

Scipsit



The Graceful Envelope

The Art of the Graceful Envelope, 2020-2025
Top 25 Graceful Envelope Contest artists, p.28

From the editor

First, an apology for the late delivery of the Spring Scripsit—its editor had personal problems. So I volunteered to produce a magazine on a different subject, and that became the sixth Graceful Envelope Scripsit I've had the pleasure of designing for the Washington Calligraphers Guild.

The last Graceful Envelope issue, Fall 2019, celebrated the contest's 25th anniversary with a selection of imaginative envelopes from all 25 years, plus winners from 2015 through 2019. This issue picks up with winners of the **2020/2021 contest through 2025**.

It also contains **two bonus features**:

Frequent winner Carol DuBosch has generously opened her **creative process** to us. The Portland, OR calligrapher shares the many trials she makes before each Graceful Envelope is ready to be entered.

We all marvel at envelopes that display a balance of calligraphy, design and stamp selection to successfully interpret the theme. Or wonder why others don't quite hit the mark. Carol's experimentation and attention to detail have helped me better understand the process.

Graceful Envelope Contest fans may recognize Carol's name as well as those of other calligraphers who share her success, including Kathy Barker, Julie Gray, Gerry Jackson Kerdok, Christy Robb, Hannah Weston and more. In fact, the back pages of this Scripsit are devoted to an **Honor Roll of Graceful Envelope winners**.

I hope that you enjoy this issue and have fun making art. But most of all, keep the contest alive by entering!

~ Lorraine Swerdloff
Contest Coordinator, 2007-2018

Scripsit Vol 47, No 1 Spring 2025 The Art of the Graceful Envelope

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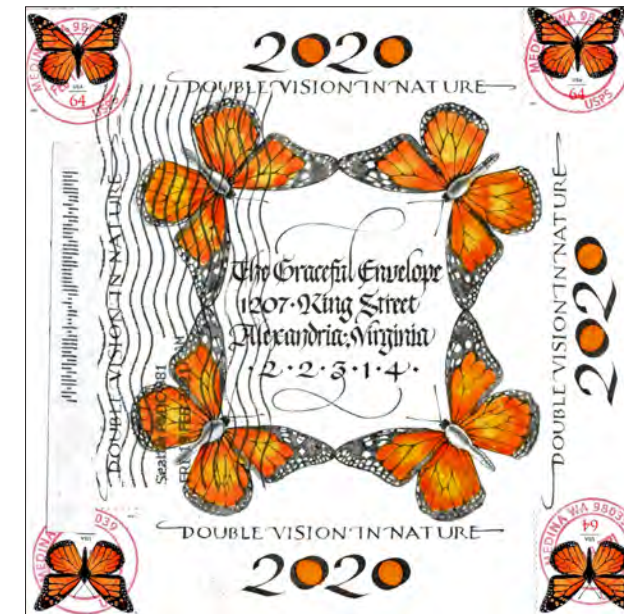
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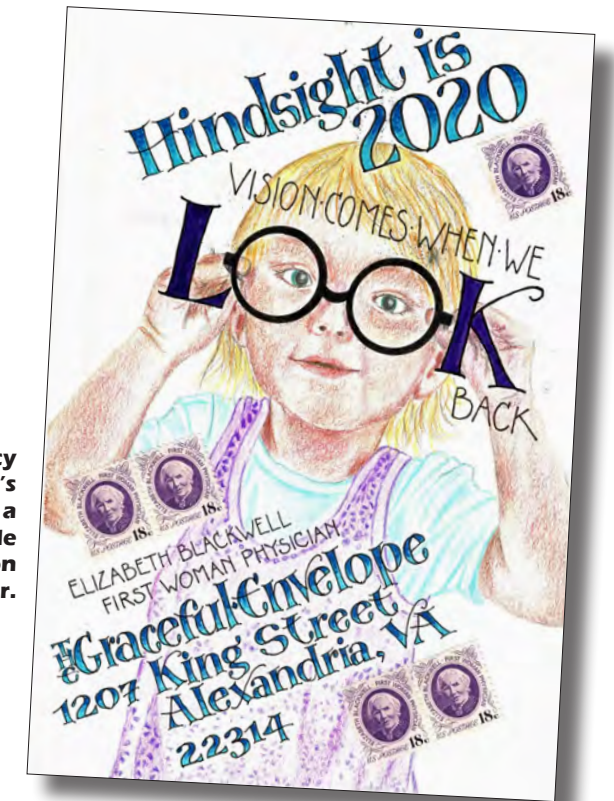
The Washington Calligraphers Guild administers the Graceful Envelope Contest. For information on how to enter, visit **calligraphersguild.org**. The contest is open to all ages and skill levels, and there is no fee. Address entries to P.O. Box 3688, Merrifield, VA 22116.

2020/21 Double Vision



COVER: Kathy Barker's entry was judged **Best in Show** despite the rough treatment it received in the mail, shown above. She sent us a pristine version for the front cover and explained how she chose to illustrate the theme **Double Vision** on an envelope:

“I decided to use the theme of nature having ‘double vision’ in naturally occurring duplicate parts, such as butterflies with two wings exactly the same. Also, I have training in scientific illustration; so the butterflies were “a natural” for me to draw. And because I had saved the butterfly stamps when the Postal Service issued them, I was ready to work on my design.”



Nancy Anderson's entry was a **Double Vision** winner.

The theme **Double Vision** was inspired by the year 2020, because only once a century does the year double up. But the Covid-19 pandemic halted WCG's normal contest schedule and the deadline was extended to March 2021.

That time of confinement gave many lettering artists the opportunity to think about the theme and formulate an approach (or three). Take a look at the steps that went into Carol DuBosch's Graceful Envelope entry on page 7.

Adult entries were juried by current and retired White House Chief Calligraphers Lee Ann Clark and Pat Blair, and professional calligrapher/illustrator Lubna Zahid. The three Student divisions were judged by professional calligraphers and art educators Susan Easton, Nahid Tootoonchi and Rebecca Solow.

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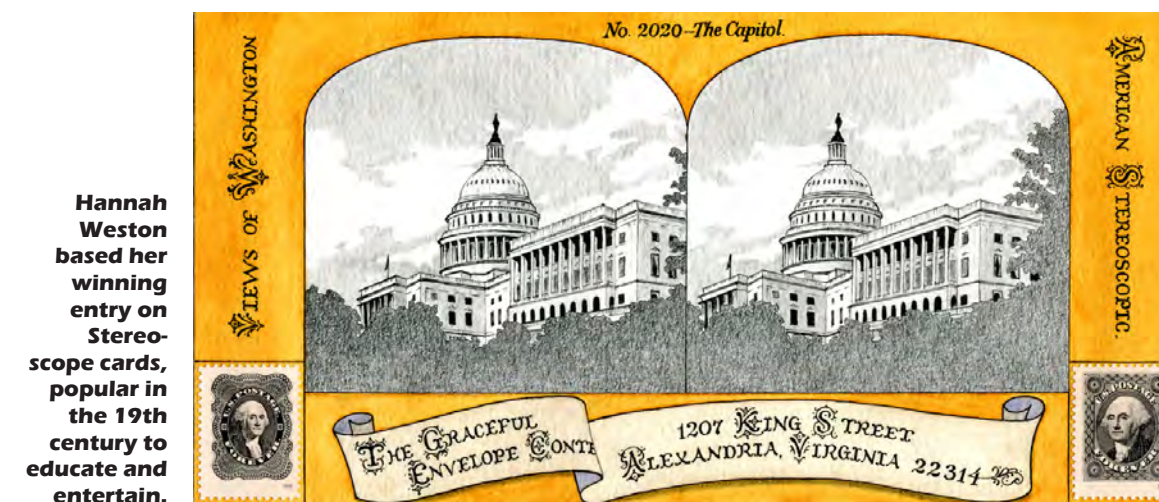
Guest article by Lisa Hutchinson, who calls the app “a huge time saver”

28... **Honor Roll of GEC Winners**

The Top 25 successful entrants to the Graceful Envelope Contest, 1995-2025

Carol DuBosch on Process

How she created each year's GEC entry: pages 7, 11, 17, 21 and 25.



Hannah Weston based her winning entry on **Stereoscope** cards, popular in the 19th century to educate and entertain.

2020/21 Double Vision

Below: Debbie Ruggles painted charismatic megafauna with a mirror-image effect.



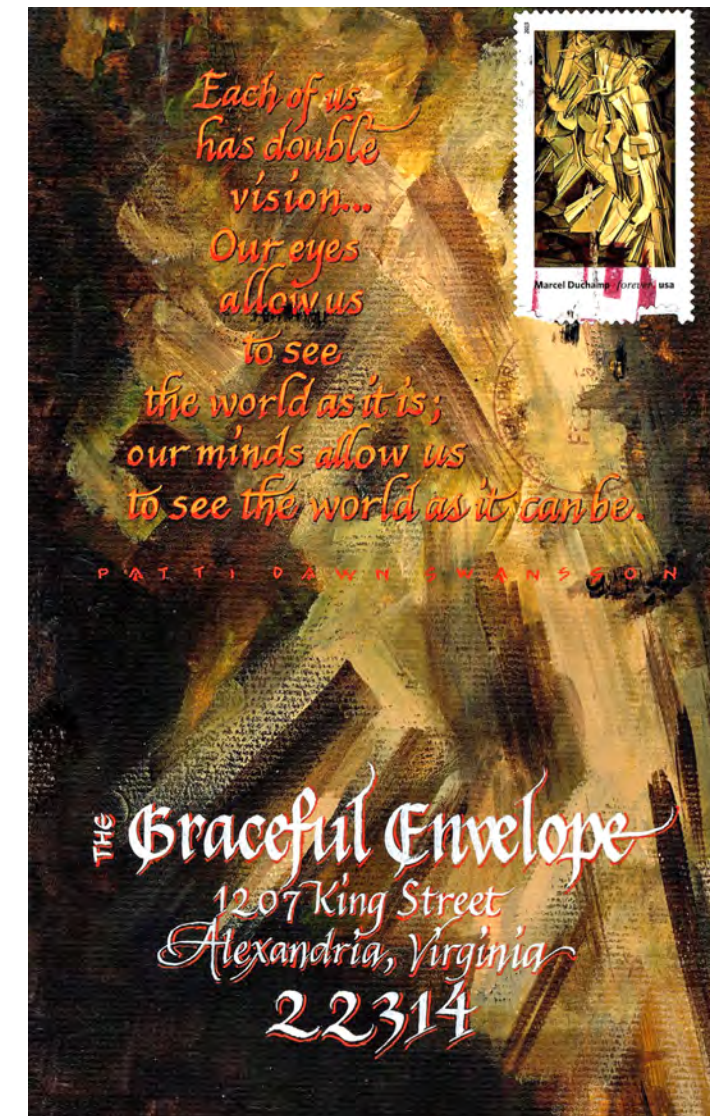
Right: Barbara Arts of The Netherlands uses colored pencils to create works of fantasy and allegory.



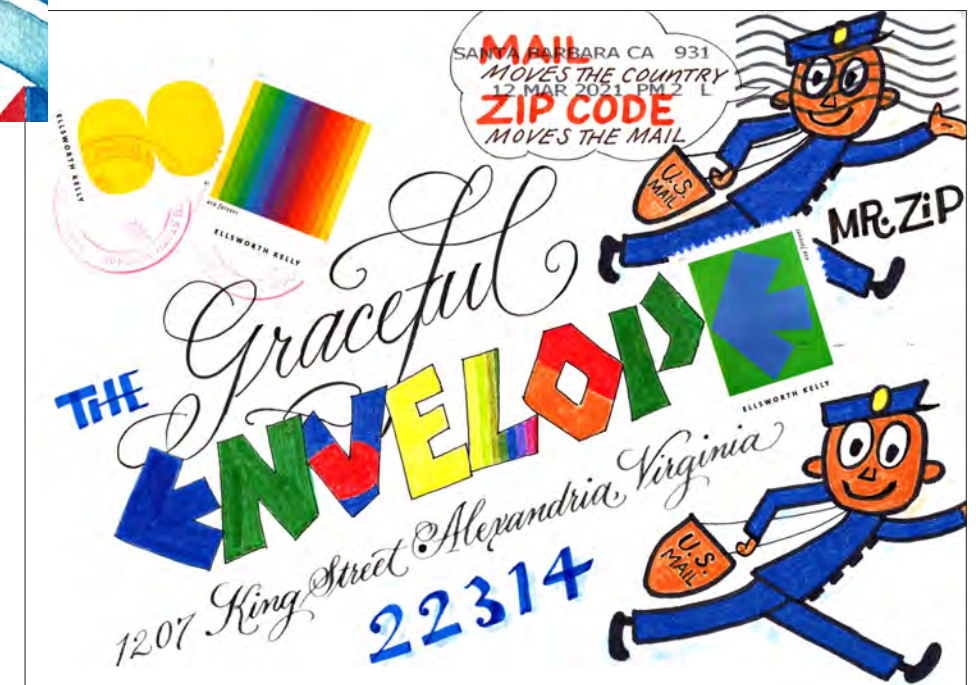
Paulie the Pigeon starred in many winning Graceful Envelopes by Brigitte Stermann.



Left: Lisa Sloop double lettered DOUBLE VISION in white across the top and bottom, anchoring the design with stamps in opposite corners.



A Marcel Duchamp commemorative stamp inspired Julie Gray's painting and a quote about double vision, which she skillfully penned in two colors.



Using colorful Ellsworth Kelly stamps that fit Mr Zip's personality, Mary Lou Johnson cleverly employed one stamp to substitute for the terminal capital E.

Left: Laura Nissen positioned two Ellsworth Kelly stamps to echo her lovely optical illustration.

2020/21 Double Vision

BEST in SHOW

Kathy Barker — Bellevue, WA

WINNERS

Nancy Anderson — Colorado Springs, CO

Barbara Arts — The Netherlands

Tina Benavides — Avon Lake, OH

P.L. Brooks — Weston, FL

Julie Gray — Lincoln, NE

Mary Lou Johnson — San Luis Obispo, CA

Kris McDonald — Minnetonka, MN

Christy Robb — Morning Sun, IA

Debbie Ruggles — Sykesville, MD

Brigitte Stermann — Vancouver, BC

Elizabeth Walsh — Olympia, WA

Hannah Weston — Manheim, PA

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Albrecht Clauss — Germany

Annabel Delgado — Miami, FL

Carol DuBosch — Portland, OR

Dorota Dylska — Poland

Linae Frei — Janesville, WI

Tatiana Gebert — Tualatin, OR

Mary Hager — Spokane, WA

Laura Nissen — Washougal, WA

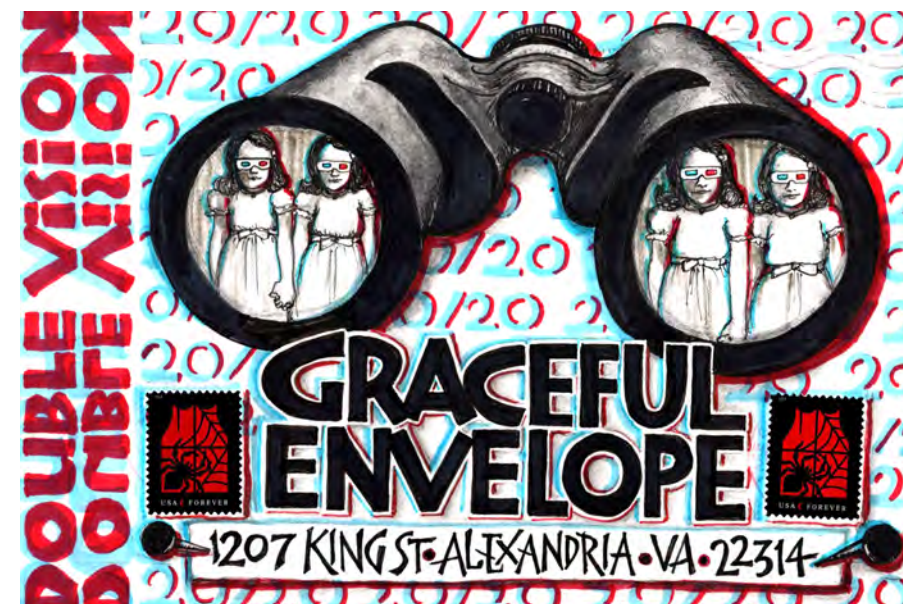
Lisa Sloop — Portland, OR

WCG's Erin Cassidy, who coordinated the Graceful Envelope Contest from 2018 to 2024, arranged for entries to be exhibited at Penny Post, a stationery shop in Alexandria, VA. Asked to vote for their favorite, patrons chose the Medieval art of Dorota Dylska, right.

Linae Frei, right, imagined the concept of eyeglasses with one side seeing the birth of the United States and the other reaching the present.

Beneath Linae's envelope is a pair of binoculars by Tatiana Gebert that capture the double image of 1950s-era girls. Perhaps at a movie theater, they wear glasses with red and cyan lenses that created a 3D effect.

Mary Hager of Spokane, WA may have visited the Skagit River, because she used its commemorative stamp as the basis for her landscape, seen double in the reflection (below).



Christy Robb deserves a gold medal for blending the double year, the Olympics symbol and spraying ice.

Stamps and illustration demonstrate a butterfly's double life. Elizabeth Walsh's strong design and lettering made this envelope twice as good.



Kris McDonald of Minnetonka, MN replaced the zeroes in 2020 with U.S. stamps commemorating the total solar eclipse of August 21, 2017. The stamp is unique because it uses thermochromic ink, which reveals a second image of the moon when warmed by a finger. The eclipse image returns as it cools.

2020/21 / Student Winners

The Graceful Envelope Contest expanded in 2005 to include student entries — at the same time that countless school systems were dropping art from the curriculum. Many elementary schools have also discontinued teaching cursive.

And, in this era of electronic mail and text messages, rare is the young person who knows how to address an envelope.

Yet children and teens continue to tap their creativity and submit Graceful Envelopes that delight and surprise us. Here are some Double Vision student winners.

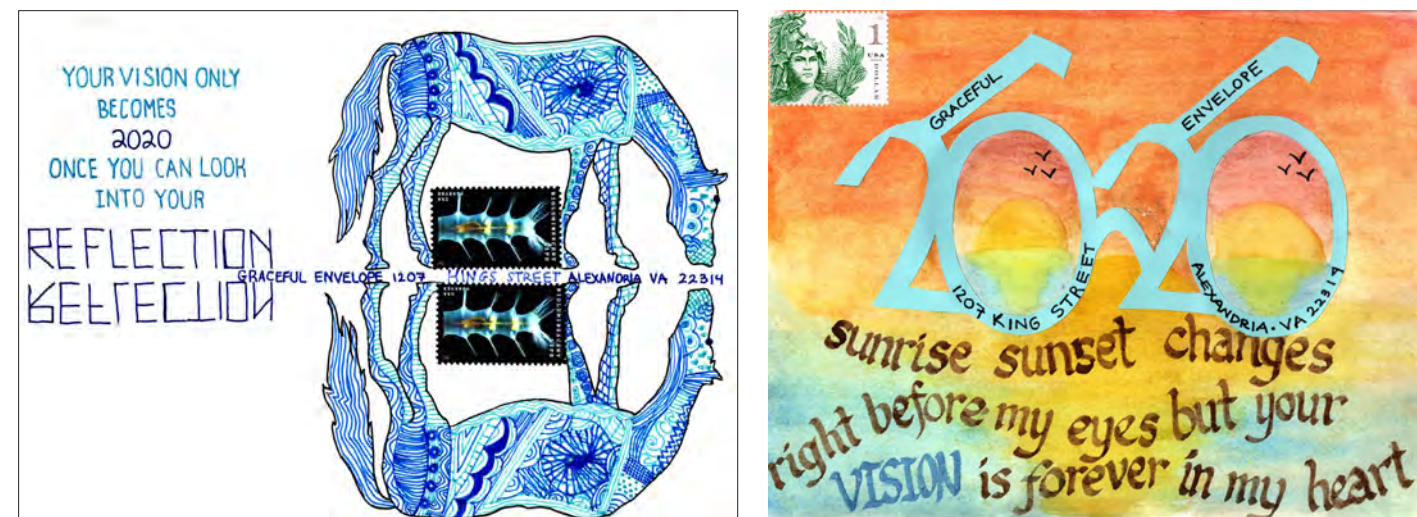


Grades 1-4: Mohammed Yunus Khera and Caden Li (r.)



Grades 5-8:
To Chen Huang
and Abigail Kim (r.)

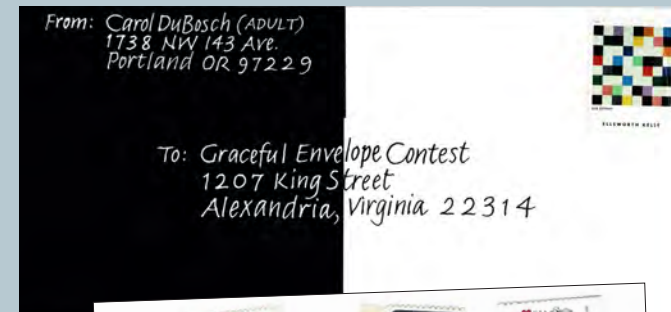
Grades 9-12: Rivka Benperlas and Yael Cohn (bottom r.)



/ Process / Carol DuBosch

The 2020 Graceful Envelope Contest was upended, like all of our lives, by the Covid-19 pandemic. The extra year, spent mostly in confinement, afforded many calligraphers the opportunity to think about the Double Vision theme and play with different ideas.

Portland, Oregon calligrapher (and WCG member) Carol DuBosch shared with us her thought processes that went into creating her entry. She generously did the same for the other themes featured in this issue:



“The 2020 theme was **Double Vision**, and I immediately decided to work with black & white. This image (top left) shows the back of the finished envelope that I made by securely taping black and white paper together.

I address and stamp the back of my Graceful Envelope as extra insurance of proper delivery. I also always make my own envelopes, so I work on excellent quality paper.

I pulled out of my vast collection of postage all of the black and white stamps, to see what the possibilities might be. I used two of the Total Solar Eclipse stamps on the final envelope.



Scroll calligraphy pens are a favorite tool of mine, and it seemed the double stroke these pens give would be perfect to depict Double Vision.

I began writing Graceful Envelope with various scroll pens using Gothicized Italic.

I wrote Graceful Envelope with two fineline pens (below) and thought it would provide a good background for the bolder version. The final version shows this overlap of scripts.



Carol's Double Vision entry was awarded Honorable Mention. Her fineline lettering behind the scroll pens created an unsettling "double vision," as did writing half of the envelope white on black and the other half black on white. However, two eclipse stamps on the white half balanced the effect.

2022 Greetings and Salutations

For the 2022 Graceful Envelope Contest, artists were challenged to capture on an envelope the magic of sending or receiving a letter from a friend.

Winners of this 27th competition were selected based on lettering, creative interpretation of the theme and effective use of color and design, including incorporation of postage stamp(s).

Entries were juried by White House calligrapher Becky Larimer and Jennifer Nicholson, U.S. State Department, Presidential Commissions.

Jurors selected 3 Best In Show:

*Christy Robb — Morning Sun, IA
 Brigitte Stermann — Vancouver, BC
 Hannah Weston — Manheim, PA

And they named 3 Winners:

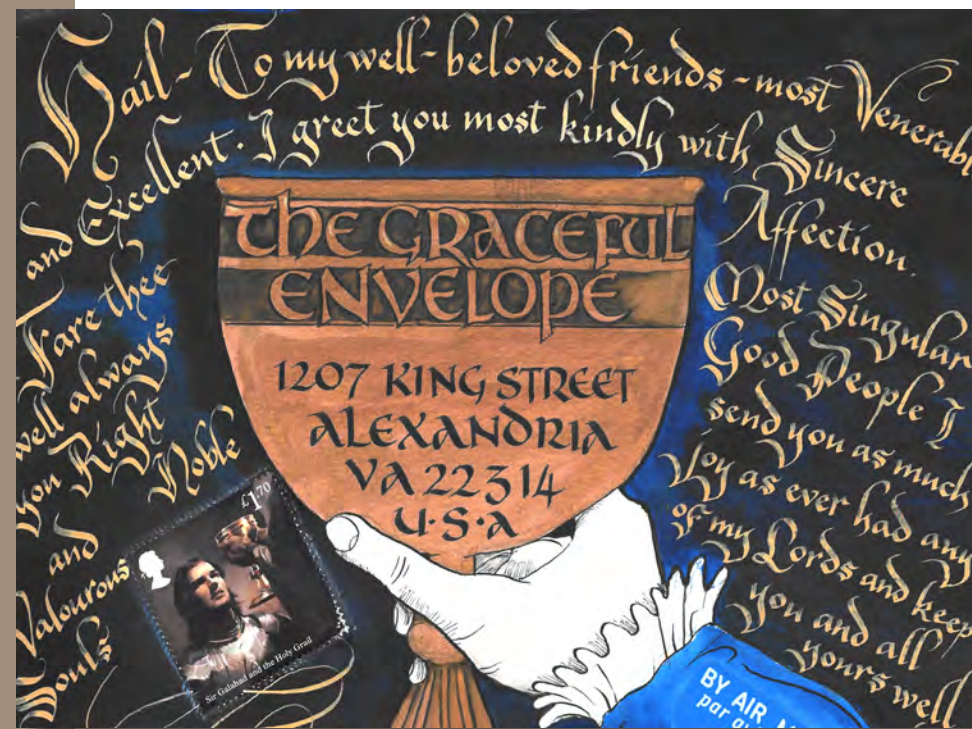
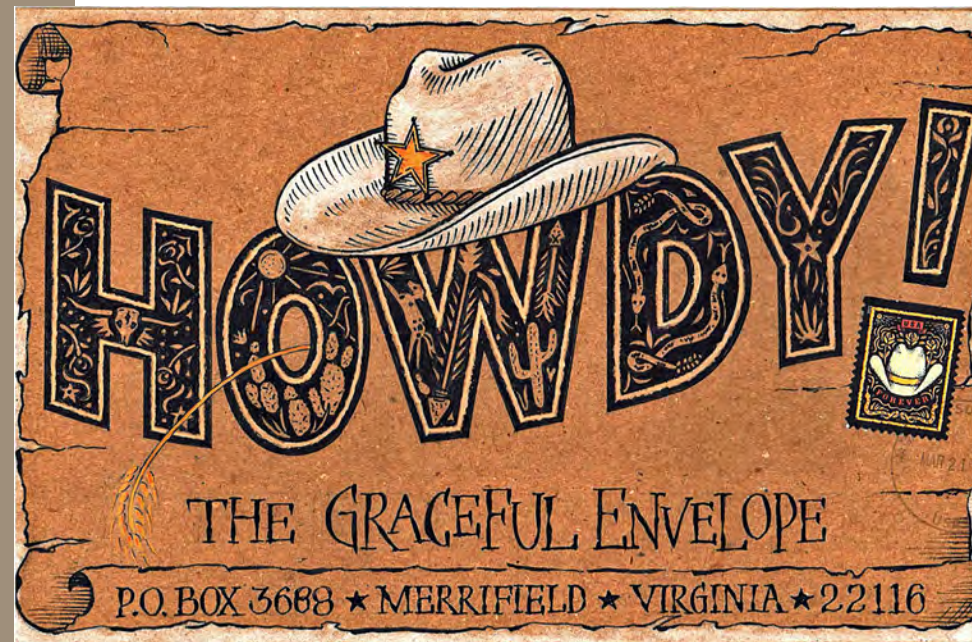
Mary deChellis — Merrifield, VA
 Annabel Delgado — Miami, FL
 Gwyneth Hibbett — Hertfordshire, UK

5 received Honorable Mentions:

P.L. Brooks — Weston, FL
 Carol DuBosch — Portland, OR
 Gerry Jackson Kerdok — Teaticket, MA
 Carol Moates — Julian, NC
 Elizabeth Walsh — Olympia, WA

*People's Choice winner chosen by Penny Post patrons.

Note: Many winners appeared in the Fall 2023 Scripsit as stylized photos.



Gwyneth Hibbett

Best in Show winners Christy Robb (left), Hannah Weston (right) and Brigitte Stermann, featuring Paulie the Pigeon.



Gerry Jackson Kerdok

2022 Greetings and Salutations

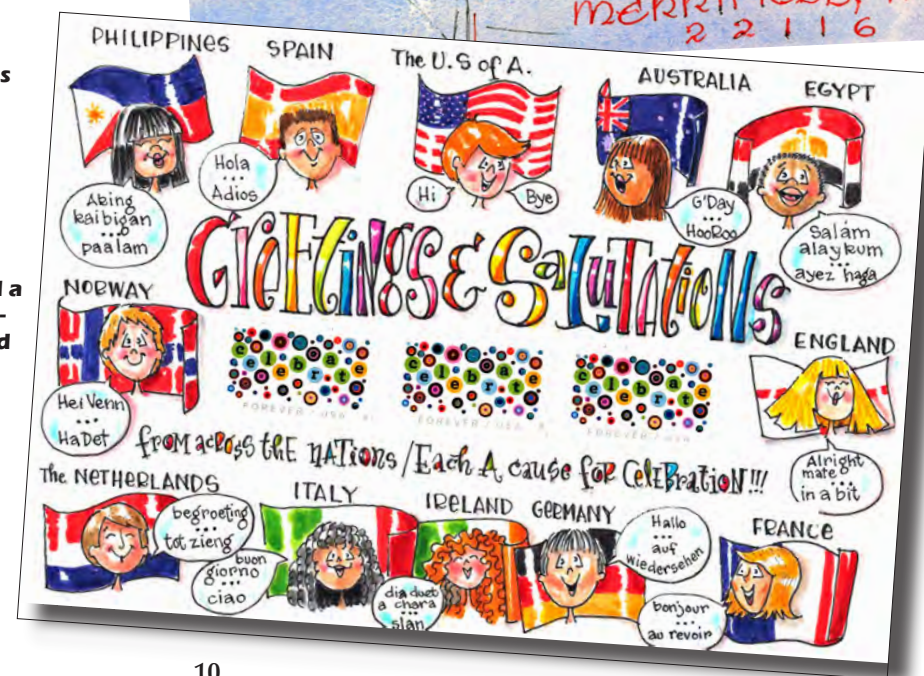


Mary deChellis' skillful rooster illustration made this a winning entry, complemented by Year of the Rooster stamps. As the rooster greets the day, Mary lettered around the red perimeter greetings in many languages penned in loose orange capitals.

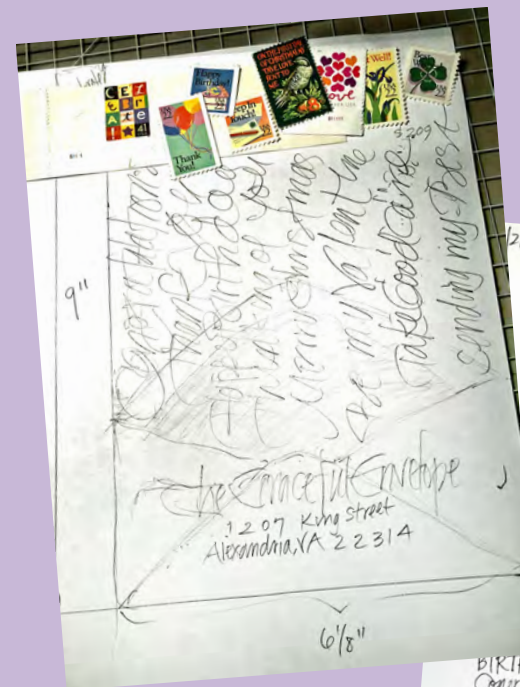
Right, another entry in many languages. Floridian illustrator P.L Brooks employed a palette inspired by colorful USPS Celebration stamps to share global greetings and salutations.

Right: Elizabeth Walsh beautifully lettered in different hands the happiest of greetings.

Below, Carol Moates painted a glowing sky and created sky-writing with diluted white. The Love stamp completed her well-executed entry.

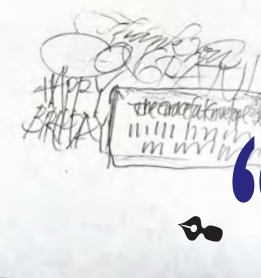


/ Process / Carol DuBosch



“ Above sketch shows that I decided to draw an envelope and let the lines of calligraphy explode vertically with an appropriate stamp at the end of each salutation. I liked the way the postage was all together at the top in a jumble.

BIRTHDAY
Congratulations
NEW YEAR
Valentines
Greetings
Salutations
Love
Take Good Care
Happy Birthday
Thank You



Carol DuBosch's entry (above) was awarded Honorable Mention in the 2022 Graceful Envelope Contest. Its theme, Greetings and Salutations, attracted heavy competition.

“ I BEGAN by penciling anything that came to mind. This is my favorite way of beginning any new project. Good, bad or silly... it all goes on the page for consideration.

Original envelope and color trials, below: The simple drawing of the envelope allows the other elements to be dominant. I chose to use many colors for the greetings, so I needed to test several products on the paper.



I chose to use a different script for each salutation. Here are some of the pen and script style trials.

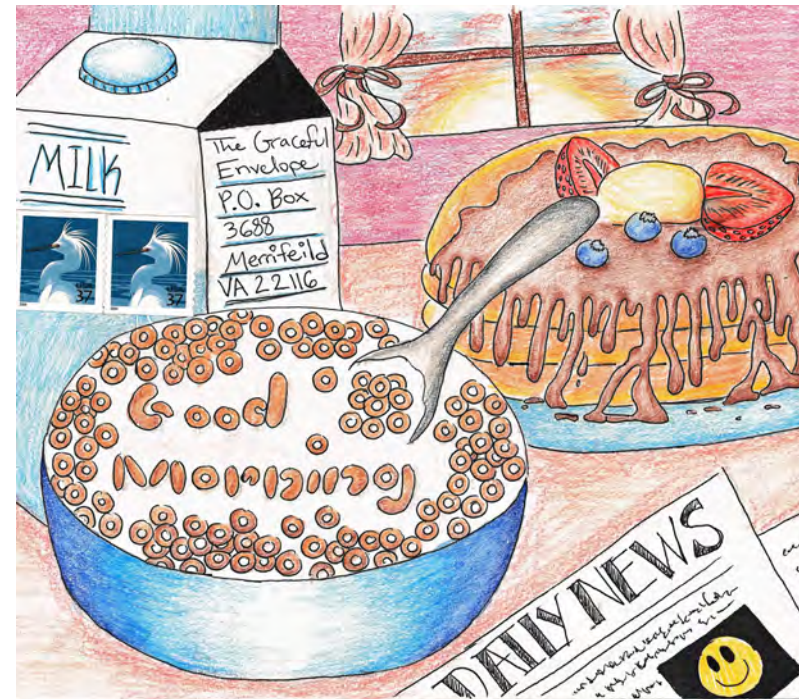
Below, more experimenting with pen and lettering styles.



2022 / Students



High school students created impressive interpretations of the theme Greetings and Salutations. Clockwise from above, Alana Bak, Oran Eisenfeld and Emily Wong.



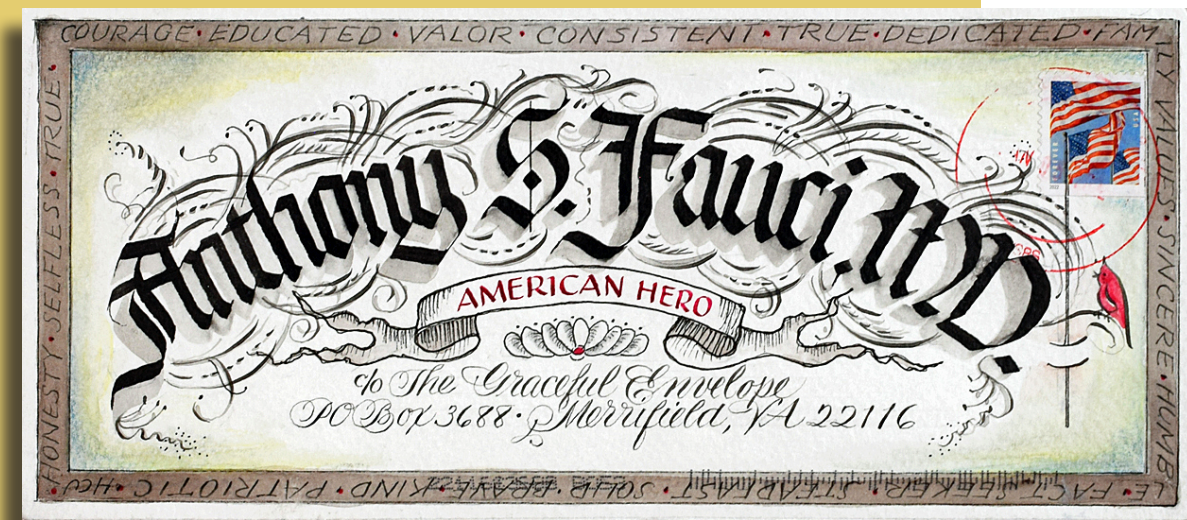
Grades 5-8 student winners included Alyssa Gonsalves (below) and Tanishi Anand (below left). Bottom row shows Grades 1-4 winners Caroline Heins (l.) and Zoe Cassadayho.



2023 Fan Mail



Anastasia Good's Graceful Envelope, designed as a postage stamp, was named Best in Show for her tribute to Canadian ballet legend Karen Kain. Four ballet stamps danced on energetic diagonals and Anastasia created two more that contained the address. Elegance in just black and gold.



The theme of the 2023 Graceful Envelope Contest, **Fan Mail**, asked entrants to design an envelope that would capture the attention of their favorite public figures, living or dead.

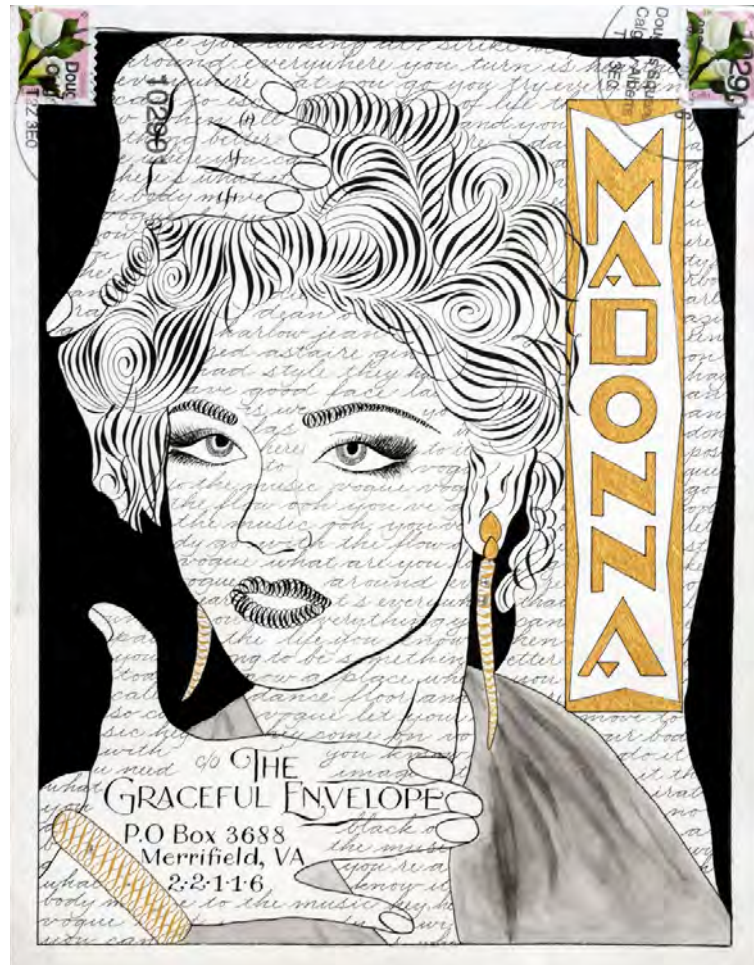
From about 300 entries by talented adults and accomplished students, a trio of jurors selected the winners based on hand lettering, creative interpretation of the theme and effective use of color and design, including incorporation of postage stamp(s).

For the official judging, entries were sent to this trio of jurors: **Suzanne Cunningham**, a professional calligrapher with over 27 years of experience; **Lindsey Bugbee**, the calligrapher behind The Postman's Knock, a resource for pointed pen and brush lettering; and **Patrick Dea** of Edelweiss Post, who celebrates and promotes "real mail."

A fan of **Dr. Anthony Fauci**, WCG member **Gerry Jackson Kerdok** engrossed an award certificate and detailed his attributes around the perimeter. For a clever touch, the Graceful Envelope Contest veteran

extended the stamp's flagpole to pierce the award and added a bird to balance the red. Her 2023 entry received Honorable Mention.

2023 Fan Mail



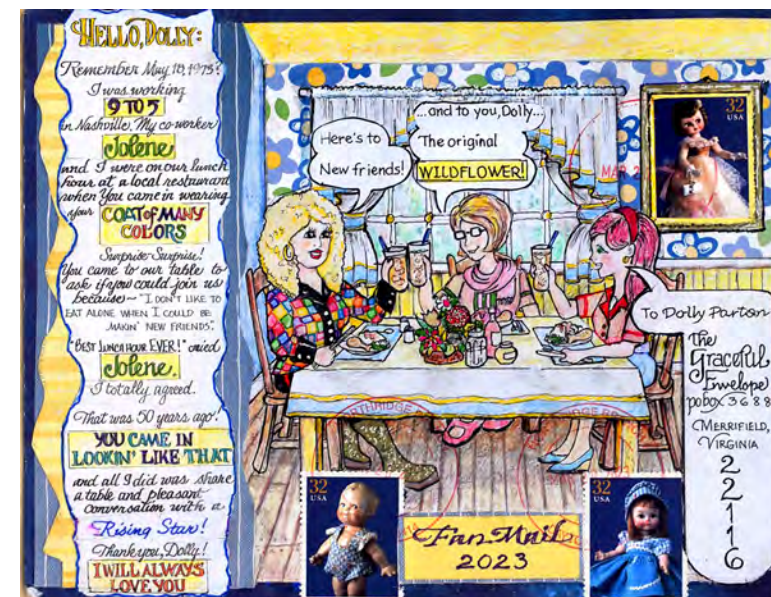
Valerie Louis drew this stunning portrait of Madonna in pointed pen and black ink with touches of gold—befitting the Queen of Pop.

Julie Gray couldn't go wrong by penning fan mail to the Graceful Envelope Contest.

We love you too, Julie, and sincerely appreciate everyone who enters.



Below, Debbie Ruggles flanked David Cassidy's portrait with Love stamps, leaving no doubt about her teenage crush.



The judges loved Pamela Day's paean to Dolly Parton.



/A Judge's Advice

Tips from 2023 judge Lindsey Bugbee, creator of The Postman's Knock website and blog

I hope that seeing some of the 2023 Graceful Envelope Contest entries gets you excited to enter the contest yourself. You don't have to submit the most skillfully executed envelope to win; you just have to combine your stamps, illustrations and lettering in a clever way that adheres to the theme. You can check current contest theme at the Washington Calligraphers Guild website.

1. Focus on Creativity

You don't have to be the best illustrator, the best calligrapher, or the best designer to win. What you do have to be is creative. Even before my mom explained the cleverness of the envelope at left to me, I had chosen it as a winner. The color scheme and lettering clearly signaled to me that the envelope was 70's themed, and I figured the face in the center must be David. And that Partridge zip code? Chef's kiss.

2. Incorporate Stamps Into Your Design

It's not always possible to find a postage stamp that follows the exact theme of your design. If that's the case, do your best to incorporate it organically into the design. Entrant Karen Burgess did a great job integrating a non-related stamp into the design by "framing" it alongside a portrait of Maurice Sendak and two merry chefs.

3. Remember ... There Are Multiple Winners

There are always several strong entries in the GEC. Take heart that your design very well might hold its own alongside the top contenders. As I said, it doesn't have to be the most skillfully created envelope. Just do your best to give it a special creative spark, and the entry will make it far in the contest!

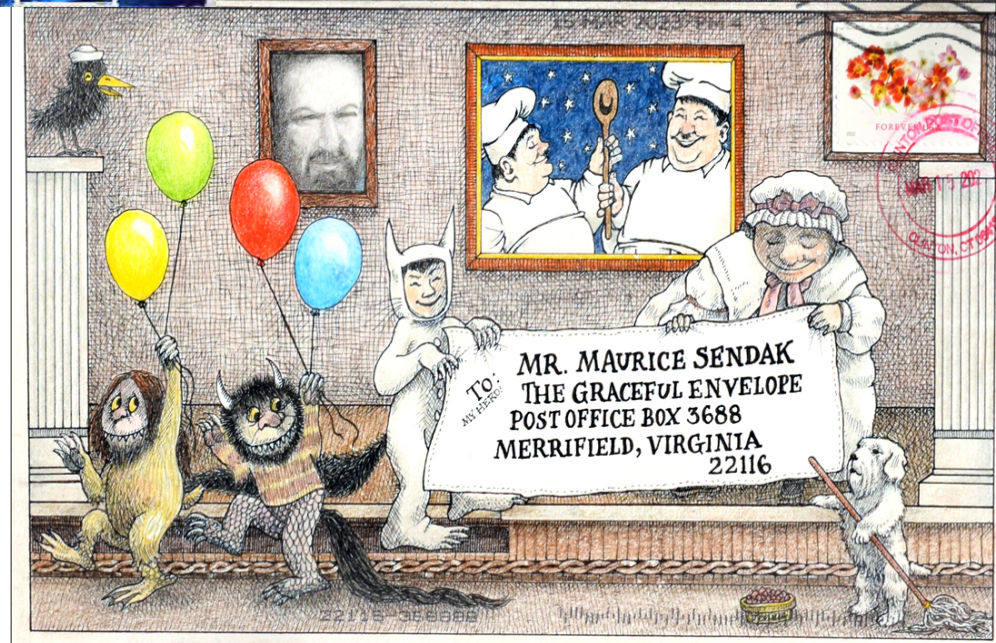
4. Have Fun!

When I first read the theme for 2025, "Go Fourth," I thought—eh, I don't want to draw four seasons, or a compass, or the phases of the moon (examples from the GEC website). I wanted to focus on something that interests me. Once I realized I could easily justify submitting an envelope that features the Beatles, I was all in. **SEE PAGE 23 for Lindsey's winning entry!**



Another charming illustration by Brigitte Stermann of Vancouver in British Columbia. Her fan mail to the lost aviation pioneer breaks our heart, too.

Entries were exhibited at Penny Post, a stationery shop in Alexandria, VA. Asked to vote for their favorite, patrons chose Karen Burgess' tribute to Maurice Sendak. Karen cleverly framed her postage stamp to coordinate with the wall decor.



2023 Fan Mail

Best in Show:

Anastasia Good
Ottawa ON Canada

Winners:

P.L. Brooks
Weston FL

Karen Burgess
Kilgworth CT

Pamela Day
Dayton OH

Julie Gray
Lincoln NE

Mary Lou Johnson
San Luis Obispo CA

Gerry Jackson Kerdok
Teaticket MA

Valerie Louis
Calgary AB Canada

Debbie Ruggles
Sykesville MD

Lisa Sloop
Portland OR

Brigitte Stermann
Vancouver BC Canada

Colin Welden
Lancashire, England

Honorable Mentions:

Kathy Barker

Tori Bell

Annabel Delgado

Carol DuBosch

Jane Andrie Gillette

Kristen Hermann

Susan Mentis

Mina Taylor

Elizabeth Walsh



Susan Mentis of Mississauga in Ontario is a fan of Canadian artist Jean Paul Lemieux. Her design, executed with colored pencil on Canson Mi-Teintes to reflect the artist's imagery, received Honorable Mention.



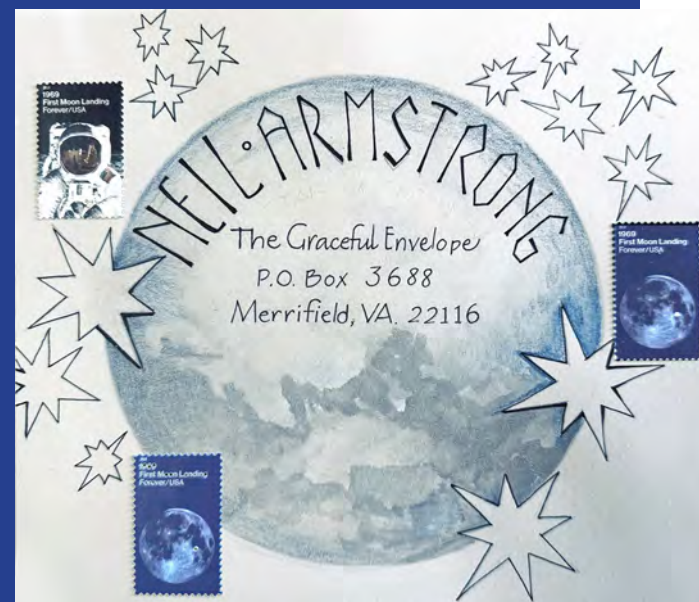
Top right: Elizabeth Poett is a 7th generation cattle rancher and star of the show Ranch to Table. Mary Lou Johnson painted her hero and detailed her legacy in Roman caps.

Right, another tribute to a culinary pioneer: Julia Child, appreciated by cook and calligrapher Kathy Barker. Read more about Kathy below.



2023 / Students

For several years calligrapher and Graceful Envelope Contest enthusiast Kathy Barker has been tutoring Bellevue, Washington high school students in lettering and design. Two of them were named winners in the 2023 Graceful Envelope Contest, Grades 9-12 division (!) Fan Mails: sisters Fiona (left) and Cecilia Abrams.



/ Process / Carol DuBosch

Fan Mail was the theme of the 2023 Graceful Envelope Contest. After some consideration, I chose to direct my fan mail to the United States Postal Service using a heart-shaped design created with Love stamps. The idea came quickly, and this sample sheet shows the simple heart shape, the full address, and the possible text for the corners.



Arranging 22 Love stamps was challenging, as they are a variety of sizes, shapes and colors. After many shuffles, I found a good order. The stamps needed a dark ground so I tried a few and settled on blue.

For this draft I tried using white for the calligraphy.



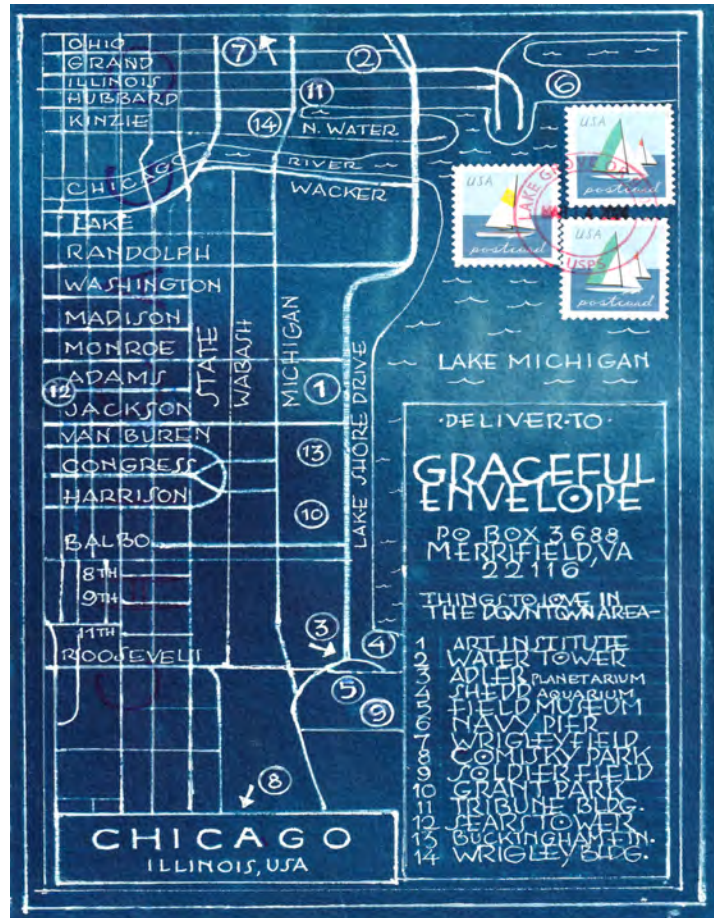
Inside the heart-shape stamps is red, and the corners also have red lettering. I did not like the red in the corners, so eliminated that on the final. I did like the red lettering inside the heart shape made of stamps, and kept that.

I simply cannot make good decisions without seeing examples.



Carol's 2023 entry was awarded Honorable Mention.

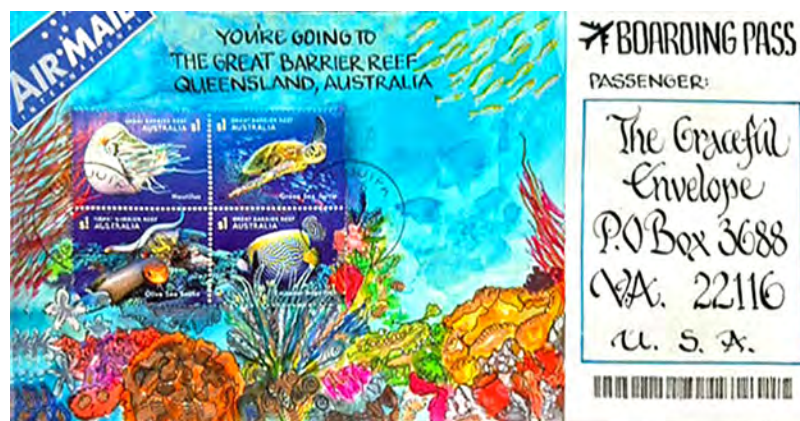
2024 Mapping the World's Cities



In the style of a blueprint, WCG member Tatiana de-Figueiredo Gebert mapped the many attractions on or near Chicago's lakefront.

Gondolier Paulie the Pigeon explored this serene city of canals and won 1st Place for Canadian Brigitte Stermann.

Carol Moates of Julian, North Carolina grew up in nearby High Point, also the birthplace of legendary saxophonist John Coltrane. Her 2nd Place Graceful Envelope promotes the town's annual John Coltrane International Jazz & Blues Festival.



Marg Kubisch of Nuriootpa, South Australia is sending us down under to enjoy the underwater marvels of the Great Barrier Reef. The postage stamps worked swimmingly in her colorful illustration.



Anastasia Good of saluted her home city of Ottawa, the capital of Canada, with gorgeous illustrations and astute use of postage stamps.



Texan Jane Ardlle Gillette paid tribute to the capital of Egypt with a delicate watercolor.

With the theme Mapping the World's Cities, the 2024 Graceful Envelope Contest challenged artists to select a location and convey its unique attributes that put it "on the map." Then—using artistry, lettering and the integration of postage stamps—capture the spirit of the special place.

Judging the 2024 contest—its 29th year—were U.S. Department of State calligrapher **Samantha Singson**, professional calligrapher and art educator **Nahid Tootoonchi** and professional calligrapher/illustrator **Lubna Zahid**.

- 1st Place
Brigitte Stermann
Vancouver, BC Canada
- 2nd Place
Carol Moates
Julian, North Carolina
- 3rd Place
Tatiana deFigueiredo Gebert
Tualatin, Oregon

- 1st Honorable Mention
Anastasia Good
Ottawa, ON Canada
- 2nd Honorable Mention
Jane Ardlle Gillette
Port Aransas, Texas
- 3rd Honorable Mention
Margaret Kubisch
Nuriootpa, South Australia

2024 Mapping Cities / Students



Clockwise from above:

Laura Jin, Gr. 7 mapped Bangkok floating market

Isha Tangri, Grade 9 mapped San Francisco, CA

Norah Trejo, Grade 6 mapped Verona, Italy;

Liam Weddington, Gr. 6 mapped Philadelphia, PA;

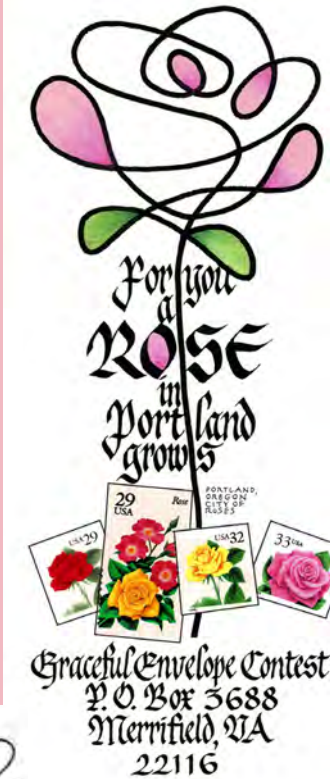
Reuben Lantner, Grade 5 mapped Washington, DC.



/Process / Carol DuBosch

Carol DuBosch's entry to the 2024 Graceful Envelope Contest (shown at right) was not selected this year. The WCG member's tribute to her home city of Portland, Oregon—known as The Rose City—did not quite fit their definition of the theme, Mapping the World's Cities. Thus even the most successful GEC entrant (see page 29 for the Top 25 list!) is disappointed on occasion. This is the process by which Carol came up with her design:

“With Mapping the World's Cities as the 2024 contest theme, I choose to honor my city, Portland, Oregon, the City of Roses. I made many line drawings of roses and chose the one at right for its loose curves. Before that I combed through my collection of stamps and found a selection with roses. Then I tried some pens and played with colors.”



Left: Once I added the text and address in black Gothicized Italic and colored a few of the spaces in the drawing, the design was close to being finished.

The two images below show the postage stamps with and without a fine black outline. A small detail like this can make a huge impact. I chose the outline version. The final entry is at the top of the page.



2025 WINNERS
Theme: Go Fourth
see pages 22-25

Best in Show
Tatiana deFigueiredo Gebert
Tualatin, Oregon

Winners
Lindsey Bugbee
Boulder, Colorado
Carol DuBosch
Portland, Oregon

Jeanine Hanson
Coopersville, Pennsylvania

Kim Montgomery
Tomahawk, Wisconsin

Yoko T. Ozzard
British Columbia, Canada

Susan Wickes
Corvallis, Oregon

Honorable Mentions
Claudia Boggs
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Dawn Rochelle Davis
Middleton, Idaho

Lynda Demke
Moorhead, Minnesota

Katarzyna Gonera
Lausanne, Switzerland

Julie Gray
Lincoln, Nebraska

Valerie Louis
Calgary, Canada

2025 Go Fourth

Four Scored!

In 2025 we reached the first quarter of this century — one-fourth of 100 years. This set the theme for the 2025 Graceful Envelope Contest: **Go Fourth**. We urged artists to consider things that come in fours, are associated with sets of four, are commonly cut into fourths, and so on. Then, using illustrations, artistic lettering and the integration of postage stamps into the design, create a Graceful Envelope that captures their interpretation of the theme.

Three judges picked winning recipients among adult and student entries: **Lisa Hutchinson** of Scribble Savvy Calligraphy; White House Calligrapher **Becky Larimer**; and **Jenny Nicholson**, Calligrapher of Presidential Appointments, U.S. State Department.

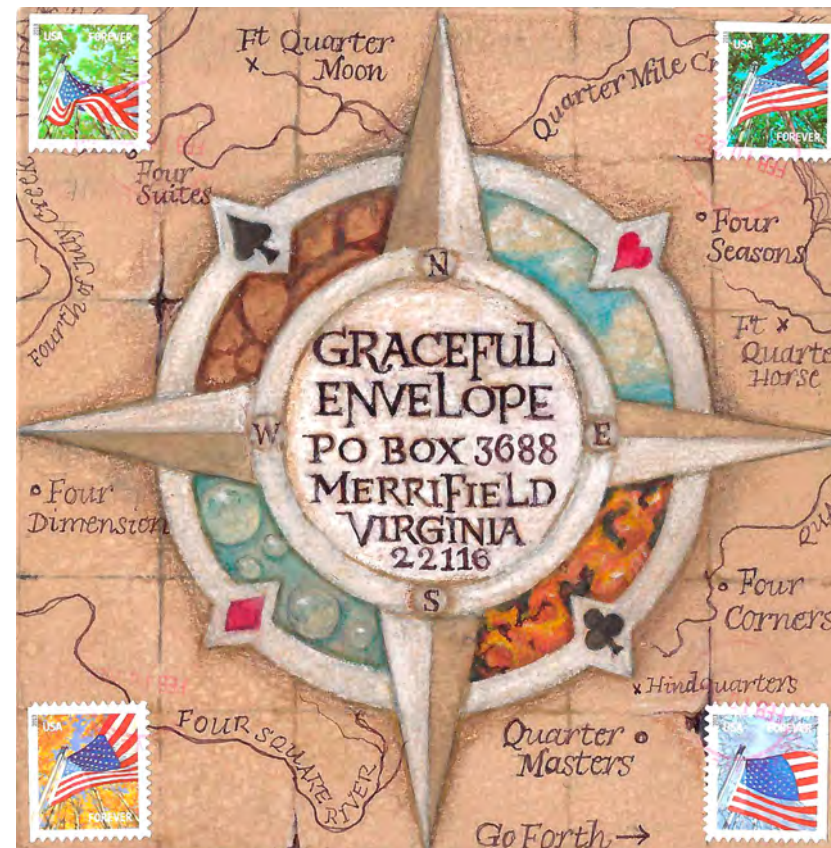
They also selected this year's overall Best in Show entry (above right), submitted by Tatiana deFigueiredo Gebert. The contest's new coordinators, **Rosalee Anderson** and **Peggy Barlett**, reported this from the jurors:

The judges noted her delicate artwork featuring a compass with its four cardinal points. The four playing card suits were included, and bands illustrating the four seasons also encircled the compass. The four flag stamps, placed in each quarter, balanced the composition. Her map is dotted with landmarks that include 'four' or 'quarter' in their names.

The report continued, "So many of the envelopes displayed very artistically creative designs, and their skilled penmanship made judging both challenging and a real pleasure."

Graceful Envelope Contest co-coordinator Peggy Barlett arranged for winning envelopes to be displayed on June 21, 2025 at Planet Word Museum in Washington, DC as part of a calligraphy demonstration and presentation by the Washington Calligraphers Guild.

All 2025 Winners and Honorable Mentions are listed on page 21.



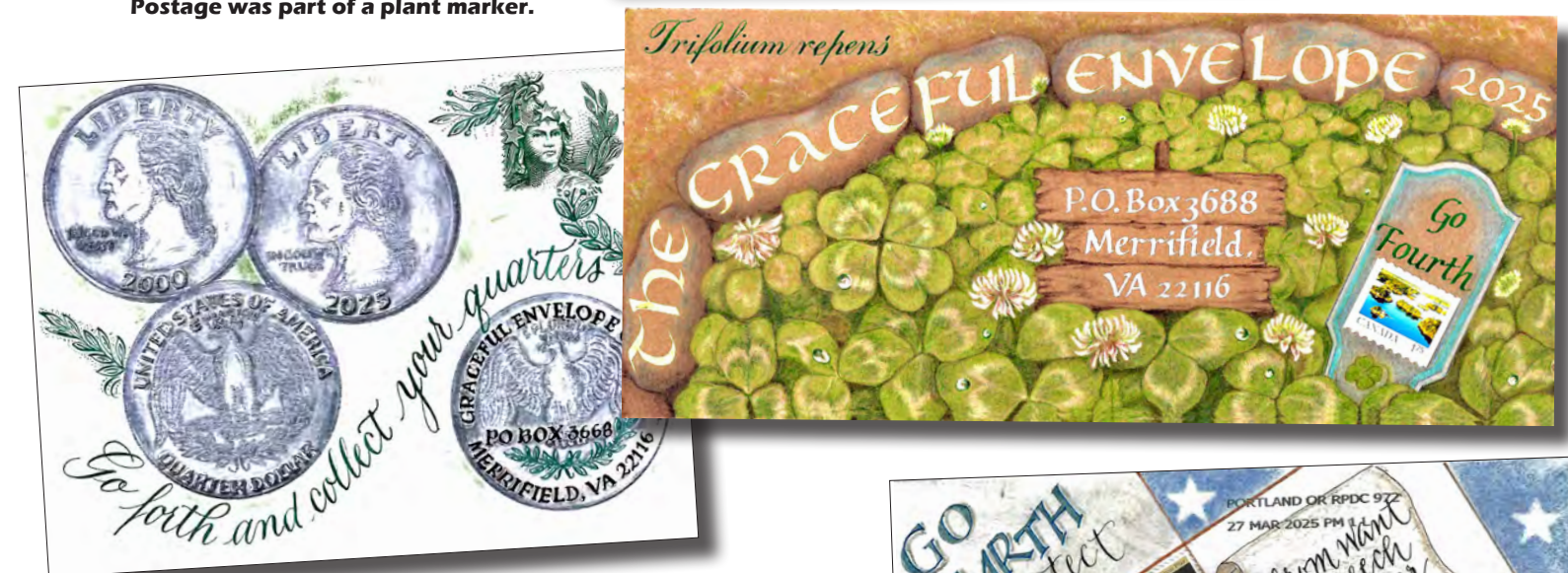
Above: Best in Show winning entry by Tatiana deFigueiredo Gebert. Her handsome compass is surrounded by place names that play off the theme, Go Fourth.

Right: Julie Gray introduced us to the Four Corners, a region of the Southwestern United States where four states meet.



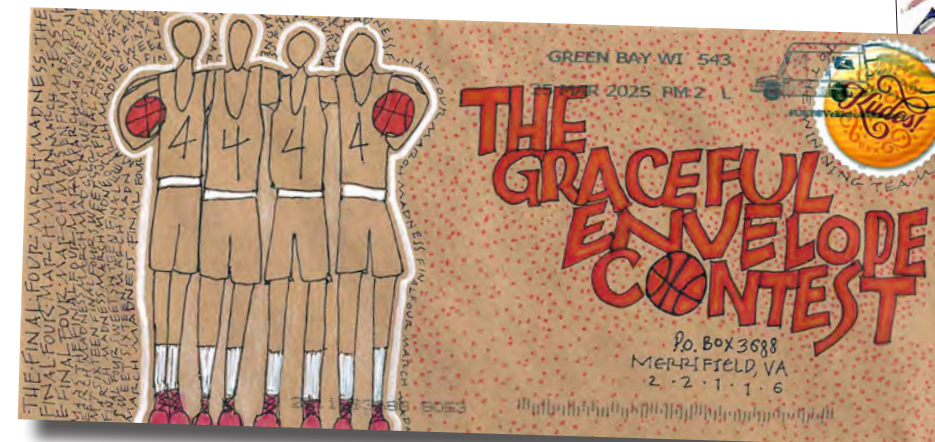
Winner Lindsey Bugbee of Boulder, Colorado, the artist and calligrapher behind The Postman's Knock website and instructional blog, immediately thought of the Fab Four when she learned about the theme. Lindsey painted the iconic Abbey Road album cover and united the four Beatles with pointed pen flourishes and lyrics.

Below the Beatles envelope, a winner with an iconic first name, Yoko T. Ozzard, illustrated the theme with four-leaf clovers. On a border of stones she used uncials to letter the contest name. Postage was part of a plant marker.



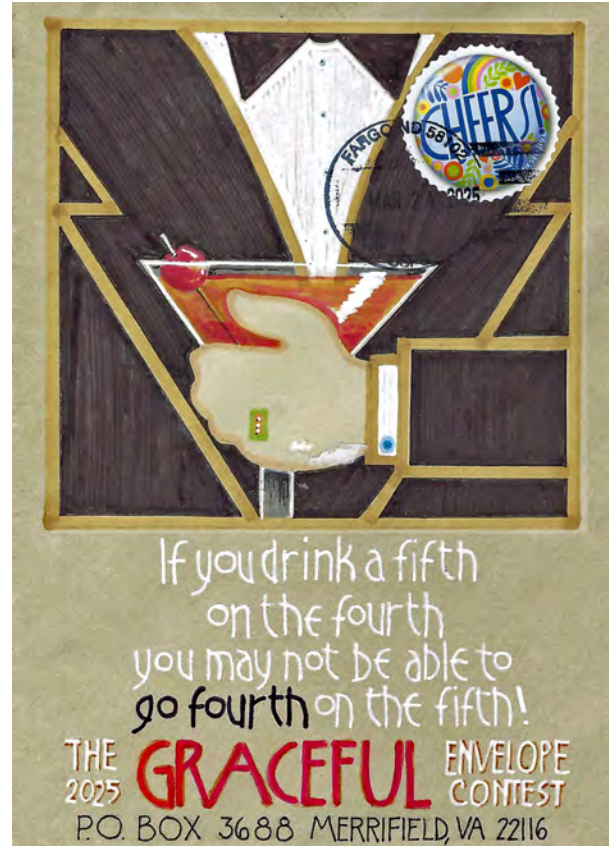
Above: Jeanine Hanson's envelope featured the quarter, a U.S. coin valued at 25 cents, or one-fourth of a dollar, for her winning Go Fourth entry.

Right: Winner Susan Wickes honored the Four Freedoms of the United States.

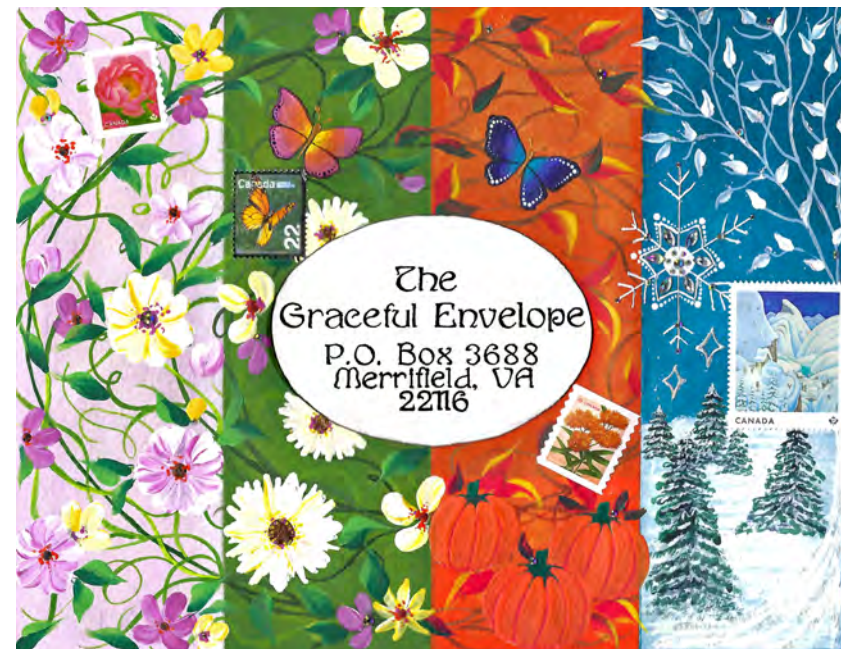


Left: In the midst of the 2025 NCAA basketball tournament, Kim Montgomery posted this entry, which looked forward to the Final Four and offered kudos to the winning team. Her design was a slam dunk!

2025 Go Fourth



A jolly play on words and nicely rendered illustration—including a Cheers “pin-back” stamp as boutonniere—earned an honorable mention for Lynda Demke of Moorhead, MN.



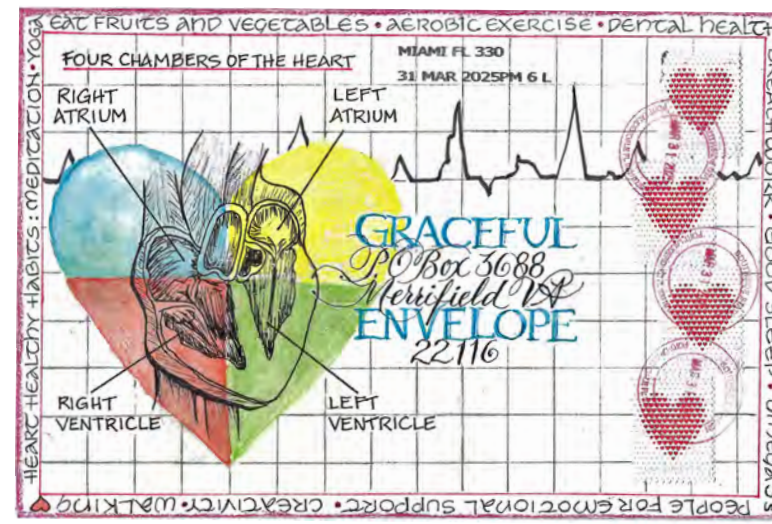
Within her delightful depiction of the four seasons, Valerie Lewis placed postage stamps that seamlessly integrated into her design. (Turn to p. 26 to see how students in three grade divisions handled the four seasons.)



Kudos to Dawn Rochelle Davis of Middleton, Idaho for skillfully interweaving four Legends of Country Music stamps with their song titles that touch on the four classical elements: earth, water, fire and wind.



Katarzyna Gonera of Lausanne, Switzerland painted four helpers into her alpine scene.

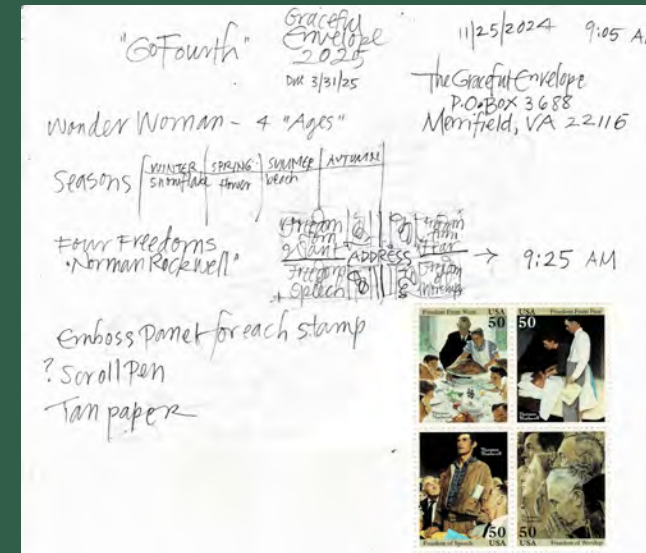


The four chambers of the heart were illustrated by Claudia Boggs atop a medical chart and well-chosen heart stamps.

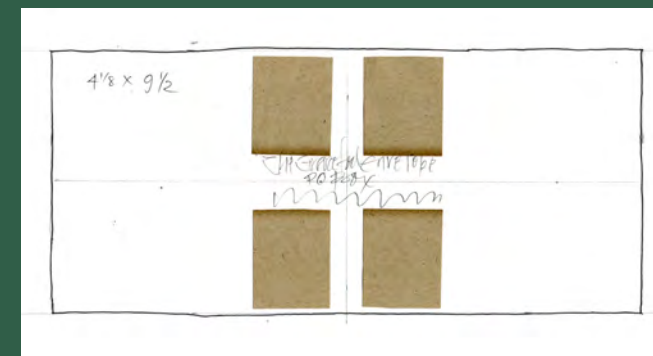
/ Process / Carol DuBosch

This entry by Carol DuBosch was named a winner in the 2025 Graceful Envelope Contest. Commemoratives play a prominent role in most of Carol’s entries, and this year’s theme, Go Fourth, reminded the Portland, Oregon calligrapher of the Four Freedoms of the United States—and the stamps with Norman Rockwell’s paintings. Note how Carol hand embossed four rectangular panels.

Below is the initial idea page that I did when I first learned the theme would be Go Fourth. Several ideas are shown here, and the small sketch in the center, above the stamps, is very close to the final layout.



The diagram below shows the envelope divided into quarters with space for the large stamps, and the address written through the center.



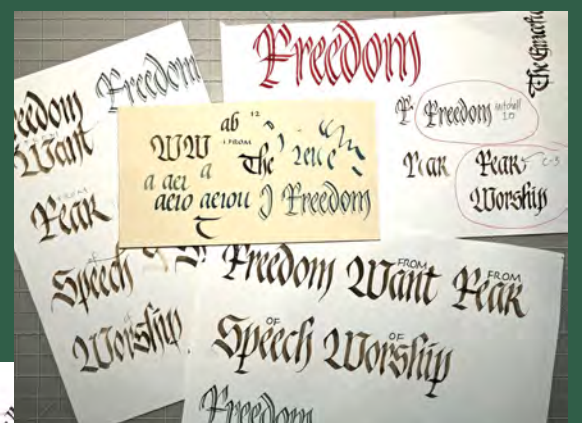
The Graceful Envelope
P.O. BOX 3688, MERRIFIELD, VA 22116



I had an incorrect address on the first final envelope, so needed to redo. This gave me a chance to increase the size of ‘The Graceful Envelope,’ and I feel it made a huge difference.

Using Gothicized Italic, I tried a variety of sizes as well as paper and color tests.

Below, a very rough draft.



2025 /Students

Students in three different grade divisions decided to “Go Fourth” with the four seasons (from the top): in Grades 9-12, Isha Tangri, Sunnyvale, CA; in Grades 5-8, Siyona Tangri, also Sunnyvale; in Grades 1-4, Miranda Meng, Rockville, MD.



/Certificates

by Lisa Hutchinson

“Having the honor of judging the Graceful Envelope Contest for the first time this year, I learned that certificates created on a computer would be awarded to winners and participants earning honorable mention in each age group. To my surprise, I also learned that, paradoxically, the names on the certificates would be in a scripted computer font! What!!!??? This is a Washington Calligraphers Guild contest, with the certificates going to calligraphers all over the United States and beyond! Since no one seemed available to pen the names, I gladly volunteered. These winners created such magnificent work, their names deserved to be hand penned.

I busted out my iPad, fired up Procreate, and got busy! I discovered this amazing illustration app years ago and fell fast in love with its versatility and ease in creating art and calligraphy. It very much streamlines the process of producing digitized calligraphy, unlike the old-school method of penning text with ink on paper, scanning, then importing into Illustrator for clean up. I simply created final digital files of each name from start to finish, all within Procreate.

Procreate is a huge time-saver and stress reducer, virtually eliminating the fear of making mistakes with the magic of a double-tap gesture to “undo” wayward strokes. The app also saves artists the cost of materials, such as paper, ink, paint and brushes. Calligraphy brushes in Procreate are pressure sensitive, mimicking a steel nib whose tines open and close as you exert or release pressure to produce contrasting thick shades and fine hairlines. Procreate allows the artist to work in layers, rearrange elements on the digital canvas, easily recolor and resize work, and so much more!

Creating the GEC certificates was truly a team effort. While I hand penned each name in fanciful, flourished Copperplate, Peggy Barlett conscientiously scanned each winning envelope. Lorraine Swerdloff then placed the name file and the coordinating envelope image onto the lovely certificates she designed digitally. Together, we created a memorable keepsake for all the winning artists earning a certificate for their Graceful Envelope masterpiece!

“I simply created final digital files of each name from start to finish, all within Procreate.”



The Graceful Envelope 2025 Contest

FROM THE BODY TO THE LUNGS
To: The Graceful Envelope Contest
PO Box 3688
Merrifield, VA
22116

This envelope by Anna Bergstrom

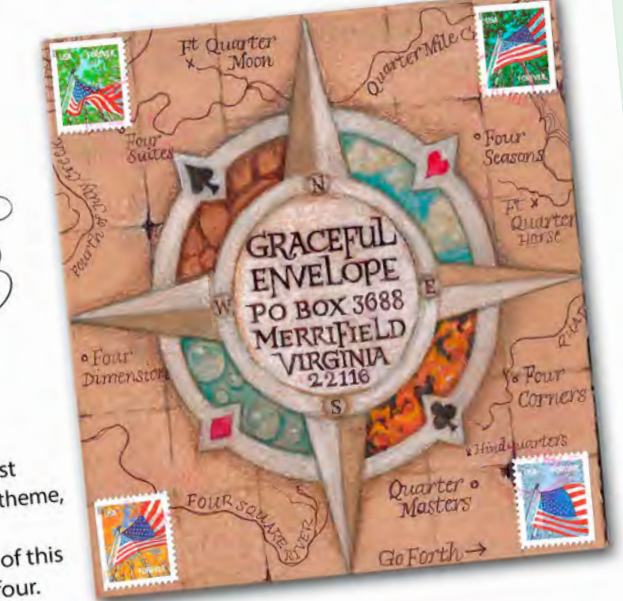
was judged a WINNER in the 2025 Graceful Envelope Contest for her artistic rendering of the theme, marking one-fourth of this year's contest.

The Washington Calligraphers Guild

The Graceful Envelope 2025 Contest Winner = Best in Show =

This envelope by Tatiana de Figueiredo Gebert

was awarded BEST in SHOW in the 2025 Graceful Envelope Contest for her artistic rendering of the theme, marking one-fourth of this year's contest.



The Graceful Envelope Contest is sponsored by Washington Calligraphers Guild for more winning envelopes: calligraphersguild.org

Owner of Scribble Savvy Calligraphy, Lisa Hutchinson penned the names of 25 Graceful Envelope Contest winners for their certificates, shown above.

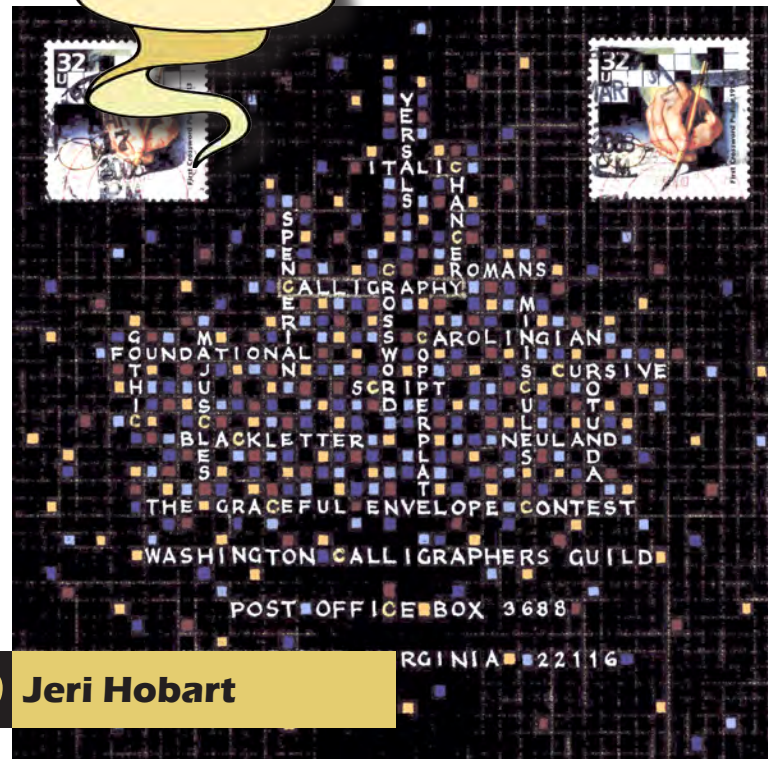
Here Lisa uses the Procreate app that allows her to achieve the graceful shades, hairlines and flowing curves of flourished Copperplate by selecting a pressure sensitive “brush” that essentially converts her Apple pencil into a pressure controlled calligraphy writing implement, like an oblique with a steel nib or brush pen.

The 2025 contest judge is pictured making edits to the Best in Show calligrapher after hand penning her name onto her iPad screen.

photos: Sylvie Jones

Top 10 Graceful Envelope Contest Winners

From top: Jeri Hobart's entry scored First Place in 2008; she won several more times, including 2005 and 2013.



#10 Jeri Hobart

Gloria Eckart's glorious paintings and calligraphy scored winning votes from the judges in (from top r.) 2009, 2005, 2007, 2011 and many other years.



#8 Gloria Eckart



#9 Brigitte Stermann

Brigitte Stermann's winning Graceful Envelopes are printed on the front cover and on many of these pages. This popular pigeon received Honorable Mention in 2017.



***How the Graceful Envelope Contest winners were ranked:**
Each Best in Show was awarded 4 points; each Winner designation merited 2 points; each Honorable Mention earned 1 point.

1- Julie Gray
Lincoln, Nebraska
Best in Show: 2006 2014
Winner: 1999 2020/2021 2002 2003 2009 2010 2011 2013 2015 2016 2017 2019 2023
Hon. Mention: 2004 2005 2007 2008 2012 2018 2025

2- Gerry Jackson Kerdok
Teaticket, Massachusetts
Best in Show: 2005 2009 2018
Winner: 1995 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2003 2007 2015 2016 2023
Honorable Mention: 2011 2012 2014 2022

3- Carol DuBosch
Portland, Oregon
Best in Show: 2003
Winner: 1998 2000 2004 2010 2013 2014 2015 2016 2018 2019 2025
Hon. Mention: 2005 2008 2009 2020/21 2022 2023

4- Kathy D. Barker
Bellevue, Washington
Best in Show: 2020/2021
Winner: 1998 2002 2009 2010 2013 2018
Honorable Mention: 2014 2015 2017 2023

5- Christy Robb
Morning Sun, Iowa
Best in Show: 2017 2019 2022
Winner: 2015 2016 2020/2021
Honorable Mention: 2018

6- Hannah C. Weston (Hannah Holder)
Manheim, Pennsylvania
Best in Show: 2015 2022
Winner: 2013 2014 2017 2018 2020/2021
Honorable Mention: 2019

7- Catherine Langsdorf
Charlotte, North Carolina
Best in Show: 2005
Winner: 1999 2001 2008 2012 2014 2015 2019
Honorable Mention: 2006

8- Gloria Eckart
Plantation, Florida
Winner: 2000 2001 2003 2004 2005 2007 2009
Honorable Mention: 1996 2006 2010 2011

9- Brigitte Stermann
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Best in Show: 2022 2024
Winner: 2016 2020/2021 2023
Honorable Mention: 2017 2019

10- Jeri Hobart
Iowa City, Iowa
First Place: 2008
Winner: 2005 2007 2011 2013 2014
Honorable Mention: 2006 2010

11- Sheryl Bracey
Hendersonville, Tennessee
Winner: 1998 1999 2000 2001 2003 2004 2008
Honorable Mention: 2005 2006

12- Linae Frei
Janesville, Wisconsin
Winner: 2007 2008 2009 2011 2012 2016
Honorable Mention: 2006 2014 2018 2020/2021

13- Lorrie Frear
Canadaigua, New York
Winner: 2003 2004 2005 2007 2011 2015
Honorable Mention: 2006 2008 2010

14- Jo Forsyth
Shoreline, Washington
Winner: 2004 2005 2007 2008 2011
Honorable Mention: 2006 2010 2015 2016

15- Yukimi Annand
Torrance, California
Best in Show: 2006 2008
Winner: 2004 2005
Honorable Mention: 2007

16- P.L. Brooks
Weston, Florida
Winner: 2018 2019 2020/2021 2023
Honorable Mention: 2013 2014 2015 2016 2022

17- Donna Sabolovic
Richardson, Texas
Winner: 1996 1998 2000 2003 2005 2006

18- Marilyn Gray
Coral Springs, Florida
Winner: 1996 1999 2002 2003 2009
Honorable Mention: 2005 2007

19- Elizabeth Walsh
Olympia, Washington
Winner: 2008 2018 2020/2021
Honorable Mention: 2010 2014 2015 2019 2022 2023

20- Peggy Shields Schiefelbein
Washington, DC
Best in Show: 2003
Winner: 2001 2002 2005
Honorable Mention: 2007

21- Sally Penley
Olympia, Washington
Best in Show: 2016
Winner: 2018 2019
Honorable Mention: 2009 2011 2015

22- Carol Moates
Julian, North Carolina
Winner: 2010 2024
Honorable Mention: 2006 2007 2008 2011 2013 2017 2022

23- Cynthia Schubert
Portland, Oregon
Best in Show: 2003
Winner: 2004 2017
Honorable Mention: 2005 2014

24- Dawn Rochelle Davis
Middleton, Idaho
Winner: 1999 2000 2015
Honorable Mention: 2005 2006 2007

25- Virginia Meltzer
Missoula, Montana
Winner: 2001 2002 2003
Honorable Mention: 2004 2005 2006

Congratulations to the Top 25 Graceful Envelope Winners, 1995-2025

*Forgive me if I missed some winning envelopes and therefore underestimated your place in this list. Moreover, I do not have access to contest files before 2001, when WCG took over the GEC from the NPM. – Lorraine



#7 Catherine Langsdorf

The North Carolina artist won Best in Show in 2005 for this confection ("I draw with a Zip embossing marker that goes on clear. When dry I pounce powdered chalk. It adheres and appears darker where there was fluid"). Catherine's entries have won seven other times, including 2014 (below) and 2019 (bottom).

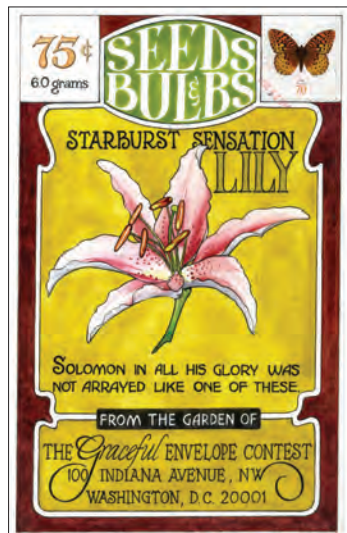


#6 Hannah C. Weston



As Hannah Holder in 2015, this talented artist won Best in Show (No Place Like Home, top). As Hannah Weston, she chalked up a Best in Show in 2022 (p.9).

Quality lettering and colorful art secured Hannah's other winning envelopes, including: 2017 (above, Pushing the Envelope); 2018 (Whatever the Weather, right); and 2014 (the letter S, a clever seed packet).



#5 Christy Robb

In 2017, for her impeccable calligraphy and elegant rendering of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Christy Robb scored Best in Show.

Two years later, she received the same honor (top right) and again in 2022 (p. 8).

In 2015 (r.) she was a winner for the theme, No Place Like Home.

The Morning Sun, Iowa calligrapher fetched a win with this doggone interpretation of the 2016 theme, Communication (below).

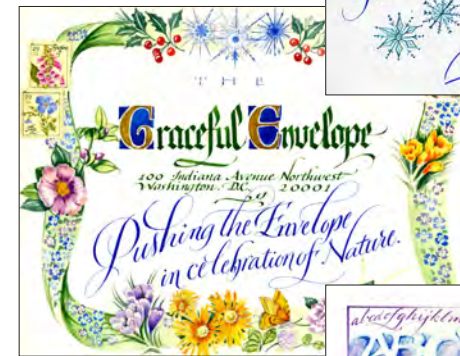


#4 Kathy D. Barker

In addition to a Best in Show on the front cover, Kathy Barker has received a string of Graceful Envelope wins, including her floral-filled artwork that integrates postage stamps. Her lovely lettering and breezy design choices unite the whole.



From the top: Kathy's Graceful Envelopes from 2013, 2014, 2018, 2017 and 2010.



Top 10 Graceful Envelope Contest Winners

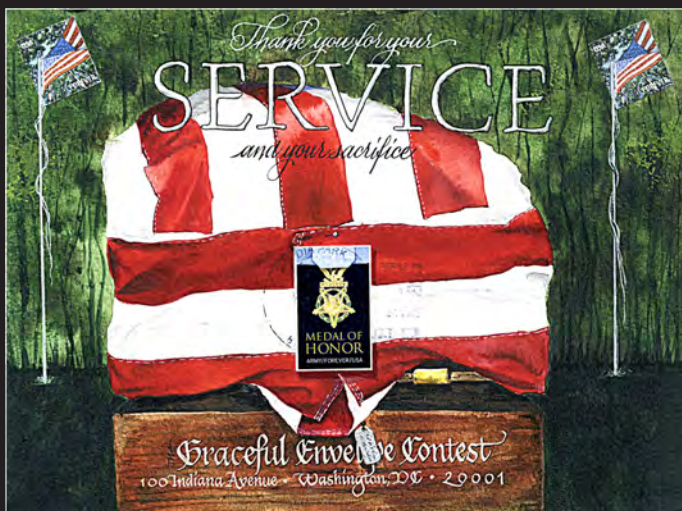


#1 Julie Gray

“My life has revolved around my calligraphic journey for more than 50 years now, and I’m proud that the Graceful Envelope Contest has been a part of that creative growth for more than 25 of those years!

The best thing I can say about the contest is that it challenges me. The design, the lettering style, working the stamp into the design, solving the theme, seeing if it even gets to its destination, and the thrill of winning is all so much a part of the challenge. I look forward to it every year!

WCG member Julie Gray, who lives in Lincoln, Nebraska, won Best in Show both in 2006 (above, for the theme A Fine Line) and 2014 (below, for The Superlative Letter S).



Right, from top: 2013 (A World of Change), for Julie’s stamp gallery of agents of change; in 2004 Weather was the theme, and Julie cut from fabric an umbrella atop mesmerizing words from the unofficial USPS motto; she wrote 2007’s theme, A Mailable Feast, on chocolate squares as The Very Hungry Caterpillar stamp emerged from its snack, body “addressed” in undulating white calligraphy.



Below, another clever use of stamps. Time Flies was 2011’s theme, and Julie Gray lettered in red Roman capitals “Time Flies When You Are Doing What You”—with the word “Love” supplied by the stamp.



The Washington Calligraphers Guild administers the Graceful Envelope Contest ~ www.calligraphersguild.org