

# The Magnifying Glass

## The Official Newsletter of the Wyoming Valley Stamp Club



APS Chapter No. 641

July 2020  
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### Summer Picnic

Seven members and two guests got together at Frances Slocum State Park on Sunday, July 26, for our annual summer picnic.

The club and the members who attended provided items for a sumptuous spread. The menu included hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill, deviled eggs, chili, cole slaw, pasta salad,

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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

Many thought the coronavirus pandemic would over or at least winding down by now, but it is resurging in many parts of the U.S.

In our little corner of the country, the pandemic is slowing down, with few new cases reported daily over the past several weeks.

Nevertheless, philatelic activities are still being restricted. The APS stamp show will be virtual as will the Postal History Symposium in October.

This will probably be the first year in six years that I did not visit the APC.

The Hoyt Library remains closed with no set date for reopening. The Osterhout Library is currently set to reopen on August 3, so maybe the Hoyt will follow soon after.

There's no telling right now if the Hoyt Library will reopen in time for our next scheduled meeting there, which is September 19.

We will resume receiving our Chapter Circuits in September. Unless things change, we may be able to have our September 14 meeting in Nanticoke. If neither September in-person meeting happens, members can come to my house to go through the circuit books.

On the plus side of the pandemic closures, I started working on the club project of *A Philatelic History of Wyoming Valley*. Contributions are welcome.

*- Ron Breznay*

**Cover Time**  
**By Tom Bowman**

This is a quest that I waited to get answers from March to July this year. Many of you saw this cover when I first showed it on a Zoom meeting back in April:



It is a fancy cancel, but what caught my eye was the date of the postmark. First part was the IOA; I could not figure what state that could be. Then while watching an American Philatelic Society video on fancy cancels, at the 16:08 minute mark there was a postcard with the same fancy cancel from the same town. The voice said it was the early abbreviation used for Iowa. I stopped, backed up the video, and listened a few times to make sure I saw and heard it correctly. The year on the postcard in the video was 1886.

That made me do a little more work on this cover. The stamp is Scott number 210, or is it? The stamp was issued October 1, 1883, but Scott 211B has an earliest documented use of May 23, 1885. So, I had to know which stamp was on the cover. Maybe I found an early use for whichever stamp I had. I dropped it off at the American Philatelic Expertizing Service to get an expert decision.

Members of the American Philatelic Expertizing Service have examined the item submitted and it is their opinion that it is:  
**United States Scott No. 210, used on cover. Genuine. Jack O'Lantern killer not listed for Charles City 10 CDS.**

**Club Calendar**

- August 3: Meeting by Zoom
- September 7: Meeting in Nanticoke or by Zoom
- September 19: Meeting in Kingston or by Zoom

It came back as Scott 210, which meant I had an early use, or so I thought.

Talking with some people, I would have to send the cover out again to an expert, so that quest began. Then I was on a Virtual Stamp Club chat and I asked for everyone's opinion before going forward. Caj Brejtfus, an expert from Nevada, said I would need another cover with the same stamp on cover from the same town to get the early use verified. He asked if I could make the cancel bigger, so here is the blow up of the cancel:



Do you see it? Look at the 15 and then the 3 in 1883. After making it larger the 3 is a 5 and just a sloppy postmark, which was very common before machine cancels. Everyone on the chat agreed, and so it stands. The actual postmark date is March 15, 1885, so it is not an earlier known use but just a fancy cancel.

It was a fun doing the research on this and waiting for results. Again, every cover has its on story. Although this one needed a little more information to complete the story.

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**The Great American Stamp Show  
Is Now the Virtual Stamp Show**

The American Philatelic Society, American Topical Association, and the American First Day Cover Society are welcoming free registrations for the Virtual Stamp Show.

The online event begins on Monday, August 17, and runs through Saturday, August 22, 2020.

Attendees will be connected directly with APS Dealer members to conduct virtual transactions.

There will be two first day ceremonies: “Innovation” stamps on August 20, and “Thank You” stamps on August 21.

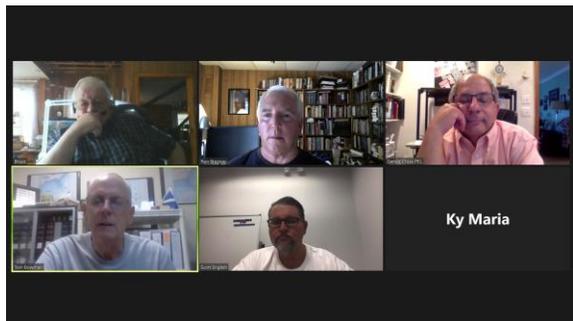
Interactive panels will be held, including “The Future of Philately” and “Navigating Collecting during COVID-19.”

Exhibits will be shown virtually, and there will be awards presentations.

And much more.

To register, go to:

<https://stamps.org/events/virtual-stamp-show>



### July 13 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 mentioned that this year’s APS stamp show will be virtual.

Scott English was at the meeting and added some more information about the APS. Besides the stamp show, the Postal History Symposium scheduled for the end of October will be virtual. Membership numbers are strong, with many new members joining in May and June. The virtual Summer Seminar went very well, and StampStore sales are good.

The Treasurer’s Report was given.

In Old Business, we talked about the summer picnic. So far, 11 people signed up, and during the meeting, Bruce Gardner said he is bringing a guest, so there will be 12 people at the picnic.

On the agenda was a discussion of whether our August 3 meeting should be virtual or in-person, but after the agenda was emailed, we got an offer for a program, so our August 3 meeting will be by Zoom.

Bill Schultz offered to give a Zoom presentation along with Jasmine Smith. Bill will present a commentary, including Q&A, on the just released (2020) “Scarce 6¼ Cents Postage Rate Census” generated by Bill and Jasmine. The presentation encompasses PowerPoint views of the covers and the related obsolete banknotes (currency) of the 1821 to 1845 pertinent era.

In addition, Jasmine, noted Postal Paper Restoration Expert, will provide an in-depth discussion with PowerPoint examples on “Paper Restoration Techniques,” including Q&A, on the fascinating process. Jasmine will provide numerous insightful tips for all stamp collectors.

Scott mentioned that he had seen the presentation and that it is very good. He noted that the census is now up to 90-some covers. [As of this writing, there are 132 covers listed.]

We talked about the packets of stamps we will provide for the Veterans Day greeting card project. So that the packets won’t be too bulky, we will put 10 to 12 stamps in each packet.

Ron Breznay still has not heard from the Times-Leader Media Group Blog Team about his proposed blog on stamp collecting, which he submitted a month ago. Apparently, they are not interested.

The summer picnic and the next meeting were announced.

We had a presentation using screen share: Exploring Stamps: “Let’s Talk About Covers.”

Ron showed some recent covers he acquired.

Then Tom Bowman presented some examples of color shifts on stamps.

The meeting concluded with an open discussion.

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### *The United States Postal Service: An American History*

An updated version of the above title is now available as a free PDF download at <https://about.usps.com/publications/pub100.pdf>.

The 144-page book is also available to purchase as a print copy by calling the USPS Material Distribution Center at 800-332-0317, option 4, option 4.

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potato salad, bourbon dogs, macaroni salad, chips and dip, two cakes, and bottled water.



Chef Tom Bowman was the grillmaster and did an excellent job.

The weather cooperated by being sunny all day without a hint of rain, although an occasional strong gust of wind caused mayhem.

We were at Pavilion #3, which had a beautiful view of one arm of the horseshoe-shaped lake. The pavilion had electrical outlets, which came in handy keeping the chili hot (though the peppers also had something to say about that).

We implemented COVID-19 precautions by wearing masks, keeping a social distance, and doing elbow bumps instead of handshakes.

Tom brought a consignment of stamps from an estate, and the person consigning them generously donated 50% of the proceeds to the club. Members got some great bargains and \$58.00 was added to the treasury.

### Birthday Challenge Scoreboard

Walt Wojcik	26 points
Tom Bowman	25 points
Ron Breznay	17 points
Vitaly Geyfman	1 point



BRITISH GUIANA SCOTT 105

### Stamp of the Month

When is a specimen stamp not a specimen?

Lawrence Block wrote about the above stamp in "The Beauty of Home-Made Stamps," a chapter/column in *Generally Speaking*, a book collecting his *Linn's Stamp News* columns of the same name.

He wrote that British Guiana Scott 103-06 was produced by typesetting, with 12 stamps to a sheet. To prevent counterfeiting, the authorities made perfins spelling out "Specimen." The stamps are not specimens, though, but postage stamps intended for use. Copies without the perfins sell for a substantial premium.

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The 2015 Scott catalog values #105 in used condition at \$60.00 with the perfin and \$650.00 without.

Block said that he likes stamps that look home-made, including this one.

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### **Our Next Meetings in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**By Ron Breznay**

Our next meeting, on August 3, will be by Zoom. But should we—or could we—have subsequent meetings in person?

At the time of this writing, I sent a survey to the members requesting input on having an in-person meeting on September 14 at the Samantha Mill House in Nanticoke using appropriate COVID-19 precautions.

The APS recently sent out an email to Chapter Circuit Managers asking if we want to resume receiving the circuits, and also setting forth recommended guidelines for in-person meetings, as follows:

To keep everyone safe, the club meetings should follow some general COVID safety recommendations from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC). A few things you may want to consider:

- Arrange seating for social distancing;
- Ask that everyone wear a mask;
- Properly clean meeting tables/chairs before and after the meeting;
- Have hand sanitizer available and encourage use before and after handling objects;
- Remind folks that if they are not feeling well, they should skip the meeting.

The email survey asked if we should have meetings in person using the above guidelines, and if the responding member would attend.

Chet Zaremba said that we could have meetings at the Samantha Mill House, and that we could use the bigger room (where all the desks are) for better social distancing.

There is no word yet on when the Hoyt Library will reopen. It is also not known if and

when the Community Room will be available for meetings when the library does reopen.

I informed the Circuit Manager at the APS that we would like to resume receiving our Chapter Circuits in September.

The Chapter Circuit will be available at the meeting(s) in September, if they happen. If anyone wants to come to my house to look at the circuits, you are more than welcome.

So far, we have had nine Zoom meetings, with an average attendance of six members.

Stay tuned.

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### **Next Meetings**

The next Monday meeting will be held on August 3, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., by Zoom. Bill Schultz and Jasmine Smith will give presentations as noted in the article about the July 13 meeting.

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.

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### **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 42.

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)