

# PHILATELIC BULLETIN



Sarasota Philatelic Club

2025

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## Stamp Quiz



No one guessed last month's Stamp Quiz. The stamp was Netherlands, Scott 218, the 10 cent value from the Queen Wilhelmina definitive issue of 1940-47. Wilhelmina (1880—

1962)

was

Queen of the Netherlands from 1890 until 1948, when she abdicated in favor of Julian, her daughter.

Stay tuned for

next month's Stamp Quiz!



## Warsaw Post Office in a Chocolate Factory 1944

By Dr. James Mazepa, RDP

In the summer of 1944, the Russian Army advanced rapidly on the Eastern front. The Vistula River divides Warsaw, and the eastern side of the river is known as the Praga District. This is primarily the residential district of Warsaw. Warsaw-Praga was liberated by Polish units fighting with the Russian Army in the summer of 1944.

One of the first decisions was to establish postal communications. Also, the Home Army, or *Armia Krajowa* (AK) was promised that the Polish units in the Russian army would cross the Vistula and join with the AK to liberate the rest of Warsaw. However, on Stalin's orders the Russians refused to cross the Vistula and liberate the rest of Warsaw. This allowed the Germans to totally destroy Warsaw during the Warsaw Uprising and decimate the AK. It is estimated that over 200,000 civilians and AK forces were killed by the Germans. Stalin feared, correctly, that the AK and a majority of the civilian population would oppose a communist government. The Russian Army only crossed the Vistula on January 17, 1945, to "liberate" the rest of Warsaw.

When the Praga district was first liberated in October 1944, eight post offices were established. Most of the mail from these post offices was sent to the Red Cross in Switzerland in an attempt to locate lost relatives. The postmarks and registration marks, as well as the various routings of the mail, are a study in itself. One of the most interesting post offices was #38 located on Zamojski street in the Wedel Chocolate Factory. Most of these letters have a pencil notation "Wedel" after the inked "Warsawa" and pencil "#38".



Figure 1. Cover from Post Office #38 in the Wedel Chocolate Factory to Geneva. Wedel 38 is written in pencil in a makeshift registry box at lower left along with a straight line WARSAWA marking.

Continued on next page



## The Prez Sez ...

Dear Club members -

Apologies for the late arrival of your Bulletin. It's totally my fault. The first part of the month I spent in Birmingham UK attending the FEPA show EuroPhilex2025. It was a great show—about 2000 frames with a couple of hundred from the USA. Club member Yamil Kouri was the Commissioner and served on the Jury. Members Jim Mazepa, Phil Leber, Liz Hisey, Dan and I all had exhibits. I didn't take any useful pictures, unfortunately (my bad). Here's one of the medal.

Once we got back, I was playing catchup—I did manage to send out the notice for our June Meeting. I want to thank all of you who came to the May meeting and decided on the location.

See you at Bob Evans off Fruitville on June 3rd



## Warsaw Post Office in a Chocolate Factory 1944 (continued)

Figure 1 shows the front of a cover sent to Geneva, Switzerland, on November 25, 1944. The straight line inked "Warsawa" was used as a registry mark and to cancel the stamps. The pencil "Wedel 38" was added to the makeshift registry box. Because there was no way to get this letter to Switzerland going westward or south because of the war, the only route was east via the Russian field post. Mail was sent without postmarks in a closed mail bag to Moscow. Figure 2 shows the back of the cover with the return address and franking. From Moscow it was sent to Ankara, Turkey, and Cairo, Egypt, where it was censored by British-Egyptian censors and finally to Geneva where it arrived April 10, 1945, a transit of 134 days.



The Wedel chocolate factory is still in existence today. It was founded in 1851 by Karl Ernst Wedel. Ownership has changed several times and today is owned by a South Korean firm. Figure 3 shows the Wedel Chocolate Café, which is still located on Szpitalna 8 in the Praga district.



(Above Left) Figure 2. Back of the Wedel Chocolate Factory Post Office cover with Ankara and Geneva arrival postmarks, and Egypt censorship markings.

(Above Right) Figure 3. The Wedel Chocolate Café today, still located on Szpitalna 8 in the Praga district.

**Sarasota Philatelic Club**

PO Box 20625 Bradenton, FL 34204

[www.sarasotastampclub.com](http://www.sarasotastampclub.com)



**APS Chapter 353**

For information: [sns-exhibits@comcast.net](mailto:sns-exhibits@comcast.net)