5	x	9.5"
EP14L	Legal Flat Rate	15	x	9.5"
EP14PE_X	Padded Flat Rate	12.5	x	9.5"

### Non-Prepaid ("Mailing Envelope"), Non-Flat Rate Priority Mail Envelopes

EP14	Tyvek	11.625	x	15.125"
MILI_PAC	MILI-PAC	15.125	x	11.625"

### Prepaid Priority Flat Rate Mail Envelopes

EP14PPD	"Big Bend" Design Flat Rate	12.5	x	9.5"
PPEP14F	Flat Rate	12.5	x	9.5"
PPEP14EL	Legal Flat Rate	15	x	9.5"
PPEP14PE	Padded Flat Rate	12.25	x	9.5"

### Non-Prepaid Flat Rate Priority Mail Envelopes

EP14G	Mailing Envelope (obsolete)	12.5	x	9.5"
-------	-----------------------------	------	---	------

### Non-Prepaid Flat Rate Priority Mail Boxes

ORFB1	Medium Flat Rate Box 1	11.25	x	8.75	x	6"
ORFB2	Medium Flat Rate Box 2	14.125	x	12	x	3.5"
LARGEFRB	Large Flat Rate	12.25	x	12.25	x	6"
OSSMALLFRB	Small Flat Rate	8.688	x	5.438	x	1.75"

### Prepaid Flat Rate Priority Mail Boxes

PPFRB1	Medium Flat Rate Box 1	11	x	8.5	x	5.5"
PPFRB2	Medium Flat Rate Box 2	14.125	x	12	x	3.5"
PPLFRB	Large Flat Rate	12	x	12	x	5.5"
PPSFRB	Small Flat Rate	8.675	x	5.375	x	1.625"

### Non-Prepaid ("Mailing Box") Flat Rate Priority Mail Boxes

O_BOX4X	Mailing Box 4	7.25	x	7.25	x	6.5"
O_BOX7X	Mailing Box Large 7	12.25	x	12.25	x	8.5"
1092	Mailing Box	13.6875	x	12.25	x	2.875"
1095	Mailing Box	15.625	x	12.5	x	3.125"
1096L	Mailing Box	9.4375	x	6.4375	x	2.188"
1097	Mailing Box	13.4375	x	11.625	x	2.5"
1098	Mailing Tube Medium	38.1875	x	6.25	x	4.25"
1098S	Mailing Tube Small	25.5625	x	6	x	5.25"
A1	Regional Rate Box	10.125	x	7.125	x	5"
A2	Regional Rate Box	13.0625	x	11.0625	x	2.5"
B1	Regional Rate Box	12.25	x	10.5	x	5.5"
B2	Regional Rate Box	16.25	x	14.5	x	3"
GBFRB	Game Board Box	24.0625	x	11.875	x	3.25"
MILIFRB	Military Box	12.25	x	12.25	x	6"
ODVDS	DVD Mailing Box	8.75	x	5.5625	x	0.875"
OSHOEBOX	Shoe Box	14.875	x	7.375	x	5.25"

A key thing to remember is that there is a difference between a "Priority Mail Mailing Box" and a "Priority Mail Flat Rate Box". If it does NOT say "Flat Rate", then you will be charge by distance and weight; flat rate is the same rate for that size regardless of distance and weight.

That said, there are also similar (but not as many varieties of Priority Mail Express envelopes & boxes:

### Non-Prepaid Flat Rate Express Mail Envelopes

EP13	Window Envelope	10	x	5.875"
EP13C	Tyvek Envelope	15.125	x	11.625"
EP13F	Flat Rate Envelope	12.5	x	9.5"
EP13L	Legal Flat Rate Envelope	15	x	9.5"
EP13PE_V	Padded Envelope	12.5	x	9.5"

### Non-Prepaid Non-Flat Rate Express Mail Boxes

EMBOX1X	Medium Box 1	11.25	x	8.75	x	6"
EMBOX2X	Medium Box 2	13.625	x	11.875	x	3.375"
1093	Large Box	15.625	x	12.5	x	3.125"

### Non-Prepaid Non-Flat Rate Cremated Remains Express Mail Boxes

BOX-CRE	Human Remains Kit 1	14.75	x	10.25	x	10"
---------	---------------------	-------	---	-------	---	-----

+ 2 kits for animal cremains...

For Priority Mail Envelopes and Boxes that are "Flat Rate", the weight limit is fairly high, around 70 pounds (good luck with that!) if shipped domestically, but only 4 pounds if shipped internationally.

All Priority Mail boxes and envelopes receive tracking and insurance up to \$50 (if you need more than that, you can purchase higher limits).

The post office usually has most, but not all of these envelopes and boxes available for pick up for free (except of course the "prepaid" ones, which have to be ordered).

—> Continued on Page 7 <—

Continued from Page 6

One box type that is NEVER available at the post office are the "Regional Rate" boxes (types A1, A2, B1 and B2; and there was a "C" rate box, but it was dropped several years ago). The regional rates can be considerably less in postage, depending on the weight and distance (but not always), and the sizes of the regional rate boxes are just slightly different than the regular medium & large size boxes. While postage for these can be less, however, it is meant for you to purchase the postage online (can't use stamps that way). However, if you choose to use stamps with regional rate boxes, you will have to bring it to the post office clerk and an extra fee of approximately \$2.50 will be assessed.

Now, has anyone even have a complete collection of these boxes in unmailed condition? How about mailed? ...that would be even scarcer! And how about all the different versions over the years?

In 2014, they created special "Spiderman" versions of the medium & large sizes boxes. And in 2016, they created special versions of the priority mail boxes for the NY2016 International Stamp Show in NY.

If you want to prepare your mail-outs better, I would highly suggest that you order these envelopes and boxes online, and other than the couple of "prepaid" ones, they are all free (including free shipping); the downside is that some of these can only be gotten in bundles of 10 or 25.

So, if you study not just postal history, but also post office history, these are neat items to collect, although it could get problematic on the storage side of things ...

Hopefully this article has explained somewhat how all of these Priority Mail & Express Mail envelopes & boxes work, and if you enjoy a challenge, try collecting these! ... Ready, set, collect! ...



Granbury Zoom Meeting November 24, 2020

The Granbury Zoom meeting had an attendance of 17 people. Yes, there's 18 shown on the shot, but I'm on there twice (from 2 different devices).

Sai, one of our new members joined us, as did out-of-state

members Scott English & John Withers. One of the topics of discussion was the club's 33rd Annual EXPO which was held just 10 days ago. Granbury will continue with Zoom meetings until at least April 2021, at which point they'll decide whether to go back to in-person meetings. See the meeting minutes on page 13.

## Helpful Advice For Stamp Collectors In Airplanes or at Airports

by Peter Elias

For anyone that has traveled by air, and obviously has been in an airport, one of the pieces of advice is not to talk about or mention things like "bombs" and related matters (especially if in a joking manner or probably best not even as part of a serious discussion).

That said, is there anything that we stamp collectors should NOT discuss amongst ourselves while in an airport or airplane when in earshot of other people?

Well, after reading an article about some particular items up for auction in Linn's, this came to mind: Stamp Booklets! Sure, talking about stamp booklets as such shouldn't peak anyone's attention, but if we were to mention "unexploded booklets", well ....

Of course, most stamp collectors know that "unexploded booklets" are simply stamp booklets that are fully intact (i.e.: still stapled or that the individual booklet panes have not been removed from the booklet. But to non-stamp collectors overhearing someone in an airport or airplane talking about something being "unexploded", well ...

And it should go without saying, that you don't mention to the TSA officer that you have a bunch of "unexploded stamp booklets" with you ... even if you do! I'm not saying TSA agents don't have a sense of humor (do they?), but do you really want to find out?

## Freaks & Errors

by Rick Howell

I am a fan of a video podcast called "Conversations with Philatelists". I have mentioned it on our Facebook page, so some of you have heard of it already. It is a regular feature on YouTube where the hosts, Charles Epting of H.R.Harmer, and Michael Cortese of Noble Spirit interview people involved in philately. It is an excellent program which runs about 30 to 45 minutes per episode and there are currently about 19 or 20 episodes available to enjoy. Go to [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=conversations+with+philatelists](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=conversations+with+philatelists) to see what's available.

So what does that have to do with "Freaks & Errors" (the title of this article) you might ask? In episode 19 of "Conversations with Philatelists", Charles and Michael interview a guy named Mark Cwiakala, of whom I had never heard. Apparently, Mark is the writer and director of a documentary called "Freaks & Errors: A Rare Collection" which is available on Amazon Prime. Freaks & Errors is a one hour and thirty-five minute dive into the world of philately with viewpoints and comments by noted philatelists such as Cheryl Ganz, Curator of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum; William H. Gross, collector of classic U.S. stamps; and Stuart Weitzman, shoe magnate who is currently the owner of the 1 cent magenta British Guiana.

There are a total of twelve people providing their insights and comments on the world of philately and it is surprisingly an interesting look at a part of philately most of us will never see. As I mentioned, Freaks and Errors: A Rare Collection is available on Amazon Prime. It can also be seen on imdb.com and iTunes if you're so inclined.

## **2021 Mid-Cities Stamp Club Membership Renewal**

# \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mr. \_\_\_ Mrs. \_\_\_ Ms. \_\_\_ Miss Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
(First) (M.I.) (Last) (Complete if under 18)

\_\_\_ **Check here if information is unchanged from 2019 and skip to signature line below.**

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Collecting Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Stamp Organizations with membership numbers (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ APS # \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ ATA # \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_ TPA # \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Permission is granted to make the information above available to other club members. Indicate anything you do NOT want shared: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

### Membership Level:

\_\_\_ \$12 Regular Adult (emailed or online newsletter)

\_\_\_ \$22 Regular Adult (with mailed newsletters)

\_\_\_ **\$25 Sponsor Membership**

\_\_\_ \$35 Sponsor (with mailed newsletters)

\_\_\_ \$6 Additional Adult (only 1 newsletter copy)

\_\_\_ \$4 Youth (under 18; add \$10 if printed newsletter is desired.)

**Make check out to 'Mid-Cities Stamp Club' and mail this form with payment to:**

**Skip Ely, MCSC Secretary, 5512 Shady Meadow, N. Richland Hills, TX 76180-6616**

# CLASSIFIED BOURSE

## Announcements

All club members that are current with their dues payments are entitled to FREE ads in this space! Please send ad to: Peter Elias, P.O. Box 940427, Plano, TX 75094-0427, give it to me at a meeting, or e-mail me at: [peter@pcelias.com](mailto:peter@pcelias.com)

## For Sale

**US POSTAGE – from our huge surplus: 1c – 20c : 70% of FV; 21c – 50c : 80% of FV.** Send any amount (min \$10), specify group (70%, 80%), and receive mix of values back in FV as indicated above. Clean, F/VF only. Plate or Zip block included for every \$10 remitted. Remit (check or MO) to: J. Myers, P. O. Box 2047, Coppell, TX 75019. TX orders, add 8% sales tax. We cover return postage, S/H charges. Can also take PayPal (same terms). [jasdmyers@earthlink.net](mailto:jasdmyers@earthlink.net) 5/15

**Recalled Legends of the West** (Scott 2870), pane of twenty inside original mailing envelope, Scott 2017 value \$125 with note that panes in original envelope (blue bordered) "sell for somewhat more." I will sell for \$80 plus any mailing costs. Ken Aldridge, [KAldridge@aol.com](mailto:KAldridge@aol.com) 12/18

## Wanted to Trade

I have general (unsorted) worldwide & used USA stamps (mostly beginning collector material) available to trade for your items such as worldwide revenue stamps & Framas. Contact Peter Elias at [peter@pcelias.com](mailto:peter@pcelias.com) 9/16

## Wanted

**Postally used "ATM" stamps** (i.e.: machine vended) from Spain, 1992 to 2007; would prefer on cover or postcard. Contact Peter Elias at [info@stvincentstamps.com](mailto:info@stvincentstamps.com) 11/20

## For Sale

I now have a new website in which I have listed all my used **duplicates (many thousands)**. They are arranged in Scott number sequence within country. Do take a look, and select any that you want. I charge 1/3 catalogue value, post paid. The URL is [www.kenwills.net](http://www.kenwills.net) Contact me at [wills@airmail.net](mailto:wills@airmail.net). Happy hunting! 3/19

**Philatelic Reference CD's.** The following self-running, philatelic reference CD's, each containing hundreds of scans, are now available:

- **APC Conversions 2012-2014 (NY2016 Vermeil Award!!)**
- **Usage of British Empire War Tax Issues** (exhibit)
- **Airport Philately** (800+ scans of Airports on Stamps)
- **4 Rings—The History of Audi (Great for any car lover!)**
- **My Life on Wheels** (autobiography via USA personalized postage)
- **St. Vincent Philatelic Reference Scans (1,700 items!!)**
- **St. Vincent Postcards** (300+ postcards from 1900 to 2007)
- **Vintage Swiss Postcards 1898-1959 (900+ postcards !!)**

Special MCSC Member price is only \$ 9.95 each. Non-member price is \$19.95 (+ \$3.45 domestic or \$6.00 international postage) each. PayPal to [peter@pcelias.com](mailto:peter@pcelias.com) are accepted. Peter Elias, PO Box 940427, Plano, TX 75094 6/16

**MOVED, BUT SALE CONTINUES!** Special discounts to MCSC members for Swiss, Austria, Liechtenstein issues, @ 1/3 and LESS of catalog values. Also will accept US postage (any values) @ 50% of catalog. All orders postpaid! I also accept PayPal if you wish! John Barrett, Ph.D. Contact info: [jstrubel-boy@aol.com](mailto:jstrubel-boy@aol.com) 12/14

**Canadian Collection housed in Scott Specialty Single Country Album.** Starts with Scott#18 through 1970. Mostly mint, some used. 2013 Scott catalog value is \$4,100, now reduced to \$775 OBO!. Will accept US postage at face value as part payment. Contact Dave Linn, (903) 785-7864 or at [dklgonefishing@yahoo.com](mailto:dklgonefishing@yahoo.com) 8/19

## Comic Strip - Blondie (Talk About Stamps) - 10/20/2020

By Peter Elias

This Blondie comic strip was published in the October 20 issue of the Dallas Morning News and is about Dagwood mentioning him running into his mailman, Mr. Beasley, at lunch, and that Dagwood was annoyed that Mr. Beasley only talked about rare stamps for an hour.

Yikes! So is this what we collectors come across as to non-collectors, that all we do is yap about stamps (rare or not)? And how do other collectors see each other? One would think that if 2 collectors talk about stamps, that they wouldn't get annoyed with each other? I suppose that if chatting with someone that isn't a collector, maybe one should inject the "Been There - Done That" routine into the chat, talk about personal things, but weave stamps and philately into the story? I suppose that this might be more palatable to a non-collector than hearing about things such as perfs and watermarks ... "well, I saw a beer stamp from Switzerland the other day, and that reminded me of when I had a beer on a mountainside restaurant there and found out the beer was made locally just a mile away" ... or something like that ...

Back to the comic strip: so I wonder, how many mail carriers (or other USPS employees) are actually stamp collectors?



## Granbury Virtual Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2020

By Debbie Hathaway

### Attendance:

- 15 members were present via the Zoom meeting.

### Welcome & Show & Tell:

- Rob Hathaway has been busy making packets of stamps to sell at their booth in the Antique Mall of Mansfield. They are packets of 100+ different US and worldwide and seem to be selling well.
- Gary showed off the large package that he received from the ISWSC auction, taking note of the \$16.00 in postage on the front. He is going to try to remove the large denomination stamps for his collection.
- Dave bid on 12 ISWSC auction lots, but unfortunately, only won one lot and he is still waiting for it to arrive.
- Scott English gave a brief update on the Postal History Symposium and said there seems to be a lot of energy in the hobby with an average daily virtual attendance of 220 - 230.
- Rick Howell showed off some of the energy awareness cancels he's been seeing on envelopes. He also received a handwritten thank-you from Scott English for his Linn's "letter to the editor" where he thanked the APS for what they are doing to encourage stamp collecting.
- Alliene reminded everyone that if you have not already signed up for the USPS "Informed Delivery" service (free!) you should do so. It came in handy when she got her daily email stating how many pieces of mail were coming that day and then didn't receive them. The Informed Delivery has a link to report missing mail which comes in handy if you are expecting something and it doesn't arrive. *[Editor's note: Informed Delivery states that it is not guaranteed that items showing up in the email message will actually be in that day's delivery, due to timing of delivery from the sorting center to the local post office.]*

### EXPO Update:

- Everything is on track for the EXPO; there will be 22 dealers, mail-outs were sent, the program is nearly finished being assembled and the club will have 50 stamp fabric masks available. Also, this year the door prizes will not only be \$25 gift certificates but there will also be stamp packets.

### Where in The World:

- Gary had a real stumper this time. See how you do:
  - ⇒ 1918 was the first issued stamp.
  - ⇒ Viking ships were on early stamps.
  - ⇒ Variik (Republic in local language) appeared on the stamps.
  - ⇒ There was a "slinky" design on some of the stamps.
  - ⇒ There was a coat of arms featuring 3 stacked lions on some stamps.
  - ⇒ The currency was krooni.
  - ⇒ No stamps were issued between 1940 - 1991!
  - ⇒ A recent set was the Birds of Baltic Shores.

—>Have you guessed it? Scott English figured it out: it's **ESTONIA**.

### ISWSC News:

- Rob gave a brief update on the happenings at ISWSC. As you can see in the show & tell, the club has many members that are also ISWSC members. Are you a member? Ken Wills has an article in the latest *Circuit* issue. Debbie is a copy editor for the *Circuit*, mail bid auctions are popular and you can pay via check, PayPal, or credit card.

### Program:

- John Withers, a member from Connecticut, gave a great program on how he got into collecting. It all started as a family hobby when his father worked in international construction. As John grew older and moved around, including three years in Botswana, he continued to add to the collection. He has expanded his love of stamps to include philatelic covers that chronicle all his experiences. This includes postmarks, family correspondence dating back to 1842, RPO mail, and FDC designs. Great job, John.

### Next Meeting:

- The next Granbury meeting will be Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM via Zoom. Stan & Judy will give an EXPO wrap up. See you then.

## EXPO Planning Meeting

October 29, 2020

By Skip Ely

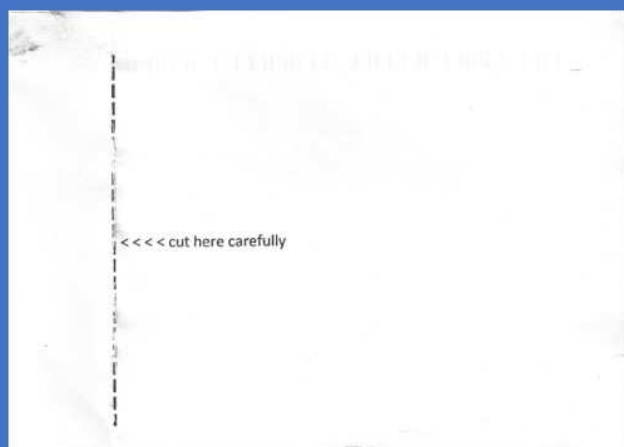
- Ralph Poore began the Zoom virtual meeting around 7:20 PM.
- Only 8 people participated (Rick, Stanley, Judy, Ray C., Karen, Skip, Peter, and Ralph); several noted difficulties joining the meeting (and Tom Cunningham never did succeed).
- Accordingly, only a few tidy-up items were discussed. Ralph mentioned the program referred to the Silent Auction, which we aren't having, so that will be removed. In awards, Debbie Hathaway should be listed as she now has the role. Only a few awards will be allocated due to the exhibits being non-competitive this year (we will still have the most popular, e.g.).
- Ralph said he understood the EXPO Chairperson is automatically an ex-officio in the club; this will be corrected in the literature. Ralph confirmed we have insurance for the event.
- Stanley Christmas said the floor plan needed to be slightly adjusted to accommodate an additional storage cabinet for one of the dealers.
- Skip Ely said he was willing to accept donations intended for next year's Silent Auction.
- Peter Elias summarized his publicity efforts.
- Judy Christmas briefly discussed the status of the EXPO budget.
- Finally, Ralph said he would contact Evan Islam to make sure everything was ok with transporting the file cabinets and frames.
- The meeting adjourned around 7:50 PM.



## German Brilliance

By Rick Howell

Over the years, I have made a lot of purchases on eBay. I think my current number of purchases sits at 2,677. Most of these have been stamps, or philatelic literature with a few other odds and ends thrown in. In any event, I do not consider myself a novice on eBay, however, I made a purchase recently that gave me a WTF (What the Heck) moment. It was something that most people probably wouldn't notice, but the philatelist side of me took over when I received the item shown in the scan below.



The first thing that struck me was that when I tried to open it, there was no flap on the envelope, and on the reverse side of the item, was a dashed line with a note pointing to it which said "cut here carefully". So, being a stickler for details, I dug out my trusty X-Acto knife and followed the directions. It was like a surgical procedure as I carefully dissected the mystery revealing four layers of paper, nervously making sure I wasn't slicing through the stamp I had purchased.

I then gently separated the layers to try to catch a glimpse of my purchase, and sure enough, at the opposite end of the package was a small plastic enclosure with my stamp and a "Thank-you note" tucked carefully inside. It was a bit more trouble than normal opening this item, as usually I just snip off the end of the envelope and yank out the contents, so that lead me to examine the package a little more carefully.

On careful examination of the front of the item, I noticed a German stamp with the denomination of €0.95 (Euros), and right under that was written the word "Postkarte", which with my

limited knowledge of German, I took to mean Post Card. That was my first clue. If this packet met the requirements of a post card, which would be size and weight [Editor note: *and thickness?*], the sender was taking advantage of cheaper post card rates to save money on postage. Genius!

So, my next check was to figure out the international mailing rates for postage from Germany. Gotta love the internet! Sure enough, the letter rate from Germany was €1.10, and the post card rate was €0.95. This translates to \$1.28 for letters and \$1.11 for post cards at the current exchange rate. So, by using the post card rate the dealer was saving 17¢ on an international transaction. I also checked the domestic rates within Germany, and for each transaction, he was saving 41¢!

The brilliance of this intrigued me, and piqued my curiosity, so I fired off an email to the seller and asked him if these "post cards" were available commercially in Germany. He quickly replied that the postcards were his own production and were not available in stores. He also informed me that he had programmed his computer to create the postcards and transfer the information directly from eBay, and that he was also a programmer. Figures!

Now, you might think, "Big deal, 17¢ international or 41¢ domestic per transaction, is that worth the effort?". Well, I wondered the same thing, so I went back and looked at the number of eBay transactions this particular dealer had made and was taken aback at the number.

This particular dealer had made 86,170 transactions. If they were all international transactions and all utilized the "Postkarte" the dealer saved \$14,648.90. If they were all domestic and utilized the "Postkarte" he saved \$35,329.70 in postage. Now I am sure he couldn't utilize this method for all the transactions, but you get the gist of what I'm saying.

Every cover tells a story!

### Editor comments & follow-up:

After I read Rick's article, I decided to go to the German Postal Service website and look up the specifications for postcards. The (cropped) screen shot below shows the specifications for a postcard mailed to the USA:



As you can see, there two criteria:

- 1) Overall size of up to 23.5 x 12.5 cm (9¼ x 4.9")
- 2) Area weight of 150-500 grams per m<sup>2</sup> (5.29 - 17.637 ounces per 10.7639 sq. feet [or 1,550 sq. inches]).

A quick calculation would show that a 4x6 inch postcard is 24 sq. inches. Weighing a standard postcard of that size is approx. 4 grams. Let's sandwich 2 of those together, so we have 8 grams [= 0.282 oz] per 24 sq. in. If we divide the 24 sq. in into the maximum of 1,550 sq. in., we get a multiplier of 64.58. That 64.58 times a 0.282 oz. card equals = 18.21, so just a tad over the maximum of 17.637 that is allowed. Ergo, if you use a slightly thinner-than-standard postcard, sandwich it together with your stamp insert, it will probably just barely sneak under the German maximum area weight of 500 g/m<sup>2</sup>. Phew! I hope got all that math right!

## USPS "A.R." Receipt Goof-Up

By Peter Elias



A couple of weeks ago, a Japanese collector sent me the cover you see to the left. It was a bit unusual in that the address was written sideways on the cover, not exactly the best way to do this here in the USA.

There was a registry label attached, but as usual, the cover was simply placed into my PO Box without requiring a signature.

Worst is, that the USPS personnel did NOT notice that this cover had a "Return Receipt" on the back (the pink form which is used for international return receipts).

The cover did state "A.R." on the front, signifying that a "Advice of Receipt" request is on the back (shown below). The problem is, that here in the USA we call these "Return Re-

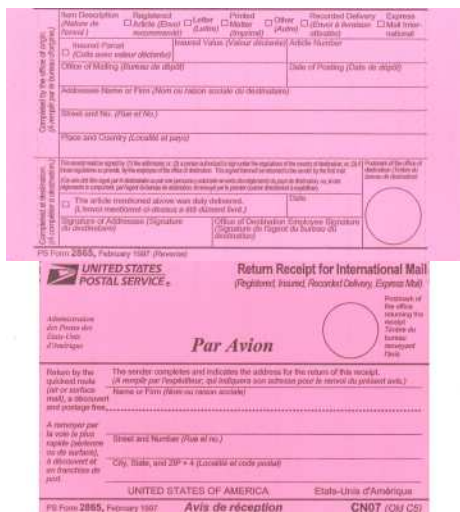


ceipts", not "Advice of Receipt", so "A.R." means nothing to USPS clerks! Thus, the return receipt service that was paid for was never performed. Part of this may stem from the fact that it

was sent to my UPS Store business address probably in a big bin along with other mail.

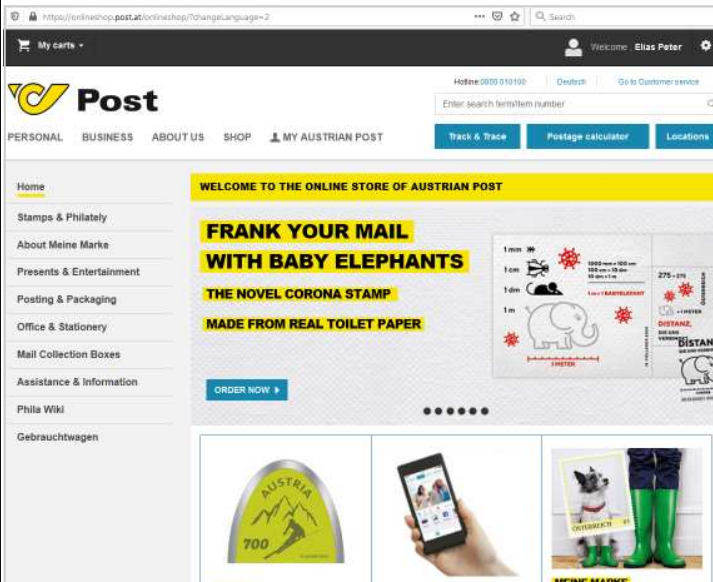
The front & back of the US version of this form is shown to the left.

The collector asked me to return the entire envelope (with intact "unreturned" receipt card) back to him. He specializes in collecting and exhibiting these items.

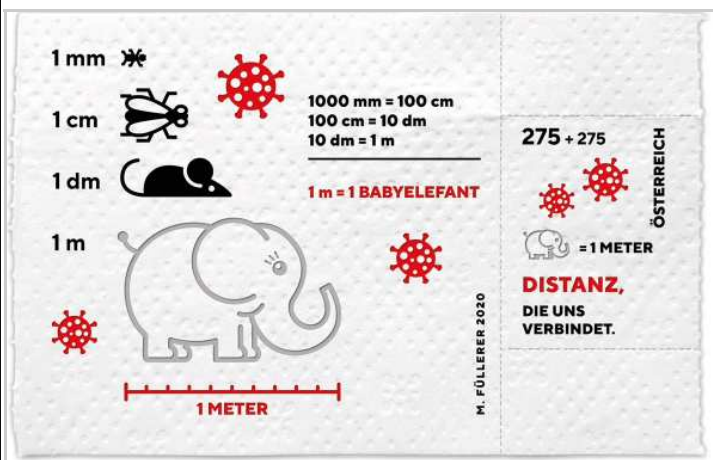


## Frank Your Mail With Baby Elephants

By Peter Elias



Ah yes, this has to be a first: a stamp made from "WC Papier" (German for "toilet paper"). Well, I know from experience that European toilet paper is generally much thicker and has a consistency along the line of sandpaper ... so maybe this stamp won't be that flimsy and could actually survive a trip on an envelope? It would be interesting to see a (postally) used version (of course, a "non-postally" used version would just be gross...)



The premise of the whole "baby elephant" is that the stamp compares the size of a Coronavirus "droplet" with that of a flea, a fly, a mouse and a baby elephant, and stating that DISTANZ, DIE UNS VERBINDET ("Distance, that connects us" in English).

The stamp is a semi-postal with a value of €2.75 + €2.75 value (~ \$6.42). The stamp is printed via "serigraphy" (a fancy term for "silkscreen printing"). 300,000 copies were printed (I wonder how many rolls of toilet paper that is?).

About 7 years ago I ordered online from Austrian Post ([www.post.at](http://www.post.at)). I figured it would be easy to just log in and order from them again, but I had to go back and forth a few times correcting their address system (they insisted on a "street number", but I use a PO Box)... rather frustrating, but I managed to get the order placed and hopefully my baby elephant toilet paper stamps will arrive in a couple of weeks...

## Drug Free USA - Last Stamp for 2020

By Peter Elias



October 27, 2020 saw the last stamp issue for the year (not barring any USPS surprises...). I was able to get the "deck card" for this issue, one of the few stamps in the past month that



my post office actually received on time. The subject is "Drug Free USA". The last US stamp issued regarding drug abuse was Scott #1438 in 1971.



Specializing in United States Stamps  
Member APS, ASDA, NSDA

Kirk McKenzie  
[kirkmckenzie@cox.net](mailto:kirkmckenzie@cox.net)

1001 North Fulton  
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74115  
918-836-1681



## Annual Club Christmas Party

By Judy Christmas

Since no one has responded to wanting a Christmas Party, there will not be one this year. We are thinking of having a Zoom meeting on the night of the December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Arlington meeting. Skip will be sending out a notice if we do.



Be sure to visit the Club website on the Internet:

← <http://www.mid-citiesstampclub.com>

For online newsletters see

or <http://mid-citiesstampclub.webs.com/newsletter.htm> →



## stampsuniversal.com

Visit us at area Stamp Shows



- \* TSDA
- \* TEXPEX
- \* HOUPEX
- \* EXPO

US/WW Classics, Modern, SONs

Visit our new online store  
@ <http://www.stampsuniversal.com>

James D. Myers  
P. O. Box 2047  
Coppell, TX 75019  
(972) 304-1671

Exp. 12/20



[cunninghamstamps@aol.com](mailto:cunninghamstamps@aol.com)

(214) 546-1179

*Cunningham Philatelics*

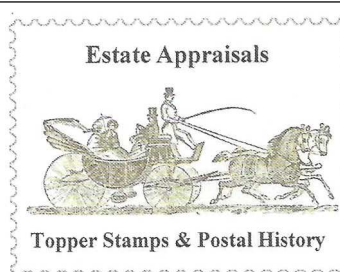
Philatelic Consultants

Elusive Items  
Stamps and Covers

Collections  
Appraisals

THOMAS L. CUNNINGHAM  
APS # 082424, TSDA

P.O. Box 863237  
Plano, TX 75086-3237



Topper Stamps & Postal History

[jonathan@topperstamps.com](mailto:jonathan@topperstamps.com)  
[www.topperstamps.com](http://www.topperstamps.com)

Jonathan Topper  
10480 Grant Road  
Suite 117  
Houston, TX 77070  
832.518.6558

## Granbury Zoom Meeting Minutes November 24, 2020

By Eugene Atkinson

### WELCOME:

- 19 members and guests participated in the November 24 meeting of the Lake Granbury Branch, Mid-Cities Stamp Club. David Stockbridge presided over the Zoom program, made necessary by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

### SHOW & TELL:

- Peter Elias had a new ATM stamp (on cover) from Spain with a COVID-19 theme.
- Skip Ely exhibited a membership application that came in a Priority Mail envelope covered with two cent stamps.
- New member Sai Madhavapeddi introduced himself and discussed his return to philately during travel in Europe.
- Fred Ekenstam found a pre-cancel newspaper wrapper and described an APS "Conversation with Philatelists" of special interest.
- Alliene Franklin joined by phone from East Texas.
- Rick Howell had a Nepal stamp with an LED feature that can be activated by a smartphone app.
- John Withers discussed Republic of Texas covers.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- APS "conversations" and other programs such as the one mentioned are archived on U tube with new ones appearing once or twice a week, according to Scott English. He also discussed staff changes at APS and the retiring of the APRL debt, which will leave money now available for other projects. The convention in Chicago is still "on" though attendance may be limited.
- Judy Christmas reported that the Mid-Cities December Christmas party has been canceled this year. A Zoom meeting will be held on December 2 but no program has yet been described.

### WHERE IN THE WORLD:

- Gary McNamee asked what country issued its first stamps in 1941 but produced most issues since the 1980s. Some featured King Peter, the city of Ilok, and the name Hrvatska. Peter Elias then correctly identified Croatia (stating that he has a trading partner in that country and thus sees "Hrvatska" frequently).

### PROGRAM:

- Stanley Christmas reported on this year's EXPO in Grapevine.
- "We actually pulled it off," according to Ben Termini.
- 21 dealers participated, with 10 of them as newcomers to the event.
- Assembly on Thursday night went well.
- visitors on Friday numbered about 250, and perhaps slightly fewer than 300 for the two days ending Saturday afternoon.
- Visitors were fewer than in years past but appeared to stay longer and were in a buying mood.
- Dealers seemed satisfied, one stating that, even if he lost a little money, it was worth it to have a show anywhere in 2020.
- Registration was more detailed to facilitate contact tracing as needed, and social events were canceled.
- The club made a profit of over \$450.
- The 48 exhibit frames were non-competitive, and the judge made comments rather than rankings.
- According to Skip Ely, the beginners table helped novice collectors since children were not admitted.
- The mixture-pick netted \$188 and the chance board brought in \$160.
- Scott English emphasized how pleased dealers were to have the opportunity and that most seemed to at least break even on expenses.

### CLOSING:

- The next Granbury meeting will be virtual on January 26, and no in-person meetings are set until at least April of 2021.
- With the meeting adjourned, some members lingered on-line to converse and enjoy the fellowship.

## USA 2020 ATM Holiday Stocking Stamp

By Peter Elias



This year's USA Holiday ATM stamp is one of the 4 designs issued as a stamp booklet in October and features the stocking design.

But there are some quality issues ... Starting sometime this year, some sort of

programming issue is having the thermally printed portion of the image end up too far on the left side on each postage label. The problem with that is, that there is an approx. 4 mm wide "clear facing stripe" on the left side; if anything is thermally activated on that stripe, it will not always appear totally black, and in many cases, this is seen in the word FOREVER, where usually the "FO" part is not quite fully activated (due to the extra clear coating stripe). It is also visible in the barcode above the word as well.

From what I can tell, many, if not all machines seem suffer from this! Some sort of "change" caused every machine (at least the 6 to 8 I regularly visit here in the north Dallas area) to now print a bit further to the left a few months ago.

As someone who has written reports for accounting systems, I believe that whoever modifies the internal "report layout" (which is what these labels rely on), simply moved the fields to far to the left (or they changed the "margins" of the form...) If the fields were all moved about 3 mm further to the right on the form, it would all look better.

That said, I believe the machines themselves have a menu option whereby the machine operator can slightly "move" the image a little bit left/right and/or up/down to adjust for this. But no one seems to do this. When they print a test label, the test print doesn't really show the exact layout of the final label.



You can see that even the test print shows the printing to be way off center (since the left border line is not even visible), and one can also see the effect of activating the thermal coating in the area of the vertical clear facing stripes on the left side of each stamp. Even though the facing stripe is fairly thin, it's enough of a difference / barrier to block the heated pins from fully activating the image in that spot (causing it to appear somewhat dark gray or mottled in appearance!).

The other issue seems to be that the imprint on the facing stripe on the right stamp is lighter than on the left stamp. The main reason for that is that the row of heated pins in the thermal print head snaps down in place on both sides. The left side of the row of pins is just a little bit closer to the labels than the right side (it doesn't take much, probably just a fraction of a millimeter), but the distance is enough to that the heated pin doesn't quite get to fully activate the thermal coating on the stamp. One has to remember, that thermal printing requires extremely rapid "on & off" heating of the pins as the labels pass underneath of them (fractions of a second for each pulse). So any minor variances in 1) distance (of paper to pins), 2) speed (of the printer) and 3) temperature (of the heating pins) can make a drastic difference in the quality of the thermal activation (i.e.: "thermal printing" is really "thermal activation" of a coating that is already present on the substrate, while "printing" implies applying a substance, such as liquid ink, coating or toner, to another substrate, such as paper, foils, film, etc, during the printing process).

From what I recall, these thermal printers are designed specifically for the labels that are in use by the USPS, so they have a fairly tight fit left-to-right fitment, which means that any adjustments have to be made electronically through the menu option mentioned above, NOT by physically positioning the paper in the printer left to right. It's up to the user to manipulate the image to fit the paper, not the other way around...

So even though the US Postal Service supervisor runs a test print, I don't think that they really have an eye for quality. To them, what you see above, is "good enough". Sad.



## MEET & EAT for December, 2020

by Judy & Stanley Christmas

"Meet & Eats" are held before our club meetings. All club members and their guests are welcome. We will gather at 5:00 PM and start ordering at that time. However, latecomers can order when they arrive or just come by for a visit. Meals should be over around 6:15 to 6:30 PM with the Arlington new meeting start time now being at 7:00 PM rather than 7:30 PM.

Meet & Eat locations will be included the club's broadcast messages. NOTE: All locations are subject to change.

- Meet & Eat get-togethers are cancelled until further notice due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Regular club for Arlington & Granbury will continue to be held, either in-person or virtually. Skip Ely will send out broadcast emails with details each month.

### ARLINGTON Meet & Eat:

Cancelled until further notice

### EULESS Meet & Eat:

Cancelled until further notice

### GRANBURY Meet & Eat

Cancelled until further notice

Mid-Cities Stamp Club "Stamping Around" Newsletter  
c/o Peter Elias  
PO Box 940427  
Plano, TX 75094-0427

**Don't Forget:**  
**No In-Person meetings in December**

## Wanted to Buy

**Texas Precancel Stamps.** Contact Rick Howell at  
[Rick.howell1@tx.rr.com](mailto:Rick.howell1@tx.rr.com)

5/19

Wanted to buy or trade for: **Worldwide unusual EFOs, postal counterfeits.** Odd US 20th century auxiliary markings, US 1934 and 1935 Christmas Seals on and off cover and publicity material, Korean War postal history from US and other UN contingents, and any other US philatelic material with an interesting story. John Hotchner, PO Box 1125, Falls Church, VA 22041, or [jmhstamp@verizon.net](mailto:jmhstamp@verizon.net)

2/15

## For Sale

I have over **10,000 auctions** on delcampe.com @ 35% of Scott or less. Worldwide & US stamps, covers and FDCs. For more info contact Denny Ludlow @ (713) 898-1872

10/15

**FREE 111-page or 26-page album** of Spanish ATM stamps (provided as a PDF file) with purchase of at least \$3.00 in Spanish ATM stamps! Contact Peter Elias at [peter@pcelias.com](mailto:peter@pcelias.com)

6/17

→ **YOUR FREE AD COULD BE HERE** ← !  
(for paid-up MCSC club members only)