



# ROSSICA SOCIETY

Bulletin 55

Summer 2015

## President's Message

I hope everyone has been enjoying their summer and have been busy with outdoor activities as well as a little stamp collecting.

We had a good general meeting at NAPEX in June. While the turnout was small, we did a great job of recruitment, with 10 new and returning members signing up. If this keeps up we just may hit my goal of 300 members by year's end. We also did a great job of selling our publications and thus reducing the pile in Jeff's basement. I would like to personally thank Jeff Radcliffe for all of his hard work at the table. He faithfully manned it with only short breaks. He was also the key to ensuring everything was at the booth on time and helped coordinate the Friday night dinner, where we had 8 members in attendance.

I would like to report that I survived my second turn at jury duty and that despite my efforts both of our member exhibitor's earned Gold medals. In addition our Journal also won a Gold medal. Well-done gentlemen! During the annual meeting, Alexander Kolchinsky received the Service Award and Howard L. Weinert received the Writer's award for best article in the Journal.

The next general membership meeting is going to be at the National Stamp Show in New York City next year. We are going to have to man our booth for 7 days. So please let me know if you can set a spell during the week. I'll be at the booth since I'm not qualified to judge at that show.

During the past few months, I have received a number of complaints about buying, selling and expertizing our Russian material. Having a bad experience with a dealer can be a real turn off to our hobby and our desire to collect. While most dealers are very honest and try to do the right thing, in the area of Russian philately most don't have a clue on how to determine the good from the bad. So first a reminder to all: Buyer beware! If the dealer does not know the material and you don't know the material someone is going to get stuck, mostly likely you! So if you are buying an item valued over a \$100 or so get it expertized by either the APS or the Philatelic Foundation. Also, if you

### New Applications to the Society

*Welcome our newest members! 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:*

- 2080 Mr. Rino Eriksen, Norway
- 2081 Mr. David LeFevre McKinney, VA
- 2082 Mr. Charles E. Nelson, CT
- 2083 Mr. Dimitry Faynerman, VA
- 2084 Mr. Leon P. Palian, Washington, DC
- 2085 Mr. David Lawrence Koman, VA
- 2086 Mr. Robert Beaty, VA
- 2087 Ms. Tiffany Patrice Seymore, VA
- 2088 Dr. Antony B. Werner, NC
- 2089 Mr. Tadas Osmolskis, MD
- 2090 Mr. Woody Witt, FL
- 2091 Frank C. Barna, PA
- 2092 Dhirubhai M. Mehta, India

## In this issue

- President's Message
- Minutes from the Annual General Membership Meeting held at NAPEX 2015
- Manfred Dobin Obituary
- New Tentative Members
- Exhibit Awards
- Article: Red Triangle Stickers
- Article: German Scientist in the USSR

are buying at an auction make sure that you comply with the rules of auction so you don't give the dealer an out if there is an issue. This should apply to any item you buy, Russian or not.

However there are special issues with Russian material—that is a lack of a large dealer base and the large numbers of questionable items for sale. As you all know, a lot of Russian postal history is very scarce and documentation of these items is limited. In the past as well as today, people are producing enhanced material and passing it off as great rarities. You also have a lot of common stamps that were faked in the 30's to support the packet trade. On top of this there is a lack of any sort of organization for expertizing this material. Nor is there an organization that is training or certifying new experts. Few of today's Russian experts will put their opinion in writing. Another issue raised is whether dealers who expertize, buy and sell are taking advantage of their insider knowledge. So what is to be done?

Rossica member Hyman Lovitz has volunteered to help establish a clearing house of issues in today's commercial market place. The idea is to collect complaints and observations and determine if there are patterns that indicate improper activities or simply a lack of knowledge. If this activity produces useable information, then a committee can be formed to review the results and make recommendations to organizations that can take action. So, if in the past year you have had a bad experience with either a dealer or an expertizing person or committee, please contact him at [hlovitz@comcast.net](mailto:hlovitz@comcast.net) with the particulars. Names of the parties will not be released without approval. If we don't know about the problems we can't address them.

Well that's about it for now. I still owe Nik Sorokin, Editor of the Journal, an article so it's back to my stack of covers.

**Ray Pietruszka,  
President, Rossica**

*Every current member must be an ambassador for the Society and recruit people interested in Russian philately in the Society.—Ray Pietruszka*

## Minutes of the General Meeting

June 6, 2015

In attendance: 10 members, including 6 members of the Board (Alexander Kolchinsky, Ray Pietruszka, Jeff Radcliffe, Charles Rehwinkel, David Skipton, Nik Sorokin). The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by President Ray Pietruszka.

*Ray Pietruszka:*

### Changes in the By-laws

1. According to current By-laws, any change requires a vote of 2/3 of members attending a general meeting. General meetings never were very representative, and even less so when our membership became more scattered. To make the process more democratic for all our 275 members, we want to replace it by the vote via mail and email and to make all decision by a simple majority of submitted votes. To finalize the changes in current By-laws, we need to vote on them for the last time at the general meeting of the Society.

The change was put up for vote and was accepted unanimously.

2. Another change concerns the status of the appointed officers. Currently, their voting rights are not clearly defined in the By-laws. The Executive Committee consisting of elected officers has found over the years that better decisions have been made by including all of the officers in the discussions and voting. According to the proposed amendment, the Executive Committee will define the voting rights of appointed officers at the time of their appointment. Appointed officers must be present at the meeting to be able to vote, and their right can be withdrawn by the decision of the Executive Committee. This change is formalizing the procedures that have been followed over the past four years.

The change was put up for vote and was accepted unanimously.

3. The third change concerns returning members who request their old membership numbers. Over the last few years our policies were inconsistent. Now we make it formal: to receive the old membership number, the applicant must pay an application fee and membership fees for previous four years. They are entitled to the Journal for the last

two years upon availability and can purchase older issues on the same condition.

The change was put up for vote and was accepted unanimously.

## Society Status

Our assets amount to a little more than \$12,000 after we pay the printer for the last issue of the Journal. Our Treasurer Michael Ann Gutter cannot fully perform her duties because of serious health problems. We are looking for a volunteer to take it over from her. I will appoint this person as an interim Treasurer until our next elections due at the end of the year. Please contact me or Alexander if you or someone you know is willing to take Mike's place, because the current situation creates chaos in our affairs.

Our membership goes down, and this also affects our financial situation. We need 30 new members to keep our finances firmly in balance; if we have 60, our purse will be growing. Every current member must be an ambassador for the Society and recruit people interested in Russian philately in the Society.

## Publications

*Nik Sorokin, Editor of the Journal:*

First of all, here are the three last issues of the Journal. They are all slightly different: font size, spacing, etc. I'd like to make it more consistent. So please let me know which do you like, what do you think should be changed, what is the optimal format. I would like to thank Mr. Zagorsky for his suggestions regarding some details of the cover design, which are especially valuable because of his vast experience in publishing. I see the mission of the Rossica Journal in retaining existing members and attracting new ones. This requires two things: wide variety of topics, so that everybody could find something interesting, and reasonable volume of the materials, because the size of the Journal is strictly limited by its cost. Thus, I am looking for articles that do not exceed three, four, maximum five thousand words. I'd like to have at least 10, better around 13 stories per issue, and that requires to have some short stories. I want to see stories from all periods, from pre-stamp to modern, like the Crimea story we published, and also some stories about postcards, because they are gaining popularity and can be shown at exhibits.

*Alexander Kolchinsky:* We may consider longer works

for separate publication, it is for Nik to decide. It fits the educational and research mission of our Society, and we haven't published anything besides our periodicals for a long time.

*Ray Pietruszka:* We will need to decide whether we want to publish it in digital format, or on paper. It is a matter of expenses.

*Alexander Kolchinsky:* We do not necessarily have to publish large monographs. It could be 50, 60 pages long and still be a valuable publication.

*Nik Sorokin:* At the same time, we might consider longer submission for digital publication after some editing. They can be sold as separate downloads. And I am against dividing stories in parts: they should be concise and fit in one issue.

A discussion followed about the need to have an updated primer on Russian philately 15-20 pages in length appealing to potential new members. Special attention should be paid to modern Russian philately: it might attract younger collectors, and material is far more affordable.

*Ray Pietruszka:*

Let me remind you that our next meeting will be at New York International Show next year.

There are two awards intended to promote our most active members. The first one is "The Volunteer of the Year" award. After considering nominations submitted by the officers, this year's award goes to Alexander. He served as the Secretary since 2013, he is actively working as an editor of the Journal, he is an active exhibitor, and publishes both in Rossica and in other periodicals promoting Russian philately.

The second award is for the best article in 2014. Interestingly, the winner of this award published two outstanding articles: "The Field Post of the Akhal-Teke Expedition" and "The Early Years of the Russian Post in Bukhara." This year award goes to Howard L. Weinert for the latter article that appeared in Vol. 163.

## General Discussion

*Nik Sorokin:* I compiled a catalog of Russian postcards of a New York publisher with scans and full descriptions. Can we put it on our web site and may be create a separate section dedicated to postcards?

The suggestion was supported by other members of the Board who mentioned growing interest in postcards among collectors.

*Dave Skipton:* our member George Shaw moved to a

new location, and during the move a part of his collection has been stolen. It seems to be a targeted hit, since the thieves took specific parts of the collection suggesting some familiarity with it. It was not the most valuable material, though unique as is most of George Shaw's accumulation. Police and FBI are work-

ing the case, and our members and other collectors should be aware of this.

President Ray Pietruszka adjourned the meeting at 10:55AM. It was followed by his presentation "The 1913 Romanov Jubilee Set."

---

## Exhibit Awards

### LITERATURE, PHILATELIC PERIODICALS

#### **Nikolai Sorokin**

Rossica Journal, Fall 2014-Spring 2015  
Gold medal, NAPEX 2015

### LITERATURE, HANDBOOKS AND SPECIAL STUDIES

#### **Valery Zagorsky**

Russia 1857-1917; RSFSR 1918-22; USSR 1923-91  
Postage Stamp Catalogue  
Vermeil medal.

#### **Valery Zagorsky**

Azerbaijan Transcaucasian Federation, 1919-1923  
Postage Stamp Catalog  
Gold medal.

#### **Valery Zagorsky**

USSR Drafts of Stamps, 1923-1960  
Silver medal.

### GENERAL CLASS, OPEN COMPETITION

#### **Alexander Kolchinsky**

Prisoners of the Great War Send Home Picture Postcards (8 frames)  
Gold medal, Auxiliary Marking Club Certificate  
"The Ephemera Society of America" Award

#### **David Skipton**

Soviet Clandestine Mail Surveillance, 1917-1941 (10 frames)  
Gold medal, APS Research Medal, Rossica Award

#### **Norman Banfield ([normanb@xtra.co.nz](mailto:normanb@xtra.co.nz))**

*Russia – Postal Censorship 1914 - 1920* (5 frames)

Large Gold – 90 points

Special Prize for Best Exhibit Relating to Military Material

Sydney Stamp Expo 2015 ANZAC Centenary, Australian National Exhibition – 655 frames, Sydney, Australia – April 2015.

#### **Guillermo Perdomo Jr**

*Griazovets Zemstvo* (4 frames)

Large Silver

WERNAMO 2015, National exhibition, Sweden 13-15 March 2015

#### **Charles Bromser ([chabro@optusnet.com.au](mailto:chabro@optusnet.com.au))**

*USSR Postal Stationery of the 10<sup>th</sup> Standard Issue – Envelopes 1960-1967* (5 frames)

Vermeil

BAYPEX 2014, The New Zealand National Philatelic Exhibition 14-16 Nov 2014

#### **Igor Grigorian**

*Pre-Christian Armenia and Temple of Garni* (5 Frames)

Vermeil, Most Popular Prix d'Honneur Ameristamp Expo 2015

Riverside, California, February 13-15, 2015

#### **Igor Grigorian**

*Incense and Its Evolution into Armenian Scented Paper (Papier d'Armenie)* (Single Frame)

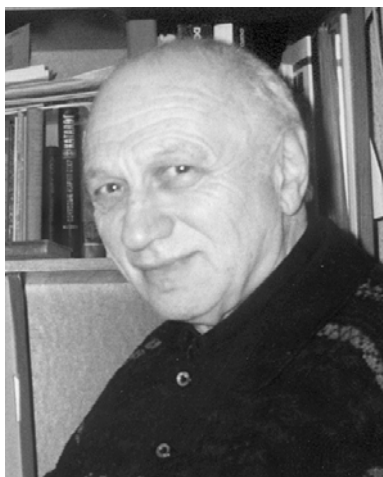
Vermeil, Best in Display Division, Most Popular Exhibit

Ameristamp Expo 2015

Riverside, California, February 13-15, 2015

## Manfred Aronovich Dobin

By Valery Zagorsky



Manfred Dobin 1925 - 2015

Manfred Aronovich Dobin, a prominent researcher, collector, expert, and author of the seminal philatelic works “History of St. Petersburg Mail, 1703-1914” and “Postal Markings of the Russian Empire. Pre-stamp period” has died. His name is well known to all collectors of the Russian Empire.

Dobin focused his research on the history of domestic mail. A thorough study of the literature, archival materials, museum holdings, and private collections enabled him to write a series of valuable monographs which garnered him recognition from many prestigious philatelic organizations. Manfred Dobin was a Honorary Member of the Union of Philatelists of Russia and the Union of Philatelists of St. Petersburg, a member of the International Association of Philatelic Experts, a member of the International Club of recipients of “Grand Prix” awards at World Philatelic Exhibitions, and a winner of gold medals and other awards at the international level.

Beginning from the earliest days of the publishing house “Standard Collection” founded in 1988, Dobin took an active part in its work. His contribution to almost all early editions of catalogs, handbooks, and other philatelic literature cannot be overestimated. His consistent approach to data organization and enviable productivity still play a role in new editions of catalogs by “Standard Collection.” Dobin’s years of research from archives and libraries related to the pre-stamp period of the Russian post, his own out-

standing collection, and his abundant correspondence and communications with other collectors is reflected in his books and other publications.

Dobin’s work as an expert was no less important for the philatelic community. Many collectors and dealers were in dire need of expertization of pre-stamp markings and entires of the Russian Empire. Dobin was an undisputable authority in this field, a member of the International Association of philatelic experts, and the only expert of Russian pre-stamp philately.

Dobin’s monograph “From the History of St. Petersburg Mail, 1703-1914” deserves a special mention. Using his lifetime records extracted from many sources, Dobin was able to compile a nearly exhaustive list of postmarks used in the Empire capital. This monograph has become a major guide and source of previously little-known information and facts for many collectors interested in St. Petersburg postal history.

In his everyday life, Mr. Dobin was employed by a “PO Box” (a euphemism for the Russian defense industry). Besides St. Petersburg postal history, he collected Leonardo da Vinci on stamps. Several years ago, his main collection was sold to a Russian collector in a private transaction. Manfred Aronovich Dobin will be remembered by all enthusiasts of Russian philately.

### 2015 Rossica Society Awards

Volunteer of the Year

*Alexander Kolchinsky*

Best Article 2014

*Howard L. Weinert*



# Red Triangle Stickers

By Michael Ercolini and George Shalimoff

We are having difficulty identifying the purpose of red triangle stickers with St. Petersburg or Petrograd markings, attached to mail. We have a postcard from Saratov postmarked 19 3 12 to St. Petersburg. The sticker was placed atop a portion of the Saratov marking and then stamped with a St. Petersburg marking 21 3 12. The postcard is shown at right.

Similarly a postcard posted in Lyuban, Novgorod. 11 2 15 to Volmar, Lifland with a received Volmar mark dated 13 2 15 has a red triangle over the Lyuban marking, stamped Peterograd 12 2 15. A prisoner-of-war card from Hann Monden, Germany dated 6 4 16 to Petrograd, was received there on 4 8 16, with a red triangle stamped Petrograd ? 4 16, and German and

Russian military censor marks. We have several other examples used between the dates given above. Please contact the authors if you have any thoughts about the purpose of the red triangle stickers.



# German Scientists in the USSR

By Alexander Kolchinsky

The postcard reproduced on the next page was sent in January 1947 from the USSR to Berlin. Like all international mail, it underwent secret censorship at Moscow "Expeditsiia No. 8." The most surprising thing about this postcard is its message:

Dear Parents, the contents of the 3 packages which I have just mailed [to you] is as follows:

- 1) 1 1/2 kg coffee and 3 packages of tea;
- 2) 5 packages of tobacco, 200 cigarettes, cigarette paper, 2 pairs of wool socks;
- 3) 350 g sugar, 1 kg coffee substitute, 200 g raisins, 500 g noodles, 1 tin of canned sausage, 1 tin of canned fish, 1 bar of chocolate, 1 pack of biscuits, 1 pack of kasha (high-fat grits which must be boiled for a long time), jam, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, wool hose.

Hopefully, the package arrives in good order.  
Kind heartfelt wishes,  
Your Ursula

strophic famine and poverty that resulted in 1-1.5 million deaths. How could the sender afford such a generous support of her parents in Germany?

In accordance with the agreements between the Allies, after the end of the war all military research on German territory had to be discontinued. Both USA and USSR violated this agreement, frantically trying to take advantage of German military technology that was the most advanced in many fields. This situation caused mutual protests and could not last, and in October 22-29, 1946, Soviet secret services within one week detained and brought to the USSR 2,200 prominent German specialists with their families, a total of 7,000 people. Although these people did not have much choice, many of them signed contracts of temporary employment voluntarily and even willingly. Germany lay in ruins, and the best specialists who did have jobs were employed by the Soviets anyway. In addition, some of them were refugees from Sudetenland who did not have a place to return to.

One of the major institutions that employed German specialists, the so-called «НИИ-160» (Institute of Scientific Research No. 160), was located in Fiazino, 40 km northeast from Moscow. It was a former camp of POWs located near a factory of electronic equipment. Before the arrival of the scientists, the prisoners built housing and research facilities. Unfortunately for

In 1946-47 the Soviet Union suffered from cata-

