



The

Volunteer State

Philatelic Gazette



"The Postage Stamp is Our World"

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CHAPTER 0431

Rocket Mail

Rocket mail is the delivery of mail by rocket or missile. The rocket lands by deploying an internal parachute upon arrival. It has been attempted by various organizations in many countries, with varying levels of success. It has never become widely seen as being a viable option for delivering mail, due to the cost of the schemes and numerous failures. The collection of philatelic material ("stamps") used for (and depicting) rocket mail is part of a specialist branch of aerophilately known as astrophilately.

Pioneers

German author Heinrich von Kleist was the first to suggest using rockets to deliver mail. While editor of the Berliner Abendblätter, he wrote an article published on 12 October 1810 which proposed using fixed artillery batteries to fire shells filled with letters to predetermined landing locations of soft ground. Kleist calculated that a network of batteries could transmit a letter from Berlin to Breslau, 290 kilometres (180 miles) away, in half a day. Later in the 19th century, Congreve rockets were used to deliver mail in Tonga, but the missiles were unreliable. Hermann Oberth suggested using rockets for mail in a 1927 letter, and he lectured on the topic at a meeting of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Luft- und Raumfahrt in June 1928. The lecture caused many experimentalists to expect the use of rockets for mail as inevitable, and by 1929 Jacob Gould Schurman, the United States ambassador to Germany, discussed the legalities of transatlantic rocket mail with a German reporter.

Friedrich Schmiedl launched the first rocket mail (V-7, Experimental Rocket 7) with 102 pieces of mail between the Austrian towns of Schöckl and St. Radekund. Several other launches by Schmiedl occurred through 1932, and similar experiments occurred in several other countries, usually subsidized by philatelists.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Here we are again and Spring has sprung. There are lots of things to do! This year's show was a great success and now we are planning for next year's show. There will be new challenges to overcome, new stamps to find, new friends to be made, and lots of stamp shows to attend! So let's look forward to a better new year!

Matt Benward, President NPS

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Nashville Stamp Show 2025

Our annual stamp show will be held next year on March 9-10 at the Gallatin Civic Center located at 320 Albert Gallatin Avenue in Gallatin Tennessee. This is a same location we used in 2023 and it will be our new home for years to come. We'll be sending out contracts to the dealers in all the states nearby Tennessee and we've already heard from some dealers that they will return next year too! Thanks to everyone who volunteered at our stamp show this year and we couldn't have been such a successful one without you! Of course we'll need people for next year's show too. Please volunteer!

Roger Hunt asks for donations of old albums

Roger Hunt asked the members to donate old, partially-filled stamp albums for the "children's stamp table" our forthcoming stamp show. As you may remember during our 2023 show there were tables setup between the dealers tables and exhibits with loose stamps for children and some adults to pick through. So if you have any old albums just sitting around the house please think about donating them to help get children interested in stamp collecting again. You may contact Roger at the club meetings or contact the club and we'll get your message to him. Please email: show@nashvillephilatelic.org.

Articles for the newsletter

I need articles for this newsletter on any aspect of stamp collecting. They can be hand written, typed, or by computer in any format. I would be willing to help write them too. I have been getting some articles during the last few months, but I still need some more. If you see interesting articles in the philatelic press, please let me know. You may contact me at the club meetings or at mhenward@aol.com. Thanks.

New Stamp Club Members

Jay Elmore
Margaret Bansemer
Roger Bendure

The Volunteer State
Philatelic Gazette

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Matt Benward
Editor-in-Chief

Tom Tribke
Associate Editor

Editorial Consultants:

Matt Benward President
Al Bollmeier First Vice-President
David Bodkin Second Vice-President
Madeline Seibert Jr. Vice-President
Tom Tribke Secretary
Mark Thompson Treasurer

Meetings: Second and Fourth Mondays of each month. Philatelic Fellowship at 5:30 p.m., Business meeting at 6:30 p.m., Program or Auction at 6:45 p.m., out by 8:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Bavarian Bierhaus, 121 Opry Mills Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37214.

Kids under 17 get a FREE stamp packet at their first attendance. Ages 6 and up are WELCOME!

THE Volunteer State PHILATELIC GAZETTE is an official Publication of the Nashville Philatelic Society

Opinions expressed in THE GAZETTE are those of the writers. These opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Nashville Philatelic Society or its members.

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The Nashville Philatelic Society is a non-profit organization.

Nashville Philatelic Society

Minutes Review for December 2023 – March 2024

NPS held its annual Christmas party on 12/12/2023 at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall. Seventeen NPS members and one guest joined together for fellowship and plenty of good food!!! We watched several videos about Christmas stamps and held a short auction with 28 lots. 20 lots were sold.

The NPS held its 1/8/2024 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-one members and two guests were present. Jay Elmore's application for NPS membership received first reading. Andre Goodrow won the door prize. Al Bollmeier won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp, and Social Media committees! It was reported that our Facebook site had 869 "likes" and that our Twitter site had 1209 "followers". Matt mentioned that our Stamp show would be held on March 9 – 10 at the Gallatin Civic Center and that help would be required with show set-up and take down. Matt also advised that our theme for the show would be "150 years of Postal Cards (1873 – 2023)". The business session was then adjourned for an excellent program with handouts on "The Most Valuable Stamps in the World".

The NPS held its 1/22/2024 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 1/8/2024 meeting were read and approved. Jay Elmore's application for NPS membership received second reading and was approved and he was welcomed to the club. Margaret Bansemer's application for membership received first reading. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp, and Social Media committees! It was reported that our Facebook site had 877 "likes" and that our Twitter site had 1208 "followers". An informal discussion on stamp displays for our upcoming show was held. Matt again mentioned that our Stamp show would be held on March 9 – 10 at the Gallatin Civic Center and that help would be required with show set-up and take down. The business session was then adjourned for an Auction conducted by David Perry. The auction had 31 lots of which 23 were sold.

The NPS held its 2/13/2024 meeting (delayed till Tuesday due meeting room scheduling) at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Fourteen members were present. Minutes of the 1/22/2024 meeting were read and approved. Margaret Bansemer's application for NPS membership received second reading and was approved and she was welcomed to the club. David Perry won the door prize. Roger Hunt won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. It was reported that our Facebook site had 877 "likes" and that our Twitter site had 1208 "followers". Mark Thompson presented Treasurer's Reports for 2023 and the 4th quarter of 2023 and a current list of dues-paid members. Matt mentioned that our Stamp show would require help with set-up and take down. The business session was then adjourned for an interesting program by Scott Simonand presented by Al Bollmeier on "Rocket Mail" with handouts provided.

The NPS held its 2/26/2024 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-four members and four guests were present. Minutes of the 2/13/2024 meeting were read and approved. Tom Bain won the door prize. Rudy Caduff won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. It was reported that our Facebook site had 877 "likes" and that our Twitter site had 1207 "followers". Matt mentioned that our Stamp show would need help with set-up and take down. The business session was then adjourned for an Auction conducted by David Perry.

NPS held its 3/11/2024 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty members and five guests were present. Minutes of the 2/26/2024 meeting were read and approved. Roger Bendure's application for NPS membership received first reading. Bill Bowman won the door prize. Bob Winters won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone and Social Media committees. It was reported that our Facebook site had 880 "likes" and that our Twitter site had 1208 "followers". Matt thanked everyone who participated in our Stamp show for the good job done. The business session was then adjourned for a presentation and handout on the "Trans-Mississippi 1901 Issue" by Tom Tribke and other members.

The NPS held its 3/25/2024 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-one members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 3/11/2024 meeting were read and approved. Roger Bendure's application for NPS membership received second reading and was approved and he was welcomed to the club. Garry Speich won the door prize. Mark Thompson won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. It was reported that our Facebook site had 880 "likes" and that our Twitter site had 1208 "followers". Matt again thanked everyone who participated in our Stamp show for the good job done. The business session was then adjourned for an Auction conducted by David Perry.

Nashville Philatelic Society

Minutes Review for September 2023 – November 2023

The NPS held its 9/11/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-eight members and four guests were present. Minutes of the 8/28/23 meeting were read and approved. Ronald Stover's application for NPS membership received second reading and was approved and he was welcomed to NPS membership. Dennis Fielding won the door prize. Roger Hunt won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media Committees. Matt reported that social media websites had 1202 "followers" on Twitter and 817 "likes" on Facebook. The business session was then adjourned for an interesting presentation and handout on "The 1898 Trans-Mississippi Stamp Issue" by Tom Tribke and others.

The NPS had its 9/25/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-eight members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 9/11/23 meeting were read and approved. Randy Coble won the door prize. Mark Thompson won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media Committees. Matt reported that social media websites had 1201 "followers" on Twitter and 824 "likes" on Facebook. Mark Thompson gave a formal Treasurer's report. Al Bollmeier reported on a service that sold individual country sections from the current "Scott International Catalogs". Several members mentioned that they had used this resource instead of having to buy the entire catalog set. Matt mentioned that our next Nashville Stamp Show would be in March 2024. The business session was adjourned for our auction with David Perry as auctioneer.

The NPS held its 10/10/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Eighteen members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 9/25/23 meeting were read and approved. Dimples won the door prize. John Kwasniewski won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. NPS was saddened to learn of recent death of NPS member Walter Whinnery. A card was sent to offer our members' sympathies. Matt reported on the INDPEX show that he and several others had recently attended. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamps and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1204 "followers" on Twitter and 836 "likes" on Facebook. Matt mentioned that our next Nashville Stamp Show would be March 9–10, 2024. The business session then adjourned for an interesting presentation and handout on "100 Greatest American Stamps" by Matt and other NPS members.

The NPS held its 10/23/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Eighteen members and one guest were present. Minutes of the 10/10/23 meeting were read and approved. Courtney won the door prize. Bill Bowman won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. An update for our social media websites showed 1204 "followers" on Twitter and 824 "likes" on Facebook. Mark Thompson reported that he had been representing NPS with the Southeastern Stamp Conference and asked to continue in this roll. An NPS vote agreed that he should continue. Mark also mentioned that the SE Conference was asking for agreement to support higher level cooperation with other philatelic organizations. NPS agreed. And further the SE Conference is considering replacing stamp show exhibits with non-judged displays. NPS also agreed. The business session was then adjourned for our auction with David Perry as auctioneer.

The NPS held its 11/13/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus at Opry Mills Mall with Matt Benward presiding. Nineteen members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 10/23/23 meeting were read and approved. Jackie Cargill won the door prize. Mark Thompson won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone and Social Media committees. An update was given on our social media websites with 1209 "followers" on Twitter and 852 "likes" on Facebook. Matt mentioned that help was needed for set-up and take-down of our next Nashville Stamp Show. The business session then adjourned for a well-done presentation on "German Hyper-inflation Stamps" by Al Bollmeier and Matt.

The NPS held its 11/27/2023 meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus with Matt Benward presiding. Twenty-six members and two guests were present. Minutes of the 11/13/2023 meeting were read and approved. Jim Cate won the door prize. Andre Goodrow won the Participation Award. Forthcoming new issues and stamp shows were reviewed. Reports were presented from the Phone, Stamp and Social Media committees. An update for our social media websites showed 1208 "followers" on Twitter and 860 "likes" on Facebook. Matt advised that our only meeting in December, our Christmas Meeting scheduled for 12/11/2023, had to be revised due to meeting room scheduling problems. An e-mail notice will sent out as soon as a firm schedule date is known. The business session was then adjourned for our auction with David Perry as auctioneer.

Rocket Mail

Gerhard Zucker experimented in the 1930s with powder rockets similar to fireworks. Between 1931 and 1933, he travelled throughout Germany displaying his rocket and claiming that it could be used to deliver mail. After moving to the United Kingdom, Zucker tried to convince the General Post Office that postal delivery by rocket was viable. After initial demonstrations on the Sussex Downs in southern England, a rocket was launched on 28 July 1934, and a second on 31 July, over a 1600-metre flight path between the Hebridean islands of Harris and Scarp in Scotland. Around 1.07 m long with a diameter of 18 cm, the rocket fuselages were packed with 1,200 envelopes. Both rockets exploded, though most of the smaller second cargo, which included survivors of the first flight, was saved.

Stephen Smith, a Secretary of the Indian Airmail Society, combined his work with his interest in rocketry. His first launch was on 30 September 1934, and he experimented with 270 more by 4 December 1944. 80 of these contained mail, and his achievements include the first successful rocket mail sent over a river and the first rocket to carry a parcel. The Oriental Fireworks Company supplied Smith with 16 rockets between 23 March 1935 and 29 June 1935. Between them, these "Silver Jubilee" flights carried over a thousand event covers. In 1992 the Indian government issued a stamp to celebrate the centenary of Smith's birth, calling him "the originator of rocket mail in India".

United States

One of the first successful deliveries of mail by a rocket in the United States was made on 23 February 1936, when two rocket airplanes that were launched from the New York side of the frozen Greenwood Lake landed on the New Jersey side, less than 100 yards away. This event was preceded by several other successful rocket mail experiments in the early 1930s.

During the mid-1950s, "amateur" rocketeers flew a number of zinc dust / sulfur "micrograin" solid propellant mail-carrying rockets interstate, from California, across the Colorado River, and into Arizona. The postal covers were printed for each occasion, and franked at the nearest destination post office.

In 1959 the U.S. Navy submarine USS Barbero assisted the Post Office Department, predecessor to the United States Postal Service (USPS), in its search for faster mail transportation, with the only delivery of "Missile Mail". On 8 June 1959, Barbero fired a Regulus cruise missile – its nuclear warhead having earlier been replaced by two Post Office Department mail containers – targeted at the Naval Auxiliary Air Station at Naval Station Mayport in Florida. The Regulus cruise missile was launched with a pair of Aerojet-General 3KS-33,000 [3 s duration, 33,000 lbf (150 kN) thrust] solid-propellant boosters. A turbojet engine sustained the long-range cruise flight after the boosters were dropped. Twenty-two minutes after launch, the missile struck its target. USS Barbero first day commemorative cover. The return address is the Postmaster General.

The USPS had officially established a branch post office on Barbero and delivered some 3000 pieces of mail to it before Barbero left Norfolk, Virginia. The mail consisted entirely of commemorative postal covers addressed to President of the United States Dwight Eisenhower, other government officials, the Postmasters General of all members of the Universal Postal Union, and so on, from United States Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield. Their postage (four cents domestic, eight cents international) had been cancelled "USS Barbero Jun 8 9.30am 1959" before the submarine put to sea. At Mayport, the Regulus missile was opened and the mail forwarded to the post office in Jacksonville, Florida, for sorting and routing.

Rocket Mail

Upon witnessing the missile's landing, Summerfield stated, "This peacetime employment of a guided missile for the important and practical purpose of carrying mail, is the first known official use of missiles by any Post Office Department of any nation." Summerfield proclaimed the event to be "of historic significance to the peoples of the entire world", and predicted that "before man reaches the moon, mail will be delivered within hours from New York to California, to Britain, to India or Australia by guided missiles. We stand on the threshold of rocket mail."

Despite the Postmaster General's enthusiasm, the Department of Defense saw the measure more as a demonstration of U.S. missile capabilities. Experts believe that the cost of using missile mail could never be justified. While during the 1920s a letter between Europe and the United States would not arrive for at least a week after mailing, by the 1950s air mail crossed the Atlantic Ocean in as little as one day.

One of the mail containers which was on board the Regulus missile fired by Barbero is in the collection of the United States Submarine Force Museum in Groton, Connecticut.

Reusable launch vehicles

Rocket expert Willy Ley speculated in 1954 that using small cruise missiles to rapidly deliver mail might be possible for as little as three times the rate for airmail, in part because they could be reusable. Technologists like Robert Zubrin, of Mars Society fame, think that rocket mail, or at least ultra-elite business package delivery, may become commercially viable with the development of fully reusable launch systems, particularly single-stage to orbit vehicles. Such systems would allow package delivery anywhere in the world in 30–45 minutes. This idea has been forwarded by Zubrin and was the original business plan behind Pioneer Rocketplane (later Rocketplane Limited, Inc.), which he co-founded. Zubrin has since left the company, which is now focused on pursuing a somewhat more conventional space tourism strategy. The potential of package delivery with reusable launch vehicles is discussed in Zubrin's book *Entering Space: Creating a Spacefaring Civilization*.

On 3 December 2005, XCOR Aerospace flew its EZ-Rocket (a rocket-powered Long-EZ aircraft the company built as a demonstrator for its reusable rocket engines) from Mojave, California to California City, California, both in Kern County. Test pilot Dick Rutan made the flight, which lasted about 9 minutes and carried US mail from the post office in Mojave to addresses in California City. This was the first time that a crewed, rocket-powered aircraft was used to carry U.S. Mail.

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