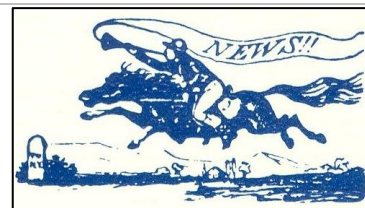


# The Post Boy

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



March 2026  
Volume 59, Issue 3

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

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## Announcements

### March Meetings

**Mar. 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 lots and more can be added to the limit of 60 lots.

**Mar. 28, 2026** - In person and online Zoom meeting starts at 10 a.m. After announcements, committee reports and raffle, there is a live donation only auction.

**Online Auction #44** - Starts at noon on April 14 , ends at noon on April 23.

Each member is allowed up to 20 auction lots. Send the lot descriptions and images by noon on April 12 to **Dave Parsons** – [NSSSauctions@gmail.com](mailto:NSSSauctions@gmail.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

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

The stamp show Exhibitor Chair, **Jeanne Paquin**, is reminding everyone to plan to have an exhibit or at least a one-page My Favorite Thing page for the July stamp show.

These will be judged exhibits, so plan accordingly. If you need advice or help, past exhibitors can help answer your questions.

The article on page 3, “Basics of Exhibiting,” will answer some questions.

## Post Boy Reporter

**Feb. 14 meeting** – Refreshments were provided by **James Steckley**, complemented by Valentine's Day cupcakes from **Maggie Griener**. The meeting was attended by 29 members and one visitor, Steve, who inquired about his inherited stamp collection. Steve participated in both the meeting and the auction, expressing that he found the experience enjoyable.

**John Walter** had a slide presentation featuring the new USPS stamp releases for February. He encouraged members to participate in Linn's stamp poll and shared details of his display at the Vassar Street post office. The display highlights Black History Month, Valentine's Day, and President's Day. **Jeanne Paquin** agreed to assume responsibility for managing the display frames at the Reno post office.

**James Steckley** reported receiving donations comprising hundreds of stamp panes, sheets, and plate blocks, which will be scheduled for two upcoming all-donation auctions. **Barbara Stanfield** announced that the Lion's Club is seeking donations of used laptops to refurbish for children in need.

**Erik Fields** provided updates regarding the July 11-12 Reno Stamp Show and discussed the annual payment of club liability insurance. The meeting raffle, managed by **George Ray**, featured ten prizes, with an additional bonus prize awarded to **Dave Gehringer**. The cash prize of \$11.00 was won by **Dave Parsons**.

The live auction was conducted by **Gary Atkinson** and **Mike Potter**. The auction consisted of 53 member lots and seven donation lots. A total of 53 items were sold, grossing \$508.35.

**Feb. 28** – Attendance was 29 members including one member on Zoom. **Dave Gehringer** provided refreshments and coffee.

As Donation Chair, **James Steckley** reported having 74 auction lots prepared, plus 16 boxes from Dick Dreiling's estate, all donated to the club. It was decided that an all-donation live auction would be held at the March 28 meeting.

**John Walter** had a report about the upcoming WESTPEX Stamp Show, April 24-26 and recent webinar attendance with information about the Boston 2026 International Expo. At least three members will be attending the Boston 2026 Expo, May 23-30.

The meeting raffle had 10 prizes with the bonus prize going to **Gary Atkinson**. The money prize of \$17.50 was won by **Joe Allen**.

**Mike Ries** delivered a very informative slide presentation entitled "Fakes, Forgeries and Counterfeits of U.S. Stamps."



Some of the club members at the Feb. 14 meeting.

## Basics Of Exhibiting

### By Jeanne Paquin

No matter what kind of exhibit you decide to create, it's essential to grasp the basic principles. Exhibiting might seem intimidating—but consider whether your subject is engaging or not. There are many factors to weigh, but however you choose to enjoy working with related stamps or covers, try to add some fun and put a smile into your explanatory text. Include entertaining or little-known facts in your write-up to make it more appealing.

Create a story that may be a mini study. The story of the item, what lies behind – how did you acquire the item, how was it made and by whom; how was it used and where. What kind of backstory does this item have attached to it. Describe its usage, location of use, and any relevant background or context associated with the item.

Demonstrating specialized knowledge enhances the visibility and engagement with your pages. Focusing the exhibit on a single or related items facilitates the development of a cohesive narrative.

The story can be thematic, historical, philatelic, or any type. Choosing one to highlight takes time, so consider what you want to share with the public.

Research matters. Have you learned your item's history, or spent time looking for it?

Décor of the entire page whether its angled, outlined, etc.

- Title – Make it simple to read and understand.
- What items will be shown on the page?
- What order will your layout follow?
- Use of columns to give information?
- Layouts include such things as:
  - Paper choices and color of paper.
  - Font types (easy to read, colored, size, and type).
  - Boxes needed to highlight information.
  - Actual layout of the pages, (is it too busy, too plain).
  - Mounting items, corner squares or clear and black backed mounts – holding your items securely on the page is important. (You don't want them on the floor).
- Most people only read the first two lines of text. That's where the most important points should be.

The exhibit should include a clear title and may benefit from enhancements such as box outlines, shadow effects, bold text, or underline. Ensure that the subject matter is readily identifiable to all visitors. Consider your audience: will they be familiar with your subject, and will the historical context and information provided help to engage their interest?

Remember that you are uniquely positioned to convey the story behind your exhibit piece, so take pride in creating a meaningful display. If you require assistance, many experienced club members are available to offer support and guidance.

Samples of one-page exhibits, referred as My Favorite Page, and full exhibits from members are on the club website: <https://www.renostamp.org/exhibits.html>

# Using a USB Microscope for Stamp Identification

By Dave Parsons

*This is an update to an article published in the Post Boy in 2015. My brother-in-law has recently taken an interest in stamp collecting and enjoys finding small differences from one stamp to the next. Of special concern is looking for secret marks, hairlines, printing techniques, etc. For his recent birthday we gave him a USB microscope, which is an upgrade to the one mentioned in the following article. He also is a coin collector and rockhound, so this has other uses for him. The one he received is:*

[Elikliv Coin Microscope, 4.3" LCD Digital Microscope 1000x, Coin Magnifier with 8 Adjustable LED Lights, PC View Compatible with Windows/Mac, EDM4B, Black](#) (about \$35 on Amazon and pictured below):



Use of USB microscopes is a fairly recent development for stamp collecting. While magnifying glasses and scanners can accomplish many of the functions of these microscopes, the USB Microscope offers the following advantages:

- Easier to see details with less eye strain or bending over.
- No waiting for scanner lamp warmup or proper placement on scanner.
- Ability to quickly examine batches of stamps to sort differences.
- Allows users to easily take a .jpg photo of area of stamp in question and save it.
- Provides vehicle to share examples with other collectors for education or trading.

The microscope used for the demo was the: Plugable® USB 2.0 Handheld Digital Microscope with stand for Windows, Mac, Linux (2MP, 10x-50x Optical Zoom, 200x Digital Zoom). It can be found on Amazon.com for \$34.95. In searching Amazon for “USB microscope,” there were many different options, all using the same basic microscope (made in China). The Plugable microscope was selected based on reviews of the software included and because the provider seemed to have superior customer service. On Amazon, the price for similar models ranged from about \$15 to over \$100. Options had differing support stands. Some of the less expensive models may work fine but were not evaluated in this process. It is unknown whether any local vendors carry USB Microscopes.

The unit itself is about 5 inches long and 1” in circumference. There is a focus wheel, LED lighting system which can be adjusted for intensity, a camera shutter button, and a lens cover (which needs to be removed prior to using!). The microscope has a USB cable that is hooked to a computer. Software is provided via a CD or downloaded from the vendor’s website. Software is straight-forward and allows for pictures or videos to be taken, allows for changing screen resolution, date/time inclusion, language selection, and measuring/drawing tools.

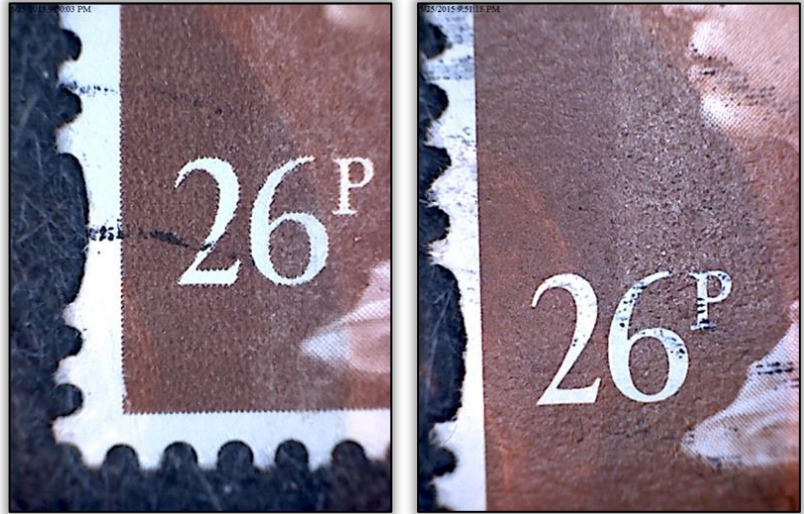
While advertised as 50X Optical Zoom, the 50X can only be obtained by placing the viewed object within the scope tube - a process not viable for viewing stamps which for the most part is larger than the inner tube dimension. Placing the tube right over the stamp allows the user to get about 24X magnification which is fine for most philatelic uses.

By increasing the screen resolution, additional digital magnification can be achieved. The scope comes with an included stand which allows the user to hover above the stamps so as not to touch the stamp and to provide a stable platform for photos. However, when moving further away, the optical magnification is reduced. To view the whole stamp, the user must devise another way to elevate the stand so the scope can take in the whole stamp image.

The microscope is advertised as a Zoom. However, the Zoom is only achieved by the user moving the scope closer to the object, but this is not a Zoom obtained by lens manipulation like in a zoom camera.

### Photogravure vs. Lithography

A question often comes up - "How can you tell the difference between photogravure and lithography produced stamps?" With the USB microscope the difference is easily distinguishable. With photo process the edges of numbers and borders have a more ragged/bumpy appearance while the litho stamp has a clean/sharp look. On the Machin stamps to the right, the stamp on the right is clearly a result of the lithography production process.



By using the USB scope, the collector can quickly sort through large lots of stamps more easily than bending over a magnifying glass. Stamps can be laid out in an array, and the scope can be moved rapidly from stamp to stamp looking for distinguishing characteristics.

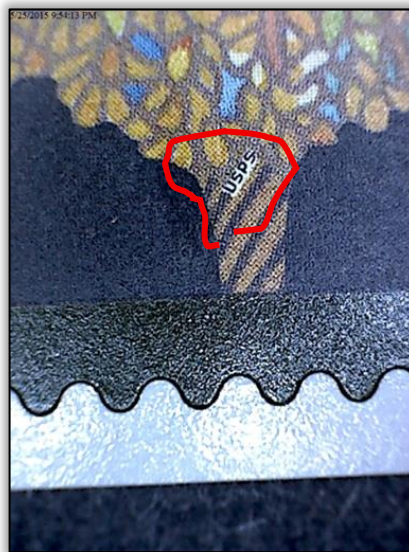
### Looking for Minor Variations



Another use of the microscope is to look for minor variations in stamps. For example, it is possible to look for Type differences and secret marks, and to take a photo of these varieties. For example, the photo on the left shows a Type III 2¢ Red Washington where the horizontal lines do not enter the outer triangle.

### Microprinting

The scope can be used to look for microprinting on more modern issues. The stamp at left below shows a Canadian bobsledder's name in very small print which would be very hard to see with a magnifying glass. The stamp on the right has USPS microprinted on a Tiffany Glass stem.



### Printing Errors and Other Anomalies

The microscope aids in detecting printing errors. The stamp image to the left is the 2¢ Columbian Stamp #231 with a broken frame line in the lower right corner.

The USB Microscope can also be used to look for re-gummed stamps and to closely examine postmarks or other small details that differentiate one stamp from another.

### Measuring a Stamp

The software touts the ability of measuring stamp dimensions or certain areas in the stamps. With some experimentation it was possible to come up with a good measurement, however, there was much trial and error in the process and it was not straightforward. The stamp on the right is a GB #179 with a vertical size of 22.75 mm.

The lower reference line showed that the scale of 20 mm was measured at 10.01 mm by the program. The actual stamp frame line was shown as 11.42 mm. Converting the 11.42 mm into reference units using the formula  $11.42/10.01 \times 20$  gives a frame measurement of 22.82 mm which is near the published size and enough to differentiate the stamp from the more valuable #173 which measures 22 mm high (Rats- I could use a 173!)



## Perforations

A question arose about using the microscope for measuring perforations. After the meeting, and many tries later, the author was unsuccessful in getting an accurate determination of perforations. The measuring tool could only achieve results within .3 to .5 of the stated perforations.

There are other more viable digital tools to determine accurate perfs and measurements but perhaps these can be discussed at another time.

In conclusion, the USB Microscope has proven to be a valuable tool for the author's collecting needs. It has allowed more rapid sorting of bulk stamps and has been useful in looking for small variances from stamp to stamp.

*Dave Parsons collecting interests include U.S. used and BOB, Mint U.S. Commemoratives, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, South Africa and Liberia.*

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## Foreign Penny Boxes By Dave Parsons

The penny boxes have been part of the Nevada Stamp Study Society for many years. However, in recent years there has been little interest. For newer members, the penny boxes consist of stamps donated to the NSSS. Members can search through the boxes and select any stamps they want and pay the club 2 cents per stamp taken. Junior members pay one cent per stamp.

If any member wants to check out the selection for any particular foreign country, please notify me at [NSSSAuctions@gmail.com](mailto:NSSSAuctions@gmail.com) prior to a club meeting and I'll bring the boxes, if available, to that meeting. The member may take the box home to search through it and then bring it back the following meeting. The pictures below show some of the countries available and samples of Japan stamps:

For U.S. stamps, Gene Smoots usually brings several boxes to each meeting, but if you want to search for anything U.S. specific, please talk to Gene.

Given the lack of interest in the foreign penny boxes, our inventory will be gradually liquidated, and the contents will be offered at club auctions on a bulk basis.



## Online Auction

By Dave Parsons

Our 2nd online auction of 2026 will start in April. This would be a good time to look through your collection of stamps and select some to share(sell) with other members. We can use listings from all members and will accept 20 lots per member. Use your proceeds to get those stamps you need.

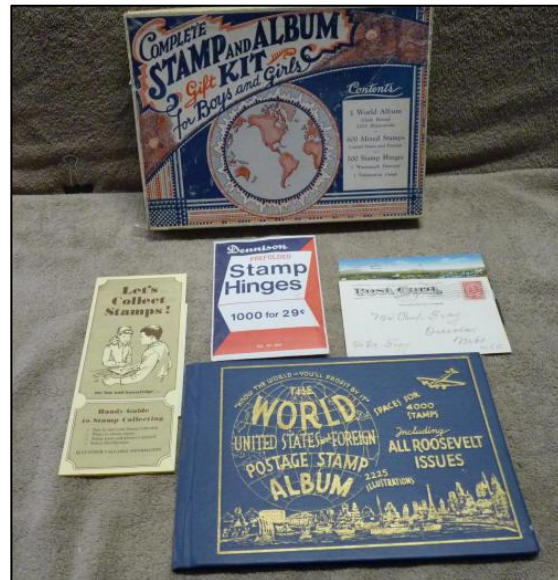
The deadline for sending in your lots is noon Sunday, April 12. The auction begins the following Tuesday, April 14th at noon and closes at noon on April 23.

To see the guide for submitting auction lots – please visit our website at <https://renostamp.org/auction/Online-Auction-Rules-rev2021-02.pdf> You can submit lots by sending them in an email to [NSSSAuctions@gmail.com](mailto:NSSSAuctions@gmail.com)

The last auction had some spirited bidding. Below are a couple of items that had multiple bids:



United States Panama Pacific Exposition,  
Scott 397- 401A, Used. CV: \$55.50.  
Sold for \$11.00.



1948 vintage album in like new condition.  
The kit contains the album, two postcards,  
Dennison hinges and an instruction  
sheet. Value unknown. Sold for \$23.00.



Bhutan phonograph stamps, in mint  
condition. This is a rare full set. 2022  
cataloged at \$461.50.  
Sold for \$30.00.

## March Quiz: American Horses and Riders

By Eric Moody

Many U.S. stamps have depicted horses and their riders. Some of these issues are featured here.

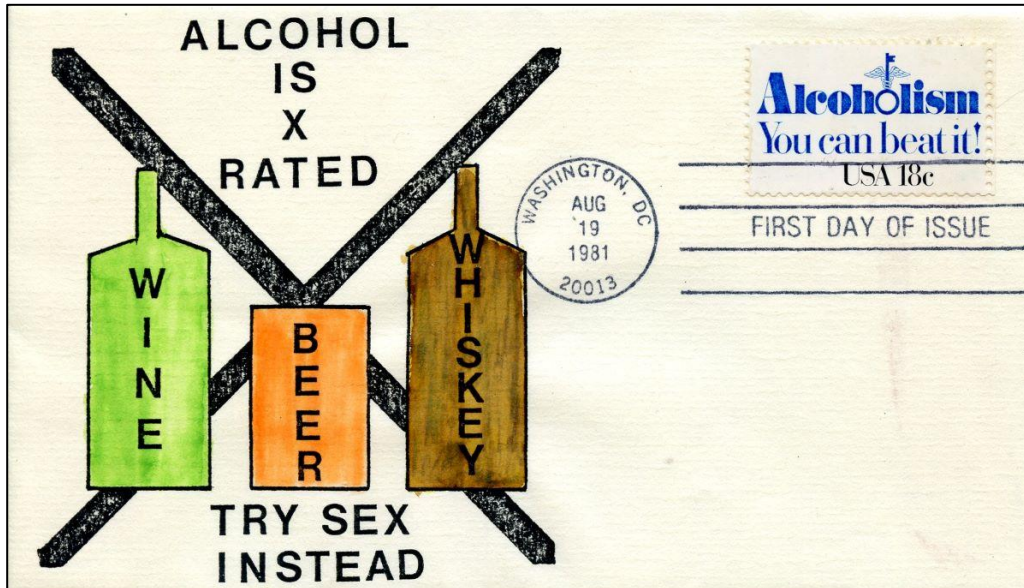
1. The first appearance of a horse on a U.S. stamp, in 1869, showed it as:  
(a) Columbus's horse (b) a plow horse (c) a post horse (d) the mount of an Indian hunting buffalo
2. A strikingly artistic stamp of 1974 featured this famous rider.  
(a) Paul Revere (b) Pony Express rider (c) Lady Godiva (d) Headless Horseman
3. This sculpture by famed artist of the Old West Frederic Remington appeared on a 1981 with Scott #1934.  
(a) A Dash for Timber (b) Coming Through the Rye (c) The Bronco Buster (d) The Stampede
4. A hero of the Spanish American War of 1898, he and his horse are depicted on a 1948 commemorative. He is:  
(a) Stephen Crane (b) Theodore Roosevelt (c) Nelson A. Miles (d) Bucky O'Neill
5. American horses are featured in a four stamp 1985 set with Scott #2155-2158. Which of these is not shown?  
(a) Quarter Horse (b) Mustang (c) Morgan (d) Appaloosa
6. Stamp Scott #4680 in 2012 depicts this equine character from Disney-Pixar's animated film *Toy Story 2*.  
(a) Horace Horsecollar (b) Major (c) Bullseye (d) Pegasus
7. A Rural America set from 1973-74 includes a stamp with Scott #1505 showing horse-drawn buggies at this type of event.  
(a) state fair (b) Chautauqua (c) barn raising (d) Easter egg hunt
8. A stagecoach shown on a 1990 stamp with Scott #2448 that commemorates a classic Western movie starring this actor.  
(a) Gary Cooper (b) Randolph Scott (c) Tom Mix (d) John Wayne
9. The large Civil War set of 1995 includes a stamp with Scott #2975 I featuring this Confederate general on his horse.  
(a) Stand Watie (b) Robert E. Lee (c) Nathan Forrest (d) Stonewall Jackson
10. Horses shown on the 1958 stamp (Sc. #1120) that celebrates the centennial of this mail service.  
(a) parcel post (b) Pony Express (c) Overland Mail (d) express mail
11. Sporting Horses in a 1993 set (Scott #2756-2759) depict all the following activities except:  
(a) harness racing (b) endurance racing (c) steeplechase (d) polo
12. Horses and a covered wagon shown in the background on a 1973 stamp (Scott #1487) that honors this writer most closely associated with the Great Plains and the West.  
(a) Edna Ferber (b) Zane Grey (c) Wallace Stegner (d) Willa Cather

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](mailto:postboyquiz@renostamp.org)

**February quiz (Hats) answers:** 1. c, 2. b, 3. c, 4. d, 5. a, 6. c, 7. d, 8. b, 9. b, 10. c, 11. d, 12. b.

## Hand-painted Unique First Day Cover Cachet

This 1981 Alcoholism FDC was found in Dick Dreiling's estate donation to the club. The card was inside the cover with information on the subject. The cachet was printed then hand-painted with watercolor.



Close up of the cachet maker's mark on the back.

The name "Which Craft" probably refers to a small, independent First Day Cover cachet line, but it's one of the more obscure makers—so obscure that it does not appear in the major public indexes of cachet producers. The available evidence points to it being a short-run. This cover is marked as 1 of 11 made.

Because "Which Craft" is not a mainstream cachet line the best way to track it normally is through cachetmaker directories and collector-maintained indexes. The American First Day Cover Society's official directory (Jan. 2024 edition) lists active cachetmakers by trade name and real name, but "Which Craft" does not appear in the directory.

This suggests the maker is no longer active, or they never registered with AFDCS. When a cachet line is not documented in the major indexes, it typically falls into one of these categories:

1. Local or event-specific maker (Someone who produced cachets for a single stamp issue, e.g., a local historical society, a club, or an individual artist).
2. Short-run personal project who created a handful of hand-drawn or printed covers for their own use or for a small circle of collectors.
3. Unregistered commercial experiment - A small business that tried producing cachets briefly but never reached the scale to be indexed.

Contact the editor if you find any information on the cachet maker.

ALCOHOLISM is a disease which can strike anyone at any time. A symptom of alcoholism is an abnormal and persistent desire to drink excessive amounts of alcohol. Some of the effects of alcoholism are brain damage and cirrhosis of the liver. Alcoholism can be treated only if the individual concerned recognizes that he or she has a problem.

Copy number 1 of 11 copies.

