

THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA STAMP & COLLECTORS CLUB

Successor to the Philadelphia Stamp Club
and The Collectors Club of Philadelphia, Founded 1885
American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18



<https://www.gpscc.org>

December 2023

Volume 11, Issue 11

HOLIDAY DINNER

Our annual holiday dinner on **December 19** starts with cocktails at 6:00 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. at The W Tavern located at 210 York Road in Willow Grove, PA. If you haven't already RSVPed and you want to attend, please send a note as soon as possible to newsletter@gpscc.org. Spouses and significant others are invited as well.

Bring cash to pay your portion of the bill. You will be responsible for any alcoholic beverages.

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AND THE NAME OF THE NEWSLETTER IS...DRUMROLL PLEASE...

The Philly Philatelist!

Of the 31 names entered, *The Philly Philatelist* was the winner in a landslide. It received a total of 46 points with six first place votes (worth 5 points each), five second place votes (worth 3 points each), and one third place vote (worth one point each).

The individual who submitted the winning name wishes to remain anonymous, but they will receive a well-deserved prize.

Honorable mentions include:

- *Greater PHILA delphia Stamp & Collectors Club TELIC* – Bruce Marsden (14 points)
- *Pennsylvania Stamp & Postal History Club* – Phil Russell (13 points)
- *The Perf & Postmark - Philatelic News* – Paul Miller (11 points)
- *The Striding Messenger* – Mike Wilson (11 points)

Nineteen of the 31 names entered received at least one vote.

Thank you to everyone who submitted a name and to everyone who took the opportunity to vote.

The Philly Philatelist will be on the masthead with the January 2024 edition.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – DECEMBER 2023

Paul F. Miller

Happy Holidays!

The holiday season is upon us, and we are all busy with a myriad of important things to do and see. Some of the best things to do include spending time with family and friends. Whether you attend big parties with lots of people, or just have a few people at a smaller gathering, this is the perfect time of year to enjoy life and those around you. A cheerful present, and a well-remembered past is a great way to spend holidays with others.

Now, I realize that this time of the year your stamp collection may not be at the top of your mind. But I am sure that it sits on the shelf, watching you enjoy the holidays, and knowing that it is not forgotten. It is just getting some time to rest. Maybe a nice present for both you and your stamp collection would be to acquire a new stamp (or stamps) this holiday season. Or better yet, maybe you can acquire some stamps and introduce stamp collecting to a loved one to enhance and grow the hobby.

In addition to all the fun and excitement of the holiday season, I believe that it also can be a time of thankfulness. Being thankful for your health and happiness; being thankful for those around you. I know that I am thankful for my family and friends – and I include the GPSCC members in that, too.

I am thankful for a great year that 2023 has been for the GPSCC. I look back and am happy and proud of the year we have had. The membership has grown; the meetings are well attended; participation and conversations at the meetings move along nicely; we have

had some really great speakers and presentations; and we even picked up a few awards along the way for our enhanced newsletter and new website. (We may also be starting a new tradition with a December newsletter, which has not been the case in the past. We can be thankful for that, too!)

So, I will close with this thought...

May this holiday season fill your home and life with joy and happiness. I hope you make the most out of your holidays and enjoy a Happy New Year, too.



AWARDS AND HONORS

At the Chicagopex show in Illinois in November, **Mark Schwartz** had two entries in the Single Frame Champion-of-Champions competition: "The Use of Boston's 'Paid in Grid' Cancels 1851-59" and "The 'Special Arrangement' between Liverpool and the U.S. – 1843-1848." In the multi-frame competition, he won a large gold, the Felix Ganz reserve grand award, the best exhibit by a member of the Collectors Club of Chicago, and the United States Stamp Society medal for his "The New York Postmaster Provisional." In the single frame open competition Mark took a gold for "The First U.S. Postal Card 1873."

A large gold and the single frame grand award at Florex in Deland, Florida in December, went to **Vern Morris** for his "World's Third Producer of Stamps: Philadelphia Local Post Fee Reduction, 1842 to 1861." Vern also had a non-competitive display, "Evolution and Development of the USPO 1685 to 1799."

NEXT MEETING

January 16, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

Community Rooms
GIANT Supermarket
315 N. York Rd., Willow Grove, PA

Dinner:

For those who would like to join us for dinner beforehand, we will meet at The W Tavern, about a block from GIANT, at 5:00 p.m. for cocktails followed by dinner at 5:30 p.m.

210 York Rd., Willow Grove, PA

CALL FOR AUTHORS!

Have something philatelic that you would like to share? Know of an article from another publication that you think others would like to read? Send Mike Wilson a note at newsletter@gpscc.org, and he'll include it in an upcoming newsletter.



DUES ARE NOW DUE!

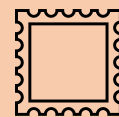
By now you should have received your invoice in the mail for renewing your annual GPSCC membership. Dues are \$12 per year. Make any changes to your membership information and send your dues to the GPSCC P.O. Box listed on page 4. Memberships renewed after December 31 cost \$15 for reinstatement.

Members who were new in 2023 will not get an invoice in the mail! Thanks to a generous donation made to the GPSCC, they get their first FULL year, 2024, FREE!

FREE DUES FOR 2023 AND 2024 OFFERED FOR NEW MEMBERS!

We will continue to offer free membership to anyone who joins during 2024. We are able to do this because of a generous donation by a GPSCC member to encourage stamp collectors to join the GPSCC.

So now is a good time to spread the word to friends to try out a membership in an active local stamp club!



CLUB MAILING ADDRESS

Greater Philadelphia Stamp &
Collectors Club
P.O. Box 446
Willow Grove, PA 19090-0446

UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS 2024

Jan. 16 – Feb. 20 – Mar. 19 – Apr. 16 – May 21
– Jun. 18 – Aug. 20 – Sep. 17 – Oct. 15 – Nov.
19 – Dec. 17 (Holiday Dinner)

OFFICERS

President

Paul Miller

president@gpscc.org

VP & Programs

Phil Russell

vpprograms@gpscc.org

Treasurer

Bruce Marsden

treasurer@gpscc.org

Acting Secretary

Letty Moon

secretary@gpscc.org

Newsletter

Mike Wilson

newsletter@gpscc.org

Shows & Events

Alan Warren

showsevents@gpscc.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 22-23, 2023 - [Lancaster Stamp Show](#), Farm & Home Center of Lancaster County, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA

December 30, 2023 – [Gettypex Stamp Show](#), Gettysburg Fire Company, 35 North Stratton St., Gettysburg PA

March 2, 2024 – Northeastern Pennsylvania Stamp Show, Bernadine Hall at Saints Peter and Paul Church, 13 Hudson Rd., Plains PA (sponsored by Wyoming Valley Stamp Club, bourse only)

April 6-7, 2024 – [Springpex 2024](#), Springfield Stamp Club, John R. Lewis High School, 6540 Franconia Rd., Springfield VA



WEBSITE: <https://www.gpscc.org>

CLUB SECRETARY NEEDED

Letty Moon is stepping down after ten years of service. Thank you for your continued service Letty!

We are looking for a volunteer who could writeup minutes for our meetings and handle some communications with our members. The pay is great! Ok, it's zero, but think of the good karma you'll build up. And by the way, you don't need to be a female to apply.

Contact any officer if you could volunteer, and we will give you all the help that you could need!

AMERICAN TOPICAL ASSOCIATION “MY ONE-PAGE EXHIBIT”

On November 21, the American Topical Association (ATA) announced the opening of year four of its successful virtual exhibiting program, “My One-Page Exhibit.” The program starts December 15 and runs through February 15, 2024. The exhibit program is free to enter and open to all. ATA membership is not required to participate.

Rather than offering judging or popularity votes, the program focuses on expression, storytelling and sharing. The previous three years’ entries realized hundreds of exhibits from countries around the globe. Many entries were submitted by ATA members giving the global philatelic family a glimpse of our topical and other philatelic interests. Submissions included exhibits from the United States, Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Peru, Austria, Italy, Columbia, Germany, and more. Exhibitors ranged from novice youths to international large gold recipients.

Literally a single page, either 8.5” x 11” or 11” x 17” in size, the exhibit represents an accessible way for newcomers to philatelic exhibiting to become engaged in this aspect of the hobby. For experienced one- and multi-frame competitive exhibitors, the My One-Page Exhibit Program provides a place to explore new themes and topics and share important stories.

My One-Page Exhibit is an opportunity for experienced exhibitors not only to create and share interesting items from their collections that may be outliers from their exhibits but also to take an active role in promoting exhibiting to those who want to try exhibiting for the first time.

The 2024 My One-Page Exhibit Program opens for entry submission on December 15, 2023 and closes on February 15, 2024. Exhibits will be submitted on the website – www.ataexhibits.com. Exhibit instructions and requirements are posted on the Program Rules page of the site. Exhibits in the 2024 program will be available for viewing on the website by April 1, 2024 and will remain online throughout the year. Visit www.ataexhibits.com for updates and details.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mike Wilson

As most stamp collectors know, the British Guiana 1-cent magenta is the world’s rarest and most valuable stamp. But did you also know that it is the world’s most expensive object by weight? Check out this 4-minute YouTube [video](#) for the full story.

*British Guiana
1-cent Magenta*



GPSCC MEMBERS ON YOUTUBE!

The U.S. Postal Service posted a video to YouTube from this year’s Great American Stamp Show. At the 3 minute 45 second mark of this [video](#) (might want to turn down your sound for the opening), you’ll catch a glimpse of GPSCC member **Richard Brent** in the middle of the screen. Way to go Richard!



Great American Stamp Show USPS Highlights

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 21, 2023, GPSCC MEETING

President Paul Miller started the meeting with some new business. He congratulated our newsletter editor and website designer, Mike Wilson on the APS awards which the Club won for both. The newsletter was one of five to win a Gold medal in the Star Route Awards competition and our website was awarded a Vermeil. Thank you for your work, Mike! Some helpful improvements were suggested by the jury which are being put in place, such as coming up with a name for our newsletter.

Paul also reported to us on the November 15 auction of an Inverted Jenny stamp at the Siegel Auction Galleries in New York, which caused a lot of excitement in the philatelic community. For those who watched, the auction lasted a little over 2 minutes. It was sold to Charles Hack for \$2 million. Coverage of this sales appeared in many types of news media, which usually do not cover philatelic events.

Paul said that he had been watching a YouTube video of the Great American Stamp Show and he caught a glimpse of one of our members, Richard Brent, who was in attendance. Paul printed out a screen shot to show Richard and the rest of us.

Secretary's Report: The dues invoices for 2023 membership were sent out October 1 with Anne Gibby helping Letty Moon to organize the mass mailing. Of our 59 members, 26 have renewed and paid as of this date and several more paid this evening.

Letty reminded the group that the newsletter is not usually produced in December since there is no regular meeting. However, Mike Wilson said that he would not mind producing a brief newsletter to send out just to keep everyone informed and up to date.

Treasurer's Report: Bruce Marsden has found a solution to our bank, Santander, increasing their fee for the club's business checking account. He will close out the old account as soon as all the checks have cleared and open a new personal checking account for the club in his name, minus the fees usually charged to business accounts.

Old Business: We discussed details for the December 19th Holiday Dinner at The W Tavern. Happy hour will be 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be 6:30 p.m. We will each order separately off the menu. The Club will contribute a base amount per person for our dinners, and the remainder will be split equally by each of us. Individuals will pay for their own bar drinks. Therefore, we need a head count of those planning to attend. A notice will be sent out asking if you will attend and giving all the details about the event. People need to bring cash (not cards) to make payment easy.

Program: Macario Sarreal was our speaker and his program was, "Japanese Occupation of the Philippines," an award-winning presentation. Mac first gave us a chronology of the key events beginning on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked the Philippines. He then focused on two Filipinos who were involved in the military, one of whom was part of his family, and finally he covered the many changes which took place in production and modification of stamps used during this turbulent period.

Unrelated to his fine program, Mac also reminded us that the Saturday Bourses which the Merchantville Stamp Club sponsors, will be moving locations after the end of 2023.

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 21, 2023, GPSCC MEETING (CONTINUED)

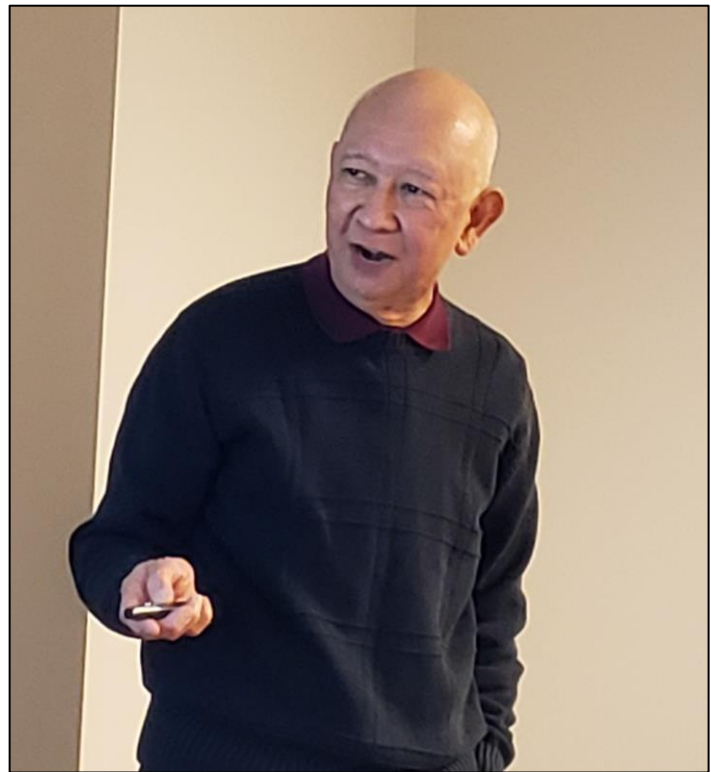
Show & Tell & Discuss: Phil Russell passed around a book, *Ghost Soldiers – The Epic Account of World War II Greatest Rescue Missions*, by Hampton Sides. It is about the World War II Allied prison camp raid at Cabanatuan in the Philippines.

rather than scheduling a speaker, and we could ask everyone to bring in something to share. March 2024 might be a good month for this.

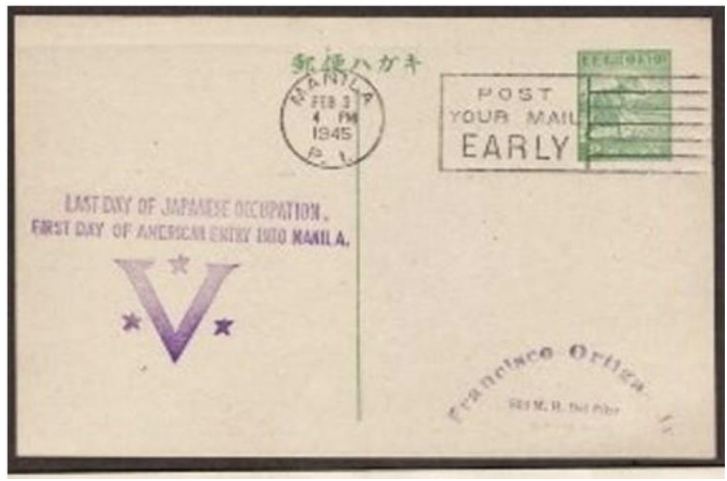
Respectfully submitted by Letty Moon

Anne Gibby asked about having longer meetings so that we have more time for discussion and show & tell. We were reminded that the Giant limits the use of their rooms until 8:30 p.m. We decided that maybe we should schedule a meeting which is all show & tell,

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Right: Mac Sarreal During His Presentation
Below: Excerpts from Mac's slides. His full slide show is available on our [website](#).



STAMP HISTORY: CHRISTMAS STAMPS – A FEW “FIRSTS”

Paul F. Miller

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Christmas stamps have been issued over time by various countries for many years. In the United States, the U.S. Post Office entered the game relatively late with its first Christmas stamp issued on November 1, 1962. Figure 1 shows the stamp.



Figure 1
Scott 1205

Why did it take so long for the United States to issue its first Christmas stamp? Apparently, there was some concern about litigation over a perceived conflict involving a separation of church and state.

For several years prior to the actual issuance of the first Christmas stamp, the U.S. Post Office received thousands of letters a year from citizens asking for a Christmas themed stamp. Eventually, the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee supported the idea and recommended a Christmas stamp, which was officially announced in May 1962.

As was expected, there was some controversy. Several legal actions were taken to block the release of the stamp, but they all failed.

The result was the first of many Christmas stamps to be issued throughout the years in the United States. Due to the excitement generated by this new Christmas stamp, the U.S. Post Office expected a huge demand. To accommodate this, 350 million stamps were printed – the most ever for a special stamp at that time. All stamps quickly sold out and many more were printed. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing eventually printed about 1 billion stamps by the end of the year!

This first Christmas stamp is part of a series commonly known as the Contemporary Christmas stamps – those that generally have images of modern Christmas celebrations. In 1966, a new series was introduced as the Traditional Christmas stamps – those with classic artwork of religious images. Over the years, the USPS expanded its holiday themed stamps. In 1996, they introduced the Hanukkah Series. It was followed up the next year with the Kwanzaa Series. The first Eid stamp was issued in 2001 and a Diwali stamp was released in 2016.

The Christmas series has seen several interesting “firsts” over the years, including the first se-tenant stamps (Figure 2), the first self-adhesive stamp (Figure 3), the first non-denominated stamps (Figures 4a and 4b), and the first self-adhesive coil stamps with a plate number (Figure 5). All are shown in order on the following page.

STAMP HISTORY: CHRISTMAS STAMPS – A FEW “FIRSTS” (CONTINUED)



Figure 2
Scott 1254-1257



Figure 3
Scott 1552



Figures 4a and 4b
Scott 1579 and 1580



Figure 5
Scott 2799-2802

One final note...

All of these “firsts” are nice for United States stamps, but what was the real “first” Christmas stamp issued – ever? Well, it is pretty much agreed that the first Christmas stamps were issued by Canada in 1898 (Figure 6).

The 1898 2-cent stamp features a collage of Queen Victoria’s crown at the top, a Mercator map of the world with the nations and colonies of the British Empire displayed in red, “XMAS 1898”, and the phrase, “We

hold a vaster empire than has been.” It was actually issued to mark the inauguration of the Imperial Penny Postage rate, which went into effect on December 25, 1898.

There is a whole story behind the creation of these first Christmas stamps, but I will leave that story for another time, another newsletter.



Figure 6
Canada Scott 85 & 86

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF COVERS

Alan Warren

Many of us collect covers, which places a burden on each one of us to preserve them while they are in our “custody.” We do not own these covers but are merely temporary curators of the material until it is passed along to another collector by trade or sale or other means. We have a duty to protect and preserve these little gems while they are in our possession.

Plastic Sleeves

In order to insure that these covers enjoy a longer life expectancy, they should not be stored loose or with other covers touching them. Every cover should be placed temporarily in a sleeve. The selection of the sleeve is important.

Many types of plastic films are used to make sleeves for storing covers. Acceptable materials include polypropylene, polyethylene, and to some extent polystyrene. However, the ideal cover sleeve for long term storage should be made from PET or polyethylene terephthalate. The trade names identified with this material are Mylar®, formerly made by DuPont, and Melinex®, which is currently available.

These plastics are not only used to make sleeves for cover storage but in some cases also to produce corner mounts and page or sheet protectors used for enclosing exhibit pages. PET products are sold to many institutions that require the highest degree of archival storage and include organizations like the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress. They may be more expensive than the other plastics but, for our best philatelic items, they are worth the extra degree of protection.

One popular type of sleeve for many years was made of PVC or polyvinyl chloride. The older versions of this product proved detrimental to

the covers or stamps stored in them. With time the plastic broke down and evolved degradation products that actually attacked the contents. Symptoms include discoloration of the vinyl sleeve (often developing a tinge of yellow), discoloration of the cover itself, and damage to the cover including postal markings and cachets as they reacted chemically with the deteriorating vinyl.

Vinyl also was sometimes used for first day cover or other cover albums for storing the items. Today some vendors offer a newer type of vinyl sleeve and describe it as “safety” vinyl. So check your cover albums and sleeves to be sure you do not have this older type of material. If you do, remove the contents and trash the bad sleeves and albums.

A good source of information on preserving your collections and understanding the physics and chemistry of preservation will be found on the web site of the American Philatelic Society’s committee on the Preservation and Care of Philatelic Materials (see below). Here you can learn not only about these plastic sleeves but also a host of other important discussions on hinges, cleaning stamps and covers, removing tape, watermark detectors, use of “glue sticks” and temporary adhesive notes, and many other topics. Some of these newer materials for mounting and documenting our philatelic items have not been around long enough for us to observe the effects of time. Caution is the watchword.



APS Website on
Preservation and
Care:

[http://stamps.org/
Preservation-
and-Care](http://stamps.org/Preservation-and-Care)

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF COVERS (CONTINUED)

Stuffers

Old stiffeners in covers often do more harm than good. When that first day or event cover was created in the 1930s, the servicer may have thought the stiffener or stuffer he inserted would not only permit a clearer strike of the cancellation but also help prevent bends and creases. I make it a point to carefully open covers that appear to contain something. Old newspaper articles are the worst culprits as the high acid content paper stains the cover.

However, the contents of some of these covers may be important. They could be letters or messages from the sender that pertain to the cover's origin and purpose, or they may be advertising inserts by cover servicers or cachetmakers that provide additional knowledge. These can be removed and shown on the same page along with the cover when exhibiting.

Opening a sealed cover that appears to contain something that may be damaging, or conversely an insert that might increase our knowledge, can be a challenge. I have found that by taking a thin-bladed knife, it is amazing how many of these loosely sealed covers can be opened by applying just a little pressure under and along the envelope flap. However, if that fails, then I suggest that a paper cutter or scissors be used to slice open the end of the cover opposite of where the stamp and cancel are. The contents can then be removed.

After the contents have been removed, I recommend inserting only a thin piece of PET that can be cut from an old Mylar sleeve or page protector. If you look at some old covers you may find that the envelope was folded by the manufacturer using glue that has now turned brown and bleeds through onto the front of the cover from inside. One way to halt this damage is to insert a safe plastic film.

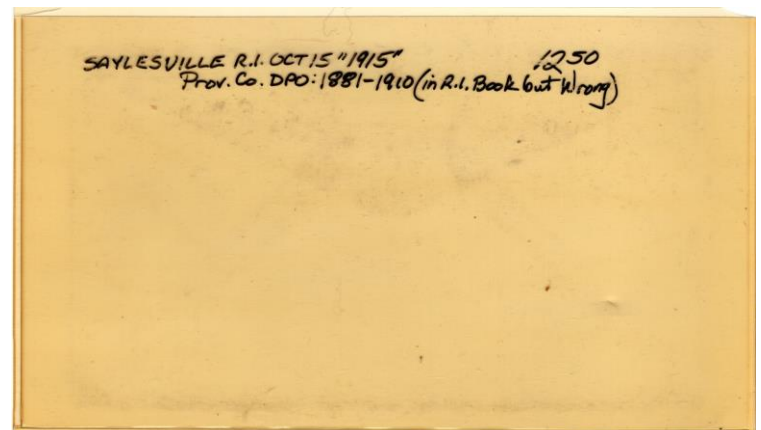
Pencil Markings

Markings on covers should be avoided, especially on the front. We think of pencil marks as easily erased but some people have used a hard pencil that leaves an indentation on the cover. Older covers might tear easily when trying to use an eraser. I have seen covers mounted on exhibit pages where the catalog number or selling price of the cover is still there in pencil.

If you want to keep notes about your cover, put the information on a separate slip of paper and place it in the sleeve until you write up the details in an article or on the exhibit page. If you want to call attention to a cancel or marking that is useful in the sale or trade of a cover, use a pen that allows the information to be written on the cover sleeve. Just be sure to write on the sleeve before inserting the cover!

Treat your covers with respect. They are entitled to TLC.

At right is an example of an old PVC cover sleeve that has gone bad. If you have any sleeves like this in your collection, replace them ASAP.



REPORT OF THE NOVEMBER 18, 2023, PHILATELIC GATHERING



Seventeen members attended the last meeting for 2023 at the Chester County History Center.

Vince Costello started with his program “Santa Claus: His Story on Post Cards.” Using vintage picture post cards from his collection, Vince portrayed the iconic Christmastime figure known around the world. He described the other familiar names such as Kris Kringle and Saint Nicholas, depending on the country of origin.

Some of the themes included treatment of naughty kids with a switch or lumps of coal, the Rocking Horse Santa, his transportation by sleigh and other means, and images of the American cartoonist Thomas Nast.

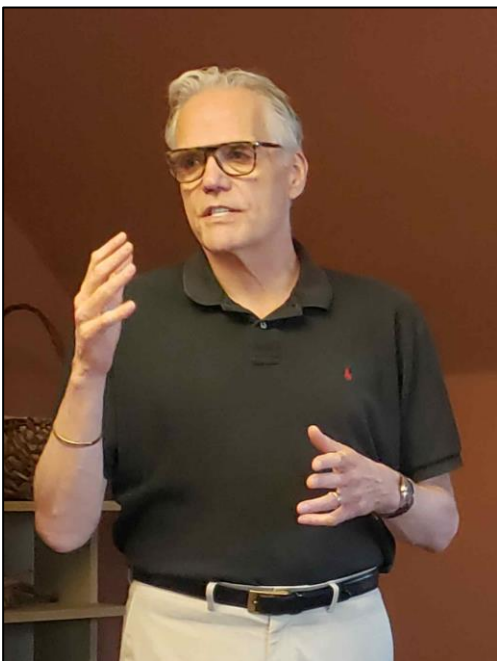
The final speaker, Kean Spencer, displayed some of his magnificent collection of stamp boxes and cases and discussed their evolution. The first containers were used for wafers that replaced sealing wax and other envelope

closures. The first boxes appeared in 1851 and were made of wood and brass. Stamp cases were used to dispense the stamps and were known in both cardboard and wood.

Later, more elaborate boxes were made of silver, porcelain, and even gold. Other postage stamp dispensers were designed to be carried on the person. The years 1880 to 1915 were the heyday for stamp boxes.

Rounds of applause for both speakers were followed by special recognition of Bill Schultz who created the concept of holding Saturday philatelic meetings, later named The Philatelic Gathering. Kean Spencer was also recognized for stepping into Bill’s shoes beginning with the 2024 meetings.

Provided by Alan Warren



Above: Kean Spencer with Two of His Many Stamp Boxes and Cases



Below: Vince Costello Speaking on “Santa Claus: His Story on Post Cards.”

