Stamping Around

Newsletter of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club

***Arlington Meetings:* 1st Wednesday @ 6:30 p.m.**
Trinity United Methodist Church, 1200 W. Green Oaks Blvd
***Flower Mound Meetings*: 3rd Wednesday @ 7:30 p.m.**
3020 Corporate Ct, Ste 400 (Step Up Sports Medicine)
Lake Granbury Meetings: 4th Tuesday @ 7:00 p.m.
Bentwater Activities Center (adjacent to Bentwater Marina)

#891-076252 #90 CHAPTER MEMBER #53-3364

Volume 39, Number 9 https://www.mid-citiesstampclub.com September 2026

Been There, Done That

Boston 2026: USPS Postcards

By Peter Elias



10 years ago, at the New York 2016 International Stamp Show, the USPS offered a free postcard with your picture on it. Basically you and a backdrop advertising the show. Wonder what they had in mind 10 years later?



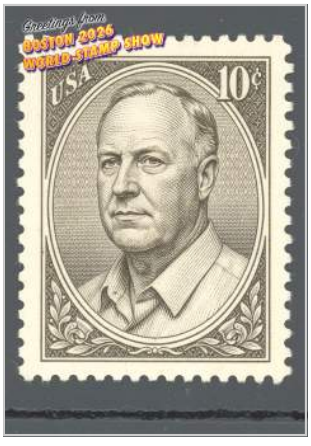
Photo by Peter Elias

In the USPS booth (above), next to the stage, they had set up a small digital camera on a stand (1). The image then was sent via the internet to some AI server, and came back to be printed on a postcard at the printer (2). Periodically they would flash images on a large TV (3) with some of the produced postcards.



On the first try, I got this one (left), showing me in front of a digital backdrop of a Boston scene. That was not the intended image, but a "fail-over" in case of a tech-fail. But hey, I'll take it… I tried a few more times in the following days. In some cases, the lines were really long!

When I stood in front of the camera again the following day, what you see to the right is the postcard that popped out of their printer.



I looked at this and went "huh"? I asked them to verify this, and they said "yup, that's your file" (since I had just also gotten an email with that same image attached to it). Huh...

I must say, that is an image of someone that belongs on a stamp! But is it me? It was created by whatever "AI" the USPS was using. I don't see "me" in that though. Where's my goatee? Plus, I haven't parted my hair since I was kid! But yeah, I was wearing an open & collared shirt that day… Was AI hallucinating?



With the next try, I got a postcard that put me into a revolutionary war character of some sort, and I suppose that was appropriate and the overall design mimicked the overall layout of one of the 2 stamps issued to commemorate the show (below left).

I definitely do see "me" in that image, the eyes and goatee do seem correct. Overall, the AI-applied attire was well done. So let's just say that AI worked in this case!

As I stated above, one of the stamps for the show featured Paul Revere on his midnight ride on a horse and shouting "*The Regulars are coming out!*"



©2026 USPS

What the USPS' AI produced this time (right), I thought was hilarious! Part me (similar to above) and part horse! Ain't stamp collecting fun?



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Stamping Around

Newsletter of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club

Peter Elias, Editor (news@mid-citiesstampclub.com)

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2025 - 2026 MID-CITIES STAMP CLUB OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President – Rick Howell
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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 (which includes an emailed or online color newsletter, or $22 for mailed black & white newsletters). For more information, the editor is reachable during business hours at (972) 671-0077 or : editor@mid-citiesstampclub.com

For a membership application write to:

Mid-Cities Stamp Club
P.O. Box 820784
N. Richland Hills, TX 76182-0784

or visit: https://www.mid-citiesstampclub.com

Coming Attractions 2026

AUG. 25	**MCSC — LAKE GRANBURY Meeting**
Program:	Review of Boston 2026 & WWII by Craig Kellogg
SEP. 2	**MCSC — ARLINGTON Meeting**
Program:	Club Auction
SEP. 16	**MCSC — FLOWER MOUND Meeting**
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
SEP. 22	**MCSC — LAKE GRANBURY Meeting**
Program:	Club Auction
SEP. 26	**MCSC - EXPO Planning Meeting, 11 AM**
David's BBQ, 2224 W Park Row Dr H, Pantego, TX 76013	
OCT. 7	**MCSC — ARLINGTON Meeting**
Program:	*France Libre: The Stamps of Free France, The Free French Colonies & Free French Forces* presented by Geoff Owens
OCT. 14	**MCSC — FLOWER MOUND Meeting**
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
OCT. 27	**MCSC — LAKE GRANBURY Meeting**
Program:	Annual Picnic
NOV. 4	**MCSC — ARLINGTON Meeting**
Program:	Preview of EXPO & general discussions
NOV. 13-14	**MCSC 39th Annual Stamp EXPO**



"Editor At Work"
LEGO™ MOC by Marcos Elias

Editor's Forum

By Peter Elias

I think that this is THE longest issue of Stamping Around ever! Back when I started editing this newsletter in 2001 (¼ century ago), it was 10 pages. And it has pretty much stayed that way (with the exception of an occasional 12 or 14-page issue) since then.

Then the plandemic happened. Maybe I had more time to tend to philatelic pursuits as a result and the number of pages started going to 12 to 14 per month. Not only is this issue the longest ever, it also has the longest article ever published, at 4½ pages (more if I had used a larger font).

EXPO Silent Auction

by Ken Wills

You are aware, aren't you, that everything in the Silent Auction has been donated? The proceeds are the principal source of revenue for the club, exceeding the annual membership dues. So far this year we have received a good number of albums. What we are short of is some better individual stamps or sets of stamps. So, please put your mind to finding one or more such items that you no longer need and that you expect will sell for at least $5 at the Silent Auction. Then pass them to one of the committee members (Skip Ely, Tom Turner or Ken Wills) by the end of September. Your generosity will be much appreciated.

Thank You!

By Peter Elias

Thank you to Gael Ann Dow for donating several older beginning collector albums & a baggie of loose stamps to the club.



Secretary's Report

By Janet Moyer

Applications Received:
Michael D. Duke (#707) - collects USA primarily
New Members:
Allen D. Brown (#705) - collects USA
Brenda Brown (#706) " "
Reinstated:
n/a
Deceased:
Howard Savage (#515)

Membership Summary – August 19, 2026

Membership as of July 15, 2026	**105**
Applications Rec'd (counts as member next month)	**1**
New Members	**2**
Not Renewing for 2026	**(0)**
Resignations	**(0)**
Deceased	**(1)**
Reinstatements	**0**
Membership as of August 19, 2026	**106**

Been There, Done That

Buben or Unter?

Peter Elias

…'Tis the question …

To clarify, "Buben" in German translates to "Boys", which as you can tell, in terms of playing cards, we call that "Jacks" in the USA. So the "B" on a German card is a "J" on English-language card decks.



Similarly, if you see a "D" on a German "face card", that means "Dame" (and is essentially the same word in English), however, we deem that card to be a "Q"ueen.

Luckily, the confusion ends there, as the "K"ing in German is "K"önig, and the "A"ce is the "Ass".

Shown on the top row above (actual size) is a set of stamps from the former *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR), or we call it, the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The country "claimed" to be democratic, but was really an authoritarian one-party dictatorship and functioned as a communist state. It was generally referred to as "East Germany" and officially ceased to exist and was reunified with "West Germany" on October 3, 1990 (and all of this was triggered by the opening of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989).

Ok, enough of the general history lesson. Back to the stamps, they are GDR #941 to 944 and were issued back in 1967.

The 4 cards feature the "Jack" in all 4 suits: Diamonds, Hearts, Spades & Clubs.

As viewed regularly, the stamps show a "U" on the top half and a "B" on the bottom (upside down) part of the stamp. I purposely show the Jack of Hearts stamp upside down. The reason is to show that the design of the bottom part of the cards on the stamps actually match the real playing cards that I'm showing underneath (which are shown slightly reduced so that I could match them up with the stamps easier).

I was a tad bit confused initially, as I had never seen German playing cards with a "U" in the corners, just the "B". I eventually figured out that the "U" means "Unter" ("under") in German, and more technically "Unterling" (underling), or "subordinate". I suppose that implies the Jack being subordinate to the Queen or King, which are higher "value" cards.

All of my older German card decks, such as the four shown on the 2nd row have the "B". These are the cards the parents played with us back in the 1960's.

The cards themselves might go back to the 1950's.

So what is shown on the GDR stamps are simply 2 halves of 2 different cards.

According to Wikipedia, going way back, the suits were not diamonds, hearts, clubs or spades, but hearts, bells, leaves and acorns (as shown above, except that the "bell" is 2-color heart-shaped).

The symbol-based cards are considered to be from "German-suited" decks, while those with "French-suited" (but used in Germany) are the ones that used the B, D & K. Sure, that sounds logical...

My cards shown above are from a German "Skat" game, which is comes with 32 cards (& also 2 Jokers), being the 7, 8, 9, 10, B, D, K & A cards. In that (trick-taking / trump-based) game, the 7 through 9 are worth 0 points, the B, D & K are worth 10 points and the A is 11 points.

Skat is not a "luck" game, but based more on "skill", involving both strategy and trying to track which cards have been played and which are ones are left. Of course, you could have "bad luck" and get dealt a crappy hand.

Skat is played with 3 people, 1 against 2. Other than being played at home for fun, in bars, money might be involved. There's not enough room to explain the game (see the blue Skat link to Wikipedia for an English explanation).

Now, when was the "U" on the Jack card get replaced with a "B"? I can't really find a "definitive date" for that.

In reading up on German cards, I found that in 1939, Germany abolished the use of tax stamps on playing cards! These "Spielkartensteuer" (playing card taxes) were originally standardized in 1879 by the German Empire. According to the website link above, these appear to be more "rubber stamp" markings, than paper-based "revenue stamps" that most of us would think of.

MCSC Arlington Meeting Minutes August 5, 2026

by Janet Moyer

Call-To-Order:

- President Richard Howell called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Attendance:

- 24 members and 4 guests: Tim & Linda Ewing, ChrisTye and Gerardo Velazquel.

Reports:

- Secretary - Janet Moyer that announced that the previous meeting minutes were in the newsletter. No corrections.
- Sales - David Stockbridge has reconcile the account with the APS sales booklets for the first half of 2026. He received new APS sales booklets today.
- Library – Richard Hildebrandt has a number of the new 2027 Scott Catalogues. If you know you want one, he will bring it to the meeting – just let him know.
- Newsletter - Peter Elias says it's in the works and asks for articles.
- EXPO Chairman – Ralph Poore – The next EXPO meeting will be August 8th at David's Barbecue.

Announcements:

- Nominations for officers are being collected. If you would like to serve as a club officer, please contact Ralph Poore at poorer@acm.org
- Skip Ely is collecting auctions lots for the September meeting.
- Next month, the church will start serving dinners again. $8 per person, starting at 5:00 PM.

Show & Tell:

- Ken Aldridge received a box in the mail covered in stamps.
- Peter Elias
  - A book – the *History & Local Post of Rattlesnake Island, Lake Erie*.
  - Souvenir sheet of UK Castles
  - Stamps and postal stationery items sent to him from a stamp collector in Ukraine.

Program:

- A program was presented by Skip Ely - "A Survey of U.S. Fractional Stamps"

Door Prizes:

- Gift certificates were awarded to Tim Sasser and Jeff Jessop.



Skip Ely gave a presentation about the US fractional stamps at the Flower Mound meeting on August 19.

MCSC Flower Mound Meeting Minutes August 19, 2026

by Skip Ely, filling in for Janet Moyer

Call-To-Order:

- President - Dan Golden called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM (exactly).

Attendance:

- 11 members braved the August heat to attend the meeting in Flower Mound.

Announcements & Officer Reports:

- Secretary - Skip Ely said our membership was holding steady.
- Sales - Skip said the APS and club books were available.
- EXPO - The next planning meeting will be Saturday, September 26, 11:00 A.M. at David's BBQ in Pantego.
- Newsletter - Peter said it was almost done.
- Future Meetings - Dan outlined the activities scheduled for the next few weeks, including the TSDA stamp show this Friday and Saturday.

Where In The World Is It?:

- Dan Golden had the subject quiz. Italy was guessed on the third clue by Skip Ely

Show & Tell:

- Skip Ely referenced a recent article in the American Stamp Collector and Dealer magazine about the differences between a collector and an accumulator. He also passed around a recent version of the Scott U.S. Pocket Stamp Catalog, and said it was much improved from earlier issues.
- Dan Golden showed a Boston 2026 desk poster that Steve Carpenter gave him.
- Ken Wills showed a large envelope from a stamp trader in Canada that had been nicely canceled with Canadian stamps, but which someone had maliciously taken a ball point pen to scribble all over them.
- Robert Martin showed an album page of mint $2, $5, $10, and $20 1873 Seward Officials he recently acquired.
- Peter Elias showed a sheet of local posts stamps he had made advertising this year's Expo. He also passed around a notebook of Ukrainian stamps he had acquired from a trading partner in the Ukraine. He also had a cover from Kosovo with some custom made postage. He also talked about the recent article about Rattlesnake Island in this month's Scott Stamp Monthly.

Program:

- Skip Ely did an abbreviated encore presentation of his "Fractional U.S. Stamps" talk he did in Arlington two weeks earlier.

Door Prize Drawing:

- Gift Certificate was awarded to Ken Wills. A sheetlet of Peter's MCSC local post was won by Rick Howell.

Adjournment:

- The meeting adjourned about 8:30 PM.

Been There, Done That

Venice

by Peter Elias



At left is Burundi, Scott #CB22 from 1971. It is one of the few times that I've seen an "Airmail Semi-Postal" stamp, which gives it the Scott "CB" designation (C for airmail, B for semi-postal).

The stamp shows the "Casa D'Oro" (House of Gold). At first glance, I thought it was the building behind me in the photo below. Now that I see both the stamp and photo together, and while it does have some minor resemblances ("arched" windows on the 2nd & 3rd floors), it's not the same. Darn.



So while I do have a picture of me at the canals in Venice, that specific scene isn't necessarily on a stamp somewhere. But there's others.

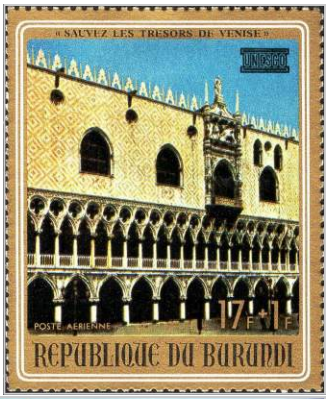


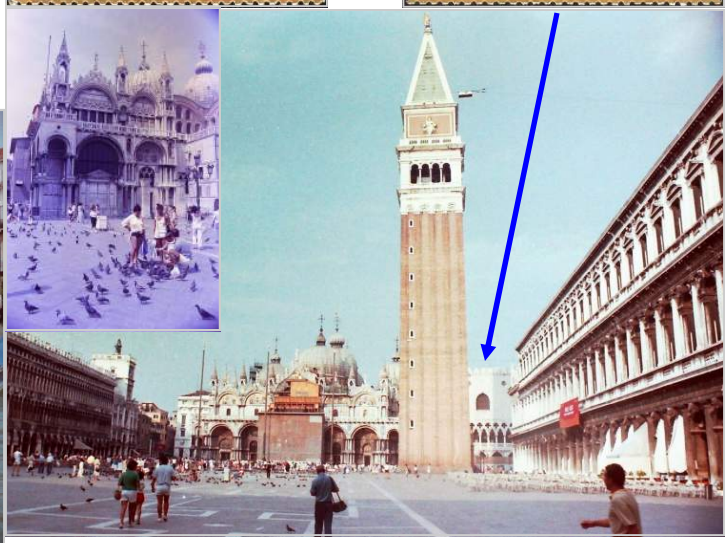
Above and below are scenes of the famous Rialto bridge. My picture though was taken from the opposite side as that on the small souvenir sheet .



At top right are stamps featuring the Saint Mark's Campanile (tower) and Doge's Palace.







On the Ajman stamp at right, the viewpoint would be where the tip of the yellow arrow is on the aerial-view picture post card that I found of Saint Mark's square.





Interestingly enough, none of these stamps showing scenes from Venice are Italian stamps! I was there about exactly 40 years ago, in August 1986. Sadly, my ancient hotel did not have AC. And it was so hot, that the ink didn't seem to dry on the postcards I was writing at 10 PM…

MCSC EXPO Planning Meeting Minutes August 9, 2026

By Skip Ely

A MCSC EXPO Planning meeting was held at David's BBQ in Pantego beginning at 11:55A.M., following lunch.

Attendees: There were 10 attendees.

Discussion Items:

- General Chairperson Ralph Poore began the meeting by saying that the insurance premium for EXPO was soon to be paid.
- Deputy Chair Rick Howell showed a PowerPoint example he made to show some interesting historical U.S. stamps. He detailed this could run on a large screen TV at the Mix Pick table to tweak newcomers' interest in stamps. A lengthy discussion followed.
- Beginning Collector Chair Skip Ely said he had ample material for the Beginners Table.
- Bourse Chair Tom Cunningham said he had commitments from 25 dealers. Most had either made a deposit or paid in full.
- The Chance Wheel was addressed by Ralph Poore in the absence of Patty Poore. He said the table had adequate material for EXPO.
- Mini Exhibits Chair Peter Elias said there weren't many offers for the exhibits in the lobby so far, but he could fill it with his own material if necessary.
- Treasurer Tom Cunningham said finances were in good shape.
- Ralph said Hospitality Registration Chair Janet Moyer had no issues at this point.
- Lunches Chair Kathryn Story said that last year's procedures worked well and will be repeated this year. She didn't know what the prices might be yet this year, but was not concerned about them.
- Flyer Mail-Out Chair Stanley Christmas said he was ready to when the time comes. He has started running out of postage, though. Skip Ely said he had some to offer.
- Mixture Pick Chair Bob Weidman said they had sufficient on-paper material, but could use off-paper U.S. material for prepackaged bag sales.
- Show Program Chair Geoffrey Owens indicated he will be ready to start work on it next month when all the details have been finalized. There was lengthy discussion on some of the details.
- Publicity Chair Peter Elias talked about the ad in Linn's. After a short discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and approved to discontinue said ad, reason being the perception that most attendees were getting information from elsewhere. A discussion of other local opportunities followed.
- Security Chair Bob Weidman said he had been in contact with the private security team that we use and that we were on the schedule.
- Silent Auction Chair Ken Wills said we were getting some very nice material, but we could always use more.
- Ralph Poore reported that Transportation was on the schedule, but that he will remind and confirm the participants once we get closer to EXPO
- Volunteer Chair Janet Moyer had indicated previously that most tables had adequate support.

--> The next (and last for this year) EXPO planning meeting will be on September 26, at 11:00 AM, at David's BBQ.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.

Boston 2026 By the Numbers

By Peter Elias

The information below was provided to me (via press release by Thomas Fortunato, Public Relations chairperson for Boston 2026).

Boston 2026 World Expo closed its doors about 10 weeks ago. The following stats for the show have been collected and verified:

1.	**Donors**:	223
2.	**Donating Societies (donating only):**	15
3.	**Donations Pledged**:	$1,201,896
4.	**Donations Paid to date**:	$1,199,096
5.	**Attendees**: (unique individuals)	20,017
6.	**Bourse Area Booths Sold**:	113
7.	**Bourse Area Booth Holders**:	115
8.	**Bourse Area Booth Fees Paid** (including auctions):	$1,096,152
9.	**Postal Administrations Represented**: (situated amongst 18 booths *[note: I counted 24 named spaces in the passport that was issued)*	31
1.	**Events, Meetings and Presentations**:	364
2.	**Participating Societies** (with booth space and/or staged meeting):	118
3.	**Framed Exhibits**:	719
4.	**Frames**:	3,746
5.	**Literature Exhibits**:	192

Of special note are the totals from the **volunteer effort** before, during and after the show:

- 477 registered volunteers, with 380+ recording time slots filled
- 2,300+ hours of work, including set-up plus mounting and dismounting the exhibits

Thanks to everyone!

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

Doing some quick research, I found these statistics:

New York 2016 World Expo:

- 23,017 unique visitors (they had shifted from counting daily attendance to unique visitors).
- 80 spaces for postal administrations in my show passport

Washington DC 2006 World Expo:

- 226,817 recorded entries (includes people attending for multiple days, so I would have been counted 7 times)
- 80,000 - 85,000 estimated unique individuals
- 200 dealers
- 156 spaces for postal administrations in my show passport

World Stamp Expo 2000 (Anaheim, CA):

- 125,000 estimated visitors (total during 10 days, not number of unique visitors). I was there for 3 days.
- 26 physically attending postal administrations, but I counted spaces for 157 postal administrations in my show passport, which is filled!

Pacific 1997 World Expo (San Francisco, CA):

- 23,000 unique visitors
- 202 stamp dealers
- 157 spaces for postal administrations in my show passport

The number of exhibit frames were similar amongst the 1997, 2006 & 2016 shows. I suppose the 2026 "issues" with tariffs had some postal administrations not want to attend.

--> So, what does the future hold for a 2036 (or earlier) show? Rumor has it that San Francisco might be a candidate...

Thank You!

By Peter Elias

Many thanks again to Jerry & Sharon Sloan for another donation to the club. This time it was 6 banker boxes of items.

This included some "loose stamps" as I was told, which turned out to be a shoebox full of mint stamp sets in various sales cards with a rather high total catalog value.

There were also some FDC's, including a complete set of 50 of the 1976 State flag set and some empty FDC binders.

2 books contained various philatelic literature, mostly older copies of Scott Stamp Monthly (going back to the 1970's) and Topical Time, along with a number the ATA topical booklets covering a variety of topics and stamp catalogs.

There was also another one of the blue albums (similar to the ones from the previous donations). As with the previous albums, they only contained select topics, so about half the album had totally empty pages (which will be discarded).

Another box contained a couple of supplies, including some "Dennisen" hinges. That's not a misspelling, these are labeled "Dennisen", not the more well-known "Dennison" hinges.

There was also a tube with a press sheet of the USA 2000 Space stamps.



TSDA Bourse

By Peter Elias

Photo from the TSDA bourse in McKinney on June 26 & 27.



Be sure to visit the Club website on the **Internet:**

https://www.mid-citiesstampclub.com

For recent online newsletters see the club website above or:

https://BetweenThePerfs.com/MCSC

(for older newsletters please contact the newsletter editor)

cunninghamstamps@aol.com

Exp.12/26

(214) 546-1179

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Philatelic Consultants

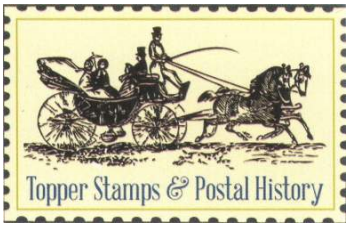
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Exp. 12/26



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Exp. 12/26



From The President's Cluttered Desk

By Rick Howell

Some of our members have expressed disappointment over the charging of tariffs on philatelic materials ordered from foreign sources.

According to an article by Bruce Marsden in the American Philatelist, August 2026 edition, if you were charged tariffs on imported philatelic materials, you may be entitled to a refund. I urge you to read the article. It's another benefit of being an APS member. Bruce also gives you tips on how to avoid being charged a tariff for future purchases.

Much thanks has to go out to Ralph Poore for his work as EXPO Chairman. There is a lot involved in putting on a show of the caliber of EXPO, and Ralph has shown he is certainly up to the task. Ralph has also agreed to be our elections chairperson and he is looking for people who are interested in the elected positions for the group. Please contact Ralph if you are interested.

September will be bringing club auctions to both Arlington and Granbury, so save up your pop-bottle refund money and come to one or both club auctions. They are a lot of fun and present a great opportunity to find items that will fit in your collection at a great price.

We are continuing to search for a new location for our Arlington meetings, as we seem to be outgrowing the room at Trinity United Methodist Church and they don't seem to have another room that suits our needs. If the current room held about 15 more people, that would be great.

Also, the lack of storage space for our club library is still an issue. Our rental agreement is paid through February, so we still have a little bit of time to find the perfect venue. Please bear with us and I'm sure we will find a suitable location at a reasonable price (hopefully).

Don't forget the TSDA show on August 21 & 22 in McKinney.

And don't forget to come to the meeting. I'll be there.
Rick

Granbury Meeting Minutes July 28, 2026

By Rick Howell

Call-To-Order:

- Vice-President Dave Stockbridge called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Attendance:

- There were 16 people in attendance.

Announcements:

- Dave introduced Denny & Raydelle Ludlow to the group and also welcomed new member Allen Brown.
- Dave went over the procedures for making purchases from the club circuit books as well as the APS circuit books.
- Rick announced that the sale of packaged stamps from the EXPO mixture pick has been curtailed until after EXPO so that we can replenish the inventory for the demand at EXPO in November.
- Dave discussed the upcoming club auction and explained the procedure for submitting lots and explained how the auction would be conducted. Both the Arlington and the Granbury club auctions will be held in September.

Where In The World:

- Les Barton had prepared a "Where In The World" that proved to be quite challenging and was eventually solved by geography expert Jim Myers.

Break & Program:

- After a short break with drinks supplied by Dave and delectable brownies supplied by Madeleine Myers, member Joe McFarland provided the program titled, "A Tribute to Denny Ludlow", and showed the collection of World Wildlife Fund commemorative stamps and covers that Denny had collected prior to selling his collection to Joe. It was a very impressive collection, and the program was enjoyed by all.

Door Prize Drawing:

- The $20 gift certificate was won by Varzvan Wadia. Congrats Varzvan!

Adjournment:

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

R.I.P.

By Skip Ely

We have been informed that member Howard Savage passed away July 17, 2026. Howard joined in 2010, and was member #515.

He was 79 when he passed away. An obituary can be found at https://neptunesociety.com/obituaries/north-richland-hills-tx/howard-savage-12971572

We have also discovered that former member **Bernie Falk** (member #609) passed away on July 13 at age 71. Bernie joined in 2018, and was a big help at the Beginners Table. We will miss him .

[Editor's note: Since he was a former member, he is not reflected in the Secretary section for member counts on page 2].

Upcoming Granbury Auction Notes

By Dave Stockbridge

On September 22, the club will hold the Annual Granbury Stamp Auction. If you have items that you would like to sell, I would be pleased to include them in our auction. Items need to be provided to me by September 2nd, so that I can prepare a listing of auction lots. The listing will be distributed to all club members and posted for others. Your attendance is welcome. However, I can accept absentee bidding prior to the auction date by email or phone.

Items submitted for sale should be of moderate value, with a minimum bid of at least $1. All bidding will be done in whole dollar increments. A bid sheet needs to accompany each sale item (email me if you need one). This bid sheet is similar to past sheets, but has been slightly modified by Rick Howell. Old or new bid sheets are acceptable.

Submissions are limited to no more than 5 items per member. Please let me know if you will be submitting items to aid me in planning the auction.

The WNS App and the Future of Stamp Identification

By Dan Golden

When I was in Boston for the World Stamp Expo, I had the pleasure of meeting Benjamin Combes, a representative of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) who was helping to run their booth.

In our conversation, he gave me a personal demonstration of an app called WNS. What does WNS stand for? It stands for the WADP Numbering System, WADP itself referring to the World Association for the Development of Philately.

While WNS was created in 2002, the app has led to a massive transformation in recent years, giving it the potential to be of tremendous use to stamp collectors and dealers everywhere.

Intrigued by the app (and wanting the chance to work with someone on the international philatelic stage, I asked Mr. Combes if I could interview him and write an article about the app, to which he kindly agreed.

This article is written in partnership with Mr. Combes, and our interview is below. Please note, this article is a review of a mobile phone app; all photos contained here are screenshots from my phone that have been combined into a larger image for convenience.

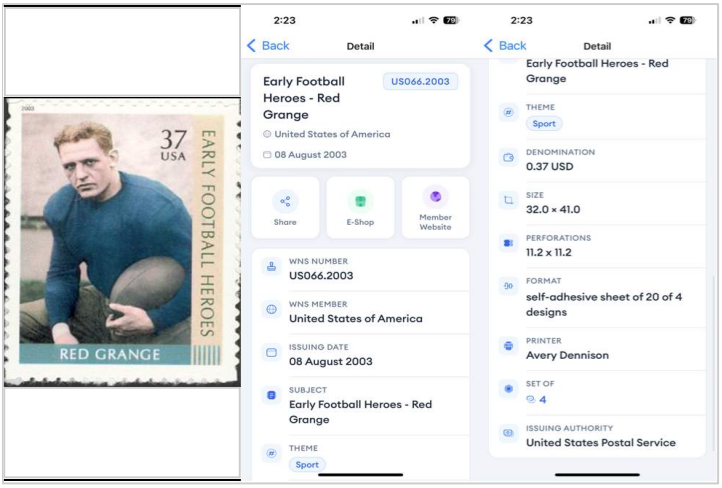
Question: What's the name of the app, and where is it available for download?
Answer: The app is called WNS. On the Apple App Store, it is listed as WNS – WADP Numbering System, while on Google Play it is listed simply as WNS. Both are the same official app developed by the World Association for the Development of Philately (WADP) under the framework of the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

Question: What is its purpose, and who is this app made for?
Answer: Originally, the WNS was created to combat counterfeit and illegal stamp issues by providing customs authorities, law enforcement agencies and postal inspectors with a simple and reliable verification tool. The value for collectors naturally grew from that foundation of making official philatelic information freely accessible.

Today, it serves as the world's official reference for postage stamps issued by designated postal operators of UPU member countries, providing authentic and reliable information supplied directly by the postal operators that issue the stamps.

By making this information available to all, the WNS promotes access to knowledge, supports education and research, contributes to preserving the world's philatelic heritage, strengthens confidence in postage stamps by helping combat counterfeit and illegal stamp issues, and gives official stamp issues unprecedented international visibility.

Originally developed for postal operators, the WNS is now designed for everyone with an interest in stamps: collectors, dealers, auction houses, researchers, museums, journalists, customs authorities and, more broadly, anyone wishing to identify a stamp, verify its authenticity or simply learn more about its story and significance.



US #3811, honoring one of the early legends of American football, features Harold "Red" Grange, member of both the College Football Hall of Fame and the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Question: What problem does this solve for philatelists?
Answer: One of the biggest challenges for philatelists is finding official, reliable and comprehensive information about a stamp. The WNS addresses this by providing a single trusted source, with all information supplied directly by the postal operators that issue the stamps. It also serves as a global cross-reference between the world's leading stamp catalogues, making it easy to match the different catalogue numbers used for the same stamp.

Let me reiterate that: the WNS does not simply provide reliable information, it publishes the official information supplied directly by the issuing postal operators themselves. Unlike commercial databases, this data is not open to interpretation or debate. They constitute the official reference published by the issuing authority, which gives the WNS a level of accuracy and authority that is difficult to match.

In practical terms, collectors can perform instant multi-criteria searches across the official stamp issues of participating countries, access high-resolution scans of stamps in their original condition (before cancellation), consult detailed technical specifications and rely on official information.

Unlike many other databases, every image in the WNS is a genuine high-resolution scan of an authentic stamp provided by the issuing postal operator, not a digitally created or retouched illustration. This significantly improves the reliability of the information, supports the detection of counterfeit and illegal stamp issues, and enhances the performance of the app's AI-powered image recognition. Simply photograph a stamp with your smartphone and, if it is registered in the WNS, the app identifies it within seconds and displays its official record.

The WNS also helps make philately more accessible to younger generations by transforming the smartphone into a genuine learning and discovery tool. More than just a database, it gives collectors something invaluable: confidence. The confidence that the information they are consulting comes directly from the official source, while helping protect the integrity of philately worldwide. ***--> continued -->***

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Question: Can the app be used by dealers?
Answer: Absolutely. One of the fundamental principles of the WNS is that official philatelic information should be freely accessible to everyone.

The app is completely free to use and is designed for the entire philatelic community, from beginners discovering their first stamps, to experienced collectors, dealers, auction houses, expertizers, catalogue publishers, researchers, museums and postal operators. Everyone benefits from the same trusted information, supplied directly by the postal operators that issue the stamps.

The WNS is not intended to replace commercial catalogues or existing philatelic services, but to complement them by providing something only the issuing postal operator can offer: official, authentic and up-to-date information.

For dealers and other professionals, it provides an authoritative source to verify official issues, consult technical specifications, access high-resolution reference scans and easily cross-reference the world's leading stamp catalogues.

Looking ahead, expanding interoperability is an integral part of the WNS development roadmap. We are currently exploring the development of APIs [Application Programming Interfaces] that will enable dealers, auction houses, catalogue publishers, online marketplaces and other philatelic websites to integrate official WNS data directly into their own platforms.



As the first American-born pope, hailing from my hometown of Chicago, and a fellow White Sox fan, I found it impossible to not include this stamp honoring the anniversary of Pope Leo XIV's election to the papacy. I cannot find the Scott Catalogue number, as WNS does not currently include that information.

Question: How does this app compare with other similar apps?
Answer: Rather than comparing the WNS with other apps, I would say that each serves different purposes.

What fundamentally sets the WNS apart is its role as the world's official reference database for postage stamps. Every piece of information it contains (including images, technical specifications, issue dates, face values and descriptions) is supplied directly by the postal operators that issued the stamps.

The WNS is therefore much more than a digital catalogue or a mobile app. It is a trusted global reference that collectors, dealers, researchers and postal operators can rely on with confidence. This direct relationship with the issuing postal operators ensures a level of authenticity and reliability that is unique.

Combined with free access, powerful search capabilities, AI-powered stamp recognition and the ongoing integration of historical stamp collections, the WNS offers a modern digital gateway to the world's official philatelic heritage.

Question: How many stamps are listed in the database?
Answer: As of July 9, 2026, the WNS contains 124,294 officially registered postage stamps from designated postal operators worldwide. This number is constantly increasing as new stamp issues are registered and, increasingly, as postal operators contribute their historical collections.

[I can confirm that the database is growing every single day. As of August 3, 2026, the date I am writing this article, there are now 124,518 officially registered stamps on the WNS app, 224 more than when Mr. Combes responded to this question].

New stamp issues are continuously registered by participating postal operators, while historical collections are progressively being digitized and added to the WNS. As a result, the database is constantly growing.

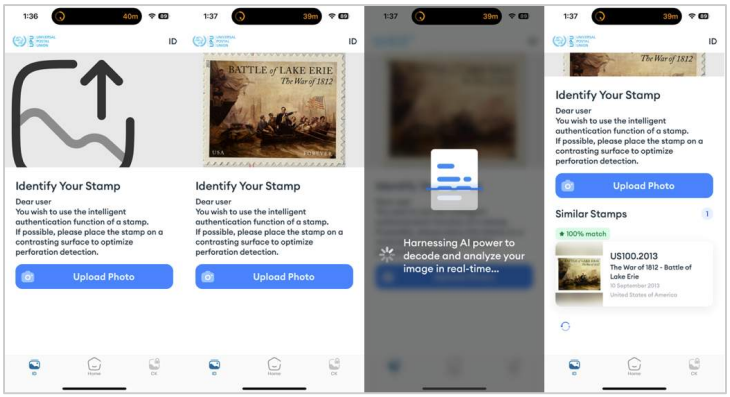
In fact, I have recently strengthened the team dedicated to this work in order to further accelerate the integration of historical stamp collections. Building the world's official philatelic memory is one of the WNS's key strategic priorities for the years ahead. Our long-term ambition is to build the world's most comprehensive official philatelic database, preserving and making accessible the complete philatelic heritage of UPU member countries.

Question: How many countries have their stamps included in the database?
Answer: As of 9 July 2026, the WNS includes the official stamp issues of 204 countries and territories, making it the world's largest official database of postage stamps. The database continues to grow as participating postal operators register new stamp issues and progressively integrate their historical collections.

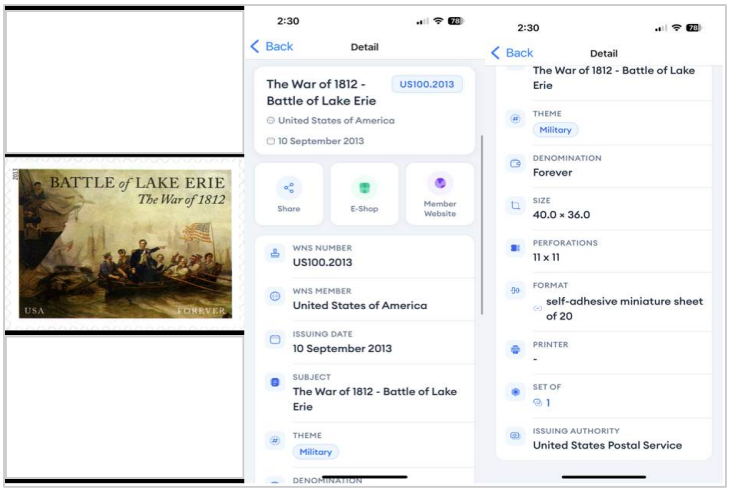
In the spirit of transparency, up-to-date statistics on the WNS - including the number of registered stamps, participating countries and territories, designated postal operators and other key indicators are publicly available at: https://www.wnsstamps.post/Home/Statistics?lang=en

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I tried out app's stamp identification feature, which allows you to either take or upload a photo of a stamp, on US #4805, which commemorates the Battle of Lake Erie.



And it worked! The app correctly identified the stamp and brought up all the information about it delivered straight from the USPS! I even discovered that this stamp was issued 200 years to the day of the famous battle!

Question: Is the app available in any other languages, and if so, which ones?
Answer: Yes. The WNS is currently available in 12 languages [it was only eight at the time of our original interview]: English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Romanian, Azerbaijani and Arabic.

Over the coming days, following the completion of final testing and linguistic reviews, we also expect to add Italian, Turkish, Slovenian and Hindi. Beyond these, additional language versions are already in preparation, with more to follow.

More broadly, I estimate that around 53 different languages are spoken across the 192 member countries of the Universal Postal Union. Our long-term ambition is therefore to progressively remove language barriers and strengthen the truly universal nature of the WNS by making it available in as many of those languages as possible.

Question: How easy is it to use?
Answer: Very easy. One of our design principles has always been that technology should never be a barrier to philately. Whether you are an experienced collector or simply curious about a stamp you've just found, the WNS is designed to provide official information in just a few taps. No account, no subscription and no advertising—just open the app and start exploring.

From searching by country or keyword to instantly identifying a stamp using AI-powered image recognition, everything has been designed to be as simple and intuitive as possible.

If you know how to use a smartphone, you already know how to use the WNS.

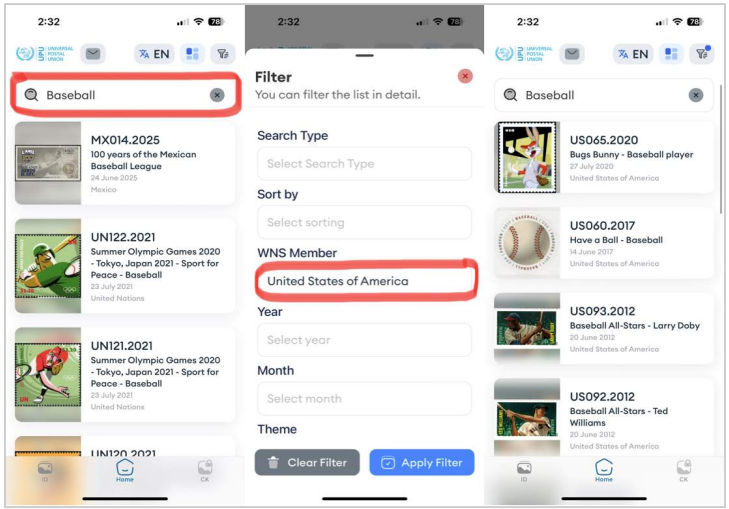
Question: Are there different ways to look up stamps or find what you're looking for?
Answer: Yes. The WNS offers several ways to find a stamp, depending on what information you have. Users can browse by country or territory, year of issue, theme, keyword, WNS number, face value, or other technical criteria. Advanced multi-criteria searches make it possible to quickly narrow down results across the entire database.

Furthermore, users can search by the name of an artist or engraver and instantly retrieve every stamp on which that person has worked. For example, entering Elsa Catelin or Pierre Bara, two internationally renowned French engravers, immediately displays every stamp they have engraved that is registered in the WNS. This is a feature that is proving particularly popular among thematic collectors.

One of the app's most popular features is its AI-powered image recognition. Simply take a photograph of a stamp and, if it is registered in the WNS, the app will identify it within seconds and display its official record.

For those who enjoy discovering rather than searching, the WNS also highlights the latest stamp issues released around the world, making it easy to explore new designs, themes and postal administrations.

Another relatively new feature allows postal operators to indicate the official number of stamps printed. For example, with a single click, users can see that the French stamp honoring Jean-François Millet, issued in 2025, had an official print run of 610,200 copies. This type of information has traditionally been difficult to access internationally, yet it is of considerable interest to collectors and researchers alike.



When searching "baseball," I was initially greeted by stamps from Mexico and the United Nations, which was a bit unexpected. So I filtered down the search results to be only American stamps, and voila! There was Bugs Bunny on US #5502 looking back at me! Certainly a very user-friendly app!

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Question: Does it cost anything?
Answer: For the public, absolutely nothing. The WNS is completely free to use. In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the UPU's mission to make official knowledge accessible to everyone, the app contains no advertising, requires no subscription, no user account, and collects no personal data whatsoever.

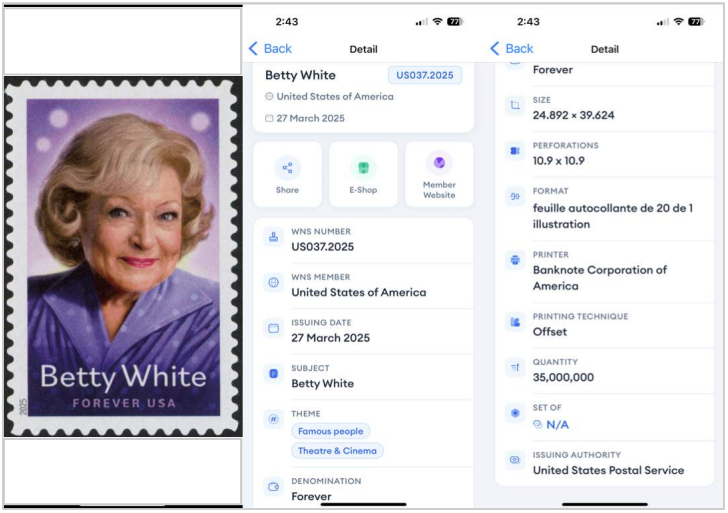
Our philosophy is simple: official philatelic information is a public good and should be freely accessible to everyone, everywhere. Whether you use the WNS every day, only occasionally, or simply to identify a single stamp, you will always have free, unrestricted and privacy-respecting access to the world's official philatelic database.

The success of the WNS is not measured by subscriptions, advertising revenue or the amount of personal data it collects. Its success is measured by how many people it helps discover, understand and enjoy the fascinating world of philately.

Question: Why doesn't everyone know about this already?
Answer: That's a very good question! The current version of the WNS mobile app was launched just 1 year ago. While the platform itself has existed for many years, it has recently been completely redesigned to offer a modern, multilingual and user-friendly experience for collectors around the world.

Since then, the International Bureau of the UPU and I have been actively promoting the WNS through international events, conferences, exhibitions, social media and our communication channels. However, the real ambassadors of the WNS are the designated postal operators themselves. Nothing can replace official communication at the national level, and we encourage every postal operator participating in the WNS to actively promote it through their own websites, social media, philatelic bureaus and collector communities.

The more postal operators promote the WNS, the more collectors discover it and the stronger the entire global philatelic community becomes.



Hollywood legend Betty White, seen here on her page for US #5976, seemed to be everywhere in the world of television. It only makes sense to find her in another medium, philately, as well.

Question: Tell me about the numbering system. Looking at the USA's Betty White stamp as an example, what does the catalogue number used by WNS, in this case "US037.2025," mean?

Answer: Seeing a stamp with the code US037.2025 means that it is the 37th stamp registered in the WNS for USPS in 2025.

The challenge is that we process submissions exactly as they are received from each designated operator. We always make every effort to follow their official philatelic issuance calendar whenever it is shared with us, but ultimately we can only register stamps in the order in which they are submitted.

If an operator does not send us all of its stamps, or submits them in the wrong order, there is unfortunately no way for us to know. As a result, the numbering may not perfectly reflect the actual chronological order of issue. Once a WNS number has been assigned, however, it is permanent and cannot be changed.

Question: WNS does not currently list the catalogue numbers from Scott or Stanley Gibbons. Does WNS plan to include that information in the future?
Answer: Indeed, as you quite rightly point out, every stamp dealer and catalogue publisher currently operates with its own numbering system, and only its own.

This is actually one of the key areas on which I intend to build bridges with them, through a partnership proposal that is currently being discussed. But for those who choose to work alongside us, we could integrate their respective numbering systems into the WNS, which would then become the single reference key linking them all together.

Question: Ireland and Germany are two countries that I have a focused collecting interest in, but neither seems to have any stamps listed in the database. Why is that?
Answer: As for Germany and Ireland, they have so far chosen not to participate in the WNS. We continue to encourage them to join, but ultimately the decision rests with each designated operator.

If you would like to help, the best way is to help increase the visibility and recognition of the WNS. The more widely it is used and consulted, the more compelling and valuable participation becomes for every designated operator.

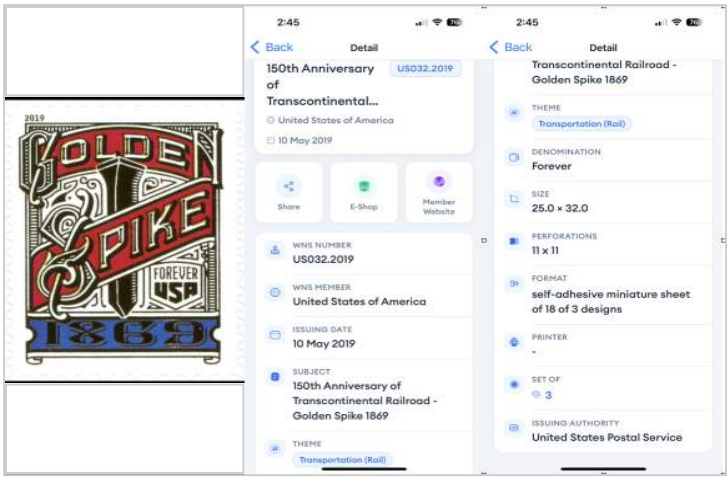
Question: How can we help?
Answer: Simply help us spread the word. If you enjoy using the WNS, tell other collectors about it, recommend it to your stamp club, mention it on social media, or share it with friends and fellow philatelists. Every new user helps make official philatelic information more visible and accessible around the world.

We also encourage collectors to engage with their own postal operators. Ask them to regularly register their new stamp issues in the WNS, to progressively digitize and integrate their historical collections, and to actively promote the WNS through their national communication channels. While the International Bureau of the UPU and I regularly promote the WNS internationally, nothing is more effective than official communication from the postal operators themselves within their own countries.

Finally, keep sharing your ideas and feedback with us. The WNS is continuously evolving, and many of its recent improvements have been inspired by suggestions from collectors, postal operators and philatelic professionals around the world. We truly see the WNS as a collaborative project, built by the global philatelic community, for the global philatelic community. Together, we can build and preserve the world's official philatelic memory, one stamp at a time.

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Much like how the Golden Spike and the Transcontinental Railroad helped to connect the far-flung and rural territories of the United States to the more developed areas of the country in the east, the WNS app has the potential to connect beginning collectors with the knowledge and expertise of the greater philatelic world!

Question: Any final thoughts to leave us with?
Answer: I would like to stress one important point. From the very beginning, I designed the WNS to be an evolving platform rather than a finished product. What you see today is only the beginning. Our ambition is to continuously enrich the WNS with new services that create value for collectors, postal operators and the wider philatelic community.

Among the ideas we are currently exploring are features that could help reconnect the public with postal operators by making philately more interactive and useful in everyday collecting. For example, we are looking at providing real-time access to second-market valuations, enabling collectors to manage their personal collections directly within the WNS, and developing many other innovative services built around trusted official data.

Our vision is not simply to build the world's official philatelic database, but to create the world's leading digital ecosystem for philately—one that combines trust, innovation and accessibility while bringing collectors and postal operators closer together.

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The following is not part of the interview, only my own review of the app.

From my exploration of the app and the in-depth responses from Mr. Combes, the key takeaway is that the WNS is an ongoing initiative working slowly backward in time with stamps. A couple of the app's core strengths are the accuracy of information provided and the fact that an already very large database continues to grow by the day! Furthermore the AI-powered stamp identifier has the potential to be extremely useful to collectors everywhere who find new or unrecognized stamps and want to learn more about them, which they can do with a quick scan and search!

However, it does still have some shortcomings, namely the absence of catalogue numbers from Scott or Stanley Gibbons to help identify stamps in your collection.

Additionally there is currently a shortage of stamps on the older side listed in the database. While I could not find an exact cutoff year for when listings become sparse, users may struggle to find stamps that are older than around 50 years. Mr. Combes assures me though that those stamps are coming to the app soon. We just need to be patient and do our part to spread the word. All in all, I would give this app 4.5 / 5 stars because it is very good at providing what it can provide now, and I can only assume it will get better with time!

Thank you again to Benjamin Combes of the UPU for his contributions to this article. I also want to commend him and his team for the work they have done to make the WNS app as good as it currently is, and their continued dedication to improving the app for future users. I encourage you all to give the app a try and see how it can be an aid in your philatelic pursuits.

Philatelic Subscriptions

By Peter Elias

Since I speak & read German fluently, I was half-tempted to get a trial subscription to DBZ (Deutsche Briefmarken Zeitung = German Postage Stamp Newspaper), a major German monthly philatelic publication that is in magazine format.

So, I went to their website at https://www.philapress.de/auslandsabonnement-dbz/, where it stated that they had a special price for new foreign subscribers where you get 6 issues + plus 2 free bonus issues for the price of 6. As such, not a bad enticement, but those 6 paid issues would still cost you €126,50 (= US$145.85). Gulp! Note: And yes, they do state fractional Euro prices with a "comma", not a "period"; conversely, they use the "period" as a "thousand" separator (e.g.: € 1.234,56).

While I *maybe* would try that subscription just once, then I ran across the fine print:

1) For your convenience, the subscription would automatically continue UNLESS I cancel in writing before a certain time. In Germany there various rules & laws regarding financial business dealings & contracts and you have to abide by them.
2) In the application form, for payment, it asked for your IBAN & BIC information (aka Swift Code here in the USA). IBAN is NOT used here in the USA, thus no easy transfers unlike in Europe. There was no option for a credit card or PayPal; and certainly no checks.
3) The other fine print said that you would agree to auto-debits from your account (again, not possible from in the USA to Europe that I know of). While there are "wire-transfers", they are expensive, and I don't think wire-transfers allow for auto-debits.
4) Other than direct-debit, they offer "bill by mail" or "bill by email". I have no idea what that looks like or how I would pay from that, as I would be legally obligated to pay simply by placing an order.

So sadly, no deal….

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**

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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** 5/15

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 9/16

Wanted

Postally used "ATM" stamps (i.e.: machine vended), such as Framas, from around the world; would prefer on cover or postcard if possible. Contact Peter Elias at info@stvincentstamps.com 8/14

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 Contact me at **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:

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Wanted

Currently looking for documents relating to **AMG (Allied Military Group)** stamp issues in Europe during WWII. Any help would be appreciated. Rick Howell, rick.howell1@tx.rr.com 2/26

State Revenue Society

By Peter Elias

As some of you may know, I dabble in collecting foreign revenue stamps, as well as USA "State" revenue stamps (but not "federal" revenue stamps). The US state revenue stamps are NOT listed in the Scott catalog, but are in a 700+ page State Revenue Catalog that was put together over 10 years ago by the SRS (State Revenue Society); it is a great publication if you are into State Revenue stamps.

Back-issues of the SRN (State ReveNews) from 1959 to 2010 are available at https://staterevenue.org/srn/back-issues#gsc.tab=0

While I'm only (and mostly) just accumulating US state revenue stamps at this point, I did join the SRS about 25 years ago. As with all major philatelic societies that I'm a member of, the main benefit is the published journal.

I received an email (sent to all members) by their acting President, Harold Effner, on July 18, stating that their newsletter editor, Jonathan Steed, had passed away suddenly. Jonathan had just taken over this position in early 2025.

While the editor had been working on the 1st quarter 2026 edition of the journal, it was never completed, and the last issue published was the 4th Quarter 2025 issue.

Now the question goes out to all the SRS members as to who would want to take over the position as editor. And no, in case you're thinking it, no, I'm not interested.

Harold mentioned this in the email:

Without an editor, without a State Revenue Newsletter, without a steady stream, or even trickle, of articles, there is no future for the SRS.

Without your help does the society just go away and fade into philatelic history?

With 280+ active members, what can you do to step up and help your State Revenue Society?

I do hope that someone will step up to the task. A club's or society's newsletter or journal (whether in print, online or as PDF files) is the life blood of most organizations, especially national ones, as in-person meetings are generally limited to perhaps one per year at some stamp show.

It was stated that all SRS memberships, ads, board member terms of office would be extended for 1 year.

It would be sad if the SRS went away.

Been There, Done That

Combining Hobbies

By Peter Elias

As you know, you can combine many hobbies with philately, as you have seen me do via the various articles I've written (such as Swiss transportation tickets).



Above is an "old-school" selfie (35mm camera with b&w film on a tripod and self-timer) that I did for a black & white photography course at MSU in 1983. And I turned that photo into personalized postage around 2005 or so.

Other than combining my love of Audi cars with stamps (of which this is a good example), there's another combination here: I do have a small collection of old license plates - mostly from cars I've owned. In this case,



that includes the license plate from that particular car. Even the registration stickers (MAR 83) match!

I suppose that for people that collect "stickers", there would be a philatelic match here as well. The "CH" (Switzerland) sticker on the personalized postage stamp below was on one of my previous Audi A6 cars. And I still do have a small supply of the plain CH stickers, as shown on the selfie stamp above, left over, in various sizes just in case - for future cars...



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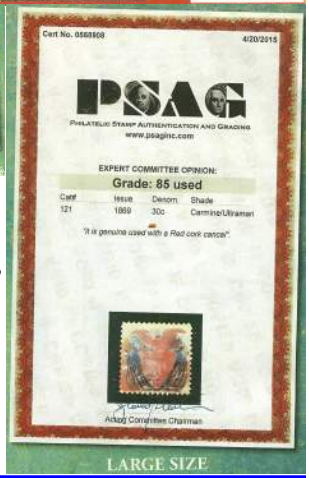


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APS DEALER

Stamp Stickers

by Peter Elias

Yup, what you see below is advertised as "vintage postage stamp stickers", along with other various words to bring this forth in a search at aliexpress.com:





If you choose the middle image, it will show you the individual "stickers" that you will receive (although some are shown in duplicate). There are definitely several of these that seem to be direct copies of older US postage stamps (that if genuine, are actually still valid as postage).

I had bought one of these lots about a year ago (and it is still available; the screen shot at top I took on July 25).

These are sold as "stickers", and all are "self-adhesive" and die-cut, something which the original stamps never were; and all are printed via some sort of offset lithography.

In the right column, I'm showing some of these "stickers" along with the regular stamps as reference.





Above: Original
Left: "sticker"
These are all shown at actual size!)



In this case, from another lot, there was also this? Cute bunny, but what / why??





For this one, it appears that the width-to-height ratio isn't quite correct. But I think that has to do with the fact that they wanted all of these stamps to fit a general size sticker layout.





The Telegraph stamp also suffers from ratio distortion, as does this one:





And below, I can't show a comparison,



since I don't actually own a real one... But it is definitely way too small and proportionally not correct. Hopefully these don't fool anyone...

Been There, Done That

Warwick

By Peter Elias

It was 40+ years ago (Spring 1986) that I found myself on a business trip within a business trip. I was on assignment in Switzerland that year, and they sent me from there to a sister company in Bridgnorth (Shropshire), Great Britain for a week. Luckily I had the foresight to make sure I got there the weekend before and stayed until the weekend after my work assignment. I figured, after all, when will I ever get a chance to go back to Shropshire again?

During those 2 weekends, I rented cars (Ford Fiesta & Ford Orion). It was, well, different driving on the "wrong" side of the road (1st time ever). Both cars were manuals, so having to shift with your left hand took some getting used to. Luckily the pedals were in the same orientation.

I like castles, and wanted to visit as many as I could given the area I was in. One that I already wrote about was Harlech Castle (northern Wales). Another (yet to be written about is Ludlow (Shropshire) and Stokesay Castles. I just haven't gotten around to those yet (got the photos, stamps, etc, just need to write the articles).

But, there was another castle on my visit list, that for years I said "*but why isn't there a stamp for that one?*" It's not a minor castle, it's actually a major one, and one of the best preserved medieval castles in in the UK.

Well wait no more! In early 2026, Great Britain issued an 8-stamp souvenir sheet (see top of 2nd column). And the 1 castle on that sheet which I did visit (ticket stub on left) was "Warwick" (2nd from bottom right column on the sheet).

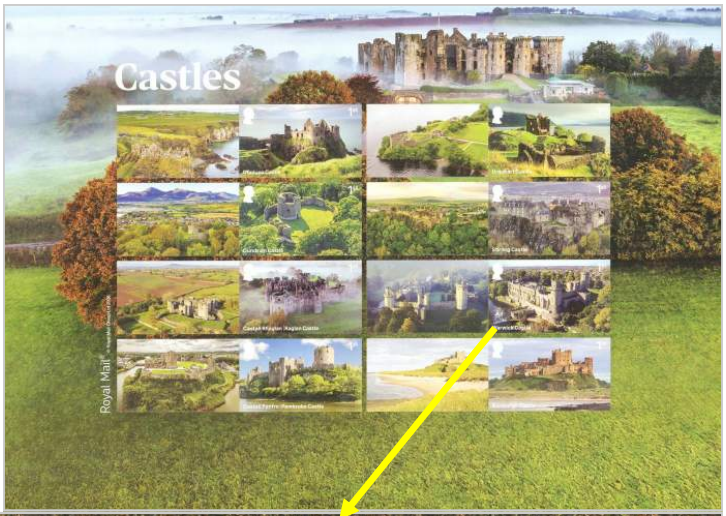


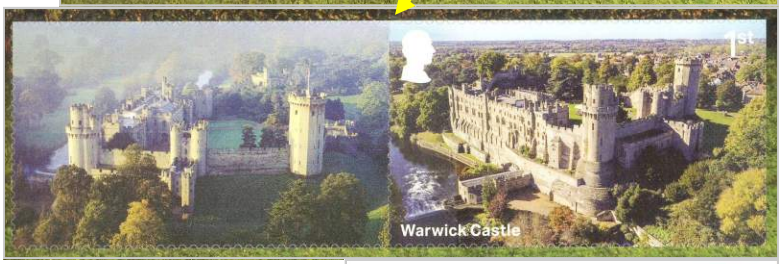
It is truly a great castle to visit. It started as a wooden fort built by William the Conqueror in 1068, rebuilt in stone in the 12th century and further modified in the 14th century.





At one point it decayed, and was turned into a "country house" in the 17th century.





Various renovations took place in the 1700's. But in 1871, the castle was severely damaged in a fire, however, the main structure was intact, and it was rebuilt between 1872-1875.



In 1967, Charles Greville, the 7th Earl of Warwick, transferred the castle to his son & heir, who sold it in 1978, causing a rift in the family, which had owned the castle for 374 years.

Warwick is now operated as a tourist attraction and I was glad that I could visit it in 1986.

As always, my articles here don't have space for the full history, so all I can give are selective summaries. I suggest that you visit the Wikipedia page at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warwick_Castle if you want to find out more!



The sheet of 8x 1st class stamps (along with 8 labels) was issued on May 21, 2026.

There is also a miniature sheet with 4 other castles and separate sheets (but none that I had visited) .

Ramp-Assist?

by Peter Elias



I collect "Airports on Stamps & Postal Stationery" as one of my sideline collections. As part of that, are a bunch of USSR postal stationery envelopes featuring airports, such as the one shown above.

When I first looked at that envelope, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Is that jet really using a ramp to take off?



I used the scan from the top image and let Google™ give me a translation, and it inserted the English translations in the various relevant areas. Much better, since I can now see which text is in which area of the scan.

First, the key translation is that of the airport itself, shown directly underneath the illustration. As part of my learning process, I now had to go look up to see exactly where this Urgench airport is located! Turns out that the city of Urgench is now in Uzbekistan, one of the former breakaway Soviet republics; the city presently has about 145,000 inhabitants.

Another word shown under the illustration is "oblast", not a word I'm familiar with. The definition of oblast is that it is the largest and most common type of primary administrative divisions in Russia. It is best thought of as "province" or "region".

Of key interest to me was of course the airplane shown on the ramp. It is a Tupolev TU-134. It is a twin engine (rear-mounted) jet that is somewhat similar to a McDonnell Douglas DC-9 or to a degree, the French Caravelle.

According to Wikipedia, 854 Tupelov TU-134's were built in various configurations between 1966 to 1989; most of which were part of the USSR's Aeroflot airline.

The TU-134 was the first Soviet airliner to receive an ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) certification and thus was allowed to fly internationally. It was considered relatively reliable (as far as Soviet airplanes go…). But, in 2002, it was banned from most western European nations due to ICAO noise regulations. In June 2011, (as a response to 47 fatalities with RusAir flight #9605, the airplane was planned to be taken out of service in 2012. The final passenger flight of the TU-134 in Russia took place on May 22, 2019.

Various airports put TU-134's on display as memorials. As such, what is shown on the envelope, is probably the plane being placed on a ramp in one of these memorials, not part of an active "take-off", but that's what I thought initially!

The airplane simply says Aeroflot and the building just says Airport. What I can't decipher is the plane's tail number, which sort of looks like CCCP-97800 to me. But that's not an active tail number and neither is CCCP-47800.

Internet searches state that there is no TU-134 known that was ever on display at Urgench airport either… So, this would then might be a figment of an illustrator's imagination. There is, however, an image of a Moldova Airlines TU-134 shown on a ramp at Chisinau Airport (in Moldova), but the front wheel of that plane is off the ramp, not on it as in this case.

I could find visual references to the Urgench airport with its "arched columns" though, so at least that part matches the envelope illustration!





MEET & EAT for September 2026

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 6:00 PM rather than 6:30 PM.

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

ARLINGTON

September 2 — Trinity United Methodist Church (5 PM)
1200 W. Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington
--> Note: Church meals have resumed !!

FLOWER MOUND

September 16 — Bari's Pizza and Pasta (5:30 PM)
3472 Long Prairie Rd, Flower Mound
(972) 426-2956

GRANBURY

September 22 — Grumps, 3503 E. Hwy 377, Granbury (5 PM)

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

Don't Forget:
Arlington club auction - Sept. 2
Granbury club auction - Sept. 22
EXPO Planning Mtg - Sept. 26

Wanted to Buy

Texas Precancel Stamps. Contact Rick Howell at: 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** 2/15

Various USA **Scott #C2 & C3 on covers & cards** are needed for my U.S Air Mail collection. Please forward scans of the covers / cards along with asking price(s) to Don Jones at **adjaams@aol.com** Thank you. 2/21

For Sale

FREE 111-page (all varieties) or 26-page album (basic version) of Spanish ATM stamps (provided as a PDF file) with purchase of at least $3.00 in Spanish ATM stamps (which are only 15¢ each)! Contact Peter Elias at peter@pcelias.com 4/24

Large accumulation of stamps from many countries both mint & used. This includes full dealer boxes, bulging glassines, binders with album and Vario pages, and old albums with collections. All stamps are no more than 20% of catalog price. Request stamps by country and I will determine the best way to get them to you for examination. You select what you want, write down catalog price, adjust for condition, and pay me when you return the material. What do you want, need, or desire to look at? Dave Stockbridge; stockdave44@yahoo.com 2/26