

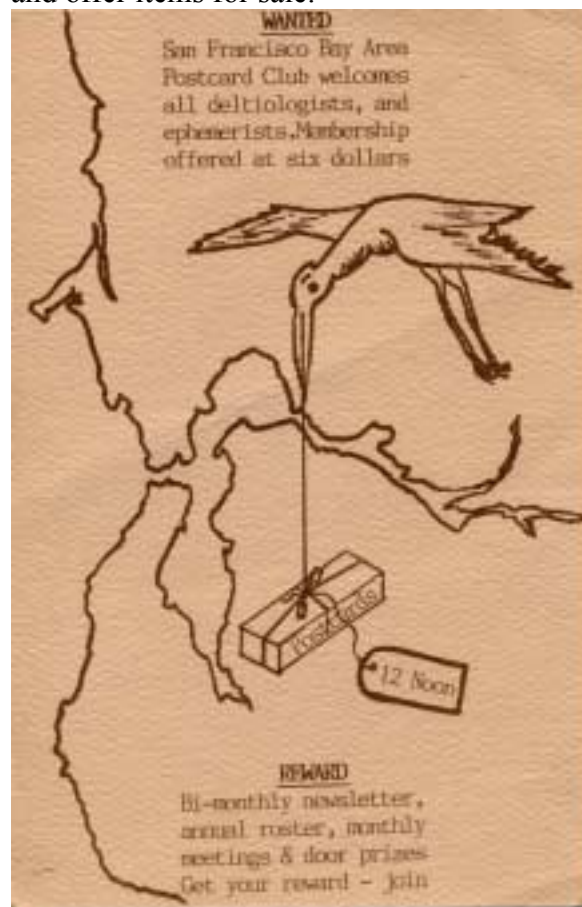
THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA POST CARD CLUB

by Lewis Baer (from *Barr's Post Card News*, March 22, 2004)

The San Francisco Bay Area Post Card Club is still a teenager. Organized in 1985 we will celebrate its twentieth anniversary next year. Although the membership rolls have ebbed and surged during those two decades, the San Francisco club has always maintained a collective enthusiasm. Meetings are called for noon on the fourth Saturday of each month except November, and several members arrive an hour or more beforehand to eat lunch and trade cards at the outside picnic tables, to visit any of several small museums and to browse through the bargains at the public library book sale. At every meeting collectors and dealers bring cards for sale or trade and donate a card or two to the pre-meeting drawing. Guests, especially dealers, are always warmly welcomed. By one o'clock the meeting begins after an hour of searching and choosing, and the forty or so members and guests present sit attentively during a brief discussion of club business and an informative program put on by a club member or outside speaker. The room is ours until three o'clock, and whatever time is left is dedicated to continued postcarding and to stacking chairs and folding tables.

That has been the routine since we moved our meeting place to Fort Mason Center, a decommissioned military base which is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Occasionally the meeting date will change to avoid conflict with a local postcard show, and we have had an evening meeting when we were invited to gather in the employees training area of the Palace Hotel, a postcard popular relic of old San Francisco.

For the past several years our March meeting has been known as the PPIE Extravaganza when the program focusses on the 1915 fair. Collectors and historians from outside the club are invited to set up exhibits and offer items for sale.



Our first club card, an invitation to join, was issued in 1985 when the club was founded. We were meeting at Crissy Field in the Presidio -- photo courtesy of Lew Baer

In recent years two of our members have had books rich with postcards published. Glenn Koch's "San Francisco Golden Age Postcards" is elegant and lavishly illustrated with many of the most beautiful and rare cards from the early twentieth century. The book was first presented at a club meeting, autographed copies were sold, and the



From the 1980s comes this tongue in cheek montage real photo of the church in which we met, "World HQ S.F. Bay Area Post Card Club." -- photo courtesy of Lew Baer

publisher, Windgate Press, generously donated a portion of the proceeds to the club. Chris Pollock, the current day postcard historian of Golden Gate Park has had two books released, the latest illustrated exclusively with postcards, and it, too, was presented at a meeting. Aside from infrequent postcard walks through San Francisco neighborhoods comparing the present scene to that on vintage postcards, the club has little other organized activity.

We do, however, have two major forms of outreach to non-meeting goers and the world at large. Our monthly club newsletter, usually twelve pages in booklet format, has been edited by Lewis Baer for the past ten years and is mailed to all members, a few clubs with which we exchange copies, and institutions that have an interest in postcards. Among them are the Curt Teich Archives and the San Francisco Library History Room, where copies are available for use by researchers.

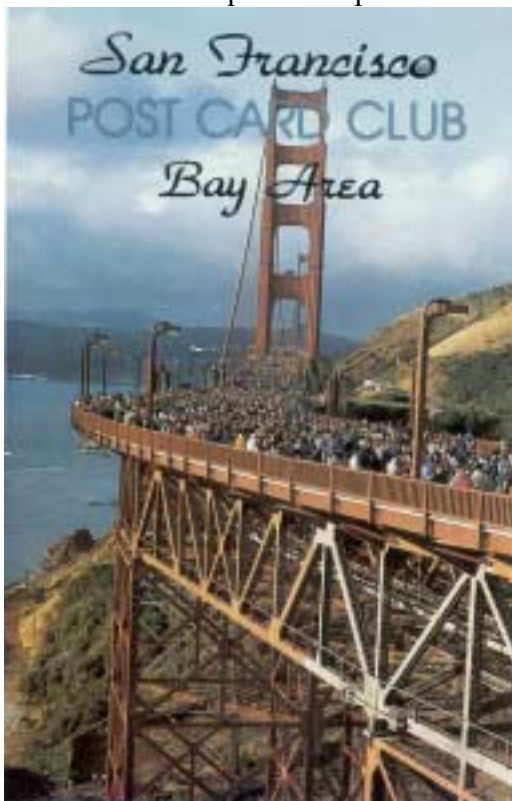
Barely a year old is our newer and far

reaching public offering: www.postcard.org. The domain name was registered several years ago by Dan Lester who founded the Postcard List on the internet. When Dan decided to part with postcard.org he offered it on the list for sale or donation—to profit or non-profit groups. Our club was the first to speak up, and so we secured this important address on the world wide web. We are also overwhelmingly fortunate in having a member who is highly skilled in web design and operation and who has the time available to work on the web site. Jack Daley, our Web Master (with the modifiers “most illustrious” implied if not actually included), has created a professional, truly world class web site with many pages of information and over a hundred postcards. By the time of the site’s official first anniversary on May 17 more than 25,000 web surfers will have visited the site.

Although Lew and Jack are responsible for bringing forth the newsletter and web site, their information, letters, articles, cards, and postcard calendar are provided by the

membership at large. The opportunity for effective and attractive public exposure definitely increases participation by our membership. One doubly exciting feature of the web site is that issues of the newsletters are archived on line for viewing by anyone who clicks on them.

Many of our members are active in other organizations and events and use them to further public interest in postcard collecting. The National Park Service hosted a series of programs on the Panama Pacific International Exposition, and several SF clubsters participated by putting on talks illustrated with postcards. Others are involved in the local historical society which is charged with converting the Old Mint in downtown San Francisco into a city museum. Still others of us have been unable to break from their philatelic past and use



"Bridge Walk May 24, 1987 Golden Gate Bridge 50th Anniversary. Limited edition, 2000." -- photo courtesy of George Epperson



Fort Mason: the view behind our current meeting place. -- photo courtesy of Jack Daley

stamp groups as venues for finding collectible cards and for spreading the word about the fascination of postcards. Our club demographics are wide ranging. Although most of the membership lives in Northern California, we have club members in the southern part of the state, across the continent and in Europe. Estimated ages of participating members spans seven decades—from the thirties well into the nineties. No marriages caused by postcards have been reported, but more than one romance has blossomed and matured over the boxes at club meetings.

The club grew out of the frustration of a few collectors who felt abandoned when the Golden Gate Post Card Club—once home base to venerable collectors such as Sam Stark and Ray Clary—disbanded in the early 1980s. About sixty enthusiasts from throughout the greater Bay Area gathered on January 5, 1985 to form the club. The name was chosen to reflect our center of activity and the inclusiveness of the many counties and collectors in the region. Two of those initial members, Ray Costa and Dorothy DeMare, are still active and participating, and several others who joined in that first year continue to find friendship and postcards at our meetings. ♦