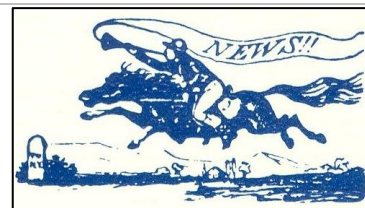


The Post Boy

Connecting and supporting stamp collectors, of all ages and interests, in Northern Nevada since 1975.



February 2026
Volume 59, Issue 2

In-person & Virtual meetings 2nd & 4th Saturday starting at 10:00 A.M.
Silverada Estates Clubhouse, 2301 Oddie Blvd, Reno ([map](#))

Officers:

President - Jeff Waldman
president@renostamp.org

Vice President - Nadiah Beekun
vp@renostamp.org

Secretary - Maggie Griener
secretary@renostamp.org

Treasurer - Erik Fields
treasurer@renostamp.org

Directors:

Dave Gehringer
dave@renostamp.org

Jeanne Paquin
jeanne@renostamp.org

Dave Parsons
davep@renostamp.org

Eric Moody
eric@renostamp.org

John Walter
editor@renostamp.org

PB Editor & Webmaster
John Walter
webmaster@renostamp.org

<https://renostamp.org/>
PO Box 2907,
Sparks, NV 89432

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Announcements

February Meetings:

Feb. 14, 2026 - In person and online Zoom meeting starts at 10 a.m. After announcements, committee reports and raffle, there is a live auction. Members can have 5 auction items and can add more to the limit of 60 lots.

Feb. 28, 2026 - In person and online Zoom meeting starts at 10 a.m. After announcements, committee reports and raffle, there is a presentation by Mike Ries on "Fakes, Forgeries and Counterfeits of U.S. Stamps." Members can have 10 consignment items and can add more when items are sold.

A correction to the January quiz: In last month's quiz on Mark Twain, the year of issue for the San Marino stamp in question #3 was given as 2000 instead of correctly as 2010. Apologies for not catching the typo.

Stamp Shows:

Feb. 13-15, AZ National Stamp Show, Mesa, AZ (27 dealers)

Contact: Tom Reyman, email: tgraz356@msn.com

April 24-26, Westpex, Burlingame, CA <https://westpex.org/>

May 1-3, PIPEX, Clackamas, OR <https://www.pipexstampshow.org/>

June 5-6, SOPEX, Southern Oregon Philatelic Exhibition, Medford, OR

July 11-12, Greater Reno Stamp & Cover Show, Reno-Sparks Convention Center. <https://renostamp.org/show.html>

Riddle: What starts with P and ends with E and has thousands of letters in it? Answer on page 10.

Post Boy Reporter **Maggie Griener, Secretary**

January 10th and 24th meetings - We welcome the new year 2026 and our first meeting following the winter break. Santa again neglected to leave a U.S. C3a in my stocking, but there's always next year. We hope all had a joyful and healthy holiday season, celebrated with loved ones both family and friends.

The meeting room was set up by **Erik Fields**, and hot coffee was ready for the 25 members in attendance on Jan. 10 and 28 attendees plus 2 visitors on Jan. 24. Refreshments were provided by our Donations Chair and President Emeritus **James Steckley**. **Erik Fields** brought the refreshments for the second meeting.

Maggie Griener was happy to bring the last of her fudge and Christmas cookies. **Barbara Stanfield** has a sign-up sheet to bring refreshments. Thanks to **Joe Bradley** and **John Walter** for donating cups, napkins, and utensils.

President **Jeff Waldman** called the meeting to order. **John Walter** showed the January USPS new stamp issues and pictures of his display at the Vassar post office. He is also still seeking a volunteer member to take over editing the Post Boy (think big auction bucks!) and/or take over/assist with the post office display cases. He talked about everyone doing the Post Boy quiz for fun, education, and 10 auction bucks for each correct answer. Give your quiz answers to Maggie.

Dave Parsons announced the next online auction that will begin January 13 ending on the 22nd. The final results were 38 of 63 lots sold for \$498.75. Here are the online auction rules:

https://renostamp.org/auction/auction_rules.html

Erik Fields signed a contract for the stamp show venue at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center for July 11-12, 2026. We will have a larger area for more dealers and judged exhibits, with FREE parking and free admission. <https://www.renostamp.org/show.html>

During the break, **George Ray** conducted the door prize raffle. **Jeanne Paquin** won the bonus prize, and **Dave Gehinger** won the money drawing.

Dave Gehringer urges members to please consider doing a presentation, short or long, on any subject of interest. The sign-up sheet is at every meeting.

The Jan. 10 meeting live auction had 66 lots including 6 donation lots with 54 lots selling for \$732.00.

A visitor, Tony Baio, brought his collections and sold many items with a donation to the club. It was nice to see **Scott Mathews** back in attendance on Jan 24. He's still recuperating from his motorcycle accident. Donation Chair, **James Steckley** still has 14 banker's boxes of items and was testing interest for another all-donation auction soon.

George Ray conducted the raffle at the break on Jan. 24. Suspiciously, **Maggie Griener** drew the first number, and it was hers. Hmm.

Following the break, our president, **Jeff Waldman**, gave an interesting presentation on Foreign Forgeries and Counterfeits, including forgeries by famous -- or infamous, depending on your outlook -- forgers. He also provided a list of websites to get more information about forgeries. See his article on the subject on page 6.

Stamp Show Exhibits Needed

By Jeanne Paquin

Today is the Day!!! Start thinking and developing your ideas for a NEW EXHIBIT for our stamp show, July 11-12 at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center.

The last few years, I have had to ask members to share their (previously created) exhibits to fill our frames at our show. This year, I would really like to turn this around—and ask you to please think of what it says when you create a new exhibit.

Here's some questions to ask yourself,

1) Am I too old to do this project?

Answer: Technically speaking you are never too old to enjoy your hobbies.

2) What do I know about creating even a 1-page exhibit? Sample one-page exhibits:

Answer: You know about your subject; you have your knowledge about your favorites.

3) Do I have time, energy and enough stamps to fill pages for an exhibit?

Answer: Look around yourself, are you looking at lots of albums, bookshelf's full of reference books, stamp albums, and boxes of items waiting to be placed in albums. You have what it takes!

4) What if I am not good at this exhibiting thing?

Answer: You don't have to be good, better or even great, just be yourself and tell us why you have been collecting.

There you go, and of course if you have questions, ideas, and crazy thoughts about what you can and cannot do, there are lots of members (including me) who can answer your questions and help you along.

What do you say? Yes, you will try at least a few pages, even Donny Sehr (our 13-year old Jr. member) is contributing! So, we are older, wiser and better, so give it a try.

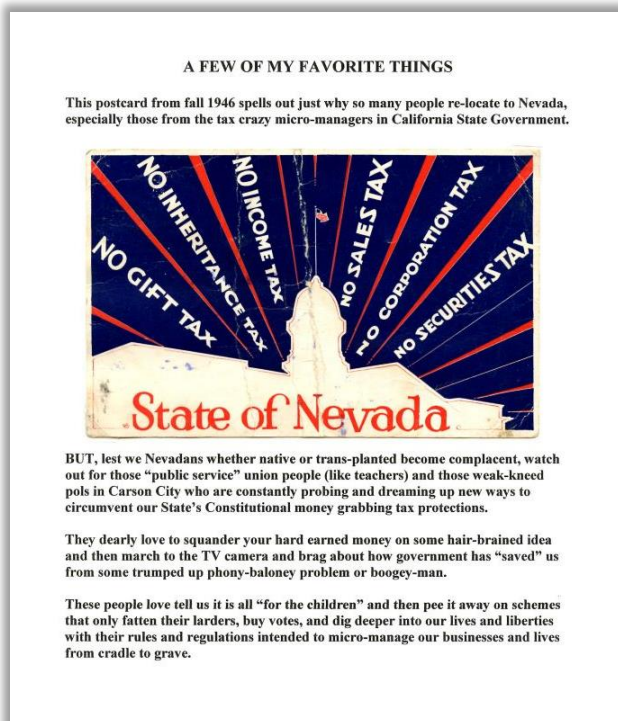
I look forward to hearing from you soon, about your upcoming ideas and plans. Otherwise, I will be asking you (and you know who you are!) for help to cover the frames on opening day.

APS Judging and Exhibiting Manual: 65-page manual on judging and exhibiting. Great information for beginners and seasoned exhibitors:

https://stamps.org/Portals/0/Judging-Manual_1.pdf

One page exhibit by Stan Cronwall from sample one-page exhibits:

<https://www.renostamp.org/exhibits.html>



P.T.O. – Please Turn Over By Patrick Crosby

Yes, I know. “Please turn over” is something said in varying tones to someone who is snoring. But a large “P.T.O.,” either handwritten or handstamped, was used postally to let postal clerks know the address information they needed was on the other side of a cover. One reason P.T.O. was used relates to recent *Post Boy* article, “A Wartime Economy Mailing Label.” Instead of a large label covering an old address, an envelope could be used a second time to save paper during World War II by crossing out the original address and applying a P.T.O. marking on the front side, then using the reverse side for a new address and seal the envelope with tape.



Another P.T.O. use was for returning to the sender an undeliverable cover when the return address was placed on the reverse side. It was saying to a postal clerk don't worry about this side, all the information you need is on the flip side. This could be a simple thing or, as in the case of the featured envelope, could be convoluted. A letter from South Africa was airmailed to a Philadelphia, PA, address, but the addressee had moved without leaving a forwarding address. The letter sat in General Delivery for pick up at Philadelphia's Oakland Station for more than a month when it was returned by ordinary surface means to the sender, who by this time had also moved, but had left a new address. Both return addresses were on the reverse side and “P.T.O.” was stamped on the front.

It's understandable if you decide to skip reading the next section that follows. It explains all the markings on this cover. Or you may wish to figure them out on your own just for fun (does not count towards Auction Bucks).

Here is my take:

- The sender addresses the envelope to Philadelphia, PA, and writes “By Air mail,” and then along the top of the reverse side he writes his return post office box address in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- A South Africa (Scott 44) postage stamp is applied paying the correct international airmail rate for ½ to 1 ounce letters (15 pence/ ½ ounce). “2/6” is 2 shillings 6 pence. One shilling = 12 pence. Total 30 pence.
- 5/13/1946 (front) mailed via airmail in Johannesburg, South Africa, with repeater style machine cancel with slogan “Save Meal and Bread” in English and Afrikaans.

- 5/21/1946 (reverse) Philadelphia, PA, Oakland Station received (Universal) machine cancel with six wavy bars.
- Pencil (front) abbreviated "Removed No Address" and single pencil slash across address.
- 6/24/1946 (reverse) boxed "Unclaimed" Philadelphia, PA (International) machine cancel.
- Purple oval handstamp (front) "Phila., Pa. / No. 39", probably a clerk's number.
- Large black crayon (front) "X."
- Small purple pointing hand (front, upper left) with "Return to Sender." Returned by surface mail.
- 7/19/1946 (reverse) round handstamp "Returned L.O / Capetown".
- Purple handstamp (front) "Rebut," meaning refused, rejected, or similar.
- Old address of sender crossed out, and new address added (reverse) with red crayon "To:" for emphasis. Yeoville is an inner city neighborhood of Johannesburg.
- 7/23/1946 (front) round handstamp "Reposted / Johannesburg".
- Large rose colored handstamp (front) "P.T.O." directs the mail carrier to the reverse side. Seems mostly used in British influenced countries.
- Purple handstamp (reverse) "Partii" is a wild card and can be placed anywhere because I don't know what it means.

The bi-colored stamp in red-brown and green is titled by Scott "Trekking" and shows a river crossing of a team of oxen pulling a wagon on the Great Trek when some earlier European pioneers, voortrekkers, moved away from British administered areas beginning in 1836.

Patrick Crosby collects U.S. postal stationery, stamps and postcards with an emphasis on postal history.

Selling Lifetime Collections:

- 1 – Canada - 1852 3¢ Beaver Stamp.
- 2 – Canada - Book #1 starts at 1967 with 1¢ stamp and goes to 1976 with \$2.00 stamps. All matched plate blocks of 4-10 and 6-16. All mint unused.
- 3 – Canada - Book #2 starts at 1972 6¢ stamps and goes to 1976 with some in the 1980s. All are mint unused. Plate blocks of 4, 6 and 16 stamps.
- 4 – U.S. postage Celebrating Peanuts. Postal Commemorative Society 46 pages. Starts with 41¢ stamp and stops with 41¢. Sell for \$225.00.
- 5 – 1978 Historic Stamp of America U.S. stamp and commemorative covers including 200 mint condition historic stamps. Value \$595.00. Sell for \$100.00
- 6 – United Nations 1969-1991. Plate Block and sheets of 4, 12, 3. The rest mint single stamps. Sell for \$100.00.
- 7 – United Nations Flags Plate Block and sheets. 53 pages of Flags, 10 flags stamps to a sheet. Value \$199.60. Sell for \$100.00

Contact – logbobby.bernal53@gmail.com Phone is best: 775-553-6107

A Brief Introduction to Foreign Counterfeits and Forgeries

By Jeff Waldman

Editor: I asked Jeff to write an article after his great meeting presentation on Jan. 24, 2026.

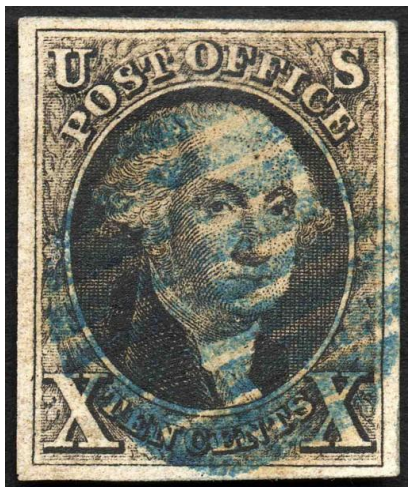
Counterfeits and forgeries have been with us for almost as long as stamps have been printed. They are mainly of concern to those who are at the level of obtaining expensive stamps, since those stamps are the only ones worth forging. What is the difference between a counterfeit and a forgery? They are physically the same, but a counterfeit is designed to defraud a postal service, whereas a forgery is designed to defraud the stamp collector. It can be argued that such alterations such as applying a fraudulent overprint to an otherwise genuine stamp would be considered a “forgery,” but philatelic references more often refer to these as “fakes.”

The terms are indeed interchangeable, but for the purposes of this introduction we will refer to both as forgeries. Some forgeries are so accurate in fine detail that even certification experts have been fooled, and some have eventually become more valuable than their genuine counterparts. There are collectors who dedicate their entire hobby to only collecting forgeries. Collecting forgeries can also aid in developing a useful comparative reference collection. The collector has some avenues of defense against, which include studying hundreds of websites with excellent visual representations of both genuine and forged stamps, and avoiding purchasing stamps from dealers known to make a practice of selling forged and altered stamps.

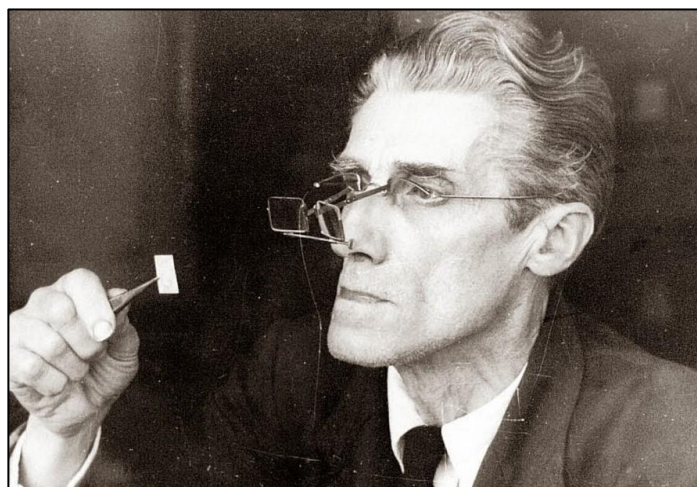
One website in particular, <https://stampforgeries.com/>, is simple to use and is full of excellent photos and references which may aid the collector in identifying forged stamps offered by unscrupulous online sellers.

The world of stamp forgeries is highlighted by a rich history of dark, notorious and even somewhat evil characters. Of the 25-50 most famous forgers, there are a few which stand out as truly interesting. I will briefly describe the “careers” of three of the arguably most famous stamp forgers below. You will see that they began with what appeared to be honorable intentions but quickly realized that there was serious profit to be made.

Perhaps the most famous and notorious forger was **Jean de Sperati** (1884-1957), or Giovanni Desperati, who was originally from Italy but eventually fled to France in 1909. Sperati’s forgeries were produced so accurately that many of his forgeries remain undetected to this day. His forgeries often command high prices; even higher than genuine stamps which they represent.



U.S. Scott #2 Sperati Forgery



Jean de Sperati with his famous magnifying glasses.

His relatives owned a postcard company and paper mill, and through these enterprises were able to obtain copious knowledge of photographic processes, print technology and paper chemicals. Sperati detested perforated stamps, so almost all of his forgeries were imperforate stamps. He invented a very clever way of starting with an inexpensive stamp from a series of stamps with other expensive denominations. The stamp ink was dissolved from the inexpensive stamp, often in a way in which he was able to retain the genuine cancellation. But more importantly, the stamp paper contained the original watermark making them even more difficult to detect.

Although Sperati at first marked his forgeries as “reproductions,” he quickly stopped marking them as such once these forgeries were certified as genuine. In fact, he submitted a collection of 125 forgeries to various certifying agencies, including the Royal Philatelic Society, which certified his stamps as genuine.

Upon his arrest in 1942 for “exporting capital,” he actually attempted to convince French authorities that his stamps were only reproductions. The court utilized stamp experts to determine that his stamps were indeed genuine, because they were being fooled as well. Once he convinced them that his “stamps” were forgeries, he was charged with fraud and sentenced to two years in prison. He was not incarcerated because at the age of 64 he was considered too old to serve time. In 1954 he sold his remaining forgeries, plates, dies and inks to the British Philatelic Association with the promise to never again produce a forged stamp. However, upon his death in 1954, it was discovered that he continued to produce forgeries right up to the end of his life.



An early Sperati forgery marked as a “reproduction”



Genuine stamp on the left with a Spiro forgery on the right.

Another of the famous forgers was the printing firm of the Spiro Brothers in Hamburg, Germany lead by the infamous **Philip Spiro**. Together they produced approximately 500 lithographed forgery designs between 1864 and 1880. The majority of Spiro forgeries are relatively easy to detect, but it should be noted that the firm eventually produced “millions” of copies.



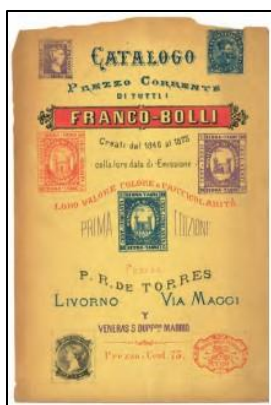
Francois Fornier

Another infamous forger was **Francois Fornier** (1846-1917) who was a Switzerland-based dealer. Fornier considered himself the creator of “art objects” which could become “space fillers” for collectors who could not otherwise afford rare, genuine stamps. Like Sperati, he soon ceased to mention that his stamps were forgeries and eventually employed five stamp restorers in his “Philatelic Clinic.”

Not only did they produce forgeries, but they secretly repaired damaged stamps and were involved in such devious activities such as the removal of pen cancellations from otherwise genuine stamps. Upon his death in 1917, Charles Hirschburger took over his business until his death in 1927. The "Union Philatelique de Genève" eventually purchased the stock and created albums of Fournier forgeries clearly marked as "faux" or "facsimile."

But perhaps one of the more interesting forgers was **Plácido Ramón de Torres** (~1847--~1910) of Spain. Torres considered himself a great artist and began his stamp "career" by innocently enough producing and publishing several stamp album illustrations and stamp catalogues. Through his stamp shops in Italy and Spain he moved from illustrating stamps to actual forgery. In fact, it has been estimated by his biographer Gerhard Lang-Valchs that 10% of the forgeries on the philatelic market are actually the forgery work of Torres.

Torres was eventually approached by a small forgery ring which asked him to add color to a few of his stamp illustrations in order that they could purchase these for their own use.



Early Torres catalogue



Genuine stamp (left) compared to a Torres illustration

Luckily for us as stamp collectors, the vast majority of his forgeries are rather easy to detect when compared to genuine stamps. For example, consider the image above. On the left is a genuine stamp, at center is a Torres illustration, and at right is the same illustration with added color. It should be obvious that the lower-left corner on the right stamp is incorrect, as well as the appearance of the train wheels.

Torres was arrested three times and in 1874 he was forced to leave Italy for his native Spain, where he lived in Barcelona for the rest of his life. His actual date of death is unknown.

The typical worldwide stamp collector need not become overly concerned about accidentally purchasing a forgery, unless the genuine stamp is quite valuable. There are numerous websites showing comparative photographs and descriptions. Conversely, you can purchase forgeries, often very inexpensively, to be used as a comparison collection. Aside from the beautifully-illustrated website <https://stampforgeries.com>, you could begin by reviewing a full list of stamps known to be forged such as <https://www.filatelia.fi/forlinks/forged-stamps-a.html>. If the stamp in question does not appear on the list, it is most likely not of concern. Another interesting website, https://golowesstamps.com/reference/illegal%20Stamps/illegal_stamp_sellers_list.htm lists online sellers who are notorious for offering misrepresented stamps.

Jeff Waldman specializes in pre-1945 worldwide classic stamps with an emphasis on Scandinavia and Europe. He also maintains an online stamp sales business and is currently President of the NSSS.

Quiz: Whale of a Stamp!

By Eric Moody

Any postal issue featuring a whale on it has to be a “whale of a stamp,” and there have been many of them from countries around the world. The following questions all relate to stamps that depict whales, scenes of the whaling industry, or authors who have written about the great seagoing mammals.

1. This American author, who famously wrote about 19th century whaling, appears on a 1984 U.S. stamp (#2094). He is
(a) Jack London (b) Richard Henry Dana (c) Herman Melville (d) Nathaniel Hawthorne
2. A 2006 Canadian stamp (#2157) shows a young girl watching a Beluga whale as it swims behind glass in front of her. The scene is at a celebrated aquarium, then celebrating its 50th anniversary, in this city.
(a) Montreal (b) Vancouver (c) Toronto (d) Halifax
3. A colorful toy whale is shown on a stamp (#634) produced by this Asian whaling country in 1956.
(a) China (b) Russia (c) Japan (d) South Korea
4. This Pacific Ocean island, part of the Cook Islands, issued in 1983 a set of Save the Whales Campaign stamps (#223-227) that depicted scenes of 19th century whale hunting.
(a) Niue (b) Aitutaki (c) Rarotonga (d) Penrhyn
5. This type of whale is featured in a Sea Creatures set issued by the U.S. in 1990.
(a) Killer (Orca) (b) Right (c) Sperm (d) Grey
6. A set of Marine Mammals stamps issued in 1984 by this Caribbean island country, once one of Ernest Hemmingway’s favorite haunts, includes one (#2679) that depicts a *Physeter catodon* (Sperm whale).
(a) Jamaica (b) Bahamas (c) Cuba (d) Barbados
7. The stamp for this U.S. state, in a 2008-2012 series depicting the flags of all fifty states, also features a breaching Humpback whale.
(a) California (b) Massachusetts (c) Oregon (d) Alaska
8. In 1999 this North Atlantic country issued a set of stamps (#873-876) featuring several Marine Mammals: three whales and a *Phocoena phocoena*, or harbor porpoise.
(a) Greenland (b) Iceland (c) Norway (d) Ireland
9. Three sets of stamps portraying Endangered or Extinct Species were issued by Tanzania in 1999. The first set appeared as a 20-stamp sheet (#1898a-t) that included an image of this type of whale.
(a) Blue (b) Right (c) Bowhead (d) Narwhal
10. Whales and whaling were sometimes featured in this famous 19th century American poet’s works, such as “A Song of Joys” and “The World Below the Brine.” Depicted on a U.S. stamp (#867) in 1940, he is
(a) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (b) John Greenleaf Whittier (c) Walt Whitman (d) Ralph Waldo Emerson
11. A 1970 U.S. stamped envelope (#U554), issued in March, the month in which World Wildlife Day occurs, depicts this famous whale.
(a) Willy (b) Shamu (c) Humphrey (d) Moby Dick
12. In 1977 a set of stamps (#64-67) featuring four different whale types was produced for mail sent from this section of Antarctica.
(a) Australian Antarctic Territory (b) British Antarctic Territory (c) French Southern and Antarctic Territory (d) Ross Dependency (New Zealand territory)

Each correct answer is worth 100 Auction Bucks. Please complete the quiz and give your answers to **Maggie Griener** at the next in-person meeting or email to: postboyquiz@renostamp.org
January quiz (Hats) answers: 1. c, 2. b, 3. d, 4. b, 5. d, 6. c, 7. d, 8. a, 9. d, 10. c, 11. b, 12. c

Vassar Post Office Display

By John Walter

This was an easy month for topic selection for Reno's main post office display.

This is the first time there are four topics. The first is for President's Day on Feb. 16. Shown are covers and stamps for Presidents' George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Franklin Roosevelt.

The second topic is for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy which start Feb. 6 and concludes on Feb. 23. Pictured are some nice cachet covers picturing some of the winter Olympic sports. The Olympic stamps on cover were issued for the 1980, 1984 and 1992 Olympics

The third topic celebrates African American History Month showing covers and stamps from the Black Heritage Stamp Series.

The fourth topic celebrates Valentine's Day on Feb. 14. The stamps and covers are from the Love Series of stamps, plus two post cards mailed in 1908 with Valentine wishes.



From page 1. **Riddle Answer: Post Office.**