



Fakes, Forgeries and Oddities • Wildflowers
RPA Meetings and Club News • GASS in Cleveland
Iceland Envelope Address • Singer Sewing Cover
Mailbox Week
Cover with University of Rochester Connection

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Fakes, Forgeries, and Oddities by Rich Spinelli

Wildflowers by Fred Haynes

I like finding faked, forged and odd stamps, particularly if they have been authorized by a reputable postal expertizing house. Over the years I have created a small album of these stamps, along with a few stamps which I think may be fake or, if not, worth big money when I have them expertized.

In July of 1992, the United States issued a set of 50 different 29 cent wildflower stamps. Each species featured is a native North American wildflower found in at least one of the 50 states. I thought it would be interesting to learn how many have been recorded in New York State.



Is this Scott #384 or Scott #388?

This first example is a Scott #384 Washington two cents imperf NH worth \$7.00, with vertical 12 perfs added to create Scott #388 NH worth at least \$3100. In 2004, Professional Stamp Experts caught this ruse and issued their expertized authentication certificate citing the fake perfs. Look carefully at the perfs. Whoever created this fake did a superb job.

According to Professional Stamp Experts in 2019, someone added fake horizontal perforations to Scott 5 Cent stamp #347 (\$60 NH) to create a fake #351 (\$325 NH). This modification was almost not worth the effort.



The New York Flora Association offers an [online flora atlas](#) of wildflowers native to New York. Twenty-nine of the wildflowers featured in the 1992 set appear in at least one New York county.

I have not seen and photographed all of them, but I intend to try! Together with RPA member Paul Brach, I visit parks, preserves, sites known to contain a rich assemblage of native flora. Since most wildflowers have a short blooming season and restrictive environments it is a challenge to visit a location exactly when a species will be in bloom. The Virginia bluebell is a perfect example. This brilliant blue flower carpets the woods of the park bearing their scientific name, *Mertensia virginica*.



Virginia bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*
Mertensia Park in Victor. May 1, 2023

[continued of page 3 \(see Fakes and Forgeries\)](#)

[continued of page 5 \(see Wildflowers\)](#)

RPA Meeting News

Just a few more meetings this spring, one in May if this issue reaches you in time, and two in June. We now 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 before we break for the summer.



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

May 25th, "Hey, Turn Me Over! By Tom Fortunato

June 8th, Everyone a Dealer Night
Bring your items to sell or trade (No Zoom Mtg.)

June 22nd – Season End Wrap-Up

A Call for Meetings

It's also not too early to start thinking about our next semester of stamp meetings starting up in September. What would you like to give a presentation on? We can help you if you wish to turn it into slides for a PowerPoint, or for that matter, you can just talk about your subject and show your fellow members some examples. Let Tom know your topic and preferred date! Here are the dates for the rest of our 2023 meetings: September 14, September 28, October 12, October 26, November 9, December 14.

RPA Club Update

It has been a while since the membership has had an update of our financial situation, which continues strong. Treasurer Larry Rausch reports that we have \$18,093.50 in total as of mid-May. The bulk of that is in multiple 12-month CDs, \$10,510.56, earning a bit of interest, along with \$7,582.94 in our checking account as cash. We have liquidated most of our prior donated material formerly held in the JCC storage room, which has greatly helped in our current bank total.

The club has 100+ exhibit frames and accompanying table covers, electrical cords, with other show related material in Larry's garage. We'll be discussing our options with these during an upcoming meeting.

We currently have 71 RPA members—including 22 life members. Members reside in 7 states other than New York—FL, LA, MA, MN, PA, TX and VA. Unfortunately we no longer have any Canadian members in our ranks. The average age of a member is just over 72 years old, slightly older than a year ago. Our youngest is 18 (Philip Savka) and oldest is 96 (Roger Zaenglein).

Great American Stamp Show

Looking for stamps? Then, attend the Great American Stamp Show, (GASS) in Cleveland, Ohio on August 10 to August 13 of this year.

Co-hosted by the American Philatelic Society, the American Topical Association and the American First Day Cover Society, the event will feature a variety of dozens of stamp dealers, and a room full of 800 pages of exhibits. Ten of those frames will host John Lighthouse's fiscal history revenue exhibit entitled "Using the Documents of Commerce to Fund the Civil War `1862-1872". There will also be First Day Ceremonies, Cancels, & Show Cachet.

Various stamp societies will have meetings and seminars will be offered on assorted subjects. A national company will conduct an auction. A cachet-makers bourse and a youth area will round out the event. Show promoters remind everyone that "the show is family-friendly and admission is FREE.

We hope some RPA members will be able to go to the event, and perhaps "carpooling" could be worked out with those interested in attending.

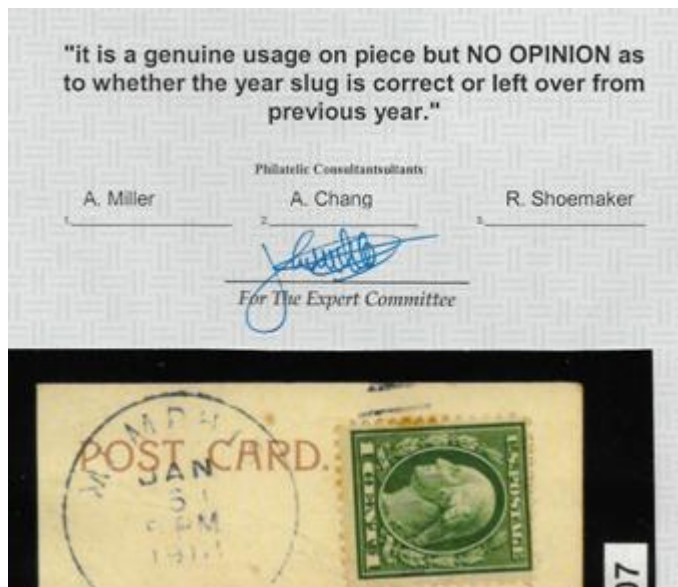
For all the details visit the APS GASS webpage:
<https://stamps.org/great-american-stamp-show>

Fakes and Forgeries (continued from page 1)



The One Cent Franklin Plating Archive caught this Scott #304 (\$2.25) modified to become Scott #315 (\$1250) by removing perforations from all four sides

In 2019 The Philatelic Foundation found this Scott #36B (\$325) with perforations illegally removed to resemble Scott #17 (\$2200), a pretty good increase in value for the faker if it had made it through the system and into a collector's collection.



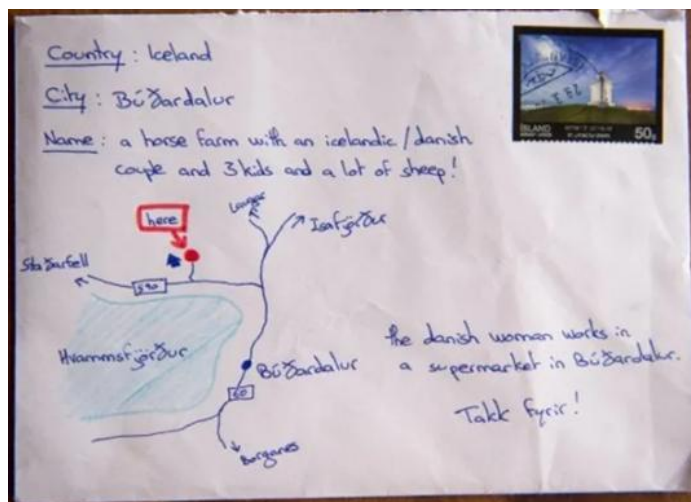
How to address an envelope in Iceland

In Iceland if you don't know the address of the person you are sending a letter to, it is acceptable to just draw a map and let the postman figure it out. The date stamp is not legible, but the stamp featuring the Elliðaey lighthouse was issued in 2015. Apparently, the Icelandic Postal Service goes above and beyond to deliver the mail. Even today!



Here is one in my favor. In 2001 Professional Stamp Experts authenticated this Scott #500 (\$240) as genuine.

This final one (top of next column) is interesting. In 2001, Professional Stamp Experts refused to confirm this January 3, 1912 cancellation date on a Scott #405 one cent Washington stamp because it precedes the official Scott Catalog First Known Usage date of February 12, 1912. I hope the collector who sent it in for certification didn't have to pay big bucks for this cheap (25 cents) stamp.



Of course, it helps that the village of Búðardalur in western Iceland had just 270 inhabitants in 2014. Wikipedia states that the village "contains a supermarket, a petrol station, a hair salon, a pub/restaurant, a health-care center, a garage, and a craft shop". Apparently the recipient of this letter works at THE supermarket!

Singer Sewing Machine Advertisement by Larry Rausch



When I first laid my eyes on the 1884 cover below, I thought it was some type of artistic design. I put it aside and returned a few minutes later wondering what the design was showing. A few minutes later I noticed the design contained letters. Now I was intrigued and NEEDED to know what this cover was telling me.



Singer Manufacturing Company March 20, 1884

On closer observation words started to take shape. Across the top it said **DRY GOODS**. Now that I was really into this what else might I learn by “reading” this cover. About 30 minutes later I had deciphered the complete advertisement. Now it is up to you to “read” the ad, see an enlarged image on the next page. Then find the answers on page 6.

Inventor Isaac M. Singer and New York lawyer, Edward C Clark, established **Singer Corporation**, an American manufacturer of consumer sewing machines in the year 1851, patenting their first machine in August of that year. In 1855 the Singer Co. was marketing its machines inter-nationally and won first prize at the Paris World’s Fair. By 1860 the company had become the largest manufacturer of sewing machines in the world. In 1910 they demonstrated the first electric sewing machine.



1990 Hungary stamp honoring the 125th anniversary of the Singer Sewing Machine.

Singer was also a marketing innovator in promotion and in the use of installment paying plans. In 1876 Singer displayed its 2 millionth sewing machine in Philadelphia. The demand was so high that its one million square feet factory in Scotland employed 7,000 workers and was producing 13,000 machines per week. Despite this Singer still could not meet the demand.

Many changes occurred during the 1950’s and 1960’s, and in June 1980 the factory closed bringing an end to over 100 years of sewing machine production in Scotland. In 1987 a corporate raider acquired the company and, over the next few years, the company was sold off. The sewing machine division was sold in 1989.

Mailbox Improvement Week

Did you know that the postal service designated May 21-27 as Mailbox Improvement Week? Details are outlined in USPS Publication 22623, the May 4 weekly edition of the Postal Bulletin found here: <https://about.usps.com/resources/postal-bulletin.htm> .

The 15 page cover article has plenty of info on approved mailbox types and vendors, proper installation instructions and lots more. In a canned press release for local postmasters to use, one passage states, “Repairing suburban and rural mailboxes improves the appearance of our community and makes delivering and receiving mail safer for our carriers and customers.”

Tom Fortunato

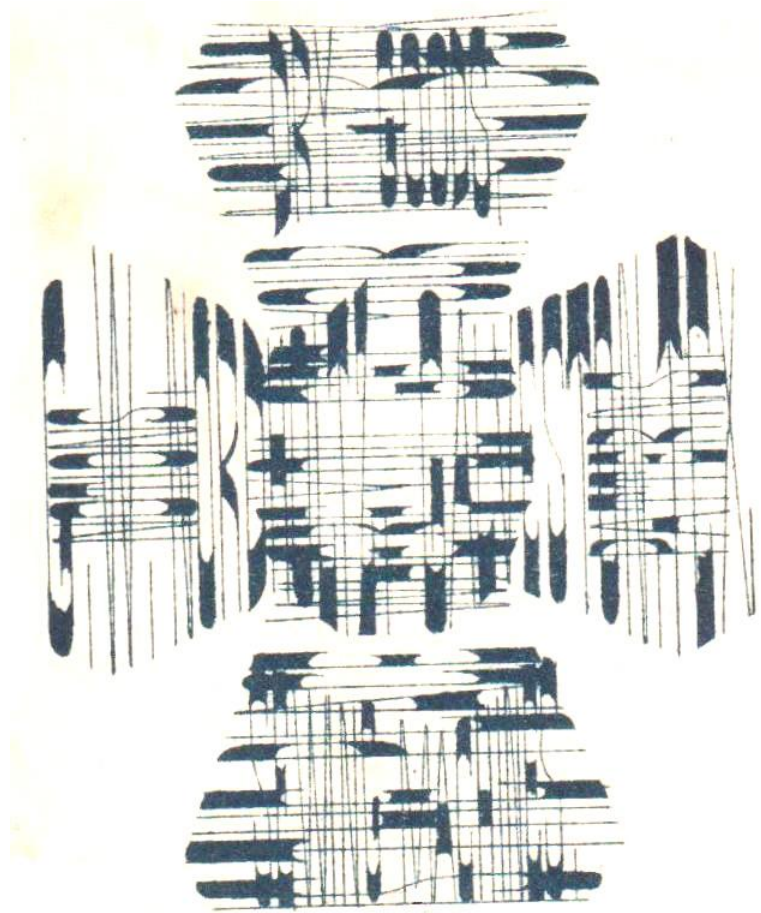


This is the preferred new style mailbox, just the right size to hold many USPS prepaid priority/express box sizes. Hint, hint? Perhaps it can double as a convection oven on a hot summer day!

Singer Sewing Machine Advertisement

Story on page 4. Can you read the message?

Answer is on page 6.



Can you read the advertizing messages hidden in this message from Singer Sewing? from story on page 4

Wildflowers (continued from page 1)

Just a few more native wildflowers spotted this season in western New York that were also depicted in that 1992 stamp set. Many more to find!



Eastern columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*
Chimney Bluffs State Park, May 11th



Jack-in-the-pulpit, *Arisaema triphyllum*
Chimney Bluffs State Park, May 11th

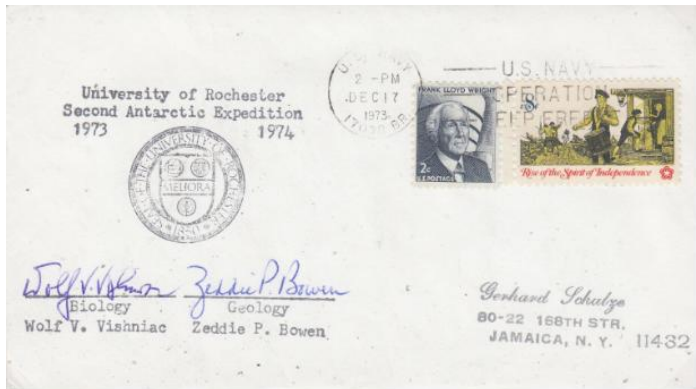


Dutchman's breeches, *Dicentra cucullaria*
Breese Park, West Henrietta, May 1st



Marsh marigold, *Caltha palustris*
Hip Brook Preserve, Penfield, May 15th

And Now ... the Rest of the Story
by Tom Fortunato



Here's a cover currently being offered on Delcampe's European auction site for 9 euros (a little under \$10) that has a Rochester connection. Who knew that our very own University of Rochester made an Antarctic expedition? Details of this second expedition came from the March 1974 quarterly publication of the New Zealand Antarctic Society, "Antarctic." Read the article in its entirety here:

<https://antarcticsociety.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Antarctic.V7.1.1974.pdf>

Here are a three excerpts from the article:
 "A United States microbiologist who was studying the water absorption of soil particles in the dry valley region and its microbiological significance fell 500 ft to his death on the slopes of the Wright Valley on December 10. He was Dr. Wolf V. Vishniac, aged 51, of the University of Rochester, New York."

"Dr. Vishniac and his field assistant, Dr. Zeddie Bowen, a 36-year-old geologist, also from the University of Rochester, began a three-month research project for the National Science Foundation's research programme in the Asgaard Mountains, some 80 miles north-west of McMurdo Station, on November 8."

"When Dr. Vishniac became overdue Dr Bowen went looking for him. When his death was reported a United States Navy VXE6 Squadron helicopter took two New Zealand mountain climbers and the squadron flight surgeon from McMurdo Station to recover the body."

The cover was signed by both U of R scientists sometime before the December 10, but as you suspect took days or weeks to wind up in the U.S. Navy's postal system.

Dr. Bowen returned to the U of R and continued teaching, additionally being appointed the geological science department chair through 1974-1976. From there he took positions at Beloit College, the College William and Mary and ultimately became Vice President at the University of Richmond in Virginia. He is currently 86 years old and living in Savannah, Georgia.

Singer Sewing Ad: The answer



- Top: ----- Dry Goods
- Bottom: ----- Sewing Machine
- Left side: ----- Notions
- Right Side: ----- Patterns
- Across left to right: --- GW Nordholtz
Galveston Tex
- Center Bottom to Top:--- Is the place where you get your money back

How did you do trying to find all the words?

From the collection of Doubleday Postal History, Anne & Elwyn J. Doubleday, Jr.

