

Scribblings

...from the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library

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What's New on the Shelves will return in the May-June issue.

Great Britain's Air Letters: Born in War

By Jeff Modesitt

Looking at a once vibrant and purposeful area of philately that is now the equivalent of collecting a "dead country," makes us recognize how much our world is changing.

In April of 2012, Great Britain announced that Air Letters, aka aerogrammes and air mail letter cards, would no longer be available, and that they would be invalid by October of that year. So, what the heck happened? Actually, the UK was late to the withdrawal parade. The United States had already exhausted their supply of aerogrammes sometime after 2006, and they were discontinued when it was recognized that demand for the last five years had been almost nonexistent.

Britain also felt the lack of demand as emails, messaging, Facebook, and Twitter eroded the need for paper communication.

The once popular Air Letter will no longer grace our Christmas mail with news from a family member or friend, nor will we be reminded of British regional events that don't make the grade for postage stamps, but were so colorfully depicted on the commemorative aerogrammes. While this does not really mean goodbye to aerogrammes altogether, it does put a beginning and an end to the issue period. It is also a perfect time to take a look back at their development, and the early years.

The balance of this article will focus on the primarily military genesis of the Air Mail Letter Cards of Great Britain, also known over the years as Aerogrammes, Air Mail Letter Sheets, Air Letters, and Airletters (without the space between words).



Figure 1. The first Air Mail Letter Card was printed by Iraq in 1933.

THE FIRST CARDS

Air Letters were the brainchild of Douglas William Gumbley, born in Guernsey and thus a British citizen, but working in Iraq in 1933 as Inspector General of Posts and Telegraphs. Given Iraq's distant location relative to large population centers and commercial activity, Gumbley recognized the need for a light weight, inexpensive, and fast communication method. Both KLM and Imperial Airways were developing routes that would bring aircraft through the Middle East, but sending heavy letters and packets by air was beyond the means of ordinary people. His answer was to design a pre-stamped, single lightweight letter sheet, costing 15 fils, or, in Arabic, the plural is fulus. (1 fils equals a thousandth of a dinar).

The Iraqis ran with the proposal, and the initial Air Letter was issued on July 15, 1933 (Figure 1). Gumbley, however, being a British citizen (Figure 2), had registered the design at Stationers Hall in London on February 15, 1933. This act officially made it a British idea!

(continued on page 3)

Scribblings

Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain
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A basic membership in the RMPL is \$25 a year, and includes checkout privileges and Scribblings. Call for more information.

Knowledge is better when shared. Consider writing an article for Scribblings about your favorite philatelic topic.

President John Sinski
Operations ManagerHoward Benson
Vice PresidentJim Kilbane
Corresponding SecretaryRoe Emery
Recording Secretary Brian Kramer
Treasurer Bob Blatherwick
Directors: John Bloor, Steve McGill, Dalene Thomas, David Weisberg. Director Emeritus: Don Dhonau. Ex-officio member, Ellengail Beuthel..

Officers and Directors may be contacted through the RMPL.

rmpldenver.org

ELECTION RESULTS

An election by the RMPL membership for positions on the Board of Directors was held in January. 213 ballots were cast out of a possible 538 members, making for a turnout of 40 percent.

Thanks to Brian Kramer for his leadership of the election committee, for organizing the election and encouraging candidates to run, and for promoting the importance of casting a ballot.

Here are the officers and board members for the next three years:

	VOTES
PRESIDENT: JOHN SINSKI	189
VICE PRESIDENT JIM KILBANE	196
CORRESPONDING	
SECRETARY ROE EMERY	188
RECORDING	
SECRETARY BRIAN KRAMER	187
DIRECTOR OF	
OPERATIONS HOWARD BENSON	183
TREASURER ROBERT BLATHERWICK	103
	(ELECTED)
TIMOTHY HEINS	87
DIRECTORS	
(TOP FOUR ARE ELECTED)	
DALENE THOMAS	168
JOHN BLOOR	149
DAVID WEISBERG	147
STEVE MCGILL	125
WILLIAM CRABBS	117
RICHARD PALESTRO	86

WRITE-IN VOTES:

JOHN BLOOR AND PAUL LEE RECEIVED 1 VOTE EACH FOR PRESIDENT, DON DHONAU RECEIVED 1 VOTE FOR CORRESPONDING SECRETARY, AND ANDREW WACINSKI RECEIVED 1 VOTE FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

A note from the outgoing President:

Congratulations to all who ran for office. Your willingness to do so is in furtherance of a more than two decade tradition of RMPL members standing forth to lead this organization.

To those who were not elected, my thanks for having been willing to do so, and we hope that you will remain available for future elections.

Sincerely,
Sergio Lugo

Great Britain's Airletters, cont..

The 15 fils cost was about the same price as a surface letter then, or about 3½ cents in today's currency. The Air Letters were printed in Iraq, but concerns over losing money resulted in an immediate re-pricing to 20 fils, thereby requiring additional postage. Evidently, very few used letters are known from the period before the price went up to 20 fils.

WWII INFLUENCE

Despite its being a British idea, it took World War II to motivate Great Britain to adopt the idea at home. As late as 1939, there were no concessionary rates available to British citizens for air mail service. This created a huge problem, as there were many active duty service personnel stationed in the Middle East and the Far East. The cost of air service was prohibitive, and surface mail was unreliable and extremely slow. Even so, it was not until 1941 (**Figure 3**) that an Air Mail Letter Card was made available to service personnel, some two years after authorities first consulted with Gumbley. The delay could also be at least partially attributed to the belief that Airgraphs (microfilm) were the best solution to fast, reliable and affordable communication.

The argument was that Airgraphs reduced the bulk of 50 pounds of letters (1600) to just 5 ounces! When adopted, the first batch (70,000) sent between England and Egypt took three weeks to reach their destination! What may have been unappreciated was the time it took to reduce each letter to film, and then, once at the delivery point, print each letter, put it in an envelope, and deliver it. Given that there was a war raging, Airgraphs created a lot of extra work. The process also required batches of equipment and chemicals, when the war effort might use these more effectively elsewhere! Airgraphs continued to be used, but in many situations, the Air Mail Letter Cards made more sense.

The Air Mail Letter Card was initially offered only in Palestine, Cyrenaica, Greece, and Cyprus, and the only delivery destination allowed was the UK. They were also in very limited supply, with distribution of one per man per fortnight.

THAT WILL BE 3 PENCE, PLEASE

Did I mention that this Air Mail Letter Card was not pre-stamped, but required the sender to attach a 3d stamp? Today, these cards or letter sheets are known as formular. It was not until 1942 that an Air Mail Letter Card was made available for families of active service personnel in Great Britain. It was also formular, and required a 6d stamp. Most of the formular letters were produced for the military, and used by active service personnel and their families. They often form the core of "Forces-oriented collections."

What most of us associate with traditional Great Britain pre-stamped Air Letters didn't occur until July 21, 1941, and it was a special situation. Available only for correspondence to prisoners of war held in Axis countries, this 2½d "Prisoner of War Post" (**Figure 4**) usually went by air to Spain, and then overland through Switzerland to the final destination.

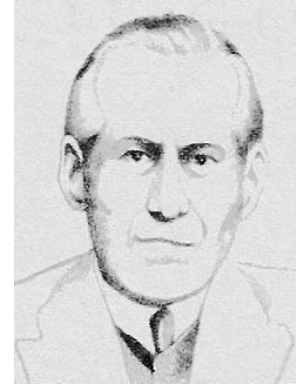


Figure 2. Douglas William Gumbley, creator of the British Air Letter.

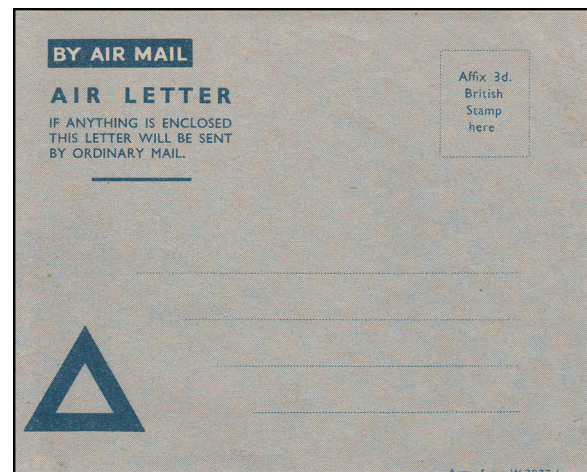


Figure 3. The first Air Mail Letter Card made available to service personnel was not without controversy. Many authorities preferred microfilm even though it was labor intensive. Also, note the triangle printed on the letter card. It signified that the contents were subject only to military base censor. Most did not have this "Privilege" feature.

Unfortunately, the high cost to families of active service personnel who were not prisoners was not addressed until almost the end of the war in Europe (April 7, 1945), when a 1½d Air Letter was introduced (see **Figures 8, 9** and **10** on page 5).

PRE-STAMPED ISSUES INTRODUCED

With all the resource demands placed on Great Britain, any way of saving paper or other precious commodities was eventually adopted. The first pre-stamped issue was made available to the general public on June 18, 1943, and saw the Air Mail Letter Card designation reduced to "Air Letter" (**Figure 5**). This version was based on the Gumbley designs already in use by the armed forces and civilians in an unstamped form, and featured the iconic George VI profile with a 6d rate.

(continued on page 4)

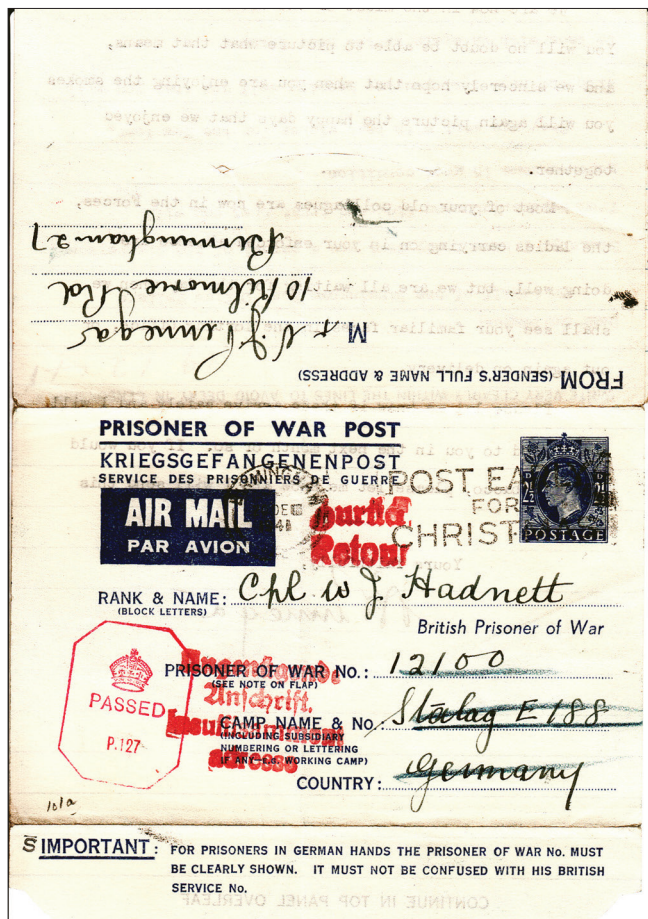


Figure 4. The "Prisoner of War Post" took a circuitous route from England through Spain and Switzerland to an Axis POW camp.

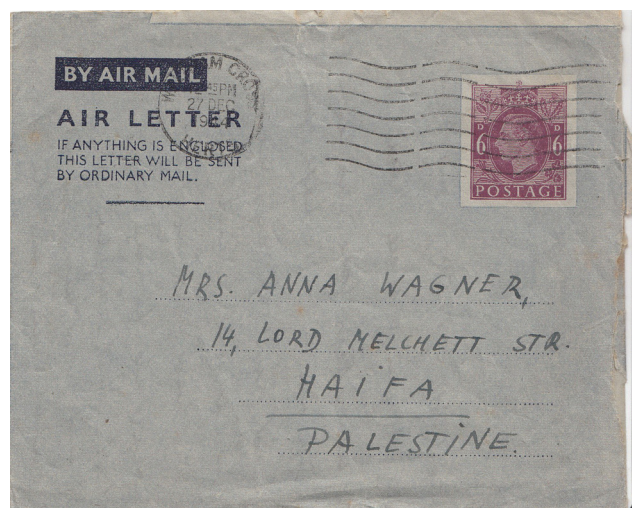


Figure 5. The first pre-stamped Air Letter made available to the general public.

From this tumultuous beginning, driven by the needs of a country fighting for their very existence, the Air Letter took its place as a fast, inexpensive, and often visually attractive communication tool. In the decades that followed, over 200 air letter designs were used, with the majority of the issues being commemorative (Figures 6 & 7) rather than definitive issues.

THE CHALLENGE FOR A COLLECTOR

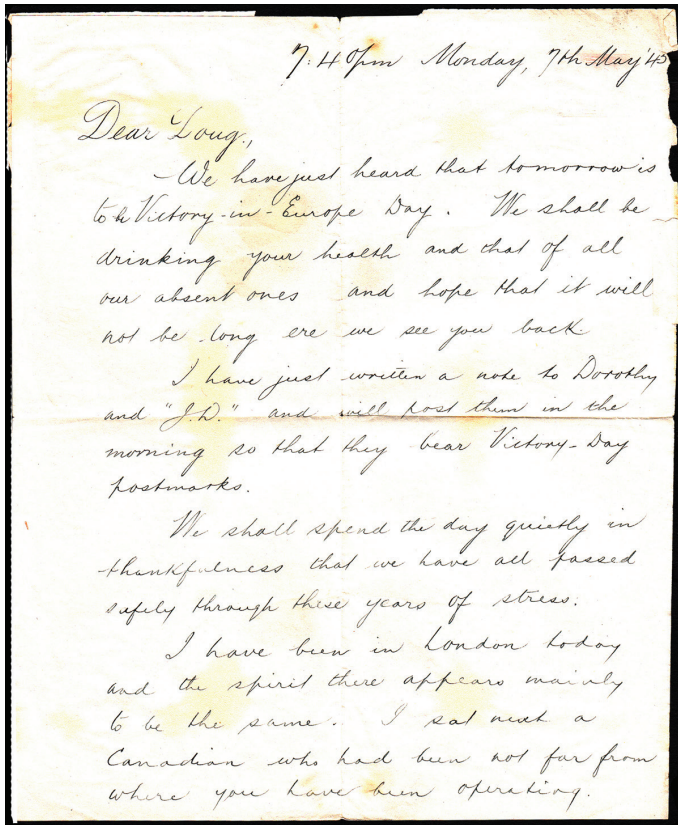
Great Britain's Air Letters are an interesting and challenging area to collect, especially for those interested in postal history. Early used covers often contain powerful descriptions of the war years, and allow us first hand



Figure 6. One of the first commemorative Air Letter cards was issued to celebrate the Queen's coronation in 1953. In addition to the AIR LETTER designation, the front etiquette format on the upper left uses the terminology AEROGRAMME. This was the first Great Britain use following the UPU's official recognition of these cards in 1951. The inclusion of the word Aerogramme was mandated, but not the font size.



Figure 7. Most Air Letters in later years after WWII were commemorative issues, rather than definitives.



Addressed to: Pfc D. C. Lofts
75 Coy
C.M.P. (T. C)
C.M.F.

Return address: George J. Lofts
34 Denonshire Ave.,
Dartford, Kent

7:40 pm Monday, 7th May '45

Dear Loug,

We have just heard that tomorrow is to be Victory in Europe Day. We shall be drinking to your health and that of all our absent ones and hope that it will not be long ere we see you back.

I have just written a note to Dorothy and "J.D." and will post them in the morning so that they bear Victory Day postmarks.

We shall spend the day quietly in thankfulness that we have all passed safely through these years of stress.

I have been in London today and the spirit there appears to mainly be the same. I sat with a Canadian who had been not far from where you have been operating.

In tonight's paper I have read news of a cricketing pal, Tim Bligh of Swanley, who has topped many adventures by taking 40 German vessels in the Adriatic just before the official surrender came about.

Tomorrow we hope to hear Churchill at 3 pm and the King at 9 pm. Historic times!

Love from us both,
Mum & Dad

Figure 10. This is a transcript of the letter in Figures 8 and 9. In it, a father writes to his son and tells of a somber attitude toward Victory in Europe Day.



Figures 8 and 9. An Air Letter to a son from his parents, written the day before Victory in Europe Day. The inside page has been lightened to make it easier to read.

glimpses of one of history's most tragic events.

The text of the Air Letter (Figure 10) admirably makes the point. Not only are the King's and Churchill's speeches referenced, but a description is also given of the mood in London of those who suffered through the German air raids. People's sober and thankful attitude makes sense, given what the British had suffered through. The letter writer's description is much different than the cheering crowds often seen in the movies.

The cricketing pal, Timothy Bligh, became Sir Timothy Bligh. According to Wikipedia, "He served in the North Atlantic, the English Channel and the Mediterranean, and was twice wounded. He was awarded the DSC and bar and the DSO, and was appointed an OBE." The OBE (Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) is what made him a Sir. I have not been able to find mention of his detailed exploits, except in the Air Letter text.

It is that kind of personal reference that makes these Air Letters so interesting and collectible!



RMPL BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting of January 29, 2015

Prepared by President-Elect John Sinski

The meeting began at 6 p.m. All board members except David Weisberg were in attendance plus those candidates for office in the new board. Roger Rydberg also attended.

Minutes of the November 2014 meeting were reviewed and approved.

The National Parks Video and book by Paul Lee were discussed, and six of the new books were sold to board members.

The following were provided in preparation for action by the new Board at some point in the future:

1. RMPL Historical Register of Board Motions and Actions.
2. RMPL Organizational Chart
3. RMPL Bylaws and Recommendations for Changes

Financial Reports for Calendar Year 2014 were reviewed and accepted.

2014 Annual Reports from Groups or Activities:

- Acquisitions of catalogs and books.
- Auctions: \$54,000 raised.
- Book Sales: \$191.50.
- Building Maintenance: electrical and lighting upgrades planned.
- Donations Provided: \$1,000 to Young Philatelic Fellows Leadership, and \$1,000 to Stamps Teach.
- Donations Received: 55 monetary donations totaling \$14,092.75, and two Memorials totaling \$125.00.
- eBay Sales: \$691.34.
- Renewal Donations: Librarian's Fund \$2776.16,

mortgage \$1,255.

- Membership: 528 Members as of 12/31/2014.
- OLLI: two programs; 19 attendees at OLLI Central, and 14 at OLLI West.
- Publications: National Parks books are selling.
- Periodicals: 91 computer records updated.
- Scribblings costs: print = \$4,835; mailing = \$4,575; total = \$9,410.
- Special Collections: the work continues.
- Stamp sales staff continued improvements to process stamps for sale.
- Technology report (included printers, copiers, computers, software and a myriad of programs and projects).
- Videos: 10 thus far; three more on schedule.
- Youth Program: RMPL continues support.

Old Business

- Webmaster: Efforts of our Technology Group to secure a new Webmaster were discussed. The Board voted to continue to support the efforts of the Technology Group.

New Business:

- 2015 Budget reviewed and approved.
- New RMPL members were approved.

Next Meeting:

- The next meeting will be March 5, 2015, at 7 p.m. New officers will be installed and will begin their terms.

RMPL Videos on Line and on DVD

The RMPL now has ten video titles on the internet:

- United States National Parks
By Paul Lee
- The Lore and Legend of Dragons
As Told by Postage Stamps, by Lynne Toews
(You will love the ending of this!)
- A History of Scouting, by Frank Leitz
- Scouting Activities, by Frank Leitz
- The Security Elements of Postage Stamps,
Part 1, By Steve Dixon
- Jewish National Fund: Labels with a Purpose
By Dasa Metzler
- Tasmania, Part 1: Pictorial Stamps 1899-1900
By Ron Hill
- Tasmania, Part 2: Pictorial Stamps 1901-1913
By Ron Hill
- RMPL Youth Stamp Club
By Don Dhonau
- U.S./German Seapost
By Sergio Lugo

To view the videos, go to our web page at www.rmpldenver.org, and click on "Videos" in the menu on the left.



The first nine of the presentations are available on one DVD. They are for sale at the library for \$5.00, or by mail for an additional \$2.00 for shipping and handling.

Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library

Assets and Liability Report for 2014

Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library ASSETS/LIABILITY REPORT: 2014 Year

Prepared for 1/29/2015 RMPL Board Meeting by Sergio Lugo

	2013	2014
CASH (as of Dec. 31, 2014):		
Checking Account:	\$18,754	\$19,587
Savings Account:	\$8,523	\$8,525
Cash Register Balance	\$91	\$124
Liquid Savings Account (Bauer):	\$20,953	\$15,902
Available Liquid Funds:	\$48,321	\$44,138
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE (as of Dec. 31, 2014):		
Pay Pal Balance:	\$100	\$1,003
INVESTMENTS (as of Dec. 31, 2014, includes interest/dividends))		
Bank Money Market	\$5,057	\$5,060
Credit Union 24 Mo. CD	\$38,161	\$38,390
Credit Union Money Market	\$6,234	\$6,240
Credit Union Minimum	\$5	\$5
Librarian's Fund Investment Account (UBS) (Principle invested since inception)	\$95,534 [\$88,131]	\$124,930 [\$113,521]
RESTRICTED FUNDS:		
Acquisition (Books)	\$4,885	\$3,697
Book Lending	\$500	\$500
Youth Reserves (Metro Youth Checking) (1)	\$229	\$744
ASSETS:		
2038 S. Pontiac Way Equity	\$127,000	\$127,000
2048 S. Pontiac Way & Gardens Equity	\$297,500	\$297,500
TOTAL: Cash, Investments, Assets (excludes books, stamps, journals, equipment)	\$623,527	\$649,329

TOTALS		
Cash & Investments:	\$623,527	\$649,329
Minus 2048 S. Pontiac Mortgage/ Liability	\$121,428	\$84,828
GRAND TOTAL: Assets	\$502,099	\$564,501

The RMPL is proud to present its financial position for the review of its members. This is the third year this information has appeared in Scribblings.

- (1) Amount available for youth activities: \$744 plus budgeted youth reserve amount of \$300 = \$1,044
- (2) RMPL Bboard decision of 1/27/15. Begin process of seeking the employment of a part-time webmaster with an unspecified salary amount until selected personnel identified. Likewise, relative to a part-time librarian until definitive word is received from Ellengail Beuthel of her desire to step down in 2015.
- (3) RMPL Board decision of 1/29/2015 to begin buildup of funds for future HVAC replacement.

Outstanding Financial Commitments As of December 31, 2014 with comparisons to 2013

	2013	2014
LIABILITIES:		
2048 S. Pontiac Mortgage	\$121,428	\$84,828
TOTAL:	\$121,428	\$84,828

OUTSTANDING COMMITMENTS (as of 12/31/14):		
(With the exception of the mortgage above, these items are not shown elsewhere in the report. They may be paid in 2015 or later years.)		
Book Lending Fund Earnings: (2012 = \$33; 2013 = \$133; 2014 = \$104)	\$166	\$270
Youth Reserve Fund Amount in RMPL Budget to Metro Youth (checking acct.)	\$1,000	\$300
Colorado RPO Book (from 2012 budget)	\$3,000	\$3,000
Renewal Donations of 2014 to be applied in 2015 above usual payments		
o Librarians Fund	\$0	\$2,776
o Mortgage Paydown	\$0	\$1,255
Reserves: Administrative		
Property Tax 2014 to pay 2015	\$1,000	\$700
Insurance to pay in 2015	\$4,100	\$4,200
Accountant/Audit to pay 2014	\$0	\$4,000
Librarian Fund: Deposits annually (excludes Renewal Donations above)	\$20,000	\$5,000
New York 2016: (\$6,000 in 2016)	\$0	\$250
Contingency:	\$2,500	\$2,500
Charitable Donations	\$2,000	\$1,000
Personnel Contracts (Part-time): (2)	xxxxx	
o Webmaster (\$ To Be Determined) (2)	xxxxx	
o Librarian (\$ To De Determined) (2)	xxxxx	
Building HVAC Repair Fund (3)	xxxxx	\$1,000
Total: Outstanding Commitments:	\$34,266	\$26,252

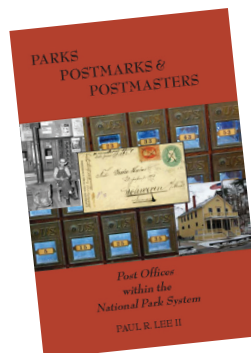
Year End Income & Expenses		
(From financial report to Board on January 29, 2015)		
Income	\$134,908	\$140,916
Expenses	\$129,721	\$137,678

RMPL's Latest Publication

The library is proud to offer...

Parks Postmarks & Postmasters by Paul Lee

Softbound - \$29.99 plus \$3.50 shipping & handling
Hardbound edition - \$50.00 plus \$4.00 shipping & handling
Prices are for shipping in the U.S.



To order, please send a check or money order to:

RMPL
Parks Book
2038 S. Pontiac Way
Denver, CO 80224

Sergio Lugo

Fourth President of the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library

by John H. Bloor
RMPL Board Member

Sergio was one of the founding members of the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library. He is number 105, part of the original group (membership numbers started at 101). I remember first meeting him at the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show (still ROMPEX back then) in 1995. He and I sat at the RMPL table at the show.



Sergio Lugo

He has been on the library board since 2000, and was elected president in 2008 when Ron Mitchell retired. Sergio is now wrapping up six years as the fourth RMPL president. How did this kid from New York City reach such an exalted position at a prominent U.S. philatelic library? It's a long and interesting story.

EARLY HISTORY

Sergio provided me with a detailed narrative describing the development of his involvement with stamps. He grew up in the Alfred E. Smith projects in Manhattan. This is close to Nassau Street "where stamp collecting began." Stamp collecting for young Sergio began in 1953 as a second grade project at St. Joseph's Catholic School, when he was about seven years old.

During the next ten years, Sergio earned stamp money by working on Saturdays for his father, repairing bus bodies. His first album was an Aristocrat published by the Grossman Stamp Co., which he bought for about \$13.00. To save money, his father taught him how to make stamp hinges from paper tape, some of which he still has. This may have led to his life-long interest in stamp hinges, culminating in his collection of them, now part of the RMPL holdings (*A Reference Guide to Hinges*, located in the stacks at 769.57 Lug, with samples of hinges).

At age 16, Sergio got a job with the Bates Manufacturing Company, only a few blocks off Nassau St. By that time (early 1960s), the area's reputation as the "stamp district" was fading, but he recalls walking down Nassau St. after work and looking at the stamps on display. At that time, the Subway Stamp Company was



Sergio grew up in the Alfred E. Smith housing projects in Manhattan.

still located in the arcade at 87 Nassau St. at the entrance to a subway station, hence its name.

By age 18, when he moved to Minnesota to attend St. John's University, the stamp collecting bug had gone into hibernation. College was followed by service in the U.S. Army as an infantry officer in Viet Nam. He met and married Pam Swedin, and eventually returned to Minnesota from 1970 to 1971, to allow her to complete her undergraduate degree. Then one day Sergio's brother, Ariel, called him to say that he was sending a large box of stamps that he'd gotten from his then-wife's relatives. When the box arrived, Sergio spent three days sorting the contents – and he was hooked (again) on philately.



Sergio's wife, Pam, has been supportive of his involvement with the RMPL.

THE MIDDLE YEARS

While he was in Minnesota, he took a job that involved driving around the state. He often stopped at local post offices and bought back issues of stamps that the postmasters hadn't yet returned to the central office. Shortly after this, the family moved to Denver where Sergio attended graduate school at the University of Denver. In the fall of 1972 he attended his first stamp club meeting at the West Side Stamp Club, where he met Bill Dunn, another founding member of the RMPL. At the next meeting, he brought along a block of six stamps, for which he had paid face value (36¢). When someone offered him \$4.00 for it – a nearly 10-fold profit – the light bulb went on and Sergio suddenly realized that there was money to be made in stamps!

In 1974 the Lugos went to Washington DC for Sergio's job training, returned to Denver from about 1975 to 1978, left again, and eventually returned to Denver for good in 1981. They've been here ever since, and Sergio's involvement in the philatelic community has continued to grow. He joined a number of local stamp clubs and he helped to found the Rocky Mountain Aerophilatelic Club in 1985, and the Latin American Study Group in 1991.

THE LIBRARY YEARS

In 1991, Sergio became associated with the group of Denver collectors who founded the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library. The organizing committee, besides Sergio, included Bob Blatherwick, Don and Ellengail Beuthel, Dave Capra, Bill Dunn, Greg Frantz, Jim Kilbane,

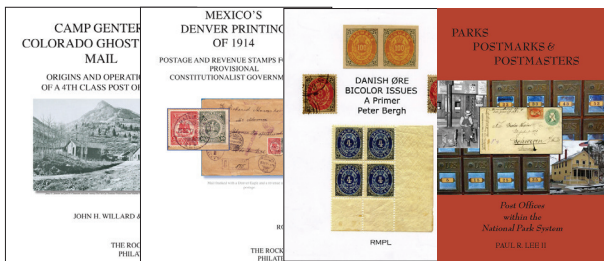
Jim Ozment, Roger Rydberg, Steve Schweighofer, Joe Weinman, and Jack Willard, with significant help from Bill Bauer of Unadilla, NY, and Joe Crosby of Edmond, OK.

The Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library came into existence in 1993. After several years in temporary locations, in 1995 the library bought its first building, at 2038 South Pontiac Way. After extensive renovation and repair work, for which most of the material and labor were donated, the RMPL opened at that site on August 3, 1996. The library was really on its way!

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

After being on the library board for eight years, Sergio was elected president in 2008. In addition to keeping the library running smoothly and growing in size and stature, there were many notable events during his terms in office. The most significant was, arguably, the purchase of a second building, 2048 S. Pontiac Way, in December, 2009. This provided much needed space for the expansion of the library, and thus the many services being provided to collectors. Throughout the renovation of this building and the development of the garden on the adjacent open lot, Sergio provided much of the direction and, frankly, the labor in these projects, but he would be the first to say he couldn't have done it alone.

Although the RMPL has become very much the philatelic center of the Rocky Mountain west, it is still a library. During Sergio's tenure, the library's digital catalog has been included in the Union and Global Philatelic Catalogues, both online on the web. These collective catalogs are an immensely important resource for both collectors and students, making material more readily available than ever before. It is an honor for the RMPL to have helped initiate these catalogs.



Sergio formed the Publications Committee that has helped produce four books.

Through a publication program begun by Sergio and others, since 2008 the RMPL has published four new books by local philatelic authors.

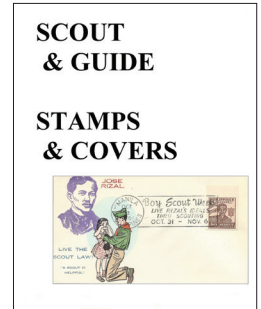
Sergio has also been responsible for developing a program of educational philatelic videos. Links to these short (10-minute) YouTube videos are available from the RMPL website. In addition to acting as a repository of philatelic literature, under Sergio's leadership the library has now become a significant contributor to that literature as well.

During the past six years, Sergio has served as a good steward to the library that was built by its founders on a love of philately and sound business principles. More than



Joe Lanotte sets up to tape part of a video (above). Joe had the idea for a series of videos, and Sergio helped make the program work. The library now has ten programs on YouTube.

The stamp album cover below is one of nearly 50 albums about Scouting in the Special Collections room at the library. Sergio has helped expand our Special Collections significantly.



that, though, he has worked hard to continue to move the library forward into the world and into the future. This is his legacy at the RMPL.

FOND MEMORIES, AND ON INTO THE FUTURE

As I write this, in just a few weeks, for the first time in six years, Sergio will be free of most of his responsibilities at the RMPL. With all of this new free time, in addition to seeing more of his wife, children, and grandchildren, he can spend more time on his own collecting interests and activities. So what are his interests and what does he collect?

Sergio describes himself as a "worldwide collector with strong interests in dead country stamps, South American nations, Puerto Rico, social welfare organizations of the First World War, [and] postcards". He also collects airmail and other postal history.

As is evident from his devotion to the library and his support of the library's publication program, he likes books and writing. He has published a series of books about several social welfare organizations that helped soldiers in World War I. His favorite is the one about the American Library Association, which kept him in reading material during his tour with the infantry in Viet Nam. All are in the RMPL; you should take a look at them. He is working on an album and a catalog of Puerto Rican stamps, which will be finished soon. It is likely that more philatelic books and articles will be forthcoming.

His favorite philatelic item is a cover sent by Ernest Kehr on behalf of the New York Herald Tribune Fresh Air Fund in 1955 during his global air tour to raise money for the Fund. Sergio bought it at ROMPEX around 2000 for \$45.00, a large amount for what would seem to be an ordinary cover. So what's so special about the cover? According to the Fresh Air Fund website, "Since 1877, The Fresh Air Fund, a not-for-profit agency, has provided free summer experiences in the country to more than 1.8 million New York City children from low-income communities." Starting at age 5, Sergio was one of those children. In 1951, through the Fund, he went to a farm in New Jersey, then he spent the next six summers at a farm in Glens Falls, New York. In Glens Falls he lived with the Mason family, where he had a wonderful

(continued on page 10)

(Sergio Lugo, continued)

time. He stayed in touch with them for 40 years. The memories evoked by that cover were worth far more than its cost. It is mounted on the first page of his U.S. collection.

His “second fondest stamp collecting item” is a set of the 1932-33 Washington Bicentennial stamps that Pam bought for him at full catalog value from a stamp dealer in Vienna, Virginia. The stamps are mint never hinged but have the “god awfullest centering I’ve ever seen”. They are still in his U.S. collection to remind him of Pam’s thoughtfulness and the support that she continues to give him in his philatelic pursuits.

Sergio became a dealer of stamps and postal history in 1985. He expanded to include other paper ephemera in the late 1980s. In about 1988, he became an active postcard collector, and by the early 1990s, he had added postcards to his trade stock. To the present day, he usually has a table at the local stamp and postcard shows.

As he goes into the future, Sergio will undoubtedly continue to work on various projects at the library, but will maintain a much reduced presence. All of us who know him hope that we will continue to see him at the RMPL, but we



Sergio often drops whatever he is doing to greet visitors and members so he can chat with them about stamps. We’re going to miss the knowledge and expertise he shares every day. In this picture, he’s answering questions from JoAnn and Paul Eakins (right). They have belonged to the RMPL for several years.

are pleased that he will have more time to spend on his own and his family’s pursuits. We wish him well.

SHOW NEWS

Big Changes at the RMSS

by Jeff Modesitt

CALLING ALL CLUBS

For those of you who have attended the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show (RMSS) over the past few years, you are aware that the show is thriving. What you may not know, and what might surprise you, is that RMSS belongs to the Rocky Mountain regional stamp clubs.

This has always been the case with the RMSS, which is made up of two types of voting members—organizations, and individuals. Unfortunately, a decade or more ago, the linkage between the regional clubs and the show began to erode. It has only been in the last several years that an effort has been made to renew this linkage.

Many of you will point out that your club already has a representative; however, it is also true that three or four individuals represent multiple clubs, and tend to act as individuals rather than as club representatives.

Our goal is to expand the number of organizational members, with each regional club designating a member to attend the RMSS meetings, and to be a voting member who speaks for his or her club. Those individuals will comprise the organizational members of the RMSS Committee. The balance of the Committee will be individual members of RMSS, representing themselves. Individual members cannot also serve as organizational members on this committee. Both organizational members and individual members will each have one vote on the committee.

Why is this important? The RMSS is a “World Series of Philately” (WSP) show, and is one of the finest in the country. Along with the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library,

the RMSS is working to elevate regional philately. RMSS is now one of the seven largest shows in the nation, as measured by both attendance and dealer participation. It’s the largest show between St. Louis and Sacramento. It is your show, and it is one of the ways that all of us together can help re-energize our hobby. We need your ideas and commitments to assure RMSS’s future.

LOCAL LEVEL EXHIBITS

Another major goal over the next few years, is to stimulate exhibitor participation. To do this, we are setting up a new level of exhibits at the RMSS. A decade ago, a new or relatively inexperienced exhibitor could get his/her feet wet by exhibiting locally. That is no longer true. Other than CHERPEX, there are no regional shows that offer the opportunity to exhibit, and to have qualified judges critique the exhibits. Consequently, a new exhibitor must now compete at the national level, or not exhibit at all. For many of us, this is not an appealing prospect.

RMSS is introducing the *Local Level Exhibit* in order to provide a more comfortable transition into the world of exhibiting. It will be limited to one frame per exhibitor, cost \$5.00, and be critiqued separately from the WSP entries. A list of these local exhibits will be included in the show program, and each will be given a written critique. Most important, the exhibitors will have an opportunity to discuss their exhibits with their judge.

Our goal is to get 25 of you to participate. We know you have the material and the desire; now you have the opportunity. There are no limits to what you can include in your exhibit, but if you have questions please feel free to contact me at jeffmcolorado@gmail.com.

Coming Soon ... Mark Your Calendar

by William Crabbs

As you're reading this, there are only about 10 weeks left before RMSS 2015. The show committee has been working since last September to put the show together, arranging for various societies to attend, asking for exhibits to fill our over 300 frames, and asking all of our past dealers to come back to Denver May 15-17.

This year we are hosting the **Philatelic Society for Greater Southern Africa**, the **British Caribbean Philatelic Study Group**, the **Bermuda Collectors Society**, the **United States Possessions Philatelic Society**, the **International Cuban Philatelic Society** and the **West African Study Circle** ... whew! Thursday, May 14th, there will be a daylong seminar on various African philatelic subjects, with 13 different speakers (see page 12). This seminar is free for anyone who wishes to attend. Schedule details will be in the next *Scribblings*.

Most of the attending societies have annual meetings planned. Each of the attending societies will have a table at the show for interested parties to sit down, ask questions, get information about the society, and provide membership applications. If you collect British Colonies, these are the societies you might want to talk to. You will also find local societies holding meetings at the show, including the

Colorado Postal History Society and **Topical Philatelists In Colorado (TOPIC)**. Come and see what each society has to offer.

This year the Rocky Mountain National Park is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The Rocky Mountain Stamp Show is helping celebrate by issuing postal cards announcing this fact. Watch for a request for volunteers coming your way. We are also offering "Door Prizes" again this year. According to Linn's Stamp News, only a small number of "right side up" Jennys have been found, and RMSS has a few postally issued packets left over from last year. They will be given away again this year, along with some additional prizes.

New this year, RMSS is proud to announce "Local Exhibiting". We are encouraging local participants who are new to exhibiting by giving them the opportunity to exhibit in a "low pressure" arena. Local judges will use standard exhibiting rules to "judge" these exhibits. A written critique, along with verbal comments, will be offered for the small admission fee of \$5.00 per frame. Only exhibits that have been never shown before from local participants will be accepted. Get out there and show us what you collect! See Jeff Modesitt's complete letter on page 10.



66th Annual Rocky Mountain Stamp Show May 15-17, 2015

Celebrating Rocky Mountain National Park's 100th Anniversary

World Series of Philately Show with 300 + frames, 35 + dealers

Crowne Plaza Hotel / Denver International Airport, 15500 East 40th Ave., Denver, Colorado 80239

Guests for 2015

The Philatelic Society for Greater Southern Africa • British Caribbean Philatelic Study Group
Bermuda Collectors Society • International Cuban Philatelic Society
United States Possessions Philatelic Study Society • West Africa Study Circle

Attractions for all 3 Days

What's in Your Attic, free collection evaluation • Local societies

USPS Post Office station on-site • Show cancels

On-site RMPL silent auction with 700 + lots • Door prizes ("Jenny" panes) all day long • More!

www.rockymountainstampshow.com

Seminar on African Philately At RMSS

Thursday, May 14th, there will be a daylong seminar on various African philatelic subjects at the RMSS show hotel. It's free for anyone to attend. The day will begin at 10 a.m. and go through the dinner hour.

Here are the titles which will be presented:

- o Ethiopia
- o South West Africa Essays and Proofs from the Archives
- o 1940-1946: The Global Diaspora and Communications of Italian Prisoners of War - When Italy awaited mail with true trepidation
- o The Rhodesia Double Head Issues
- o The Era of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: Madagascar and Dependencies
- o The Postage Dues of Zanzibar
- o Evolution of the Gambian Postal System from Victoria to George VI
- o Mail Volumes
- o South Africa's Centennial Celebrations 1936-1940
- o Bechuanaland



There are probably countries shown on the map in which you have a philatelic interest. For specific times and names of speakers, see the RMSS web page at:

rockymountainstampshow.com.

More details will be in the next *Scribblings*, too.

New RMPL Video Tells You Everything You Didn't Know About the National Parks System

The RMPL's latest video, "United States National Parks," is a nice, quick tour of some national parks I never heard of, such as Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, and some places I have heard of that I had no idea were under the National Parks System, like Harper's Ferry. It also explains the structure of the National Parks Service, and discusses collecting ideas.

For avid readers of *Scribblings*, it'll be something of a rehash of Paul Lee's article, "Collecting Our National Parks," in the Jan-Feb 2015 issue; but the video appears to be meant not for us, but for the beginning collector, or even the non-collector. I think it's a nice introduction to National Parks collecting, and to thematic collecting in general.

The second half of the video discusses collecting NPS-related material, beginning with stamps, then specialty albums, FDC's, special event covers and post offices/postmarks.

Altogether, it's a well-done video, and very watchable.

As an aside, those of us who are ancient enough to collect Social Security can obtain at any National Park kiosk, for only \$20.00, a Senior Pass, good for a lifetime of free admission for your entire carload. Yea for handouts!

-- Mike Milam



DON'T PACK YOUR BAGS JUST YET, BUT IT IS TIME TO MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND NEW YORK 2016 IN NEW YORK CITY MAY 28 - JUNE 4. CHECK OUT THE WEB SITE AT NY2016.ORG.

It might be right down your alley...

Try a TOPIC Meeting!



Minerals



Art



Scouting



Disney



Lighthouses

The Topical Philatelists In Colorado (TOPIC) are looking for a few new members.

Topical collecting tends to focus on an item depicted on, or represented by, the stamp, cover or card. The subject of the collection can be anything the collector desires. The collection itself is limited only by the imagination, and the budget, of the collector. A selection of topically-oriented stamps is depicted on the left.

Our calendar has recently been changed. We meet at the RMPL on the first Saturday of every other month at 1 p.m. in February, April, June, August, October, and December (even numbered months). Guests are always welcome, and the coffee pot is usually on.

After a short business meeting, the focus of the meeting is a presentation by one of the members or an invited collector, usually on a topic which the presenter collects. Recent presentations have been on topics as diverse as: Skiing, Notre Dame Cathedral, Nikola Tesla, Laundry, Rainbows, Helicopters, Manatees, Nursing and the Novels of Jules Verne. There is much to be learned about a subject, or about building a collection.

Sherri Jennings presented a talk on Czeslaw Slania that was well-received at the February 7th meeting. Slania was the very most (according to Guinness) prolific stamp engraver in history.

Frank Leitz, an expert on Scouting on Stamps, will be the speaker at the April 4th meeting. Bring your own magnifying glass!

It Will Be the 21st Annual...



The RMPL Silent Auction for Rocky Mountain Stamp Show 2015 is quietly being prepared by Auction Manager David Weisberg. He's been working on it for months, and is at the point where pages are being arranged to go into the two dozen or so binders that will house the lots. The catalog and more information will be included with the next Scribblings.

Cheyenne Coin Expo US & World Coins, Tokens, Currency & Philatelics

March 7th & 8th 2015

Laramie County Community College

1400 EAST COLLEGE DRIVE

CHEYENNE, WY 82007

\$1.00 ADMISSION

INCLUDES RAFFLE TICKET

HOURS: SAT. 9:00 TO 5:00

SUN. 9:00 TO 4:00

60+ TABLES

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

BILL ARNOLD

PO Box 20233

CHEYENNE WY 82003

PH: 307-630-2350

WFA1972@AOL.COM

FUTURE SHOWS

FALL SHOW SEP 11-12, 2015

SPRING SHOW MAR 5-6, 2016



SECOND SATURDAY PROGRAMS AT THE LIBRARY

Second Saturday programs are sponsored by the RMPL and attract a friendly group of folks who are interested in a specific subject, or who are interested in learning more about an area of philately that may be new to them.

Contact Jim Kilbane if you would like to present a program. His email address is aurora_80017@yahoo.com.

The programs begin at 9 a.m. and are over by 10 a.m.

Doughnuts and coffee are complimentary, and all are welcome.



March 14, 9 a.m.

Czeslaw Slania, Stamp Engraver

by Sherri Jennings

Czesław Słania was the most prolific stamp engraver ever. His exquisitely beautiful stamps are admired around the world. Come see a presentation about this popular engraver by an award-winning Słania exhibitor.

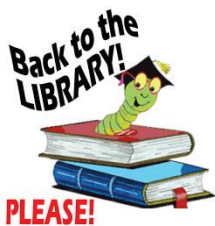
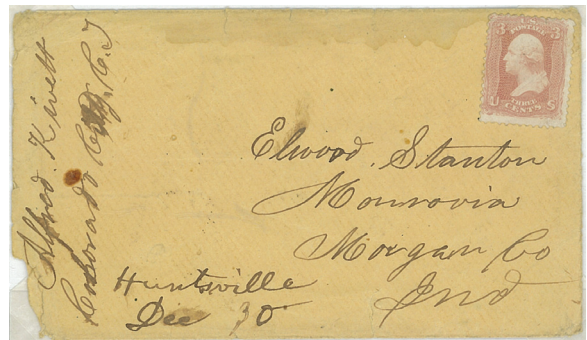


April 11, 9 a.m.

Douglas County Postal History

by Don Beuthel

Sources report there were 44 official post offices in Douglas County, beginning sometime in the 1860s. The earliest recorded is from Huntsville, dated December 30th, 1867. Two covers are known from Huntsville. This is just one interesting example from the PowerPoint program (right). Sites of post offices photographed by Bill Bauer and Jim Ozment are also included.

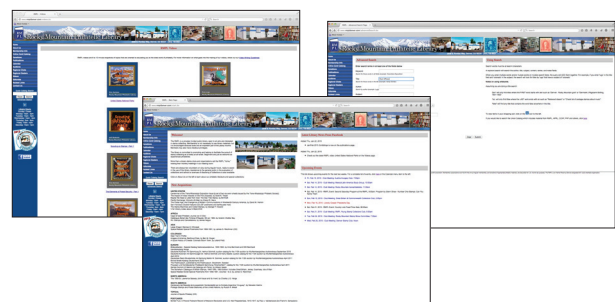


Return books on time...



- Books are on loan for two weeks.
- If you call before the due date, you may renew for two more weeks
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It's All Right Here



Visit the RMPL on Line

- Use the catalog to find your favorite philatelic area, specific topicals, auction catalogs of note, anything in the Western history room, and more
- Research regional clubs and dealers
- View our videos
- See how we present ourselves to the stamp collecting world

rmpldenver.org

NEW MEMBERS

The RMPL is pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined the library in the past two months.

- Peter Baker**, Bellvue, CO - Collects US, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Italy (Soccer and Skiing)
Joe Szalay, Colorado Springs, CO - Collects US, Germany, Japan, Great Britain

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 5, 2015
 7 p.m.
 Installation of new officers.
 All members are welcome!

Gene Holgate Receives Award

Gene Holgate is the latest member to receive the RMPL's highest award, a "clock/book" with an inscription that tells of his work for the library and philately.

Gene is a joiner and gets involved. He's a regular volunteer at the library and helps with the bulk lots auction every year. He's also a volunteer for the annual combined auction held by the Arapahoe, Denver, Cherrelyn, and Aurora Stamp Clubs. In addition, he volunteers his time to work at the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show all four days, every year.

Our congratulations to Gene!

Library Snow Day Closures



Frosty reminds us that March and April are the snowiest months in the Denver area, with around 20 inches of snow.

If we get more than three inches, the RMPL buildings may be closed for the safety of our volunteers and patrons.

Call ahead during business hours at (303) 759-9921 and if no one answers the phone, a decision has probably been made to close.

DONATIONS

The library thrives on the enthusiasm and generosity of its members. The following members made donations to the library in December and January. We thank each and every one who has contributed.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Mike Anderson | Thomas Pollard |
| Herman Axelrod | Professional Stamp |
| Donald G. Beuthel | Experts |
| Charles Bull | Mike Reddy |
| Steven Church | Jim Reichman |
| Sue Dunn | Owen A. Robb |
| Walter Figel | Shyla Rohde |
| Neil Finicum | Richard Ruth |
| Nolan Flowers | Scandinavian |
| Erling Fossum | Collectors Club |
| Leslie Gorsuch | Marlene Siegel |
| Sherri Jennings | Morgan Sonsthagen |
| Mark Kelly | Ludvik Svoboda |
| Charles Klein | Jeanne Switzer |
| Julie Lays | Dalene Thomas |
| Frank Leitz | Valerie Todd |
| Donald Lovelace | Jack van Ens |
| Mary Ellen Markel | Tonny VanLoij |
| Bill McIntosh | George VanTrump |
| Pat McNally | Vincent Graves Green |
| Tom Miller | Philatelic Research |
| Jim Moravec | Foundation |
| Helen Morgan | Arthur T. Weaver |
| Steven Peckar | Martin Wilkinson |
| Daniel Piazza | Janet Wrenn |
| William Plachte | |

HELP WANTED

The library needs a volunteer to help evaluate and price US covers (not first days). If you are interested, contact Eric Carlson or Sergio Lugo at (303) 759-9921..

Donation Schedule

Donations of philatelic materials are accepted on specific days:

- Tuesday • Wednesday • Friday

Donations are accepted on these days only, during regular library hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Donors who bring material on other days will be asked to please return on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday.



Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Thursday 2 - 8 p.m.. Closed Sundays and Holidays. Phone: (303) 759-9921

Meeting times and places sometimes change. It is best to call the library or the club to confirm the place and time. A calendar of reserved club times is kept at the library by the Operations Manager, Howard Benson. Clubs should check the calendar regularly and notify Howard at (303) 521-6216 of any changes or updates. All requests to reserve meeting time and space other than those listed here must be approved and scheduled by Howard well in advance for philately-related meetings.

MARCH 2015

Mar 4 Wed - Meeting - Aurora Stamp Club
6:30 p.m. trading, 7 p.m. meeting

RMPL Board Meeting

Mar 5 Thurs - 7 p.m.

Installation of new officers
All members are welcome!

Mar 7 Sat - Meeting - 10 a.m.
Scandinavian Collectors Club

Mar 11 Wed- Meeting - 7 p.m.
Denver Germany Stamp Club
& Austria-Hungary Club
joint meeting

Mar 12 Thurs - Meeting - 2 p.m.
Cherrellyn Stamp Club

Mar 12 Thurs - Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
Denver Postcard Club

Second Saturday at the RMPL

Mar 14 - 9 a.m.
Program by Sherri Jennings
Czeslaw Slania, Stamp Engraver

Mar 14 Sat - Meeting - 10 a.m.
Mexico/Latin America Study Group

Mar 15 Sun - Meeting - 2 p.m.
Great Britain & Commonwealth
Collectors Club

Mar 21 Sat - Meeting - 9:30 a.m.
RMPL Young Stamp Collectors Club

Mar 24 Tue - Meeting - 7:30 p.m.
Rocky Mountain Stamp Show Committee

Mar 25 - Wed - Meeting - Noon
Denver Stamp Club

APRIL 2015

Apr 1 Wed - Meeting - Aurora Stamp club
6:30 p.m. trading, 7 p.m. meeting

Apr 4 Sat - Meeting - 10 a.m.
Scandinavian Collectors Club

Apr 4 Sat - Meeting - 1 p.m.
Topical Collectors of Colorado

Apr 8 Wed - Meeting - 7 p.m.
Denver Germany Stamp Club

Apr 9 Thurs - Meeting - 2 p.m.
Cherrellyn Stamp Club

Apr 9 Thurs - Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
Denver Postcard Club

Apr 10 Fri - Meeting - 7 p.m.
Austria-Hungary Club

Second Saturday at the RMPL

Apr 11 - Meeting - 9 a.m.
Program by Don Beuthel
Douglas County Postal History

Apr 11 Sat - Meeting - 10 a.m.
Mexico/Latin America Study Group

Apr 11 Sat - Meeting - 11:30 a.m.
Rocky Mountain Aerophilatelists

Apr 18 Sat - Meeting - 9:30 a.m.
RMPL Young Stamp Collectors Club

Apr 19 Sun - Meeting - 2 p.m.
Great Britain & Commonwealth
Collectors Club

Apr 22 Wed - Meeting - Noon
Denver Stamp Club

Apr 28 Tue - Meeting - 7:30 p.m.
Rocky Mountain Stamp Show Committee