

ACROSS THE FENCE



Newsletter of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By WFSC President Karen Weigt

Call for Convention 2014!



It's another turkey bash – WISCOPEX '14, May 17-18, at the historic Retlaw Plaza Hotel, One North Main St., Fond du Lac, Wis. We're look-

ing forward to a great event and at the same time looking back to our 1932, 1956 and 1964 ties with the Hotel Retlaw (its original name).

In 1932, the Wisconsin Association of Philatelic Societies (later the WFSC) was founded at the Retlaw during its first convention of nine stamp clubs throughout Wisconsin. The meeting was broached by a call from the Fond du Lac Philatelic Society.

In 1956, the Collectors Club of Fond du Lac and the Fond du Lac Philatelic Society hosted the WFSC's silver anniversary convention at the same site. The event included a U.S. Post Office Department first-day ceremony for the 3¢ Wildlife Conservation series wild turkey stamp.

In 1964, the same Fond du Lac clubs co-sponsored the WFSC's 33rd annual convention and exhibition at the Retlaw. Although we've convened in Fond du Lac since that time, it's been at a different venue, with the last happening in 1992.

WISCOPEX '14 is sponsored by the WFSC in cooperation with the Fond du Lac Stamp Club and revisits the 1956 wild turkey theme. You'll want to be there not only for all the philatelic activity, but also to see Fond du Lac's 1920s landmark Retlaw Plaza Hotel in all its splendor. It's rather awesome to step into the Crystal Ballroom and see the massive chandeliers shown in 1932 convention photos from the WFSC's

archives. This is where you'll find our 2014 convention bourse.

Here are more highlights of our 2014 convention –

Annual Business Meeting

The WFSC's 83rd Annual Business Meeting convenes at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 17. The meeting includes brief officer, committee, and special project reports, plus officer elections and appointments. Delegates have the opportunity to offer comments that their clubs might have concerning the WFSC and its operations. Most importantly, we'll be looking for your club's offer to host WISCOPEX 2016 and beyond!

Delegates also will vote on the nominations of three outstanding philatelists for induction into the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame.

We plan to keep the meeting time down to a maximum of 60 minutes.

Delegates

All WFSC clubs are urged to send a delegate and/or an alternate to the Annual Business Meeting. Your WFSC officers and appointees work hard to keep the WFSC operating. Please show them the respect they deserve by ensuring your club is represented with a delegate. That goes the other way, too, in keeping your club's name upfront among your fellow collectors throughout the state.

Delegates should be prepared to check in at 12:45 p.m. or preregister at the WFSC table with written credentials – a simple statement signed by your club president designating you as the official representative of your home club.



All WISCOPEX attendees are encouraged to check in at the WFSC society table. Pick up a convention button and gift. Light up your home club on the display map and register for door prizes. Bring your club publicity fliers (club meeting information, show fliers, etc.). Place them on the WFSC table for distribution to all show visitors.

CONVENTION DELEGATE CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

Delegates! You are the VIPs of this event. We request that clubs inform WFSC Secretary Ken Grant of the names of your delegates at any time prior to the convention. (Ken Grant, E11960 Kessler Rd., Baraboo, WI 53913, Kenneth.grant@uwec.edu.)

Then, to shorten the meeting check-in line, preregister at the WFSC society table where you can pick up your meeting folder and delegate nametag and ribbon.

Members-at-large are also encouraged to attend, but have no voting privileges.

Bourse

The bourse offers something for everyone and the U.S. Postal Service will have all recent issues on hand. Remember to patronize the dealers; they are the backbone of each and every

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Chapter 350 Chapter 107

www.wfscstamps.org

ISSUE THEME

Death and Taxes



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

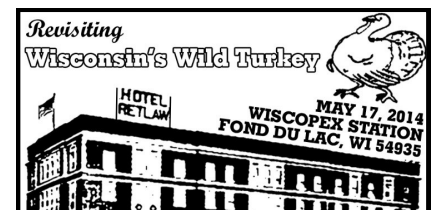
President's Message	1
DANEPEX Covers Available	2
WISCOPEX '14 Updates	3
Mourning Stamps and Covers	4
Cheryl Ganz Named to CSAC	5
Sin Taxes	6
Clubs Are Trump	7
Discount Postage and the USPS	8
Reader's Response	9
Stamp Related YouTube Videos	10
Show Schedule and Calendar	11

stamp show. A WFSC Dealer Recognition Award will be presented at the awards banquet on Saturday night.

Silent Donation Auction

Three silent donation auctions will be held throughout the two days of the show, and we're

Continued on next page.



WISCOPEX '14 cancel

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, (Cont'd.)

Continued from page 1.

accepting donations for this activity. See details on page 3.

Youth and Beginning Collectors

Youth and beginning collectors can enjoy an entire room of free stamps and activities.

Exhibits

WISCOPEX features many interesting and diverse exhibits in the open (multi-frame), single-frame, and youth competitions. Judges are Brian J. Liedtke and John Paré. We're also expecting a good showing of club team exhibits. Entry forms (due May 1) and the exhibit prospectus can be found on the WFSC website www.wfscstamps.org, or requested from the Exhibits Committee: Brian J. Liedtke (262-794-3345, brianliedtke@northwesternmutual.com) or Roland Essig (262-338-1522, printmaster@hnet.net).

Seminars

We have six speakers scheduled to entertain and

inform you on a variety of philatelic topics. This includes a Wisconsin favorite, Jay Bigalke of *Linn's Stamp News*, who will talk at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 17 about recent Wisconsin first-day ceremonies.

All seminars are a maximum of 20 minutes long as we realize that show attendees have only a limited amount of time to take in the exhibits, visit dealers, socialize with friends, etc.

Awards Banquet

This is where we highlight the exhibitors by presenting awards for their efforts in displaying their collections in accordance with exhibiting rules. We'll also honor the three newest members of the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame and the recipient of the WFSC's 2014 Dealer Recognition Award.

The banquet, however, is more than much-deserved recognitions for those who have excelled in our hobby. It's about camaraderie as stated as one of the "Aims and Purposes" in our WFSC

bylaws: "... to ... cultivate a feeling of mutual friendship and fraternity among philatelists ..." The banquet, therefore, is for all WFSC members to just come and enjoy meeting your fellow philatelists. We have other banquet activities and amenities in the planning stages. It will be a turkey bash night to remember.

See page 3 for banquet ticket reservations due May 6. Please note that we cannot guarantee that tickets will be available at the show.

I'm anxious to see all of you at WISCOPEX '14 where you'll find even more show features to enhance your enjoyment.

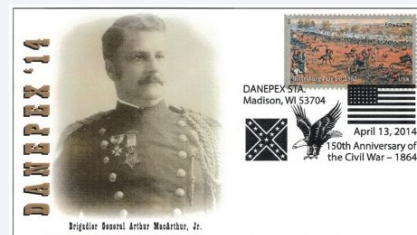
See more about WISCOPEX 2014 on page 3. ☞



DANEPEX '14 Covers Available

The Badger Stamp Club is offering its DANEPEX '14 (Sunday, April 14) covers. The two cacheted covers relate to the Civil War theme with the 2013 Civil War issue franking. Arthur MacArthur, Jr., is featured on one cover as the young "boy" colonel, who received the Medal of Honor at a very young age for his heroism during the Civil War. The other cover shows him at a later age when he achieved the rank of brigadier general. The MacArthur family resided on and off in Milwaukee and are well known for their accomplishments.

To mail order, send \$3 each to Curt Shawkey, 610 Malvern Hill Dr., Madison, WI 53718. Include a No. 10 SASE and make checks payable to Badger Stamp Club.



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Across the Fence Post is the official publication of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. WFSC also is a life member of the APS (since 1953). For more information about WFSC, please visit the website, www.wfscstamps.org.

ATFP is published monthly September through April, and every other month May through August (10 issues per year). News of Wisconsin collectors, club news and other gratis original philatelic features are welcomed. The editor accepts submissions in any format, but prefers email if possible. The editor reserves the right to make editorial changes to submitted copy.

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Unless explicitly stated by an officer in conjunction with official WFSC business, opinions expressed by the editor or individual authors are not necessarily endorsed by the WFSC.

Submission deadlines for editorial and advertising materials are the 1st of the month preceding month of publication (i.e. Jan. 1st for Feb. issue).

Editorial matter should be sent to: Aimee Devine, Editor ATFP, 2111 E. Luther Road, Janesville, WI 53545. Phone: 608-758-1354 (spanishmoss72@sbcglobal.net).

Advertising material and payment should be sent to Dave Carney, Advertising Manager, ATFP, P.O. Box 55, Kimberly, WI 54136-0055. Phone: 920-687-9077 (dcarney1@new.rr.com). For a complete list of advertising rates and policies (display, classified, and listings), request a copy from the advertising manager.

WISCOPEX '14 Update

LODGING –

Reservations Due May 2

The Retlaw Plaza Hotel has blocked off 20 rooms for WISCOPEX '14 guests. The rate is \$69/night and includes a continental breakfast. For reservations, phone 920-923-3000 and request the group rate for the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs. For reservations via the Internet, go to www.retlawhotel.com and enter Group Code CGSTAM.

PARKING

Free parking is available in the Retlaw Plaza Hotel's ramp levels four to seven. Take the elevator down to the lobby level and cross a courtyard to enter the lobby. Take the lobby elevator to the second floor to get to WISCOPEX. Free parking is also available on streets surrounding the hotel. Meters are void on Saturdays and Sundays.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, May 17

- 10 a.m. -- Show opens
- First auction opens
- Seminar "Dead Countries," by Art Schmitz
- 11 a.m. -- Seminar "Recent Wisconsin First-day Ceremonies," by Jay Bigalke
- 12 noon -- Seminar "Plate Number Coils (General Overview)," by Jim Stollenwerk
- 12:30 p.m. -- First auction closes
- 12:45 p.m. -- Final check-in and seating for Annual Business Meeting
- 1 p.m. -- WFSC Annual Business Meeting
- Second auction opens
- 3 p.m. -- Seminar "Captain Tim and the Ivory Stamp Club," by Stan Ewert
- 3:30 p.m. -- Second auction closes
- 5 p.m. -- Show closes
- 5:30 p.m. -- Social hour at hotel lobby bar
- 6 p.m. -- Awards banquet

Sunday, May 18

- 9 a.m. -- Wisconsin Postal History Society meeting
- 10 a.m. -- Show opens
- 11 a.m. -- Third auction opens
- Seminar "The Wild Turkey Stamp of 1956, by John Paré
- 12 noon -- Seminar "Collecting Your County's Postal History," by Ken Grant
- 1 p.m. -- Judges' critique (at the frames)
- 2 p.m. -- Third auction closes
- 3 p.m. -- Show closes

WISCOPEX SILENT DONATION AUCTION

The WFSC requests donations for three silent auctions planned to be held at WISCOPEX. Proceeds will be used to help defray costs for sponsoring the show. The auction schedule is:

Saturday, May 17 – 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 17 – 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 18 – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Auction items must have a minimum estimated value of \$3. The WFSC is an IRS 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Consequently, all donations are deductible on your IRS tax returns. The WFSC will provide the appropriate receipt upon request.

PLEASE HELP -- BRING YOUR DONATIONS.

DEALER BOURSE

See these dealers at WISCOPEX '14. (Confirmed as of March 20)

David Alex, Glenview, IL

JADECO Stamp & Hobby, Stevens Point, WI

Lake Country Stamps, Hartland, WI

William B. Robinson, Green Bay, WI

R.H.O. Postal History and Stamps, Manitowoc, WI

Riverbank Treasures, New Lisbon, WI

W.H. Burdick, Mountain Home, AR

University Stamps, Madison, WI

Lake Edge Stamps, McFarland, WI



AWARDS BANQUET — Reservations Due May 6

Saturday, May 17, Retlaw Plaza Hotel, Fond du Lac, WI
5:30 p.m. social hour at hotel lobby bar — 6 p.m. dinner

Make banquet reservations on the following form. Pick up ticket(s) at the WFSC registration table.

WISCOPEX '14 Awards Banquet, Saturday, May 17, 6 p.m.

Please reserve _____ ticket(s) for

Choice of entree (both include salad, starch and vegetable):

_____ Choice Top Sirloin (marinated and grilled, topped w/caramelized onion au jus) - \$22

_____ Balsamic Grilled Norwegian Salmon (topped w/brandied cranberry sauce) - \$22

(Vegetarian and children's meals available upon request — contact Karen Weigt - kweigt@tds.net)

My check for \$_____ is enclosed (checks payable to WFSC).

Reservations due by **May 6**.

Send to : Karen Weigt, 4184 Rose Ct., Middleton, WI 53562

Mourning Stamps and Covers

By Ann Selzer

Among people of European background, the color black is usually regarded as the color of mourning — from the hanging of black crepe during the 19th century funeral held in the home, to the black dress of the widow and the black band around the widower's arm, right on to the decoration of stationery purchased to announce the death of a loved one. Mourning covers usually show a black edge of various widths around the envelope, often are lined with black, and contain a card announcement, or a letter on black-edged stationery. They were commonly used from the mid-1800s into the first quarter or so of the 1900s in the U.S. They were also used in other countries. At least 250 countries have passed mourning covers through their mail services. In some countries around the world, this custom did not disappear and mourning covers can be found to this day. Some mourning covers especially include black-edged stamps which commemorate the death of a well-known person honored by the stamp. On many occasions, when the interior letter is still present, there is only a brief mention of a death, or even no death is mentioned at all. The cost of mourning stationery produced this strange anomaly. Making this stationery was expensive for many people. Therefore it was not thrown away after the year of grieving was past. In order to obtain every penny of value of this precious paper, it was used for even routine communication. Even if the letter inside did announce the death, it often went on to report all sorts of other family news since these letter communications across the miles were often infrequent and precious opportunities.

I delved into my various collections and came up with these mourning stamps edged in black. Both are from Greece. The first set of three stamps, shown in Figure 1, was issued December 21, 1945, seven months after the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, showing a frontal portrait of the U.S. president. The set of three stamps included a 30 dinar violet purple, the 60 dinar green, and the 200 dinar grey-brown issue. All include in the design a narrow black rim characterizing them as mourning issues.



Figure 1. Greek FDR mourning stamps

Less than two years later, Greece developed a second mourning set, seen in Figure 2, of a three-stamp set of the 1 drachma green, 3 drachma brown, and the 8 drachma deep blue issue of 1937 picturing Greece King George II who died April 1, 1947. They were created by quickly overprinting the 1937 issue with new denominations, 50 drachma, 250 drachmas, and 600 drachmas respectively and with black borders (Scott 498 – 500). Using overprinting of standard preexisting issues allows these stamps to be available rapidly after the loss of a renowned person like King George II. They were released April 6, 1947, on the day of his funeral.

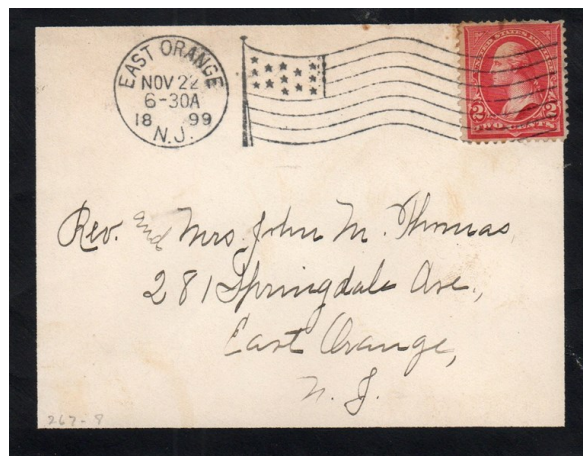


Figure 2. Greek King George II stamps

Other examples of mourning stamp issues include Yugoslavia's King Alexander issues, Germany's Hindenburg issue of 1934 and Belgium's Queen Astrid memorial issue of 1935.

Here in Figures 3-5 are two mourning covers sent to the same people about three months apart. The two covers have a different width of black outlining the envelope. Some people think that the mourning stationery was ordered purposefully with the width of the black lines indicating the closeness of the deceased to the sender of the mourning letter.

Shown reduced in size in Figure 3 (above), the first mourning cover was sent from East Orange, N.J., to Rev. and Mrs. John M. Thomas, 281 Springdale Ave., East Orange, N.J., on Nov. 22, 1899, utilizing the American flag machine cancel (originated in 1894 in Boston), and franked with U.S. Scott 220 — the 2¢ George Washington red stamp. The second is a smaller cover (Figure 4), which could be classified as a so-called "Lady's Cover," sent on Feb. 12, 1900, from Rutland, Vt., to Mrs. John M. Thomas, at the same address. This one is cancelled by the American flag machine cancel with numeral "1" in the stripes of the flag. This number may refer to the post office location. It is also franked with the 2¢ George Washington red stamp (Scott 220). On the back of the second cover (Figure 5) are two receiving stamps, Feb. 13, East Orange, N.J., and "Received" with numeral "1."



Figures 3-5. (above and below). Two mourning covers sent to the same person three months apart. Notice the different widths of the black rim around the edges.



Some interesting information can be ascertained from the addressees of these mourning covers. The good Rev. John M. (Martin) Thomas was born in 1869 in Fort Covington, N.Y., and died in 1952 in Rutland, Vt. His hometown, Fort Covington, is a couple miles from the Canadian border in upstate New York. His preparatory school was in Malone, N.Y., 20 miles south. In 1890, he graduated Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vt., across Lake Champlain and south, very near Rutland, Vt. In 1893, he graduated from the Union Theological Seminary in New York, married Sarah Grace Seely on May 18, 1893, and immediately took a position as pastor of the Arlington Avenue Presbyterian Church in East Orange, N.J., where he served for 15 years. It was during this time at East Orange, that he and his wife received these two mourning covers. He and his wife had five children. It is interesting that this man went on to become a scion in education, serving as

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Continued from page 4.

ninth president of Middlebury College, his alma mater (1908 to 1921); ninth president of Penn State University, then called Penn State College (1921 to 1925); and 12th president of Rutgers University in Newark, N.J. (1925 to 1930). During those last two presidencies, he strove to move both colleges toward becoming public universities, an economic challenge that caused him to resign and move on at both places. From 1925 to 1930, he was vice president of National Life Insurance Co. in Montpelier, Vt., but he couldn't resist the academic life and the educational challenges. He agreed to serve as acting president of Norwich College, Northfield, Vt., in 1937, and then was elected president from 1939-1944. He had written prolifically about education, especially in terms of the Middlebury's educational vision. He served as chairman of Vermont State Board of Education. And to add even more glory to his life, he served as U.S. army chaplain for the Vermont

National Guard, 1st Infantry, 1913 to 1914; served on the Mexican border in July and August of 1916, and became a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army from 1918 to 1919. I am not sure of the connection to Rutland where he died, but that city is within 20 to 60 miles of Middlebury, Northfield, and Montpelier, the capital of Vermont. It is also the origin of the mourning letter sent to Mrs. John Thomas. And that connection drew Reverend and university President Thomas back to Rutland where he died. Figure 6 shows President Thomas while at Rutgers (www.rutgers.edu).

Mrs. Thomas was no slouch either. She was born Sarah Grace Seely in Middlebury, Vt., in 1870, the daughter of Professor Henry Martyn Seely, who served as professor in the chemistry, natural history and geology departments at Middlebury College. He was an M.D. and had taught medical sciences academically as well. Through her father, she was descended from immigrants who came to the American colonies in the 1600s. Sarah Grace graduated from Middlebury in 1891 and did graduate work at Vassar College from 1891 to 1892. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Hawthorne and Essay Clubs of Middlebury, the Mosaic Club of East Orange and the Ethan Allen Chapter of the D.A.R. For another thing, she served for 15 years as the wife of Pastor Thomas of the large East Orange Presbyterian Church. During this time she bore and raised three daughters and two sons.

Both Rev. Thomas and his wife, Sarah Grace, were buried in the West Cemetery of Middlebury, Vt., where they had both gone to school, as young adults.

This research, and the people I learned about, are an example of how two covers, in this case, mourning covers, can shed light on lives that previously were unknown to me

and the significance that their lifetime accomplishments had to the local history.

Collecting these items as a topic is not a dead-end interest. Shown in Figure 7 is a German issue from 2011 of mourning stamps, which are meant to be used on mail sent at times of grief. Even though we now have the Internet, email, Facebook, and telephone, sometimes a personal handwritten note still seems the best way to communicate very heartfelt sentiments. Germany, like many other countries, the U.S. included, has provided various stamp issues that meet some of these sentimental needs. However, Germany is a rare country that meets the needs of bereavement. The motif of the stamp is the white calla lily, known to be symbolic of mourning and expressing solidarity with the grieving people.

There is a black bar at the base of the stamp emphasizing its symbolic meaning and coordinating with the age-old black bar we recognize and written about in this article.



Figure 6. A recent German bereavement stamp

For anyone interested in pursuing this avenue of collecting, there is a topical club that specializes in mourning stamps and covers. It is called appropriately Mourning Stamps and Covers Club. The website is www.mscc.ms.

The author is a retired physician who now has time for her many interests which include collecting stamps and other collectibles, writing, gardening, genealogy and offering various public speaking engagements.



Figure 6. A portrait of Rev. Thomas painted while he was president at Rutgers University.

Cheryl Ganz Named to CSAC

Cheryl R. Ganz, who retired at the end of February from her position as chief curator of philately for the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, has been appointed to the USPS's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee.



"Cheryl Ganz brings a wealth of educational experiences and expertise that will add tremendous value to our efforts to create interest and excitement

in our stamp program," said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe in announcing his selection.

"Cheryl's vast knowledge, energy and forward-thinking will help us to strike a balance in historical as well as timely, relevant and contemporary subjects on stamps for current and future generations to enjoy."

Ganz will attend her first committee meeting in April.

She joined the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in 2005 and was instrumental in the development of the museum's William H. Gross Stamp Gallery, which opened

Sept. 22, 2013. Ganz received the Smithsonian Secretary's Research Award for the best research book of 2011. Smithsonian Scholarly Press is currently preparing her latest book, *Every Stamp Tells a Story: The National Philatelic Collection*, for publication later this year.

Ganz was inducted into the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame in 2013 during Stamp-Show in Milwaukee. She was born and lived on Washington Island until her family moved to Illinois. She still has family on Washington Island and returns there several times a year for visits. She collects postal history of Door County. (Parts of this article are courtesy of linns.com.)

Sin Taxes

By Gregg Greenwald

Governments have always levied various taxes on their citizenry to support government services. A subset of taxes levied is labeled "Sin Taxes" used to reduce activities that are considered socially undesirable [Wikipedia].

The *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* lists a number of categories of stamps used to collect this class of sumptuary tax. Let's take a look at the stamps issued to show payment of the tax on the consumption of sinful activities as listed by Scott.

ALCOHOL

One of the most popular vices to tax, a wide array of stamps are listed with denominations from as small as 1/5c up to \$50,000.

Wine (Scott RE1-204)



Figure 1. Wine Stamp (Scott RE1-84A)

The stamps specifically for use on sparkling and still wines were in use from 1914 to 1954. Due to a complex and ever-changing rate structure based on alcohol content and packaging, a large number of denominations were required including many with fractions of a cent (Figure 1).

Wine or Fermented Fruit Juice (Scott REF1-10)



Figure 2. Wine Stamp (Scott REF4)

The short run of stamps that appeared prior to the end of Prohibition in 1933 was used to show payment of tax on 3.2 percent alcohol. The stamps were discontinued in 1933 with the lifting of Prohibition (Figure 2).

Beer (Scott REA1-199)

The stamps used to show payment of tax on various sized kegs of beer were first issued in 1866 (Figure 3, at right). A dizzying array of paper types, as well as surcharges, can be found on the early issues. The *Thomas W. Priester Catalog* mentioned in Scott is an excellent reference to supplement the Scott listings.

Distilled Spirits (Scott RX1-46)



Figure 4. Distilled Spirits Stamp (Scott RX25)

The stamps used to show payment of the excise tax on distilled spirits were in use from 1950 to 1959 (See Figure 4, above). This series contains stamps with the largest face values (up to \$50,000) ever issued by the U.S. government.

Rectification (Scott RZ1-18)



Figure 5. Rectification Stamp (Scott RZ18)

The stamps used to show payment of the tax on distilled spirits that underwent additional distillation or blending were issued in 1946 (see Figure 5).



Figure 3. Beer Stamp (Scott REA21b)
Photo courtesy Connie Greenwald

Rectified Spirits (Scott Puerto Rico RE1-51)



Figure 6. Puerto Rican Rectified Spirits Stamp (Scott RE41A)

The stamps used to show payment of the tax on rectified spirits, specifically rum exported from Puerto Rico to the United States, were first issued in 1937. The stamps are listed under Puerto Rico in Scott even though the taxes paid actually went to the United States. Numerous provisional overprints exist on U.S. wine stamps that are not listed in Scott.

TOBACCO

The stamps used to tax tobacco products are all designated as tax-paid since they show the tax by weight or quantity. However, one tobacco consumption related area is listed in Scott.

Cigarette Tubes (Scott RH1-5)



Figure 7. Cigarette Tube Stamp (Scott RH2)

Continued on next page.

(Continued from page 6)

The stamps used to show payment of the tax on cigarette tubes were first issued in 1919. They were specifically designed for those who "rolled their own" cigarettes by inserting loose tobacco into the hollow tubes of paper (See Figure 7 on previous page).

GAMBLING

These stamps were used for taxing the implements of gambling.

Playing Cards (Scott R2, R11, R12, R17, R21, R28, RU1-16, RF1-29, Virgin Islands RFV1-3)



Figure 8. A Playing Card stamp (Scott RF15)

The stamps used to show payment of the tax on playing cards (Figure 8), were first issued in 1862, took a short hiatus and resumed again from 1894 to 1965. A complex variety of surcharges exist due to the fact that playing card manufacturers were burdened with applying the new values.

WEAPONS

Regulating the acquisition of dangerous weaponry proved an effective measure.

Firearms Transfer (Scott RY1-11)

The stamps used to show payment of the tax on the transfer of dangerous or concealed firearms (Figure 9) were first issued in 1934. Better known as the "Tommy Gun" stamps, they were used to keep automatic weapons out of the hands of gangsters in the 1930's. They are still in use today with a new variety appearing in 2012.

The information provided merely scratches the surface of the federal revenues available. Non-Scott listed material as well as state and local revenues are also available to collect. 

References:

Introduction to United States Revenue Stamps, Friedberg, Richard, 1994, *Linn's Stamp News*

United States Beer Stamps, Priester, Thomas W., 1990, Pine Hill Press, Inc.

Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers, 2014, Scott Publishing Co.

Gregg Greenwald collects "modern" U.S. (post-1922) stamps and specializes in varieties, including tagging. He also specializes in the revenue stamps of the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. He belongs to a number of national philatelic societies including, but not limited to, the American Philatelic Society, American Revenue Association, United States Stamp Society (formerly Bureau Issues Association) and United States Possessions Philatelic Society. He is also a member of the Central Wisconsin Stamp Club.



Figure 9. A Firearms Transfer stamp (Scott RY11)

CLUBS ARE TRUMP

By Maurice Wozniak

Central Wisconsin Stamp Club, Stevens Point, regularly buys imperforate press sheets of stamps offered by the U.S. Postal Service and makes panes and other multiple stamps available to members. Spreading the cost out brings the expense of collecting these specialty items down considerably.

To clear out the unsold inventory, President Gregg Greenwald makes leftover stamps available to the public. (It helps the club to break even financially and also is a subtle way to promote the hobby. Even if they don't collect, some people are attracted to the unusualness of the product.)

If you are interested in buying some examples of a specific issue, even those that have been sold out through USPS Philatelic Fulfillment, contact Greenwald at bluebird@tznnet.com to see if they may be available.

******* Program Ideas *******

A variation of the popular "show-and-tell" program at the **American Topical Association Chapter 5** in the Milwaukee area: just the "tell" part – members were asked to share their favorite stamp show memories. And, of course, if the memories included a special "find," participants could bring along those items,

purchased or found.

And here's a program idea from **ATA Chapter 5** that might be timely during the debate over immigration reform: a show-and-tell on "Our Neighbors to the North and to the South," featuring items that originated in Canada or Mexico.

A "Pretty/Ugly" program at a **Green Bay Philatelic Society** meeting featured members' examples of what they thought were attractive designs, contrasted with those they thought were distasteful. One entry qualified in both categories – a beautiful German Hitler stamp with an ugly subject.

A member of **Badger Stamp Club**, Madison, volunteered to host a roundtable discussion of collecting techniques during a meeting, including hints on how to soak self-adhesive stamps.

Piggy-backing on the interest in winter sports generated by the Olympics and the local Pine Mountain Ski Jumping Classic, the **Northwoods Philatelic Society**, Iron Mountain, Mich., had a show-and-tell program on things related to winter sports.

******* What Others are Doing *******

Some overdue recognition: Last fall it was noted that a mini-exhibit by Mark Pleyte of the

Northwoods Philatelic Society, Iron Mountain, Mich., on early Columbian Express Mail stamps had the No. 1 rating for hits on the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs exhibit pages.

The Northwoods club renewed its annual gift subscription of *Linn's Stamp News* to the local library.

The youth division of **American Topical Association Chapter 5** in the Milwaukee area ordered a stamp mixture from a classified ad and analyzed the stamps received in terms of number received, faulty stamps, their catalog value, and other elements.

Sign of the times from a newspaper comic strip reproduced in "The Open Album" newsletter of the **Northwestern Mutual Stamp Club**, Milwaukee: Two grandkids come across their grandmother's stamp album and comment, "Ooooooh, they're pretty." Then one adds, "What's a stamp?" 

Information for Clubs Are Trump is gathered from club newsletters. Please send them to Maurice D. Wozniak, 1010 Berlin St., Waupaca WI 54981 or E-mail at mwoz@live.com.

Discount Postage and the USPS

By Bert Hart

This talk was given on Feb. 13, 2014, to members of the Madison Postal Users Council, an organization of heavy postal users and the companies that support them.

I'd like you to imagine, if you will, that your dear Aunt Tillie has passed away and willed to you her stamp collection. Tillie began buying pretty 6¢ stamps at the post office in 1970, moving to 8¢, 10¢, 13¢, and finally ending with 15¢ stamps in 1980, when she ceased buying. So you now own more of an accumulation than a true collection. Why she did this we don't know, but this hoarding behavior is strikingly common. Perhaps she felt that they were a good investment, that she couldn't in any event lose, because she was buying at face value. We shall see that she was quite wrong.

The stamps are in good condition, really quite as nice as the day she bought them, as she placed them carefully in files and folders and did not store them in the basement. But you can see that, nonetheless, they present a serious problem as far as usage goes. There are about 100,000 stamps with a total face value exceeding \$10,000. It is true that three 13¢ and one 10¢ stamp make 49¢, but you would be hard pressed to make up another easy complement. And what about those pesky 8¢ stamps? Are you actually going to put six of them on an envelope and still have to add 1¢?

But, you think, there is a simple solution. They are nice fresh stamps, you will just sell them to collectors! So you take the huge lot to a stamp dealer, and are flabbergasted when he offers you half of face value or even less. He tells you that stamp collecting is on the decline, and that hoards like this come on the market every day. Those that collect this sort of thing already have it, and no new collectors are coming along. If you sell these stamps to him, he will pass them along to someone who is willing to take the considerable time to use them on packages or envelopes. Economic theory tells us that there will always be those willing (for a price) to do tedious and boring jobs.

You may not wish to sell to this dealer. You may put them up for auction, try to use them yourself, or contribute them to a charity that has a lot of volunteers. But, they will be used. There is no other market. And the buying and selling of such "discount postage" is a worldwide phenomenon. I have personally sent many thousands of dollars worth of stamps to Canada and Great Britain, sold at a discount to be used there.

The steep decline in stamp collecting is

hardly unique. Young people have entirely new ways to use their time, different ways than those of their parents and grandparents. We know anecdotally what they are doing: texting, tweeting, Facebooking, skyping — all the social media. And then there is gaming, both on and off the Internet, which can be very time consuming.

There is another factor, too: hard times. *Bloomberg Business Week* has reported that student debt in the U.S. has now reached a trillion dollars, more than all credit card debt. Student debt cannot ordinarily be discharged in bankruptcy or otherwise be reduced, except by payment. Perhaps you know of a young person deeply in debt, who is unemployed or underemployed, working two part-time jobs, trying to stay afloat. Such a person is not likely to take up a collecting hobby of any kind.

So it is, that when stamp collectors leave collecting, unfortunately often feet first, they leave their collections to a world increasingly indifferent to their prizes. We have always seen ourselves as owners of our stamps, yes, but also as conservators, ready to leave them to the next generation. But what happens if that next generation turns indifferent? My friends tell me that the collecting of coins, postcards, railroad memorabilia, mid-range antiques, old cars and car parts, and many other things, is way down. And that is not to even mention Billy Beer cans and Beanie Babies!

Stamp prices are, therefore, in a gradual decline. Even the price of discount postage, as a percentage of face value, has been falling. I looked on Sunday at the last 200 U.S. stamp lots that closed on eBay. One hundred twenty-five of them did not sell, and those that did generally sold for \$50 or less. The prevalent decline is somewhat masked by reports of ever higher prices at the very top. The late Thomas Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, once said that the price of art does not reflect the value of art as much as the worldwide glut of money. What he meant was that in the circles he travelled, he saw a lot of ultra-rich people used to having their own way. Rare stamps of top quality — like rare cars, Americana, and art, still continually set records, because it only takes two wealthy bidders. So, we see two separate markets.

But even "sure things" in stamp collecting can turn out to be disasters. In 1930, the U.S.



Figure 1. A recent eBay lot of mint sheets of stamps.

issued three stamps to honor the German Graf Zeppelin, which was visiting the U.S. and which carried mail, along with passengers. The 65¢ stamp was for use on postcards, the \$1.30 and \$2.60 stamps were for letters. Today, it is quite easy to buy them used in this way. Other than for use, the mint copies sold poorly. In those years, nearly every boy, and quite a few girls, had a stamp collection. But \$4.55 was way beyond the capabilities of most families, and in any event would have been seen as a frivolity. Of the highest value, only a bit more than 62,000 were sold. Subtracting usage, those sent overseas, those in museums, or lost, burned, and forgotten, there are certainly less than 50,000 sets extant.

By 1970, a nice set had reached \$300 or so and continued to rise in value through the 1970s. But then, we came to the fantastic year 1980 — the year silver hit \$49.80 per ounce, for one shining moment, as the Hunt brothers tried to corner the market. It had been below \$5 in 1978 and was to fall below that again in 1982. Gold, too, hit \$825 up from \$275 and was to fall below \$300. Inflation hit 14 percent in 1980, and the rush was on to invest in hard assets. And what better place to invest than the scarce Zeppelin set? It hit \$10,000 that year. But then, the Federal Reserve raised short-term interest rates to 20 percent to combat inflation, killing the economy. Now, as the prices of hard assets declined, speculators in the Zeppis tried to unload them to collectors. But collectors were just as unwilling to pay \$10,000 in 1980 as they were to pay \$4.55 in 1930. The prices fell and fell and fell. Today the price seems stabilized — at about \$1,200! That's not just a decline of 88 percent. We must adjust to the decline in buying power of the dollar since 1980 — about 70 percent. So the real loss is about 95 percent. Aunt Tillie, too, lost far more than 50 percent when adjusted for inflation.

The use of obsolete postage, of course,

Continued on next page.

POSTAL POTPOURRI (Cont'd.)

(Continued from page 8)

presents a problem for the USPS, and it should not be minimized. I suppose the draconian solution would be to demonetize old stamps, but this is not possible under a law passed right after the Civil War.

So, all the USPS can do is to keep issuing pretty new stamps, hoping that new sales make up for old usages. To that end, they have sometimes violated their own standards. Take the recently issued Harry Potter stamps, which violate their own rules about stamps only being issued for U.S.-based people and events. Of course, the USPS assumes that philatelic sales represent pure profit, as the stamps "will never be used." When the 29¢ Elvis stamp was issued, they took a survey of buyers and many said they were not buying them to use. Well, they are being used every day. So, philatelic sales are more of a loan than a final sale.

Now I want to say a couple of things about Forever stamps. The USPS recently announced that they were adjusting their reserve for unsold stamps by \$1.5 billion. This is the type of accounting adjustment that makes you look better, but puts not a penny in your pocket. Their decision was based upon a study of the usage of the first big Forever stamp, the one showing the Liberty Bell. I think at least 50 billion of these were made over a three-year period. By a methodology I don't understand, the USPS has come up with a shortfall in usage

of this stamp of about three billion stamps, hence \$1.5 billion dollars. In other words, they are saying three billion stamps are "lost or in collections, and will never be used." In my opinion, very few are in collections. But if their methodology is correct, what, then, happened to these stamps? I believe the answer is hoarding, partly a sort of inadvertent hoarding, where people have a few stamps put away, thinking they will always be good, then temporarily forgetting about them. But then there must be people who think, "Well, my bank only offers me .25 percent, the USPS wants another penny in 2015 and another in 2016, that's 2 percent a year. I might as well invest in them." That's another loan that the USPS treats as a final sale.

On eBay right now, there are many people offering Forever stamps for sale at less than face value, often in smaller quantities of 100 to 500, but a substantial number in lots of 1,000 or more, and one lot is up of 10,000 stamps! And these are not philatelic lots, but rather the most common stamps, which look as if they were just purchased. eBay charges 10 percent plus 3 percent for their PayPal subsidiary, so with shipping it looks like people are buying and then immediately selling stamps for about 20 percent less than what they just paid! It makes no sense! Of course they could be stolen, but in the quantities offered I just don't believe it. But then, I read an article in

Time Magazine about sales of marijuana in Colorado, where state and federal laws collide. It said that sellers could not take credit cards due to federal rules, nor could they deposit cash receipts in banks due to money laundering regulations. It occurred to me that a seller, if desperate enough, could buy stamps at the post office and immediately sell them through eBay. The money would appear in their PayPal accounts and could from there go to a bank. Laundering!

At this point in my talk, I held up an envelope stamped with commemorative stamps totaling 49¢ and offered to stamp their envelopes and give them a generous discount from face value. Although several people took my business card afterwards, I got no takers. Very large mailers are not good targets for discount postage for numerous reasons.

The day after my talk, the Feds announced that Colorado banks could take cash deposits from registered marijuana dealers. It is not certain that all bans will allow this. ☞

Bert Hart, age 70, is a dealer specializing in discount postage of the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. He is a long-time member of the Badger Stamp Club and has served as vice-president. He regularly attends Rasdale and William Robinson auctions.

READER'S RESPONSE



Figure 1. The Accordion Museum in Superior, Wis.

I just finished reading MaryAnn Bowman's article "Keyboards on Stamps"—a very interesting exploration of a topical area. I was drawn to the comments on the accordion. Last fall, my daughter and I took a trip to Superior-Duluth, cities that I hadn't visited in over 40 years. One of the things on our "to do" list was a visit to the Accordion Museum in Superior (Figure 1). Located in an old church basement it has preserved and displayed hundreds of accordions from around the world. Admission is free and the wonderful woman

who owns and runs the museum lives upstairs and gives accordion lessons to all ages. If you are in Superior, do visit it. AWESOME is the

only word that does this museum justice.
-John Pare

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Madison, WI 53704



April 14, 2014

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the Civil War — 1864

DANEPEX '14
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commemorating the American Civil War

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Stamp-Related YouTube Videos

There are many stamp collecting videos available online at YouTube. They are easy to find and would make nice presentations for club meetings. The links for all videos mentioned in this article appear at the end.

One of these videos was done by Wisconsinite, Kristin Patterson. It is titled, "Due to the Civil War — The Creation of U.S. Revenue Stamps"

(Figure 1). This seven-minute video is full of beautiful illustrations of revenue stamps and describes the history of and reasons for revenue stamps.

Movie aficionados will enjoy Tom Richards' videos on philatelic movie props. The first video is about material from "Cold Mountain," which takes place during the Civil War

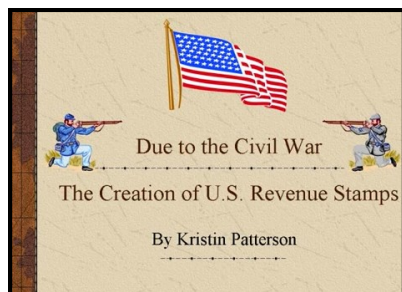


Figure 1. The opening screen of Kristin Patterson's YouTube video.

(Figure 2). His second video is "Philatelic Movie Props with a German Theme or Flavor" (Figure 3). Richards was able to purchase some of the props from these movies and used them to create an exhibit. It's amazing to see the lengths some Hollywood producers will go in order to have accurate props that will only appear on the screen for a few seconds.

Richards has a few more Hollywood-related videos. One is about fan mail to movie star Deanna Durbin and the other is about collecting movie star fan mail (Figure 4). Both are very interesting and combined with his other movie videos would make a nice presentation for clubs.

For those interested in zeppelins, there are several videos to choose from. "The Zeppelin Mail Drop over Flensburg, Germany, 1924" is about the trial flight of the zeppelin that would later be renamed the *U.S.S. Los Angeles* (Figure 4). "Hindenburg Fire Broadcast - Graf Zeppelins Survival Mail" includes the live radio broadcast recorded at the time of the crash.

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum's YouTube page has over 130 videos available. There are short clips about stamp design and production and recordings of lectures given at the museum.

The American Philatelic Society's website has a long list of links to online videos. There are how to's, stamp collecting basics, stamp production, first-day ceremonies, postal history, thematics, and many others.

Links to all the videos mentioned in this



Figure 2. A cover made for the movie "Cold Mountain" and shown while the main character relaxes in the trenches at Petersburg, Va.

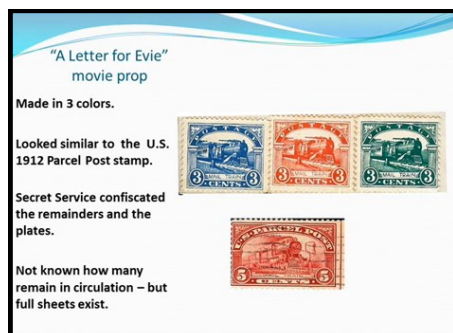


Figure 3. These stamps were used in "A Letter for Evie" and were later confiscated by the Secret Service. One postally-used cover is known to exist and is postmarked April 1, 1946.



Figure 4. A screenshot of Roy Rogers dumping out one week's worth of fan mail. From the YouTube video, "Collecting Movie Star Fan Mail."



Figure 4. This slide shows the *U.S.S. Los Angeles* from the video about the ZR3's trial flight of 1924 in Germany.

article can be found below. They will also be posted on the WFSC website:

www.wfscstamps.org.

If you have a favorite philatelic video, please send the editor a note and it will be mentioned in a future issue of *ATFP*. 

VIDEO LINKS:

Due to The Civil War

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKBclCTQDsg

Cold Mountain Movie Props

www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBb6kMZgWvY

Philatelic Movie Props with a German Theme or Flavor

www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeZx34XMKqY&feature=youtu.be

Collecting Movie Star Fan Mail

www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBH_q12H24M

Hindenburg Fire Broadcast - Graf Zeppelins Survival Mail

www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CLf76Rjy3g

The Zeppelin Mail Drop over Flensburg, Germany, 1924

www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lCmqIz63Oc

The Smithsonian National Postal Museum

www.youtube.com/user/SmithsonianNPM

The American Philatelic Society

www.stamps.org/Stamp-YouTube-Videos



WFSC Show Schedule

(Some dates and details may be subject to change, and there will likely be additional listings.)

List your show, bourse, auction or other event here!

Contact Karen Weigt, 4184 Rose Ct., Middleton, WI 53562.

Phone: 608-836-1509 (kweigt@tds.net)

WFSC CLUB SHOWS

April 13, 2014

DANEPEX '14

Badger Stamp Club
Crowne Plaza Hotel,
4402 E. Washington Ave. (across
from East Towne Mall), Madison, WI
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Contact: Bob Voss,
P.O. Box 35, McFarland, WI 53558
608-838-1033, lestamps@charter.net

April 26, 2014

OUTAPEX '14

Outagamie Philatelic Society
V.F.W. Hall, 501 N. Richmond St.
Appleton, WI
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Contact: Corey Gartner
P.O. Box 11, Appleton, WI 54912
920-257-4028
clgartner@digitalsilk.net

May 17-18, 2014

WISCOPEX '14

Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs
83rd Annual Convention

Retlaw Plaza Hotel
One North Main Street
Fond du Lac, WI

Contact: Karen Weigt
4184 Rose Ct., Middleton, WI 53562
608-836-1509, kweigt@tds.net

www.wfscstamps.org

June 28-29, 2014

TRI-PEX STAMP FAIR

ATA Chapter 5, North Shore Phil.
Soc. & Waukesha County Phil. Soc.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga Hall
1435 So. 92nd St., West Allis, WI
Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sun. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Contact: Robert Henak, MPS
P.O. Box 170832
Milwaukee, WI 53217
414-351-1519
henak8010@sbcglobal.net



Our new Constitution is now
established, and has an appearance
that promises permanency; but
in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except
death and taxes.

—Benjamin Franklin, in a letter to Jean-Baptiste Leroy, 1789

July 2014

(Date to be announced)

BAY DE NOC STAMP & COIN SHOW

Bay de Noc Stamp and Coin Club
Joseph Heirman Bldg. (off lobby
entrance), Bay College,
2001 N. Lincoln Rd. Escanaba, MI
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. EDT

Contact: Mark Kuehn
7019 Co. Rd. 426, M.5 Road
Gladstone, MI 49837
906-786-2103
triplejump@charter.net

July 26, 2014

9th LAKELAND COIN & STAMP CLUB SUMMER SHOW

Lakeland Coin and Stamp Club

Woodruff Town Hall
Hwy. 47 E., Woodruff, WI

Contact: Dean Marin
9030 Blumstein Rd.
Woodruff, WI 54568
717-356-9453

September 19-21, 2014

MILCOPEX 2014

Milwaukee Philatelic Society

Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport
6401 S. 13th St.
Milwaukee, WI

Contact: Robert Henak, MPS
P.O. Box 170832
Milwaukee, WI 53217
414-351-1519
henak8010@sbcglobal.net
Dealer Contact: Michael Mules
414-234-9867
pnc5dealer@gmail.com

OTHER MAJOR SHOWS AND BOURSES

APRIL 5-6, 2014

MSDA SPRING STAMP SHOW

Midwest Stamp Dealers Association
Comfort Inn (formerly Wingate)
600 Milwaukee Ave.
Prospect Heights, IL

May 3-4, 2014

MAYPEX '14

St. Aloysius Gonzaga Hall
1435 So. 92nd St.
West Allis, WI

May 23-25, 2014

COMPEX '14

Chicago Area Philatelic Societies
District 214 Fieldhouse
2121 So. Goebbert Rd.
Arlington Heights, IL

July 12-13, 2014

MSDA SUMMER STAMP SHOW NORTH

Midwest Stamp Dealers Assoc.
Comfort Inn (formerly Wingate)
600 Milwaukee Ave.
Prospect Heights, IL

July 18-20, 2014

MINNESOTA STAMP EXPO

Maplewood Stamp Club
Twin City Phil. Soc.
Lake Minnesota Stamp Club
Minn. Stamp Dealers Assoc.

Crystal Community Center
4800 N. Douglas Dr. North
Crystal, MN

July 26-27, 2014

NSDA SUMMER SHOW

White Eagles Banquet Hall
6839 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Niles, IL

**Back issues of
ATFP can be
viewed online at**

www.wfscstamps.org.

The only difference
between death and
taxes is that death
doesn't get worse
every time Congress
meets.

—Will Rogers



Roger H. Oswald
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12/14

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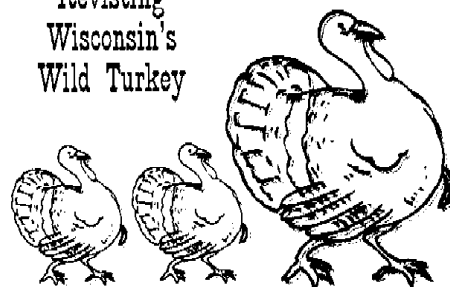
EMAIL: jadeco@charter.net

J.D. MANVILLE - OWNER - CELL 715-498-1111

9/14

www.jadecostampandhobby.com

Revisiting
Wisconsin's
Wild Turkey



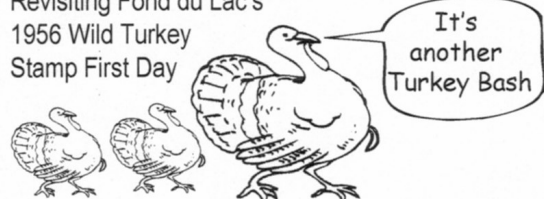
WISCOPEX 2014
May 17-18, Retlaw Plaza Hotel
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

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The WFSC is looking for a volunteer to
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These scans would then be electronically
sent to WFSC webmaster Steve Kluskens, who
will put them onto the
federation's website
where they will be avail-
able for all to enjoy.
Copies of back issues
will be provided to the
person volunteering for
this job. If you are inter-
ested, please contact the
editor. Contact infor-
mation is on page 2.



Revisiting Fond du Lac's
1956 Wild Turkey
Stamp First Day



May 17-18

83rd Annual Convention
and Exhibition
Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs

WISCOPEX 2014

at the historic

Retlaw Plaza Hotel

One North Main St., Fond du Lac, WI

Hours Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sun. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



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critique at frames

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Wisconsin Postal History Society

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Educational Seminars

Beginners Room for Youth and Adults

free stamps
instructions on the basics of stamp collecting

WFSC Albums Display

historical archives
Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame

Pictorial Show Cover & Cancel

commemorating Wisconsin's wild turkey

Door Prizes

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Awards Banquet

exhibit awards presentation
Hall of Fame induction ceremony
WFSC dealer recognition award
turkey trivia & prizes
registration due by May 6 (no guarantee tickets
will be available for purchase at the show)

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Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs
in cooperation with the Fond du Lac Stamp Club
www.wfscstamps.org



Gen. Contact Karen Weigt, 608-836-1509, kwiegt@tds.net
Bourse Chrmn. Bob Voss, 608-838-1033, lestamps@charter.net