
I may not have found the translation for all our members but I hope each of you realize that the officers of Rossica do wish that all of you have the Best of a New Year and that each of you realize the goals that you have set for yourselves. May you have good health as well as your family and friends.

This is going to be a uniquely large issue of the Bulletin. There is just so much information to let you, our members, know about that we cannot limit this issue to the usual 8 pages. I will advise you to read the minutes of the Annual Meeting. A lot of the news that I might have made into special articles for the Bulletin are in the minutes. As dull as it may be to read, at least I don’t have to write up a second article for you to read.

However a quick summary might help.

- The Constitution changes passed.
- We made changes to the PayPal fee to cut down the number of levels.
- We have a new Membership Chairman. He is Alexander Safonoff and a welcome addition to the officer ranks.
- Our next Annual Meeting will be held in Santa Clara, CA in June, 2009 in conjunction with the ASDA Show.
- We will be having our own all Russian and related-areas exhibition at the same time at the annual meeting called ROSSICAPEX 2009. (See the announcement elsewhere in the Bulletin)

No! Your eyes did not deceive you. Rossica is working with the American Stamp Dealers’ Association and we are actually having our own exhibit. Rossica was approached at CHICAGOPEX in 2007 to see if we were interested in holding an exhibition and meeting at the Santa Clara Show. Since our next West Coast annual meeting was scheduled for 2009, we had some quick planning meetings with the Northern California Chapter whose help was absolutely essential. Once they agreed, the officers decided to go for it. It has blossomed into an international exhibition since then. I suggest that you start marking your calendars, making your travel plans and saving your money. This show and meeting should prove to be one of the best yet. Remember that right now the airlines are starting to offer special pricing on the air rates. We are also getting block rates from the hotel thanks to ASDA. I will also be trying to get other hotels to help as well. This depends on your RSVPing and letting me know if you are coming. So speak up now and let me know.

This is also the year to elect new officers. Please consider running for an office. Each office is open for new officers and it is an all voluntary non-profit Society. Each elected officer serves for three years. Think about it.

Mike Gutter, Bulletin Editor. (michael.gutter@rossica.org)

Signing of the 2008 Vignette

Hy Lovitz, Rossica member, and Catherine Nickle, vignette artist
Annual Meeting Minutes, 2008

Our General Membership Meeting was held Saturday August 30, 2008 from 2:30 to 4:00 PM in Salon C of the Hunt Valley Marriott during BALPEX in Baltimore, Maryland.

Gary Combs had Dave Skipton introduce our speaker. Our guest speaker was long-time Rossica member Joseph J. Geraci. He spoke on the Postal Connections between Russia and Italy in the Nineteenth Century; An Exploration of Routes and Rates Involved.

Joseph first thanked Dave Skipton who translated for him and Greg Mirsky for the information that Greg supplied him from the library. A nice handout was supplied explaining all of the information presented on the screen. It was an interesting presentation of a very complex system of mail between different countries of the time. Rates varied depending on the postal treaty between countries and the exchange rate of the money used in each country. I take my hat off to a fine presentation that kept me engrossed the whole time. (One of my main interests.)

The meeting was called to order at 3:42 PM.

A vote was taken to approve the previous meeting minutes after a motion by Ed Laveroni, seconded by Michael Gutter. It carried.

A vote on the previous year’s officers’ meeting was made after a proposal by Dave Skipton and seconded by Ray Pietruszka. It carried.

Gary thanked BALPEX for the best arrangements of any show that he had attended. Mike Carski, a Co-Chairman of BALPEX and a Rossica member was in the audience of 20+ members.

Gary also thanked:

Jeff Radcliffe for being the editor of the Journal and Webmaster for the Website,
Michael Gutter for the handling of the finances,
George Shalimoff and Michael Gutter for the successful audit,
Alexander Sofonoff for becoming our new Membership Chairman as he and Jeff Radcliffe create a new data base.

Gary explained to the membership what is going on in Rossica today:
1. If you have dropped out for less than two years, you must pay your $25.00 dues and you will be reinstated with your membership number. If you dropped your membership more than two years and wish to rejoin, you will be issued your old membership number if your pay $20 per year for each year that you have dropped.
2. The results of our special election on the two changes in the constitution:
   Article II, Section 2, c. Tentative membership is open to all individuals who successfully apply. A person is considered Tentative until his/her name is published in the next Bulletin (changed from journal) and a period of ninety days (90) days has passed with no negative comments from the Regular membership.
   The change was passed with 82 responses. 80 voted for it and 2 voted against it.
   Article II, Section 2, e. Applicants shall be notified by the Secretary (changed from Treasurer) of their acceptance into or rejection by the society. The change was passed with 82 votes cast; 81 for and 1 against.
   (Only a 2/3 majority of the votes cast were needed for passage.)
3. Next year is election of officers. We need nominations from the membership.
4. The library has downloaded over 50,000 pages from analog to digital. It is cheaper to download to digital format convert to paper.
5. Rossicapex will be held next year in June at the ASDA Show at the Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, California. It is being run by Dave Skipton. The first ever Rossicapex was in 1938 in NY at the YMCA Show. (A Rossica Vignette from the show is on display.) The second show was in Belgium in1954 (also a vignette from show on display). This show next year will be the third ROSSICAPEX.

We are planning on 200 frames. Please contact Dave Skipton for exhibit information david.skipton@rossica.org. There will be three tiers of exhibits: 1) FIP 2) National (APS) 3) Gratification of owners for public interest. There will be as many dealers as possible with Russian material, a meeting room for officers, and a general membership meeting, awards dinner, and Rossica booth. Everyone is welcome.

Comments and Questions from the Floor:

Don Howard: Thanks for the Epstein Stationary Catalogue that was bought. Thanks to everyone involved.
Nikolai Sorokin: One of the advantages of belonging to Rossica is the similar interests of members, but at the present time, there is no way for the membership to know what the interests of other members are. We must make a way for the information to be available to all members.
Gary: Because of liability laws, privacy laws and the sue-happy lawyers and individuals, we have been reluctant to release that information.
Mike Carski: We need to send out a list of members, and a members’ list on our website with their permission.
Ed: All members should be sent a new member information form so that it may be compiled and put somewhere.
Hy Lovitz: Agreed we should have the new member information compiled somewhere for all to see.
Mike: The new member information is now being compiled by our new Membership Chairman Alexander Safonoff. In 6-7 months we should have it up and running on the website.
Mike Carski: Volunteered to manage collector’s interests.
Jeff: Our webmaster said OK with him.
Rein Vasara: He suggested that we make a profile or biography of a collector as his British Columbia group has done in the past.
Mike: I will put out a profile of a collector in the Bulletin. Rein offered to give her his that had been used previously.
Hy Lovitz: Mike Gutter has done a good job with the Bulletin.

It was now 4:00 PM and time to clear the room. A hasty adjournment motion was made and passed. The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by,
Ed Laveroni,
Rossica Secretary

Annual Officer’s Meeting Minutes, 2008

The officers” meeting was called to order in a suite at the Hunt Valley Marriott during BALPEX on August 24, 2008 at 2:00 PM EDT by President Gary Combs. Also present were Dave Skipton, Ed Laveroni, Michael Gutter, Ray Pietruszka, and Webster Stickney.

Old Business

1. PayPal Fees:

Michael Gutter had previously requested that the PayPal Fee Structure presented in the Analysis Report be accepted. It basically stated that members who paid less than $21 would pay a $1.00 PayPal fee; $21-$49.99 would pay a $1.50; $50-$75 would pay $3.00 PayPal fee; $75.01-$150 would pay $5.00; and over $150.00 would request a quote.

$5 would be assessed for all nonmember transactions.

There was some discussion including possibly raising dues by $5 and Rossica absorbing all fees, but there was little disagreement with Michael’s proposal.

2. Rossica Virtual Gallery

Dave Skipton’s report: The RVG is up and running. There are no technical difficulties to overcome, but time will be required for Jeff Radcliffe to plug the exhibits into the 16-page templates.

At present we have five exhibits on display, totaling 37 frames (592 pages). They are:

- Peter Michalove’s Georgia Postal History, 1920-1950 (6 frames)
- George Werbizky’s Russian Rural Posts (Zemstvo) Use of Bisected Stamp (1 frame)
- Dave Skipton’s Zek. The Soviet Slave Labor Empire and It Successors, 1917-2000 (10 frames)
- Military Censorship in Imperial Russia, 1904-1917 (10 frames)
- A Look Through the Judas Hole. The Imperial Russian Prison System and Censorship (10 frames)

We have four more exhibits totaling 24 frames (384) pages waiting to be loaded. They are:

- George Werbizky’s Ostarbeiter (10 frames)
- Thomas Berger’s Zakaznoe- Registration in Czaristic Russia (5 frames)

- Vladimir Tyukov’s History of Russian Empire Postmarks: 1782-1917 (8 frames), an exhibit that Gary solicited from a member in Russia.

The Society’s Rossica’s Vignettes, 1938-2008 (1 frame). This one can be seen at the Rossica Booth here at the show. While this exhibit will probably never be formed again (it incorporates material from three private collections and the Rossica Archives), it has been saved in digital form and will live on in the RVG.

In addition, I have firm commitments from three people to contribute exhibits: Arnold Levin (Mute Cancels), Roger Quinby (Finnish WW I War Censorship), and Howard Weinert (Imperial Siberia, Central Asia and the Caucasus). We expect to attract more exhibits in the lead up to ROSSICAPEX. While we will never equal the sheer mass of exhibits on EXPONET, we will soon exceed their selections of Russia. (End of report)

At the meeting new exhibits were added to the firm commitments. They are: Ray Pietruszka’s Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, and Ed Laveroni’s Postmarks of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Chelyabinsk to Manchzhuryia.

3. Rossica Awards Change Proposal

Ray Pietruszka reported: The purpose of the proposed change to the Rossica awards is to make them a more effective tool of the Society in promoting Russian philately. Currently there are two Rossica exhibit awards: The Rossica and President Awards. In past years we have been upgrading the Rossica awards for National meeting shows while keeping the other presentations the same. The purpose of the Rossica awards is to promote the collection and study of Russian area philately thru the recognition of quality Russian exhibits. “Russian area philately” is defined as the territories that were part of Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, and the CIS. It includes its offices, armies, zemstvos, and the independent states that existed between the World Wars. (Point of discussion-should we open it to include the “recent” independent republics?) (not discussed.)

Proposed Changes

a. Rossica Award (Plaque & Certificate) is available to WSP shows with best Russian-area exhibit. The winning exhibit must be awarded at least a vermeil in the open competition. For a WSP show hosting the Society’s National meeting, the plaque will be replaced with a small art object. (Changes are hi-lighted in blue.) (Currently a ribbon is given with the plaque.)

b. The President’s Award (Small Plaque & Certificate) is available to shows that host National and Regional Rossica Society meetings. It is awarded on the basis of imagination, innovation and eye-appeal to an exhibit winning less than a gold in the general competition.

Summary of Key Changes:

i. We add a Certificate to both awards.
ii. We formalize the upgrading of the Rossica Award from a Plaque to an Art Object. This year it is a Russian Lacquer Box.

iii. We upgrade the President’s Award from a Ribbon to a small Plaque. No more ribbons.

Proposed New Award:

At the last officers meeting it was proposed that we institute an award for literature competition. If the officers agree, Ray proposed the following:

a. **Rossica Russian Literature Award** (Certificate) - available at WSP shows with a literature competition. The winning item must be a publication that contributes to the body of knowledge of Russian philately and be awarded at least a vermeil. A qualifying exhibit may win even if it is the only Russian-area publication at the show. Journals and periodicals are not eligible.

b. **The G. B. Salisbury Award** (working title) - an internal Rossica award for the best Journal article of the year. The winner is to be selected by the (Publication Board or President or popular vote?) The award will be a certificate and will be presented at the annual membership meeting.

Summary:

We would be adding two new awards, replacing the ribbons with certificates and upgrading one award. The objective of this is to improve the Society’s presence at shows while keeping it simple for the judges.

Gary talked about how only the exhibits were given an award, but there was no service award for members doing things for the society above and beyond the normal. He felt that they deserved as much recognition as the exhibitors. No ruling was made.

Dave Skipton made a motion to approve the old business. Ray Pietruszka seconded. It was voted on and passed.

4. Membership Numbers

Michael wanted to know how to handle old members who wanted to rejoin the Society after years of not paying dues. Much discussion followed, and it was decided if a lapsed member rejoins the Society, he/she will be issued the old number if it is less than 2 years since he/she was last a member of Rossica. If it is more than two years since being a member, and the member wants to keep the old number, he/she must pay $20 a year for back dues for all the missed years beyond the first two years.

New Business

1. Proposed Budget

Michael passed out the proposed budget, and all officers present received a copy. The budget was reviewed. Gary thought the library expenses were high.

(Discussion diverted: Gary felt it was important that the Librarian make sure that the person he is dealing with is a member of Rossica. He also felt that the Librarian needs to get information to the members regarding what we have in the library. If we are paying extra money for acquisitions, a synopsis or list of library material and acquisitions would be helpful. It was mentioned that Greg has put information on the Samovar, but only a few members use this vehicle. It was thought that the Rossica Bulletin or Journal would be a better choice. Michael thought the Bulletin would be best. She asked for the officers’ approval of a report to the membership of what the Librarian has in the Library. The motion was seconded and approved. It was also moved that as much digital conversion as possible be made this year. This removes the funding of the project out of the 2009 budget making more funds available now. The motion was seconded and approved.)

The Rossicapex projected budget is between $4,000 and $4,500. It may be much more than needed. Ed pointed out that a $680 frame setup and take down will be paid by the ASDA.

Ed made a motion to approve the budget except for ROSSI-CAPEX. Dave seconded it. It passed on a voice vote.

2. Editor Needed

We need to get somebody to replace Jeff Radcliffe. He is ready to resign as editor of our Journal. He will stay on until we find a new editor.

The meeting was closed in order for the room to be cleaned for the Awards Reception later.

Cordially submitted,
Ed Laveroni,
Rossica Secretary

New Members

Welcome to Rossica! We hope you will enjoy the benefits the society has to offer including the Journal, the Bulletin, the Library, and the Website. Of course, if you have access to the Internet, the Samovar is a great source of information and I encourage you to visit it and post your questions as well any news and discoveries you may have made. We also encourage you to share your collecting interests with others. Help us grow and bring new members into Rossica.

1933 Denis Dant, Lake Oswego, OR, USA
1934 Richard Clever, San Jose, CA, USA
1935 George Tarnowski, Lansdale, PA, USA
1936 Nikolai Krylov, Cambridge, MA, USA
1937 Vladimir Antropov, Ames, IA, USA
1938 Chris Ceremuga, Sydney South, New South Wales
1939 Buel Boaz, Bakersfield, CA, USA
1940 Roberto Molteni, Canzo, Italy
1490 James Reichman, Colorado Springs, CO, USA
1943 Andres Schlichter, Buenos Aires, Argentina
1946 Jan Kaptein, Maarsen, Netherlands
1947 Michael Astashkevich, Short Hills, NJ, USA
The following are our tentative members who will become full members within 90 days unless our regular members provide us reasonable cause why they should not become Rossica members.

1948 Michael Carski, Columbia, MD, USA
1949 Rein Vasara, Vancouver BC, Canada
1950 Guido Craveri, Lugano Switzerland
1951 Harold Ford, Stone Mountain, GA, USA
1952 Richard Weinberg, Indianapolis, IN, USA
1953 Stefan Berger, Jena, Germany
1954 Melvin Malenski, Baltimore, MD, USA
1955 Nick Kurlick, Havre De Grace, MD, USA
1956 Victor McHenry, Alexandria, VA, USA
1957 Andreas Bliersbach, Reichshof, Germany
1959 Michael Rogers, Winter Park, FL
1960 Peter Gutter, Carson City, NV, USA
1961 Raymond Kargl, Los Angeles, CA

**Odd and Unusual Covers**

by Michael Ercolini

In the Rossica Journal #151, Fall 2008, Mr. G. Werbizky showed a number of civil war issues and varieties. I thought our readers may like to see an actual somewhat unusual use of one of the stamps. This cover was sent registered from Novonikolaevskaya to Novocherkassk in June, 1919. It is an official educational correspondence.

These two covers below have been in my “unusual covers” collection for some time. One is from Archangel (ARKHANGELSK) (cover 2) and the other is from Petrograd (cover 3). Both are registered and censored at the point of origin with the identical destination. They were mailed as properly franked registered International mail in January 1917. Note the hand-stamped UB64 on one and the manuscript U Boot/U.64 on the other. Does this mean that the mail was carried by German U-boats? Since mail probably went first to Sweden (via Finland from Petrograd and possibly via Norway from Archangel), I wonder if this was by a special agreement with Sweden-Germany-Holland?
FORGERY DISCOVERED
by G. G. Werbizky

The cover with the arms-type stamp, fig. 1, appears to be genuine. The 10-kopeck rate is correct; the town of Perm machine cancellation raises no questions. There is an indistinct receiving postmark on the back of the cover, but it also raises no questions. The stamp, though, is imperforate! Nice find! However, closer examination is in order.

Fig. 1. Cover with 10-kopeck imperforate stamp.

If the stamp is in fact imperforate, then a comparison with a perforated stamp is required. The test is simple: when a perforated stamp is placed over the imperforate stamp, the borders of the imperforate stamp coincide with the edges of the covering stamp. If the imperforate stamp is smaller in the X-Y dimensions, then it is a „manufactured” item, i.e. a forgery.

In this case the imperforate stamp is clearly smaller than the perforated one and must be considered a fabrication. Unless the borders outside of the stamp image are sufficiently large and cover or even overlap the perforated stamp, one cannot accept the item as imperforate. It is therefore desirable to collect imperforate stamps at least in pairs if not in larger blocks. That is not an easy task if the issue consisted of perforated stamps and imperforates are an error.

It is peculiar that the letter originated from the “Russian Foreign Trade Bank” in the town of Perm, a respectable business establishment. Also the address of the recipient appears to be legitimate. Does the fact that the letter was mailed during the turbulent times of June 1917 have anything to do with this fabrication? Was one of the bank employees attempting to create a valuable philatelic item? Further explanation from readers is welcome.

Fig. 2. Imperforate stamp placed over perforated stamp and enlarged 400 %. The black border around the imperforate stamp was added by hand in order to show the actual size of this stamp.

Unusual Cover 3 from Petrograd (front and back)
ROSSICAPEX 2009

Sponsored by the American Stamp Dealers Association, Inc.

What: An ASDA-sponsored exhibition, ROSSICAPEX 2009, the first strictly Russian-and-related-areas exhibition in the U.S. since 1938, and the largest ever in North America. The Society will also hold its Annual General Meeting there.


Where: Santa Clara Convention Center, at the ASDA Summer Postage Stamp Show.

Please mark your calendars for this unique event and make plans to attend and support your Society! These will truly be red-letter days for Rossica; it has never attempted anything on this scale before. Thanks to the ASDA, which is supplying the facilities, providing the security, paying for the frame transportation and labor costs, footing a good portion of the bill for an Awards Banquet and arranging for the Society’s booth (all at no cost to Rossica), we have been given a golden opportunity to put on an exhibition that will dwarf anything we’ve attempted in the past. It will be a celebration of Russian and related-areas philately, a demonstration of the incredible vastness, depth and richness of these fields and a concentration of information that dozens of books and journals could not contain. With all this, as you might suspect, we are in need of volunteers, exhibitors, donations and member dealer support.
In a Samovar posting on 16 September 2009, it was stated that ROSSICAPEX would "…not be an APS or FIP-sanctioned event. If it were, we would not be able to focus exclusively on our own area. But it will place the Rossica Society on the map in a way we haven’t seen in over half a century. In terms of frame count alone, it puts us on par with some of the second-tier national shows in the U.S."

Well, events have conspired against that vision and proven a couple of the assertions wrong, and what we have going now is going to be much, much better than "Mark I."

First off, the jury has been firmed up to the point where we are confident of having five APS- and/or FIP-qualified judges. (Better yet, every one of them collects some aspect of Russian or related-areas philately!) This plus the fact that we now expect to reach 200+ exhibit frames puts us in a position undreamt of at the start of the planning for this event. On 27 November the Rossica Society submitted a formal request to the APS, asking that ROSSICAPEX 2009 be granted special, one-time World Series of Philately (WSP) status. We are now awaiting a decision from the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ) and the APS Board, and we should have the answer no later than February of next year.

What such a status would mean is this: Our Grand Award winner would be eligible to compete at the APS Champion of Champions show in 2010, and the Rossica Society would gain considerably more prestige and visibility than it would have had we run an ordinary "PEX." Regardless of our eventual status, though, exhibitors will be afforded the chance to attend a judges' critique on Sunday, June 28th, and will receive copies of the judges’ critique forms.

It was originally believed that if we were to be an APS-sponsored show we would have to open it up to exhibits that had nothing to do with our area of collecting. Not true! ROSSICAPEX 2009 will be devoted exclusively to Russia and related areas (defined as the Imperial Russian, Provisional Government, Civil War, RSFSR, Soviet Union and Russian Federation eras, plus the former republics of the Soviet Union (all periods, from Imperial times to the present), Bulgarian Classics (those produced at the EZGB in St. Petersburg), the Grand Duchy of Finland, Mongolia, the Kingdom of Poland and wars with the Soviets, Tannu Tuva and Offices Abroad).

At present we are awaiting word from the ASDA on the block rates for hotel rooms at the Santa Clara Hilton (right across from the Convention Center, where the exhibition and bourse will be held). As soon as we get that information, the exhibit application forms and Exhibition Prospectus can start going out to our prospective exhibitors. While first consideration will be given to Rossica members, we also welcome non-members with exhibits in our area, subject to available space.
Judging and Awards. Multi-frame exhibits in competition will be judged in one of eight divisions by a jury of five judges whose decisions are final and who may reclassify exhibits to benefit the exhibitors. The divisions are: Traditional, Postal History, Social Philately, Display, Revenue, Thematic, Cinderella and Single-Frame. If an exhibitor wishes to compete under APS rules for World Series of Philately exhibitions, the exhibit must be no less than two frames and no more than 10. Five medal levels will be awarded at the discretion of the judges: gold, vermeil, silver, silver-bronze and bronze. The only direct competition among the exhibits will be for the ROSSICAPEX 2009 Grand, Reserve Grand and specialty awards (the latter in accordance with the donor society criteria).

Single-frame exhibits will be judged separately using the 2005 APS/CANEJ score sheet in one of the eight divisions listed above. The same five medal levels will apply to these exhibits as well. The jury will select the best single-frame exhibit for the ROSSICAPEX 2009 One-Frame Grand Award and any other specialty awards in accordance with donor society criteria.

If you would like to participate in this outstanding show as an exhibitor, please contact me at david.skipton@rossica.org and I'll gladly send you an application form when they’re ready to go.

Other scheduled ROSSICAPEX 2009 events: One or two speaker presentations, one or two panel discussions (topics, speakers and panel members to be announced later), the unveiling of Rossica’s third vignette in the series honoring old Rossika’s greats, this one commemorating Sergey Vasil’evich Prigara, the author of the work on which much of Russian philately in the West was based, an Awards Banquet, Judges’ Critique, a Show Program that will be a collector’s item in its own right, and docent tours.

In addition, some of Rossica’s member dealers will be present and there will be a Harmer-Schau auction.

David Skipton

L: The Santa Clara Convention Center, site of the ASDA Summer Postage Stamp Show and ROSSICAPEX 2009; R: The Santa Clara Hilton, across the
The Rossica Library

Once a year, we publish the new additions to the Rossica Research Library. Below is a listing of these additions. Some are purchases. Some are donations. We thank all who have donated books and material to the Rossica Library. We especially thank Kaj Hellman and Alexander Safonoff.

Rossica Library New Arrivals 2007-2008

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Please note that the books that were written in Russian had their titles translated. Unfortunately there was not enough space on the page to provide the title both in English and in Russian. (Mike Gutter)