

# The Magnifying Glass

## The Official Newsletter of the Wyoming Valley Stamp Club



APS Chapter No. 641

June 2020

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### Cover Time by Tom Bowman

Back during the Great Depression, the federal government allowed lenders a way to help the general public get back on its feet. Hence the start-up of companies like the one above.

It has a 1935 postmark on the front from Reading, PA. The coincidence of this ad card is my uncle's father owned this company. Artis

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Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Samantha Mill House in Nanticoke; and on the third Saturday of the month at 1:00 p.m. at the Hoyt Library in Kingston. This schedule is subject to adjustment due to holidays and other considerations. See the last page of this newsletter or our Facebook page for specifics on the next two meetings.

### President's Letter

Luzerne County, Lackawanna County, and Wyoming County are now in the “green” phase of the governor’s reopening plan.

Now that the number of new cases of COVID-19 has dropped dramatically and restrictions are being lifted, we may be able to go back to having in-person meetings soon, and it looks like our summer picnic will happen.

It certainly has been a trying time. It was interesting, to say the least, to have meetings through Zoom or GoToMeeting.

Thanks to Tom Bowman for sending out the postcards to keep members connected.

And thanks to all the members who sent in tales of their activities during social distancing.

An intriguing new topical subject has appeared in recent month: COVID-19 stamps and postal history. Do any of our members have anything in this topic?

Several countries have issued stamps relating to the virus, and a sought-after postal history item is a postcard the White House sent out. (I did not receive one; any members get one?)

At a virtual meeting of the North Toronto Stamp Club on June 11, Jean Wang gave a presentation titled “COVID-19 Related Philately.” The 45-minute presentation is available on YouTube (just search for that title).

*- Ron Breznay*

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Hettinger also had a Chrysler car dealership, with his brother, at the other end of Penn Street in Reading. Both my uncle and his father were big fans of motorcycles and owned Reading Standard Motorcycle.

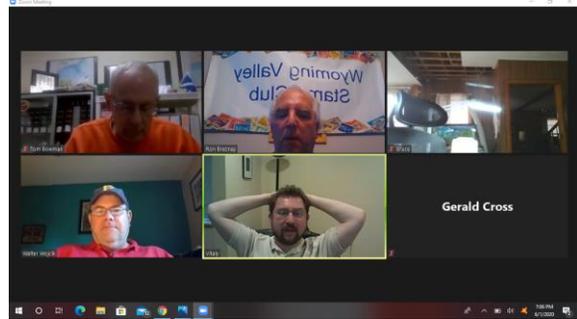


You never know what you may find in a cover that involves family history as I recently did.



### Club Calendar

- June 15 – Meeting by Zoom
- June 29 – Meeting by Zoom
- July 13 – Meeting in Nanticoke
- July 26 – Summer Picnic
- August 3 – Meeting in Nanticoke
- September 7 – Meeting in Nanticoke
- September 19 – Meeting in Kingston



### June 1 Meeting

The meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom. There were six members present.

In the APS Ambassador’s Minute, Tom Bowman talked about the current status of the American Philatelic Center (currently closed to the public, including members), Stamps for Champs, and the Summer Seminar, which started today online.

The Treasurer’s Report was given.

In Old Business, we talked about the birthday challenge. Walt Wojcik and Vitaly Geyfman showed covers they have for the competition, and Ron Breznay showed two covers he recently received.

We also discussed the summer picnic. We will not be able to use the pavilion until Luzerne County enters the “green phase,” but that should happen before our picnic.

In New Business, we discussed the possibility of being able to return to in-person meetings next month considering we should be “green” by then. That meeting would be at the Samantha Mill House on July 13. Chet Zaremba informed the club that the Mill House will reopen to visitors on June 1. He said we should be able to resume meeting there in July, and that by then, facemasks may not be necessary. Stay tuned.

The Hoyt Library has not yet reopened, but we would not have a meeting there until September because of the library’s reduced hours on Saturdays in the summer.

We also discussed participating in a community project being run by the mayor of Swoyersville (see article below).

Upcoming meetings and the summer picnic were announced. Because our next meeting would be a month and a half away, a suggestion was made to have an extra meeting this month.

[Zoom meetings were later set for June 15 and June 29.]

Vitaly Geyfman gave a well-received presentation titled “The First Solo Around-the-World Flight, 1933.” He showed many covers related to Wily Post’s flights, including some that were not listed in the American Airmail Catalogue.

Ron Breznay then showed a newly acquired NEPPEX 1981 cover. He also showed five stamps depicting the *USS Pennsylvania*. Four of the stamps were shown as “screen grabs” in his recent presentation, “USS Local,” and one was a stamp that was not shown.

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### **Swoyersville Mayor’s Community Project By Ron Breznay**

At the meeting of June 1, we discussed the club’s possible participation in a community service project.

In the June 1 issue of *Citizens’ Voice* was an article about a can drive that was started by the mayor of Swoyersville, Christopher Concert. He is raising funds for several ventures, but the one that caught my eye was “to buy thank you cards, stamps and supplies for veterans for Veterans Day.” In particular, the word “stamps” brought me to attention.

When I read that article, I figured that the mayor would probably just go to the post office and buy whatever stamps they have on hand. But the club could do one better. We can provide stamps with military, veteran, and patriotic themes. I was thinking we could provide enough stamps for 200 greeting cards, which would cost \$110, more or less. We would offer to provide up to 200, but we would hold off on buying the stamps until we could get an estimated count, just in case the mayor ends up sending out fewer than 200 cards.

We could order current stamps, if any appropriate ones are available, from the caves. Or we could order past issues from any of several sources, some of which might charge less than face value. Some possible sources are usmintsheets.com, malack.com (but the stamps are a little pricey there), eBay, and the APS StampStore (checking at random, I found a few

panes of military stamps for a little more or a little less than face value). Also, Tom Horn told me that the APS might have sheets of discount postage.

Another thing we could do is provide small packets of used military stamps to enclose in the cards, provided the mayor agrees. However, Dave Stola suggested that the stamps do not have to be all military stamps, which makes sense. They do not even have to be U.S. stamps.

We would put a label about the club on the packets. However, so as not to steal the mayor’s thunder, the labels would NOT include such phrases as “The Wyoming Valley Stamp Club thanks you for your service” or “Compliments of the Wyoming Valley Stamp Club.” I was thinking of something like “Interested in stamp collecting? Contact...” Some members said they have stamps that they could donate for this.

A third thing we could do is volunteer to prepare and stamp the cards if they need such assistance. I would raise my hand for that.

We also discussed a fourth possibility and that is to just make a monetary donation. But I think providing the stamps would be more meaningful and more in line with our mission to promote philately.

I want to point out that this is not just a “Swoyersville thing.” The article states that the mayor “is asking people to provide him with names of *any* veterans who have served the country so he could send them thank you cards” (emphasis mine). Therefore, it is not limited to Swoyersville veterans.

Mayor Concert has done several community projects over the years and he does not limit them to the borders of Swoyersville. One of his other projects for the can drive is to provide books to give to students at Dana Elementary School, which is in Forty Fort.

Since we did not have a quorum at the June 1 meeting, I sent out an email outlining the above and asking members to vote aye or nay and offer any other feedback. Eleven members responded, with ten voting in favor of participating and one abstaining, so we will go ahead with this.

Mayor Concert is pleased with our offer, including providing packets of stamps to place in the cards, so we are good to go on this.

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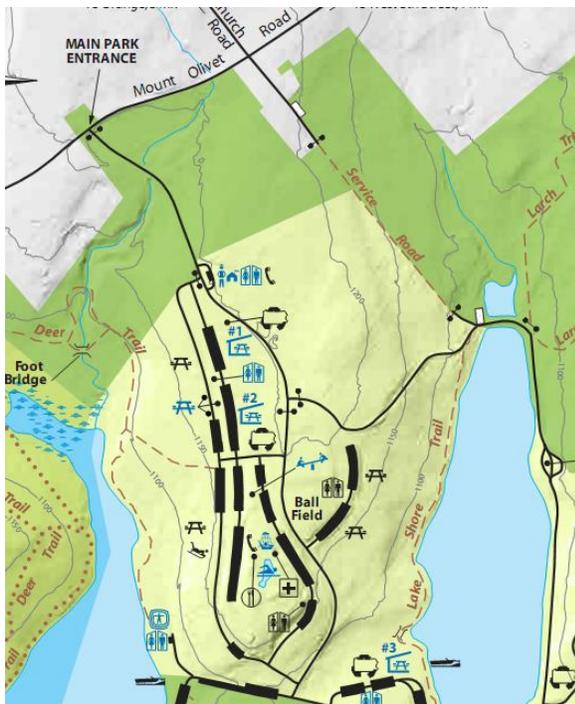
## Summer Picnic

Don't forget the Summer Picnic on Sunday, July 26, 2020, at 1:00 p.m., in Pavilion #3 at Frances Slocum State Park.

As of this writing, eight members and three guests have signed up, and three members sent their regrets.

So far, the menu includes hamburgers, hot dogs, deviled eggs, pasta salad, potato salad, bourbon dogs, chips and dip, relish tray, and bottled water.

Pavilion #3 is in the lower right on the map below.



## Mail By The Numbers

**00501** – The lowest ZIP Code (the Internal Revenue Service in Holtsville, NY).

**01001** – The lowest ZIP Code for a town (Agawam, MA).

**99950** – The highest ZIP Code (Ketchikan, AK).

**13,000+** – The number of Main Streets, which is the most common street name in the U.S.

**33** – The length in miles of the longest Main Street (Island Park, ID).

**73** – The length in miles of the longest street in the U.S. (Northern Blvd. in Long Island, NY).

**1.2** – The length in miles of the shortest rural delivery route in the U.S. (in Carrollton, TX).

**190.7** – The length in miles of the longest rural delivery route in the U.S. (Sidney, MT). The mail carrier travels this route daily to deliver mail to **272** boxes.



## Stamp of the Month

The 1854 four-anna from India (Scott 6) was an innovative stamp. It was the first bi-color stamp produced by the British Empire, and it was printed using the fairly modern lithographic printing process.

The example pictured was sold by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries on June 19, 2019. It was listed with a catalog value of £1,000.00 (\$1,263.00 at the time) and sold for \$550.00.

Wyoming Valley Stamp Club

c/o Ron Breznay

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## Activities During Social Distancing

“Social distancing” is a new phrase that has entered our vocabulary during the coronavirus outbreak. Below are some more responses to the postal cards Tom Bowman sent to the members.

### Chet Zaremba:

To: Breznay, Ron, President, W.V.S.C.

Fm: Zaremba, Chet, Charter Member, W.V.S.C.

Subject: Stamp Hinges Packaging Audit

1. In compliance with the Governor’s “Stay At Home” edict, I am completing heretofore ignored issues in the stamp collecting community.
2. Finding four packets of stamp hinges in my bottom desk drawer, I noted that the labeling contained the wording “Contents – 1000 Hinges.”
3. Not being one who believes everything that he reads, I set out on a quest to determine the veracity of this claim.
4. Following are the results of stated audit:
  - A. Package #1 contained 973 hinges.
  - B. Package # 2 contained 1036 hinges.
  - C. Package # 3 contained 988 hinges.
  - D. Package # 4 contained 1018 hinges.
5. I will retain these packets in unaltered condition should any member doubt these figures and wishes to conduct a recount.
6. This information should be brought to the attention of all members of the club so that they do not expect to believe what they read.
7. Under consideration on my part is the issue of whether to bring this matter to the office of the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office, Bureau of Consumer Affairs.
8. Your thoughts and/or input on this matter is welcomed in the event you feel it is necessary.
9. One last thing: a few of the hinges were actually not “prefolded.”

**Ron Breznay:** I continued moving stamps from my old Liberty album to my new National album. Did some shopping in the club’s stock and added some more stamps to my U.S., Canada, and worldwide collections (including classic worldwide and Hong Kong treaty port stamps). And more reading and writing in the philatelic field. I started working on the initial blog post for my proposed Times Leader Media Blog Team stamp collecting blog.



## June 15 Meeting

The meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom. We had a connection problem on the first try, so we had to set up the meeting again. There were six members present. Two others connected the first time but did not rejoin the second try.

In the APS Ambassador’s Minute, Tom Bowman deferred to Scott English, who talked about the Stamp Chat that was being given the next day. He said there is nothing new regarding the APS at the moment, but there will be some news in the coming days. Quite a few membership applications were received this month. A lot of interest was generated in response to a recent article about stamp collecting in the *Wall Street Journal*.

The Treasurer’s Report was given.

In Old Business, we talked about the birthday challenge and the summer picnic. Since Luzerne County will enter the “green phase” on June 19, we will be able to have the picnic.

We discussed whether we want to have an in-person meeting on June 29. That meeting would be at the Samantha Mill House, pending confirmation from Chet Zaremba. We will have the July 13 meeting there as Chet informed the club that the Mill House will reopen to visitors soon.

We also discussed our participation in the community project being run by the mayor of Swoyersville.

In New Business, Ron Breznay mentioned that Gerry Cross had sent him an ad that appeared in the *Times Leader* about the Times Leader Media Group Blog Team seeking additional blogs for its sites. Ron sent in an email expressing an interest in writing a stamp blog, but he has not heard back yet. Scott said

that if the stamp blog does happen, to let the American Philatelic Society know so that it can be linked on the web site.

Jim Hoyson announced that stamp sales are open again, so members can send him emails with stamp orders.

Dates of upcoming meetings and the summer picnic were announced, followed by an open discussion.



### June 29 Meeting

The meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. Six members attended, including John Sokolowski, who is not in the above screen shot.

In the APS Ambassador's Minute, Tom Bowman mentioned that the American Philatelic Center is still not open, but there is curbside service available.

Also, there have been three changes in positions on the APS staff. Tom Loebig, Chief Content Officer, will become Director of Membership. Ken Martin, Chief Membership Officer, will take over as Director of Expertizing. Gary Loew, Director of Expertizing, will serve as Editor-in-Chief.

The Treasurer's Report was given.

In Old Business, we talked about the summer picnic (see article on page 35).

We talked about whether to have our July 13 meeting by Zoom or in person. Considering the recent surge in coronavirus cases across the country and some members' health concerns, we decided to have the July 13 meeting by Zoom.

The next item of discussion was the Swoyersville mayor's Veterans Day project (see article on page 34). The club purchased some stamps to donate for postage, and a couple of

members have offered to donate more. Tom Bowman said he has a lot of used stamps for making packets to enclose in the greeting cards, as did another member. For each card, we will provide a small packet of about 10 or 12 used stamps. They do not necessarily have to be military stamps, as was originally suggested, but stamps of any country or any topic.

Over two weeks ago, Ron Breznay contacted the Times-Leader Media Group Blog Team, which was looking for new blogs. Ron proposed writing a blog about stamp collecting. However, he has not heard back yet.

In New Business, Bill Schultz's new position was mentioned (see following article).

There was a discussion of a new stamp collecting topic, i.e., COVID-19 philately. Several countries have issued stamps related to the virus, and there is some postal history out there as well, including a bulk-mail postcard the White House sent out recently. None of the members present indicated they got one, and Tom Bowman said they went only to states that had a Democratic majority in the last election.

In addition, at a virtual meeting of the North Toronto Stamp Club on June 11, Jean Wang gave a presentation titled "COVID-19 Related Philately." The 45-minute presentation is available on YouTube (just search for that title).

Jim Hoyson mentioned an offer he got in the mail for discount Showgard stamp mounts. They are "seconds" and are sold in packs of double the usual number of strips for the price of a regular package. Though they are seconds, the faults are minor, not noticeable, and not harmful to the stamps. In addition, the seller is offering a 20% rebate during the month of July. For more information, see the email sent to the membership.

We had a presentation using screen share: Exploring Stamps: "Top 10 Dead Countries to Collect." Unfortunately, one member had a connection problem during the showing of the video and had to leave the meeting.

The meeting concluded with an open discussion. Ron Breznay talked about the book he is currently reading, *Generally Speaking* by Lawrence Block, including the last two chapters he read, which were about birds on stamps.

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**Bill Schultz Joins  
David Feldman Auction Firm**

Bill Schultz, who has been a guest of the club, recently joined the David Feldman auction firm, which announced:

“We are delighted to announce that a new agent has just joined the David Feldman’s team covering the United States and the Canada.

“Bill Schultz, born in Washington D.C., now residing in West Chester PA USA. He has been a philatelist and postal historian for over 60 years.

“Bill is an energetic accredited APS Chief Judge and an enthusiastic exhibitor, having produced over 50 different exhibits so far in his lifetime. He is an active participant in numerous philatelic organisations, such as Assistant Treasurer of the United States Philatelic Classics Society, board member and life member of the American Assoc. of Philatelic Exhibitors, lecturer for the APS summer seminar series, guest speaker of the New York Collectors Club, past president of the Pennsylvania Postal History Society, as well as writing a monthly column for the American Stamp Dealer and Collector publication entitled “The Facets of Exhibiting”. Bill actively assists many exhibitors to achieve their expectations in the world of exhibiting and in the area of postal cover/document restoration.”

The firm is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Bill told Ron Breznay that his roles with the firm are:

Acquire collections and exhibits for their auction sales.

Encourage collectors in North America to purchase from Feldman.

Encourage and supply virtual exhibits to be displayed in their Museum of Philately.

Prepare or assist their clients in Competitive Exhibit preparations.

Provide cover and document restoration services to their world-wide client base via my restoration organization called “Page-smith” located here in Pennsylvania.

The Museum of Philately is a virtual museum, accessible through the web site, [www.davidfeldman.com](http://www.davidfeldman.com) .

**Next Meetings**

The next Monday meeting will be held on July 13, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., on Zoom. Programming to be announced.

The next Saturday meeting will be held on September 19, 2020, at 1:00 p.m., at the Hoyt Library in Kingston, if the library is open by then. Programming to be announced.

**Membership Information**

Anyone wishing to join the club should request a membership application and submit it by mail or at a meeting with payment of dues (\$10.00) (please make check or money order payable to Ron Breznay). See contact information on page 35.

Anyone wishing to join the American Philatelic Society should see APS Ambassador Tom Bowman or any member of the club, or go to <http://stamps.org/>.

**Club Officers and Officials**

President: Ron Breznay  
Vice-President/Program Chair: Tom Bowman  
Secretary/Treasurer: Ron Breznay  
APS Ambassador: Tom Bowman  
Membership Roster Compiler: Don Stevens  
Curator of Library Display Case: Tom Bowman  
Newsletter Editor: Ron Breznay (all content is by Ron unless otherwise indicated)