



## THE SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

### ***Bulletin 72, Winter 2024***

*Randy Woodward - Bulletin Editor*

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### **President's Message**

Greeting from Alabama! As I am writing this it is the 14th of February and is 60° F during the day. So happy Valentine's Day. Also, a belated happy New Year to everyone with wishes for the best of health to you and your family during the rest of 2024.

This is shaping up to be another busy philatelic year with many national and international shows and several Rossica meetings both by Zoom and live. Randy Woodward is still very busy organizing our monthly zoom meetings so please volunteer to give a short presentation on the theme of your choice. This year Randy has been trying to line up meetings in response to your requests, so please help where you can.

Our yearly Rossica Society meeting will be held

at CHICAGOPEX in November of this year. Please plan to attend the show and our meeting. Better yet, plan to exhibit a part of your collection. Now is the time (March) to make the commit to participate and still have enough time to finish putting together an exhibit. It gets very lonely being the only Russian area exhibitor at many of these shows. (Besides, the judges are getting tired of seeing my exhibit.) To encourage exhibits, I am recommending that whenever possible the society restart the policy of awarding both Rossica awards at shows.

We must all work together to keep Russian Philately alive and well during these troubling times, now in their third year. I know Russian material is getting hard to find at the dealers' booths but if we don't ask for it, they will not bring it. Rossica survived World War II and the Cold War, it can survive this mess too. As of now we are the only such English language Society left in the West, and it is up to us to keep Russian Philately alive. Be active, show parts of your collection at shows and your local club meetings.

The benefits of Rossica membership continue to be enjoyed by all of us. The editorial team succeeds in publishing an outstanding Journal and Bulletin. Not only is Steve Volis keeping the treasury on an even keel he has also taken on the role of editor of the Journal along with Nik Sorokin and they are doing a great job of it. The library continues to grow and be used by our membership. Greg Mirsky works hard to fulfil your requests for information as our library continues to grow.

For long term planning purposes I would like to note that we will be holding our 2025 membership meeting at WESTPEX, and the following year, 2026 - at the international Boston 2026 World Stamp Show. Vesma Grinfelds is working on getting the arrangements made for a booth and meeting room. As in New York, we will need volunteers to man the booth for the duration of the show. 2025 is also an election year, so start thinking about what you can do for your Society. We already have officers doing multiple jobs. I would like to spread the work around to more members.

I'll be attending a few shows this year, the GASS

in Harford in August, CHICAGOPEX of course and my exhibit will be going to Estonia. This is in addition to visiting my daughter and her family in France - yes I will be going to Paris in search of stamps.

So, get out there, have fun, enjoy your hobby. And take care of yourself and your families.

*Raymond J. Pietruszka  
Rossica President*

## **Brief Summary of the August 6, 2023, Rossica Board of Directors Meeting**

In attendance: Ray Pietruszka, Semyon Brayman, Nik Sorokin, Steve Volis, Randy Woodward, Greg Mirsky and Vesma Grinfelds.

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 PM (Pacific Time) by President Ray Pietruszka via Zoom with a quorum.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Volis noted that we have about 265 paid members and 12 new members since the recent Journal. Ray expressed thanks to Steve for recruiting these new members. After paying for the printing and distribution of the Journal, the Treasury is stable at \$26,000.

Library Report: Greg Mirsky, Librarian, reported that the Library is doing well. He receives 1-2 requests weekly for information. Most requests ask for Journal articles. Periodically the Library receives literature donations. Greg is sorting items to determine what to keep and what to donate to other libraries.

Rossica Identification Service (RIS): RIS is working well, receiving a couple of requests per month. It is free for members. Non-members are being asked to pay \$5 for this service. This should be an opportunity for us to extend an invitation to join Rossica.

### Digital Sites:

**Facebook:** About 320 people have joined Rossica Facebook from all over the world. It is very active. We should add a bilingual advertisement to join Rossica.

**Website:** Randy has had requests for all indexes of our Journals. He was wondering how to make it searchable. Greg had suggestions in that "File with only Content Pages of all Journals might be doable. Greg has a searchable .pdf file from all Journals. He is also able to search numerous journals (not just Rossica) as a global search. Searches are free to members. This information and news should be added to our Facebook site and the Bulletin. Members, for \$90, can purchase searchable PDF journals as a downloaded zip file in the Rossica online bookshop on Rossica's website.

### New Business:

Disbanding of British Society - Dave Skipton has noted to Steve that we should ask BSRP to give us rights to their publications and archive (whatever is left of the archive). Steve agreed to reach out to the BSRP about this concern.

Zoom Meetings - Randy noted that attendance has been dropping and that speakers and subjects need to be interesting. Semyon suggested that perhaps a survey of the membership is needed? Perhaps weekday meetings and times (evenings at 6:00PM East Coast should be attempted. It was agreed that this will be tried a few times.

It was then suggested that we need to engage "younger members - under 50" by asking them to assist on smaller tasks. Steve may have a list of birthdays of members in the last few years. He will check. Greg noted that joining a society is one thing but helping the society run is another thing! Meeting adjourned at 1:05 (Pacific Time).

*Respectfully submitted,  
Vesma Grinfelds, Secretary*

### **IMPORTANT REMINDER:**

**If you did not pay your annual dues for 2024 please pay ASAP or your membership will be suspended before the next journal is mailed.**

## A "Different" Opportunity to Exhibit Internationally

International Shows typically require exhibits to be either one, five or eight frames in length. Rules also define that if a five frame exhibit has received a Large Vermeil in an International Show, it needs to be shown in 8 frame format in the future.

Mare Balticum, an International Show to be held in Tartu, Estonia July 26-28, 2024 is a FEPA (Federation of European Philatelic Associations) event. The United States and Great Britain have been invited to participate. The Show will have FIP judges and judged by FIP standards. A feedback session has been planned.

This unique exhibition has different rules as explained in the IREX (Individual Exhibition Rules). Exhibits of any number of frames between 1 and 8 frames can apply. To qualify, an exhibit must have received at least a silver medal at a national level Show. All classes of exhibit types can apply. Secondly, FEPA has new guidelines accepting regulations for "Narrow Theme Exhibits" comprising 1-2-3 frames.

In addition to "Narrow Theme Exhibits", 4, 6 and 7 frame exhibits can also apply! Numerous exhibitors have exhibits fitting nicely into this total page count. Some exhibits may never be able to reach 5 frames due to subject limitations; others would never be able to expand to 8 frames.

Additionally, this is an opportunity to receive a points score and judging at an International (FIP) level. International level points and feedback are usually only available at GASS upon request.

Did I mention that the fees for Mare Balticum are nominal when compared to a full FIP Show?

Complete information can easily be found at: [www.marebalticum.ee](http://www.marebalticum.ee) The application can be found online along with the IREX. The title page and synopsis should be included with the application. The USA Commissioner is Vesma

Grinfelds (AAPE Secretary) and she can easily be contacted with questions at [vesmag@gmail.com](mailto:vesmag@gmail.com).

Clearly, this is an opportunity to test your exhibits with unusual number of frames at an international level and receive FIP judging.

**The deadline for an exhibit application is Feb 28.** So, if you want to exhibit, you must hurry.

### New Rossica Members

We welcome the following new applicants into the Rossica Society.

#### New members:

2243 - Mikhail Petrunin, Thailand  
2244 - Christopher Harman, United Kingdom  
2245 - Kemal Giray, United Kingdom  
2246 - Don Jacobson, VA, USA  
2247 - Jan Lauridsen, Norway

#### Reinstated:

1837 - Anatoly Chlenov, CA, USA  
2199 - Philip Schnell, OR, USA

## Can't Pay?

*By Randy Woodward*

The postcard shown in Figure 1 (next page) was posted locally in Moscow on January 2, 1923. The fee for a local postcard at that time, was 50 kopecks, measured in 1923 rubles.

The RSFSR inherited the ruble used in the Russian Empire – these rubles are often referred to as the "old" rubles. The old ruble was revalued in April 1922 at a rate of 10,000 old rubles = 1 R (1922). A second revaluation occurred on January 1, 1923, at the rate of 100 R(1922) = 1 R(1923).

The postcard is franked with Scott #210, the 100,000-ruble surcharge of Scott 183, measured in old rubles. The 100,00 old rubles stamp was re-valued first to 10 R(1922) and then to 0.10 R(1923).

Hence the franking on the day (January 2, 1923) the card was posted was only 0.1 rubles, or 10 kopeks. This is an underpayment of 40 kopeks.





Figure 1.

Postage due is calculated as the amount of underpayment plus the registration fee, which on this day was 1 ruble. Hence the total postage due was 1 ruble plus 40 kopeks, or, simple 1.4 rubles.

That due amount was written in the oval handstamp. It was to be paid by the person receiving the postcard.

However, there is a text written across the top

of the card, “Did not have money. / Mailman Pavlov,” indicating that the person receiving the card did not have funds to pay the postage due.

This leads me to a question: What happened to the card after it was refused by the addressee?

Any help would be greatly appreciated. Send replies to randyw1909@gmail.com.

## Unexpected Economic Loss for the Soviet Post Office

by Mikhail Dymshits



I’ve had an envelope in my collection for many years that looks like a common Soviet stamped envelope No. 37-1989 (issued October 17, 1989) but with a significantly displaced indicium – a 50-

kopek stamp shifted to the left. It doesn’t take much magnification to see that this envelope was printed using a photocopier, and the return address on its flap shows who did it. It bears the

Los Angeles address of the Chabad Russian Immigrant Program.

The cover has a U.S. Postage prepaid imprint from a non-profit organization, and yet that piece of mail went through the Soviet post in 1990 when an International Book Fair was being held in Moscow. Most likely, this envelope was produced by the US based organization for its own purposes, but it was brought to Russia by one of its employees who just took a sporting chance to see if he could send it through the post in Moscow. The Soviet postal employees were inattentive and processed the letter as usual because they were

familiar with the envelope's design and the fifty kopek indicium stamp showing the Moscow Kremlin was the proper rate for international airmail. Evidently, the US postage paid imprint was of no importance to outgoing Soviet mail. Of course I should point out that in that time period events were developing so quickly that it is doubtful that whoever came up with the idea of using a Soviet stamped envelope design as a prototype for reproduction, would have expected it to be used in the USSR, especially considering the significant displacement of its postage stamp. And yet – there it is.

## **A Special Service of the UPU in Cases When Postal Service Between Countries is Suspended**

*by Mikhail Dymshits*



During a difficult period in mutual relations between Russia and Georgia in the first decade of the 21st century, Russia instituted a number of bans on postal communication with Georgia between 2006 and 2009. None the less, at least from the Georgian side, delivery of mail to Russia continued unabated, as illustrated by a registered letter that I had received in 2008 from Tbilisi. It had been mailed from there on April 29 and it was

delivered to me on May 8th. The cover has a label that bears the emblem of the Universal Postal Union and is marked “letters - special services.”

I have not been able to find official documents that mandate this type of service, but the evidence shows that the one-sided application of limits on postal communication harms only those who institute it, and has little practical effect on the other side.



## SPECIAL CATALOGUE

For information contact Dmitry Frenkel at:  
[dmitry-f@ukr.net](mailto:dmitry-f@ukr.net)



2023

## СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫЙ КАТАЛОГ почтовых марок РСФСР и СССР

# 1918 – 1940

## RSFSR and USSR Postage Stamps

# SPECIAL CATALOGUE

This is a bilingual catalog in English and Russian. It has 575 pages, 4,500 illustrations and about 100 tables and diagrams; the prices are quoted in US dollars. The catalog offers collected, verified and systematized information on postage stamps of the RSFSR and USSR (1918–1940) and their postal use. In addition to traditional information, the catalog presents stamp varieties by printing types, paper, glue, and perforation, as well as the information on stamp sheets and their elements, specimens, proofs, drafts, stamp booklets, history and dates when the stamps were issued in postal circulation, local issues, revaluations and perforations, and postal use of rare stamp varieties.