



## THE SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

**Bulletin 64, Winter 2020**

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### President's Message

Happy New Year! As you are reading this bulletin, we are well into 2020, so let me recap some of the significant events of the second half of 2019 and our plans for 2020.

First of all, our Journal won a Reserve Grand and Large Gold at the APS StampShow Philatelic Literature Competition held in Omaha, NE in August 2019. Our Journal continues to garner high marks in national and international competitions for the quality of its articles and its professional production. While all the credit for the production quality goes to the editor team of Bill and Nik, the quality of the articles is a great reflection on you, the members. You are the authors and it is your quality research that is helping make our Journal great.

Several new books have been published by Rossica members. The books were reviewed in previous issues of the Journal, and are examples of the serious study being performed by Rossica members. Keep up the good work!

We had our national meeting at CHICAGOPEX in November. It was a great meeting. We had a well-stocked booth, staffed by a number of volunteers, and the booth soon became an ad hoc meeting place for Rossica members for the duration of the show.

Our membership meeting was well attended, with about 20 members in attendance. Our annual awards were given out with Nik Sorokin selected as the *Volunteer of the Year* and John Myke winning the *Journal Article* award for his article *Comments on a Tsar's Collection* in Journal #171.

Announcement of awards was followed by an interesting program from Joseph Geyfman on Local Stamps (provincials) stamps based on his new book.

Our society is in good shape- 290 members, cash in the bank – we can pay for our publications without the Treasurer getting gray hair. And as I said before, our Journal is first rate and comes out on time. Randy has also been insuring that the Bulletin has been coming out on time and keeps us up to date.

Last but not least we had nine exhibits, a wide variety of subjects were on display and I received many comments on the interesting subjects they presented. Plus, this year we had a hospitality room that was open Friday and Saturday night after all the dinners. Lesson learned is that we will have to advertise it better so more folks know about it.

CHICAGOPEX was a mini Pan Slavic, with the Russians, Poles, Ukrainians and Lithuanian societies having national meetings. I attended a few

meetings with the other Presidents of the Societies and the following recommendations were put forward:

- a. Coordinate Public Relations at all the National shows. The idea is to follow the ATA's method in which a joint program is developed promoting East European Philately and all of the associated Societies. Once developed, the program is given at as many shows as possible. This will not happen overnight, with a 2021 as target date for approval.
- b. Sharing of articles in our publications. This would mean that the editors develop a method of sharing stories that have crossover interest between Societies.
- c. Plan to have another Pan Slavic event at the APS Show in 2021 but calling it something like the Eastern European Convention.
- d. Please provide your comments on these ideas.

Our 2020 National Meeting will be held in conjunction with SESCAL in October. Details to follow at a later date.

Reflections on how to improve the national meeting. The board is exploring way to improve the draw of our national meeting. Why is this you may ask? Top of my list is the scarcity of good Russian material in the dealer's room. Why spend the money to travel away from home if there is nothing to buy? I would like to see out national meetings become the go to event of the year for out members. So what can we do to get them to want to come. Here's what we've come up with to date:

1. Expand the Hospitality Suite
  - a. Advertise it better before the show.
  - b. With the Show committee's approval, host a member exchange after hours at the suite. We all have duplicate material we would like to trade for something we need.

2. Organize a dinner on Friday night. Saturday is always the award dinner so that would be the night. We could also look at having the suite open early on Saturday too.
3. Promote the program better. This year's program was well attended but we need to draw non-members also. This will mean getting the program into the Show bulletin and Linn's.
4. Having a well-attended booth was great but it took a lot of work putting it together. We need to bring more different publications to the shows. This year the Precancel monogram sold out.

The challenge with all this is that we need help before the show. I spent two months prepping for the show and was rushed the whole time. We need to start earlier and lock down key evens 4 months before the show so we can get the publicity out early. So that means we have to start in May 2020 for the October national meeting, so I'll be looking for help in May after my daughter's wedding.

Dues are due. As of this bulletin you are on notice that if you have not paid your 2020 dues already, you are close to not getting your next Journal. I've been told that half of our members had already paid by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year, the rest of you have until the end of March to get them in. You don't want to miss another great Journal.

I am sad to have to report the passing of Hyman Lovitz on December 29<sup>th</sup> 2019. Hyman was the Society's legal counsel; an obituary will be in the next Journal.

Submitted by Raymond J. Pietruszka  
Rossica President

# Minutes from Rossica Board of Directors Meeting

November 23, 2019

The Annual Meeting was called to order at 2:00PM by President Ray Pietruszka at CHICAGOPEX.

President Pietruszka gave the following reports:

**Membership Report:** Currently, there are between 280 - 290 paid members. The annual dues renewal is coming up; as normal there is a 10% flux in membership.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ray also noted that there is about \$28,000 in the bank with \$4,000 payable for the printing of the Journal. Dues for 2020 will increase by \$3.00 for a paper copy and \$1.00 for a digital copy.

## Announcements:

- 1) The new elected officers were introduced:
  - a. Semyon Brayman (Vice President) and Vesma Grinfelds (Secretary).
  - b. Dr. William Moskoff has returned and will be the Editor of our Journal going forward.
  - c. Re-elected were
    - i. Steve Volis (Treasurer),
    - ii. Gregory Mirsky (Librarian)
    - iii. Ray Pietruszka (President).
  - d. All appointed officers have agreed to continue to serve the organization.
- 2) Ray Pietruszka addressed the subject of a Pan Slavic "Federation of Societies". The previous day, the 4 Presidents of attending Societies met and discussed doing joint promotions and hosting joint meetings/presentation at national shows. All organizations are facing the reality of "aging out" membership. Promotion is needed to attain new members. Rossica needs to expand its base.
- 3) Ray then announced the two Annual Awards:
  - a. The Volunteer of the Year Award winner was: Nik Sorokin for his contributions as Journal Editor.
  - b. The Best Article of the Year winner was: John Myke for his "Comments on a Tsar's Collection" in Journal #171.

## Question and Comments:

Nik Sorokin noted that there is a serious need for volunteers to help find advertising for our Journal. Please consider volunteering to assist in this task!

Susan Smith, the Winston Blount Research Chair at the Smithsonian Postal Museum, was present and invited all of us to visit the Museum. She noted that if one is doing research at the Museum, their travel can potentially be subsidized.

## Presentation:

Joseph Geyfman gave us a PowerPoint presentation giving us an overview of his Gold Medal book entitled: "Specialized Catalog "Local Stamps (Provisionals) Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, USSR 1918-1922, 1931".

Submitted by Vesma Grenfeld  
Rossica Secretary

## 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:

<b>2189</b> - Prof. Gilbert Rios	France
<b>2190</b> - David Pidgeon	New Zealand
<b>2191</b> - Oleg Grinevich	OH
<b>2192</b> - Barry Wilson	PA
<b>2193</b> - Arkadiy Cherniak	MI
<b>2194</b> - Sandra Spellmire	MN
<b>2195</b> - Peter Petrenko	WI

## Member Exhibit Awards

- Joseph Geyfman
  - Local Stamps (Provisionals) of Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, USSR, 1918-1922,1931
  - Book / Catalogue
  - CHICAGOPEX, 2020
  - Large Gold

Two other Rossica members sent information of their most recent exhibits, and I must embarrassingly confess that I cannot find where I stored the information. And for this, I sincerely apologize. If they will send the information to me again, I **WILL** publish it in the next Bulletin.

These were the only notes of exhibit awards that I received.

**To ALL exhibitors:** If you have exhibited since July, 2019, please send the following information to [randyw1909@gmail.com](mailto:randyw1909@gmail.com). All information you send will be published in the Bulletin.

- Your name (first, last),
- Exhibit title and number of frames,
- Name of Show
- Exhibit award

## Valid Postage?

By Alexander Epstein and Randy Woodward

The card in Figure 1 was posted April 3, 1923 from Derbent, Dagestan to Versailles. It is franked with 4 copies of Scott #B36, the “Train” value of the set of 4 charity stamps B35 – B38. The 4 charity stamps were issued November of 1922, and at that time each of the 4 stamps sold for 25 rubles in the 1922 currency or 25 kopecks in the 1923 currency, had an internal postage value of 20 kopecks in the 1923 currency, with the remaining 5 kopecks being designated to famine relief.



Figure 1. Derbent to France Postcard Using Locally Revalued Invalid Charity Stamps

There are a few interesting franking features of this card.

- Each of the 4 copies of B36 had an internal franking value of 20 kopecks, for a total franking of 80 kopecks. At the time this card was mailed, the required rate for a postcard with a foreign destination was 3.0 rubles. Thus, the card is woefully under franked.
- The 4 charity stamps B35 – B38 were never valid for foreign postage.
- From April 1 forward, the stamps B35 – B38 were declared invalid for postage for internal postage.
- Yet no postage due was applied.

The question then is “why wasn’t any postage due applied?”. Rossica member Alexander Epstein offers two possible answers. The first is that an error was made by postal clerk(s). The second explanation is that some post offices did not have the stamps needed to make the required postal rate. Thus, these post offices needed to make conventional semi-official local revaluations of stamps they did have available but without any overprint in order to make the correct rate. The rate for this foreign bound postcard was 3 rubles, and thus it is possible that each of the 4 stamps was revalued to 75 kopecks in Derbent.

Much more about local revaluation of stamps can be found in an article written by Alexander

Epstein and published in the 2019 Winter issue of Rossica.

One of them is of special interest in connection with the present article and is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Moscow to Tallin Correctly Franked Using Locally Revalued Postage

It is an ordinary postcard mailed on 27 December 1922 from Moscow to Tallinn, Estonia when the tariff was still 90 rubles in the 1922 currency. This rate is met by franking with a 40-ruble stamp from the 'Star' issue set (Scott 220), a charity stamp (Scott B35 with a postage value of 20 rubles and a pair of 15-kopek Imperial Arms

definitives, Scott 81, revalued to 15 rubles each.

In this case, we have both a local revaluation of stamps not destined for it, since officially only such stamps with face values of 1 to 14 kopeks were officially allowed for revaluation in April 1922, and use of a charity stamp on the mail abroad also not allowed. And all this happened not in the very distant Derbent but in Moscow, the country capital.

## Request for Short Philatelic Notes for Bulletin

If you have a short philatelic note you would like to see published in the Bulletin, please send a copy to me at [randyw1909@gmail.com](mailto:randyw1909@gmail.com).

Submitted by Randy Woodward  
Rossica Bulletin Editor