

2023 WESTPEX

By John Walter

One of the largest stamp shows on the west coast (65 dealers and about 265 exhibit frames) ended on April 30. At least five members of our local stamp club attended. I attended the Ryukyu Philatelic Specialist Society (member) meeting with a discussion on conservation for early Ryukyu postal history items. Interesting that one can purchase an early cover for \$20 and spent a couple of hundred dollars to remove tape marks and other acid destroying marks to increase the value; but does that cover the conservation cost? Sometimes!

The Collectors Club sponsored two seminars including the one I attended on "Constructing an Award-Winning One Frame Exhibit on a Budget." I hope to put that information to use for a future exhibit. A great history lesson on the "VJ Day in Tokyo Bay" was presented by Steve Shay from the Saginaw Chapter of the Universal Ship Cancellation Society (member) showing covers canceled on Sept. 2, 1945, from 58 of the 255 ships present around the Tokyo Bay area.

Dave Gehringer and I represented our club at the meeting of the Northern California Council of Philatelic Societies since our club is a member.

As with the last few WETSPEX shows I like to show-and-tell a few items I purchased. This year I found a few inexpensive aerogrammes addressed to overseas destinations. The first one was found in a dollar box of covers. It was mailed by a USAF TSGT., APO New York 09179 (RAF Lakenheath, UK) to Dundee, Angus, Scotland using an aerogram canceled on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Staten Island*, WAGB-278.

Research on the USCGC *Staten Island* revealed it was a Wind-class icebreaker commissioned in 1944 and almost immediately transferred to the Soviet Union (named *Severnny Veter*) under the WWII lend lease program. The vessel was returned to the U.S. in 1951 and in 1952 was renamed the *Staten Island*. She was involved in many icebreaking voyages first in Antarctic then in the Arctic based in Seattle.

As you can see by the cachet, in 1971 she was part of Operation DeepFreeze in the Arctic. She was decommissioned in 1974.

The second aerogram was a personal letter from Norene Card in Midland, MI to a couple in West Germany mailed June 12, 1971.

I also purchased two other aerogrammes addressed to Italy in 1971 and Moscow, U.S.S.R. also in 1971. These aerogrammes will be shown at a future club presentation.

John Walter collects U.S. used postal stationery, U.S. navy hospital ship covers, Japan, and U.N.

