

Stamp Tracks



NEWS AND
INFORMATION FOR
PHILATELISTS OF ALL AGES

Write Me A Letter

For over a decade I have encouraged students to write us letters requesting stamps for use in their collections and various school projects. This past year we have experienced a marked increase in requests, propelling our volunteers into overdrive!

Writing, as we know, is an essential life skill. Many of our stamp lessons require some sort of writing. To learn information in the classroom or at home we must read, write, and discuss. When we add stamps to the mix, it assures even better internalization of the subject matter because we hold the stamp, read the information and look at the illustration. Learning with stamps helps to cement the information in our brains. Look, touch, read, write, and discuss with stamps.

When I talk to teachers and students about writing letters I recommend the students think of five topical ideas or countries that they would like. Our topical list is at <https://postalhistoryfoundation.org/education-store/>. The idea is to get them started with topics and/or countries that they have a connection to. Every child is different, so make it personal.



One-of-a-kind stamp drawing with another request inside.

Corresponding with businesses, friends, and banks are life skills we all need to learn to be successful as an adult. Youngsters who are starting to learn reading and writing sometimes perceive these skills as hard work and therefore feel like they can't do it. They give up. For some, it takes a lot of practice to become successful. What better way to encourage reading and writing than by informing students they can receive stamps by writing a letter. It is fun, educational, and rewarding. Stamps can be put in collections, included in reports, used for art, and other projects. Many upper elementary teachers require their students to write letters in cursive, which is also a very essential life skill.

Every child is different in their development of learning and fine motor skills. Some at ages three and four can start to enjoy some success at the writing process. On page seven we see an example of a parent that is savvy enough to write down a theme and guide the child

Dear Mrs. Dembowski,

Thank you for letting us come to the Postal History Foundation. I learned that they would carry mail on mules. My favorite part of the field trip was when we got to cancel stamps, put them in the little mail boxes, and finding their name because I got to cancel the stamps. Can you mail me puppy, horse, cartoon, and guinea pig stamps?

Sincerely,
Grace

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Postal History Foundation

920 North 1st Avenue
Tucson, AZ 85719
520-623-6652

www.postalhistoryfoundation.org

Email us at: info@phftucson.org

Museum and Post Office Hours:

Monday through Friday except
Federal Holidays 8:30am-2:30pm

The Slusser Library will reopen

Wednesday, September 25th
Check the online calendar for temporary
closures due to field trips and meetings.

Administrative Assistant

Kelzi Bartholomaei x 100

**Stamp Discovery
Education Program**

Lisa Dembowski x 102
education@phftucson.org
Education Assistant—Kat Wahl

Philatelic Sales

Monday — Friday
520-623-6652 x 101
Mike Wood
sales@phftucson.org
eBay sales: Bob Davis
[bobacarol on eBay](#)

PHF Officers and Board:

Chair: Bob Davis
Vice Chair: Mike Wood
Treasurer: Ted Maynard
Secretary: Steven Hamann
John Carney, James Green,
David Irick , Sue Sisson, Max Swartz

**Book Specials from the
Sales Department**

**Holmers' Specialized Catalogue of Canada and
British North America**

by J.N. Sissons Tenth ed.1963 hardback \$15 + shipping

**The Once-Cent Magenta: Inside the Quest to Own
the Most Valuable Stamps in the World**

by James Barron 2017 hardback \$5.00 + shipping

**8th Edition of Zeheri Catalogue for Postage Stamps
of Egypt, U.A.R. and the Sudan**

by Mehanny Eid 1967 Softcover \$15 + shipping

**Historical Catalog of U.S. Postal Card Essays
and Proofs**

by Bill Falberg and Dan Undersander
2008 hardback \$25 + shipping

Out Foxing the Fakers

by Jean-Francois Brun 1993 hardback \$5.00 + shipping

**From the Treasurer
An errant pickup truck
Monsoon storm damage
Driveway and parking lot resurfacing**

These **unusual** events are causing some very large
expenses in the near future.

As we approach our **Annual Membership
Renewal cycle for 2025**
please be generous and move your membership
to a higher level. Help us get through this period
of extraordinary costs.

Your dollars allow us to support
our active Stamp Discovery
program and the Slusser Library
as we promote philatelic learning
and inspire future generations.



*The children, teachers, and par-
ents thank you!*

Message from the Chair by Bob Davis

For the Postal History Foundation, the year 2024 (to date) has been dramatic and traumatic.

eBay Sales: As a result of eBay rule changes we were obliged to leave our PHF sales moniker behind. We have migrated to a new seller name, “**bobacarol**” on eBay. All sales proceeds continue to go to the PHF. Also, we are experimenting with sales on Hip Stamps as PostalHistoryFoundation. We have an abundance of worldwide stamps, covers, and philatelic supplies available for sale.

Errant Truck: In January a pickup truck slammed across our entry steps, tore out railings, hit a wall, broke a water line, and destroyed a mature mesquite tree and very old (10 foot) saguaro.

Monsoon Winds: In July a monsoon storm with high winds sent roof shingles flying and blew down an additional three mature mesquites.

And: The time has come to resurface the driveway and parking lot.

Any donations to help with the costs associated with the noted items would be appreciated.

Inside the building our Stamp Discovery program is doing well and we have hired a new librarian. The Slusser Library will reopen September 25th.

My final note. We need **volunteers**—talented individuals who can help us a couple days a week—to assist in the many tasks needed to accomplish the goals of our Foundation.

Sales Department Specials

- **Individual World Wide Stamps** 50% SCV or less
- **US Mint Plate Blocks / US Booklets**
- **Foreign Gold Mines** 4 to 5 oz off paper \$25.00
- **Foreign Platinum Mines** 4 oz off paper SCV
\$0.50 to \$10.00 each stamp/set - \$135
- **Foreign Titanium Mines** SCV per stamp
\$10.00 minimum - no weight limit \$225.00
- **Discount Postage** — 40% discount of face
- **Postcards** — 25¢ each or 5 for \$1 unless marked
- **US Year Sets**
- **Collections**
- **Foreign Covers**
- **US and Foreign Singles and Sets**
- **Stock books and cards**
- **First Day Covers/ RPO Covers/ First Flights**

Worldwide stamps in red boxes

- **Catalogues**
- **Empty Albums**
- **Mounts**
- **Vario Sheets**
- **And More**



Visit the Sales Department
Monday — Friday
Call 520-623-6652 x 101 or email
sales@phftucson.org

Roland (Ron) Perry, a Donor of the Postal History Foundation, has passed away. He began his PHF activities in 2012 when he exhibited postage stamps, coins, maps, and artifacts from Papua New Guinea. Ron was a frequent visitor to the PHF, and donated many significant collections to the foundation. We have fond memories of Ron. He will be missed.



Follow the PHF on Social Media



facebook.com/postalhistoryfoundation

@phftucson



Farewell to Slusser Library Giants

John Birkinbine II *by Valerie Kittell*

Long-time philatelist, stamp dealer, and Arizona Philatelic Ranger John Birkinbine has passed away at the age of 94. John became the 13th enrolled Ranger in 1961, after the creation of the Arizona Philatelic Rangers and the Postal History Foundation, (then known as the Western Postal History Museum) in 1960.

John's specialty in collecting was western postal history. His collection of western covers was unparalleled. He owned some of the oldest and rarest western covers including many from Territorial Arizona and New Mexico. "He had unusual and rare covers that nobody else had," said Bob Davis, chairperson of the PHF board. Famously, John owned and displayed a stagecoach that once delivered the very mail he collected.

John created several award-winning exhibits. He won numerous exhibit gold medals at international exhibitions as well as being named to the Court of Honor at AMERIPEX 1986, WORLD STAMP EXPO 1989, and NORDIA 2001. In 1985 John was named U.S. Champion of Champions at the 99th APS STaMpsHOW in San Diego for his exhibit "Confederate States of America, 1861-1865."

Continued on next page



John and Seny Birkinbine at one of the many Postal History Foundation Volunteer luncheons.

Valerie Kittell *by Lisa Dembowski*

Slusser librarian, Valerie Kittell, our librarian and archivist for eleven years, has resigned her position at the Postal History Foundation. Valerie has been an outstanding care-taker of our library and a crusader for positive change at the PHF. As a work partner of mine, it has been hard to adjust to the void. The following are few of her many professional highlights during Valerie's service to the PHF.

Valerie arrived at the PHF having left the teaching profession to earn her Masters in Library Science at the University of Arizona. I immediately recommended her when she applied for the PHF position, as I had first hand experience working with her at Orange Grove Middle School in Tucson, AZ. Her previous experience as a classroom teacher at Orange Grove was very helpful during field trips and scout merit badge workshops I held over the past decade.

She is the complete modern library scientist, which was very important due to our Old Naco Post Office museum and the Slusser filled with books, historical items, catalogues, digital collections, and more.

Besides cataloguing over 3,000 books and answering a thousand questions over the years, she completed many archival projects that were needed. Valerie created 29 specialized collections that cannot be found anywhere else in the country as they connect with the mission of the Slusser and our region. Finding aides for some of these collections can be 50 pages long.

Continued on page 6



Valerie Kittell

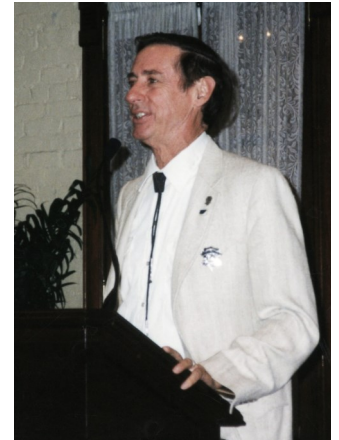
John Birkinbine cont'd

He also compiled his research into an exhibit-like book, which the Slusser library has in its holdings.



John in front of his table at one of many, many stamp shows .

John was a stamp dealer, and registered his business, American Philatelic Brokerages, back in 1946. He set up philatelic shops over several years in Pennsylvania, Arizona, Utah, California, and Maryland. In 1969 he met and wed his wife Seny while in Utah. She became an integral part of his brokerage. He was well-known in many philatelic circles both through stamp dealing and the Rangers. People would gravitate to his table at the stamp shows.



John addressing attendees at a Ranger dinner. Stampshow '96'



Birkinbine served as the president of the Arizona Philatelic Rangers for decades. One of his duties included planning the famous Ranger dinners, held to coincide with stamp shows. These dinners were held at venues with interesting histories and menus. It was at these dinners that John would pin badges on new inductees. The Rangers created the Youth Endowment Fund, ensuring the continuation of the PHF mission to support youth education through stamps and grow the hobby. John and Seny contributed generous amounts of money to this fund over the years. Birkinbine also served as an ex-officio member of the PHF Board of Directors for over 30 years.

John was instrumental in the creation of the Slusser Library. Family friends Blaine and Bessie Slusser were devastated when their only daughter, Peggy, passed away at the age of 51. Seeking a way to honor her, John suggested they fund the building of a library at the Postal History Foundation. John acted as liaison between the Foundation and his friends and facilitated the process.



Peggy Slusser

John's contributions to philately, western cover collecting, the Arizona Philatelic Rangers, and the Postal History Foundation have left an indelible impression. He will be missed.

The Birkinbine legacy at the PHF includes the Slusser library, bottom left, and the beautiful Slusser reading room, below right.



Valerie Kittell cont'd

Valerie has preserved PHF documents, records, business dealings, historical documents, and catalogues. Archivists also create boxes or housing units for historical items that need to be protected. She actually built a 3 X 5 foot wooden platform on wheels to house one of our famous dioramas, created by the artist, Cal Peters. The diorama celebrates aviatrix Katherine Stinson dropping a mail pouch and also performing aerobatics, in 1915 at the Pima Country Fairgrounds. So, yes, archiving and curating can include carpentry.

One of Valerie's most important accomplishments was the accession and cataloguing of the Old Naco Post Office Museum collection. She built and painted the slat wall system as seen at right, for displays to be hung. Valerie created and designed, from the floor to the ceiling, an interactive experience for visitors of all ages, which is enjoyed by hundreds of tourists and students during field trips.

Her eye for design and graphics was a big bonus in designing pamphlets, banners and such for our foundation. Over the years she created 15 interesting and unique exhibits that were displayed in the library cases such as *A Star is Born: the Stamp Design Process of Artist Robert McCall*, *Love for Arizona Airmail*, *Mining and the Mail*, and *The 12 Days of Collecting*.



Valerie in the Old Naco Museum

We worked together on a few events over the years which were very successful and fun. Valerie made it a point to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Slusser Library. The special guest was the Mayor of Tucson, Johnathon Rothschild, who had attended school with Peggy Slusser, the namesake of our library. The most successful event at the PHF was the Star Trek Fete. She organized and planned all the activities around the U.S.P.S. Star Trek stamp issue of 2016. Trekkies of all ages enjoyed the trivia quizzes, raffle of memorabilia, show-related food, and the photo room where a visitor could take her/his picture with Spock and Captain Kirk. Valerie also created the photo background.



One other major contribution was the design and creation of our website, including the Stamp Discovery program store which allows educators to order stamp lessons and topicals for teaching. We receive many compliments on our website.

Educators across the country use the educator store to order lessons and stamps. Luckily for us, Valerie is willing to help with website glitches, when needed, until the new librarian can take over this task. Valerie's knowledge of computers, website management, and writing skills was incredibly helpful to me and very beneficial to the education program and PHF.

Working with Valerie was easy and enjoyable. I admired her professionalism, ethics, and dedication. I will also miss her intelligent humor and sly smile.

We are all thankful for Valerie's exceptional stewardship of the Slusser Library. The Postal History Foundation is much better for her tenure here. We wish Valerie, health, happiness, and success in her new adventure.

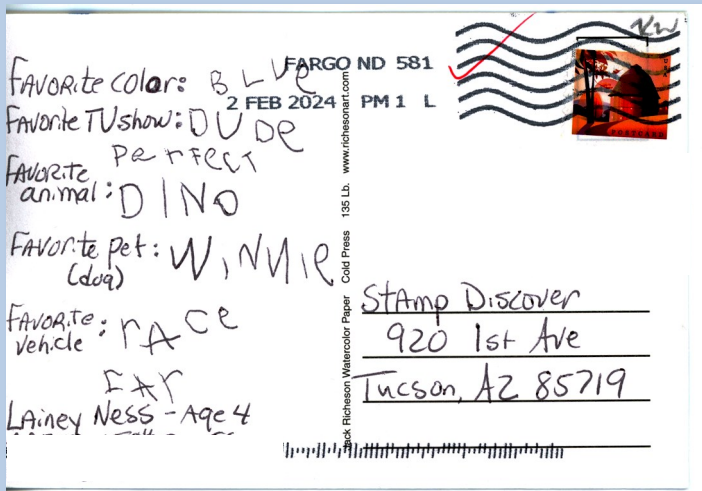
Write Me a Letter, cont'd

to write down a basic word for the topic. (See below left.) The four year old discusses and writes what stamps she would like with her parent, works at her writing, and receives something in return for her efforts. The child also learns patience as the request will not be filled immediately but will take a few weeks.

Letter writing is included in our annual participation numbers. This past school year, the Stamp Discovery program has supplied stamps and lessons to over 13,000 teachers, parents, and students via online lesson and topic orders, classroom visits, field trips, community events, scouting, and of course, request letters. During the past school year, our program has sent over 705,000 stamps to students across the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada.

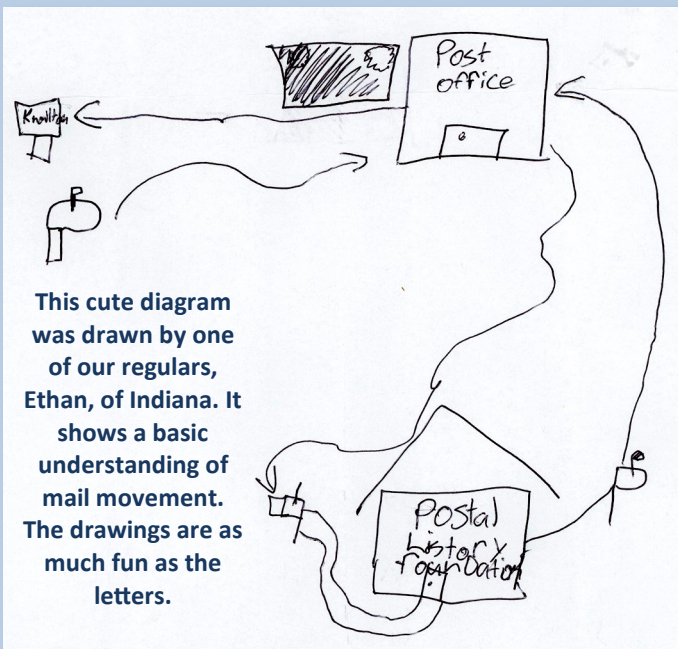
The Stamp Discovery program is constantly growing new collectors, but remember, we can't do it without your donations. Monetary donations help us to continue to staff the Postal History Foundation which not only includes education support locally and across the country, but the Old Naco Museum and the Slusser Library.

Encourage your children or grandchildren to write me a letter. Lisa Dembowski, Education

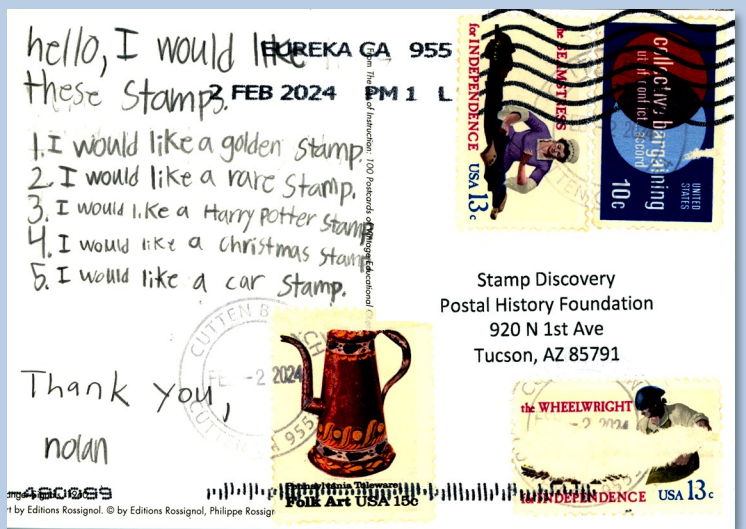


**Letters and drawings always make us smile.
We hope these add a smile to your day.**

The drawing at right, reflected our feelings here at the PHF this summer, as the heat in Tucson was relentless. Working on our stamp collections is a **COOL** way to pass the summer and keep out of the heat!



This cute diagram was drawn by one of our regulars, Ethan, of Indiana. It shows a basic understanding of mail movement. The drawings are as much fun as the letters.



Stamp Discovery
Postal History Foundation
920 N 1st Ave
Tucson, AZ 85791

PHF Calendar

Board Meeting October 19th at 9am in the Slusser Library

Visiting the PHF

Open M-F 8:30am - 2:30pm with some exceptions.

At times the library and/or museum might be closed on the day of scheduled field trips, meetings, and large group tours. Please check the online calendar or call 520-623-6652 x 100 or 107

Our online public calendar is found on our website at: postalhistoryfoundation.org

click on **Latest** → then click on **Event Calendar** OR

postalhistoryfoundation.org/visit/calendar/

Slusser Exhibit

"Step Right in, Let Adventures Begin! The Philatelic Truck"

The Slusser will reopen for visitors and researchers on Wednesday September 25th

You can visit our permanent and rotating exhibits in person or online at home by going to our website and clicking

Museum → Permanent Exhibits or

Museum → Rotating Exhibit → See more

Discount Postage for Sale

Packets of mint stamps, lower denominations, for use on your outgoing mail. **\$10 value for \$6.**

New Members

Partha Chakraborty
Tempe, AZ

Tom Smith
Glendale, AZ

Patrick Spencer
Tempe, AZ

Bill Stroud
Sun City, AZ

*Drs. Jane and Marshall Whitmire
Camp Verde, AZ*

*John (Jack) Zittere
Tucson, AZ*

In Memoriam

Robert Ashmead
Member

John Birkinbine II
Member, Ranger, Volunteer

Malcolm Bell
Member

Karen Hemmeter
Member

Ron Perry
Donor, Volunteer

Sergio Sismondo
Ranger

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postalhistoryfoundation.org/about/stamp-tracks-newsletter

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Tucson Stamp Club

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Fraternal Order of
Police Lodge on

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For more information contact:

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