

San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club

*Meetings are held the fourth Saturday of every month except December
Visitors and dealers are always welcome*

See us online at www.postcard.org

March 2004

Volume XIX, No. 3

Next Meeting: Saturday, March 20, 12 to 3 PM

Fort Mason Center, Room C-370

Laguna Street at Marina Boulevard, San Francisco

Please disarm pagers, cell phones, and alarms during the meeting.

Program Notes: Vice President Bob Bowen has invited Ranger Marcus Combs to be the speaker at our annual PPIE extravaganza. Marcus' presentation will be on the current PPIE exhibit at the Presidio, and he will reveal what was involved in coordinating the exhibit among numerous governmental bodies, some of the problems that occurred and what's going to happen to the items in the exhibit. Marcus has had a long career with the Park Service at the Presidio and Muir Woods and is presently the volunteer coordinator who leads many of the historical and naturalist walks in the GGNRA.

As in past years, collectors and historians specializing in the PPIE have been invited to set up exhibits at our March meeting.

Robert Eckhardt has donated the postcard collection he built up during his youth. The attaché case full of cards will be at the meeting for our selection at 10¢ each. Thanks Robert!

Show & Tell: PPIEana, of course, and as always, collector's choice. Three item, two minute limit.

COVER CARD

Along with her dues Michelle Callarman sent word that she has "become fascinated by the Corn Palace. Do you know anything about it?" First built in 1892, the Mitchell, South Dakota auditorium is postcard famous and a major example of civic folk art in the US. Each year it is redecorated using thousands of bushels of colored corn and tons of other grains. It can be seen on real photos, white borders, chromes, and mods, some of them cartoons and dazzling night views. The Corn Palace was rebuilt in 1921 featuring a roof with onion domes and cupolas. The building's many panels have portrayed scenes of local history, transportation, the Statue of Liberty, Indian themes, buffalo, Mount Rushmore, and much more. Janet and I stopped there on a cross country junket in the early '90s. The building was open, as it is every day, with free entry. That day there was a program on signs of the devil and protecting our children from Satan.



Postcard courtesy of Rich Musante

—Lew Baer

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Newsletter Deadline: 10th of each month

MINUTES, February 28, 2004

Although parking had been difficult forty members and guests signed in. Just before noon many parking spaces were emptied, a reward for late arrivers.

Cards were brought for sale or trade by Ray Costa, Joseph Jaynes, Ed Herny, Brenda and Rich Musante and others.

We were called to order by President Ed Herny. Guests were introduced: Sally Jensen who brought some of her father's postcards; Jacky Mollenkopf, a long time but infrequently seen member; Linda Richardson who collects landscapes; Jose Navaez, one of our new members and an acquaintance of Joseph Jaynes who resisted coming to a meeting but is glad he gave in; Craig Hudson whose interest is architecture; Berkeley historian Allen Stross who passed out copies of the postcard he published of the Golden Gate Pavilion on the shores of Stow Lake. Wayne Ellinger, a friend of our Pennsylvania member Don Brown, dropped by to donate a box of new and old postcards which were swiftly devoured.

Announcements: Lew Baer told of the donated cards on the front table, 10¢ each; the auction to be held on the Sunday of the Santa Cruz show; the catalogs soon to be published by Retro-Photo, our

members in France; a letter received from Frank Smith who is now living in Baltimore; and the program on the PPIE to be held at the Presidio March 7. Hester Lox then led a discussion on last week's Presidio program and those to come.

Ray Costa announced that the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum has a new exhibit up on the Mare Island shipyard with a few postcards (all Ray's); and that the Vallejo Gem and Mineral Society will celebrate its 50th anniversary at the fairgrounds on March 14 and 15.

Ed Herny brought a few postcards advertising the Paul Elder exhibit at the main San Francisco library; next Sunday will be the giant outdoor Alameda antique fair.

Old Business: Jack Daley announced that sometime during the day our website, www.postcard.org, would welcome its 20,000th visitor.

New Business: Ed Herny received a letter from the North Bay Philatelic Society inviting us to make use of the philatelic library in Sunnyvale.

Show & Tell: Darlene Thorne brought real photos of a 1919 airshow in Guerneville; when she told her dad of them he told her that he had been there with his father. A cousin's caregiver turned her patient's postcard collection over to Darlene and her sister including a card with their mother and



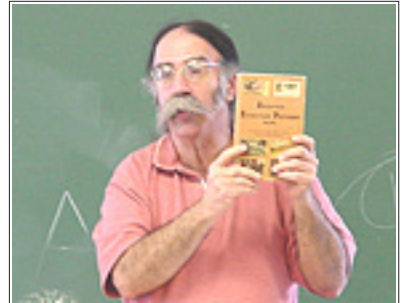
grandfather and other family members, and an RP of their uncle in his car for hire at the pre-Playland Beach and at the Cliff House. (Tears from Darlene; applause from the crowd.) ... Sharon Wolf collects chromes and was at the Tampa show two weeks ago where she found several new cards which she showed us for her Babes & Machines category of pretty girls with office machinery. ... Hy Mariampolski is a New York City collector, especially entertainment; he showed cards also found at Tampa of night clubs: early 1900s Bowery, from the swing era Rio Rita and the only Swing Girl Orchestra, Hollywood Cabaret Restaurant, an RP of a Spanish night club in Greenwich Village, and Fleishman's Turkish and Russian Baths (women 10 AM to 10 PM, men 10 PM to 10 AM). Dan Cudworth brought a real photo of a 1907 race in wooden laundry tubs a Fort Comfort, Piermont, New York; an Army airship lowering a passenger onto a train, an RP of a ship and blimp, and from Abe Samuels' cards in a Playle auction a Liberty bonds promo set showing Huns bayonetting Jesus. ... Rich Roberts, always on the hunt for cards of Cornwall, came up with a real photo of Cornish miners last week, and alerted to the category by an ad in postcard magazines picked up a national bank card from Sharon, Pennsylvania with an ad for the architect on the back. ... Jack Daley showed a family card of the ship his grandfather came to the US aboard in 1917. ... Jack Hudson brought "three wonderful cards" he got from Richard Musante: all 1948 Autocar trucks that are in the same format as his 103 early Autocar advertising real photos. ... Ed Herny brought two cards from a collection he bought (and he is hoping to find more): both are Arts & Crafts style by Companeros of Santa Rosa. Harold Wright and Kay Yonemoto knew about the publisher: a brother and sister, John

and Catherine Comstock, who came West in 1908 to do some work for Luther Burbank.

—Bruce Diggelman, Recording Secretary

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Ed Herny has been collecting 1894 California Midwinter International Exposition cards for about thirty years. They are the earliest and some of the rarest San Francisco true picture postcards, and Ed has told us about them twice before. Each time that he brings out his Midwinter Fair cards he reveals new details and once showed two newly discovered cards. This month he has offered the text of his presentation for the newsletter along with views of six cards and their backs as well as overprint variations and a real photo. This is an exceptional opportunity for expo collectors and researchers to see both sides of the three sets of MWF cards—in monochrome in these pages and in full color on www.postcard.org. Turn to page 4.



Ed Herny and the Megson Expo book;
Photo: Chris Pollock

TREASURER'S REPORT

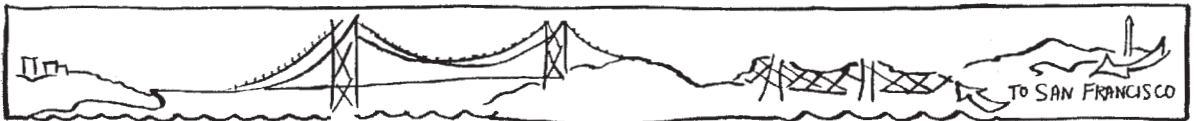
As of March 7, 2004 \$1814.40

—Daniel Saks

EDITOR'S REPORT

Here's another full issue thanks to our generous contributors, and with luck next month we'll fill twelve pages again. For May and beyond, it's up to each of us.

—Lew Baer



THE POSTCARDS OF THE 1894 CALIFORNIA MIDWINTER FAIR

by Edward M. Herny

The first postcards printed and used in the U.S. were privately printed cards that appeared in 1861. By 1873 the first government “postals” had been issued. A small fraction of these had advertising preprinted on them, and an even smaller group had advertising that included illustrations. These were, technically, the first picture postcards in America. They are fascinating and often include much historical information, but are difficult to study as postcards. This is due to the fact that there were not yet any “postcard publishers” as we understand that term and most cards were the individual efforts of the businesses whose advertising they announced. They were not published in sets and most were unique in their design. Larger American cities and many towns had their examples, and San Francisco had its share. The Baker and Hamilton hardware company issued one in the 1870s that may well have been San Francisco’s first picture postcard.

But interesting as they were, it seems somehow awkward to collect from a field of what was essentially a group of exceptions looking for a rule. In 1893 the playing field changed. The occasion of America’s first actual World’s Fair, the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, saw the sudden appearance of a plethora of picture postcards—some of them even in sets—from more than two dozen publishers. Some earlier expos had produced a card or two, but this one produced a crop that could inspire and even create postcard collectors.

San Francisco’s California Midwinter International Exposition which opened on the heels of

the Columbian in January of 1894 was quick to learn from the success of its predecessor.

Three sets of illustrated postcards and a few stragglers were the result.

There are now three postcard reference books that list or catalogue these cards. The first was Jefferson Burdick’s *Pioneer Postcards* which appeared in 1956, and the author deserves credit for having created the first organized listing of these cards. Burdick’s book includes all the U.S. postcards known to him to have been printed up to 1898, which constitutes the “Pioneer Era.”

The next reference book to appear was *American Exposition Postcards 1870-1920* by Frederic and Mary Megson in 1992. This is an excellent book and it includes more detail and more expo cards of the period than Burdick. It gives estimated values, and manages to include nearly every expo card known today for the time period that it covers. Late in 2003, a third work was issued. In *The Birth and Development of the American Postcard* Daniel Friedman divides the Pioneer Era into two periods—Early, 1861-93, and Classic, 1893-98. His listings of the Midwinter Fair postcards closely follows that of the Megson book.

The first set of Midwinter Fair cards proclaims itself the “Official Set” and lists G. L. Hergert as the copyright holder and the Schmidt Lithography and Label Co. of San Francisco as the printer. There are nine cards in this set, and it is often referred to by collectors as the “set of nine.”

While the Schmidt Lithography and Label Co. was a large and well known firm in San Francisco, little is known about G. L. Hergert. A quick check in





Front and back of one card from the Set of Nine

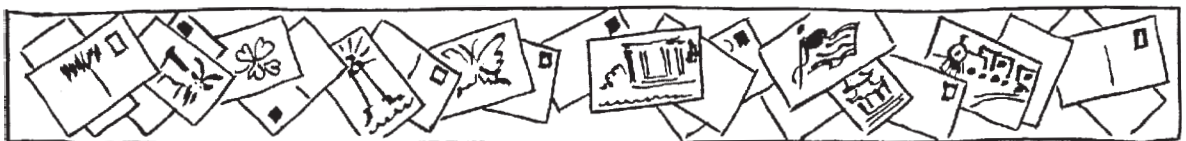
the S.F. city directories reveals no listing of Mr. Hergert in the years 1890-94. He does pop up in 1895 with the simple designation of “manufacturer’s agent” in his one-line listing in the directory.

The Set of Nine is the most attractive of the three sets. The quality of the color printing is excellent, and the cards are printed on fairly high quality card stock. Each card has two vignetted views of scenes and people at the fair. Most say “Greeting from” and each is designated a “Souvenir Correspondence Card” as the term postcard was not yet in common use for privately published mailing cards. The reverse includes a boxless stamp box and a rendering of the California state seal in the opposite corner.

The cards in this set are by far the most frequently encountered of the Midwinter Fair issues, but even so are quite rare. Most are seen unused, but when mailed one addressee is the most common, a Monsieur Carion in Paris, France. It is possible that he was a stamp dealer or collector who had these cards sent to him to create an inventory of postally used cards that he could then sell or trade.

The second set consists of four cards and some-

what resembles the first set, the Set of Nine. The fronts of this Set of Four are also attractively color lithographed, but of a slightly lesser quality than the Set of Nine. Also, the card stock they are printed on is of a lesser quality, and as a result of this these cards are most often found darkened by age and with damaged corners and edges. There is no printer’s or publisher’s name on any card in this set and they are therefore designated “anonymous.” This set is far scarcer than the nine card set. Perhaps the most interesting feature of these cards is that they occasionally appear with overprinted advertising. The advertiser is most often Fleming’s Whiskey, although the Megson book also mentions a company called Nordman Bros. The Fleming’s Whiskey overprints sometimes include a list of places where the whiskey can be purchased in the message area on the front of the card. One example that I have in my collection also has on the reverse the words “Mechanics Fair 1895” indicating, apparently, that leftover cards from this set were recycled the next year at another event. A curious fact in connection with the Fleming’s Whiskey overprint is that G. L. Hergert is mentioned as the Pacific Coast Agent for





Examples of fronts and backs of the Set of Four: at top an unused card with 2¢ 1893 Columbian series stamp attached, and below two cards with different overprints effectively turning them into trade cards.





A card from the Set of Five, front printed in red, back in black; very discolored card stock.

Fleming's Whiskey. This seems odd, in that Hergert is the publisher of the Set of Nine but overprinted this Set of Four. This set also includes a portrait of M. H. De Young, the Director General of the Midwinter Fair, on the reverse. I have not seen any card of this set postally used.

The third set which includes five cards, is entirely different from the first two. The most striking variation is that the front of the card is printed in only one color. Burdick lists both red and green varieties and Megson also mentions a blue one. These cards are crudely printed on very acidic card stock. While of lesser quality, they are also

the most rare of the three sets, and I have not seen any postally used. This set, curiously, does not have the word "card" printed on it at all, and instead designates itself as merely a souvenir. At least one of the five views has the imprint of the Union Photo Engraving Co. of San Francisco, and this is the presumed publisher of this set.

The three reference books each assign a different numbering system to the three sets of cards, so perhaps it is in fact simpler to continue to refer to them as the sets of nine, four, and five respectively.

In addition to these three sets, there are also a few individual cards. Megson lists an advertising post-



Photo taken at Midwinter Fair, printed and mailed during the post-1898 Private Mailing Card era.



card from the R. N. Nason & Co. of S.F. (a paint company), which mentions, but does not picture, the Midwinter Fair. Also in Megson is a divided back photo postcard of the official birdseye view poster of the fair. This apparently was issued some years after the fair closed. I also have in my collection, two photo postcards, one mailed in 1900, the other unused which are both views of the fair and are produced in identical format to each other. There is no publisher indicated, but the sender of the mailed one is Dr. O. H. Gardner of Port Townsend, Washington, who is possibly the maker.

Work clearly remains to be done on the history of these sets, particularly to identify the publisher of the Set of Four.

The comparative rarity of all of the Midwinter Fair postcards indicates, that while they appeared at the time that picture postcards were beginning to become popular, they could not have sold very well. Trade cards from this event are far more common, though 1894 was certainly the tail end of the trade card era. Another factor that must be considered is that trade cards were usually giveaways while postcards were usually sold. Also, the oversize dimensions of all the Midwinter Fair postcards made them less likely to be saved when the modern standard size became prevalent in 1898. Thereafter, the Midwinter postcards thus far saved, might then easily have been discarded—or just as sadly, trimmed—as they would not fit standard postcard albums or boxes.

Collecting these scarce cards and piecing together their story has given me much enjoyment. I welcome any new information or better yet, any additional cards that may appear.



Memories of Treasure Island

by George Epperson

I was fresh out of high school when the H.S. Crocker Co. recommended me to run the mimeograph machine for the Publicity Dept. on Treasure Island in 1939. I proofread the news releases and printed them for the newspapers. I also did the daily programs. I was first to know what was doing on the island. The girls would type the stencils at a record 120 words a minute on the new I.B.M. electric typewriters. We were given passes to all the great shows such as Folies Bergere, Cavalcade of America and Billy Rose's Aquacade with Esther Williams.

On opening day of the fair I took the first ferry to the island. Everyone rushed to be first on the island. I decided I would be last and just watch the excitement. There was a man on the dock with a long cord and microphone trying to interview anyone. It was Art Linkletter who had his own radio program. I was his last chance. He rushed up to me and got a death grip on my arm. After the in-



This is a postcard view of "Opening Day of Treasure Island Ferry February 16, 1939".
First ferry to the Fair; George at upper right railing



terview he gave me tickets to everything at the fair; what a fantastic day. For months after, old ladies would tell me that they had heard me on the radio.

I rode the nickel electric train to the Mole in Oakland to get the ferry. A fair reporter boarded a few stops after and sat with me. He was from New York and would ask how the weather was going to be. As I lived on a hill I could see the cloud formations out to the Golden Gate. It was strange that my predictions always agreed with the weather report. One day the weather puzzled me and the reporter surprised me by asking what he should put in the paper. I told him to say it's going to be fair weather. He liked that, and for the rest of the fair it was fair weather.

Every day I brought a bag lunch and would sit in the sun in the luxurious South Garden by a pool, fountain, trees and flowers while listening to the beautiful background music and watching the seagulls. What could be nicer!

I have many unforgettable memories of the two years I worked there. Helen and I spent our courtship on that island. After sixty-five years it seems like a wonderful dream.

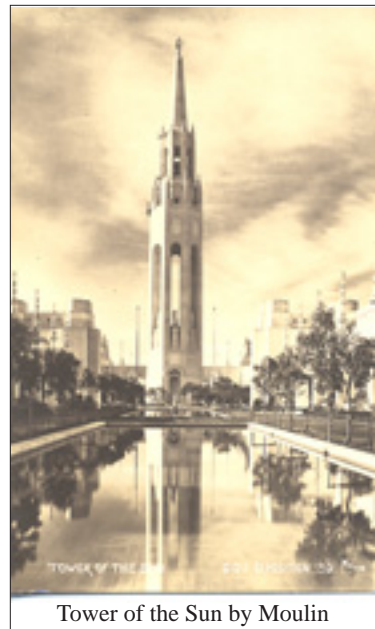
A stream of celebrities came through our office. The official photographer Gabriel Moulin would take their pictures for the papers. One day I was



Theme Girl Zoe Dell Lantis

asked to drive the Fair Theme Girl, Zoe Dell Lantis, to the site of the 1915 fairgrounds in San Francisco. They wanted a picture of the old and new. I asked, "Why me?" The boss said that he couldn't trust the older reporters. Zoe had a cute pirate costume her mother had made. I drove her there in a brand new DeSoto sedan. It had the first automatic transmission. I was told to just step on the gas and away it would go. Off we went onto the new Bay Bridge in style. Fifty years later I met Zoe at a Treasure Island reunion, and she still remembered. Early one morning when I was crossing the fairgrounds I saw the California building swarming with firemen. No one would tell me what was going on, but that night the building burned to the ground, making headlines around the world. I always thought it was a publicity stunt.

The Tower of the Sun reached up into the clouds, which made it look at times like the tower was



Tower of the Sun by Moulin

moving. One day a lady looked up and screamed, "The tower is falling! The tower is falling!" which caused a panic.

Another time in the Science Building there was an unusual visual scene showing the Court of Nations just outside. The narrator said that these were ac-



tual pictures now being taken. I rushed outside to see if it were true. Sure enough, there were the same people. What a miracle—television! There were a lot of surprises such as meeting Wrong-Way Corrigan by his airplane. The big bands and dances were tremendous... jitterbug contests... always something doing. Edgar Bergen with Charlie McCarthy, Bing Crosby; you name them, they were there. Happy kids in paddlewheel boats, elephant trains, screams from the Fun Zone, Mrs. Merchley's Musical Maids....

I loved to listen to Hertado's Bahia Marimba Band which played in the bandstand overlooking the Lake of Nations. I was able to buy his marimba at a garage sale years later. His daughter said that he had played it at both the 1915 and 1939 fairs.

Gabriel Moulin did an exceptional series of photographic postcards. I have almost a hundred of these treasures that bring back fond memories. One card of the Tower of the Sun with a fair postmark, written by Meta to Mrs. Martin of Kentucky, puts it well, "This Fair is beautiful. The planting, trees and flowers is perfect. You would love it."

P.S. ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO publishers ran contests for the wordiest message on a postcard. Michelle Callarman's missive might have qualified. After she asked about the Corn Palace she went on to tell about her childhood in Marin County and astonishment at the sudden disappearance of Nave Lanes just off 101 in Novato. "It looked like Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax building and was closed and falling into disrepair." Now it's gone, and Michelle is wondering if any one of us has a postcard view of the bowling alley. She also bemoans the conversion of the Alhambra Theatre into a yuppie gym, the Alcazar into a garage, and the total disappearance of

the Fox. Michelle was cheerful over her first sortie at the Alameda mega fair. She bought about fifty cards from someone in the hangar and is eager to return. Michelle also hopes to be opening her own stationery store in Polk gulch, with excellent postcards, of course!

HESTER LOX gets a prize for her cleverly elegant way of gifting a postcard. She folded a piece of nicely textured heavy paper in half just a bit larger than the sleeved postcard, decorated the front, cut corner slits on the inside and tucked the postcard into them. "Oh, just another greeting card," the recipient thought, until it was opened and the treasure inside was discovered. ... Suzanne Dumont earned a prize in the same category a few years ago by putting a card in an oversize rigid holder with small address labels on the sleeve over the back of the card, and a self adhesive first class stamp. The open end was secured with a gold foil notary seal. ... Try them both. I have.

A **LETTER** from Frank Smith tells that he has written to the USPS suggesting a stamp for the 100th anniversary of the 1906 earthquake and fire. And he suggests that we all follow his lead. In return, the USPS sent Frank a postcard telling that his comments are included in the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee files. With less than two years to go to April 18, 2006 we'd better start writing, too.

NEW MEMBER Roger Skinner wants us to know about the postcard reference books at the Western Philatelic Library in Sunnyvale. Of most general interest are Burdick's *Pioneer Post Cards*, the last Ryan edition of *Picture Postcards in the United States 1893-1918* (often referred to as *The Bible*), and Mashburn's *The Postcard Price Guide*. Info: 408 733-0336. Other books deal with specialized topics, including postal history. A few days earlier a letter from Peter Barrale brought a clipping from the "American Philatelist" that tells of a dealer's and collector's great surprise to find that the postal markings on two common postcards had a catalog value of £1000. Even more startling was the actual hammer price of almost £12,000!

—Lew



POSTCARD CALENDAR

Mar. 24, Wednesday, San Francisco, Presidio Officers' Club (50 Moraga Avenue in the Presidio), PPIE program: David Parry speaking on "The Architecture of the Fair"

Mar. 27-28, Saturday-Sunday, Santa Cruz, Postcard & Paper Show plus **live auction**, UCSC Inn, 611 Ocean Street, 10am-4 and 5 pm*+

Mar. 31, Wednesday, **San Francisco**, see March 3, Park Ranger John Martini speaking on the Army and the PPIE

Apr. 2-4, Friday-Sunday, **Santa Clara**, Coin, Stamp & Collectibles Show, Santa Clara Convention Center, 5001 Great American Parkway, Fri. & Sat. 10am-7pm, Sun. 10am-3pm*

Apr. 4, Sunday, **Alameda**, see Mar. 7*

Apr. 7, Wednesday, **San Francisco**, see Mar. 3, Rebecca Baker speaking on Burbank, Edison and Ford at the PPIE

Apr. 17, Saturday, **San Francisco**, SFM&HS Chicken's Ball. See below.

Apr. 25, Sunday, San Francisco, Golden Gate Post Card Show at Ephemera 2004, SF County Fair Building, Lincoln Way at 9th Avenue, 10am-5pm

Apr. 29-May 2, Thursday-Sunday, **San Mateo**, Antique Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds, Thurs.-Sat. 11am-8pm, Sun. 11am-5pm*

May 2, Sunday, **Alameda**, see Mar. 7

May 7-8, Fri.-Sat., **Grass Valley**, Old West Antique Show, Fairgrounds, Fri. 11am-6pm, Sat. 9am-5pm*

May 14-16, Friday-Sunday, **Pomona**, huge RBF Collectibles Show, Pomona Fairplex, LA County Fairgrounds, Fri. 11am-6pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-4pm*+

May 22, Saturday, **San Francisco**, Antique Show, SF County Fair Building, 9th & Lincoln, 10:30am-5pm*

May 29-30, Saturday-Sunday, Concord, Vintage Paper Fair, Concord Centre, 5298 Clayton Road, 10am-6 and 4pm*+

Jun. 4-6, Friday-Sunday, Pasadena, Vintage Paper Fair, 400 West Colorado Blvd., Fri. 1pm-7pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-4pm+

Aug. 21-22, Saturday-Sunday, Sacramento, Capital Antique Paper and Post Card show, 6151 H Street, 10am-5 and 4pm*+

Oct. 8-9, Friday-Saturday, Santa Rosa, Redwood Empire Post Card & Paper and antique bottle show, Finley Hall, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Fri. noon-7pm (\$5), Sat. 9am-3pm (Free)

Bolded dates are shows produced by SFBAPCC members.

*Ken Prag will set up at these shows. Call him at 415 586-9386 or kprag(at)planetaria.net to let him know what he can bring for you.

+R&N Postcards will be at these shows with cards and postcard supplies for sale.

Postcards are available for browsing and sale 7 days a week at the SF Antique Mall, 701 Bayshore Blvd., where 101 and 280 meet, info: 415 656-3530; also Wednesday through Sunday at *Postcards, Books, Etc.*, in Cotati. Call to confirm: 707 795-6499.

DON'T BE CHICKEN

Our friends at the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society invite us to attend The Chicken's Ball, Saturday, April 17, 2004, at The Old Mint, 5th and Mission Streets. Dinner in the vaults 5:30 to 7:30 pm or wine and dessert reception 7:00 to 10:00 pm. Entertainment by singers and musicians from the "Barbary Coast" starts at 8:00 pm. Dancing after the entertainment. Tickets \$75-\$250 with proceeds benefitting the San Francisco Museum-to-be at the Old Mint. Info: www.sfhistory.org.



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA POST CARD CLUB
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

New Renewal Individual or Family \$15 Out of USA \$20

Name: _____

Family members: _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Collector Dealer Approvals welcome: Yes No

Collecting interests: _____

Please make your check payable to SFBAPCC
and mail it to PO Box 621, Penngrove CA 94951

3/04

P.O. Box 621
Penngrove CA 94951



CLUB MEETINGS

2004

March 20

April 24

May 22

June 26

July 24

August 28

September 25

October 23

November 27

See us online at www.postcard.org