

# Nevada

P.O. Box 2907 Sparks, Nevada 89432

N.S.S.S. meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month at 10:00 am  
in the Sparks Heritage Museum at Pyramid and Victorian Avenue  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~renostamp/>



Stamp  
Study  
Society

## N.S.S.S.

## POST BOY

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Summer, Winter, Summer, winter. April couldn't make up it's mind. Wear long johns one day and play golf in shorts the next. I'm ready for some Spring. May, can you do it?

The events of the year are starting to come at us and you might want to make a calendar to keep track. at the end of July we have the **Greater Reno Stamp and Cover Show**. Have you started on your cachet and/or cancellation for the cover yet? If you want to enter an exhibit, **Jeanne Paquin** has the prospectus ready. Shortly after that is the club picnic is to be held on August 11th. Then comes the State Fair, August 22nd to 26th.

We need people to volunteer to help out at all these events. Its not hard work, in fact its pretty easy and usually fun. Not at all like a job. You will be needed to help set up and tear down the show as well as man (or woman) the tables. Help is needed for the Fair as well, to man a table, set up and tear down when its over. We will need exhibits too. You also get to see the Fair for free and get free parking. Not a bad deal. For the picnic, be ready to bring a side dish to go along with the hot dogs and hamburgers that **Dick Dreiling** cooks so well.

While on the subject of helping out the club we must remember that the museum has helped out the club and now its our turn to return the favor. Its not only one of the most fascinating jobs you

can find, its as easy as, as, as,,, working at the State Fair! You will get to meet people and learn about Nevada's history and more specifically, the history of Sparks. Why not offer an hour or two a week or try calling when you have some time to spare, maybe they could use some help on the spot. Don't forget to let them know you are a member of the stamp club.

This month the presentation was given by **Mike Potter**. We can all take a lesson from him. The talk was about putting an exhibit together. He put his own up for us to see. It was just in its beginning stages and still had a ways to go. This was his first effort and I commend him for allowing us to see it. It received some criticisms that was offered in a positive manner and Mike accepted graciously. My hat's off to you Mike. I don't think I would have the confidence.

Still not many stamp shows nearby other than the usual run of commercial bourses

**COALPEX** is coming in June 9-10 at the Walnut Creek Community Center at 1375 Civic DR. 10 - 6 on Sat and 10 - 4 Sun. They are still accepting exhibits. Contact David at; [dmcnamee@aol.com](mailto:dmcnamee@aol.com).

The **Greater Reno Stamp and Cover Show** is coming to town on July 28 and 29 at the Bowling Stadium in downtown Reno. Hours will be 10 - 6 on Sat and 10 - 4 on Sat.

Cachet makers. If you are making a cachet for the Reno Stamp and Cover Show in July or intend to make one its time to get started. The deadline is on June 15th. This is not an artificial deadline that you can miss by a few days. it is the last possible moment. If there are several cachets turned at this time, the best of them may be overlooked for lack of time to make a decision. Get it in tomorrow if possible. Don't wait until the last minute..



Speaking of cachets, this one will be used to support awareness of mental illness. A walk and talk-a-thon will be held at Rock Park from 11am to 4pm. Jeanne Paquin will be there and will be happy to give you the opportunity to purchase one of these cacheted envelopes to support the cause, cause it will make you feel better about the type of life you live. Come down to Rock Park after the stamp club meeting and allow yourself to become a part of something you can be proud of.



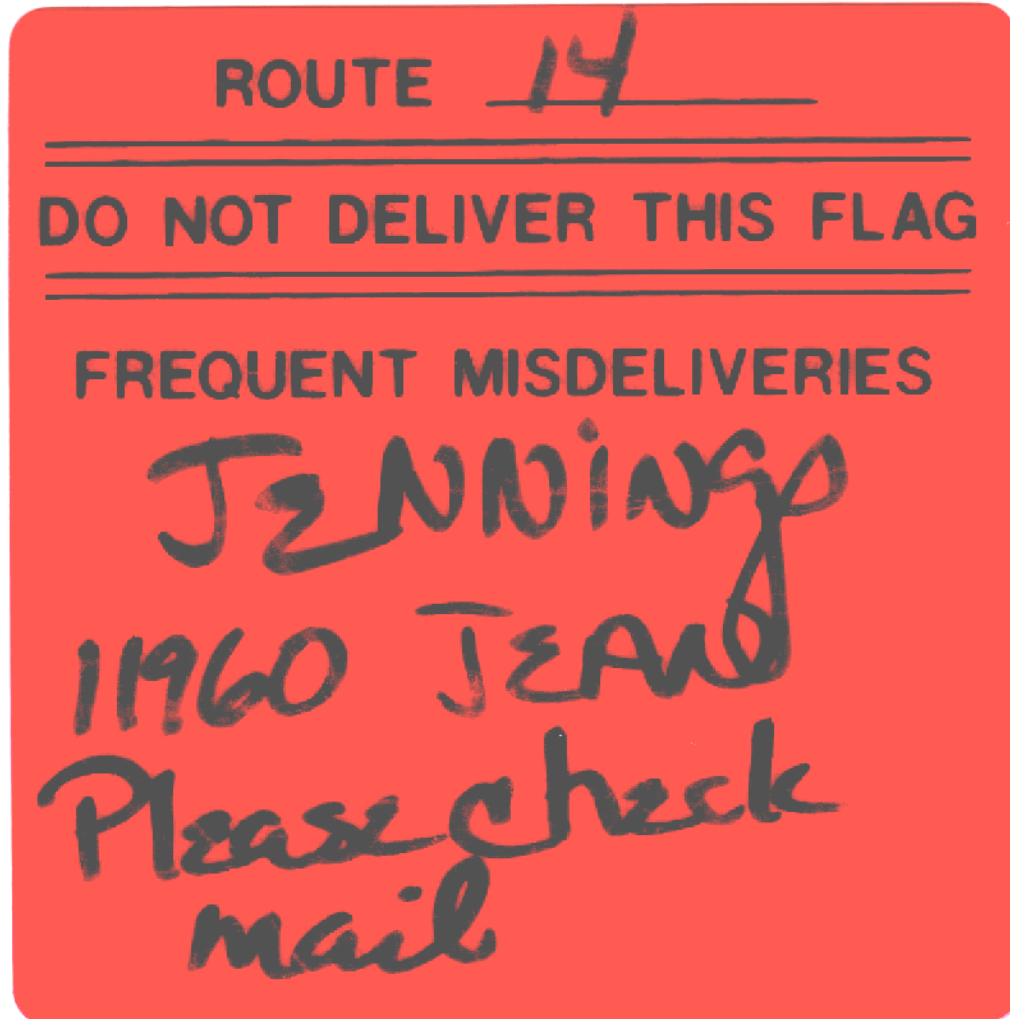
From the Arkansas Gazette: At El Dorado, one of Hazel Finch's neighbors came knocking (she isn't saying which neighbor) and asked to trade a postage stamp. Hazel Finch had never heard of such a request.

"I asked him if this was some sort of a joke."

"I'm sending in my tax return. The only stamp that I have in the house says "LOVE."

from: **Winick Snippets** By Les Winick, As syndicated in 435 non-philatelic newspapers

An interesting piece of postal paraphanlia. I've never seen one of these before. It's a flat piece of red plastic with black lettering, filled out with a marking pen (those shouldn't be allowed inside a post office!).



The message points out that route fourteen has been having a problem delivering mail to the wrong address'. I know I have seen several misdeliveries in my mailbox. Of course it doesn't happen all that often but, hey, nobody's perfect. Looks like the people at 11960 Jean have been overloaded with other people's mail lately and said so to someone important. Wonder if some of it was mine because Route # 14 includes my mailbox!

The second line from the top says "Do not Deliver this Flag". Obviously it is not meant for the customer's eyes and is only used within the postal service. So how did I come across this unusual peice of post office equipment? It was delivered to my mailbox! And, oh yeah, that's not my address.

Normally I have a single page in this spot which I tell you all about. Occasionally I like to put a bunch of pages you might find useful or entertaining. Some of these have been in here before but are worth a reminder.

Penny Postcards. This person has put together a collection of Penny postcards to illustrate your state or any other that takes your fancy. Its done county by county.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/%7Eusgenweb/special/ppcs/ppcs.html>

The Third Reich in Ruins. This one is what it says. What happened to the structures built by Hitler. What do they look like today and what happened to them.

<http://www.thirdreichruins.com/>

Tips on Scanning. The scanner is a handy magnifying glass for your stamps. You can blow a small part (like one letter or number) to the size of your screen for study. There's some good tips on scanning in this site.

[http://www.pgacon.com/tips\\_on\\_scanning.htm](http://www.pgacon.com/tips_on_scanning.htm)

Translations. Do you have a foreign catalog and wonder what it says? This is a site I often use, though sometimes you have to translate the translations.

<http://www.freetranslation.com/>

Pilatic translations. This one devotes itself to foreign word in philately, like Grün means green. There are five languages represented but that covers a lot of ground.

<http://www.stampshows.com/translate.html>

US Postal Service. So what do you need this for? Information! You want to insure a package you're getting ready to send to your grandmother. Its worth \$643 and you want to insure it. You know you can insure the first \$50 for \$1.35 but how much for the other \$597??? I think you can buy stamps too.

<http://www.usps.com/>

Council of Northern California Philatelic Societies. You belong to this club. Get to know it. They have information like upcoming shows from the other member clubs and how to contact other clubs and whats going on in Northern California (and Reno) philately.

<http://www.norcalstamps.org/>

The Western Philatelic Library. Its in San Jose. How often do you pass through or near San Jose? Have you ever visited?. There is a map you can print out and an address to go to. Next time you're near you might want to stop in and say hello!

<http://www.pbbooks.com/wplm.htm>

Last month we had a quiz about Canadian stamps and before that it was Canadian stamps. Is there any rule that says all the quizzes have to be about stamps? Of course this is a rag about philately so I suppose there is but so what? This is the world's easiest quiz (or is it?) so sit back and enjoy a change of pace and see how easy it really is. It came off the internet so some of you may have already seen it. Easier for you, then.

A. How long did the hundred years war last??

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What country makes Panama Hats??

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What animal does catgut come from??

\_\_\_\_\_

4. In which month do the Russians celebrate the October Revolution??

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is a camel's hair brush made of??

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after which animal??

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What was King George VI first name?? (no, it's not "King")

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What color is the purple finch?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Where are Chinese gooseberries from?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. How long did the thirty years war last??

\_\_\_\_\_

Bonus question. RPO means Raqilway Post Office. What does RMS mean?

You can thank Stan Cronwall for this little piece of mischief. You may want to take a second look at your answers before you turn it in. Things aren't always what they appear to be.

Two errors (my bad) in last month's quiz. 1956 instead of 66 (#1) but most people caught that. The other was death instead of birth (#3) but nobody noticed. Sometimes words are just not important.

1. B. Traffic sign is the right answer but 1956 is the wrong question. My error. I mis-typed the date and spell check didn't catch it. Darn! You all get it right. #447

2. C. Pierre Laporte was the Minister of labor. He was kidnapped along with British Trade Commissioner James R. Cross. Laporte was killed and the killers were captured and prosecuted. Cross captors released him in return for being allowed to go to Cuba. Sct #558.

3. B. Richelieu was French and Friar Tuck may not have existed at all. Laval was a major figure in the religious and civil affairs of New France (much of Canada and part of the United States) and established Qubec (now Laval) University. #611.

4. A. The Montreal Olympics were first celebrated in June of 1975 on # 664-66 and again when they were held in 1976. #681-83.

5. C. America's first postmaster, Benjamin Franklin, was celebrated on a joint issue with the United States. #691. The US issue was #1690.

6. B. The Peace Bridge was opened in 1927 and extends across the Niagra river from Fort Potter in the US to Fort Erie in Canada. #737.

7. C. Loons are on the coins and the Orioles are in Baltimore. Its the Canadian Geese that are on the airmail stamps (C9).

8. A. Remember to use your postal code. The Canadian post office tied a bow around a woman's (and a man's) finger to remind their patrons. # 815 & 816.

9. B. The set was issued in 1979 in a setenant sheet of twelve. The stamps are #821-32. The sheet is 832a.

10. B. If you're a topical collector you might know what the dominant topic in Canadian semi-postals is. Up 'til 1976 all Canadian Semi-postals featured sports in their designs (B1 - B12).

Bonus: Canges in the bylaws were noted in red for our internet readers and underlined for those who receive it in the mail.

There were good scores again and most people got the error question (#1) right!



It's always nice to know what's going on at the auctions. Its also good to be observant of what you're looking at. The picture below shows a group of airmail stamps from Thailand (formerly Siam). What's wrong with this picture? Nothing so far. The stamps look real enough and the cancelations are too sloppy to have been applied by anyone other than a bored postal clerk, I don't believe the problem is in the stamps or cancels but maybe the overprint and surely the description.



### **Siam, Compl. Overprinted. Never issued. RARITY. Read**

“Never issued because the Death of the King. Shipping is 0.97 or insured .Your choice. For every additional item sent with this set/stamp- shipping is only 0.20 [SAVE 0.77 on every supplementary lot.”

See anything wrong yet? Never issued because of the death of the king? Back in the days of the pharaoh, the servants of the king were buried with their dead leader. Usually alive. Other societies have practiced this treatment on the hapless housemaids, cooks and washers of feet but that was long ago. Do you suppose this custom was continued in the Thai post office? All the stamps were cancelled when the king died? Otherwise, how did they get used if they were never issued! Well, hey, the shipping is cheap.

Pay attention to detail when you look at an auction. It may not be what the seller says (or thinks) it is. By the way, opening bid is only \$24.90.

**RPO**  
**Railway Post Offices**  
Bill Brew

the Railway post office system began in the 1860's with the development of the railway system. A mail car was added to the train for the purpose of sorting and delivering mail to the stations along the train's route. It didn't take long for the system to expand. The railroad became the primary and fastest method of handling the mail. Coast to coast was accomplished in 1889. The railroad cancel R.P.O. with its assigned number became a collectors subject.

A letter has a cancel of the Chicago and Council Bluffs, Iowa Train #8. The RPO stands for Railway Post Office. The cover is dated Nov. 17, 1919. It was mailed from Chariton Iowa to Grinnel, Iowa, a distance of 170 miles. The railroad line that carried this letter was the C.R.I. & P. (Chicago Rock Island and Peoria railroad). The next letter is an R.P.O. on the Pitts. and St. Louis, train #19, and dated Nov. 10, 1932. It was sent from Corning, Iowa to Anamosa, Iowa. It was on the CMSP & P from Anamosa to Ceder Rapids and to Oskaloosa to Sigourney, Via CRI & P to Eddyville and via Chicago and Council Bluffs R.R. to Corning, a distance of 200 miles. Also note the cancel on the stamp contains the letters RMS. RMS means Railway Mail System.

These letters were sorted by a postal clerk as he travelled along the route. In all probability the process was just routine, as opposed to the many climactic events that happened in earlier days. Train wrecks, fires, errors catching the stringers or throwing the pouch into the designated areas.

One such clerk, a substitute, now a regular, put the hook out too soon and caught a semaphore post. Now confused about the goof he just made, he promptly threw the sack of mail just in time to have it crash into the station's window. The crew laughed so much that no demerits were given. For weeks after, the crew still hooted the "sub"



when he would board the mail car. It was a while before he was assigned the task again.

The R.P.O. clerks were not as charismatic as the engineers, but the intelligence and high efficiency of the RPO clerks was superb. It required an annual test of 284 difficult questions to keep the job. A sorting test requires the clerk to sort cards at a rate of 16 per minute.

The sorting of the mail by these clerks was astounding. The myriad of slots, oxes, pigeon holes would confuse any average individual. But, for the clerk' he could pump the mail into it's designated place at a rate of 3 times the test requirements and into unmarked slots. He must have a memoy of 3,000 to 10,000 destinations. Routes and time schedules were embeded into his mind. It became automatic for him.

One such incident describes an incident where one of the clerks had a heart attack and was asked where he lived. Hardly had the victim spoke his address, the preoccupied clerk barked out " Carrier 145, 2nd morning delivery; if its special pouch it to the main....."

There were more serious moments, such as the time the clerk got his chain caught in the pouch and and threw it off the train. He went with it and at 65 mph there was little doubt of his outcome. Other deadly risks were possible. Wrecks and holdups were always on the horizon.

Holdups were rare but they did happen. All mail clerks were required to carry firearms. Pistols mainly. There are several instances when a clerk needed them to help stave off a robbery attempt. As late as 1939, two postal clerks repulsed a desparate group of bandits with gun play. This was on the Chicago and Carbondale train 31 at Onarga, Illinois. Badly wounded, they managed to wound one of the bandits and saved a \$56,000 payroll.

Wrecks still happen these days. For a mail clerk, he would first notice ties, rails passing past the windows and the mail flying like pigeons in the car. He knew he was in for a wreck. Only two people got a wreck ahead of the mail clerks. The engineer and the fireman

The life of a mail clerk had some glamor and lots of hard work. Once it was in their blood they usually stayed for a lifetime. One mail clerk racked up 2,717,500 miles of RPO duty. Many others could claim over 1,000,000 miles of duty. That's dedication.

Its interesting what can come from a couple of covers and a little research.

References: "Mail by Rail" - Bryant Long and William Dennis

The Encyclopedia Britannica

The article was written a few years ago for inclusion in other publications. Bill Brew was kind enough to allow it to be published in the Post Boy. Covers mentioned in the article have since found another home and were unavailable for this issue.