

BULLETIN

of The Empire State
Postal History Society

Volume 40 Number 3

Decemberr 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2007 has been an eventful year for Empire State Postal History Society. The highlights include our exhibiting awards at two shows (ROPEX in May and STEPEX in October), our first annual meeting at ROPEX, a good turnout for the multi-state postal history exhibiting competition at PNSE in September, another good turnout for our first membership meeting in New York City, a revival of our annual de Lisle four-page exhibiting competition held at this meeting and the appointment of David E. Williams as the next editor of our journal, *Excelsior!*

I am hoping you will find the March 2006 *Excelsior!* in the same envelope with this Bulletin. Drew Nicholson has committed to produce one more issue of *Excelsior!* following the one enclosed, to wit, September 2006. David Williams will start with the March 2007 issue.

At the Executive Board meeting November 10 in Syracuse (minutes elsewhere in this Bulletin) it was agreed to hold our 2008 annual meeting again at ROPEX, the Rochester Philatelic Association's yearly World Series of Philately show. The 2008 dates for ROPEX are May 16-18 at the ESL Sports Center on the campus of Monroe Community College. There will be more on this meeting in the March Bulletin, but please mark your calendars now. I expect the meeting will be held on Saturday, May 17.

Also, for those attending Cover Mania 10 at the Clarion Hotel, 3 Watervliet Ave., Albany, Feb. 16 & 17, 2008, there will be a regional meeting of the Society on Feb. 16, probably at 2 pm (please check for the time at the show entrance).

You will find in this issue of the Bulletin an obituary for David Proulx, a report on our fall meeting and the de Lisle competition at the Fall Mega Event in NYC, a report on recent honors received by Society members, and a short biography of David Williams together with a report on the process for selecting the new editor of *Excelsior!*.

2007 was a very full year for the Society; I expect 2008 will be the same. Prepare and show an exhibit of your New York postal history, attend one or more of our meetings, write an article or two for our publications, and I'll guarantee this will increase your enjoyment and appreciation of our great hobby! Have a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year!!

Al Parsons (alatholleyrd@aol.com)

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 Leatherstocking/Catskill: *vacant*
 Central: Bob Davison
 West Central: *vacant*
 Southern Tier: Alan Parsons
 Western: David Przepiora

Secretary's Membership Report

Application for Membership:

Al Starkweather, 5520 Gunn Hwy, Apt.
 1406, Tampa, FL 33624-2847

Richard Erat, 1119 Fern Hollow Dr.,
 Liverpool, NY 13082-5486

New Members:

Lynn Bissell, 4 Madison Avenue,
 Oneonta, NY 13820-1115

Reg White, 966 Rt 311, Patterson, NY
 12563

Art Groton, PO Box 30, Fishkill, NY
 12524

Address Change:

David E. Salovey, 55 W. 25th St. Apt. 8H,
 New York, NY 10010

Do you have material for the ESPHS member's
 auction? Contact John Nunes for information

DAVID H. PROULX, 1937-2007

David H. Proulx of Baldwinsville, NY, an active member of Empire State Postal History Society for many years and author/compiler of two of its books, died November 6, 2007 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse after a battle with cancer.

At his death he was serving as Curator of the Margie Pfund Memorial Post Mark Museum and Library in Bellevue, OH, the showpiece of the Post Mark Collectors Club. In his 38-year association with the PMCC David also served terms as its Director (highest elective position) and Secretary. His wife, Beverly, who survives, is the current Secretary of the PMCC.

A native of Plattsburgh and graduate of SUNY Plattsburgh, David taught biology in the Baldwinsville School District for 34 years, coaching football, wrestling and softball as well..

David was an active stamp and postal history dealer at shows for many years but switched to eBay sales in the late 1990s. When he was doing shows his considerable stock of NY postal history, organized by counties, gave many aspiring collectors a fast track into our Society's specialty.

As a postal history collector as well as dealer, David developed an interest in NY star "killers," or cancels, and in NY townmarks (also referred to as cancels) incorporating county or postmaster names.

During a period of six years during the 1980s he identified 70 different varieties, or types, of star cancels used by New York post offices, primarily during the 19th century. Each variety was assigned a type number and is illustrated at the beginning of his book, *Star Cancels of New York State*. He lists in alphabetical order, with types, years of use, etc., all the NY post offices using star cancels known to the author in 1987 when ESPHS published the book. In its total of 23 pages, the book also includes 11 pages of cover illustrations and five pages of county groupings of NY post offices having star cancels. .

In his *County and Postmaster Cancels of New York State*, published by ESPHS in 1990, David again begins by identifying and illustrating the different types of cancels, or townmarks, he had found (23 in all), but organizes the post office listing by counties rather than a single alphabetical list for the whole state. This book has 44 pages including 30 pages of cover illustrations.

At the time of his death David was working on a postal history of Onondaga County, to be completed by his family. He was a life member of the Syracuse Stamp Club.

David's final contribution to Empire State came at our 2006 fall meeting in Syracuse.

(continued on page5)

FOUR-DAY PRESENCE AND FALL MEETING AT MEGA EVENT IN NEW YORK CITY 10/25-28; JOHN LANGE WINS de LISLE AWARD COMPETITION

Thanks to arrangements made by our NYC/LI Regional Representative Frank Braithwaite, the Society was able to staff a booth for the entire four days of the 2007 Fall Mega Event sponsored by the ASDA at Madison Square Garden October 25-28.

The exposure was worth the effort; two new members were signed up, at least 14 existing members stopped to visit and sign in, and a good number of our free handouts including membership applications were picked up by others.

It was the first trip to NYC in 30 years for the Society President, who spent three days at our booth and had the pleasure of meeting at least seven members from the metropolitan area he had not met before. One of those seven, John Dowd, has since mailed Parsons an analysis (issue dates, contents, etc.) he prepared of all ESPHS periodicals he had been able to find, primarily in the Collectors Club library. There are gaps to be filled, but even with the gaps this is a valuable resource for identifying and locating what has already been published in our journal and Bulletin.

ESPHS members signing in at our booth, besides Braithwaite and Parsons, were Caroline Scannell, David Salovey, Daniel Knowles, Roger Brody, John Wright, Richard Fuhrman, John Dowd, Keith Bantz, Bill Hart, Tom Mazza, Morton Laby and Brian Levy. John DeSanto did not sign in at the booth but did attend (and sign in) at the fall meeting.

Fourteen members and guests were present at our fall meeting, held Saturday October 27 at 4 pm in an enclosed area on the show floor. This was the first ESPHS meeting to be held in New York City. Parsons and Braithwaite presided; Parsons opened the meeting with a short "state of the Society" talk and then responded to questions.

At Parsons' request Tom Mazza reported on his research coordinating New York State manuscript cancels with postmaster dates of office during the stampless period, thereby assisting in dating, by handwriting comparison, otherwise undated manuscript-canceled covers. He indicated this work would eventually be published in our journal, just as his similar, if not identical, work on Pennsylvania manuscripts is now being published in the Pennsylvania Postal Historian.

For "show and tell" Brian Levy and Frank Braithwaite spoke about and passed around covers with "a story to tell" they had brought to the meeting.

Last but not least, nine of those present took the time to view and vote on three exhibits entered in the Society's annual Kenneth R. de Lisle four-page exhibit competition. The

(continued on page 5)

BRODY, TRIGGLE HONORED; REINHARD NAMED CHAIR OF CANEJ

Belated congratulations to Society members Roger Brody of Watchung, NJ, Ann Triggles of Clarence, NY and Stephen Reinhard of Mineola, NY on their receipt of significant awards (Brody, Triggles) and a major APS appointment (Reinhard) in the last four months of 2007.

Brody received the American Philatelic Society's 2007 John N. Luff Award for Distinguished Philatelic Research at the StampShow 2007 awards banquet in Portland, OR August 11. The Luff awards are the highest recognition accorded by the American Philatelic Society.

Triggles, a previous Luff award winner, received the Philadelphia National Stamp Exhibition's National Service Award for Outstanding Service to Philately at the PNSE awards banquet, Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, PA September 9. PNSE names two Merit Award Winners each year, one for Local Service and the other for National Service.

Reinhard was appointed Chair of the APS Committee for the Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ) at the initial meeting of the newly-elected APS Board in August. He succeeds Ann Triggles in that position and is already hard at work, having prepared and mailed to "about 1000 exhibitors" an extensive survey as part of "...a comprehensive review of national level exhibiting and judging and what must be done to make it a better experience for all...". He has appointed three separate task groups to conduct this review and make recommendations for improvements.

Fall Meeting.... (continued from page 4)

winner, by one vote over the runner-up, was John Lange's Postal Routes in 1837-1841 and How They Influenced the Delivery of Mail Originating in Saratoga County, NY.

The award for winning the de Lisle competition is a handsome, suitably engraved, walnut plaque outline of New York State. Lange will receive the 2007 de Lisle Award at the Society's 2008 annual meeting.

Dave Proulx (continued from page 3)

He showed a video he narrated about the Marge Pfund Memorial Museum and Library, then talked about its collection and finished his presentation with recollections of his personal collecting experiences and his many years as a dealer. Although not intended as such, it was truly a memorable "farewell address."

DAVID E. WILLIAMS NAMED NEW EXCELSIOR! EDITOR AFTER EXTENSIVE DELIBERATIONS

The minutes of the November 10 Executive Board meeting state that Albert Starkweather, currently the editor of *Stamp Insider* and *The Philatelic Communicator*, and one of two candidates for *Excelsior!* editor, was elected by a 4-3 vote. Eight of the 13 Board members were present; the president cannot vote except to break a tie. Following the vote President Parsons expressed his disappointment and said he would probably resign since he could not see himself being comfortable with Starkweather as *Excelsior!* editor.

Subsequent to the meeting Parsons advised the Executive Board that he was resigning effective 1/1/08 unless a vote by the entire Board (via email, fax, etc.) rescinded the appointment of Starkweather and named Williams the new editor. The new balloting resulted in a 6-6 tie, Parsons was then able to vote and Williams was elected by a 7-6 vote.

Parsons felt strongly that the 4-3 vote Nov. 10 electing Starkweather was, to put it mildly, a fluke. One board member who had planned to be at the meeting took ill at the last minute and couldn't attend. He later advised Parsons he would have voted for Williams and had he been there Williams would have been elected. Of the four votes for Starkweather at the meeting, three of them came from Board members who are also masthead-listed staffers of *Stamp Insider*, and each has a full page article or column in every issue.

David E. Williams, 57, grew up in Binghamton and Harpursville, both in Broome County, and graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology in 1973 with a BS in electrical engineering. He spent five years with GTE Sylvania in Seneca Falls before moving to Louisville, KY where he held a position with the Louisville City Government until he retired in 2005. He and his wife still reside in Louisville.

David has been a stamp collector since childhood. He became interested in postal history in the early 1980s as a result of attending stamp shows where he started buying covers from New York State. He joined ESPHS in 1987 and began specializing in Binghamton and Broome County postal history. In David's own words, here is what happened next:

At some of those early stamp shows in Louisville, I purchased a few "fancy" cancel NY covers among which were several star cancels. Upon seeing the ESPHS publication list, I immediately placed an order for Dave Proulx's star cancel book. At each show even if I could not find any Broome County material, it seems that I always came away with at least one or two star cancel covers. Sometimes I found that these were not in Dave's book, so I started adding these new discoveries in the margins. Soon, after running out of room in the book, I created a database, entered Proulx's entire book into it (hopefully not violating any copyrights!), and began adding my own discoveries to it. When the new finds kept coming, I decided to contact the powers to be at ESPHS and inquired about creating an update to

(continued on page 7)

Williams (continued)

the Proulx book. My offer was accepted and, thanks to publicity in the Bulletin and later Excelsior!, star data began arriving via snail mail and email. The arrival of eBay provided me a new and very fertile ground for new discoveries, and I still get referred to new finds from some ESPHS members as well as philatelic friends I have made online. The original database of Proulx's 900+ records has now grown to over 1300. I am hoping that this data can be published in a new edition of the star cancel book later this year. I have just found out in the last couple of weeks of the death of Dave Proulx. When the 2nd edition of the Star Cancel book is published I would like to have it dedicated to Dave, since it was his work which inspired me to pursue this narrow area of postal history as one of my several collecting interests.

David has been an APS member since 1986 and since then has joined the American Philatelic Research Library, the United States Philatelic Classics Society and the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors. His website, www.broome-county-postal-history.com is linked to the ESPHS website and is clearly worth a visit.

Articles for Excelsior! can be sent to him, preferably by email attachment, to dewilliams@netpointe.com, or by land mail to David E. Williams, 2617 Byron Avenue, Louisville, KY 40205-2609. Please send him articles and related covers, if any. If he is going to succeed as *Excelsior!* editor and bring its publication schedule up to date, he needs the full support of our membership!

NEW WEBSITE FOR POSTAL HISTORIAN LAUNCHES

Richard Frajola, long time U.S. dealer and collector has begun a massive project harnessing the power of the Internet. Frajola recently announced an on-line database called "PhilaMercury: A Permanent Census of United States Stamp and Cover Images". At the current time the database is limited to pre-1900 covers, both domestic U.S. covers as well as foreign covers with a U.S. destination. By the beginning of January, 2008, over 1000 covers had been entered into the database.

The site's address is: <http://www.philamercury.com/index.php>

ESPHS.ORG???? have you visited our website lately?

Minutes of the Nov 10, 1907 Executive Board meeting in conjunction with SYRAPEX,

Present: A. Parsons, J. Cali, M. Tirums, B. Davison, H Sweeting, D. Nicholson, John Nunes. G McGowan (joined meeting just prior to voting for new Excelsior editor)
Absent: J. Rowbottom, F. Braithwaite, B. Hart, G Dekornfeld, G Wiley

Meeting called to order 1:30, Quorum present

Drew Nicholson stated that we would need to buy a fuser for the laser printer within a few months and that toner prices have gone up @ \$20.00 a cartridge.

Status of back issues: articles are in and edited, they need to be transferred onto masters and have headers and footers added- expected delivery "is as soon as Larry returns from his brother's funeral."

David Proulx passed away on Tuesday last of pancreatic cancer. Sympathies were expressed by all. Bob Davison will arrange to get an obituary from the Syracuse paper to AI for the bulletin.

Drew has at least 4 back-up articles for the other back issues of *Excelsior!*. He will begin production of the March 2006 issue of *Excelsior!* next week and post it the week after. AI repeated Frank Braithwaite's offer to assist with back issues. Drew is willing to continue printing and mailing issues.

AI asked Drew if he would be agreeable to a publication schedule and stick to deadlines established and monitored by a committee. If deadlines were not met, would he agree to a fine system for each day late. Drew declined the idea of paying any kind of monetary penalty .

New editor selection: the new editor will start 2 issues behind. Drew as publications committee chair would prefer to see David Williams take over. AI read an e-mail from David regarding possibly becoming editor.

Glenn Estus has indicated that it would be possible to reduce the size of Excelsior and have it come out quarterly with the Bulletin. [ed. note: I (Glenn) actually suggested that *Excelsior!* should consider sticking to a set number of pages for each issues rather than having issues with different number of pages]

A comparison was made of the two Excelsior editor candidate's editing examples (AI Starkweather and David Williams). Discussions included margins and hole punching, and Starkweather's reduced size of covers and text. Maris Tirums expressed the need to make

(continued on page 9)

Meeting minutes (continued)

a selection ASAP. John Nunes and Heather Sweeting expressed their confidence in Al Starkweather's ability to become our editor. Maris questioned whether Al Starkweather would be able to solicit articles, and also expressed confidence in Al's ability to meet deadlines. Al Parsons stated that he did not believe that Al Starkweather has the knowledge of NY postal history to become editor of a specialized journal, and points out his emphasis on style over substance which will weaken the publications content.

Maris ask Drew if he sends proofs of articles back to the author for editorial changes. Drew stated that he does occasionally make changes for readability. Drew stated that Al Starkweather generally sends articles back to the author for review. Al Parsons stated that he does not do that for his Elmira club page which has been repeatedly cut and edited to fit one page.

Al Parsons called for a vote. A motion was made by Maris that we select a new *Excelsior!* editor from the two candidates, 2nd by John Nunes. The result of the voting elected Starkweather. In favor: MT, GM, JN, HS, nay: JC, BD, DN The adoption of a new *Excelsior!* editor commences with the March 2008 issue. The new *Excelsior!* editor would also take over with back issues starting March 2007 producing 4 issues in the 2008 year. John Nunes made a motion for a vote of approval for Daivd Williams to be associate editor, Drew 2nd. Six in favor, one abstained.

Nunes presented a proposal that Adventure Graphics become the printer for *Excelsior!*. Norm Cohen has offered to print in full color for no more that the cost of our present printing. John Cali expressed his concern with printing out of state (Texas). Passed 6 to 1 The publications committee will be responsible for getting *Excelsior!* guidelines to the new editor. Costs also will be determined by same committee.

Al Parsons expressed his confidence in Dave Przepiora becoming a board member to replace G Wiley. Drew made the motion, 2nd Nunes, Passed 6 yes one abstained

Treasurers report was accepted

For the annual meeting in 2008, Al suggested ROPEX. John Cali had concerns with having the meeting and a show at the same time. John Nunes suggested having meetings before the show opens. ROPEX was selected.

Nominating Committee: John Cali accepted with reservations

Motion to adjourn, Nunes, 2nd Tirums, passed

Respectfully submitted jointly by Heather Sweeting & George McGowan

ESPHS Celebrates 40 Years of NY State Postal History Study

In 1966 two fellow collectors Charles H. Sweeting and Harry S. Taber decided they would spearhead an effort to begin a group for NY postal history collectors. They sent out surveys to collectors, which said in part: "There has been some speculation if it would be advisable to try and bring these collectors into a specialist group to exchange information and generally help one another in building their collections ... The general exchange of notes, lists, and valuable knowledge would be useful to all interested in postal history. If you would care to join such a group, we would like to hear from you." Twenty-five initial replies were received to their mailing.

On March 20, 1967, Linn's Weekly Stamp News carried an announcement that the Empire State Postal History Society was organizing and seeking interested members. From early club correspondence it can be discerned that member Anton Zahm was among those influential in suggesting the name of this newly formed group,

The first official club meeting was held on April 29 and 30, 1967 in Buffalo, and ten people showed up. Harry Taber was elected secretary and Charles Sweeting president. Ken deLisle became membership secretary shortly after. The first list of paid founding members included many noted philatelists, including Sweeting, Taber, Zahm, Nick Todaro, Ray Staplin, Lee S. DeGraff, E. N. Sampson, John Gemmill, Frank Karlson, Don Burdick, Mahlon Lord, Mrs. A. C. Nelson, Calvet Hahn, Dewitt Wise, G. M. Tuttle, Ralph Reynolds, L. Pierce, George Bernadt, Paul Fisher, K. A. Kroeger, E. N. Perkins, and Arthur Abelson. In 1968 member Neil Garner offered to design a logo for the group. Sadly, these pioneering postal history collectors are no longer with us, except for Nick Todaro.

After formation, the group eagerly began compiling lists of all the post offices in New York State by county, using legislative manuals and Library of Congress microfilms to obtain information. The material was all hand compiled on index cards and then cross referenced by county. A project on New York RFD cancels was started by Nick Todaro, and a news bulletin for members was begun using a duplicating machine. By January 23, 1968, almost a year later, the group reported 38 members. To date the group has grown to more than 180 members.

In 1969 the group officially drew up its constitution and bylaws and restated its goals: "To advance the knowledge of the postal history of the State of New York by means of education and historical research; to acquire and disseminate through publication, exhibition or otherwise information relative to the organization and development of post offices and postal systems in the State of New York."

(continued on page 11)

ESPHS History.... (continued)

The first publication of the society in 1969 was the result of the efforts to compile the county post office lists. This became Lee DeGraff's extensive missal titled Federal Post Offices of New York State 1792-1969. In the last 30 years, the efforts of others have resulted in books on New York State star cancels, postmaster cancels, postal histories of Wayne, Cayuga, and Oswego counties, postal route maps, manuscript cancel listings, and George Bernadt's massive compilation, Postal Markings of New York State 1792-1856. The society also produces a quarterly *Bulletin*, has member auctions, and twice-a-year publishes *Excelsior!*, a scholarly journal devoted to philatelic research.

Isn't it interesting that the actions of two fellow collectors seeking those with similar interests and goals and camaraderie can accomplish something that withstands the test of forty years? The information compiled and recorded by the many ESPHS members will stand as its own historical legacy for future generations of New York State postal history collectors.

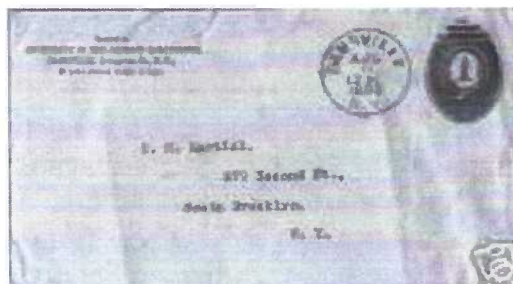
Heather Sweeting



See more information on this cover in
 Albert Carroccia's Auction Report on page 12

AN AUCTION REPORT

The collector searching for interesting New York postal history should look no further than the on-line auction service eBay where a cursory glance for nothing in particular turned up a cover that proved not only interesting but truly a bargain. It was described as a stationery envelope, possibly U71, with a corner card showing it was sent from the Secretary of the Jackson Sanatorium in Dansville, New York. The cover was sent to South Brooklyn, New York and has a clear Dansville, New York August 11, 1892 date cancellation with Brooklyn and New York backstamps dated August 12, 1892. This cover sold for \$4.25!



The Jackson Sanatorium was founded in the 1840's by James Caleb Jackson, a Dansville resident, who named it "Our Home on the Hillside". Jackson was a proponent of the water cure philosophy-hydropathy. The idea of water as a cure was the basis of this philosophy as people flocked to the sanatorium to enjoy the relaxing effects of water. Fire destroyed the original building and was replaced by a larger building. The sanatorium was eventually taken over by Jackson's children who continued the business until 1914 when it was closed for financial reasons.

It was eventually revived as the Physical Culture Hotel by Bernard McFadden who ran it as a recreational center based on physical activity. The place fell into disrepair after McFadden died in 1955. The building remains vacant and abandoned today. This story of Dansville and Livingston County history was found on a cover that sold for less than \$5.00!

We travel to Lockport for the next cover. It was described as an unused advertising cover for Merchants Gargling Oil and Liniment, a medicine for both humans and animals. The cover indicted the yellow wrapper was for animals and the white wrapper for humans.

Dr. George Merchant invented the liniment in 1833 and set up the business in the center of Lockport. In 1856 he sold the business to John Hodge who continued to successfully manufacture and sell the medicine. The business continued into the early 20th century. The cover is a gem in its engraving which shows two people working on a horse and annotates the many uses of the liniment and the form it can be purchased. Very interesting and the price is certainly right. In excellent condition but unused, it sold for \$2.92!

--Albert Corroccia

(editor's note: you'll notice the illustration of the Danville cover is small and hard to read. if you're going to scan a cover for use in a publication, scan it at regular size and at least 300 ppi. The editor can later manipulate it down to the needed size, but, often he cannot manipulate it upwards from a smaller size and still have an adequate illustration.)