

BULLETIN of The Empire State Postal History Society

Volume 44 Number 2

September 2011

UP-COMING EVENTS

**SYRACUSE STAMP CLUB PRESENTS
SYRAPEX 2011: An Exhibition and Bourse**
November 12th and 13th at the Carrier Circle Hotel
6555 Old Collamer Road South, East Syracuse, NY 13057
Saturday, Nov. 12th from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 13th from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Members wishing to exhibit, or to obtain more details should visit the Syracuse Stamp Club's SYRAPEX 2011 web site, www.syracusestampclub.org/meeting_shows/syrapex11
(Ed. Note: Googling SYRAPEX 2011 is also productive)

**Also at Syrapex 2011:
ESPHS REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
Saturday Nov. 12th at 1 p.m. Check for room assignment upon arrival.

**MEMBERS, PLEASE SUPPORT ESPHS NEW YORK POSTAL HISTORY
AUCTION #3 BY CONSIGNING UP TO FIVE PIECES TO OUR DECEMBER
MAIL AUCTION. USE THE ENCLOSED CONSIGNMENT FORM.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Summer is speeding to a close and the Fall weather will be upon us soon. With the cooler weather moving in, we can think more about our postal history collections. It is a good time to start planning to organize and research some of those covers. Maybe even putting together an article for Excelsior; a good way to showcase your collection and/or some local history.

As promised, my first priority was to reestablish a society web site – and we did. If you haven't visited the site, it is at www.esphs.us. It is now a basic site, but gives us a presence on the Internet. We hope to make it more interesting in the future.

Our next directors meeting will be in Syracuse on Saturday, November 12th at 1 p.m. I hope all our officers and directors will make it a priority to be present, as it will be the first time to meet newly elected members in person.

David Przepiora (djprze@hotmail.com)

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 Upper Hudson: Maris Tirums
 Mohawk: *vacant*
 Lower Hudson: *vacant*
 NYC/LI: Frank Braithwaite
 Leatherstocking/Catskill: *vacant*
 Central: Bob Davison
 West Central: *vacant*
 Southern Tier: Alan Parsons
 Western: David Przepiora

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Secretary's Membership Report**Membership Reinstated:**

John B. Flannery, Webster, NY
Marvin Raphael, Rochester, NY

Accepted into Membership:

Terrence Hines, Chappaqua, NY
Walt Kisack, Rochester, NY
Nick Todaro, Liverpool, NY

WRITERS COURSE PRESENTED AT 2011 APS SUMMER SEMINAR BY ESPHS MEMBER

ESPHS founding member Robert Dalton Harris and his wife, Diane DeBlois, conducted yet another memorable workshop at the American Philatelic Society's annual Ice Cream Social and Summer Gathering in Bellefonte, Pa., June 19 to 24, 2011.

Bob and Diane, ably assisted by APRL Librarian Tara Murray and APS stalwart David L. Straight, welcomed 12 students to **Geography & Postal History: a "Writers Institute"**. This four-day major course met together for morning "mapping exercises" led by Diane that expanded the concept of a map from a picture of natural or political geography to an important tool in researching postal history. Following the mapping exercises, David Straight drew on his knowledge and collection of Post Office Department Forms to show the geographical implications of data that can be derived from broad samplings of completed Forms, especially over periods of time. Each afternoon session allowed the "writers-in-training" to meet in small groups and define the scope and requirements of their self-selected *Geography & Postal History* project, then make use of the contents of the APRL and instructors' material to develop their thesis.

Bob and Diane's course was organized around D. W. Meinig's four volume set *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*.

Day One: **Atlantic America 1492-1800.** *History is not the past, but a map of the past drawn from a particular point of view to be useful to the modern traveler.*

Mapping Project: Interpret the "route diagram" on the 1796 Bradley map

Case Study: Find meaning in the "Beaver Map" of 1715 by Herman Moll

Day Two: **Continental America 1800-1867.** *North and south, east and west. city and country – from the 1780s to the 1850s the most powerful influence in the shaping of American society was space. Ideas about space, uses of space, projections across space, and accommodations to space, above all else, charted the changes that occurred in America between these years.*

Mapping Project: Overlay the first railroads on stage roads and river routes.

Case Study: New York Post Roads, the Topology of Postal History.

Day Three: **Transcontinental America 1850-1915.** *Every city and State in the Union has an interest in the location of this road, for it is destined by its more, or less, favorable point of connection with passing railroads to affect all their commercial and social interests.*

Mapping Project: Chart Oct. 1913 RPO deliveries on the Denison & Wichita Falls RR.

Case Study: Registered Mail, Stony Hill, Mo. 1883: Cultivation of Rural Commerce.

Day Four: **Global America 1915-2000.** *Changes within the transportation system have engendered a mobility of the population that is unprecedented.....*

Mapping Project: Overlay the first airline mail routes over the 1925 rail routes.

Case Study: Asymmetry of Air Mail, Air Special Delivery, Special Delivery usage.

Each participant left Summer Seminar with a well-defined "article-in-progress" that will be completed by the author, edited by the instructors, and published in a monograph. The time in Bellefonte was hardly "all work", what with collegial meals, a bourse and evening entertainments plus many interesting talks and PowerPoint presentations throughout the week.

Editor's note: as a first-time attendee I heartily endorse Summer Seminar as a standout event for philatelists!

Hudson River Mail Poses a Challenge

By Maris Tirums



Throughout human history, waterways have served nations and cultures as primary means of travel, conveyance of goods, and communication. In New York State, rivers and streams south of the St. Lawrence River basin almost all feed into the Mohawk-Hudson basin, and this has made the Hudson River a major artery for travel.



In the 19th century, and especially after the invention of steam driven ships, the Hudson became a major mail route between Albany and New York City. Steamboats also disembarked at Troy, about ten miles beyond Albany.

In spite of the practicality of carrying mail on the Hudson, covers that can be identified as having traveled via this route are relatively scarce. Hudson River mail was marked upon disembarkation rather than at the point of origin. Thus, a letter from New York City to Albany carried via a Hudson River steamboat was marked at Albany and not at New York.

The cover illustrated here was mailed to Troy, and was hand-stamped STEAM at the Troy post office. Docketing reveals that the letter was mailed in August 1846, but as the contents are not with the cover sheet, we cannot know for certain where it was initially mailed.

The seven cent rate, shown with a manuscript numeral 7, is a peculiar amount that calls for some analysis. In 1846, the postal rate to mail a letter weighing one-half ounce or less a distance under 300 miles was five cents. The additional two cents was referred to as the ship letter fee and was paid directly to the captain of the steamboat that carried the letter. The addressee had to pay the entire seven cents as this letter was not prepaid by the sender.

Hudson River mail is a challenging Empire State postal history field. The definitive reference work on the subject was written in 1969 by Kenneth R. deLisle of Albany and is entitled *The Hudson River Mail, 1804 - 1858*. DeLisle based his research on the incomparable Albany collection of the late W.L.L. Peltz and on his own substantial holdings.

*This article also appears in the March/April 2011 edition of **Stamp Insider**, the Journal of the Federation of New York Philatelic Societies. For information, contact RRATCHFORD@NYSTAMPCLUBS.ORG.*

SOCIETY MEMBERS ENJOY STAMPSHOW 2011



At day's end, Jerry Hirsh, Linda & Drew Nicholson, Al Parsons, John Cali and Tricia & David Williams pause for a moment before dinner at *Michael O'Toole's Restaurant*.

STAMPSHOW 2011, celebrating the 125th anniversary of APS, was held August 11 - 14 at Columbus, Ohio. Despite the distance to travel, ESPHS members Drew Nicholson and his wife Linda, Alan Parsons, John Cali and Excelsior! Editor David E. Williams and his wife Tricia made the trip and are pictured above with friend Jerry Hirsh at a private dinner. STAMPSHOW is well known as *the* WSP event of the year and second only to Garfield/Perry for camaraderie at the local watering holes. Well done, y'all.

2ND BULLETIN AUCTION DRAWS SUCCESSFUL BIDDERS

Our June 2011 Auction featured some very desirable lots and bidders quietly scarfed up some bargains. Congratulations to Robert Dalton Harris, George McGowan, Drew Nicholson, Alan Pugliese, Maris Tirums and new member Nick Todaro.

Thanks also to our Consignors Glenn Estus, Allen Fink, Morton Laby, John Lange, Jr. Al Parsons and Bill Powers.

If this notice is smaller than that of March 2011 announcing the results of Auction #1, it is because we were not able to offer as many lots as we had for Auction #1 in December, 2010. Our ability to continue these auctions obviously depends on having a good supply of consigned lots. So PLEASE look through your boxes of New York State postal history and pick up to five nice items, fill out the enclosed Consignment Form and send your lots to me while you are thinking about Auction #3 scheduled for December 2011.