



WASHINGTON CITY DESPATCH



NEWSLETTER OF THE WASHINGTON STAMP COLLECTORS CLUB
VOLUME 3 NUMBER 1 WHOLE NUMBER 13 JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2008

TO RUSSIA FROM D. C. 1917 - 1918

by C. A. Stillions



In the summer of 1917, the American Red Cross retained a recently graduated lawyer from Georgetown University and sent him to Russia. This letter to that graduate, D. Heywood Hardy, was posted on 15 September 1917 and simply addressed

D. Heywood Hardy,
Sec'y, American Red Cross
Russia.

The manuscript notation in red at the lower left translates as "Europa Hotel" which was and still is in St. Petersburg. What is impressive is that he received it as indicated by the penned notation Rec'd 3/24/18

just 6 months and 9 days later. Remarkable considering the letter was underpaid (The rate was 5 cents.), the simple address, and the turmoil occurring in Russia at the time.

Mr. Hardy returned to Washington and went on to serve as the Assistant to the Attorney General in the Hoover Administration.

WSCC MEETING PROGRAMS JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2008

2 January **Election of Officers**, first call for nominations, and **Annual Cover Contest**, contest categories are as follows:

Categories to be voted on by meeting attendees:

- 1: most interesting postmark which uses an animal in its name
- 2: most interesting modern postal marking(s)
- 3: most attractive cacheted foreign first day cover
- 4: most interesting slogan or pictorial postmark
- 5: most interesting use of patriotic cover
- 6: most interesting "wrecked" cover.
- 7: most interesting postmark with a president's last name (state of Washington or Washington, D.C. do not count)

Categories to be selected by a panel of judges chosen by the Presiding Officer:

- 8: earliest leap year cover, (February 29)
- 9: earliest illegal usage of a postage stamp to pay postage (labels do not count)
- 10: smallest cover
- 11: earliest inauguration day cover

Unless otherwise specified, a cover can be an envelope, card, folded letter, complete front, wrapper, package, form or document that shows payment of lack thereof of postage and/or postal fees.

16 January **Elections**, final nominations and elections of officers for 2008,

6 February **Swap and Trade Night**

20 February **Members Auction**, auction of philatelic material for the benefit of the member.

COMING EVENTS

Upcoming area and regional club sponsored stamp shows and other philatelic events

2008

March 8-9 **20th Annual Stamp Show**, Tidewater Stamp Club, Easton Volunteer Fire Department Auditorium, Aurora Street & Creamery Lane, 315 Aurora Park Drive, Easton, Maryland. Contact Hope Messick, phalarope@dmv.com; 410-822-6471.

March 29-30 **SPRINGPEX08**, Springfield Virginia Stamp Club, Robert E. Lee High School, 6540 Franconia Road, Springfield, Virginia, Contact Springfield Stamp Club, www.springfieldstampclub.org.

June 6-8 **NAPEX, National Philatelic Exhibitions of Washington, D. C.**, McLean Hilton at Tyson's Corner, 7928 Jones Branch Drive, McLean, Virginia. Contact Thomas Lera, frontier2@erols.com; www.napex.org; 703-205-0600.

August 22-24 **AMERICOVER, American First Day Cover Society**, Fairview Park Marriott, 3111

Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, Virginia. Contact Doug Kelsey, americoverexpo@aol.com; www.afdcs.org.

August 29-31 **BALPEX, Baltimore Philatelic Society**, Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn, 245 Shawan Road, I-83 Exit 20E. Contact Robert E. Gibson, Sr., balpex@aol.com, 410-332-4741.

October 18-19, 25-26 **AAFSW Book Fair & Stamp Corner**, State Department, 22nd and C Streets, N. W., Washington, DC

2009

June 5-7 **NAPEX, National Philatelic Exhibitions of Washington, D. C.**, McLean Hilton at Tyson's Corner, 7928 Jones Branch Drive, McLean, Virginia. Contact Thomas Lera, frontier2@erols.com; www.napex.org: 703-205-0600.

CLUB WEBSITE UPDATED

A redesigned Washington Stamp Collectors Club Internet site has gone live at www.dcestampclub.org. It contains information on how to attend meetings or join the club, read back issues of the *Washington City Despatch*, and contribute to the D.C. Postal History Project. It is profusely illustrated with stamps that show District landmarks and has a coming events calendar that is constantly update and visible on every page. New content added in recent weeks includes two Washington Post articles: one on the disappearance of the Washington, D.C. postmark since the anthrax attacks of 2001 and another on the Bethlehem, MD postmark that is highly sought after at Christmas time. Both are available on the Postal History Project page of the Web site.

Questions and comments about the new site as well as suggestions for new content should be directed to the webmaster, Daniel Piazza, at dpiazza3@verizon.net or 202-633-4737.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT by Gerry Marandino

2007 has been a great year for the WSCC. Our membership is at its highest levels in recent history. Moreover, we have added ELEVEN new members to our rolls. This may, indeed, be a record crop of new recruits. We must be doing something right since this seem to be going against the reported trend in decreasing collector interest. Let's try to beat this record in 2008!

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE by Phil Uhlmann

On Tue., 11 Dec, seven WSCC 'ers, at the invitation of Don Peterson, visited the "Stamps for a Living" business at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, in southeast Washington. Besides Don, attendees were Lorraine Bailey, John Ehrlich, John Hardies, Dan Piazza, Pat Sluby, and Phil Uhlmann. As Virginia Randolph put it in her interview a few "Despatch'es ago, "...collecting stamps can have great therapeutic value" (paraphrased), this amazing program at St. Elizabeth's certainly bears this out as a case in point. If any member would like to visit that venue, I'm sure Don would be glad to let you know how to go about it (entrance procedures to the facility as one might suspect are a bit involved).

A Closer Look at Postally Used Material

by Matt Cassetta

Those of you who know my collecting history will recall that it all began when at age 9 I inherited a massive box of accumulated stamps from a late aunt in Tennessee. Most of the material that sparked my interest and started me on collecting consisted of used foreign stamps, much of which was still on clipped covers.

Though I later began to acquire a small amount of mint of the themes that interest me (birds, nature) my most prized finds were inevitably exotic covers studded with stamps with evocative cancels. I can vividly recall my delight on discovering a town cancel from "Elephant Pass" on a clipping from Sri Lanka. This was the stuff of true fascination, leading to a life-long hunt for interesting marks from small places, outer islands and isolated outposts.

I am now approaching three decades of collecting and over this time I have become ever more appreciative of used stamps and covers for the stories they tell. I am particularly fond of post cards for this purpose, as anyone can easily delight in the stories from visitors to faraway places and the adventures they share with those back home. Often, post cards are mailed from bizarre and tiny places scarcely traceable on maps that the writers sailed or hiked to at some effort from larger capital cities. Just a few of my favorites include Va'Vau (Tonga), Kissidougou (Burkina Faso , formerly Upper Volta) and Nuku Hiva - Marquesas (French Polynesia .)

While cover collectors abound in our midst, I find postally used cards are equally as compelling and perhaps even a bit more challenging, as foreign used material becomes increasingly elusive. Cards provide not only imagery and gorgeous early engravings, but also the delights of cancels and odd postal markings from ships, air carriers, and the like that confirm how they made successful voyages from abroad. Some of my favorites include postcards from the Galapagos which clearly feature vessel names as well as local postmarks, or a card from Egypt with Paquebot markings that went via the Suez Canal.

On a final note, I would remark on the challenge of collecting postally used material from small places such as oceanic islands, tiny African nations such as Djibouti, or micro-states such as the Vatican. Since these places have very low populations compounded in some cases by low rates of literacy, the actual postal use of stamps is quite rare indeed. I have found lovely cancels from such places, such as the elegant cancels in latin used by the Vatican, and beautiful stylized slogan cancels from Madagascar, Chad and Polynesia. Though scarce, used lots from places such as these are a true treasure when found by collectors. I am convinced that used copies from such places are severely undervalued by catalogs, and we may in the future see rising value estimates for such issues or a separation of values for postally used and CTO copies.

I would urge used collectors to take another look at canceled cards and material from micro-states, two areas that provide great beauty to those able to persevere in searching them out.

ACCOUNTS OF MEETINGS

by Martin Fleischer, Recording Secretary

21 November President **Matthew Cassetta** presiding, 19 members present. **Virginia Randolph** placed a motion that the Christmas Party auction be changed from club donation to profit for members. The motion was seconded by **Pat Sluby** and put to the vote by the president. It carried: 18 'yeas' to 1 'nay'. (Background: **Joel Fassler**, club treasurer, reports that the club's financial state is "too good"; that we are on the verge of shifting from one IRS status to another, requiring a more elaborate tax return to be filed for this fiscal year.)

The highlight of the meeting was the member's auction. For this auction **Don Peterson** submitted numerous lots on behalf of "Stamps for the Living". Mostly high quality U.S.A. material. Bags of "kilo-ware" brought from \$3 to \$10. A large packet of recent high denomination U. S. A. on paper prompted a bidding war between **Lorraine Bailey**, **Virginia Randolph**, and **Jack Qiao**. Starting at \$3, quickly bid up to \$20, then moving back and forth between bidders and steadily rising. The lot was knocked down to Virginia for an astonishing \$66. Stock books went for \$1 to \$11, while a packet of U. S. A. unsorted postage dues sold for \$6. Lots of mixed foreign, Mexico, Guatemala, Africa, Middle-East were acquired for \$ to \$35. As always, **Tadas Osmolskis** talent as auctioneer rose to surface, especially during the U. S. A. packet 'ping-pong' bidding. Members were also kept busy with a large offering of APS and USS circuit books. And yes, there was plenty of pumpkin pie.

5 December President **Matthew Cassetta** presiding, 12 members present. **Tadas Osmolskis** announced that revisions and updating of the club's website are due to appear by the second week of December. **Tadas** and **Daniel Piazza** have been responsible for this task.

Although we experienced the first snow of the season, stalwart members appeared ready to chat and review the new circuit books. Many spent additional time with the ever popular "nickel-box" of world wide stamps. **Virginia Randolph**, as an addendum to a previous "windfall stories" program, exhibited two Liberian triangulares with small overprints which dealers/collectors appeared to have missed until **Virginia** adopted them from a dime-box at a local show. **Phil Uhlmann** shared a wonderful story about the so-called "dead-letter section" of the post office. A young girl wrote and mailed (with enclosing photos) a letter to God about her recently deceased dog. Yes, she received an answer: the photo and her letter returned, a letter of assurance that God will cherish the as the does and a book by Mr. Rogers on children grieving a death. Admittedly, the USPS often gets it exactly right.

19 December President **Matthew Cassetta** presiding, 34 members and guests present. Treasurer, **Joel Fassler**, presented a financial report. The club's active account stands at about \$4,000. He also announced that he final proceeds of the Washington Philatelic Society's Turner Collection of DC Postal History of about \$71,000 was being distributed as follows: \$50,000 to the American Philatelic Research Library where a room will be named for George T. Turner, \$20,000 to the WSCC to be invested in high interest bearing instruments for the club's benefit, and the remaining funds to the club's active account. **Don Peterson** opined that the club would do well to send a letter of thanks and appreciation to **Brock Covington** who, as form president of the Washington Philatelic Society, had the foresight to move it's membership to adopt a clause in the merger agreement to allow for the Turner sale proceeds to partially benefit the new club. **Matt Cassetta** will aid in drafting of this letter.

Annual Holiday Party and Auction followed, see account elsewhere in this newsletter.

CLASSIFIEDS

Members may place classified ads in the newsletter for free on a space available basis. The submission date for ads is the same as for other submissions, the last meeting of even numbered months. Send you copy to the Editor, C. A. Stillions at the address in the panel on the last page. Hand written or typed, mailed or hand delivered, faxed or emailed, any way is acceptable, but email is preferred.

STAMPS FOR SALE

37 + 39 cents Hi-Ends	\$17.00 a pound
34 cents and under Low-Ends	\$ 9.00 a pound
Christmas	\$ 1.00 a pound
Bulk Stamps	\$ 1.00 a pound
Appraised value 38 cents and over	5 or 10 cents a piece
Plate # stamps	5 cents a piece
Foreign Stamps	\$15.00 a pound

Order from Stamps for a Living Business,
FO18/JHP/OT Dept., 2700 M L King Avenue, S.
E., Washington, DC 20032-2601.

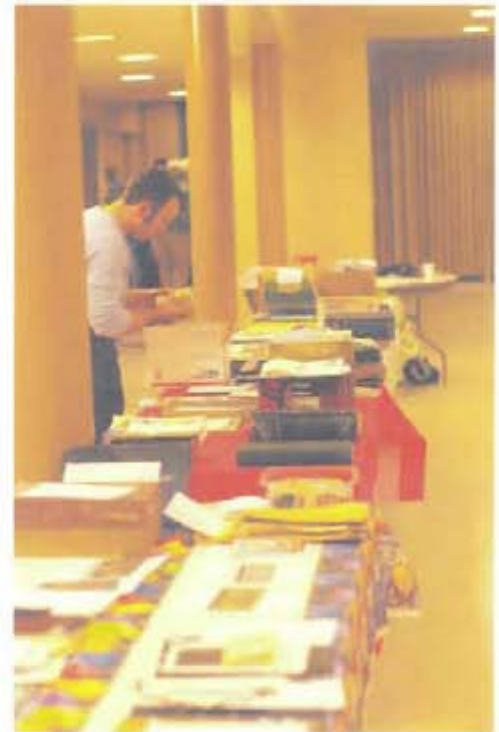
ACCOUNT OF ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Reported by Martin Fleischer



The gathering of December 19 was the WSCC Holiday Party. Taking place in Christ Unite Methodist Church's lower level social hall which provided a great space for chatting, eating, and the auction. As in years past, great food was on hand: potato-corn casserole, Thai noodles, sausage and rice, pepperoni and cheese, chicken, assorted cakes, pies, and cookies and PUNCH.

The auction was gaveled by Tadas Osmolskis (Thanks!). Of the mostly philatelic items Scott International Albums (\$10-\$15), numerous cartons and tins of stamps (\$3-\$8), and interesting smaller lots of U. S., world-wide, Belgium, Poland, and Switzerland were sold. An interesting lot of retired circuit books and numerous lots of U. S., censored mail, and world-wide covers drew out bidders. Many members left with some fine philatelic Christmas presents for themselves.



Many thanks to the members who set-up for the party and those members and their guests who helped to clean up afterwards. HAPPY HOLIDAY TO ALL.

NPM Library Open One Saturday a Month through May 2008

The National Postal Museum Library (<http://www.sil.si.edu/libraries/npm>) was opened on some Saturdays this past summer as an experiment to encourage further use of the facility. The results demonstrated some public interest, and the pilot program has been extended. The library will be open from 10 AM to 4 PM on the third Saturday of each month through May 17, 2008.

On the Metro, take the Red Line to Union Station; if driving, there is ample parking in the Union Station garage. On entering the museum, tell the volunteer at the reception desk or a security guard that you wish to use the library and ask them to contact library staff. The phone number is 202-633-5544.

At the end of the trial period, the results will be evaluated to see whether there was enough public use to justify making these once-monthly Saturday hours permanent. So "use them or lose them!"

WASHINGTON STAMP COLLECTORS CLUB

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Membership information may be obtained from the Executive Secretary. Dues are due June 30th and are \$16.00 a year for resident members, \$8.00 a year for non-resident members, and \$8.00 a year for junior members.

Meeting are held the First and Third Wednesdays of the month at Christ United Methodist Church, 900 Fourth Street, S. W., Washington, DC starting at 7:00 PM. (Enter Church Education wing from I Street, S.W.)

POSTMASTER

THIS NEWSLETTER CONTAINS DATED MATERIAL

PLEASE DO NOT DELAY DELIVERY!

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