

# San Jose Stamp Club

APS Chapter 0264-025791

Founded 1927, Club show since 1928

January 2023

## 2023 Club Officers\*

### President

\*Brian Jones ..... 408 300 3377  
[bfj39@yahoo.com](mailto:bfj39@yahoo.com)

### Vice President

\*David Occhipinti ..... 408 723 0122

### Secretary

\*Dave Gilman ..... 408 264 1953  
[Sanjosegilman@gmail.com](mailto:Sanjosegilman@gmail.com)

### Treasure

\*Andy Hilton ..... 408 377 1442  
[Papa\\_hilton@yahoo.com](mailto:Papa_hilton@yahoo.com)

### Webmaster/Newsletter

Jim Steinwinder ..... 408 644 4090  
[calcps@aol.com](mailto:calcps@aol.com)

### SJSC Blog

Ron Biell ..... 408 323 8702  
[Rbiell-dsl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Rbiell-dsl@sbcglobal.net)

## Filatellic Fiesta 2022

### Chairman

Brian Jones ..... 408 300 3377  
[bfj39@yahoo.com](mailto:bfj39@yahoo.com)

### Bourse Chairman

Andy Hilton ..... 408 377 1442  
[papa\\_hilton@yahoo.com](mailto:papa_hilton@yahoo.com)

### Awards Chairman

Open

### Club Email

[sanjosestampclub@gmail.com](mailto:sanjosestampclub@gmail.com)

### Club Website

[www.sanjosescc.com](http://www.sanjosescc.com)

### Club Blog

[www.sjscblog.net](http://www.sjscblog.net)

### Filatellic Fiesta Website

[www.filatellicfiesta.com](http://www.filatellicfiesta.com)

### Correspondence:

San Jose Stamp Club  
981 Shadow Brook Dr.  
San Jose, CA 95120



the San Jose Stamp  
Club on Facebook



## Happy New Year

Another year had passed and we begin a new year. 2022 wasn't too bad as the pandemic subsided and things began to return to some form of normal. If you are like most people you begin the year with hopes and expectations and probably some resolutions. Resolutions is a fancy word for goals and everyone should have goals in one form or another.

As I think back on the last couple of years I have had some major upheavals in my life. The return of cancer, a stroke, sciatica, blood clot in the left leg and a move from San Jose to Sacramento. All were stressful and have been dealt with. I am back in remission, the stroke was dealt with quickly and I have few side effects and Sacramento is becoming more comfortable. The sciatica is gone as I have lost a lot of weight and I am taking some new meds for the blood clot. But I do miss San Jose. What I regret most is that I was not able to be more involved with the club. Being a long distance member limits the ability to have a more active role in club activities.

I digress since I was talking about goals. I think the club should set some goals this year, suggestions as follows,

1. We need more members to replace members we have lost and spread the work load.
2. We should work to find a better venue and grow the show.
3. Re-establish Filatellic Fiesta as one of the few West Coast WSP shows with exhibits again.
4. Restart the social functions we have skipped the last few years, Summer picnic and Christmas dinner.
5. Expand the Social Functions where possible, Special outings where there is a common interest.
6. Re-establish a regular program of presentations.
7. In-person meetings. Re-kindle the personal connection.

I'm sure there are many more goals we could set. The goals I have suggested is a good amount of work. The club has done all this in the past and if we work together we can do it again.

For presentations, I have 6 ½ hours of video presentations on the website and 5 more hours not on the website. With all the new members we could re-show some of the videos and I can make some more new ones. There is at least 1 or 2 new ones that have not been shown.

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## Club Blog & Website

**Blog Updates** No Activity

### Website Updates

December 2022 newsletter uploaded

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## Remember the dates!

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### President's Message

A New Year and time to start planning ahead. I wrote last month about wanting to focus on "growth and engagement". Let's take this to the next level of detail this month.

Obviously, we're a STAMP club, so the goal is to keep our activities focused on stamps. We have an extraordinary level of philatelic knowledge and experience in our somewhat small club.

One attraction to larger stamp clubs is the opportunity to purchase stamps from other members during club auctions. That doesn't work for a smaller club like us. However, we do have something most other clubs don't – our own club inventory. There are several million stamps in sorted glassines for members to look through to find stamps to compliment their collection. While the

club inventory doesn't have rare and exotic varieties, but it does include a deeper variety that one might expect. There are stamps that are more difficult to find than their catalog value represents. Any member can stop by my home and look through the boxes or check-out the box and take it home. It has not been necessary to set hard rules on how much to pay for the stamps one takes as everyone who has taken advantage of this has always been very generous to the club. Let's keep that tradition going. Anything you can add to the organization of the box is appreciated.

Something I want to try to grow the club is reaching out to those on our mailing list that live reasonably nearby. I'm proposing that we consider mailing our club brochure out to people who live with-in 10-12 miles and invite them to visit the club. I'd like to include in that invitation a speaker program. So, please consider offering to give a talk later this year.

Part of being a member of a club is to have fun and enjoy each other's comradery. It is expected that we will be able to return to social events in 2023 with the pandemic with wanning. I hope to return to having a summer picnic and Christmas party along with other social gatherings. Perhaps we'll be able to do some non-philatelic activities just because it's something we enjoy. Help organizing these activities is greatly appreciated.

Our club is what WE make it. Please consider how you can contribute.

*Brian*

## Club News

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### Johnny Kochever Memorial

Our club member and good friend Johnny Kochever will be laid to rest on Sunday January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:00pm. The service will be held at the American Legion Hall at 1504 Minnesota Ave. (It was previously reported to be on Saturday, but that was incorrect.)

The majority of Johnny's extensive collection is being donated to the Western Philatelic Library. Exactly they will handle has not yet been determined. The family has already made a generous donation of stamps and collecting supplies to the SJSC.

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### Important: Club Address Change

It is important that everyone stop using the PO Box we've used for years. It has been closed and mail will to it will be returned. The club will now use my home address:  
981 Shadow Brook Dr, San Jose, CA 95120

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### Help Required: Filatelic Fiesta

January 2023: This was run in the December newsletter, but no response was received. It is urgent that we rally together and make our annual show a reality.

Filatelic Fiesta was a success this year. Nevertheless, it is time for new leadership. It is just too much to lead both the club and show and make both of them the successful and engaging event we are capable of hosting. Our bourse chairman Andy Hilton is also stepping aside after several years of terrific work. He will remain as our treasurer.

Please give serious consideration to taking on being the show chairman or bourse chairman. You'll get plenty of support and coaching from Andy and I. Please give me a call to discuss either of these jobs in more detail. It is essential we fill these jobs to have a show in 2023. These are "do-able" jobs, especially when you're not busy trying to two things at once. You can do this, so please speak up.

## USPS Gets Festive With a Lunar New Year Stamp

### What:

The U.S. Postal Service will commemorate the Lunar New Year in San Francisco with the unveiling of the Year of the Rabbit Forever stamp.

The first-day-of-issue event for the stamp is free and open to the public. News of the stamp is being shared with the hashtags **#LunarNewYear** and **#LunarNewYearRabbit**.

### Who:

The Honorable Derek Kan, governor, U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors

The Honorable London N. Breed, mayor, San Francisco

The Honorable Fiona Ma, state treasurer, California

Jay Xu, director, Asian Art Museum

### When:

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023, at 11 a.m. PST

### Where:

[Asian Art Museum](#)  
200 Larkin Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102

### RSVP:

Dedication ceremony attendees are encouraged to RSVP at: [usps.com/lunarnewyearrabbit](https://usps.com/lunarnewyearrabbit).

### Background:

The Postal Service will issue the latest Lunar New Year stamp celebrating the Year of the Rabbit. This stamp design calls to mind the elaborately decorated masks used in the dragon or lion dances often performed in Lunar New Year parades. This three-dimensional mask depicting a rabbit is a contemporary take on the long tradition of paper-cut folk art crafts created during this auspicious time of year. The rabbit mask design incorporates colors and patterns with symbolic meaning.

Art director Antonio Alcalá designed the stamp and the pane with original art by Camille Chew.



The Year of the Rabbit stamp is being issued in panes of 20. It will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price.

Lunar New Year is one of the most important holidays of the year for many Asian communities around the world and is primarily celebrated by people of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Malaysian and Filipino heritage. Across these varied cultures, many traditions exist for ringing in a new year of good luck and prosperity.

Customers may purchase stamps and other philatelic products through the [Postal Store](#) at [usps.com/shopstamps](https://usps.com/shopstamps), by calling 844-737-7826, by mail through [USA Philatelic](#) or at Post Office locations nationwide.

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## Follow the Evidence One Expert's Guide to Stamp Authentication

6/21/2022

I have been in the stamp profession since 1975. This is how I have made a living for my family in all those years. More than 35 of those years were spent working for some of the major U.S. stamp auction companies, breaking up collections into saleable lots and writing the descriptions of stamps and collections for auction catalogs. This gave me a very broad knowledge and experience in both U.S. and worldwide stamps. It wasn't until the last 14 years that I devoted my work to expertizing.

I thought that my experience as an auction describer prepared me for expertizing because I had already learned to identify and to determine the authenticity and condition of stamps in order to properly describe them for the auction companies. My descriptions were going to have to stand up to possible expertization by the buyer. If they did not, the stamp would be returned for a refund, which would not please the buyer, the seller nor my employer.

What I discovered was that while my auction experience gave me many skills and the basics necessary for expertizing stamps, there was much more that I had to learn, as well as skills to be honed.

Herbert Bloch, of Mercury Stamp Co. and member of the Friedl expert committee, was a well-known expert that overlapped the early years of my career. Sadly, I never got to know him personally, but I always remember one his purported quotes: "Being a stamp expert is like being a detective." I discovered this was so true.

An expert looks at a particular stamp and uses all his experience, references and tools at his disposal to understand and tell the story of this stamp and all that has happened to it since it was issued. But more than just give an opinion about the stamp, he or she must be able to give reasons why this



opinion is true. In other words, an opinion should not just be based on a hunch or feeling, but must be supported by hard evidence. This is an approach that does not always come naturally.

I have been around “experts” who say about their opinion, “Well, it doesn’t look right,” or “That’s just my opinion.” While they may be correct, their answer is not very informative, and it does not cite evidence that others can check, and then confirm or refute.

In the United States, most of our expertizing agencies are committees of several experts giving their opinion. If on the worksheet the expert simply states “Reperforated,” without giving reasons for his opinion, others, who may not agree, have no basis to check his opinion. Maybe several experts say a stamp is reperforated, but unless evidence is given, all you have is consensus. However, contrary to popular belief, a consensus does not prove that something is true. Stamps should not be expertized by taking a vote because a majority can easily be wrong. What shows that the opinion is true is the evidence.

This is exactly what a detective does when he goes out to solve a criminal case. He uses the knowledge, experience, and tools at his disposal to find the perpetrator. When he has built the case to a conclusion, he turns the evidence over to the prosecutor. The prosecutor evaluates the evidence and, if sufficient, takes the suspect to trial. What the stamp expert does is to play the part of the detective and give an opinion supported by the evidence. Then, the expertizing agency evaluates the opinions and determines what is to be said on the certificate. When the submitter gets the stamp back, he or she may conclude that the experts got it wrong. The client has the right of appeal, but the only successful appeal is to cite evidence why the certificate is wrong. Experts make mistakes, sometimes through carelessness, sometimes because they don’t have the proper information or knowledge, but evidence is always the determining factor.

There are many things that the expert determines and the certificate states. Some are more easily ascertained than others. These include: the proper identification of the stamp by catalog number; the specific shade of the stamp; whether the stamp is unused or used; if unused whether the gum is original; if original whether it has been hinged; if used, is the cancel genuine? Has the stamp been altered to either improve its condition or to try to deceive others into believing it is a more valuable or a different stamp than it really is? What is the condition of the stamp? Has the stamp been damaged and what is the nature of the damage?

As you can see, on any given stamp there are many determinations to be made. But in every decision, it is the evidence that holds sway. For example, one expert says the stamp is never hinged. A second expert says that he sees a spot that looks disturbed, like it has been brushed to make it look never hinged. This second expert explains what he sees and identifies exactly where the spot is, then gives what evidence he has even if it is nothing more than, “see how the gum is disturbed and has an unusual texture in that spot.” Then others can evaluate and determine whether his evidence is good or there is some other explanation for its appearance.

Let's look at an expertizing issue that experts spend a lot of time on. This is reperforation. New perforations or fake perforations are applied to stamps for a lot of reasons. It may be that the stamp originally had a natural straight edge, which might be considered less desirable, or it has damaged perforations, or perhaps is not beautifully centered. One thing that is often done is to take imperforate coils or imperforate sheet stamps, which might be inexpensive, and perforate them to create fake coils. There are many coil issues where I see as many or more fakes as genuine examples, especially when the materials to make them are cheap and readily available, and the profits are high if the fraud is successful..

The first thing to know is what real perforations are like. (I will discuss U.S. perforations only. Foreign stamps have some differences, but reperforating is not as much a problem as it is with U.S. stamps.)

A rotary perforating machine was normally used on the stamps where reperforating is a problem. This machine had wheels with pins in them to punch out the perforation holes. Several wheels were spaced out to put a row of perforations between each row of stamps on the sheet. The stamps were run through the machine in one direction to apply the vertical perforations, and then turned sideways and run through again to apply the horizontal perforations. This is known as line perforating. The pins on the wheels that put in each individual hole could be spaced apart at different intervals.

Some stamps were done with very closely spaced perforation holes and others widely spaced. The perforation gauges that we use are numbered by the number of pins with measurements of two centimeters. So, a stamp perforated 12 has 12 holes per 2 centimeters; a perf. 10 has 10 holes per two centimeters, etc. The gauge experts use to measure perforations is the United States Specialist Gauge by Kiusalas. It is very accurate and designed for United States stamps only.

Because the pins are on a wheel that is rotating, each pin meets the paper at an angle and comes out of the paper with an equal angle in the opposite direction. This phenomenon produces holes with certain characteristics that reperforators find very hard to duplicate. First, the holes are very slightly oval (not round) in the direction of the perforation. So vertical perforation holes will look slightly taller than they are wide, and the horizontal perforations will look wider than they are tall.

Secondly, when the pin first goes into the paper at this angle, the pin often doesn't cut cleanly and pulls the paper on one side of the hole. Furthermore, when the pin comes out of the hole at the other angle it pushes against the edge of the hole raising up the paper on the opposite side of the hole from the above pulled side. This is called a pressure ridge. Thus, ideally, a genuine vertical perforation will have a rather roughly pulled cut at the top of the hole and a pressure ridge at the bottom of the hole. This can be reversed depending on whether the top or bottom of the sheet was fed into the machine first. Horizontal perforations will have the pulls and ridges at the sides of the holes rather than top and bottom. One final point: on the sides of the slightly oval holes, the pins make a nearly vertical cut of the paper that in a way rounds the paper into the hole. In other words, the cut is not sharply sheared, nor is the edge beveled.

All of these features are more or less prominent depending on the issue of the stamps and the perforation gauge used. Perf. 10 and 11 show pressure ridges better than perf. 12. Regardless, some individual stamps will show these features better than others depending on their freshness and how they have been handled. Mint stamps with original gum will show these features better than used stamps that have been soaked and pressed. But all genuine perforations will be consistent with these features, even when the features are mostly muted.

Before we look at the evidence for reperforating, let me note that it takes a lot of practice and examination of genuine perforations on many different issues of stamps before you become efficient and accurate in recognizing both genuine perforations and reperforations. Also, I use 30x magnification to examine perforations (I have a bi-ocular lab scope). Under this magnification I often use oblique lighting to highlight the pressure ridges or lack of them.

So, what are the indicators and evidences of reperforating?

I make a distinction between indicators and evidence. When I get a stamp to examine, I first just look at it without magnification to see if I detect anything unusual about it. Early on in my career I was often amazed that I could look at a stamp from the face and be pretty sure it was regummed before I looked at the gum. There is sometimes a “mint bloom” that original gum stamps have that is lost when the stamp is soaked and regummed. This is an example of an indicator. It is not evidence. It is simply a sense one gets after looking at many stamps that something is wrong. The expert has not done his job if he bases his opinion on just an indicator.

In reperforating, some indicators might be: one side that looks different than the other sides; the ends of the perforations are in a perfectly straight line or clipped off rather than torn apart as stamps usually are separated; the perforations are crooked or unevenly spaced. These examples are indicators because there might be another reason for their appearance other than reperforating (though if there is real hard evidence that the stamp is actually reperforated these indicators may be confirming evidence).

Indicators tell the expert to pay special attention to a particular side because something doesn't look right. However, if an expert makes a call based on just an indicator, he or she runs a serious risk of making a wrong call.



**Figure 1. This block of Scott 262 with wobbly vertical perforations might seem to be reperforated, but is actually just an extreme example of a “wild” perf hole, made when the pins are not properly secured in the perforating wheel.**



As an example, look at the illustration of the block of four shown (Figure 1). I am sorry it is such a poor reproduction of a block of the \$2 James Madison of 1898 (Scott 262). I've kept this photocopy because it reminds me that sometimes things are not what they seem.

Note the center vertical perforations. They wobble all over the place. This is a product of not having the pins properly secured in the perforating wheel. It is rare to find such a dramatic example of this. Usually, one encounters just a single pin or two that is loose, causing a misaligned hole (known as a "wild" perf. hole). I can guarantee you that if these stamps were separated into singles and submitted for expertizing separately from each other you would have a very difficult time obtaining a certificate that does not state "reperforated." Yet, as bad as these perforations look, they are genuine and there is no other confirming evidence that they are reperforated. In fact, they are so bad that one could argue that it is unlikely a reperforator would have done such a poor job.

So, what do I do when I check the perforations of a stamp? First, I look down all the perforations on each side with 30x magnification. If all the perforations show the genuine characteristics I described earlier, then I gauge each side with the specialist gauge. This measurement should match the known perf. gauge with which that particular issue was perforated. There's one caveat: stamp paper can shrink after perforating for reasons in its manufacture and subsequent handling. So, all perf. 12 stamps may not gauge a perfect perf. 12, but opposite sides should gauge the same. So, if the right side of the stamp gauges a bit long or short of the perfect gauge, the left side should gauge at the same amount. This doesn't mean that if the right and left measure a bit off that the top and bottom must also be off. Often the grain of the paper will cause a stamp to shrink in one direction and not the other. Now, if the stamp looks proper with genuine characteristics and gauges correctly, I conclude it is not reperforated and the perforations are genuine.



**Figure 2. From top, a genuine Scott 413, a faked Scott 413, and another genuine 413. The center example is the imperf 482 with fake perforations added to masquerade as the more valuable 413. Note the perfectly round vertical perfs, compared to those seen in the genuine examples, and the sheared appearances of the edges.**

What then is the evidence that a stamp has been reperforated? Here is a list of some of the things to consider:

1. The holes are perfectly round (Figure 2).
2. The edges of the holes are sheared or have beveled cuts rather than the edges being rounded into the hole.
3. The perforations are lacking pressure ridges. (Note that these first three points often go together.)
4. The insides of the holes have been artificially scraped or roughed up to hide a sheared edge. They look unnaturally chewed.
5. The holes on one side are fresher than the other sides. This shows up on earlier used stamps where the perforations have patina or faint soiling. Reperforating removes the patina, and holes look more freshly cut.
6. Graphite or some other blackening substance is on the inside of the holes. This is done to hide the freshness and sharpness of the cuts.
7. The perforated tips have been filed so the ends of the perforations are unnaturally thinned out to the tip, which shows when back lighted or dipped in watermark fluid. This is sometimes done to hide the evidence that a straight edge has been reperforated. It should be noted that any unnatural feature, such as filing, scraping or blackening, is prima facia evidence that the stamp has been altered from its original state.
8. One side gauges significantly different than the opposite side.
9. Perforation holes are erratic and have poor alignment or spacing of the holes. The block illustrated in Figure 1 shows that there should be other confirming pieces of evidence that this is really evidence of reperforating.
10. reperforating was done by punching the holes from the back of the stamp. This is often done to get the front to show pressure ridges. Genuine perforations are always punched into the front of the stamp.

I have listed a number of things to look for and I am sure there are more that could be mentioned. This is why it is really important to be familiar with genuine perforations. The more familiar you are with the genuine, the more the features of the fakes will stick out. On stamps perforated on all four sides, the expert always has four sides to compare with each other. Usually, such stamps are reperforated on only one or two sides. By comparing, the expert is looking for anything out of place or unusual. Collectors can learn to do this. Coils with fake perforations do not have any genuine perforations to compare so you need a reference of genuine coils of the specific issue. However, the evidence that we look for is the same in both reperforation and fake perforation.

I will conclude with one further thought. You might get the idea that once you have learned all this, identifying reperforating should be pretty easy. It's not. Sure, there are some that are pretty obvious and without doubt, but that is not always the case. The good expert, like the good detective, must compile the evidence, such that he or she can discover, then decide whether this is sufficient to make a finding that may ruin the value of the stamp.

I have always tried to follow the principle that the evidence must be convincing, and there are times when I have to write on the worksheet that I don't like the perforations on a particular side, but it is not clear and convincing to me that it is reperforated. I am not willing to kill a stamp on a feeling, and I am committed to following the evidence. If it is not really there, I don't want to make foolish judgments. I always try to give the stamp the benefit of the doubt and demand hard evidence to give an adverse opinion.

## The Author

Rex Bishop lives in Southwest Michigan with his precious wife, Cindra, of 55 years. Both he and Cindra love collecting Michigan Postal History. He currently expertizes stamps for The Philatelic Foundation and Professional Stamp Experts. He gives opinions on mostly United States stamps, but also expertizes stamps from a broad range of foreign countries. One of his specialties is United States grilled stamps and he has authored an article in the Collector Club Philatelist, Vol. 99, No. 4, entitled "1868 Production Grills: Why Size Matters."

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## Continued from page 1

The more pressing problem at the moment is the annual show. To have a successful show in November, we have to start now. We need to secure the venue and contact dealers. Dealers have to plan their travel and shows they intend to participate in well in advance. These are not difficult jobs and we have members in the club that can assist. These 2 jobs fall on the show chairman and the bourse chairman. The job of signing dealers is done primarily thru mass mailing. All the forms pretty much stay the same year to year and many of the dealers are repeat every year. This is not rocket science, just good organization and attention to details. Consider taking on one of these 2 jobs, there is plenty of help available. Before my move to Sacramento, I assisted with bourse and show planning. It was not difficult and little or no learning curve. If I can do it, anybody can.

Other areas of concern are hospitality, club sales, auction and reception. Some of the new members have already worked reception. Hospitality is fairly straight forward. Biggest job is making sure we have coffee made and snacks laid out. Engaging with the guests is enjoyable, promoting the hobby and the club. We usually get a new member or 2 from hospitality. Club sales and auction are major sources of revenue for the club. The auction is the more detailed of the 2 but still not difficult. Auction has to be organized in advance because all the items in the auction go up on the show website in advance. But I have handled that for the last few years and I plan to help in that area again.

The club show is the single most important event for the club every year. It is the largest source of revenue and where the club gets the most exposure. Please consider getting involved quickly as the clock is ticking.

## A Visit with Clarence Robert Tower

One of the privileges of being club president is the opportunity to meet interesting people who contact the club with a variety of inquiries and requests. One of the most fascinating people I've gotten to meet is Clarence Robert Tower. He's 94 years old and contacted the club as he wanted to share his style of stamp collecting. Clarence is known to his friends as Bob and he's in his long life he's an artist, writer, and local historian. Bob's latest publication is "Legendary Locals of Santa Clara". When I visited his home, it is wallpapered with his own original art which covers express an interesting assortment of styles and subjects. Since I foolishly forgot to take photographs of his art, you'll have to look it up on-line. To find him, he recommends searching his full name.



Bob has a unique take on stamp collecting. What he does is very unconventional and it could inspire someone to take their own collecting into a new style. As you see in images, he makes a page(s) on a country using stamp images that he finds are most representative of the country's history, culture, natural wonders, and art. He occasionally includes non-stamp images of things like flags. Also, overlapping images is a no-no for philatelists, but I still like seeing a new style. While his style might not be what you want to do, I hope you'll enjoy seeing these images. If anybody is interested, speak up to see many of the other pages.





# San Jose Stamp Club

APS Chapter 0264-025791

Founded 1927, Club show since 1928

January 2023

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## Club Member/Dealers

### Richard Clever

Asia Philatelics, P.O. Box 730993, San Jose, CA 95173-0993

Phone: (408) 238-0893 Fax: (408) 238-2539 Email: [richard@asiaphilatelics.com](mailto:richard@asiaphilatelics.com)

Web Site: [www.asiaphilatelics.com](http://www.asiaphilatelics.com)

(China, Asia, Ireland, Japan)

### Ron Biell

Euro-Asian Stamps, P.O. Box 20562, San Jose, CA 95160

Phone: (408) 323-8702 Fax: (408) 323-8702 Email: [rbiell-dsl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rbiell-dsl@sbcglobal.net)

Web Site: [www.eurasiastamps.com](http://www.eurasiastamps.com)

(China, Japan, Baltics, Russia, W. Europe, Covers Worldwide)

### Doug Gary

Douglas Gary, P.O. Box 457, Campbell, CA 95009

Phone: (408) 274-3939 Email: [doug\\_gary@hotmail.com](mailto:doug_gary@hotmail.com)

(USA & Worldwide Postal History, Stamps, Autographs, Postcards)

### Deepak Jaiswal

Stampbay, Inc, PO Box 50848, Palo Alto, CA 94303

Phone: (650) 387-3885 Fax: (650) 561-4044 Email: [info@stampbay.com](mailto:info@stampbay.com)

Web site: [www.stampbay.com](http://www.stampbay.com)

(India including India used abroad)

### Walt Kransky

Walts Postcards

Web Site: [www.thepostcard.com](http://www.thepostcard.com) Email: [wrsky@att.net](mailto:wrsky@att.net)

(philatelic material, covers, postcards)

### Gary Morris

Pacific Midwest Co., PO Box 730818, San Jose, CA 95173

Phone: (408) 532-7100 Email: [garyucb@aol.com](mailto:garyucb@aol.com)

[www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com), Seller Name: garyucb

(Hawaii Stamps & Covers, Other Worldwide Stamps, Linder and Lighthouse Stamp Supplies)

### Denis Norrington

Arrow Stamp Company, San Francisco, California.

Phone: [415-425-6683](tel:415-425-6683) Email: [denis@arrowstamp.co](mailto:denis@arrowstamp.co) Web site: [www.arrowstamp.com](http://www.arrowstamp.com)

(Worldwide Stamps and collections)