

GOLD COUNTRY STAMP CLUB

NEWSLETTER

Meetings of the Gold Country Stamp Club are held the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of each month
3:00-5:00 pm at Robinson Enterprises Conference Room 293 Lower Grass Valley Road
Nevada City

2020 Officers:

President: Bob Brenan—478-0130 * <rabrenan@gmail.net>

Vice President: Steve Hickok—273-0110 * <hickok12531@comcast.net>

Treasurer: Carole Ward—477-0108 * <ancward@yahoo.com>

Directors: John Schwabecher, Rick Lund

Programming: Steve Hickok—273-0110 * <hickok12531@comcast.net>

Newsletter editor: Ron Tranquilla <ron2401@att.net>

The Prez Says

More than a year has passed that our club could not meet due to the COVID pandemic. I hope you have taken some of the time sequestered to work on your collections. The good news is that we have started meeting again. We have had three meetings this quarter: one in May and two in June at my home. Attendance has not been great but my hope is that you will meet with us over the coming months.

Even better news is that Cindy has found a place for us to meet. Beginning July 8th we will meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the Robinson Enterprises conference room: 293 Lower Grass Valley Road – south of the Gold Flat intersection. See you there.

—President Bob Brenan

A Word from the Treasurer

As of 03-31-21 our Balance was \$4049.01

We took in \$568.97 (Club Collections), and \$20.00 (Donation from Ron).

We paid out \$40.00 (Refund Dues for 2021), \$45.00 (APS Renewal), \$45.00 (Anderson Collection), and \$30.00 (Refreshments).

As of 06-30-21 our new Balance is \$4477.98.

—Carole Ward, Treasurer



Semi-Postal Stamps

—Ron Tranquilla
GCSC Newsletter Editor

What are semi-postal stamps? This descriptive name makes clear one part of the function of a semi-postal stamp: *postal*. That is, part of the price of the stamp pays for postage at the current postage rate. The *semi-* part of the name indicates there is a non-postal purpose for part of the charge for the stamp. This other purpose is to “raise money for a particular charitable cause,” thus adding “a premium over the postal rate.”¹ Therefore, semi-postal stamps usually “show two denominations separated by a plus sign”² (as with the East German stamp pictured on the left, above—35+15—and the Republic of Germany stamp pictured above on the right—10+5), the charitable rate either printed, as in these two, or as an overprinted surcharge, as below at right (1914 France, Scott catalogue number B14); note that in this case, the plus sign also serves to make a red cross, the Red Cross organization being the cause. In many cases, however, just the postage rate is shown, and some show just the surcharge.



The primary difference between a semi-postal (or *charity*) stamp and a tax stamp is that the use of the tax stamp is obligatory on all mail, but semi-postals are not required by decree to be used either to pay the postage rate or for a donation to a cause. Use is voluntary. For example, most War Tax stamps—(such as Canada 1915 Scott MR1, pictured left; according to Scott’s *Classic Specialized Catalogue*, “intended for fiscal use, the war tax on postal matter being 1 cent...[Only] a few...were used to pay postage.”) most war tax



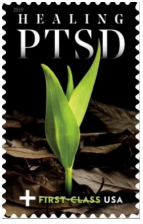
stamps were issued after WWI, and were required by embattled countries to defray costs of the war or to support soldiers’ families. In general, most semi-postal stamps have been used to generate contributions to health and handicap charities³ (such as France B14 Red Cross, pictured right). Most of European countries’ semi-postals have been issued after wars to help pay war costs or to support soldiers and their families; most disaster relief semi-postals have been issued by Caribbean, Central American, and Latin American countries to support recovery efforts and aid organizations after the region’s many hurricanes and geologic catastrophes such as volcanic eruptions and earthquakes.³

The first semi-postal was not a stamp, but a postal *card*, issued by the United Kingdom and Ireland, with a face value of one penny, to commemorate the Uniform Penny Post in 1890, but “sold... for sixpence, with the difference given to a fund for postal workers.”⁴

The first semi-postal stamps were Wales and Victoria, the stamps of New South Wales’ stamps shillings, a 12 x increase over the over the postage value [is] probably an New South Wales “issued the world’s (New South Wales Scott B1-B2)...raised money to support a home for consumptives (people with tuberculosis).”⁷



issued by the Australian colonies of New South each marking the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria were “denominated in pennies, but sold for face value.”⁵ “This whopping 1,200 percent premium all time high as a ratio of charity surtax to postal value.”⁶ first semipostal stamps in June, 1897...[These] stamps



The United States issued its search stamp, in July 1998. tion Act, Pub. L. 106–253, of tionary authority to issue and

as it considers to be ‘in the As of the end of April, 2021,



first semi-postal stamp, the Breast Cancer Re- Two decades later, the Semipostal Authoriza- 2017, granted the US Postal Service “discre- sell semipostal stamps to advance such causes

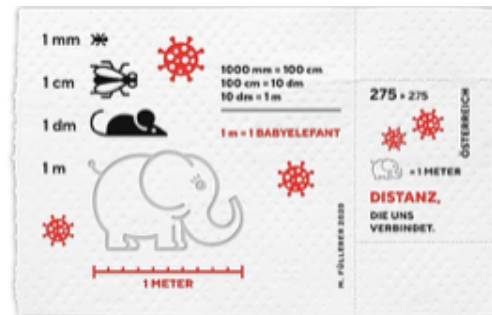
national public interest and appropriate’.”⁸ more than 1.08 billion of the breast cancer

stamps have been sold, bringing the total revenue raised to more than \$92.6 million.⁹ Under the 2017 semipostal discretionary program, the Postal Service is to issue five stamps over a 10-year period, with each stamp to be sold for no more than two years.” The first of these stamps to be issued ...[was] an Alzheimer’s Awareness Semipostal Stamp, followed by a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Semipostal Stamp on December 2, 2019...Net proceeds [...are to] be dis- tributed to the US Department of Health and Human Services. A Save Vanishing Species stamp was issued next, and funds raised (over \$60 million to-date) will be transferred by the US Postal Service under the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semi- postal Stamp Act of 2010, to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to support the MSC.¹⁰



Of world semi-postal stamps issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, perhaps the most ingenious (and certainly of the most questionable taste) is a souvenir sheet that encloses a single

semi-postal stamp issued by Austrian Post. The sheet’s slogan is, “Distance that brings us together.” The sheet and stamp, issued on October, 2020, illustrates the proper social distancing required by the COVID-19 virus, picturing an ant, a fly, a mouse, and a cute baby elephant. The one meter length of a baby elephant is the space required for safe distancing. (How many Austrians have suf- ficient knowledge of baby elephants to be able to apply this com- parison is questionable.) The stamp is distinguished not by its illustrations and its reminder of how far apart a safe distance is, however, but rather by the paper it is printed on: The sheet and stamp are printed on real toilet paper, backed with a foil adhesive so the stamp will not tear. The Austrian Post Office “was proud to tout the perforations as ‘typical of toilet paper’.”¹¹ The idea for using the toilet paper medi- um originated when, according to the Austrian Post officials, “at the beginning of the pandemic, supplies of toilet paper around the world vanished quickly from supermarket shelves.”¹² There is no stated recipient of the funds to be raised; instead, Austrian Post simply reports that “the extra funds from the issue will be used ‘for a charitable cause’.”¹³



Notes:

1. “Semi-postal Stamps,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-postal_stamp> Retrieved May 29, 2021
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Henry Gitner and Rick Miller. “New South Wales issued world’s first semipostals.” (Linn’s Stamp News Sep. 16, 2020. <<https://www.linns.com/news/us-stamps-postal-history/new-south-wales-issued-world-s-first-semipostals>>) Retrieved May 30, 2021
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

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date and location coincide with the Great American Stamp Show scheduled to take place Aug. 12-15 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont.

No ceremony is planned for the Sept. 9 issuance of the * **Happy Birthday** stamp, but the first-day of issue (and therefore the postmark) will appropriately be Toast, NC [not bread; champagne!]. The four **Message Monsters** commemorative forever stamps will debut Sept. 24 in Topeka, Kan. * El Paso, Texas, will be the first-day location for the four **Day of the Dead** commemorative forever stamps to be issued Sept. 30.

Finally, * Four **A Visit From St. Nick** special forever stamps are scheduled to be issued Oct. 7 in Santa Claus, Ind. And, the expected final stamp issue of the year, * the set of four **Otters in Snow** forever stamps...are slated for release Oct. 12 in Otter, Mont.²

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Notes:

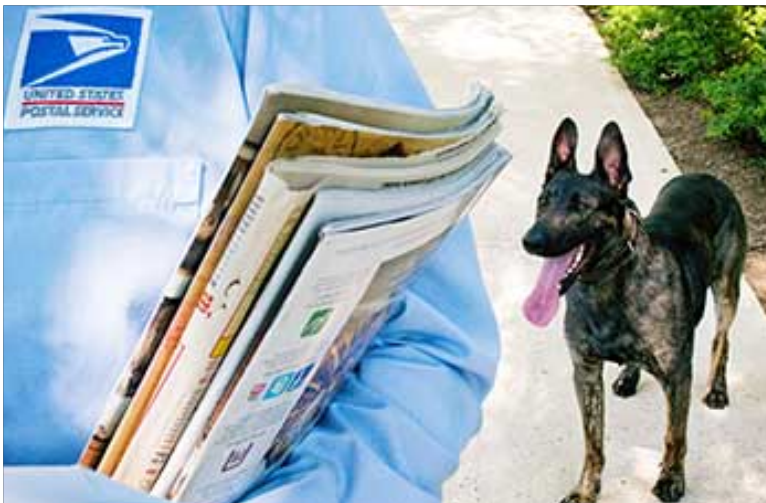
1. Jay Bigalke, "USPS reveals dates and locations for 2021 issues." Linn's Stamp News. (May 18, 2021) <<https://www.linns.com/news/us-stamps-postal-history/usps-reveals-dates-and-locations-for-2021-issues>> Retrieved May 26, 2021
2. The source of this program is Bigalke. Ibid.

Postal Workers tout National Dog Bite Week

Jokes abound about dogs and mail carriers, but it's not a laughing matter.

According to the USPS, nearly "5,800 postal employees were attacked by dogs last year [2019], but ... that's [just a part of]...the 4.5 million Americans attacked each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The majority of victims are small children, the elderly and Postal Service carriers, in that order.

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The Postal Service this year will continue its tradition of calling attention to this public health issue.

[The] 2020 National Dog Bite Awareness Week [took] place June 16-22. [The] campaign theme [was] “Be Alert: Prevent the BITE.”

For last year’s announcement and suggested dog-owner tips concerning mail delivery, visit <<https://about.usps.com/what/corporate-social-responsibility/activities/dog-bite-awareness.htm>>

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GCSC MEETING NOTES:

- * Thanks to Club President Bob Brenan’s generosity, we had Club meetings—indoors, face to face—three times this quarter, at Bob’s house.
- * The first meeting on April 15 had little business. According to Bob, it was generally just “getting reacquainted.”
- * No Secretary has been elected to take Sally Bracket’s role. Carole Ward graciously took notes at these first meetings but (*Editorial opinion:*) Carole has a number of important Club duties to attend to other than volunteering as Secretary, including being our Treasurer, and coordinating our Kids’ Club program. A permanent Secretary should volunteer or be elected, and that person should not be Carole. Please.
- * Members **voted** to pay for refreshments each meeting this year. Steve Hickok will be in charge of coordinating.
- * Because the Sacramento Stamp Club no longer is holding the annual Easter Seals show, to which we have made donations, a suggestion was made that we might donate to the Veterans. Future investigation and discussion needed.
- * Dues collected in 2021 will be returned since we did not meet in 2020.
- * On behalf of the Club, Ed Dimmick will order a new Specialized Catalogue.
- * Members present at the June 6 meeting **voted** unanimously to hold Club meetings in Robinson Enterprises’ conference room, in Nevada City. Suggested by Cindy Hren. Two-a-month meetings will resume there beginning July 8.
- * Our Kids’ Club is in suspension as we await word from Lyman Gilmore School’s administration about the school’s re-opening plans, post pandemic.