



# Membership Loss Decreasing

At the end of April we drop members whose dues have not been paid for the current year. January is the last issue of *The American Philatelist* sent to individuals who have not yet renewed, but we continue encouraging unpaid members to renew and wait until late April before formally dropping them as members. As you can read in this issue's Membership Report, a total of 2,205 members were dropped for nonpayment of dues this year. This is higher than desired, but considerably better than the 2,695 last year, and the *lowest number* since the late 1980s.

With these drops our membership now stands at 30,859 — only 515 fewer than the same time last year. While we have not yet managed to change the losses to gains, our annual net loss dropped by more than half from 1,216 a year ago. And the annual member loss has *dropped every year* since 2008 when, over a 12-month period, membership declined by more than 3,000. If we are able to duplicate the last 12-months improvement this year, next April we would have a year-to-year member *increase* to report!

It is within reach. Staff will do everything they can, but YOU are our best recruiters. Talk with others about what the Society means to you, and encourage club members and other collectors who are not already APS members to join. Once members have joined our retention is excellent, currently at just over 90%. With your help, a year from now we look forward to reporting a gain in membership!

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We often hear “I cannot travel to APS headquarters to take a Summer Seminar course,” or “When will you offer an APS Course on the Road in my city?” To help address the challenge, we have begun offering “Collecting Connections.” Through this new program of online classes, APS instructors are able to offer smaller 1–2 hour, modules of their popular live courses at various times throughout the year. Students may take all of the modules or only the ones that meet their current interests and educational needs.

“Collecting Connections” classes under consideration for 2015 include U.S. Revenues, Postal History, Germany, Stamps & Stories of the 1920s, Collecting WWII Intercontinental Air Mail, and Computers and Collecting I and II — featuring scanning and using Photoshop Elements. APS Education Director Gretchen Moody (gretchen@stamps.org) would like to hear your ideas for additional topics.

I'm also delighted to report that we had the largest attendance ever for the recent “On-the-Road” course that immediately preceded WESTPEX. Over two days, fifty-two students were able to benefit from the knowledge of eight experts on Western Postal History.

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Our August 21–24 APS STAMPSHOW in Hartford is fast approaching. Most members attend for the dealers, exhibits, society meetings, and seminars. However, Hartford is a great city and we have arranged three events to help you, and hopefully your family,



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The 2014 APS STAMP SHOW Cachet designed by Chris Calle.

enjoy your visit.

On Thursday we are offering a tour of the Watkinson Library, led by Head Curator and Librarian Richard J. Ring. The Watkinson serves as a public research library, the rare book and special collections of Trinity College, and the repository of the College archives. It contains more than 175,000 printed volumes ranging in date from the fifteenth century to the present; 4,000 linear feet of manuscript and

archival material; 25,000 pieces of sheet music (1720–1950); more than 5,000 sound recordings; and thousands of pieces of ephemera (postcards, greeting cards, trade cards, ballad sheets, prints, maps, playbills, posters, and broadsides).

Wear your comfortable shoes on Friday for the two-hour walking tour. It will begin at the entrance to the Convention Center walking towards Main Street on the way to Bushnell Park. Some of the highlights will include the statue dedicated to Casimir Pulaski, a hero of the Revolutionary war; Mark Twain, Hartford's most famous author; and state hero Nathan Hale. Entering Bushnell Park you'll see the statue of Horace Wells, the father

of anesthesia, and the Soldiers and Sailors Arch dedicated to those who fought in the Civil War. The tour continues to the exterior of the State Capitol and then heads back to the Convention Center.

A four-hour Saturday bus tour will explore Hartford, beginning with a drive through the Asylum Hill neighborhood, highlighting the colorful personalities that made up

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Bushnell Park.

Nook Farm, including Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe. The tour will include a stop to explore the art, architecture, sculpture, and history of Connecticut's State Capitol and Bushnell Park. Then participants will ride down Main Street and observe treasures such as City Hall, the Ancient Burying Ground, the Wadsworth Atheneum, and the Old State House. The tour also will pass through Coltsville, where Samuel Colt built his Armory, the largest in the world at the time, and learn about Armsmear, the employee housing, the Church of the Good Shepherd, and the Colt Memorial. The bus tour concludes with a tour of the State Capitol.

The Watkinson Library tour is free, while the bus tour costs \$40 per person and the walking tour \$15. Space for all three is limited. Visit <http://stamps.org/SS-Function-Tickets> or call 814-933-3803 to make reservations.

For individuals who prefer to plan their own tours, the Dash offers free transportation for the downtown area directly from the convention center, and other information on area attractions can be reached from links on the APS website.

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June should be an exciting month for stamp collectors. Let's use the sale of the British Guiana One-Cent Magenta to spread the word about our great hobby. The auction of this famous stamp will be held June 17, 2014 at 7 p.m. EST with a predicted sale price of \$10-\$29 million! The live auction can be streamed from the Sotheby's website at [www.sothebys.com/en/auctions.html](http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions.html). (Please note: This is a long page and takes a while to load. Closer to the date there should be a direct link on the main page.)

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