

Press Release

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USPCS Announces Society Cup and Award Winners for 2010-2011

May 16, 2011....The 2011 Annual Meeting held by the USPCS at TEXPEX from April 15th-17th was a great success with a wonderful showing of exhibits and visitors. Pictures of the event can be viewed on our Facebook page under "U.S. Philatelic Classics Society". While you're there, make sure to "like" us.

After over 3 years of serving as Publicist, the USPCS would like to thank Alex Haimann for his generous contribution and work dedicated to our society. It has been announced that Andrew Titley of Dallas, TX will replace Alex as Publicist. Andrew can be contacted directly at atitley@spink.com.

The USPCS is proud to name the following society cup and award winners for this year. Each has made a significant contribution to both the USPCS and philately as a whole. These awards are a special recognition to those who have furthered our knowledge in different fields:

- *The Susan M. McDonald Plaque* – **Michael Plett** for his article, *U.S. Card Proofs with Handstamped "Specimen" Overprints in Chronicle 227* (August, 2010).
- *The Tracy Simpson Cup* – **James Allen**
- *The Dr. Carroll Chase Cup* – **Michael Plett** for his article, *U.S. Card Proofs with Handstamped "Specimen" Overprints in Chronicle 227* (August, 2010).
- *The Stanley B. Ashbrook Cup* – **Michael Laurence** for his book, *Ten-Cent 1869 Covers, A Historical Survey*.
- *The Distinguished Philatelist Award* – **Edward J. Siskin**

Description of the awards and winners of each are listed below:

The Susan M. McDonald Plaque is awarded for articles about U. S. Classic Postal History published in a given *Chronicle* Volume.

About the winner of The Susan M. McDonald Plaque: For almost a century, collectors have been aware of the existence of card proofs of classic United States stamps bearing handstamped "Specimen" overprints in various colors and typefaces. The origins of these items have been shrouded in mystery. Through the careful development of research evidence, this article proves that there are four overprint types and more than 600 artifacts, each one of which is unique. Thorough research, detailed and useful visuals, and innovative tabular presentation of data combine to make this article a highly meritorious work of philatelic research.

The Tracy Simpson Cup is awarded only to a member of *The U. S. Philatelic Classics Society* for outstanding service to the society.

About the winner of The Tracy Simpson Cup: Jim Allen has served as Business Manager, Publications for the Society for several years. During that time, he has done an excellent job of negotiating with our vendors, resulting in large and continued savings for the Society. In bundling *The Chronicle* with *The Chatter*, we were able to cut costs again. He acts as liaison between our editors and our printer, ensuring that our printing orders are accurate and timely. Jim is also leading the effort to find new ways to reduce our book inventory, some of which are already in process. As well, Jim serves on the Board of Directors. He always exhibits a "can do" attitude and delivers on time.

For *The 1851 Issue of United States Stamps: a Sesquicentennial Retrospective*, Jim penned three articles that comprised the entire section on the 12c 1851 issue. He has also written articles for *The Chronicle* and the *London Philatelist*.

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Jim started his stamp collecting in a Harris 59-cent album in 1956. After leaving the hobby in 1961, he returned in 1989 while overseas, and joined the USPS at that time. He immediately became interested in the classic US stamps, and began concentrating on the 12-cent 1851-60 stamps because of the lack of information in some areas, and is currently focusing on a traditional exhibit. He also collects colors and cancels on the 1, 3, 5, and 10-cent stamps of the same series as well as 1869 cancels.

Over the last couple of years he has developed an interest in the intersection of Canadian and US railroad history.

The Dr. Carroll Chase Cup is awarded to authors of articles, books, or other studies concerning any U. S. Stamp issued to 1894 including postmaster's provisionals, locals, carriers, and back-of-the-book material.

About the winner of The Dr. Carroll Chase Cup: This study documents that one of the uses of card proofs was to provide samples of stamps to foreign post office departments, and that in four instances those card proofs were handstamped with the word "Specimen." It establishes, and illustrates for the first time, four different types of these hand-stamps, and concludes these were used by foreign governments rather than in the United States.

Previous to this article only two of these hand-stamps had been identified, listed in Scott as Type F and Type G. The article clearly defines the hand-stamp types assigning the numbers 1 through 4, sorted by appearance, font, measurements, and color. It provides many colorful illustrations of the various issues, often with a cross reference from his type to the Scott listings, where applicable. The author provides a detailed historical reference of past catalog listings and auction sales, which form the basis for his census of regular, departmental and newspaper issues listed by type and color in easy to follow tables. While the study limited to only four sets of card proofs, it breaks new ground in the establishment of the two new types, and establishes the origin of these long-misunderstood issues.

The Stanley B. Ashbrook Cup is awarded to authors of articles, books, or other studies concerning U. S. Postal History from the Colonial Period to 1894.

About the winner of The Stanley B. Ashbrook Cup: Every major stamp issue from the 1847 through the 1861 issue has had at least one paramount reference book documenting the various uses. While several books dedicated to the 1869 issue have been published previously, none presents such a thorough examination of this issue's usage over a period spanning at least six years.

Through the ten-cent stamp of this issue almost every conceivable use is examined and often illustrated. By extension, through the use of all of the stamps in this issue Michael was able to create – for the first time – a comprehensive postal history reference for the 1869 era. The occasional use of stamps and stationery from the periods prior to and following, often in combination with the 1869 issue, provides additional insight for collectors and postal historians.

The Table of Contents and Listing of Tables offer the casual reader a precise location within the book pertinent to the rates and routes for domestic, cross-border, and foreign mails. The use of original research combined with the works of others, offers additional insight for future researchers and tends to cement the use of the reference numbers used throughout the book as a standard. All of these are later condensed into one section in Appendix A for convenience, and source acknowledgement follows.

Collectors of this issue, as well as those of the 1861 and bank note eras now have a thoroughly researched and illustrated source to consult for authoritative information.

The Distinguished Philatelist Award recognizes exceptionally meritorious service to U. S. Philately through published research, award-winning collections, active participation in the organization & promotion of philatelic exhibitions, & sustained administrative service to the national or international organizations which furthered United States Philately.

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About the winner of The Distinguished Philatelist Award: Edward J. Siskin is certainly not an ordinary stamp collector. He began collecting covers as early as stamps when he was just six years old and he has formed collections in several very different areas. Not many of us have been collecting as long as Ed Siskin either, as he started collecting in 1947 – sixty-four years ago. In fact, Siskin still has a few first day covers he personally serviced back in the 1940s.

Siskin has built and disbursed four varied collections. His first included the 3 cent stamp issued from 1851 to 1861 and another was the Washington-Franklin issue on cover. He still maintains numerous postal history collections today, including New Jersey postal history, stampless covers, World War I, free franks and famous persons. However, Ed Siskin will always be best known for his long time interest in and dedication to earliest documented covers and colonial mail of the United States.

As noted earlier, Siskin has been interested in first day covers since he began collecting. His exhibit of classic first day covers was the first of its kind to be awarded a national gold medal, which he received at FLOREX in 1978. He was not only an avid collector in the area, but a pioneer in the field of earliest documented covers. The United States Post Office did not normally establish dates of issue until 1922. Consequently, collectors like Siskin had to determine earliest known uses for all stamps issued before 1922. In 1990, Siskin compiled the *American First Day Cover Foundation Checklist of First Days and Earliest Documented Covers 1847-1931*. He continued to update his database and subsequently donated it to the American Philatelic Society (APS). Based on this work, earliest documented covers for each issue are now listed in Scott's *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers*.

Nearly at the opposite end of the collecting spectrum, Ed and his wife Jean collected and studied colonial mail of the United States. Their exhibit – Colonial American and Early United States Mail - was described as "unprecedented in terms of the quantity and quality." Robson Lowe did not even think it was possible to assemble such a comprehensive collection, given the miniscule amount of material available to private collectors. Apparently both national and international philatelic judges agreed, as the exhibit won three national grand awards, two international large gold awards and it was nominated for the Grand Prix National at Pacific 97.

In his spare time, Ed Siskin has written or co-authored more than two hundred articles for philatelic journals. Two of these articles received the Philip H. Ward, Jr. award from the American First Day Cover Society and another received the Walter W. Hopkinson Memorial Literature Award from the United States Stamp Society.

Siskin has been active in many philatelic organizations. He has donated much of his time to the American First Day Cover Society and their Expertizing Committee, having served as chairman. He has also expertized for both the Philatelic Foundation and the American Philatelic Society. Ed Siskin was a philatelic judge for almost thirty years, judging many national shows from 1982 until his recent retirement.

In his non-philatelic life, Siskin has 45 years of experience in the engineering, construction and operation of power, utility, petrochemical and scientific facilities. From 1990 until 1994, he was the General Manager of the Superconducting Super Collider Laboratory, the largest scientific instrument ever undertaken. He has received the Presidential Merit Award and the National Nuclear Security Administration Gold Medal for service to our country's national security.

Ed Siskin lives with his wife, Jean, in New Jersey, who he considers his philatelic partner in every respect. Siskin has two daughters and two grandchildren.

About the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc.

The U. S. Philatelic Classics Society (USPCS) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) association of people interested in the pre-1894 stamps and postal history of the United States. Our goal is to promote interest and knowledge of philately through the encouragement of philatelic research, and through exchange of information among our members as well with other philatelic organizations. We do this by preparing and distributing philatelic literature and periodicals, particularly *The Chronicle of the U. S. Classic Postal Issues* and the *Chairman's Chatter*. We are operated entirely by volunteers, and welcome anyone interested in the "classic era" of American philately.

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