



# THE PHILLY PHILATELIST

Award-Winning Newsletter of the Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club

Founded 1904

American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18

March 2024

www.GPSCC.org

Volume 12, Issue 3

## NEXT MEETING

March 19, 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

## IN THIS ISSUE

	Page
President's Message	1, 4
March 19, 2024 Program	2
Awards and Honors	2
Upcoming Events	3
Club Secretary Needed	4
Minutes of the January Meeting	5-6
Did You Know?	6
Post Box Woes	7
Abraham Lincoln Campaign Cover	8
Operation Cornflakes	9
Philatelic Gathering	10
Letters and Post Cards Exhibit	10



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Paul F. Miller

Each month I enjoy seeing the results of *The Philly Philatelist*. It is an invaluable extension of our club. For those of you who cannot attend a live meeting, I view the newsletter as the next best way to get information out to our members.

Not only is it a great resource for up-to-date matters regarding the club, it is also a terrific source for interesting content. I try to add articles and items where I can, and Mike does a wonderful job of adding content and assembling all of it into a wonderful, easy-to-read format.

Content is a great way for all collectors to get exposure to areas of stamp collecting that you might not otherwise readily find on your own. That is why I am excited when I hear about new content offerings that are readily available to everyone.

We are very fortunate right now to have a new, free content offering from the American Philatelic Society (APS). It is called *StampEd*, and it was just released within the past month. You can find the first issue of this new digital magazine at <https://stamped.pub>.

So, what is *StampEd*? I am going to cheat a bit here and give you some of the information straight from the APS website, in case you have not seen or heard about it yet.

“APS’s new digital magazine, *StampEd* will be released on a quarterly basis, online-only, and is completely free, easy to access (no log-in required), and sharable.

(Continued on p. 4)

**PROGRAM FOR MARCH 19, 2024:  
THE SPANISH ISABELLA ISSUES OF 1855-1859**

GPSCC member **Jaume Balsells** will present "The Spanish Isabella Issues of 1855-1859." Jaume will talk about the different values and types and why they present challenges for U.S. collectors relying on the Scott catalogue. He will also show postal uses and other varieties covered by Scott.



*Jaume Balsells*



**AWARDS AND HONORS**

At the San Diego Stamp Show in February, **Vernon Morris** received a large gold, the APS pre-1900 medal of excellence, and the United States Philatelic Classics Society award for his "Evolution of American Colonial Mail to Postal Act of 1792-1799."

Also in San Diego, **Mark Schwartz** took a large gold with his "Independent Mail and Express Operations at Boston 1843-1845" and another large gold for his "Packet Mail Sent from Essex County, Mass. 1840 to UPU."

Mark will be the speaker at the GPSCC June 2024 meeting. His presentation is titled, "The New York Postmaster Provisional."



*Vernon Morris*



*Mark Schwartz*

**OFFICERS***President*

Paul Miller

[president@gpscc.org](mailto:president@gpscc.org)*VP & Programs*

Phil Russell

[vpprograms@gpscc.org](mailto:vpprograms@gpscc.org)*Treasurer*

Bruce Marsden

[treasurer@gpscc.org](mailto:treasurer@gpscc.org)*Acting Secretary*

Letty Moon

[secretary@gpscc.org](mailto:secretary@gpscc.org)*Newsletter*

Michael L. Wilson

[newsletter@gpscc.org](mailto:newsletter@gpscc.org)*Shows & Events*

Alan Warren

[showsevents@gpscc.org](mailto:showsevents@gpscc.org)**CLUB MAILING ADDRESS**

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

**WEB SITE**[www.gpscc.org](http://www.gpscc.org)**FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM**[@gpscc19090](https://www.instagram.com/gpscc19090)**UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS**

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

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**March 15-17** – [Garfield-Perry March Party](#), Best Western Plus, 15471 Royalton Rd., Strongsville OH 44136

**April 6** – [NEPPEX](#) Northeastern Pennsylvania Stamp Show, Bernardine Hall at Saints Peter and Paul Church, 14 Hudson Rd., Plains PA 18705 (bourse only)

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

**April 12-14** – [Philatelic Show 2024](#), Boxboro Regency Hotel and Conference Center, 242 Adams Place, Boxborough, MA 01719

**May 4** – [DELPEX](#), Nur Shrine Center, 198 S. DuPont Parkway U.S. Route 13, New Castle DE

**June 1** – [NEPPEX Northeastern Pennsylvania Stamp Show](#), Bernardine Hall at Saints Peter and Paul Church, 14 Hudson Rd., Plains PA 18705 (bourse only)

**June 7-9** – [NAPEX](#), McLean Hilton at Tyson's Corner, 7920 Jones Branch Dr, McLean VA

**June 22-23** – [SCOPEX](#), Mount Nittany Philatelic Society, American Philatelic Center, Bellefonte PA

**July 15-19** – [APS Volunteer Work Week](#), American Philatelic Center, Bellefonte, Pa.

**August 15-18** – [Great American Stamp Show '24](#), Connecticut Convention Center, Hall AB, 100 Columbus Blvd., Hartford, CT 06103

**FREE DUES FOR 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.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

“*StampEd*’s mission is to reach a new generation of stamp collectors – online, community-oriented, curious, and engaged with stamp collecting in new and exciting ways. The magazine will share entry-level practical collecting advice, explore the many ways people come to collecting, and how stamp collecting intertwines and intersects with other interests and hobbies. Finally, *StampEd* embraces the future of stamp collecting and celebrates the existing and growing online stamp collecting community.

“The magazine will be divided into three major sections, called “DesignEd,” “ConnectEd” and “SkillEd.” DesignEd is art and design-focused; ConnectEd is focused on human interest and community building; and SkillEd will offer general collecting knowledge and skill-building opportunities, as well as mentorship.

“*StampEd* is much more about embracing curiosity, being engaged and connected, and opening yourself to looking at stamp collecting in new ways. If that sounds like you, whether you’re 80 or 20 years old, you are so welcome.”

So, there you have it! A new magazine with a new twist by the APS. Take a look at it now and return again in future quarters to check out the new content that they have lined up. I wish the APS much success with their new magazine.

Oh, and if you are feeling generous, you can support the success of the publication by making a donation. Look for the “Support” link on the top, left-hand side of the webpage!

## CLUB SECRETARY NEEDED

Letty Moon is stepping down June 1, 2024, after 12 years of service as secretary and acting secretary. We really appreciate Letty’s service, including agreeing to serve as acting secretary for an extended period.

With Letty setting an official end date, it’s now gotten serious folks. We need a volunteer who can write up minutes for our meetings and handle some communications with our members.

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



*Editor’s plea: I’m now frustrated including this in every newsletter! Someone please volunteer! The other officers will be more than happy to lend a hand to help you get up to speed.*

## CALL FOR AUTHORS!

If you have something philatelic that you would like to share or know of an article from another publication that you think others would like to read, send me a note at [newsletter@gpscc.org](mailto:newsletter@gpscc.org),

As for submitting an article, I’ll take any format, but the optimal would be a Word document with images embedded in that document or sent separately.

As for length, 750 words with two or three images will fill up two pages of the newsletter. Shorter pieces are fine, as are longer ones. The latter could be spread over a couple of issues, or I could lengthen an issue.

Give it a thought. You can tell all your friends you’re a published author. In fact, if you take up Paul Miller’s offer of free membership for a year (see the [February 2024 newsletter](#)), you can say you’re a paid author!

- Michael L. Wilson



## MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 20, 2024, GPSCC MEETING

President Paul Miller started the meeting giving a summary of our December 19 Holiday Dinner at The W Tavern. A good time was had by all.

He then commented on our award-winning newsletter, *The Philly Philatelist*, and he thanked its editor, Mike Wilson, for producing it with so many interesting articles. The club's newsletter received a Gold medal and its website received a Vermeil medal in the 2023 APS-sponsored Star Route Awards competition. All the winners were announced in the January 2024 issue of *The American Philatelist*, the monthly journal of the APS.

**Secretary's Report:** Letty reported that all the dues are in now. We have 52 members. We have lost five members due to health reasons, giving up the hobby, and a few just never responded. A new member joined tonight. We should all have received via email an updated membership list for 2024, which included emails and collecting interests.

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) did not serve us well this year, losing Bruce's check for payment for our post office (P.O.) box in Willow Grove. After much confusion and delay, the P.O. box was paid for, and the block was taken off. We were without the mailbox for about three weeks. See the whole story in this newsletter. Put the blame on the USPS and "human error" at our local post office.

Letty gave notice that she will step down from being Acting Secretary on June 1. The members need to give some serious thought to appointing someone to take over for Letty after almost twelve years of volunteering. Duties are mainly: recording minutes at meetings, writing up the minutes for the newsletter, sending out the annual invoices for dues, and keeping membership records.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bruce has changed our bank account so that it is no longer a business account which has reasonable costs. He is still watching the bank statement for the recent check sent to the Willow Grove Post Office to renew our rental box, which was apparently lost by the USPS.

**Old Business:** Mike Wilson reminded us that we have an Instagram account which has about 100 followers. He would welcome any pictures of your stamps that you might like to post there.

**New Business:** Paul asked members to please submit articles with new content for future newsletters to keep it fresh and interesting. To encourage this, Paul announced a challenge to the membership: If you write two articles and they are published in *The Philly Philatelist*, you will receive free membership for the following calendar year! Start writing everybody!

An announcement was made about the West Suburban Stamp Club's Plymouth Show on April 20 and 21 in Westland, Michigan. It is an APS World Series of Philately show.

Our March speaker will be our new member, Jaune Balsells. In April we will have Michael Heller and in May we will have an all-member Show & Tell.

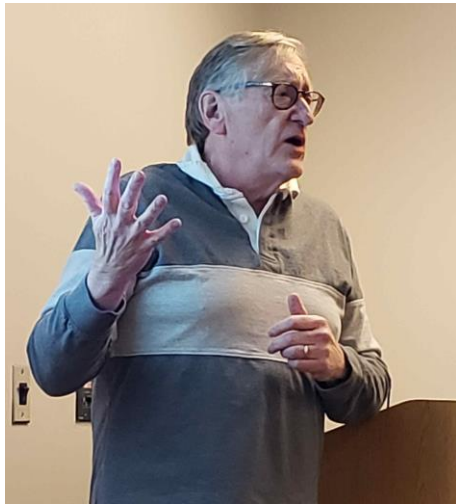
**Program:** Mike Wilson presented, "National Air Mail Week – A Big Deal in 1938". He discussed the plans laid out by James Farley, Postmaster General at the time, to promote awareness and enthusiasm for airmail, which had only been around for 20 years. The event was held May 15–21, 1938 and was the inspiration for many cachets and other items which today are interesting to collect. Mike passed around some of the 10,000 items which can be affordably collected from that event.

**Show, Tell & Discuss:** Robert Cohen brought in some Mystic Year in Stamps blank pages for the taking.

Ed Weisberg put out a number of books on stamps, also for the taking.

(Continued on next page)

FEBRUARY 20, 2024 MINUTES (CONTINUED)



Michael L. Wilson and His Title Slide

Letty Moon brought a postcard announcing that Alderfer Auctions of Hatfield was holding a stamp auction on February 28.

We welcomed a guest tonight who became our newest member, Thomas Almerini. Thom told us that he has been a collector for 50 years and belongs to many philatelic organizations. He is

very active in the Bux-Mont Stamp Club and had heard of our club through our website. He currently collects Liberia, Indonesia, and Spain. Outside of stamps, he also collects baseball cards. Welcome Thom!

Respectfully submitted by Letty Moon.

DID YOU KNOW?

Paul F. Miller

The 2024 Chinese New Year was recently celebrated. For a number of years, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has commemorated the Chinese New Year with a variety of Lunar New Year stamps. In 2005, the USPS decided to assemble and display all the Lunar New Year designs in one souvenir sheet.

However, there was a problem. The first-class rate in 2005 was 37¢. So, the cost of the souvenir sheet would have been \$4.44 for 12 stamps. The problem - the number four is considered unlucky in Asia. It was decided, instead, to issue a double-sided sheet. The face value of the sheet of 24 stamps then totaled \$8.88. Problem solved! And the number eight is considered a lucky number in Asia.

A double win for the USPS!



US Scott 3895

## POST BOX WOES

*Letty Moon*

Renting our club's post office box has gone smoothly for the past 11 years, but recently things changed as the membership dues for 2024 came in at the end of the year.

We received notices of rent due in December and our Treasurer, Bruce Marsden, sent off our check for renewal before the end of the year. No problem. As Secretary, I received an occasional letter or email in January telling me again that the rent was overdue. I double checked with Bruce and reasoned that the post office had just not processed our payment yet. I received the last notice on January 18, and they had closed our box days earlier, claiming that they still had not received our check. Bruce and I thought it best if I went to the post office right away (since I live much closer) to ask about this and to make another payment, plus penalty, immediately.

I had been waiting for a few late letters with dues payments in January, which a few members told me they had sent off, but were returned to them as undeliverable. By now they should have arrived, so I went to pick up the mail eight days later only to find that the block was still on our box! When I went to the counter to question why, there was a lot of whispering and scurrying around until the Postmaster came out. He apologized profusely for this mistake, claiming that it was just "human error," and block was removed.

So, I next asked what happened to all of our mail? He said he wasn't sure, but the person in charge of the rental boxes would not be in until the next morning, and that he would have that person call me.

Naturally, no one called and that person was also not in the following business day. By the third day, I got someone on the phone who told me (what I already knew) that all the mail had been returned to senders.

During this period of time when I was sending out email reminders to members to pay their dues, I gave them notice that the box had been closed, it was now open again and apologizing for their checks possibly being returned. I let them know that it was okay to send their checks finally....or maybe not! One of our members had his check returned twice, and I wasn't sure if he'd have any trust in my assurance that it was safe to send a letter to our address a third time!

Things have gone smoothly since then, but Bruce keeps looking for that first lost check from December to see if it is ever returned or is cashed.

Where do lost letters go anyway?





## ABRAHAM LINCOLN CAMPAIGN COVER FROM 1860

Michael L. Wilson

This is a great Abraham Lincoln campaign cover. The cover is postmarked "October 29" but without a year. I'm fairly confident, however, that it dates from 1860.

It is franked with a 3-cent stamp from the Series of 1857-61 (Scott 26), so it could be from as early as 1857 but that is highly unlikely. It was after Lincoln lost the Illinois Senate race to Stephen Douglas in 1858 that he began to be mentioned as a presidential candidate for 1860.

But note in particular the split-rail fence across the top and down the left-hand side of the cover. Lincoln was given the nickname "Railsplitter" at a convening of Illinois Republicans in May 1860 just before he was nominated for president. Lincoln was nicknamed the Railsplitter because he had built split-rail fences as a young man and the image of a hardworking, self-reliant man appealed to voters (all male) at the time.

That fact is why I think this cover dates from the second half of 1860 and that this cover was postmarked on October 29, 1860. It is certainly from no later than 1860 because it depicts an unbearded Lincoln, and we know he grew his beard after he won

the 1860 election.

The illustration on this cover is listed in *Abraham Lincoln Illustrated Envelopes and Letter Paper 1860-1865* by James W. Milgram, M.D. published in 1984. Milgram catalogs it as AL-82 and notes that it is probably a copy of similar designs first published by Joseph E. Baker of Chicago. Baker's versions of this cover include the imprint "Baker-Chicago" or "Published By Baker, Chicago." The illustration on this cover has been seen on white, orange and yellow envelopes. This is clearly an orange envelope variety.

It was Joseph E. Baker (1837-1914) who drew the portrait of Lincoln seen on the cover shortly after Lincoln's 1860 presidential nomination. Baker became famous for this portrait, and during the Civil War he drew many political cartoons.

In addition to "Honest Abe" and his split-rail fence, the cover features Lincoln and his two flatboat voyages to New Orleans between 1828 and 1831. These voyages supposedly shaped Lincoln's attitudes on transportation, commerce, and especially slavery.



Cover has Philatelic Foundation certificate number 586893, which opines that it is a genuine usage of Scott 26 on a Lincoln campaign cover mailed from Corunna, Michigan. Corunna is situated between Flint and Lansing, about 90 miles northwest of Detroit. Its destination was Blackberry Station, Illinois in Kane County about 45 miles west of Chicago.



## OPERATION CORNFLAKES

*Paul F. Miller*

Have you ever heard of Operation Cornflakes? When I first heard the name, I thought it was a movement by moms to get their kids to eat a healthy breakfast!

It was actually the name for a secret U.S. operation during World War II to help overthrow Adolf Hitler and ruin the Nazi government. The secret operation involved postage stamps!

In early 1945, World War II had been raging on for some time. Germany was nearing defeat. The U.S. was hard at work trying to figure out the knock-out punch that could end the war.

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS), an intelligence agency and forerunner of today's CIA that was formed during World War II, had the responsibility of figuring out a plan. Throughout the war, one of its most effective tools was propaganda aimed at demoralizing the German people. OSS officials had always hoped that the propaganda might spark a revolt against the Nazis.

However, getting the propaganda into the hands of everyday Germans was challenging. The OSS had dropped leaflets from the air, but wind, rain, and other factors often destroyed the materials before it reached their intended audience.

With the thought of distributing propaganda in a more efficient manner, the OSS came up with a bold plan. Use Nazi government workers to distribute misinformation to their citizens via their own postal service. The OSS hoped that it might have a powerful psychological effect on the German people.

To start, the OSS interviewed German POWs who had been postal workers to learn details about the mail service. Stamp samples, cancellations, mail sacks, and envelopes were studied. Two million mailing addresses were gathered and envelopes were created using legitimate businesses as return addresses. Propaganda pieces were printed for inside the envelopes.



Most importantly, fake stamps had to be created. Current versions of the 6pf (pfennig) and 12pf German stamps picturing Adolf Hitler were forged for use on envelopes. Another version of the 12pf stamp was also printed with an image of Hitler's skull and the inscription "Futsches Reich" (meaning "Ruined Empire"). These stamps were included in the envelopes along with other anti-Nazi propaganda pieces. Images of these stamps are shown at the top of this article.

The plan was to bomb mail trains and drop mailbags with propaganda materials near the wreckage. By using specially designed bombs, the OSS hoped to mimic realistic damage caused by bombs without destroying the propaganda.

Because most mail was delivered very early in the morning, as Germans were sitting down for breakfast, the plan was called "Operation Cornflakes." The operation launched on February 5, 1945. Allied planes dropped bombs on a mail train bound for Linz, Austria, near Hitler's childhood home. Bags filled with almost 3,000 propaganda pieces were then dropped into the wreckage, where they mixed with actual German mail sacks. They were later salvaged by German authorities and delivered as usual.

Between February and April of 1945, the 14th Fighter Squadron of the 15th Air Force dropped 320 mail bags containing 96,000 forged letters during twenty missions over southern Germany and Austria. There is evidence that at least some of this mail made its way into German homes.

It was difficult to measure the operation's direct contribution to weakening German morale. However, in evaluating the success of Operation Cornflakes, 10,000 German deserters and POWs said they had been affected by the campaign. Additionally, the OSS determined that the raids taxed the Nazis by burdening their postal service and destroying mail routes.

## PHILATELIC GATHERING, FEBRUARY 24, 2024

On February 24, 2024, the Philatelic Gathering members and guests kicked off the 2024 season with two excellent lectures by two well-respected philatelists and postal historians. The first was by Bob Myers on his award-winning exhibition titled “UPU British Commonwealth and Empire Protected Specimens,” the largest such collection in private hands outside of the world’s museums and the Queen’s Collection. He brought along his exhibit of rarities and displayed for all to see.

This was followed by Dr. Charles J. DiComo whose presentation was titled “Who Needs a Doctor? This Elixir Will Do! A Primer on U.S. Revenue Private Die Proprietary Medicine Stamps and Nostrums.” He

followed up his most entertaining lecture with a hands-on exhibit of U.S. private die proprietary revenue stamps and product labels used on their original packaging as intended (bottles and boxes and wrappers). All are excited to see him return later in the year to expand the study to the Percussion and Friction Matches revenues and wrappers.

For some pictures from the event and links to the presentations, visit the [Study Group](#) page of the Philatelic Society of Lancaster County.



*The Philatelic Gathering meets the third Saturday of the month (March through December), 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Chester County Historical Society (CCHS). For more information on joining, contact Kean Spencer ([keanwspencer1@gmail.com](mailto:keanwspencer1@gmail.com)) or Dr. Charles J. DiComo ([charlesdicomo@gmail.com](mailto:charlesdicomo@gmail.com)). The CCHS is located at 225 N. High Street, West Chester, Pennsylvania. Upcoming programs are:*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lead   Host</u>	<u>Description</u>
23-Mar	Paul Pitcher	“A Tour of U.S. Collecting Possibilities Based on Advertising Covers,” by Michael L. Wilson AND “Danish West Indies Postage and Revenues,” by Kean Spencer
20-Apr	John Howker	“Tibet: Stamps and Postal History,” by Alan Warren and “Switzerland” by Bruce Marsden

## LETTERS AND POST CARDS

Through June 1, 2024, at CCHS

Guest curator and GPSCC member **Bill Schultz** shares hundreds of examples from his remarkable collection of covers (envelopes) and colorful post cards that illustrate U.S. postal delivery from and to West Chester from 1820 to 1920.

In a rare opportunity, visitors will also be able to view “Domestic Rates – U.S.P.O. Acts of 1792 to 1863,” Schultz’s nationally award-winning postal history exhibit.

