



## THE SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

**Bulletin 59, Summer 2017**

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### President's Message

July 4, 2017

I'm writing this to you on July 4th, so Happy Independence Day!

Your Rossica officers have been busy. We had a meeting on July 2 and covered a number of matters. First, we discussed our publications and their sales. Jeff Radcliffe, our webmaster, has been posting additional publications for sale on our website, so check them out. We also have been getting inquiries regarding other publications that some of our members and societies in related areas wish to offer to our membership. The BSRP may be offering a new handbook on Batum in the near future, and

we'll get the word out when they are ready. We discussed an index of Rossica journal articles, basically updating what was published in the past, but expanded and displayed online. We would like to make available on our website a complete set of the Bulletins, a project that Jeff and Greg Mirsky, our librarian, are working on. Our editor, Nik Sorokin, is currently preparing for publication Dick Scheper's updated handbook on Imperial perfins; that should be available in the coming months. So a lot is going on.

Membership is holding steady, and our finances are in good shape thanks to the hard work of Alexander Kolchinsky and Steve Volis.

Our annual membership meeting will be held in Ontario, California (not Canada!), at SESCAL during the weekend of October 13-15. The exact time and place of our meeting is not yet known. Check the SESCAL website for details when they post it.

We'll have several items to discuss with you, one being the idea of holding a second membership meeting at a different show each year. The goal is to promote more members getting together, since we no longer have any active local chapters, and the result would be to spread the meetings out around the country. Most likely we will not be a convening society at those mid-cycle meetings. Please let me know what you think of the idea and what you would want to see done at SESCAL and the other meetings.

Also in the works is a joint meeting of the various Eastern European societies at Chicagopex in 2019. As of now the POLONUS and ROSSICA Societies are meeting, and maybe some of the others. Once again, what would you like to see at such a gathering? What would it take for you to risk a snowstorm to attend?

In addition to the membership meeting at SESCAL, we will have a program on the early Soviet postcards of the State Tretyakov Gallery, presented by your President. I will try to keep it under 45 minutes, and don't worry, I'll be focusing on the philatelic aspects of the subject.

Get your exhibit application in ASAP (that's military for "as soon as possible") for SESCAL! Time is running out and we need your exhibits.

Being a philatelist means reading books and articles about the stamps and postal history that interest us. Currently I'm reading about the philatelic life of Agathon Faberge, written by Kaj Hellman and Jeffrey C. Stone. I'll do a full review of it in the next journal, but let me say that the photographs of his collection alone, nearly 700 of them, make the book worthwhile.<sup>1</sup>

On a sad note, we just learned from Great Britain of

the passing of Ray Ceresa -- a great philatelist, researcher, and scholar of stamps of Russia and other areas of the former Empire during the turbulent period of 1917-1923. His contributions have benefited collectors for years and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. I had known him since the early '80s, and he will be sorely missed.

That's it for now, I'm packing for a trip to Europe – a true vacation, with no phone and no internet. But don't worry, I'll track down a few stamps shops. I hope to see many of you at SESCAL in October or at one of the shows where I will be judging.

Raymond J. Pietruszka

**Rossica President**

<sup>1</sup> The book can be purchased from  
[www.stamps.fi/main.php?sivu=avaatuote&id=28837](http://www.stamps.fi/main.php?sivu=avaatuote&id=28837)

### ***New Applications to the Rossica Society***

We welcome the following new applicants with Tentative Membership into the Rossica Society. If there are no objections from the membership, they will become full members in the Society:

2137 Stephen P. Marek	ME
2138 John S. Seidl	GA
2139 Boris Belenky	NY
2140 Winston Bai Liaoning	China
2141 William Tefft	NM
2142 Brian G. Civin	South Africa
2143 Alexander Korkhov	NY
2144 Charles Colomb	Canada
2145 Maxim Antonov	NY
2146 Willis D. Shook	PA
2147 Peter Bamert	Switzerland

### **Rossica Exhibit Awards**

#### **Melbourne2017 International Stamp Exhibition, March 28-April 2**

##### **Gold**

**Dr. Andrew Cheung**, "Imperial Russian Postal Stationery Used in China"

##### **Vermeil**

**Dr. Ross Marshall**, "Poland Postage Due – Plate of the 2-value of 1919"

#### **FINLANDIA 2017, Tampere, May 24-28**

##### **Gold**

**Björn Sohrne**, "Russia and Persia Postal Relations till the 1920s"

##### **Gold**

**Hannes Westendorf**, "Postal History of Estonia during the Russian Period"

##### **Gold**

**Dr. Andrew Cheung**, "Russian Post Office in China – The Overprinted Issues 1899–1920"

##### **Gold**

**Norman Banfield**, "Russia – Censorship of Mail 1878–1920"

##### **Large Vermeil**

**Roger Quinby**, "Finnish Railway to St. Petersburg 1870–1918"

##### **Vermeil**

**Alexandr Mramornov**, "The polar stations North Pole-1 – North Pole-24"

#### **PIPEX-2017, May 12-14, Portland, OR**

##### **Large Gold**

**Dr. Ross Marshall**, "Russian Mail via Galicia to UPU (1874)"

Also, APS Medal of Excellence, Pre-1900

##### **Gold**

**Vesma Grinfelds**, "The Slogan Handstamps of Latvia: 1936-1940"

##### **Gold- Single Frame**

**Ross Marshall**, "Russian Mail to Britain 'via Hamburg'"

#### **SOUTHEASTERN STAMP EXPO-2017,**

January 26-28, Norcross, GA

##### **Large Gold**

**Roger Quinby**, "Finnish Railway to St. Petersburg 1870-1918"

Also AAPE Award of Excellence – Plan and Headings and Rossica Society Award

##### **Vermeil**

**Ray Pietruszka**, "The Dis-Union of the Soviet Union"

Also AAPE Gold Award of Honor

##### **Non-competitive**

**Roger P. Quinby**, "Finland's Short line Narrow Gauge Jokioinen Private Railway 1898-1963"

## Obituary

With deep regret we received the news that a long-term member of Rossica Reginald Hindley (membership No. 1000) passed away on June 10. Mr. Hindley, a geographer by profession, lived in England. His organizational skills were indispensable for proper functioning of both Rossica and BSRP. He collected Imperial Russia, zemstvos, and other countries. We express our sincere condolences to his wife, 4 children and 10 grandchildren.

## Minutes of the Board Meeting April 2, 2017

In attendance: Michael Gutter, Hyman Lovitz, Alexander Kolchinsky, Greg Mirsky, Ray Pietruszka, Jeff Radcliffe, Davis Skipton, Nik Sorokin, Steve Volis.

1. Alexander Kolchinsky and Steve Volis invested significant effort in finding non-paying members listed in the outdated database of the Society. Two mailing campaigns (50 and 20 letters), emails, phone calls, and other attempts to contact non-responding members resulted in the removal of non-existing members and, with the help of Jeff Radcliffe, cleaning of our database. We can report that we have 262 active paying members.

2. Our Treasurer Steve Volis presented a brief financial report. Current assets of the Society consist of \$10,260 in saving account; \$12,390 in checking account; \$300 in receivables; and \$2,240 in Paypal account, a total of \$25,190. We received \$8,000 in dues and \$1,900 in advertisement revenue, including some pre-paid ads. Printing and shipping of the last Journal cost us about \$3,600.

3. Like other philatelic Society, we suffer from decreasing membership. After an animated discussion, it has been decided that we should more broadly and energetically promote the Society in American cities with large Russian communities as well as abroad. With this in view, we need volunteers in Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, DC, and other regions to distribute Rossica materials and recruit new members at WSP and regional shows. If you wish to participate, please contact members of the Board. We are also interested to increase our membership in Russia, Ukraine, and other parts of

former USSR. In particular, our member Alexander Mramornov currently distributes "Rossica" journal in Moscow. However, we will remain an international society using English as the working language in our publications.

4. Hyman Lovitz reported that, after many attempts and lengthy negotiations, it became clear that Rossica cannot offer official expertization of philatelic material: we don't have necessary legal support, equipment, reference collection, etc. At the same time we do have "identification service." It is free for members and cost a nominal fee for non-members. This service is provided by our librarian Greg Mirsky, who also advises owners to seek formal expertization if necessary.

5. The need to have a more comprehensive Index for the Rossica journal has been discussed. Currently, it runs up to 2004 and includes only authors' names and articles' titles. Jeff Radcliffe is working on its extension to the most recent issues. We would like it to include keywords and are looking for volunteers to work on this project.

6. The position of auditor as a member of the Board is defined in our Constitution. Usually, small nonprofit organizations like ours use *ad hoc* auditors. The removal of this position from the Constitution has been discussed and tabled as requested by the President.

7. Details of our participation in SESCAL exhibit in October were discussed. We urgently need exhibitors for the show.

8. We have to increase the first year application fee for overseas members who wish to receive paper version of the Journal. It is caused by the cost of shipping.

9. All catalogs available at Valery Zagorsky store can now be purchased from the Rossica bookshop. Valery kindly agreed to donate a portion of the proceeds to support our Society.

### Announcements

- [We need volunteers to promote the Rossica Society at stamp shows.](#)
- [We need volunteers to work on detailed Index of the Journal.](#)
- [Don't discard old philatelic literature before contacting our librarian Greg Mirsky.](#)
- [Starting from the next Bulletin No. 60 we will accept members' adlets for publication in the Newsletter.](#)



You've waited a long time, so please wait a bit longer. I hope to repay."

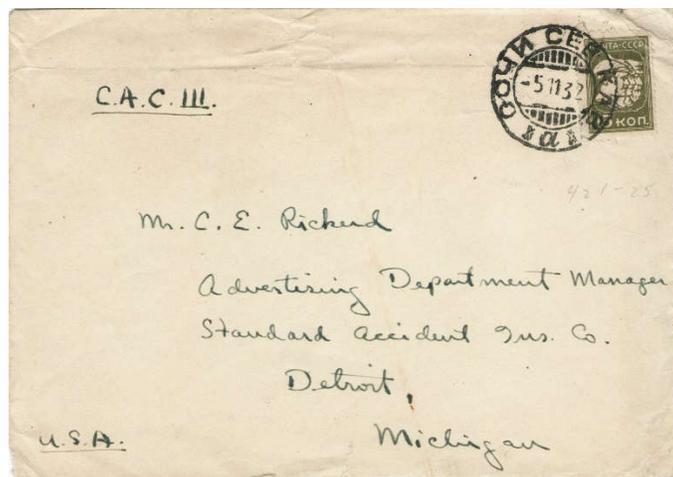
We have no way of knowing how this little drama played out, but the card does offer us a brief glimpse into the past. Reflecting on it, the old French saying comes to mind: "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" -- the more things change, the more they stay the same.

## A Postcard from American Village

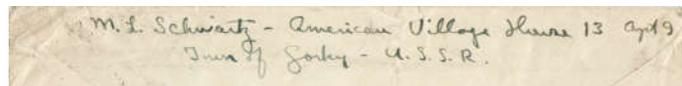
By Alexander Kolchinsky

In his article "The Early Days of the Avtozavod" (Rossica Vol. 164, pp. 58-61) Ivo Steijn briefly told general and postal history of the car factory built in Nizhny Novgorod (renamed Gorky in 1932) with the help of American firms. I would like to supplement his article with two related items from my collection.

The first one is a cover sent by one M.L Schwartz 5 November 1932 from Sochi, where he probably spent his vacation, to an insurance company in Detroit. American workers were entitled to generous benefits, including a 30 day vacation.



The most interesting detail is that he wrote his return address on the reverse as "American Village" in Gorky. Taking into account that Nizhny Novgorod was renamed "Gorky" on October 7, just 30 days earlier, it is evident that Mr. Schwartz was well acquainted with the realities of Soviet life.

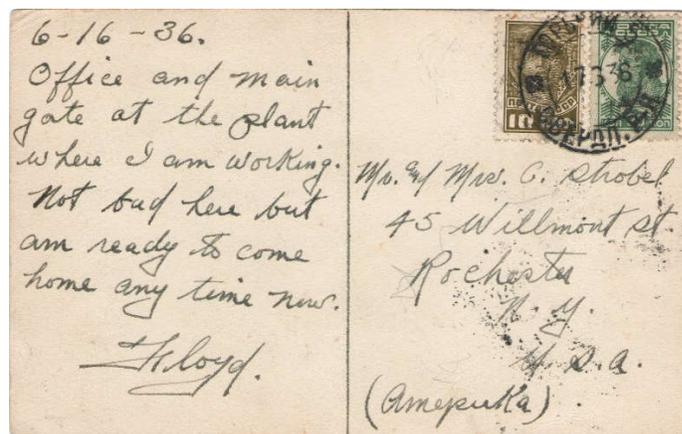


Another item is a picture postcard showing "Avtozavod. Highway Road. Stalinsky district." The

postcard has a censor's approval from local Glavlit (main organization responsible for censorship of all printed production, theaters, films, etc.) Foreigners were not allowed to make any photographs showing industrial buildings, general views, people in uniform, railroads, major highways, – almost anything.



The sender, Mr. Floyd Strobel, wrote to his family (parents and two little sisters) in Rochester, NY, on July 16, 1936: "Office and main gate at the plant where I am working. Not bad here but am ready to come home any time now. Floyd." Floyd's father worked as a foreman at the camera factory Kodak. Note that, unlike Ivo Steijn's examples, the postcard was sent from a regular city post office.



Initially, the agreement with Ford Company was signed till 1938. In effect, by 1937 the American Village was empty. Most Americans went home, and still unknown number – at least several hundred – were detained by NKVD and perished in the Gulag. Floyd Strobel was lucky to celebrate Christmas with his daughter in Detroit in 1949.

## Contact Us

Questions? Comments? If you are interested in the content of this Bulletin and would like to provide feedback, or respond to a volunteer opportunity, please contact us! You can find our elected officers on our website at

<http://www.rossica.org/contacts.php>

or send an E-mail to [info@rossica.org](mailto:info@rossica.org).

Submitted by Alexander Kolchinsky, member of Editorial board, Rossica.