



THE PHILLY PHILATELIST

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

Founded 1904

American Philatelic Society – Chapter 18

October 2026

www.GPSCC.org

Volume 14, Issue 9

NEXT MEETING

October 20, 2026 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 cocktails and dinner beforehand (Dutch treat), we meet at The W Tavern located at 210 York Road, at 5:00 p.m. for cocktails followed by dinner at 5:30 p.m.

The W Tavern menu can be viewed here:

<https://wtavern19090.wixsite.com/my-site/menu>.

The "Grilled Bill" is a favorite of GPSCC members. It is worth checking out!

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Paul F. Miller

This month's message is all about "membership." The Cambridge Dictionary defines membership as "the state of belonging to an organization."

Membership is important because it grants individuals certain rights and privileges within a specific organization or group. It allows members to access services, participate in decisions, and benefit from the collective resources or benefits the group offers. Membership also creates a sense of belonging, which can promote cooperation, shared goals, and enhanced opportunities for professional, social, or economic development.

If you are reading this in the current GPSCC newsletter format, it is likely because you are a part of the club's membership. I thank you for being a member and participating in any way you choose. The

GPSCC membership goals are pretty simple. Operate and maintain a stamp club for the social and psychological benefit of our members who have varied interests in the world of philately. We focus on the camaraderie that we build among members that extends beyond just the newsletter or the monthly meetings. We intend to expand each member's enjoyment of their own collection and learn about the many other avenues of stamp collecting.

At this point, I want to shift my message to how we maintain our membership. This is where you have a critical role. Without you, as members, we can have no membership. GPSCC exists because folks like you want to be a member of the club. I value every member we have, and I want every member to consider a membership renewal for 2027.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Reminder notices for the 2027 year will be going out in the mail soon. Please look for your renewal notice.

In prior years we successfully offered the GPSCC Membership Dues Sweepstakes. As a reminder, the sweepstakes awarded free memberships to fifteen randomly selected existing members. Since that has been well received in the past, we will do a sweepstakes again for 2027! This will be known as the "GPSCC 2027 Membership Dues Sweepstakes."

The same process will be used again this year. No action on your part is necessary. If you are randomly selected, you will receive the normal 2027 membership dues notice in the mail, but there will be an additional page notifying you that your dues are waived for 2027! Keep your fingers crossed for that lucky selection. Regardless of the results, please know that your continued membership in the GPSCC is greatly appreciated.

In addition to our own club's membership, I have been asked by the American Philatelic Society (APS) to remind GPSCC members to take advantage of

a "Special Membership Offer" if you are not already a member of the APS.

As the APS celebrates its 140th anniversary, they are launching the most important membership drive in its history. The APS is actively implementing an ambitious [Strategic Plan](#) designed to strengthen and expand philately for current and future generations of collectors.

Over the coming months, the APS will introduce a series of exciting, new initiatives, including:

- An all-new, state-of-the-art APS website;
- Professionally developed digital educational courses designed to introduce people to philately in a fun and engaging way; and
- A significantly enhanced Digital Library that is doubling its content intake from 30,000 pages to 60,000 pages per month.

If you want to add an APS membership to your GPSCC membership, just follow the instructions below.

CELEBRATE THE APS 140TH ANNIVERSARY AND SAVE ON MEMBERSHIP!

Join the American Philatelic Society (APS) today and unlock access to exclusive member benefits, trusted expert resources, educational opportunities, and a community of fellow collectors who share your passion for philately.

As part of the APS 140th Anniversary Membership Drive, Greater Philadelphia Stamp & Collectors Club members can receive **25% off their first year of a new APS membership** by following these simple steps:

1. Visit info.stamps.org/aps140 to learn more about the benefits of APS membership and click "Join Today".
2. Complete the online membership application. Be sure to enter our club's APS Chapter Number, 001978, as your referral source near the bottom of the Basic Info portion of the online application.
3. Select your membership type:
 - Membership: \$45/year (\$33.75 after discount)
 - Digital Membership: \$35/year (\$26.25 after discount)



PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 20, 2026: Bill duBell on "LZ-127 Graf Zeppelin Mail – 1931"

GPSCC member **Bill duBell** will share his passion for Zeppelin collecting at our October 20 meeting.

Bill is new to Zeppelin collecting after being drawn in by a hand-cacheted cover blanketed with U.S. stamps and placed on the Lakehurst to Friedrichshafen leg of the 1929 Round-the-World Flight (below right).

Since he purchased that item, he has obtained over 50 additional Zeppelin covers and postcards including 18 from 1931. His talk will focus on the 1931 covers/postcards. These items are franked with stamps from Germany, Hungary, Iceland, The Netherlands, Russia, Egypt and Brazil. The stamps are airmails, with and without Zeppelin overprints, regular and semi-postal issues and in a couple of instances include exotic "syncopated" perforations. He looks forward to sharing and discussing this part of his collection with the GPSCC and learning more about this topic.



Postcard franked with Germany C35 1RM Zeppelin stamp. The postcard was mailed on Aug. 29 1931, from the Modern Philately (MOPHILA) stamp and aviation exhibition in Hamburg Germany and then flew on Graf Zeppelin on Sep 11, 1931, receiving postmarks on board (Luftschiff Graf Zeppelin) and at the Zurich Airport (Zurich Flugplatz Luftpost) in Switzerland. The caption under the picture translates to "Processing of mail for the airship Graf Zeppelin."



Postcard showing Graf Zeppelin over the Muhammad Ali Mosque located in the Citadel of Cairo, Egypt. Postmarked Apr. 11 1931, on the front and back and franked on the picture with Egypt Scott C3 - Egypt Scott C1 surcharged and overprinted "Graf Zeppelin Avril 1931 50" in French and Arabic. The picture was presumably taken during an earlier flight to the Middle East.



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SHARE YOUR FAVORITE STAMP OR COVER!

I would like to highlight your favorite stamps or covers in *The Philly Philatelist*. All you need to do is send me a picture of the item and a sentence or two about why it's your favorite.

If your favorite item is a stamp and you don't have a way to scan an image, just give me the country, year and a description, and I'll track it down.

If it's a cover, bring it to a meeting, and I'll take a picture of it or send it to me via regular mail, and I'll scan and return it to you. My mailing address is 19 Brookdale Dr., Doylestown PA 18901. Thanks!

Mike W. (newsletter@gpscc.org).

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 31, 2026 – [Eastern PA Stamp Show](#) (EPASS), Schnecksville Fire Company, 4550 Old Packhouse Rd., Schnecksville, PA, bourse only.

November 21, 2026 – [Philatelic Gathering](#), Chester County History Center, 225 N. High Street, West Chester, PA, 10:00 a.m.-Noon. Presenters are **GPSCC member Louis Gotlib** with "Match and Medicine RS1 and RS66-72," and Ronald Majors on "Highlights of the Postal History of the Decimal Issue of Canada (1859-1868)."

December 10-11, 2026 – [14th Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposium](#), National Postal Museum., Washington, DC.

UPCOMING CLUB MEETINGS

Nov. 14 – Dec. 15 Holiday Dinner (no meeting)

Note: Nov. 14 is a Saturday, and the meeting will start at 10:00 a.m.

AND NOW FOR A LITTLE HUMOR...

Stamp collectors never lose their cool—they just keep everything hinged together.

I told my wife stamp collecting was a cheap hobby; then I discovered auctions.

Stamp collectors are great at relationships—they know when to stick with something.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 15, 2026 GPSCC MEETING

President Paul Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and introduced Sandeep Jaiswal, who joined via Zoom to present "Some of My Favorite Indian States Items."

Sandeep began collecting Indian States at age 20 and later expanded into the Indian Feudatory States. His collection includes stamps, postal history, and postal stationery of the Indian Princely States. He has written numerous articles, exhibited widely, and earned more than fifty gold or large gold medals for over 25 exhibits.

He opened with an overview of the Indian Feudatory States. The princely states were territories ruled by local princes under British control. Their number varied over time, with 565 states existing when the British left India in 1947. Five Convention States were permitted to use British-printed Indian stamps overprinted with the state name and valid both locally and throughout British India. Feudatory States generally produced their own stamps for use within their borders. The complex political and postal relationships make this an especially interesting collecting field.

Sandeep then showed a wide range of stamps and covers, including many rare and unique items. After several questions, he agreed to return for a future meeting to continue his presentation.

Paul Miller then conducted the business meeting.

The club has again been invited to the Science History Institute, 315 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, to view selections from its approximately 30 science-related stamp collections on Friday, October 16, at 11:00 a.m. Members interested in attending should contact Mike Wilson within the next week.

October is both Economic Education Month and Stamp Collecting Month. Paul reported on Joseph A. Giacalone's e-book, *A Philatelic Economic and Business History of the United States*. A sample copy was available for review. The book may be purchased at

<https://leanpub.com/economic-philatelic/c/stampclub> for \$9.00.

The Fourteenth Winton M. Blount Postal History Symposium will be held December 10–11 at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C., and online via Zoom. Mike Wilson will present "The Cheap Postage Movement of the Mid-1800s," although the exact time has not yet been announced.

MILCOPEX 2026 will be held in Brookfield, Wisconsin, September 25–26, with Postal History as its theme. Mike Wilson participated in two of the Zoom presentations held in advance of the show.

Dutch Country Auctions will again offer APS consignments, including 55 lots of U.S. and worldwide collections, in its September 15–16 sale.

The American Philatelic Society has opened nominations for its 2027 awards and honors, to be presented at the Great American Stamp Show in Albuquerque, New Mexico, August 19–22, 2027. The nomination deadline is December 1, 2026. Details are available on the APS website under "Awards and Honors."

The APS has also introduced new logos (see below). Information appears in the [APS/APRL Board Update – Status & Highlights dated August 27, 2026](#), page 5.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

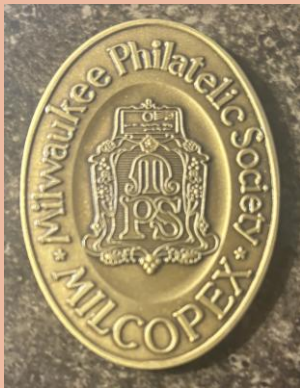
Respectfully submitted by Robert Cohen



AWARDS AND HONORS

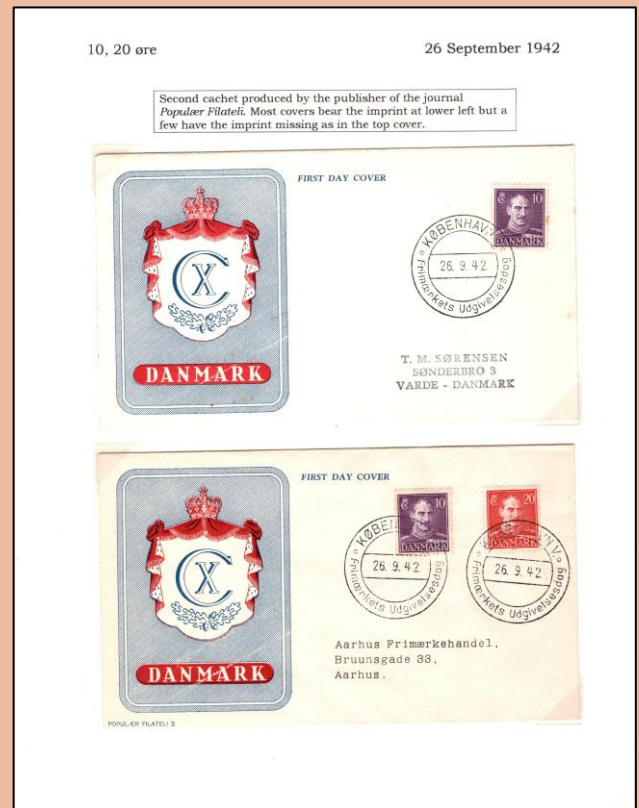
Alan Warren

At MILCOPEX 2026 in Brookfield, Wisconsin in September, **Michael Wilson** won a gold and the AAPE creativity award with his single frame "Pan American Airways Speed Test of 1946." At the same show **Alan Warren** took a large vermeil for his six-frame "Denmark: The Christian X Definitive Issues of the 1940s on First Day Covers."



Left: Medal presented to MILCOPEX exhibitors.

Right: One page from Alan Warren's six-frame exhibit.



DID YOU KNOW?

Michael L. Wilson

When the Civil War began in 1861, large quantities of United States postage stamps remained in the hands of postmasters in the seceded states. The Post Office Department feared that these stamps—effectively government-issued negotiable value—could be sold or exchanged to benefit the Confederacy. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair therefore ordered an entirely new series of stamps. Beginning in August 1861, customers exchanged their old stamps for the new designs. After a short exchange period, the earlier stamps were demonetized: they could no longer be used to pay postage. Confederate postmasters reportedly held about \$270,000 in U.S. stamps and stamped envelopes when the change was made.

This was not the first U.S. demonetization—the 1847 issue had already been demonetized in 1851—but the 1861 action was unusual because national security and the Civil War were central to the decision.



1857-61 Series that was demonetized.



1861 Series

MULTI-POSITION LETTER SORTING MACHINE – POSTAL INNOVATION

Paul F. Miller

During a recent visit to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington DC, I wandered into a large exhibit area that presented many postal system innovations. It is mind-boggling to think about how the United States Postal Service (USPS) effectively manages the billions of pieces of mail each year.

People often joke about the inefficiency of the USPS. In reality, however, the USPS continuously uses and refines its technologies to create new and innovative ways to handle the mail.

In 1957, Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield stated: *"The Post Office must mechanize because, if the mail volume continues to grow, it would be impossible to cope with the great flood of mail within a relatively few years, using present-day methods."*

One innovation put in place in the 1960s to handle sorting and processing pieces of mail was the Multi-Position Letter Sorting Machine (MPLSM). Coupled with the introduction of ZIP codes, the MPLSM assisted in moving the mail more quickly. I snapped a picture of the basic keypad that postal workers used. You can see it in Image #1.



Image #1 – MPLSM keyboard

The keypad is not much to look at, but it was part of a larger overall machine that streamlined the sorting and processing of the mail. A dozen postal workers

would be stationed at each large machine. As letters were automatically slid in front of their eyes, the postal worker would key number codes into the keyboard that would allow for the proper sorting into bins on the back end of the machine.

Workers had to be diligent and fast. The letters passed by quickly, sometimes at a rate of more than 60 letters per minute. Postal workers using these machines could sort about 30,000 letters per hour! Image #2 shows a station of twelve postal workers hard at work.



Image #2 – MPLSM workstation

So, imagine a busy postal facility at the height of the day: carts packed with envelopes, deadlines approaching, and thousands of destinations waiting to be identified. The MPLSM became a vital link between hand-sorted mail and the highly automated systems used today. Built for large processing centers, it allowed several operators to sort letters at the same time into a wide bank of destination pockets. Its mission was straightforward but essential—move enormous volumes of mail into the correct geographic groups quickly enough to meet dispatch schedules.

Now, imagine yourself in the middle of the workflow...

MULTI-POSITION LETTER SORTING MACHINE (CONTINUED)

Each letter began its journey by being faced in the same direction and fed into the machine. A transport system carried it to a postal worker, who had only moments to read the address—usually focusing on the ZIP Code or routing information—and tap the proper code on a keyboard. Those keystrokes triggered the machine's belts and gates, sending the envelope toward the correct pocket. Multiple operators worked together, creating a steady rhythm of reading, coding, and sorting. As pockets filled, other employees "swept" the mail, removing and organizing each batch for another sorting pass, transportation, or final delivery.

Postal workers needed sharp concentration, quick fingers, and an impressive command of sorting plans. They memorized the codes connected to dozens of pockets and learned to make rapid decisions when addresses were smudged, incomplete, or difficult to read. Speed and accuracy kept the mail moving: one wrong entry could send a letter far off course and add costly delays. Training, equipment checks, and clear procedures were essential. At its best, the machine worked like an orchestra, with feeders, keyboard operators, sweepers, and mail handlers performing different parts of the same carefully timed process. Image #3 shows the rear view of the MPLSM.

Compared with fully manual sorting, the MPLSM delivered a dramatic leap in capacity. The machine's strengths also revealed its limits. It required a large, well-trained workforce, frequent updates when

sorting plans changed, and constant care for its many moving parts. Operators faced repetitive work and the noise of industrial machinery. Damaged envelopes and difficult handwriting could interrupt the flow. Most importantly, the system could move no faster than people could read and enter information. As optical character readers, barcodes, computerized databases, and automated sorters improved, machines began recognizing and routing more mail on their own. The MPLSM gradually moved out of the spotlight. While MPLSMs were still in use in the late 1980s, by the end of 1990 they were no longer in active USPS service.

The Multi-Position Letter Sorting Machine is a fascinating piece of innovation and automation. Rather than removing people from the process, it paired human perception with mechanical muscle.



Image #3 – MPLSM rear view



To learn more about the history of mail processing machines visit <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/research-article/machines-or-bust/mail-processing-machines>

4-cent First Automated Post Office
single postage stamp issued in 1960
(U.S. Scott 1164).

REPORT OF THE SEPTEMBER 19 PHILATELIC GATHERING

Courtesy of Charles DiComo



September 19, 2026
C. DiComo, PhD



Photo Credit:
Alan Warren



On September 19, 2026, Members of the Philatelic Gathering met at the Chester County History Center for two excellent seminars.

Kean Spencer opened the program with his presentation “Tobacco & Alcohol Tax Paid Revenues of Puerto Rico.” The early ones were printed by the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. He showed cigarette revenues overprinted locally and also cigar bands. Chewing tobacco was also taxed. The wording Porto was changed to Puerto in 1934. The first liquor revenues were cigarette stamps cut in half and overprinted. He also showed revenues for wine and rectified spirits as well as “Tax Free” stamps.

The second speaker was GPSCC member Michael Wilson who presented a program on “The American Cheap Postage Movement.” He will present a version of the talk at the Blount Postal History Symposium in December at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. Early in the postal rate system the cost of sending a letter was equivalent to buying a loaf of bread or shipping a barrel of wheat, i.e., beyond the reach of most citizens. The early U.S. postal system accrued a surplus of funds up to 1837, suggesting that cheaper rates might be more reasonable. In the 1840s and the 1850s, Barnabas Bates, the original “Father of Cheap Postage” in the United States, pressed for lower mailing rates. The Postal Act of 1845 simplified rates based on weight and distance rather than number of sheets, and the Cheap Postage Association in 1848 continued to argue for lower rates. In 1883 the rate of 2¢ per half ounce was introduced. Another activist was James Hale, who was also dubbed the “Father of Cheap Postage in America” about 15 years after Bates was given the title. How soon we forget!

Philatelic Gathering Home Page: <https://lcps-stamps.org/study-groups/>

HOLES IN STAMPS THAT ARE A-OK

Michael L. Wilson

Stamp collectors usually avoid stamps with holes—but perfin are an exception.

A perfin is a stamp deliberately punched with initials, numbers, or a design identifying the company or organization that owned it. The word is a contraction of "perforated initials" or "perforated insignia."

Perfins originated in Great Britain in the 1860s as a way to discourage employees from stealing company postage. Because unused British stamps could be redeemed for cash, punching a company's initials into them made theft and resale more difficult. Their use later spread to the United States, where they were especially common from about 1908 through the 1950s.

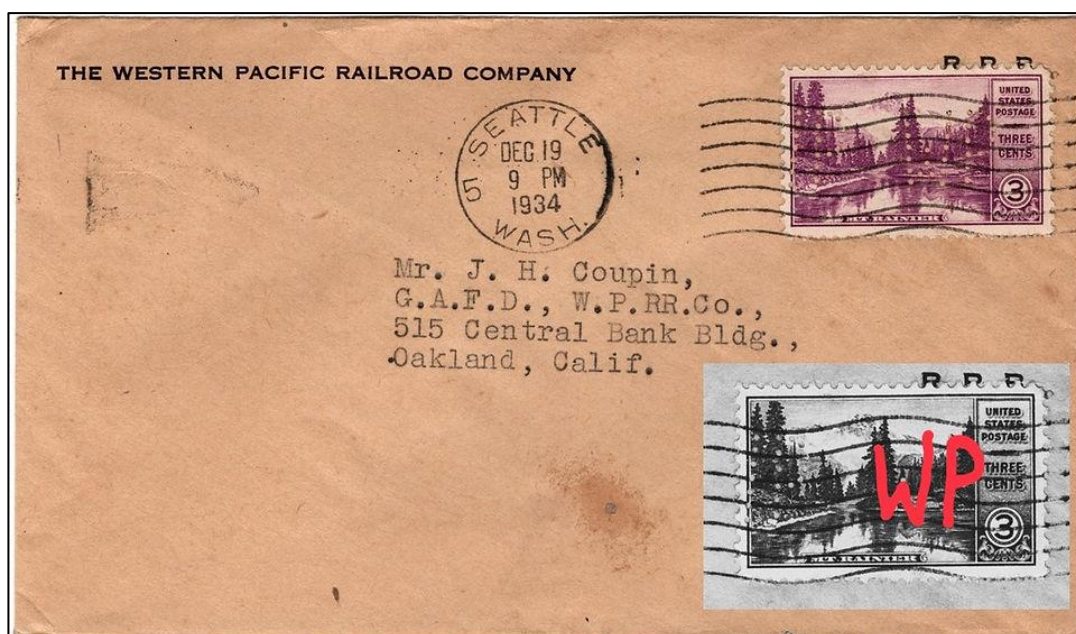
Hundreds of American businesses used perfins, creating a remarkable variety of patterns. Railroads, banks, insurance companies, manufacturers, and other large organizations all adopted them. Some designs consisted simply of initials, while others incorporated numbers, geometric shapes, or symbols.

Identifying a perfin can be part of the fun. A high-resolution scan of a stamp, especially from the back, can make the punched pattern much easier to see. Rotating the image, increasing contrast, or changing the color can also help reveal the letters or symbols. Once the pattern is clear, it can be matched against published perfin catalogs.

The Western Pacific Railroad cover shown here is a good example. The 3-cent Mt. Rainier stamp bears the railroad's "WP" perfin, which is easier to see in the enlarged inset.

The growth of postage meters and permit mail after World War II gradually made perfins unnecessary, but today their many patterns and commercial connections have created a specialized collecting field of their own.

For collectors interested in identifying examples, The Perfins Club maintains an extensive catalog and reference collection at <https://perfins.org>.



Western Pacific ("WP") Railroad perfin, pattern W154, on U.S. Scott 742, the 3-cent Mt. Rainier issue—an especially appropriate design for a Western railroad. The cover was postmarked December 19, 1934, in Seattle, Washington, and sent to John Henry Coupin (1891–1973), General Agent, Freight Department, Western Pacific Railroad, in Oakland. Coupin retired in 1956 after 46 years of service and was profiled in the June 1956 issue of the company's employee magazine, Mileposts.