

## March Meetings

Zoom meetings continue for the Central Florida Stamp Club. Our March 4 meeting had 22 in attendance and was led by **Jim Cooney** who shared his collection of stamps about Mars. More than 25 countries have created stamps for the planet and explorations by projects like Mariner, the Viking Orbiter, Pathfinder, Sojourner, and Perseverance. It was interesting enough that it may be worth repeating when we meet in person. **Gene Perry** won the door prize.

The March 18 meeting had 20 attendees and featured **Mike Smith** giving a presentation of market analysis and strategy of buying high grade U.S. material and how grading affects prices. **David Allen** won the door prize. Mike has developed what he calls his "recipe for success" in obtaining stamps graded 80 or better usually in light hinged condition. He argues against spending the astronomical prices for MNH stamps that tend to be as much as four times that of well centered high grade LH stamps. He had several examples from his collection and gave a well-considered opinion on values.

## Maitland Stamp Show

The first local stamp show in over a year will take place this Saturday, April 3, at the Maitland Civic Center. **Francis Ferguson** reports a sellout of 14 dealers. The hours are 10:00 to 4:00 and all COVID-19 precautions will be followed. You must wear a mask, use hand sanitizer, and keep social distance as well as possible. No food will be provided, so bring your own snacks if needed. A survey at our last Zoom meeting show that 16 of 20 had been vaccinated. This suggests that our aging membership has availed themselves of success in prevention of illness. Ten of the twenty indicated they will be at the show.

## Presidents Message

Whatever you feel about April Fool's Day, this second one under COVID-19 finds us more hopeful and closer to the possibility of a normal life again. No fooling! By the end of April, it may be possible that most of our membership will be vaccinated. The Marks Center remains closed, mainly because of staffing issues. Should they allowed limited attendance meetings, we will let you know.

I had a bout with COVID-19 last July and survived. However, my wife Linda has spent most of February and March in either the hospital or a nursing facility with sodium imbalance, a UTI and now a diagnosed small stroke. In moments of despair, I have been buoyed by prayers and well wishes from our many friends. I am more sympathetic with those who have suffered pain and loss.

**Shows:** As of now, it looks like the Summer FUN coin show will happen July 8 to 12. The APS Great American Stamp Show is still on schedule August 12 to 15 at Rosemont, Illinois. I have been receiving announcements about groups like the ATA and the Collectors Club of New York plans to be at the show. If all goes well, I will attend those shows representing the Souvenir Card Collectors Society, as well as the ANA's World's Fair of Money show at the same time and place as the APS outside of Chicago.

**FLOREX theme:** Your Board of Directors has been considering a theme for FLOREX 2021. The consensus has been to mark the return of the U.S. from the COVID-19 crisis by honoring those who have quickly provided the needed vaccination for this deadly disease. If you have some input for consideration, please let your BOD know.

For several years I have belonged to the free online Malaria Philatelists International (MPI). One focus of that organization is the UN led worldwide initiative in 1962 to fight malaria. Dozens of countries produced stamps, including the U.S., to support the fight against this worldwide scourge. It will be interesting to see how the Corona virus crisis of 2019 to 2021 will play out in future stamp issues.

**Membership:** We have had about an 80% renewal of membership for 2021. A few more will come in once we start in person meetings. We have contacted many members by phone, by email, by Zoom. Saturday will be the first time to see old friends in over a year. Despite the virus, I have had encounters with members **Roy Anderson, Jim Edmunds, Don DeGraw, Larry Stiles, John Bailey, Bill Johnston, Greg Priewe, Mark Tiger** and **Tom Lera**. I've added significant stamps to

my collections in Russia, Spain, Japan, first day covers, souvenir cards, and even matchbooks. I've bought and sold using our club bourse. Have been on Zoom calls with **John Robbins** and **Stephen Strobel** with the Collectors Club. I suspect that other members have had similar interactions. Let's be safe and enjoy face to face contact when it comes either this Saturday or in the near future.

### **WWI Soldier Mail Makes Interesting Postal History**

Long time stamp club member **Jim Edmunds** shared a small correspondence that came from two aunts who lived in Seattle, Washington. These two examples come from May Phillips, a schoolteacher. The first cover (at end of article) was written from the trenches in France and enlightened us on some of the daily life of the doughboys. A transcription of N. W. Barteaux May 14, 1918 letter follows.

“American Front”

May 14, 1918

A short note to the little Patriots of room #19 University Heights School from a soldier boy in “France.”

I suppose you would like to know what the boys are doing right now, - well I shall do my best to tell you the time is midnight & the place is a dugout somewhere in France, there are (4) four bunks in the dugout and there are two men in each bunk, there is a candle burning in the center and outside the door one of the men is standing guard ready to fire the gun if the alarm is given that the Huns are coming, it is so inky dark outside and no one is allowed to show a light as it might show the enemy where we are, all the boys are asleep now, being rather tired after working all day. With pick and shovel, many of the boys have written letters home early in the evening and are probably dreaming of home now, their mothers, fathers, little sisters & brothers, the boys are all happy and say they will not go home until they have “beat the Kaiser.”

The weather has been clear & sunny the last few days and is a welcome change from the rain we have had every day for the last (5) five months which made mud and plenty of it which was ankle deep and in some places knee deep.

If you could see some of the little boys and girls over here who have lost their parents in the war you would be you would be glad you are in the U.S.A. and everything that their teacher tells you about them and how you can help will add so much more happiness to these little children who are alone in the world, many of the little boys and girls have been taken care of by the soldiers who will take them back to America and send them to school.

The best way to be a soldier is to obey orders and always do as you are told, never talk back to your officers and above all study hard. The reason for that hard study and strict obedience is that the men who does that have the best chance to become officers. - now I am going to write to Miss Phillips ask her if the patriots in the room #19 would make good soldiers and shall be very disappointed if she says they are not studying as hard as we are “over here” for it is them we are fighting for and when the big guns roar we often think of them back home.

N.W. Barteaux A soldier boy in France Med. Corps 102 Field Artillery

This three-page letter from the French front in spring, 1918, may be typical of the patriotic doughboy who writes home to his teacher to exhort the young ones to good behavior. The run-together sentences tell us much about facts and attitudes of a typical soldier. Unfortunately, by the time the letter arrived, the school had closed. The notation suggests that the letter was forwarded to Miss May Phillips, the teacher.

The letter is ripe for further study like researching the “what and where” of the “709” designation of the postal unit. The censor mark includes the number 146 of the Y\*A L F. Another unusual mark is that the censor Lt. Bell also inked his OK on the last page of the message, usually not seen on the inside of the letter. The “Soldiers Mail” is not noted but is obvious on this stampless cover.

An earlier post card (fig.2) written April 22 is marked as “Soldiers Mail” was sent to “Dear Phil” Miss May Phillips in Seattle. It pictures the two leading generals of the British and U.S. armies, Sir Douglas Haig and General Pershing. Labeled as “Christmas Greetings. 1917.” History has not been kind to Haig in that his expenditure of flesh against German machine guns in “slow march” charges holds a dim view today. It is assumed that the American buildup in the winter and spring of 1918 saved the Allied armies against the German offensive to the Second Battle of the Marne and led to the popularity of Pershing.

The contents of the post card refer to Miss Phillips as “that dark haired girl in Seattle” suggesting that he is/was a beau. He says we “have had a lot of fireworks lately and enjoyed them immensely.” Does this mean an artillery barrage is entertainment? He closes with the question, “Do they still manufacture candy in the States???” Either he is suggesting a care package or some veiled reference to a private joke.

Reading soldier mail from a century ago is interesting, but the postal history search adds to the charm.

(Note: I have a new computer, printer, and scanner that I am still learning to use. Figure 1 and 2 from the article follow. I will try to get better, but look forward to the July return of Francis Ferguson)

