



**PERF-DISPATCH**  
**GREATER MOUND CITY STAMP CLUB**  
Established 1884  
Saint Louis, Missouri



**Volume XXX1 Number 7**



**July 2025**

Where Dielmann Rec. Complex  
Dielmann West room  
11400 Olde Cabin Rd.  
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

When 4<sup>th</sup> Monday each month at **7:30 PM**

Membership \$15 for Regular members  
\$10 for email only Perf-Dispatch

**JULY 28 MEETING**

July is always the time for the Lick & Stick party where we prepare the mailings for StampFest. The more helpers we have, the sooner we get done.

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

August.....TBD.....Michael Karasick  
September....Stamp Act of 1765.....Nathan Esbeck  
October.....Philatelic Jeopardy.....Guy Gasser  
November.....Auction Bux.....Jerry Schultz(?)  
December.....Christmas Party....Katrina Whitaker  
**2026**  
January...Lawrence of Arabia ..Michael Hirschfeld  
April....Intro to Match and Medicine....Ron McVay  
June.....TBD.....Alan Barasch

Thanks to everyone who volunteered to present programs for this year. Katrina is hard at work starting to fill out the schedule for next year. Let her know what month you want before it's gone.

**WHAT YOU MISSED**

Alan Barasch, an accomplished speaker about philately, gave a program on Disease! Using the big screen TV in the meeting room, he showed many stamps from around the world calling attention to various diseases and conditions. It was interesting to see how many times countries appropriated the design used by another country. He also showed stamps honoring doctors and scientists.

**WORDS FROM EL PRESIDENTÉ**

Hello club members. Is it hot enough now for everyone? Our typical summer weather has not disappointed us. However, we have received a lot more rain than usual this summer, which is nice especially if one has a sprinkler system, like me, that keeps the lawn watered. My water bill has been much lower than past years.

It's show time! This is the last meeting before StampFest and the show is shaping up nicely. We have 16 confirmed dealers this year. All of the admin stuff for the Rec-Plex is done and we are locked in there. The Rec-Plex also gave me a more specific address for those using GPS to get to the show. That address is elsewhere in this newsletter, but I'll put it here too. Use 5250 Mexico Road, St. Peters. Our advertising is placed and Tom is finalizing everything for the show. We won't be running our own concession stand as the Rec-Plex has one right next to the show, and it will be open throughout the show hours both days to not only support us, but also those using the hockey rink which is across from the gym.

There is an event that is ending Friday afternoon at the Rec-Plex. Therefore, we can't occupy the floor until 5:00PM. Time for volunteers to make this shin-dig happen. Phil will have sign-up sheets at the meeting this month. Those who wish to help, but can't make the meeting please contact me or Tom with what you can do soonest.

Ten people to set up the show floor on Friday afternoon at 5:00PM.

Four people to help dealers move in after the floor is set up.

One person for the registration desk for 2-hour intervals starting at 9:30AM on Saturday morning, and again starting at 9:30AM on Sunday morning. The person working the registration desk will also handle any club sales from the dime store.

Ten people to take down the show floor on Sunday at 4:00PM

Four people to help dealers load out at 4:00PM on Sunday.

Jerry, our auctioneer, said that he will round up the help he needs for the auction on Sunday. Katrina will have the sign-up sheet for the pot luck. Those going to attend the potluck, but can't make the meeting, please contact Katrina with what you want to bring soonest as we need to get a head count. I hope that many of you plan to attend to enjoy the festivities. Family members and friends are welcome too! We also invite the dealers. The club is providing all of the paper products, condiments, drinks, and fried chicken. Any alcohol is BYOB; however, I'm waiting on an answer from the Rec-Plex on any rules about alcohol.

This month is the famous lick and stick month that everyone anxiously looks forward to every year. This is also an important event because it's how we'll notify the masses of StampFest. We will also conduct an auction. One might want to bring a sponge for the stamps that need licked before stuck! This event is actually more fun than it sounds. The more that come to the meeting, the faster it all goes.

Don't forget about GASS next month in Shamburg, IL, which takes place the weekend after our show. This is the closest to St. Louis (about 4 1/2 hours) that the annual big show of the land will take place unless I can convince the APS to hold a future GASS in St. Louis. This is also the show to attend to have the best chance to find those illusive items that one can't find at the smaller shows. There will be about 85 dealers from across the country. This show also provides many activities that one doesn't find at other shows like first day ceremonies, an expansive USPS floor, champion exhibits, seminars, games, and many societies. Not sure what a particular society does? This is the show to find out as most of them will have table at this show. You don't want to miss this opportunity!

The programs for this year are filled! Thank you for those of you who volunteered. The VP is now working on programs for next year, and has filled a couple months. Let's get next year filled now too!

That is all!

Guy

**CLUB WEBSITE**

[www.greatermoundcity.org](http://www.greatermoundcity.org)

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Did you know: The first day ceremony for the sesquicentennial of the Oregon Trail was originally set to be held on 14 February 1993 in Oregon City, OR, the terminus of the trail. A month before the ceremony, USPS changed it to Salem, OR. The backlash resulted in 39 cities along the Oregon Trail designated as official first day of issue cities. Who has them all?**

**OPEL+**

The "Old Philatelists Eating Lunch Plus" gathering in August will be on Monday, August 11 at 11:30 at Helen Fitzgerald's at 3650 S. Lindbergh in Sunset Hills. I hope to see you there. It's a fun time. Why not come on out, have a good lunch, and spend time with your stamp collecting friends.

**OFFICERS**

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**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

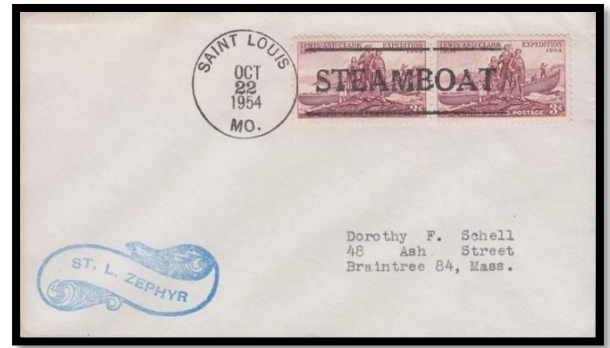
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## Oct 22, 1954 – Steamboat Cancel

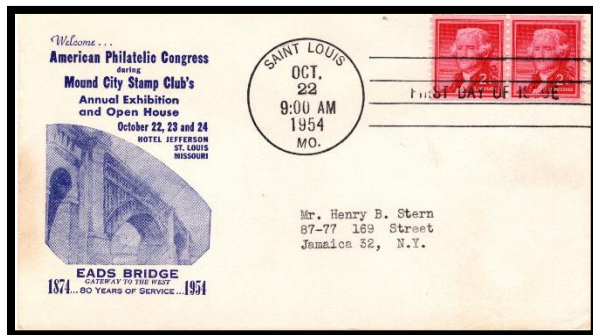
By Pat Morgan

While researching the history of the Mound City Stamp Club, I ran across an interesting story about these unique steamboat-delivered souvenir covers (figure 1) and how they came to exist.

The Mound City Stamp Club hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> American Philatelic Congress. The Congress was to meet in the Hotel Jefferson from October 22nd to 24th, 1954. The show event cover celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Eads Bridge (figure 2).



1. Steamboat Souvenir Cover – Ship Mark Style 1



2. 1954 APC Convention Event Cover

In 1954, it had been almost 50 years since any mail had been delivered by steamboat. The revival of a steamboat delivery was sponsored by the Mound City Stamp Club (MCSC) in connection with the American Philatelic Congress. To pull this off, a lot of red tape had to be cut.

Robert W. Murch, Vice-President of the MCSC, an avid collector of ship letters, went to the St. Louis Postmaster, Bernard F. Dickmann, to ask if the 1825 Postal Law was still in effect for the use of steamboats to deliver the mail.

Postmaster Dickmann went to Postmaster General Arthur

Summerfield, who determined that the law was still effective in 1954 and authorized the special service requested by Murch.

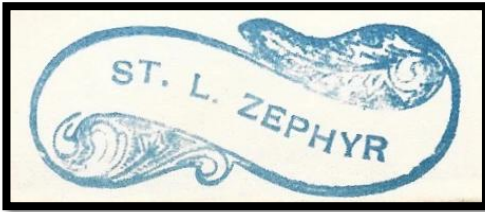
The 1825 Postal Law was enacted to stop the practice of Steamboat Captains delivering mail up and down the rivers without postage, causing the Government to lose revenue. The law directed the Postmaster General to pay a fee of 2 cents per letter to any steamboat captain not under a mail contract for all mail postmarked aboard his vessel. To cover the cost of the fees paid to the captains, the rate for the letter was double the regular postage. In 1954, the regular rate was 3 cents, and as a result, all the letters shipped in 1954 required 6 cents of postage.

The Post Office department had to determine how the ship captain was to get compensated, as well as create the special rubber stamp cancels, no longer available, which by law had to say “STEAMBOAT.”

Having worked out all the details, Murch worked to get the word out about this one last steamboat delivery through numerous philatelic papers. The response was overwhelming. Murch received over 7,000 self-addressed stamped envelopes from every one of the then 48 states, Canada, Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Sweden, and England.

In early October 1954, Murch took the 7,000+ requests and boxed them up, putting them on the towboat, St. L. Zephyr, for the trip down to New Orleans and then back to St. Louis along with barges full of gasoline. The actual *St. Louis Zephyr* had ceased operation decades earlier, making the name more nostalgic than literal. The St. L. Zephyr was a diesel-powered towboat and technically not a steamboat, but that doesn't detract from the philatelic story we are telling over 70 years later. Based on the volume of requests, it was clear that in 1954, philatelists saw this as a last opportunity to obtain a letter that was delivered by ship.





3. Commemorative Ship Marking - Style 1

There are at least two versions that were applied to the covers on the ship (figure 3 and figure 4) and one that appeared in the newspaper article about this event (figure 5).



5. Newspaper Article Graphic

In the golden age of steamboats, it became common practice for these letters to be stamped with a distinctive mark by the mail clerk to get some free advertising for the ship. It is not clear who created the blue ink stamps on the letters carried by the Zephyr in 1954.



4. Commemorative Ship Marking - Style 2

Postmaster Dickmann found himself accepting the 7,000+ letters and commenting that the modern practices of the post office and its streamlined practices of 1954 were no longer geared towards the steamboat era. He is quoted as saying, "It's so much simpler to throw mail sacks on a railroad car or an airplane." On Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1954 (figure 6), the letters off the Zephyr were cancelled in St. Louis by Dickmann and were then sent on the rest of their journey back to the requestors.

70+ years later, this story has probably been lost to the majority of the Philatelic world. Those who collect ship covers today see this cover as a gimmick (philatelic souvenirs) rather than postal history. These covers have little value in comparison to a cover from an actual steamboat of the era, such as the Natchez, Robert E. Lee, or one of the other famous steamboats that navigated the rivers of America to facilitate commerce and transportation. All the same, it was an act of passion by a ship cover collector, Murch, that was able to cut the red tape and have one last shipment of mail handled the way it was handled 50 years prior.

Kudos to Robert Murch and the Mound City Stamp Club for having gone to all the effort to make such a historic philatelic moment by reviving the Mississippi River steamboat mail service one last time as a commemorative gesture. This is yet one more example of the role St. Louis stamp collectors played in U.S. postal history.

Hope you enjoyed this article. If you have any questions or comments, send me an email at [pjmorgan622@gmail.com](mailto:pjmorgan622@gmail.com)

Sources: Hannon, R. E. (1954, October 17). 'Steamboat Mail' Coming Up the River. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 1D.



6. 1954 Steamboat Cancel – Ship Mark Style 2

Read more about [Steamboats - Postal History](https://about.usps.com/who/profile/history/steamboats.htm) at <https://about.usps.com/who/profile/history/steamboats.htm>