

Stamping Around

Newsletter of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club

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

Bob Duncan Center, 2800 S. Center St.

Eules Meetings: Third Wednesday @ 7:30 p.m.

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

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

Bentwater Activities Center (adjacent to Bentwater Marina)



#891-076252



CHAPTER MEMBER

#90



#53-3364

Volume 37, Number 1

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

January 2024

Postage Rates & Fees	7/9/2023	1/21/2024
DOMESTIC		
1st Class - 1 oz (retail/metered or PC)	0.66 / 0.63	↑ 0.68 / 0.64
" 2 oz	0.90 / 0.87	↑ 0.92 / 0.88
" 3 oz	1.14 / 1.11	↑ 1.16 / 1.12
" 3.5 oz (maximum)	1.38 / 1.35	↑ 1.40 / 1.36
non-machinable surcharge	+0.40	+0.44
1st Class Flats - 1 oz	1.35	↑ 1.39
" 2 oz	1.59	↑ 1.63
" 3 oz	1.83	↑ 1.87
" 4 oz	2.07	↑ 2.11
" 5 oz	2.31	↑ 2.35
+ 0.24 per ounce up to 13 oz (maximum)	+0.24/ounce	+0.24/ounce
(if rigid, non-rectangular, non-uniform, must be mailed as Ground Advantage)	4.23	↑ 4.27
Ground Advantage - up to 4 oz	4.75 - 5.25	↑ 5.00 - 5.55
" up to 8 oz	5.40 - 5.85	↑ 5.70 - 6.15
" up to 12 oz	6.15 - 6.65	↑ 6.50 - 7.00
" 13 oz (max for retail)	7.60 - 8.55	↑ 8.00 - 9.00
--> "1st Class Package" is being renamed as "USPS Ground Advantage" in July 2023		(now up to 15.999oz)
Media Mail - 1 lb	3.92	↑ 4.13
" 2 lbs	4.67	↑ 4.87
" 3 lbs	5.42	↑ 5.61
" 4 lbs	6.17	↑ 6.35
Priority Mail - Flat-Rate/Legal/Padded	9.65/9.95 / 10.40	↑ 9.85 / 10.15 / 10.60
" Commercial Flat-Rate/Legal/Padded Env.	8.05 / 8.35 / 8.80	↑ 8.50 / 8.80 / 9.30
" Small Flat-rate Box (Ret/Comm)	10.20 / 8.55	↑ 10.40 / 9.05
" Medium Flat-rate Box (Ret/Comm)	17.10 / 14.75	↑ 18.40 / 16.00
" Large Flat-rate Box (Ret/Comm)	22.80 / 19.90	↑ 24.75 / 21.85
Postcard (Domestic)	0.51	↑ 0.53
Certificate of Mailing (domestic) (3817 / 3665 with 3 piece min)	1.95 / 0.57	↑ 2.00 / 0.58
Certified Mail	4.35	↑ 4.40
Insurance (up to \$50 is included with Priority Mail) up to \$50 / \$100 / \$200	2.70 / 3.44 / 4.55	↑ 2.75 / 3.50 / 4.60
Registered (Domestic)		
\$0 value	15.25	↑ 16.80
\$0.01 - \$ 100 / \$100.01 - \$500	15.90 / 18.30	↑ 17.55 / 20.20
INTERNATIONAL		
Letter & Postcard Airmail		
All Countries (1 oz) or Canada (2 oz) (variable pricing up to 3.5 oz)	1.50 see usps.com	↑ 1.55 see usps.com
Non-machinable surcharge	+0.40	+0.44
First Class Pkg Int'l (1 to 8 oz)	15.75 - 18.90	↑ 17.00 - 20.00
Priority Mail Int'l Flat Rate Env(4 lbs)	36.60 - 44.70	↑ 40.25 - 46.50
" Canada	30.35	↑ 30.90
Priority Mail Int'l (1 pound, Grp2-20)	50.80 - 63.10	↑ 54.85 - 66.25
Certificate of Mailing (3817/3665)*	1.95 / 0.57 each	↑ 2.00 / 0.58 each
See current Notice123 at usps.com ! *FCM/MinQty3 *FCM / MinQty 3		

USPS Rate Increases January 21, 2024

By Peter Elias

The USPS is requesting rate changes starting on the 3rd Sunday in January. The 1/21/24 rates shown to the left are pending approval of the PRC (Postal Rate Commission) as of December 15.

It appears to be pretty much an "across-the-board" increase in rates (with the exception that the "additional ounce" rates are still \$0.24). In case you did not know, "1st Class Letter Mail" stops at 3.5 ounces (approx. 100 grams), after that it goes to either "1st Class Large Envelope/Flats" or "Ground Advantage" (which has replaced "1st Class Package/Parcel" back in July) depending on size / weight / shape of your mail piece.

The table to the left is a summary of frequently used rates. Please download the online version of Notice 123 for all current rates (about 68 pages).

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Stamping Around

Newsletter of the Mid-Cities Stamp Club

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

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2023 - 2024 MID-CITIES STAMP CLUB OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President – Ken Aldridge
 First Vice-President – Rick Howell
 Second Vice-President – Stanley Christmas
 Secretary – Janet Moyer
 Treasurer – Judy Christmas

Board of Directors (voting):

Peter Elias Ralph Poore Ken Wills
 Immediate Past President: Rich Hildebrandt

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

2024

JAN. 3	MCSC—ARLINGTON Meeting
Program:	EXPO Wrap-up & Clean Out Your Closet
JAN. 17	MCSC—EULESS Meeting
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
JAN. 23	MCSC—LAKE GRANBURY Meeting
Program:	Clean Out Your Philatelic Closet
FEB. 7	MCSC—ARLINGTON Meeting
Program:	TBD
FEB. 10	MCSC - EXPO Planning Meeting (11 AM)
At David's BBQ in Pantego	
FEB. 21	MCSC—EULESS Meeting
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
FEB. 27	MCSC—LAKE GRANBURY Meeting
Program:	TBD
MAR. 6	MCSC—ARLINGTON Meeting
Program:	TBD
MAR. 20	MCSC—EULESS Meeting
Program:	Extended Show & Tell and philatelic discussions
MAR. 26	MCSC—LAKE GRANBURY Meeting



"Editor At Work"
 LEGO™ MOC by Marcos Elias

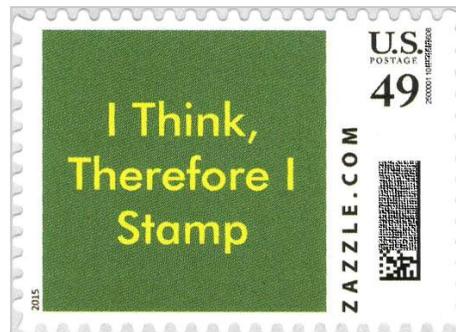
Editor's Forum

By Peter Elias

Whoa! It's almost 2024 (well in a couple of weeks anyway, as this is being written in early December...).

This will be "Volume 37" of *Stamping Around*. Well, not "really", since there was some mis-numbering of volume numbers back in the 1970's, and it should really be volume 38 or 39, and I'm not going back in time to figure out what it technically should be. I'm just continuing what it was at the time I started being the editor back in July 2001!

The above all said, we are heading towards having



ing 2,000 "philatelic" related articles (i.e.: not "club-related" articles such meeting minutes, President reports, etc) that have been published!
 <-- **Food for thought!**

Membership Renewals

If you've already paid your 2024 membership dues, thank you! If not, there's an **updated** renewal form in this newsletter. We do not mail out renewal notices, so please use the form from the newsletter.

Secretary's Report

By Janet Moyer



Applications Received:

Dan Golden (#662) He collects:

Baseball, ships, trains, maps, scenic views of nature

New Members:

Ewan Gray (#660Y)

Bryan Young (#661)

Reinstatements:

n/a

Resignations:

n/a

Membership Summary – December 6, 2023

Membership as of November 15, 2023	101
Applications Rec'd (counts as member next month)	1
New Members	2
Did Not Renew for 2023	(0)
Resignations	(0)
Deceased	(0)
Reinstatements	0
Membership as of December 6, 2023	103

EXPO Planning Meeting Minutes December 2, 2023

By Janet Moyer

Call-To-Order:

- The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ralph Poore at 11:30 AM.

Previous Minutes:

- The previous minutes were accepted as published in the newsletter.

General Chair:

- Ralph Poore announced the purpose of this meeting was to get started planning EXPO 2024:
 - We need to decide on a theme so we can start getting exhibits.
 - We need to confirm chairpersons and coordinators.
 - We will need to review / revise the Budget for 2024.

FRAMES:

- The condition of the frames was discussed. It was decided to exhibit fewer frames next year and use what we have. It was felt we could commit to at least 30-40 frames. We will get the frames and examine them on set-up day. The good frames will be used and the bad frames will be boxed and labeled as to what needs to be fixed. We can then work on them during the EXPO.

THEME:

- A few ideas were discussed and it was decided to go with "America: From Sea to Shining Sea". This could incorporate Innovation, National Museums and Parks, famous Americans and their accomplishments, etc.

BUDGET:

- The group discussed every item of the budget. The budget will be updated for the next meeting.

General decisions:

- There will be no cachet.
- The raffle will have only one prize.
- The Silent Auction will leave the stage in the up position so we will not need to pay to have it lowered.
- Committee Chairs and Coordinators were confirmed for all positions except as listed in "Open issues" below.

Open issues:

- Need Awards Chairperson.
- Need Exhibits Frames Set-up Coordinator.
- Need sources and pricing on materials for exhibit frames repair.

Wrap-Up:

- The January General Meeting will be a wrap-up for the general membership to hear. If you have any ideas or information we need, please get it to Stanley Christmas [with a cc to Ralph]. Ralph will be gone until April.

Next Planning Meeting:

- The next EXPO meeting will be on February 10, 2024, at 11:00 AM at Dave's Barbecue.

The following update was submitted on December 5:

In an extended (and remote) session of the EXPO committee meeting, it was decided to eliminate Exhibits permanently [or until such future date that sufficient club demand makes its return feasible].

Ralph will get with Grapevine Convention Center and obtain a revised contract with the following reductions:

- No additional room for Exhibits
- No banquet or room for banquet.

Ralph also thanked Richard Hildebrandt for his willingness to chair the Exhibits.

MCSC Arlington Meeting Minutes December 6, 2023

By Ken Aldridge

On December 6th, MCSC 's Annual Christmas Party was held at the Bob Duncan Center in Arlington. 25 members & guests attended and enjoyed ham, turkey, sweet potatoes, green beans, rolls and assorted desserts.

A white elephant gift exchange was held after the dinner.



Will Artificial Intelligence Influence Philately?

By Rick Howell

Computers have been a part of my life since 1973. While serving an apprenticeship at Newport News Shipbuilding I was trained in Numerical Control Programming for cutting steel plates to fit bulkheads on ships. When personal computers became available in the 80s, I jumped right in and learned to build my own computers, program them, and even started a computer club in the Mid-Cities area in 1986. I have always had a fascination for artificial intelligence and how it is going to impact our everyday life as computers become smarter.

Microsoft recently introduced a program they call Microsoft 365 Copilot, which is designed to enhance your experience with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and everyday computer usage (if you use a computer). Of course I put it on my computer and thought I would give it a try. I must say, I was shocked! I typed in a one line instruction that said, "Create a one page newsletter article that tells how copilot can influence philately." What follows below is what Copilot and my computer told me.....

Here is a one page newsletter article that I wrote for you:

How Copilot Can Influence Philately

Philately, or the study and collection of postage stamps, is a hobby that has fascinated millions of people around the world for centuries. Stamps are not only miniature works of art, but also historical documents that reflect the culture, politics, and events of their time. Philatelists can learn a lot from stamps, such as the geography, history, and languages of different countries, the achievements of famous people and organizations, and the diversity of flora and fauna.

However, philately can also be challenging, especially for beginners and enthusiasts who want to expand their knowledge and collection. There are thousands of stamps issued every year by hundreds of countries and territories, each with its own design, value, and rarity. How can one keep track of all the stamps that exist, and find the ones that interest them? How can one identify and authenticate stamps, and determine their condition and value? How can one organize and display their stamps in a way that is both attractive and informative?

This is where Copilot, a new artificial intelligence tool, can help. Copilot is a smart assistant that can generate code, content, and data based on natural language queries. Copilot can also access various sources of information, such as web search results, image search results, and news search results,

to provide relevant and up-to-date answers. Copilot can assist philatelists in many ways, such as:

- *Finding stamps: Copilot can search for stamps based on various criteria, such as country, year, theme, color, shape, or perforation. Copilot can also suggest stamps that match the user's preferences and interests, and provide links to online catalogs, auctions, and dealers where they can buy or sell stamps.*
- *Identifying stamps: Copilot can recognize stamps from images or descriptions, and provide information such as the name, date, denomination, and catalog number of the stamp. Copilot can also compare stamps and highlight the differences and similarities between them, such as watermarks, errors, or varieties.*
- *Valuing stamps: Copilot can estimate the value of stamps based on their condition, rarity, and demand. Copilot can also track the market trends and prices of stamps, and alert the user when there are changes or opportunities.*
- *Organizing stamps: Copilot can help the user create and manage their stamp collection, and provide tools such as albums, pages, labels, and lists. Copilot can also generate reports and statistics on the user's collection, such as the number, value, and diversity of stamps, and the gaps and duplicates in their collection.*
- *Displaying stamps: Copilot can help the user design and create attractive and informative displays of their stamps, such as frames, posters, cards, or slideshows. Copilot can also generate captions, stories, and trivia for each stamp, and add interactive features such as quizzes, puzzles, or games.*

Copilot is a powerful and versatile tool that can enhance the experience and enjoyment of philately. Copilot can not only make philately easier and more accessible, but also more fun and educational. Copilot can inspire philatelists to discover new stamps, learn new facts, and share their passion with others. Copilot can also encourage philatelists to be more creative and innovative, and to explore new ways of expressing themselves through stamps.

If you are interested in trying Copilot, you can sign up for a free trial at [copilot.github.com]. You can also learn more about Copilot and its features at [copilot.github.com/docs]. Copilot is compatible with various platforms and devices, such as Windows, Mac, Linux, Android, and iOS. Copilot is also constantly learning and improving, and welcomes feedback and suggestions from users.

Copilot is not only a tool, but also a friend and a guide for philatelists. Copilot can help you achieve your philatelic goals, and make your philatelic journey more enjoyable and rewarding. Copilot is the ultimate copilot for philately.

I'm not sure what the future holds for philately and computers, but I bet there will be some changes.

See y'all at the meeting.

Retired APS & OPS Stamp Sales Book Clearance

By Dave Stockbridge

I have several hundred retired American Philatelic Society and Oklahoma Philatelic Society sales books that I will sell at about 10% of the catalog price. These books contain stamps from most countries of the world. Stamps are both mint and used, but mostly used. Prices range from \$0.50 to \$25 per book. The greatest majority of books are under \$10 in the \$5 to \$8 range. All books have had some stamps removed but still contain from a few to hundreds of stamps. Most books contain stamps from 1 country.

I will be bringing some of the books to most of the club meetings starting in January. However, if you have a special county or region that you want to see first let me know and I will arrange for you to see them. If you want to take a box containing 80 to 90 books home and look them over let me know. Prices for each book is marked on the front cover.

A 10% commission fee needs to be added to all sales, which goes to the club to cover club sales expenses. To request books, contact Dave Stockbridge at stockdave44@yahoo.com.



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:
<http://BetweenThePerfs.com/MCSC>
 (for older newsletters please contact the newsletter editor)



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President's Message

By Ken Aldridge

As we close out 2023, I want to thank my fellow club officers for their help and understanding in capping off another club year:

- Rick Howell, 1st Vice-President
- Stanley Christmas, 2nd Vice-President
- Janet Moyer, Secretary
- Judy Christmas, Treasurer

I also want to thank those who served as Board or Officio members:

- Rich Hildebrandt
- Ken Wills
- Peter Elias
- Ralph Poore

A few important issues came up during the year and the Board response has led to resolution and improvements in several areas of the club's operation.

The last meeting of the Arlington group was our annual Christmas Party and White Elephant gift exchange. I want to thank Stan & Judy Christmas for making arrangements for the food and the gift exchange.

The next Arlington meeting will be on January 3rd and the program will be an EXPO Summary, followed by "Clean Out Your Closet." Sellers are reminded to put clear selling prices and your name on your items to sell.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



My 2¢ Worth: Stamps & Coins

By Peter Elias

In the current issue of "The American Philatelist" the APS decided to do an issue that also features the "other" main collecting hobby: Numismatics. After all "stamps and coins" are frequently used in the same sentence, as if they are the same. They are certainly similar in that they are both collecting hobbies. Both are generally government issued items.

Certainly one thing that both hobbies have in common is that collecting "current issues" can be taxing on one's budget. While stamp collectors complain about the cost & of stamps issued, have you seen what it would cost to buy sets of everything that US Mint sells? Uncirculated sets, proof sets, silver proof sets, various commemorative issues and gold & platinum coins; I think all of that can easily cost 10 grand a year!

One interesting thing to note: there are lots of stamps that features coins & banknotes (1,850 of them according to the ATA); yet I don't see to many coins or banknotes that feature stamps. Go figure!

And yes, I do collect some coins, mostly I find "ancient" coins (i.e.: Roman & Greek) to be of interest, as well as Swiss Cantonal Coins (1200's to 1850). I don't really have an interest for bank notes, unless it's greenbacks, and then only for spending purposes... I just find stamps to be more interesting, certainly more of a variety of topics to collect.

2024 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 2023 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

Wright Brothers National Monument

By Ken Aldridge

This last summer, my wife and I had an opportunity to visit this monument located at Kitty Hawk, NC. The concrete memorial is located at the top of Kill Devil Hill and a very nice museum and gift shop is nearby.

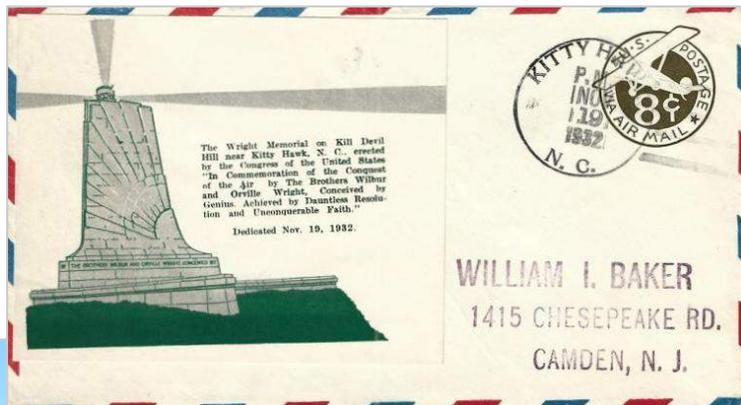


Photos by Ken Aldridge

There are several sidewalks to ascend the hill to get to the top. We took the least-steepest one. The 8c airmail envelope shown was mailed the same day the memorial was dedicated, November 19, 1932.

Replicas of the Wright Brothers plane, The Wright Flyer or Kitty Hawk Flyer, are located outside the memorial as well as inside the museum. Their original plane is housed at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

The brothers, from Warrenton, Virginia, built three flyers over a four-year period of research and development.



MCSC Christmas Party Photos

Here are a few more photos; these are from Rick Howell.

EXPO 2023 Raffle Winners

By Ralph Poore

Here are the winners of the 3 Raffle prizes at EXPO 2023:

- Connie Woertendyke won both the Penny Black and the framed Duck stamp with artist signed print.
- Charles Ferdbee won the USA #C3.



Returned Naval Cover

By Peter Elias

And from the "What the...?" department, we have this cover shown below:



This is a cover with a cachet and corner card dated 1977 from the USS Thomas A. Edison (SSBN-610), a 1961 nuclear submarine that participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was decommissioned in 1983. Back as a teenager in 1977, I had an interest in ship cancels and wrote off to various US Navy ships with on-board post offices.

The cover was handed to me at EXPO by dealer Stephen Crippe who said he found it in an auction company box lot he bought. But how did that happen? I must have donated this to MCSC a long time ago, and it was put into either the Beginner's Table or an EXPO silent auction lot and then somehow wound up at some auction company. Wow! Small world. I guess what goes around, comes around...

Kris Kringl Time Again

By Peter Elias

...I mean, "Christkindl" (Christ child), from which the English word "Kris Kringl" somehow evolved (I wrote about this in the August 2023 issue on page 8), where I had received a cover recently postmarked in Kristkindl, Austria.

At EXPO 2023, I ran across the item shown below. This was a fairly elaborate postcard (depicting the Parrish Church in the small village of Christkindl (west of Steyr in north central Austria).

Each year you can get a special commemorative postmark there. The registered card below is postmarked on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1963 and amazingly enough made it via airmail to Dallas in just 4 days, judging by "Dallas - Terminal Annex" receiving postmark on December 28, and then 2 days later at the Lakewood Station. Presently, that would easily take 10 - 14 days at minimum.

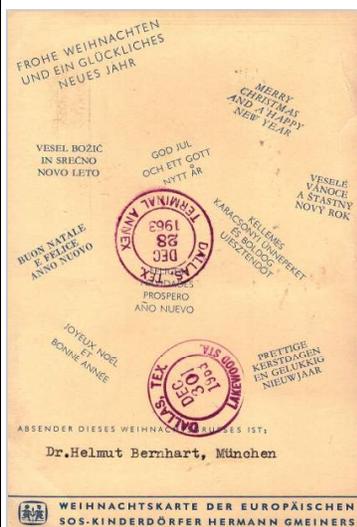


The card features two of Austria #625 from 1958 featuring the Christkindl Church, and also #718 featuring the birth of Christ scene (a Baroque Crèche by Josef Thaddäus Stammel) that was issued just a month earlier on November 29, 1963.

Without researching it further, I don't know whether 6 Schilling of postage correctly paid or overpaid the registered card rate to the USA.

On the back of the card, other than the 2 US Post Office Department receiving postmarks, are Christmas & Happy New Year greetings in various languages. While meant to look like they're manually rubberstamped on the card, they appear to be pre-printed.

Near the bottom of the card it states that the sender of this Christmas greeting was a Dr. Helmut Bernhart of Munich [Germany] to an Irene Carnes (who, best as I can tell, passed away in 1987 and whose "Texas Postcard Collection" can be found at the Dallas Public Library; it was



donated by her in 1983; see <https://dallaslibrary2.org/dallashistory/archives/08315.php>).

There are several nice items present on the front of the card, including a sticker that also shows the Christkind Church, a "via Christkindl" sticker, an airmail sticker and a "R" registration label.

I figured since this newsletter will reach everyone before Christmas, that this is an relevant item for this month's newsletter!

St. Louis Union Station

By Peter Elias



St. Louis Union Station USA 19

Link with more info:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Louis_Union_Station

© USPS 1994

Back in the day of steam locomotive travel, there were many grand train stations in the USA. St. Louis, Missouri, has one of those and it is shown on USA postal card #UX177 issued in 1994.

That card was issued on the 100th anniversary of the opening of the station, which at the time was the largest in the world that had passenger service areas and tracks all located on one level. At its peak (in the 1940's), it had 100,000 passengers per day!

After the last Amtrak train left the station in 1978, the [train station](#) was converted to a hotel, entertainment complex and shopping center.

I first visited the station in January 1986, when I was stationed in St. Louis for 1 month prior to work-



ing in Switzerland for the rest of that year. I lived out of a hotel for that entire month of January (luckily I didn't have to deal with snow). I do remember that there was a really good steak restaurant at the station at that time. If memory serves me correctly, I believe it was called "McCormick & Schmick's".

Flash forward to 2015, and our family did a driving trip from Dallas to upper Michigan (via St. Louis and Detroit). We visited the train station building and it seemed different now. The shopping portion seemed to be mostly gone (and so was that restaurant).

I took the picture shown above. There is another one of Annie & myself sitting on the ledge by the fountains. When I took this picture, little did I know it was pretty much from the same angle as the postal card (which I didn't acquire until this year). I do highly recommend visiting St. Louis though if you ever get the chance! You could even visit the Budweiser Brewery (but I already did that in 1986).

MCSC Sales Activity Report

By Dave Stockbridge
MCSC Sales Manager

2023 was a good year for club sales. Several members found material for their collections from the 18 - 20 American Philatelic Society books received monthly. Also, a few members added 22 new club books of material. A significant amount of material was added for US Classics, Switzerland, and Scandinavian counties.

If you have duplicate material or material that you no longer collect, I urge you to consider putting it in a club sales book.

Empty books cost 50 cents. Most material is priced at 20 to 30% of catalog price. Selling material provides other members the opportunity to add to their collections and can also provide the seller a few dollars.

In 2024 we will be receiving APS books from different 20 categories. Categories that have re-

ceived considerable interest in the past include US covers, US classics, Canada, and Scandinavia.

In addition to offering both club and APS sales books the sales department has over 300 retired APS and Oklahoma Philatelic Society books for sale. Retired books have a few to many stamps removed, but still hold stamps that you may need or want. Each retired book is being sold as 1 item with a price total posted on the front. The total price of the book is about 10% of Scott catalog price. Most books sell for \$5.00 to \$8.00.

10% is added to all sales from Club books, APS books and retired books. This 10% helps to cover sales department expenses including mailing and printing materials.

With the assistance of Skip Ely and Stanley Christmas, we will try to have club sales materials available at all Arlington, Granbury and Euless meetings. Check out what's available at the sales table, you may find something interesting!

Granbury Meeting Minutes November 28, 2023

By Stanley Christmas

Call-To-Order:

- Dave Stockbridge called the meeting to order at 6:50 PM.

Announcements:

- Judy Christmas and Dave Stockbridge talked about the Annual Christmas Party being held in Arlington, TX December 6, 2023. Granbury branch members were invited to come.
- Dave Stockbridge welcomed Danny Pittsford, a new guest to the meeting, and invited him to join the club. Stanley Christmas said he would send Danny a membership application.

Show & Tell:

- Jim Case showed a collector's card of the first black hockey player in the NHL, Willie O'Ree.
- Rick Howell discussed "How Do You Collect British Stamps". He also talked about a new pilot AI on stamp collecting program being developed by Microsoft.
- Stanley Christmas showed a cover he got from Canada that was sent with no postage applied.
- Danny Pittsford showed the Post Offices Annual Package for 1983.

More Announcements:

- Dave Stockbridge announced that the January meeting will be "Clean Out Your Closet". He also asked for volunteers to do next year's program.
- Dave pointed out Jim Case's article in the December newsletter, titled "You Did Not Tell Me", where he discusses how he got into stamp collecting.
- Rick Howell discussed the status of the MCSC exhibit frames and how we need to repair them.

Program:

- Bob Coleman gave an interesting discussion and a show & tell on a small part of his collection of Naval Covers. He briefly discussed the history of each and passed the covers around to the membership. Some of the covers he showed were from the USS Arizona, USS Enterprise (Original) and USS Indianapolis. He showed some covers from destroyers that participated in the recovery operations of US Space craft.

Door Prizes:

- At the end of the meeting there was a drawing for \$10 gift certificates. The winners were Stanley Christmas and both Anne & Joe McFarland.

Adjournment:

- Dave adjourned the meeting around 8:00 PM.



Another Club Christmas Party In The Books

By Judy Christmas

Another year's Annual Mid-Cities Stamp Club Christmas Party went off without problems what-so-ever. The party was held on December 6th at the *Bob Duncan Community Center*. Everyone brought a covered dish or dessert. There were 23 members & guests present.

This year I asked for round tables instead of the long tables. Everyone enjoyed the smaller seating arrangement and said it is great being to talk with each other and being able to hear the conversation going on.

The meats were turkey and ham from Spring Creek. Grace was given by Tom Turner before all filed through the buffet line at 6:30. After our tummies were full, we started the gift exchange. As members came in with their gifts, they picked a number out of a bag that Stan had. Stan then called out numbers for members to choose a gift. A gift could only be taken three times. This all took about an hour, and everyone seemed to have a good time. We were done before 8:30.

If you are not coming to the Christmas Parties, you are really missing out on good time and good eats. Make one of your New Year's resolutions to come to next year's party.

I would like to say a special thanks again to Richard Hildebrandt for again providing all the festive decorations for the tables. They always make the hall come alive with the feeling of Christmas in the air. And my thanks to all who helped clean up.

Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year to Everyone!!

RENEWAL FORM Address correction!

--> In the previous 2 or so 2023 newsletters, I had the address for the PO Box listed wrong as 820874 when it should have been 820784. The corresponding Zip+4 was correct though and so was the info on page 2.

This has been corrected in this issue --> so please only mail in membership renewals using the form from THIS issue! Thanks!

If you had already mailed in your dues, let us hope that the USPS will deliver based on the ZIP+4 or put it into the wrong box anyway... If not, they might also return it back to you. You can also give any renewals directly to the club secretary at meetings.

My wife's book signing in Texarkana, Arkansas went well. She was one of 25 authors at the event and made \$200 for the 5 hours spent there.

I have four of the very old wooden and glass philatelic exhibit frames and filled the 8-page spaces of one of them with stamps on 8 pages showing images of 8 different Walt Disney cartoon classics: Snow White, Bambi, Pinocchio etc. I laid that flat on Karen's table.

As parents with children were walking by, I'd get the kid's attention by asking them if they liked Walt Disney movies and got them to come over and look at the stamps. The parents usually stopped and came back to their kids. Then I gave the parents a sales pitch and that resulted in a few of Karen's sales.

I finally got to the right person at the library here in Jefferson. It turns out that the top woman at the library is the daughter of a man who worked for NASA in Houston for a number of years where he had a management job under one of the uppermost men at that Center. She has a few flags that were flown to the moon, she told me.

She decided that the most appropriate place for me to give a talk on Astrophilately would be at the Jefferson History Museum and told me that she was going to call the top person there, asking him to let me make an Astrophilatelic presentation on manned space travel at that facility.

I then suggested that I could give a talk on the author Jules Verne at the library and am awaiting a decision on that. I've really been trying hard to meet people in this tourist town of under 2000. But it feels like I'm in a closed community. I've talked to several but with very limited results.

On another subject, today's mail brought me the most unbelievable piece of mail that I've ever received and I have no idea at all as to how this could possibly happen. A copy of "The Circuit magazine – Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors" arrived this morning in our mailbox. I didn't look at it at all for a few hours and turned it over to get it out of its plastic envelope, when I saw the addressee on the back. It was not addressed to me. Instead, the address was for a Mr. Kenneth Wills of Grapevine, Texas. Grapevine, Texas is 190 miles west of here! How did a magazine with Ken's name and address wind up in MY mailbox? What are the odds of having that happen?? As I write this, I haven't had a chance to contact Ken, but I'm sure that he will be as perplexed as I am. I have never subscribed to, nor have never even seen a copy of this magazine ever! I'll call Ken in the morning and want to hear his reaction to this strange coincidence.

[Editor's comment: Ken frequently comes to our Eulless meetings; there he sometimes has spare copies of "The Circuit" magazine, all shrink wrapped and addressed to him. He is involved with the ISWSC, and for them to get a discount in mailing their journal, they send extra copies to him and he distributes those to us in person; but it's certainly a mystery that a copy got mailed to Ray directly!]

In reading Ray's article to the left, I figured, why not do some basic statistical analysis of this (i.e.: about being apparently the only active stamp collector in a small town of 2,000; perhaps 2 collectors if you also count Karen)? [Here goes:](#)

- DFW now has about 8 million inhabitants. We get about 400 people at EXPO (even if some of those are the same people attending on both days); but let's just say 400 people. So, that's only about 1 collector for every 20,000 people (that attends a stamp show). I'd say that if your town with 2,000 people has 1 collector, then that is 5x better than the entire DFW metroplex area in terms of statistical averages!
- In reviewing a 2017 MCSC EXPO mailout list, it had 1,273 records that were listed as NOT "dropped" from future mailouts. Thus: 8 million divided by 1,273 = 6,284 people per known collector from that list... Your statistics as 1 collector per 2,000 are still better (sadly though...).
- Of course this is "statistics", and the numbers don't always paint the whole truth ... these numbers are based on "all" people, so how many do we subtract out that are obviously NOT stamp collectors (say, all people under the age of 8 - which is when I started collecting stamps)?
- In the USA, the true total number of stamp collectors (from casual accumulators to specialty philatelists) is estimated at 5 million (according to Apfelbaum, Inc.), which would make it about 1 "collector" per 67 people.
- Worldwide, it is estimated at 60 million collectors (of which 20 million are in China alone!). So worldwide (at about 8 billion people), it would equate to 1 collector per 133 people. Based on China alone (1.43 billion people), it comes to 1 collector per 72 people.
- For Europe (~742 million people), I can't get any decent data. For Germany, it is estimated that there are approx. 2 million collectors. Given that Germany has a population of about 83 million, that would be about 1 collector for every 42 people.

Conclusion: Roughly speaking, based on the above statistics, I would say that the above statistics seem to show that Germany has one of the most collectors percentage-wise compared to their overall population.

The big problem is that it is really difficult to get exact numbers, a lot are just "estimates". Yes, we probably can get numbers about how many members there are in various philatelic societies, specialty groups and local stamp clubs. But those numbers would overlap. Not every collector or philatelist wants to join a stamp club or philatelic society, nor does every stamp collector want to subscribe to philatelic newspapers.

I read a long time ago, that way back in the 1950's, about half of all boys (no word about girls...) was collecting stamps. Hard to say how many boys that entailed, but certainly more than today (percentage-wise)! Given that I once tried to start a stamp club in my son's elementary school, only about 5 kids showed up on day one, the following week only about 3. The school had 600 kids! While kids collect all sorts of stuff (think Pokémon cards, etc), stamps are just not on their radar.

So the inevitable question: "who" is the future of the hobby? Best I can tell, it's not really kids (some for sure, but not that many). Perhaps adults, middle-age to retired? What can be done to make stamps "speak" (i.e.: make it interesting) to people? More outreach (i.e.: get stamps in front of people by whatever means, use them to illustrate articles)?

Try to get stamp collecting "personalized"? Everyone has one or more "interests" in life (whether professionally or leisure). There should be a stamp[s] for just about everyone out there? Heck, I even found lawn mowers on a couple of stamps!

Moving Through Network

By Peter Elias

... So what exactly DOES that mean? The USPS provides a handy online article about "Where's My Package" at <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/Where-is-my-package>:

How can we help?

Where is my package? Tracking Status Help

Learn about USPS® package tracking statuses and find out what to do when you believe your package is late, missing, or misdelivered.

Article Number: 00000077

Customer Information

USPS uses many package tracking status scans. Here are the most common statuses, what they mean, and what you can do when you see them. We invite all customers to sign up for [Informed Delivery](#)® notifications which offer preview of your mail and allow you to manage your expected packages. Check the latest tracking status of your package here.

Other sources of information:

- Domestic Claims - How to file a claim
- Missing Mail - How to submit a Missing Mail search request
- Delayed Mail and Packages - Delivery standards for all mail classes and when to contact Customer Service

Click the tracking status that you want more information about:

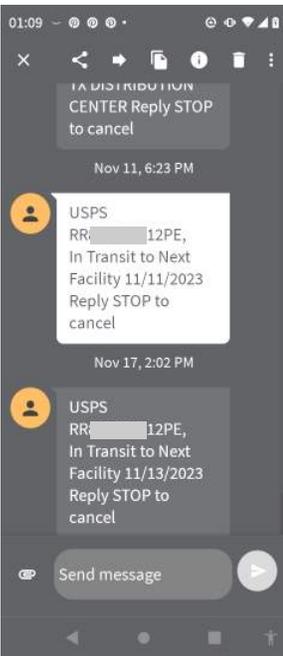
DELIVERED / DELIVERY ATTEMPTED	OUT FOR DELIVERY	PREPARING FOR DELIVERY
Delivered	Out for Delivery	Arrived at Post Office
No Access to Delivery Location	Available for Pickup	ACCEPTANCE / PRESHIPMENT
Insufficient Address	Held at Post Office, At Customer Request	Arrived Shipping Partner Facility, USPS Awaiting Item
No Such Number	Awaiting Delivery Scan	Departed Shipping Partner Facility, USPS Awaiting Item
Reminder to Schedule Redelivery of your Item	Delivery Status Not Updated	Picked Up by Shipping Partner, USPS Awaiting Item
Redelivery Scheduled	MOVING THROUGH NETWORK	On Its Way to USPS
Notice Left (No Authorized Recipient Available)	In Transit	Pre-Shipment Info Sent to USPS, USPS Awaiting Item
Notice Left (No Secure Location Available)	Arrived at USPS Facility	Shipping Label Created, USPS Awaiting Item
	Departed USPS Facility	USPS In Possession of Item
	Forwarded	Shipment Received, Package Acceptance Pending
	Forwarded Processed	

Delivered

What It Means: The package has been delivered with a recorded date, time and delivery location. If your package shows a delivered status but you can't find it, your carrier may have placed it in a safer location. Please check:

- Garage
- With others in your household
- Mailbox - Packages may come separately from your regular mail, check again later in the day.

That's all fine & dandy, and while all of the non-underlined items on that list above do have some information, "MOVING THROUGH NETWORK" itself is just a heading and has no further information. I suppose it just means what it says, that the item is "moving through their network".



Ok, but what "network" are we talking about here? The full tracking for this registered letter from Peru is shown at right (as of December 13). The letter was accepted by the Peruvian Post Office on October 28. It landed at the Miami ISC (International Service Center) of the USPS on November 4 and was handed off to US Customs. It then reentered the USPS network on November 8. It arrived at the Coppell USPS Distribution Center (via DFW Airport I presume) on Friday, November 10.

To the left is a text from the USPS that I received on Saturday evening, November 11, where it states that the envelope is "In Transit to Next Facility". How could that even be? November 11 was Veterans Day and my post office was certainly closed that day, so why would they have sent a truck

out to the post office that day? The Coppell Distribution Center by the way, is about 25 miles from my Plano post office. The last tracking update shown is for Monday, November 13 with "Moving Through Network".

So, today (December 13), it is 1 month later: nada, nichts, nyet... No tracking or movement of this registered



A photo of the registered mail piece sent to me by the sender in Peru.

letter what-so-ever.

To my knowledge, registered letters travel in a sealed bag, and need to be accounted for by anyone that handles (via scanning it), but apparently this is not so according to: <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/What-is-Registered-Mail-International>, where it states "When mail is registered internationally and is inbound for the United States, it will be handled in the domestic First-Class Mail mailstream from the point that USPS obtains it until it reaches the local Postal Office responsible for mail delivery. The recipient must sign a delivery receipt at the time of delivery."

That doesn't exactly make me feel better about what is going on. I mean what's the point of it being registered mail when it's not treated as such when it lands on our shores? So where is the letter from Peru? Is it "lost" (i.e.: that could mean "fell on the floor", "stolen", "misdelivered without a signature", "destroyed by postal mail processing equipment", etc)?

According to <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/USPS-Mail-Requiring-a-Signature-Accountable-Mail>; "foreign origin mail with extra services" IS considered "accountable mail". Sure wish I could hold the USPS "accountable" for whatever goof-up occurred starting Veterans Day...

Tracking Number: RR [redacted] 12PE

Copy Add to Informed Delivery

Latest Update

Your package is moving within the USPS network and is on track to be delivered to its final destination. It is currently in transit to the next facility.

Moving Through Network

- In Transit to Next Facility
November 13, 2023
- Arrived at USPS Regional Destination Facility
COPPELL TX DISTRIBUTION CENTER
November 10, 2023, 10:30 am
- Arrived at USPS Regional Facility
OPA LOCKA FL DISTRIBUTION CENTER
November 8, 2023, 2:55 pm
- Inbound Info Customs
- Processed Through USPS Facility
ISC MIAMI FL (USPS)
November 4, 2023, 2:55 pm
- Origin Post is Preparing Shipment
- Processed Through Facility
LIMA AVICON, PERU
October 31, 2023, 4:03 pm
- Processed Through Facility
LIMA AVICON, PERU
October 30, 2023, 4:52 pm
- Acceptance
PERU
October 28, 2023, 10:40 am

Hide Tracking History

The Peruvian sender has in the meantime filed an inquiry with Serpost (Servicios Postales del Perú). He said they seem to think it was stuck in Miami Customs, although it obviously made it to the DFW area. I guess we'll see what happens (this will probably take at least 30+ days)... I don't think I'll ever actually receive this letter. Sigh...

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

Stamps Not Suited For Young Collectors

By Peter Elias

And in the “*stamps not suited for sensitive younger collectors department*”, here’s my entry.



This is Spanish Sahara #88, issued in 1957 in a “slate green” color and it features a menacing Hyena.

While there’s nothing wrong with depicting wildlife on stamps, somehow this stamp just gives me the creeps.

The longer I look at this image, I’m thinking that I’ll have some sort of nightmare later.

I certainly wouldn’t want to give this to any sensitive child collector.

Oh, and it also comes in a pretty pink shade as a semi-postal...

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

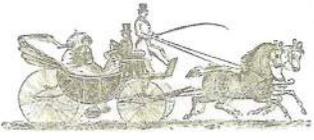
Philatelic Reference CD’s. The following self-running, philatelic reference CD’s, each containing hundreds of scans, are now available:

- [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 \$ 6.95 each (Regular price is \$14.95 to \$19.95).. Contact peter@pcelias.com 7/23

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

Estate Appraisals



Jonathan Topper
13100 Wortham Center
Dr. 3rd Floor, Ste 45
Houston, TX 77065
832.518.6558

jonathan@topperstamps.com
www.topperstamps.com

USPS Collector Cancels

By David Stockbridge & Peter Elias

The USPS POM (Postal Operations Manual), in sections 231.3 and 231.4 gives the rules for stamp collectors wishing to obtain “collector cancellations” (which includes “hand-backs”).

The entire 584 page PDF file for the POM (which is current through January 1, 2021) can be found here:

<https://www.nalc.org/workplace-issues/resources/body/Postal-Operations-Manual-POM-Issue-9-July-2002-Updated-With-Revisions-Through-January-31-2021.pdf>

The section about philatelic cancels for sections 231.3 & 231.4 starts on page 120 (which is page 204 in the PDF file).

“Philately” itself is covered in section 2 of the POM, and that starts on page 97 (but is numbered as page 181 in the PDF file).

Certainly in reading just a little bit of this, it seems that some USPS clerks are not well versed in their own rules.



MEET & EAT for

January 2024

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 3 Jay Jay Café, 1001 S Bowen, Arlington, TX 76013-2203, (817)-861-1060

EULESS

January 17 Mexican Inn, 1400 Airport Fwy, Bedford, TX 76022-6774 (817) 545 4700

GRANBURY

January 23 Grumps, 3503 E. Hwy 377, Granbury

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 \$4.00 in Spanish ATM stamps (which are only 15¢ each!) Contact Peter Elias at peter@pcelias.com 1/21

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

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

Don't Forget:
... to pay your 2024 membership dues!