

Stamping Around

Newsletter of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club

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

Bob Duncan Center, 2800 S. Center St.

Flower Mound Meetings: Third 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)



CHAPTER MEMBER



Volume 38, Number 1

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

January 2025

Postage Rates & Fees	10/6/2024	1/19/2025
DOMESTIC (thru 1/19/25)		
1st Class - 1 oz (retail/metered or PC)	0.73 / 0.69	0.73 / 0.69
" 2 oz	1.01 / 0.97	1.01 / 0.97
" 3 oz	1.29 / 1.25	1.29 / 1.25
" 3.5 oz (maximum)	1.57 / 1.53	1.57 / 1.53
non-machinable surcharge	+0.46	+0.46
1st Class Flats - 1 oz	1.50	1.50
" 2 oz	1.77	1.77
" 3 oz	2.04	2.04
" 4 oz	2.31	2.31
" 5 oz	2.59	2.59
+ 0.28 per ounce up to 9 oz	+0.28/ounce	+0.28/ounce
+ 0.30 per ounce after 9 oz	n/a	+0.30/ounce
" 13 oz (maximum)	4.91	4.91
(if rigid, non-rectangular, non-uniform, must be mailed as Ground Advantage)		
Ground Advantage - up to 4 oz	5.40 - 6.05	5.25 - 5.85
" up to 8 oz	6.10 - 6.65	6.00 - 6.55
" up to 12 oz	6.90 - 7.50	6.75 - 7.35
" up to 15.999 oz	8.40 - 9.50	8.35 - 9.35
Media Mail - 1 lb	4.63	4.63
" 2 lbs	5.38	5.38
" 3 lbs	6.13	6.13
" 4 lbs	6.88	6.88
Priority Mail - Flat-Rate/Legal/Padded	10.45 / 10.75 / 11.20	10.10 / 10.40 / 10.85
" Commercial Flat-Rate/Legal/Padded Env.	9.00 / 9.30 / 9.80	8.75 / 9.05 / 9.55
" Small Flat-rate Box (Ret/Comm)	11.00 / 9.55	10.65 / 9.30
" Medium Flat-rate Box (Ret/Comm)	19.30 / 16.85	19.15 / 16.65
" Large Flat-rate Box (Ret/Comm)	26.00 / 23.05	26.30 / 23.95
Postcard (Domestic)	0.56	0.56
Certificate of Mailing (domestic) (3817 / 3665 or 3877 with 3 piece min)	2.20 / 0.65	2.20 / 0.65
Certified Mail	4.85	4.85
Insurance (up to \$100 is included with GA & Priority Mail) up to \$50 / \$100 / \$200	2.50 / 3.15 / 4.15	2.50 / 3.15 / 4.15
Registered (Domestic)		
\$0 value	18.60	18.60
\$0.01 - \$ 100 / \$100.01 - \$500	19.30 / 22.20	19.30 / 22.20
INTERNATIONAL		
Letter & Postcard Airmail		
All Countries (1 oz) or Canada (2 oz)	1.65	1.65
(variable pricing up to 3.5 oz)	see usps.com	see usps.com
Non-machinable surcharge	+0.46	+0.46
First Class Pkg Int'l (1 to 8 oz)	17.00 - 20.00	17.85 - 21.00
Priority Mail Int'l Flat Rate Env(4 lbs)	40.25 - 44.70	43.50 - 45.40
" Canada	30.90	30.90
Priority Mail Int'l (1 pound, Grp2-20)	54.86 - 66.25	56.70 - 67.60
Certificate of Mailing (3817/3665)*	2.10 / 0.61 each*	2.10 / 0.61 each*
See current Notice123 at usps.com !	*FCMI / MinQty3	*FCMI / MinQty 3

USPS January 2025 Rate Changes

By Peter Elias

Up for approval by the PRC (Postal Rate Commission) are the following rate increases submitted on November 14, 2024 that are to take effect on January 19, 2025:

Priority Mail +3.2%, Priority Mail Express +3.2%, Ground Advantage +3.9% and Parcel Select +9.2%.

Commonly used rates to be in effect (if approved) are shown in the right column in the table. Rates with changes have an arrow to the left and are in an *italic dark red* font. Unchanged rates are in *green*.

While some rates do appear to have gone down, it is only because they were just temporarily increased on October 6, 2024 to begin with (...for the holidays...); technically they are still higher than the last permanent rate changes that took effect on July 14, 2024.

January Arlington Meeting Change

By Peter Elias

--> The January meeting in Arlington will be on **Wednesday, January 8** (since the 1st Wednesday falls on January 1st...).

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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
Vice-President (Arlington) – Rich Hildebrandt
Vice-President (Granbury) – Dave Stockbridge
Vice-President (Flower Mound) - Dan Golden
Secretary – Janet Moyer
Treasurer – Thomas Cunningham

Board of Directors (voting):

Peter Elias Ralph Poore Ken Wills
Immediate Past President: Ken Aldridge

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>



"Editor At Work"
LEGO™ MOC by Marcos Elias

Editor's Forum

By Peter Elias

It was a complete surprise to me when the APS announced that *Stamping Around* not only received a "Large Gold" in the APS Star Route Competition, but also the "Grand Champion" award! The previous year, the newsletter got a "Vermeil" level award, and I had not made any major changes in the newsletter since then as such, just different

articles as I get around to writing them and whatever other members submit. Different year, different judges I guess...

As you might guess, I enjoy writing articles about subjects on which I have knowledge. I also know that it is certainly easier to read an article, than to write one from scratch. That said, I didn't particularly enjoy writing essays in my English classes in Public School ... go figure! But then, in an English class, most of the time you do not get to choose the subject. I do much better when writing about something that I am passionate about!

This past year, Dan Golden, one of our newest members, has already submitted several excellent articles! Please think about what philatelic related subjects you could write something about. For me, this process is different for every article. Sometimes a picture I have will have me search for a stamp with that same or similar subject; other times I run across a stamp and then have to find a personal picture (or other artifacts such as postcards, entry ticket stubs, etc). Then a brief visit to the internet (most of the time it is Wikipedia) for the basic rundown of the history and facts, followed by a visit to my memory to recall the personal info relating to the philatelic subject (which can be a postage stamp, a postmark, postal stationery or even a cinderella stamp). If you need to find the stamp for an article, but don't actually have it, the USPS lets you use images that they have, provided you provide their copyright notice; for foreign stamps, I usually end up buying them on eBay or Hipstamp.

Coming Attractions

2025

JAN. 8	MCSC — ARLINGTON Meeting
Program:	Clean Out Your Closet --> (2nd Wednesday this month only!)
JAN. 15	MCSC — FLOWER MOUND Meeting
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
JAN. 28	MCSC — LAKE GRANBURY Meeting
Program:	Clean Out Your Closet Sale
FEB. 5	MCSC — ARLINGTON Meeting
Program:	My 1 Page Exhibit, video by the ATA
FEB. 19	MCSC — FLOWER MOUND Meeting
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
FEB. 25	MCSC — LAKE GRANBURY Meeting
Program:	Virtual Exhibits by Rick Howell
MAR. 5	MCSC — ARLINGTON Meeting
Program:	How Condition Affects the Value of Stamps presented by Tom Cunningham
MAR. 19	MCSC — FLOWER MOUND Meeting
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
MAR. 25	MCSC — LAKE GRANBURY Meeting
Program:	Papua New Guinea by Ray Cartier

Secretary's Report

By Janet Moyer

Applications Received:

n/a

New Members:

James Monnig (#677)

Larry Reid (#678)

Reinstated:

n/a

Deceased:

n/a

Membership Summary – December 17, 2024

Membership as of November 20, 2024	104
Applications Rec'd (counts as member next month)	0
New Members	2
Not Renewing for 2025	(0)
Resignations	(0)
Deceased	(0)
Reinstatements	0
Membership as of December 17, 2024	106

Slimy Gum

By Peter Elias

Yeah, that title doesn't sound too enticing, right? Soaking stamps: it is an activity that is a part of stamp collecting. Well, unless you just don't want to do that.

Most of the time, we're soaking off used stamps that have been mailed on envelopes or postcards.

Then there are other reasons to soak stamps. They could be used stamps that have heavy or seemingly unpeelable hinge remnants, or mint stamps that were poorly stored (humid environment) that got stuck to each other or on album pages.

Older US stamps generally soak off fairly easily, to the point of almost floating off the envelope paper and the gum is dissolved in your soaking bowl.

But then there are some stamps that do come off the paper (or separate from other stamps) easily, BUT the gum does not dissolve, and stays on the backside of the stamp. And that gum is well, "slimy". It has an incredibly "slick" feel to it when you lightly rub a finger across it, and it will NOT come off. That in turn creates a problem when you now try to "dry" the stamp (I use stamp drying books). In the end, the stamp would simply be stuck against the drying book pages!



Slimy gum on a wet stamp has a "glossy" look on the stamp paper as shown above.

While I don't have a definitive list of which stamps are like this, I'm sure you've probably also run across a few while soaking various foreign stamps.

I think that some of the worst offenders are stamps from the British Empire / Commonwealth, especially those from the early 1900's to perhaps 1950's, when the stamps were still printed via "engraving". Shown above is one such stamp, it is a 4p stamp from Jamaica, Scott #122, issued in 1938. I really like these stamps with their "crisp" designs. Unfortunately the gum is horrible. Stamps from many French colonies & territories of that same era also have the same problem.

So, how does one get around the problem of "slimy" gum that just won't come off the stamp papers?



Here is my solution that works reasonably well for me. Look at the picture above. I generally soak stamps in the sink in my spare bathroom. After I make sure that the sink top has just a few drops of water on it, I fish out the offending stamp and lay it upside down as shown above while it is still soaking wet and the gum is still slimy.

Then I use an old toothbrush (with soft bristles) and while holding the stamp down on one end with my thumb, I carefully "brush" the wet gum off the wet stamp away from my thumb, I then repeat this for the other half side of the stamp. Sometimes I have to dip the brush in the water to make sure that the stamp remains wet.

This "brushing" will take off most of the gum and doesn't affect the stamp paper. Since the sink top is still a bit wet, I then slide the stamp off and put it back in the sink. There, while mostly submerged, I hold the (printed side down) against my index & middle finger and my thumb on top, and then slowly rub off any remaining "sliminess" (which you can feel, as there will be a bit more



friction when the gum is gone).

Above is a picture that shows me doing the last bit that I mentioned. Then I simply put the stamp into the drying book, cover it with a reasonably heavy object and wait a couple of days. At that point, the stamp should now easily come off the drying page (as without doing all of the above, it would be firmly stuck to the drying pages, especially if you are drying your stamps in something other than a drying book).

Hopefully, if you are soaking stamps and run into the "slimy gum" syndrome, try some of the above!

MCSC EXPO Planning Meeting Minutes

December 7, 2024

by Janet Moyer

Call-To-Order:

- Ralph called the meeting to order and announced that this would be a dual meeting; to close out EXPO 2024 and to recognize items for kicking off EXPO 2025 planning.

Previous Minutes:

- Rick Howell moved that we accept the minutes as posted in the newsletter. Peter Elias seconded and the motion passed.

EXPO 2024:

- Ralph stated that the 2024 EXPO had record attendance and record proceeds. There were a few glitches that need to be addressed for next year.
 - The transportation team had miscommunication and was late for Thursday set-up. They did not show up at all on Saturday, so we used Rick Howell's Pick-up.
 - There was no security for Thursday evening due to an emergency on the private security officer's part.
 - We were not allowed to use the front door for the dealers to cart their merchandise into the building.

EXPO 2025:

- Ralph announced the new volunteers:
 - Incoming Deputy Chairperson – Rick Howell will replace Stanley Christmas.
 - Lunches - Kathryn Storey will continue in this role.
 - Tom Cunningham will assume EXPO treasurer duties..
 - Kathryn Storey handled the show program this year. Next year she will transition duties to Jeff Owens.

Committee Reports:

- Beginning Collectors Table - Skip Ely said the team thought it went well. They need another table at the end to block through traffic. The biggest problem was there were no kids.
- Bourse – Tom Cunningham announced there were 25 dealers. We had to find a replacement near the end due to a pull out. He expressed a concern because we have 9 dealers over 80.
- Chance Board – Patty Poore says next year we will stabilize the prices. There was a lot of traffic and she ran out of prizes. She will work with Skip to plan for next year's supply.
- Mini-Exhibits – Peter Elias says he needs more people to offer exhibits so we don't just repeat the ones he is using.
- Financial - Tom Cunningham presented a very well done financial report. We had a very successful year.
 - There were a lot of MCSC gift certificates issued. This needs to be discussed further.
- Hospitality / Registration – Janet Moyer said she thought things went well. We need a few more volunteers for the Chance Board and for the Silent Auction next year. Perhaps a floater to give the volunteers a break (not just the dealers).
- A raffle topic was presented and subsequently tabled.
- Lunches - Kathryn Storey announced that all went well, but next year we will double-count the lunches before leaving Jason's. The new process worked well.
- Mail-Out - Stanley Christmas will look through the registration slips and form a list for next year.

- Mixture Pick Table – This area did fine and brought in record donations. The stamp bags sold pretty well. We should have a good supply for next year.
 - Should we order specific types of stamps for next year? (Things not usually found on cancelled letters.)
- Program - Kathryn Storey did a good job on the program. Next year Jeff Owens will be helping with a new program. It should work out well.
- Publicity - Peter Elias announced he buys a Linn's ad, but asked if we should continue since they no longer have a print edition. The Facebook page is helping. Stanley is going to study the registrations slips and see what people said they used to learn about the show.
- Security – Ken Aldridge said it went ok this year, with a few glitches, he does need a replacement.
 - He has four radios (three work) that will be given to the secretary for storage until his replacement is found. He gave a folder of contact information to her as well.
- Silent Auction – Tom Turner announced a successful year. We had only four lots that did not sell. Two that were sold were not picked up, but have been gotten to the buyers.
 - We have some lots started for next year but will need more.
 - We need more volunteers next year on the stage.
- Outdoor Signs - Ralph Poore said he and Richard Hildebrandt took care of it and it went well.
- Snacks – Ken Aldridge will resign from this also.
 - A folder of recommendations for next year was given to the secretary for storage.
 - If you have any recommendations of what to supply next year, let whoever is in charge know.
 - The drinks left over from this are also used by the club throughout the year.
- Transportation – Ralph said there was a definite problem this year and we will work on it for next year.
- Volunteers – Janet Moyer announced that a lot of the new members volunteered and helped, but that we still need more for next year. There are some weak areas.
 - Most people that signed up – showed up.
 - The old nametag ribbons were discussed and it was decided to throw them away. They have the club logo on them so cannot be used by anyone else.

Adjournment:

- Rick Howell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Peter Elias. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM.

Next Meeting:

- The next meeting will be January 25, 2025, at David's Barbecue.
 - Lunch at 11:00 AM, meeting at 11:45 AM.

After meeting discussions:

- A discussion of frames and exhibits will be held at a later date.
- Rick Howell asked for programs and / or ideas for the coming year.

Items to remember:

- IF we decide to have regular (judged) exhibits, we have to check with the Convention Center to see if the extra rooms are available. We have to check the frames for use and/or fix ability. We have to make sure we have the extra volunteers / manpower to do exhibits.

[Chartres Cathedral, France](#)

By Geoff Owens

Last November I flew to Paris for several days. My primary purpose in going was to see the newly restored Notre Dame Cathedral, which as everyone will recall was badly damaged by fire in 2019. At the time I originally booked the flight, it appeared likely the cathedral would be reopened to visitors by November but the timeline slid some and I ended up missing it by about three weeks.

All was not lost though, as the nearly equally famous Chartres Cathedral is only an hour and twenty minutes by train southwest of Paris. So I bought my ticket and took the 10 AM train on Sunday morning.

The cathedral is only a few blocks from the train station in Chartres and I arrived while Sunday service was still underway. Even though I'm not Catholic, it seemed that the respectful thing to do was to quietly take a seat and join in.

After the service ended and the congregation dispersed, the organist continued to play for another ten or so minutes, while myself and a dozen or two other visitors wandered around the magnificent structure, admiring the renowned stained glass windows, altar statuary, side chapels and the famous labyrinth stonework pattern on the floor. When the organist finished I said to him, "c'était magnifique!" and he smiled and simply replied, "merci."

The main section of the present cathedral was constructed between 1194 and 1220. It was built atop the site of at least five earlier cathedrals that were lost to fire, war, or other misfortunes. The two dissimilar spires at the west entrance were built approximately 350 years apart.



Many of the magnificent stained glass windows are original, although they have been cleaned and refurbished several times during the intervening centuries. A major restoration project to clean the stonework, and perform necessary repairs and apply protective coating to the windows, was begun in 2009 and was still

underway at the time of my visit, but did not detract from the experience.

Surprisingly, I have found only a few French postage stamps that feature Chartres Cathedral. The one shown nearby, Scott #B186, is the most attractive in my opinion, certainly much more so than my selfie!



[A Closer Look: Peru #J2](#)

By Peter Elias

Rather than just sticking a stamp in your album when you are filling spaces, it is nice to actually look at the stamp a bit closer. The trouble is, that because it is a stamp, details are often lost when looking at the stamp with just your eyes.

A magnifying glass certainly helps, as you can then see the details, especially if it is an engraved stamp, such as this 150 year old postage due stamp from Peru (#J2). At top left is how it appears to the naked eye. At left is the same image, but is now magnified by over 400% (i.e.: over double the length & width). And it's even better if it takes up my full computer screen!

To best appreciate the details, you need to set your scanner to 600 dpi or more.



Granbury Meeting Minutes November 26, 2024

By Rick Howell

Call-to-Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Dave Stockbridge.

Attendance:

- There were 8 members present.
- Attendance was low because of the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday.

Show & Tell:

- Jim Myers showed the new club card which will be handed out at the TSDA shows and EXPO in the future. He also showed us a deal on a shopping bag he purchased at Ross which was very colorful and featured a design showing all the states.

EXPO Report:

- Rick Howell reported that sales were good at the Mixture Pick and Silent Auction. He also reported that attendance was somewhere around 316 people.
- Dave Stockbridge reported that everyone he had talked with had enjoyed the show.

Announcements:

- Dave Stockbridge announced that yearly dues need to be turned in to the club secretary Janet Moyer.
- Rick Howell announced that the club newsletter "Stamping Around" had received the Grand Champion award in the APS Star Route yearly competition. Having the best newsletter in the country reflects on the hard work of our contributing members and our editor, Peter Elias. Rick mentioned that we need to get more members involved in writing articles for our newsletter.
- Dave Stockbridge announced the upcoming Christmas party on December 4th at the Bob Duncan Center in Arlington. We will have a potluck dinner featuring finger foods and appetizers along with a gift exchange. Members are asked to bring a wrapped philatelic present with a value of at least \$10. Members will be given a number when they bring in a gift and when their number is called may select a gift from the pile or steal a gift from someone who has already received one. It is a fun time and participation is optional.
- Dave announced he had sales circuit books available, and there were some from the Oklahoma Stamp Club that were on sale at 80% of the original price.
- Jim Case mentioned the Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe and said if you ever get out that way, you should stop and take a look at it.
- Dave Stockbridge announced the January 28th meeting of the Granbury Chapter will be a "clean out your closet" sale where members can come and sell philatelic items they no longer want. It's a fun time and some great bargains can be found.
- Rick Howell mentioned Dave Stockbridge's article that was published in the November "American Philatelist" magazine, and Dave was given a round of applause.

Door Prizes:

- \$10 gift certificates were won by Anne McFarland and Joe McFarland.

Break:

- After the announcements we held a short break and enjoyed cookies baked by that world-renowned cookie chef, Madeleine Myers.

Program:

- Jim Myers gave a great presentation entitled: "Do you know more than a Texas third-grader?" It was a competition featuring Texas history that related to philately. Jim gave out prizes to those who answered the questions correctly and it was a fun and challenging evening.

Adjournment:

- After the competition the meeting was adjourned at about 8:15 PM.

*Been There,
Done That*

Bochum

By Peter Elias



Shown above is a postcard of the Bochum, Germany main train station, circa mid-1960's. Bochum is a city of (currently) 372,348 in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the 16th largest city in Germany.

Bochum dates back to the 9th Century. As it was at an important trade route junction, Charlemagne (King of the Franks) set up a royal court there. Fast forward about 1,000 years, and in 1871, the city became a part of the German Empire.

Sometime during that same time period, my great-grandfather (on my dad's side) moved to Bochum, where my father was also born.

In 1968 I received the postcard shown above when I lived in Switzerland as a child. It was sent by my grandmother who was visiting her sister in her former hometown and sent me this card, postmarked in Wattenscheid, a part of Bochum, on 7/10/68 (see cropped address side of the post card below).

In 1984, I had an internship in Mülheim a.d. Ruhr. Since one of my "aunts" (technically a "1st cousin once removed" - as she was my dad's cousin) still lived in Bochum, I got to meet her for the first time. It was only about 25 km (16 miles) from where I was staying!

I also visited her again a few years later. I didn't find this card until just a couple of months ago!

Treasure your old family correspondence!



Christmas Classic: A Visit From St. Nicholas

by Dan Golden

I love Christmas. From the time I was a wee lad, I have always loved the joyful time of year that exudes from the holiday. And even before I got into philately I have always enjoyed sending and receiving Christmas cards and seeing the latest iteration of Christmas stamps available. Of course, coming from a devout Catholic background, the Madonna and Child stamps are cool, but (may God forgive me for saying this) I have always liked seeing other aspects of the Christmas season depicted on stamps a little more. Be it Santa Claus, children's toys, holiday decorations, elves, or something else, they always help put me in the joyous spirit of the season. This is one of the reasons why I have such a deep fondness for the stamp set US #5644-5647, issued in 2021. I had only



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There is the image of Santa on the rooftop, with his sack of toys over his shoulder, making his way toward the chimney, through which he will enter the house. In the next image we see Santa coming down said chimney, his legs being the only part of him visible as he is about to touch down onto the floor of the unlit fireplace, with the family's stockings hung on the mantle with care, reminding us of the anticipation every child feels on Christmas Eve. In the third image we see a headshot of Santa from straight on, and he is winking directly at us the viewer, a small gesture that almost seems to communicate that we have been let in on a secret by seeing Santa face-to-face. Finally we come to the final image, that of Santa in his sleigh being pulled by reindeer through the night sky, as he looks back at us and bids us farewell.

I am a sucker for stamps that have a lot of detail because it really hammers home the idea that stamps are miniature works of art. The more details that can be seamlessly included by the designer, the more the stamp is elevated to be a true piece of artwork rather than a fancy-looking sticker that you put on your mail. Brad Woodard, the artist behind these stamps, used a perfect blend of detail vs. simplicity to make this poem come alive and tell the story in four images. In my opinion, his work in bringing a timeless story to life makes this set a modern-day classic.

As I look at each stamp, I am transported to back to the magic of the season that I felt as a child and the joyful anticipation that comes with it. I can almost hear the thuds of footsteps on a snowy roof as I lay in bed waiting for Santa to come. I can feel the warmth of the inside of the house as I dream of seeing St. Nicholas coming down the chimney, out of the fireplace, and winking at me as he begins laying gifts around the tree. And as I watch him depart and fly away to his next destination, I can almost hear him shouting to his reindeer: "Now, Dasher! Now, Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen! On Comet! On, Cupid! On Donner and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall! Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!" Just writing that honestly gave me flashbacks to childhood and the eager excitement of opening presents on Christmas morning.

Whether you celebrate Christmas or one of the other holidays around this time of year, I pray that the joy of the season touches each of your lives in a special way. Merry Christmas to you all, and may your season be bright!



Editor's Notes: Each year, the USPS issues a booklet of secular "Holiday" stamps, generally with 4 different designs. One of these (*Santa on sleigh with reindeers*) was the one chosen in 2021 to be on the "CVP" stamp available from postal kiosks in the approximate 2,500 of the 31,123 post offices in the USA.

At each machine, there is also a "lug-on" sign that advertises the stamp as well.



Thank You!

By Bob Weidman

A big thank you to Cindy Munnerlyn, D.A. Lux, Jack Urish and Paul Witthoef who donated stamps for the Mixture Pick at our EXPO this year!

By Peter Elias

A big thanks to Jerry Peebles of McKinney for donating 7 boxes of stamps from his wife's collection. A lot of really nice material here, useful for various aspects of EXPO (beginners table, chance board prizes, mystery boxes, etc) and postage. -->

Another big thanks to stamp dealer Jonathan Topper for bringing 3 boxes of donations for me to pick up at the December TSDA show (below).



Also a big thanks to Tyler Veasey (he partners with Byron Sandfield) for 5 boxes of albums & stamps that he gave us during the TSDA show on December 14.



Members In The News

By Peter Elias

The April 2024 issue of the "Lambda Philatelic Journal" (published by the Gay & Lesbian History on Stamps Club) featured an article by club member Arthur von Reyn called "Rainbow Flag Stamps Had Forerunners". This info came from the ATA's "Topical Time".

The Winter 2024 issue of the "Meter Stamp Society Quarterly Bulletin" featured an article by Peter Elias entitled "TikTok Shop Orders" on pages 32 - 34.

To all MCSC club members: If you are aware of a club member that has published a philatelic article (or given a presentation) elsewhere, please let me know. We'd like to recognize our members whenever we can!

ATA Zoom Presentations

By Peter Elias

The ATA (American Topical Association) has 7 different Zoom presentations listed on their website that you can sign up for between January to March 2025. One of them is "The Story of Bread". For more details and signing up, visit:

<https://www.americantopicalassn.org/events>



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)



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From The President's Cluttered Desk

By Rick Howell

This is the first of about 24 of these columns I have been tasked with writing if you guys will put up with me for that long. This is not however the first time I have written this column, just the first time for this club. I was previously the founder and president of the Mid-Cities Personal Computer User Group back in the late 80's. The Mid-Cities Stamp Club is a different creature altogether. Here, I have found a group of people I really enjoy sitting down and talking with. Some of your stories are totally amazing to me and sometimes I find when it is time to go home from a meeting, I would rather continue for a couple more hours. The knowledge and fellowship shared at our meetings is a tremendous learning experience for me and I hope for each of you as well.

For my first point, I would like to take this opportunity to offer thanks to Ken Aldridge, our immediate past-president for his excellent service over the last two years and his dedication and service to the club. Great job Ken!

Next, I would like to thank my current board of directors as they have all jumped in far in advance of our taking office on January 1st. The three vice-president positions which I proposed and you guys approved earlier this year has already yielded great results, and we currently have a 2025 schedule complete with programs for the first six months of 2025. If we can meet the rest of the year with this much enthusiasm and cooperation, it promises to be a great year.

Tom Cunningham has taken over the treasurer's position for Judy Christmas and with his years of experience as a CPA, I have no doubt he will continue the fine job that Judy filled for so many years.

Janet Moyer, our club secretary has done an excellent job with documenting all our activities and takes care of so much paperwork behind the scenes. Another person doing an excellent job that is so much appreciated.

What can I say about Ralph Poore, our EXPO chairman. He has taken on this huge task of organizing everything for EXPO, and making sure things run smoothly. Job well done, Ralph!

And then there is Peter Elias, our newsletter editor. This past year, Peter submitted our newsletter "Stamping Around" to the American Philatelic Society's Star Route Competition, which is an annual competition held by the APS to judge the best websites and newsletters offered by philatelic organizations that are affiliated with the APS. "Stamping Around" walked away with the Grand National award—best in the country. Hard to beat that. Peter is doing us proud as my grandfather would say. The judges did mention that we needed more input from our general membership, so I would like to encourage everyone to write an article for the newsletter. I would like to see everyone write about something they are interested in in the philatelic realm. I'm pretty sure Peter can get your articles included in one of the issues. Anyway, great job Peter!

Dave Stockbridge and Skip Ely are so dedicated and ready to jump in and lend a hand at just about anything. I am so appreciative of the job these two guys do for

the club. They make my job so much better.

Then there's Dan Golden. Dan is that enthusiastic kid (to most of us) that is running around the meetings ready to help out and offering to me some great new ideas for the group to pursue. I look forward to hearing Dan's outlooks for the future of our group. His newsletter article in our last newsletter is indicative of the type of young man he is, and I know he is going to be a very valuable resource in the future.

I feel confident that we will have a great year in 2025 and with this excellent board of directors backing me up and keeping me in line, things should go smoothly. I thank you all for electing me as president and you have my assurance I will try to do the best for the group that I can. I would like to encourage each of you to contact me if you have any suggestions for improvement or if you would like to put on a program highlighting your collection or your special interests. My email address is: rick.howell1@tx.rr.com and my other contact info is listed in the club directory.

See y'all at the meetings!

APS Star Route Competition Comments

By Peter Elias

Along with the "Grand Champion" medallion that is shown on the front cover page, the APS also sent along two judges remarks sheets with comments, summarized as follows:

Best / most valuable part of the newsletter:

Communication of club business, i.e., minutes from each of the three monthly meetings; upcoming events; EXPO updates and decisions.

Keeping track of 3 stamp clubs and their meetings is not easy but it comes together in Stamping Around.

Which part could use improvement:

Try to get more philatelic articles by more authors to fulfill stated purpose to provide an outlet for original articles on stamp collecting and philatelic subjects. Editor Peter Elias writes most of the longer articles and monthly columns. They are informative and well-written about a wide variety of subjects. But a more diverse range of perspectives would better reflect the membership and stated purpose of the newsletter.

--> Editor: Well then readers, please send me more articles! I know that reading articles is easier than writing them ... but ...

A little light on member recognition.

--> Editor: I'll gladly publish more of this if others let me know this information as they come across it.

Some pages have nothing but type, no images. Two column reading with closely spaced lines is sometimes hard to read. Multiple columns page after page, one has to scroll down, then up, and down again.

--> Editor: Pages with only type are usually meeting minutes, which in our case are usually long & detailed and generally don't have any room for photos and graphics. I have to make all articles fit the printed page. A 1-column layout is hard to read on an 8.5" wide sheet of paper; 2 columns are about right, and 3 columns would make it look more like a newspaper. The comment is also about scrolling. The judges are most likely reading this on a small screen rather than a printed piece of paper, for which this newsletter is presently designed.

Other feedback:

The masthead shows an outdated American Topical Association logo.

--> Editor: I have fixed this! See page 1.

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

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 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

EXPO Planning Meeting

By Peter Elias

Here's a photo of the EXPO planning meeting on December 7, held at Dave's Barbeque in Pantego. One attendee (Patty Poore) is off camera to the left, and Dan Golden had not arrived yet. I had my back to the wall, and this is as wide-angle as my cell phone camera allows...

The EXPO meeting minutes are on page 4. While I prefer to put a picture like this into the meeting minutes report, it just wouldn't fit without reducing the font to a miniscule size or it would push a part of the article to another page.

Hope to see you attend at a future meeting!



For Sale

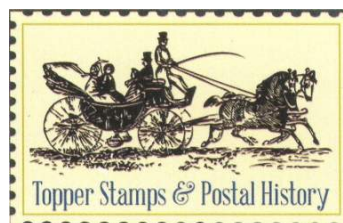
I now have a new website in which I have listed all my used **duplicates (many thousands)**. They are arranged in Scott number sequence within country. Do take a look, and select any that you want. I charge 1/3 catalogue value, post paid. The URL is www.kenwills.net Contact me at wills@airmail.net. Happy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

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

- [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!)
- [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 \$ 4.95 each (Regular price is \$14.95 to \$19.95).. Contact peter@pcelias.com 11/24

MOVED, BUT SALE CONTINUES! Special discounts to MCSC members for Swiss, Austria, Liechtenstein issues, 25% and LESS of catalog values. All orders postpaid! I also accept PayPal if you wish! John Barrett, Ph.D. Contact info: jstrubel-boy@aol.com 12/14



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jonathan@topperstamps.com

www.topperstamps.com

Crystal Cave

By Peter Elias

I love visiting caves whenever I am travelling. Even here in Texas we have several of them (all south of the DFW metroplex). When you search for "Crystal Caves", there are several that come up; in California, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and even Concan, Texas, amongst several others in the USA. Then you also find that name in Western Australia, Belize, Bermuda and Mexico.

The subject of this article is the Crystal Cave that is located in (or should that be under?) Bermuda. These caves have been a tourist attraction since 1907, after their discovery in 1905. They are on privately owned property (the Wilkinson family, now a Trust, has owned these since 1884) and are open to the public.

The caves are about 1,640 feet long and 203 feet deep, with parts being below the water level.

Bermuda Scott #828 was issued in 2002 as part of a set of 4 stamps featuring Bermuda caves.

So where exactly are these caves on Bermuda? Bermuda isn't just one island, it is actually several.

Bermuda Scott #924 shows an old map of Bermuda, and obviously doesn't show the Crystal Caves, as they weren't discovered until much later. Below is a Google map of Bermuda, with a "pin" at the Crystal Cave location, for which I've drawn a blue arrow on the stamp at left.



Crystal Caves, Bailey's Bay.



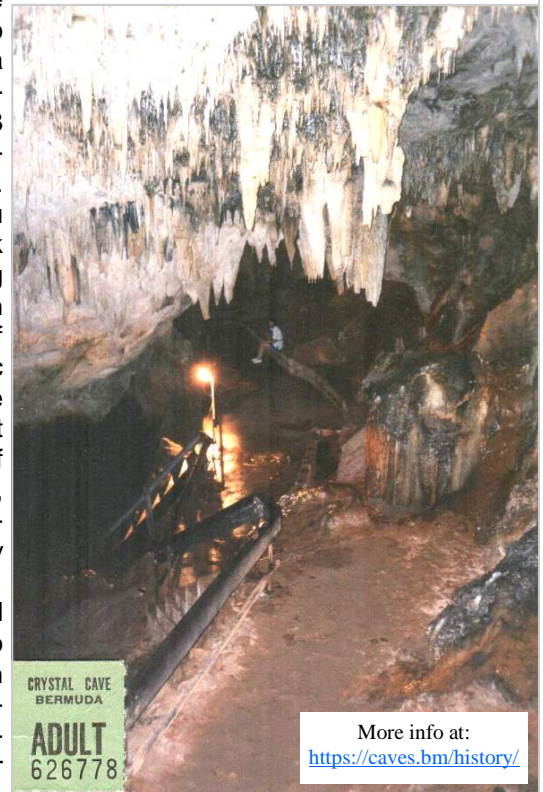
In addition to Scott #828, there is also a Bermuda postal stationery card (above) that commemorates the Crystal Caves. The picture side of the postcard shows the same photo as on the printed stamp design.

I have only been to Bermuda once, in October 1993 for my honeymoon. While you might think that visiting an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean in late fall might have lots of bad weather, it was actually fairly decent.

We stayed at the Grotto Bay Beach Resort, situated on Castle Harbor (just to the right of the point of the red pin). The airport is on St. David's island, situated across the harbor, roughly where the word "Crystal" is at. It is connected to the island via a road on a causeway.

The Crystal Caves themselves were located only about 1,000 feet from our resort, so it didn't take long to get there. Reading up the Crystal Caves, even Mark Twain visited there once! While I love caves, I'm certainly no "spelunker" ... I prefer to walk through caves, not crawl through them (but hey, that's just me...).

I did manage to take a picture or two, one of which is shown above, along with the rather tiny entrance ticket stub.



Migros

By Peter Elias



Gottlieb Duttweiler (1888-1962) was a Swiss businessman and politician. Born in Zürich, he started with several delivery trucks that delivered just 6 basic food-stuffs and eventually founded the Migros grocery stores, which is structured as a cooperative.

The name Migros comes from “mi” (French for mid-way) and “gros” (French for wholesale), thus meaning prices midway between retail & wholesale (...and I learned that just now while researching this!).

Migros is now Switzerland’s largest retail company (US\$8.5 billion), largest supermarket chain and largest employer (99,000+); not to mention one of the forty largest retailers in the world.

The Swiss stamp above, Scott #1476 was issued to commemorate him in 2013. Coincidentally, the photo I took of the fabulous chocolate bar aisle at their Davos store, was also taken in 2013 during a vacation to Europe. Go figure...

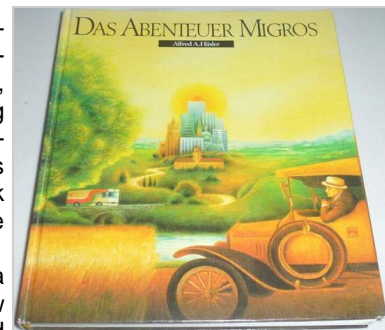
In 1986, when I lived in Switzerland, I did become a member of the Migros Genossenschaft (i.e.: co-operative), and that did get me the book you see on the right, titled “The Adventure Migros”. Over 2 million Swiss are now members.

Growing up in Switzerland in the 1960’s, we always went shopping at a small Migros grocery store in our neighborhood.

The fridge in our apartment was close to dorm-sized from what I remember, so my mom went shopping there almost on a daily basis. Luckily, the store was only about a 1150 foot walk (5 minutes) from where we lived!

While we only had a small store then, Migros now has huge supermarkets and even malls. When we went to Switzerland on vacation, we always stopped at the Migros “Pizolpark” shopping center in Sargans to stock up on items. Think of it as a multi-story Super Walmart (except that the quality of products is better).

Much as I love Migros, when we were vacationing in Davos in 2013, we shopped across the street (where there was free underground parking offered by the competitor, which was Aldi!).



More info about Migros:
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migros>

2025 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 2024 and skip to the 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 colors newsletters)
- \$22 Regular Adult (with mailed black & white newsletters)
- \$25 Sponsor Membership**
- \$35 Sponsor (with mailed black & white newsletters)
- \$ 6 Additional Adult (no separate 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:

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



MEET & EAT for January 2025

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.

ARLINGTON

January 8 Jay Jay Café, 1001 S. Bowen, Arlington
(817) 861-1060

FLOWER MOUND

January 15 Jason's Deli, 6020 Long Prairie Rd.,
Flower Mound (972) 355-3867

GRANBURY

January 28 Grumps, 3503 E. Hwy 377, Granbury

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

**Don't Forget:
Arlington January Mtg is on Jan. 8!**

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

United States Booklets, large selection of unexploded booklets for sale at just above face value. Starting with booklet #BK104 to #BK259. Identify booklet number desired and send an email to Dave Stockbridge at stockdave44@yahoo.com.

Dave will send you a price, if booklet is available and payment instructions.

4/23