



A Historic ROPEX Cover
Future RPA Meetings • What RPA Means to Me
Tagging Basics • Sheep Ranch CA • The End Game
Fairport Library • RPA Bookmark
Best and Worst of 2022

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An Impressive RPA Cover

by Ada Prill

Florence Wright recently gave me a wonderful piece of RPA/ROPEX history. ROPEX was celebrating a century of commemoratives that year and her husband, Norman Wright, had RPA members sign a commemorative-postmarked envelope during the show. I have managed to decipher almost all 29 of the signatures, but two are still puzzling. I will list the signatures by column, starting on the left and going from the top to the bottom.

First column: John Kellas, Joseph K. Doles, Raymond Stone, Brad [Sterling], Dusty [Miller], [Illegible]

Second column: Florence [Wright], Whitney McMahon, Stan Scheer, Randolph Jones Jr. (*runs into next column*), Walter J. Orton, Kelly Armstrong, James M. Trenton, Larry Moriarty, Gretchen Dinin

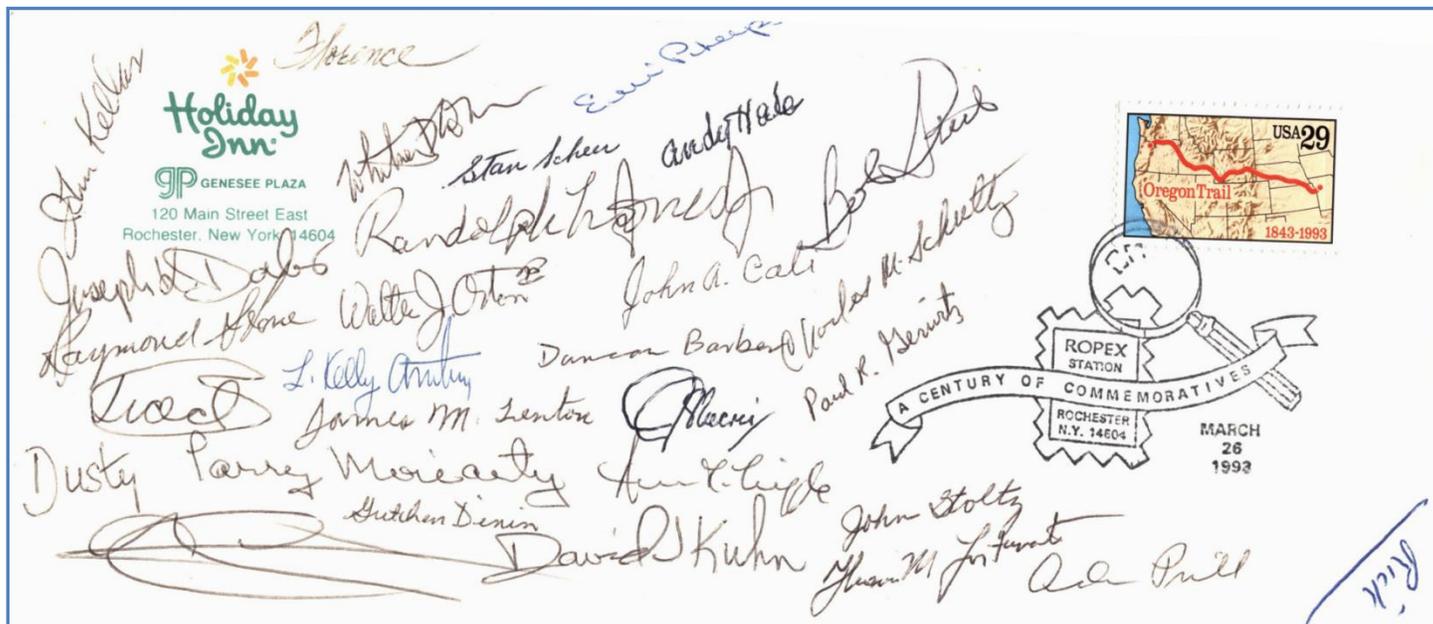
Third column: Elli Phelps [Steeb], Andy Hale, *end of Randy Jones' signature*, John A. Cali, Duncan Barber, [illegible], Ann Triggler, David J. Kuhn

Fourth column: Bob Steeb, Charles M. Schultz, Paul R. Gerwitz, John Stoltz, Thomas M. Fortunato, Ada Prill

Lower right corner: Rick [Kase]

Does anyone have a guess about either of the illegible signatures? The blob at lower left is probably hopeless, but I would love to know who signed between Duncan Barber and Ann Triggler.

There are multiple past officers and even RPA Presidents on this list. How many do you know?



RPA Meeting News

Since the last Hinges and Tongs we have moved our twice monthly meetings to the Village, 1477 Long Pond Road in Greece. More specifically we meet in the spacious Unity-Village Community Room which shares a building with the Sales Office near the back of the complex. Parking is very close and access is easy. If you have not attended a meeting there yet, come check it out.



Unity-Village Community Center in Greece

However, if you can't attend in person, join us via a Zoom connection using the following link and login details at 7:30 PM most meeting nights:

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/7117955142?pwd=amR3Z1Z3L0d4bkJaNHdJUjBmbjFaQT09>,

Meeting ID: 711 795 5142, Passcode: 9W3Mkg
Note that Zoom connections last 40 minutes. On disconnection, click the meeting link again to rejoin the meeting in progress.

Buy/sell/trade runs from 7:00-7:30 PM, followed by the formal meeting at 7:30 PM. A silent auction concludes most evening's program.

Upcoming RPA meetings:

- Feb. 23rd **The End Game – A Dark Story**
By Steve Eisinger (see page 4)
- March 9th **How I Got into Cachet Making**
By Kelly Armstrong
- March 23rd **The 3 Cent Wing the War Stamp – Common Stamp – Uncommon Usage**
By Jeff Shapiro (via Zoom)
- April 13th **Norden Stamp Series (an update)**
By Fred Haynes
- April 27th TBA
- May 11th **The Prexies Turn 85: Hidden Gems**
By Steve Suffet
- May 25th, June 8th, and June 22nd – TBA

What RPA Means to Me

By Reinhard Danger

As a relative new Member (I joined in 2018) who has only collected stamps for 70 years, I gain so much new knowledge at every meeting and always end up with new and exciting stamps. Some are perfect for my collection, others I trade, especially with my friend Alessandro in Washington, DC who has single handedly made my Italian and San Marino collection one of my finest. I collect a few specific countries, but also the entire world because history and geography are of significant interest to me. This has been so since my grade school days back in Denmark. To me, every stamp is history and geography.

I have tried to pass my interest in stamp collecting to my granddaughter, but, well, no luck, at least not so far. At 12 she is a busy young lady, apparently with other greater interests. I am very fortunate that my wife Pamela is supportive and patient of my time consuming hobby. I truly appreciate the entire RPA membership and its leadership.

Guest Presenter in January



We held our first meeting of 2023 in our new venue, the Unity-Village Center in Greece and were fortunate to have **John Hotchner** there to help with our inaugural meeting at what will be a fine meeting site for us. John spoke on "US Postal Counterfeits*" and even brought several examples with him, some of which we framed up into one of our club frames for all to view. Others were laid out on a side table.

Tagging Basics by Tom Fortunato



I received an email from RPA member Bob Hunt a few months ago. Bob was cataloging his U.S. stamps and had some questions about tagging. It's an area of philately that is often overlooked and I thought it would be a good subject for a club presentation.

Think about it. A stamp is usually placed on an envelope's upper right corner. But that envelope has four corners on each of its two sides, resulting in 8 possible positions for that stamp to be. So how could large volumes of envelopes all be oriented in the same way to allow the stamps on them to be uniformly postmarked through high-speed facer-canceling machines?

The solution was developed in the U.S. and elsewhere in the 1960s by putting a coating on stamps that would make them glow when exposed to UV light, thus allowing automated equipment to right-side envelopes first and flip them around properly as needed before going through the cancel machines.

Here's where things get a bit complicated. Tagging is the process of coating stamps with an invisible compound that will glow when exposed to UV light. Several different chemical compounds can be used to achieve this. One type produces a phosphorescence effect—a glow that remains when first exposed to UV light but diminishes within seconds when the light is removed. The other produces a fluorescence effect—a glow when first exposed to UV light but immediately stops when the light is removed.

Stamps with a UV coating are considered “tagged” and those without are “untagged.” Stamps that were intended to be tagged but did not receive the invisible coating can be considered as errors!

Generally, stamp coatings used by the United States, Great Britain and Canada (from 1962-1972) glow with a phosphorescence effect when exposed to shortwave UV light (180-300 nm), while those of many European and Scandinavian countries as well as post-1972 Canada glow with a fluorescent effect using a longwave UV light (300-450 nm). Yes, two different UV lamps are needed to “see” everything!

UV coatings can be applied in several different ways—over the complete stamp and its perforations, just over the stamp itself in a block, or over a portion of stamp. It can also be applied as characters or designs over the design of a stamp.

Germany successfully experimented by using a fluorescent taggant within the stamp paper rather than as a separate coating. Canadian philatelists in the early 1970s developed a 10 point scale to describe the amount of glow in stamp paper!

This teaser above is only the start of what this subject involves. If you missed the live presentation, or wish to learn more about this interesting and overlooked area of philately, check out the PDF online at:

<http://www.rpastamps.org/presentations/taggingbasics.pdf>



A few tagged stamps that might be in your collection.

**Sheep Ranch,
California**
by Larry Rausch



The proudly owned and rarely found 19th century duplex postal cancelling device pictured below consists of two parts: the left side is the circular date stamp having the name Sheep Ranch Cal. around the outside and the square inside can accept three metal slugs for month, date, and year. The right side accepts a round cork slug which usually is carved with an image produced at the discretion of the local postmaster (see below and in the title box above).



1880's Sheep Ranch Postal Cork Hand Stamp

The town was officially named Sheep Ranch until 1895 when it changed to Sheepranch. The post office first opened in 1877 and closed when the Zip code 95250 was archived in January 2008. The 32 local residents can still use the town name of Sheepranch but must use the Zip Code 95246 for nearby Mountain Ranch, Calif.



Sheep Ranch, CA , postmarked 1887-08-25

The rural town is located in Calaveras County, California and lies at an elevation of 2359 feet. One of the very few “free-range” areas in California, there are several hundred freely roaming sheep throughout the town, far out numbering the residents. There are currently no active businesses in Sheepranch. At one time, the town had two churches and a small red school house which now is a private residence. The school employed two teachers until 1907 when the enrollment dwindled to 30 pupils all of whom were taught by one teacher. The town also supported two hotels -- the Eagle and the Pioneer which is still standing.

Sheep Ranch was once surrounded by sheep corrals, and in 1860 gold ore was discovered in the corrals. By the turn of the century there were five gold mines and the town supported fifteen saloons. The main mine in town was known as the Hearst mine. George Hearst, who was the father of William Randolph Hearst, bought the mine with partners in 1877. The mine produced more than 8 million dollars worth of gold during its operation. The mine ceased operation in 1942.

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The End Game: A Dark Story

Have you ever thought about where your stamp collection will end up when you are done with it? Do you have a strategy for its disposition? Are you an obsessive-compulsive collector? Do you hoard stamps? These are all valid and important questions for all us entering into the twilight of our collecting years.

On February 23rd, Steve Eisinger will address these questions as he presents what he has called “The End Game: A Dark Story” at our club meeting. He’ll tell us what psychiatrists and psychologists have to say about collecting habits and then offer his thoughts from experiences both from his medical experiences and from his own hobby interests in stamps and coins.

If you want to see a preview of Steve’s presentation check out his words of wisdom ending with eight recommendations, his so-called: Strategies to Improve the “End Game”. They can be found on the meetings page of our club website: LINK: <http://www.rpastamps.org/presentations/theendgame/notes.pdf>

Library Outreach in Fairport by Mario Sarra



In early December, the Fairport Library asked the RPA (through Tom Fortunato) if there was someone in our organization willing to make a presentation on stamp collecting at the library. I volunteered and put together a short slide show which I entitled "Philately, an introduction for the curious and the serious". The librarian in charge, Caitlin Crilly, seemed excited about getting people in her community to share the fun of stamp collecting.

Caitlin advertized the Friday afternoon event widely in Fairport and 15 people signed up to attend. My planned presentation started at 2:30 PM and ended just before 3:30 PM. But at 4:15 I was still there answering questions! It was obvious from the start that few were there to learn much about stamp collecting. Most had either inherited a collection or started one many moons ago and wanted to see how they could profit from dusting off their collections and selling them. I helped a bit with this while trying not to be too pessimistic and volunteered to do an open session where attendees could bring some of their material.

I informed Caitlin of the Don Quixote stamp presentation I did for the club a few years back and she invited me to present that in the future. She also thought that the librarians in charge of children programming might be interested in a session involving stamp collecting. I will contact them to see if something can be arranged.



Mario Sarra presents at the Fairport Library.

Photo by Gail Sarra

2023 RPA Bookmark

If you attended a recent RPA meeting, you were offered a laminated bookmark personally made by Larry Rausch. One side notes our new meeting location; the other has all the 2023 dates. Real stamps are embedded and you can pick out a bookmark with stamps that please you. There are probably a few left to select from if you attend our next meeting. Thanks, Larry



Linn's 2022 United States Stamp Popularity Poll

The calendar had flipped to 2023 so it was time in January for RPA to set aside a meeting and vote in the annual Linn's U.S. Stamp Popularity Pole. After carefully reviewing all the candidates in both the Commemorative and Definitive categories, those present set about the serious chore of electing our winners (and losers).

In the commemorative category, the Mighty Mississippi set won best design easily while the National Maritime Sanctuaries received the most votes for Most Important commemorative. There was no doubt that the RPA crowd was not impressed with the Buzz Lightyear stamps, "rewarding" that set with the Least Necessary award in a landslide. The Title IX stamp set was selected as Worst

Design in the commemorative category.

It was on to the Definitive and Special Stamps category. In the most split vote of the session, "Christmas: Virgin and Child" won Most Important with just three votes as eight different selections received at least one vote. The Best Design went to the Monument Valley high denomination stamp. We all agreed there were multiple options for Worst Design and Least Important, but when the votes were counted and a couple of tie-breaker revotes were conducted the two Love stamps and the \$2 and \$5 Floral Geometry stamps took home those honors, respectively.

I wonder what we will be voting on next year.

And here they are: Our winners and losers from last year's Linn's Stamp Popularity Poll

Mighty Mississippi
Best Design - Commemorative

National Marine Sanctuaries
Most Important - Commemorative

MONUMENT VALLEY
Best Design - Definitive

CHRISTMAS
Most Important - Definitive

GO BEYOND
Worst Design - Commemorative

TITLE IX
Least Necessary - Commemorative

5 DOLLARS
Least Necessary - Definitive

LOVE
Worst Design - Definitive