Program Notes: It’s holiday party time and a free-for-all show and tell. Authors within the club are asked to display and discuss their books—non-postcard books, too—and offer them for sale. Everyone is invited to bring a few cards to brag about. And for the festive board we are all to provide nongooy finger foods to share—sweet or savory. Beverages and tableware will be supplied by the club.

A box of better quality cards, not seen before at a club meeting, will be available for purchase for the treasury’s benefit. There will also be postcard books and other items—given by Louise Costa from her husband Ray’s estate.

COVER CARD

Coralie Sparre, a schoolteacher by profession, published postcards as part of her educational calling. She used them to entertain and inform her students, and she intended her cards to be used in schools everywhere. Her cards were produced by Mike Roberts who had a 3,000 card minimum press run, so there were plenty left over to sell to collectors. For years Coral-Lee cards languished in her garage, then later in dealer ten and twenty-five cent boxes. Today their monetary value has increased substantially, as has their educational impact.

Take this card honoring Sandra Day O’Connor on her appointment to the Supreme Court in 1981. Justice O’Connor is recognizable, but I had to search for the identities of all but two others. Can you name them?

—LEWIS BAER

Thirty-four members and guests signed in. A few guests escaped without leaving their autographs. Cards were brought for sale or trade by Jack Hudson, Shirley Tuten, Roman Manevich, Albert Muller, Dave Parry, Arlene and Ted Miles and Sue Scott. Dan Saks, our Treasurer/Hall Manager, deserved a round of applause for the exceptionally easy parking situation.

We were called to order by President Ed Herny. Ed introduced Glenn Koch who introduced Brian Schatell, a long time member living in New York City who was attending his first meeting: “There used to be two of us in the New York area. Now Glenn has moved out here. We never competed as he goes for the vintage gems, and I like touristy chromes.” Jim Caddick, a guest, was also introduced; his interest is photographic history and he is currently researching a man named Heght.

There were thirteen lucky winners in the drawing. Announcements: Jack Hudson showed a new book, “Halloween Merrymaking,” a “must-have with articles and illustrations from ladies’ magazines, lots of postcards.”

Lew Baer told about the Retro-Photo auction catalog from France with exceptional art cards; the Jackson auction in Iowa with mint Muchas—including the Waverley Bicycle card, plenty of Schmuckers and more; a French-English book on the postcards of the 1924 Olympics. Lew also reminded us that dues for 2006 would be gladly accepted.

Ed Herny reminded us about the Sunnyvale show on November 5.

Old Business: Ed Herny spoke about the Earthquake centennial celebration. Several members attended an update meeting at the Oakland Museum. Ed also spoke about the need for participants for a postcard exhibit at Westpex, the large philatelic expo in San Francisco next spring. There will be plenty of secure display space available. Because our club is a member of the local umbrella stamp organization, club members may exhibit cards (or stamps) in judged shows.

New Business: None

Show & Tell: Albert Muller finished researching and mounting his collection of Rembrandt drawings and etchings, “unfortunately they’re postcards, not the real things”; he showed a new book by Robert Olen Butler, HAD A GOOD TIME, stories out of postcards… Glenn Koch told of a super book he bought at Green Apple on Clement Street, REAL PHOTO POSTCARDS… Ted Miles showed a new card made for the Western Railway Museum from a
photo by Arlene; it shows SF Muni car #178, which ran from 1923 to 1958.

Darlene Thorne found a number of real photo postcards on postcards at the Santa Rosa show, all made by the Golden Gate Post Card club, our forerunner; she also bought a set of RPs a few years ago postmarked San Francisco, and she located the house pictured on it in West Portal—designed by Bernard Maybeck. … Rich Roberts showed a real photo of a signal tower—a railroad switch building—postmarked on a small railway line in England. … Brian Schatell brought five oversize die cut San Francisco cards—cute, clever and 50 to 59 years old. … Lew Baer showed a new addition to his goats on different types of cards: his first die cut from Catalina. … Jack Hudson held up a frame with six cards: lines of race cars at Daytona Beach, a hand colored bus in Nevada, real photo of a woman parachute jumper, Cal Rogers and his aeroplane, a Leyland Thomas racing car, and an Outcault souvenir card with the Yellow Kid, mailed April 17, 1906. … Dave Parry helped to make an exhibit now in City Hall on “100 years of Organized Real Estate”; he told of having breakfast with earthquake author Simon Winchester and learned about the free mail service after the disaster; Dave also showed a card he needs help translating; he thinks it’s in Finnish. … Sue Scott told that she is looking for postally used Guatemala cards for trading.

—BRUCE DIGGELMAN, RECORDING SECRETARY

Program: Kathryn Ayres on
Queen Virgilia: Portolá [Portola] Festival

“October is Portolá [Portola] Festival month,” the explorer’s name pronounced as the festival committee and newspapers at the time had instructed—“Port-o-LAH.” The first festival was held in 1909 commemorating the discovery of San Francisco Bay 140 years earlier and recovery from the earthquake and fire of three years before. The resident population of the city was 565,000 at that time, and the festival attracted more than two million visitors. It was the great success of the Portolá [Portola] event that convinced the civic powers to pursue hosting the 1915 fair.

Every festival needs a queen, and as she spoke Kathryn held up enlargements of postcards showing Virgilia Bogue, the woman chosen to be consort to Don Gaspar de Portola, played by Nicholas Cova-rubias. We saw Virgilia on a Britton & Rey card and on a series of “official” view cards overlaid with her face in a cartouche. During the time of the festival the auto show was displaying 1910 models, and Kathryn showed an over-
size card of Virgilia at the wheel of a White steam car, the same model car that President Taft had. Next, a real photo of Portolá [Portola] with his his queen by his side receiving the key to the city.

When she was considered for filling the role of festival queen, Virgilia was examined by a team of competent judges. In publicity releases her name was misspelled as Vergilia, but not on postcards. She was credited with many accomplishments, most of them questionable. The real trouble began when a novel Virgilia had written was published after she became queen. The story was about a thinly disguised alter ego who loved a man other than her husband, a character named Paolo Cenari.

A Pacific Novelty card shows Virgilia walking on Covarrubias’ arm on Market Street. The message on the back whispers of Virgilia’s secret marriage... no, engagement, news of which leaked out six weeks later. The husband-to-be was Carlo Cesarej Baron, an interior decorator turned street-car motorman. After their marriage the couple moved to Italy where depression overtook Virgilia. She was eventually institutionalized.

Holding up the card of the royal couple walking proudly down San Francisco’s grandest thoroughfare, Kathryn reiterated: “She had been Queen.”

Hearty applause followed this intriguing and dramatic presentation.

—NOTES TAKEN BY LEW BAER

The Club’s finances are in fairly good shape (your Treasurer never wants to sound too optimistic) thanks to the many members who opted to join at the Supporting Membership level when it was introduced last year. Your continued support is much appreciated.

The 2006 Schedule will be found on the back cover. We meet on the fourth Saturday of each month except for August and September when the dates have been changed to avoid conflict with the Sacramento show and the impossible to park at Blues Festival.

—DANIEL SAKS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS
Sam and Susan Torres, El Cerrito; both are collectors of Richmond, Pinole, El Cerrito, San Pablo, Lake Tahoe and the entire Bay Area.

POSTCARD CALENDAR
Nov. 17-20, Thursday-Sunday, Santa Clara, Coin, Stamp, & Collectibles Expo, 5001 Great American Parkway, Fri.-Sat. 10am-7pm, Sun. to 3pm*
Nov. 25-27, Friday-Sunday, San Francisco, Dickens Fair with naughty French Postcard Review, Cow Palace, also next three weekends to December 18, 11am-7pm
Dec. 10-11, Saturday-Sunday, San Rafael, Collectors’ Fair, Civic Center, 10am-6 and 5pm*
Dec. 30-Jan. 1, Friday-Sunday, Santa Clara, Antique Show, Santa Clara Convention Center, Fri. & Sat. 11am-7pm, Sun. 11am-5pm*
Jan. 7-8, Saturday-Sunday, San Mateo, Antique & Collectibles Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds. 9am-6 and 5pm*
Jan. 21-22, Saturday-Sunday, Sacramento, Capital Postcard & Paper Show, 6151 H Street, 10am-5 and 4pm*+
Feb. 3-5, Friday-Sunday, Pasadena, Hal’s Paper

TREASURER/HALL MANAGER REPORT
As of November 5, 2005 ................. $2,610.17
It’s DUES time again. Regular Memberships at $15 and Supporting Memberships at $25 (or more) can be given or sent to Lew Baer, Dan Saks or paid through Paypal on our web site, www.postcard.org.
Fair, 400 W. Colorado Blvd., Fri. 1pm-7pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. (Free entry day!) 10am-4pm*+
Feb. 9-12, Thursday-Sunday, San Mateo, Hillsborough Antique Show, San Mateo Expo Fairgrounds, Thurs-Sat 11am-8pm, Sunday to 5pm*
Feb. 11-12, Sat-Sun, Concord. Hal’s Paper Fair, 5298 Clayton Road, 10am-6 and 4pm, $6, Free Sunday+
Feb. 25-26, Saturday-Sunday, San Francisco, Antiquarian Book Fair, 7th & Brannan Streets, Saturday 10am-7pm, Sunday 11am-5pm*
Mar. 11-12, Saturday-Sunday, San Rafael, Collectors’ Fair, Civic Center, 10am-6 and 5pm*
Apr. 8-9, Saturday-Sunday, Santa Cruz, Postcard & Paper Show, UCSC Inn, 611 Ocean Street, 10am-5 and 4pm*

Bolded entries are events by SFBAPCC members.

On the first Sunday of every month several dealers set up at the huge outdoor antique market at the Old Naval Air Station in Alameda.

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

+R&N Postcards will set up with cards and postcard supplies.

Postcards are available for browsing seven days a week at the SF Antique Mall, 701 Bayshore Blvd., where 101 and 280 meet, info 415 656-3530.

JOHN FISHER and OLD STUFF

Old Stuff, an antique store on outer Clement Street, was an open secret amongst many SFBAPCC members. The little shop provided wonderful opportunities for collectors with time on their hands. Though the many boxes of postcards were unsorted, the price was right—one dollar each, six cards for five dollars. But the owner, John Fisher, had become more sophisticated in recent years. Not long ago, I selected some embossed Thanksgiving cards from albums he had just purchased, and he looked a little uncomfortable. He gravely said, “Oh. I’ll have to charge you more for those.” After a brief pause, he added, “Four dollars each.” I tried to match his grave tone, and said that would be all right. I didn’t feel guilty.... They were for my collection and remain some of my favorite cards.

John often had furniture out on the sidewalk to entice customers, but last month there was a whole bunch of “old stuff,” including a life-sized mechanical Santa. As I got closer, I could see the signs in the windows: “Everything 50% Off” and “Closing October 31st.”

I was already a little saddened, because The Bookmonger, a wonderful used bookstore a block away, had closed a year ago—the owner had retired. So I walked into Old Stuff expecting to congratulate John on his retirement. But, no! The place, usually stocked full, was almost empty, and the man behind the counter told me that John had died of a heart attack on September 15th. He was 57.

John always remembered customers’ names and collecting interests. He would greet me with a smile, and immediately move to get his more special postcards out of the back room for me.

After considerable effort to clear the lump in my throat, I asked the man behind the counter what would become of the boxes and boxes of cards that were still in the shop. Our editor has learned that Joseph Jaynes has purchased the stock. A fitting match. Joseph, like John, shares his treasures at friendly prices… and Joseph, of course, will sort them.

John’s store was an experience, a trip back in time. He clearly chose his profession for the love of “old stuff.” He will be sorely missed.

—KATHRYN AYRES
Coppa’s and Its Murals

When San Franciscophiles speak of the bygone restaurants that contributed to the city’s reputation as a dining and drinking wonderland the first and foremost to be mentioned is the Poodle Dog. Its name supposedly Americanized from the French Poulet d’Or, the restaurant assuaged the varied hungers of localites and visitors for over a century. There was, however, a less long lived but at its time equally talked about restaurant that contributed much to San Francisco’s renown as a bohemian enclave: Coppa’s.

Giuseppe Coppa was from Torino, Italy. He learned to cook in Paris and stopped to run a restaurant in Guatemala City en route to San Francisco where he arrived in about 1895. He cooked at the Poodle Dog and elsewhere; then, in 1903 in partnership with Felix Piantinida, he opened Coppa’s in the southwest corner of the Montgomery Block. Photos reproduced in The Coppa Murals by Warren Unna (Book Club of California, 1952) show the heavily mustachioed partners behind the bar in the long narrow room with gas lamps and three rows of tables. A frieze of black cats, nose to tail, runs around the room just below the ceiling; from the top of the wainscoting to the cats is a band of bizarre drawings, names and indecipherable words: the (first) Coppa murals.

The murals came to be because of red wall paper. In 1905 Coppa decided to redecorate—a bit—and had the walls, from the wainscoting up, papered in unblushing red. A Genthe exhibit in the Bohemian Club billiard room had just closed, and a large gray screen had been left behind. Porter Garnett, inspired artist, author (and later Bancroft curator) began some chalkwork caricatures on the screen. Other members joined in, and they all went to Coppa’s to recuperate from their efforts. The Bohemian clubsters entered the restaurant, saw the garish red wallpaper and, emboldened by their previous artistry, offered to decorate it. How much arm twisting Coppa required to say yes is not recorded. Garnett drew first—a lobster—and then lettered Oscar Wilde’s prophetic words from Salome, “Something terrible is going to happen.” Bobby Aitken, who later sculpted the Dewey monument, drew nudes. The next Sunday Maynard Dixon, Gelett Burgess, and Billy Wright added their contributions. Xavier Martinez, fairly fresh from Paris and imbued with European Bohemianism, contributed the stenciled chain of black cats à la Montmartre’s cabaret, Le Chat Noir.

Over the ensuing weeks the murals became a nonsequential collection of themes sprinkled with “conundrums,” jumbles of words in varied and arcane tongues which made little sense in any language. Names of the “Immortals,” historical figures and present company, were added to the all chalk art work. Shades of Samuel Schmucker, there was even a large haired woman, smoking, sitting in a champagne glass. The artists dined there regularly. Gelett Burgess immortalized the Coppa crowd in his novel, The Heart Line.

With the art and colorful characters came popularity. Two waitresses became eight. Now six
cooks were needed to feed the “slummers” who paid to eat, laugh and stare. Coppa put a large oval table in the center of the room for the Bohemians to sit at. Special menus were made for other diners with prices doubled. Coppa prospered, but his privacy and the restaurant’s unique charm were lost.

Those problems were overcome, however, on April 18 to 20, 1906 when fire roared through the area already strewn with the earthquake’s detritus. The Monkey Block survived the fire. Its deep sunk redwood pilings had weathered the temblor. But no one came through the rubble to oversee Coppa’s. Vandalists broke in and stole the booze, tobacco and food. They broke the china, and burned papers and mementos. Felix quit, and Coppa went to join other Italians sequestered in the Presidio.

But the Bohemians found him. They coaxed him back to the restaurant and laid out a Last Supper with food and drink brought from home, served cold... on paper plates. A colonel of the militia had given them permission to burn candles. After dinner the guests left, and the murals, scarcely a year old, disappeared with the cleaning of the Montgomery Block. As the story is recounted by Unna and in BOHEMIAN SAN FRANCISCO by Clarence E. Edwords, the old San Francisco was said to have died that night and to have been swept away with the ashes.

Coppa’s, only slightly daunted, appeared anew at 453 Pine Street with more murals. One by Maynard Dixon showed Coppa holding a huge menu in front of a hungry crowd. In 1913 Coppa moved to 569 Jackson where he opened a theme restaurant, the Neptune Palace. Then he relocated to Colma and the Pompeian Garden. Next, murals again at Coppa’s Red Paint Restaurant on Washington at Hotaling Place. When that closed Papa Coppa served diners at 120 Spring Street, off California, with murals—yes again, by Maynard Dixon and others. In 1936 after the San Francisco Bank purchased the building Coppa gave a last gasp at 239 Pine, and when he sold out the place became home to Marconi’s.

By the ’30s Giuseppe Joseph Papa Coppa was in his seventies and growing a bit hazy. He preferred to stay at his San Rafael home recalling amorphous memories of the past, pleasantly unclear as to who, or where or when—or even that he had played the role of standard bearer to San Francisco’s—now lowercase—bohemians.

Although photos were made of the murals in the original Coppa’s, no postcards of them are known to exist. Coppa did leave a trail of advertising postcards starting with those of the “Wall Decorations” at the Red Paint on Washington Street. The cards shown here are from the collections of Glenn Koch, Frank Sternad and Lewis Baer.
How many different cards did Coppa have made for his restaurants? If you know of others, please share the information via this newsletter. Shown at left center and top are “Bohemia’s Toast,” a goat scene and “The Bauble,” all from Coppa’s Red Paint; the card at center right shows the black cat frieze recreated at 453 Pine Street. Below that is “The Mask” by John Garth at Coppa’s Famous Restaurant on Spring Street, off California near Kearney. It is unquestionably Coppa’s most exciting and attractive card and is in stark opposition to the Prohibition dreary mess of the Fusil Oil card used in 1930, at lower left, also from Spring Street.
Exterior views of Coppa’s are not known to have been commissioned, but traces of the restaurants do show up on general views. Nor were postcards featuring the Monkey Block made, to my knowledge, but there it is, a bit right and above center, in the 1907 Weidner card No. 258, top right. The inset below the card shows the Montgomery Block dead center; Coppa’s would have been at the lower left corner. A Piggott photo card made after 1926 (the Mark Hopkins is completed) shows the Coppa’s Spring Street sign near the lower right corner, also inset. At the upper left is a photograph, not a postcard, made in front of the exterior of the Original Coppa’s shortly after the earthquake and fire. The photo is accredited to Jack or Charmian London and is in the public domain.

—LB

EDITORIAL COMMENTS
It’s that time of year, folks, when I get a month off for good behavior, and you get an extra month to provide filler for these twelve pages. The Editor’s cupboard is bare.... Your offerings of letters, comments, complaints or, even better, articles and stories illustrated with interesting cards will be appreciated by all. Please ask me about scans before making them. Thank you in advance for another eleven months of support.
The 1906 Earthquake and Fire book publishing project continues to progress. Of the 100 anticipated pages more than half have been laid out and captioned. Thus far fourteen club members have lent their cards and their expertise. The book promises to be a real winner. The first copies should be in hand early in the new year.

—Lew Baer
Yes! I found it hard to believe even after I had “won” the card on eBay. Then, at the club meeting that week Ed Herny showed a postcard, not of a cable car post office but a card canceled aboard one. I was on tenterhooks waiting to see if the card I had purchased would have a San Francisco RPO (Railway Post Office) cancel on it. Alas, it doesn’t; the card was mailed within “KCK” (Kansas City, Kansas.) But it is still a pretty neat card. Frank Sternad dug out his copy of “Railway Post Offices of California and Nevada,” by R. Crossley (1991) for me. Crossley writes that there were two cable car lines used for transporting and processing mail between post offices in the city. Beginning in 1896 they were operated by the Market Street Railway and ran from the Ferry building out the Mission Street line to Mission and 22nd Streets, and on the Sacramento line to Fulton and Sixth Avenue, shortened to Sacramento and Walnut Streets in 1902. There was also an electric line which ran out Market to Hayes and up to the Stanyan Street entrance of Golden Gate Park. In 1905 RPO service was discontinued in San Francisco. Sacked mail was then carried in two special cars of the United Railroad of San Francisco. In 1906 both mail cars were trapped by the earthquake and destroyed by the fire.

The undivided back card shown here was published by F. v Bardeleben of New York and was printed in Germany. It is captioned “Street Car Post Office” but shows Sacramento Street Cable Car B at its Ferry Building terminus at the turn of the century.

—Lew Baer

P.S. Continued
Nancy Tucker, one of our New Mexico members, has undertaken a project that should help postcarders everywhere. She is compiling a list of places to find postcards—as I said—everywhere. She started with her own discoveries in the U.S. To those she’s added dealers from show lists and shops that she’s learned about on the postcard list on the internet. Hy Mariampolski contributed entries from his recent visit to South America. You can add to it, too, preferably by email to TheSandiaKid(at)aol.com, but if you must use the phone, leave a clearly spoken message at 505-323-5020. Use those same contacts to ask for postcarding sources when you’re planning your next junket or voyage.

—Lew
RAY COSTA was a natural collector. Besides postcards and stamps he also saved the paperwork from the organizations he belonged to. Before our meeting in October Louise Costa arrived with two boxes of Ray’s “stuff.” There were reams of items for the club archives as well as several postcard books which will be available for purchase at the coming meeting. Thanks Ray! Thanks Louise!!


MIS-MANNERLY: A message has been received from Emily Postcard reminding us of some basic show decorum that we may never have been aware of. It is, says Ms. PC, definitely not PC to interrupt buyers at dealers’ tables to offer for sale—or even discuss—cards you may have for them. If you are trying to hawk even one card at a show you should have a table, or you should wait until the pigeons are not in someone else’s nest.

GOING... GOING... GONE... A couple of clubsters have written in with comments on recent auctions. Hester Lox attended her first postcard auction and was impressed at the use of technology to handle all forms of bidding at once—in person, over the phone, by real-time e-mail, and the auctioneer’s representing absentees. Hester was allowed to sit quietly (not her usual style) and look at cards before they went on the block. Not being a bidder she found the event a bit tedious. … Dan Saks was a nonbidder, too, but tedium was not his reaction to the rules for an out of state sale: Dan asks if it was “run by a group of paranoids or do they think of their bidders as a bunch of deadbeats? To bid ya gotta give ’em your driver’s license number, your employer info including your job ‘position/title,’ tell them how much you expect to spend with them, all your checking account info, and your credit card info since you’ll be using that for the 20% deposit on your purchases. And if you don’t pay with cash you get charged an additional 5%. They’re charging more for paying by check than the fee that banks would charge them for credit card payments. And a ‘standard’ 22-1/2% buyers premium? That really is outrageous. Every $100 card becomes a $125 card. Not that I was going to bid on that Italian Futurism ad card, but the $250-350 estimate really means $300-430. I particularly enjoyed reading the admonition of the right to reject bids from ‘Buyers of Ecclesiastical’ if it was felt the items would be used other than originally intended. So, we’re infidels, too.”

JOHN FREEMAN has a new interest: San Francisco tour busses. Most of the busses looked pretty similar, but this is one of the most unusual. Pacific Sightseeing Company was the major tour operator and owned this vehicle photographed at the Cliff House, 1911.

Continued on page 10
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA POST CARD CLUB
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

New [ ] Renewal [ ] Individual/Family $15 [ ] Supporting $25 or more [ ] Out of USA $25/35 [ ]

Name: 

Family members: 

Address: 

e-mail: 

Phone: 

Collector [ ] Dealer [ ] Approvals welcome: Yes [ ] No [ ]

Collecting interests: 

Please clip or copy and make your check payable to SFBAPCC
Mail to PO Box 621, Penngrove CA 94951

P.O. Box 621
Penngrove CA 94951

Post Card

CLUB MEETINGS
for 2006

January 28
February 25
March 25
April 22
May 27
June 24
July 22
August 19
September 30
October 28
November 25

See us in color online at www.postcard.org