



# Thames Stamp Club Newsletter

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The Thames Stamp Club meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, Sept. through June, at 7:30 P.M. at the Waterford Public Library, 49 Rope Ferry Rd, Waterford, CT. All area philatelists are invited. Annual dues are \$10.00. The club's email is [tbbee@aol.com](mailto:tbbee@aol.com). The club's address is PO Box 624, E. Lyme, CT 06333 and on the web at <http://www.ThamesStampClub.org>.

## January Recap

**10 Jan** – Open meeting at the Waterford Public Library with eight members attending and two on Zoom. Everyone reported they enjoyed the Christmas party. The Club extends its thanks to Suzanne and Rob Cole for the generous use of their lovely home. The inclement weather policy was discussed. If the Waterford Schools are closed, the Waterford Public Library will also be closed. We will revert to a Zoom only meeting. There was a short auction and Charles N supplied the refreshments.

**24 Jan** – Meeting was called to order at the Waterford Public Library with seven members attending and two members on Zoom. Sue F will explore setting up a section on our web site for Club auction lots. A short auction, door prizes and refreshments by Gerry V concluded the evening.

## February Meetings

**14 Feb** – In-person meeting at Waterford Public Library plus Zoom for those who cannot make it. Thamespex hot wash-up cont. Bill B has refreshments

**28 Feb** – In-person meeting at Waterford Public Library plus Zoom for those who cannot make it. Marilyn H has refreshments.

## February Stamp Shows

**25 Feb 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Show** @ The Annex Y.M.A. in East Haven

**9 Mar NORPEX'24** @ Senior Center, 11 Allen Rd, Norwalk

## Here and There

This month's cover-of-the-month illustrates a little known chapter of US Postal history. If you have a candidate for cover-of-the-month, please send me a scan plus a short write-up. Brian has designed another spectacular cover honoring the USS Parche SSN 683. If you have not paid your 24 dues, please consider doing so today. Dues are \$10/yr. Please mail \$10 to TSC, PO Box 624, E. Lyme, CT 06333. I am circulating the stamp-circuit boxes; if you want to check out the box in your home for a few days, let me know. Everyone please stay healthy and safe. The following link will take you to the APS Newsletter: <https://stamps.org/news/c/news/p/1>

Philatelically yours,

*Tony*

Tony Bruno

This month's cover(s) of the month illustrates a fascinating and little know aspect of US Postal History. In 1968 entrepreneur, Thomas M. Murray of Oklahoma founded the Independent Postal System of America (IPSA) as a nationwide commercial carrier of Third and Fourth Class Mail in direct competition with the United States Post Office (USPOD), now the United States Postal Service (USPS). Mr. Murray's IPSA mostly operated in Oklahoma delivering packages, catalogues, magazines essentially 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> class mail cheaply and efficiently. By 1971 the company had grown to 18,000 employees in 30 states and foreign offices in Canada and England. Employees wore fancy uniforms similar to USPOD uniforms. In 1971 the USPOD became an independent government business, the United States Postal Service (USPS) as a result of the Postal Reorganization Act of 1971. By November of 1971, IPSA began issuing 5 ¢ stamps in an attempt to deliver Christmas cards at a discount to USPS rates. The first-class rate in 1971 was 8 ¢, so the IPSA rate was a discount to the then prevailing rate. The USPS and the Postal Unions sued IPSA for attempting to deliver first-class mail. The USPS prevailed and continued to sue IPSA in an attempt to rein in the independent delivery of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class mail. IPSA continued to issue stamps that attempted to discount first-class USPS rates. The first day covers illustrate examples of IPSA stamps issued in 1973. The IPSA 5 ¢ stamp undercut the first-class domestic rate by 3 cents. The USPS continued to litigate IPSA and the company eventually folded in the late 1970s. However the USPS did not prevail on all counts. The courts sided with IPSA on delivery of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class packages which opened the door for FedEx and other package delivery services.



I found these two covers in a lot I purchased and put them into a pile of covers to be checked. My original thought was these were Zazzle stamps. But on close inspection, the stamps are from the Independent Postal System of America. These are the first and only examples of IPSA mail I have found. The company existed for about 10 years but very few examples survive.

\* Reference: <https://web.archive.org/web/20060517115720/http://www.wichitastampclub.org/IPSA.html>, by Louis Forster