



The Philatelic Communicator

Journal of Writers Unit 30 of the

American Philatelic Society

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Ballot enclosed for WU 30 Election. Deadline for receipt of Ballots August 12, 1991.

The President's Message

By Robert de Violini

We have had a lot of comment and publicity following Ken's open letter to the Postmaster General in our last issue. Some publicity is nice, but I don't know that it's really desirable as a result of that kind of article. My initial reaction was that Ken's open letter was something that would be more suitable for a supermarket tabloid.

That is why I sent my "letter to the editor" to Mike Laurence at *Linn's*. I felt it was necessary to reinforce the fact that Ken was presenting his own personal viewpoint (not that of the editor of the *PC*), and that his open letter did not necessarily reflect the views of the WU officers.

From the flurry of correspondence and phone calls I had in late March and early April, I learned that some of our board members feel Ken was right on target with his open letter, and also that other members of our board feel he went overboard in his wording.

Two members (one an officer) resigned from WU 30. A non-member was particularly virulent in his writings to the WU board, and another member suggested that I retract my letter to *Linn's*.

In answer to several questions, no, I do not have any idea of what will be in the *PC* until the issue arrives in my post office box. There is no prior review of what is to be included in any one issue—but maybe there should be. I'll leave that to the new president.

My thought is that Ken could have been a little more selective in his wording and could have cut the content by about a third without losing what he set out to do. But I'm not the editor, he is, and I feel that in general he is doing a fine job.

With respect to one of the points in the letter—that philatelic organizations have been cut out of the loop as far as new-issue information is concerned—I know that it has been several years now since we received press releases about new issues or information about the pictorial cancellations. And once in a while there would be a publicity poster for a new issue.

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Gordon Morison Replies

A writer who serves as his own editor sometimes can be likened to a live grenade rolling down hill. It may have a target but it goes off in all directions. It may even be rolling down the wrong hill.

Since your publication is for writers, I would note that an independent editor serves a useful purpose to review content. He or she ensures that unnamed sources for an article are reliable and do not have their own agendas. If they do, he or she ensures that available documentation is accurately reported and that others have the opportunity to provide comment for simultaneous publication.

A writer serving as his own editor answers to no one. Sadly, it results in the type of "open letter" to me in *The Philatelic Communicator*, First Quarter 1991.

The sources used for the "open letter" are not evident to the reader. However, certain phrases used clearly identify to me the sources of allegations; I might say the agendas of these sources are hardly unbiased. The letter contains so many inaccuracies, innuendoes and imagined intentions that a rational response regrettably is almost impossible.

I find it ludicrous to assert that one individual could subvert the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Treasury Department, government procurement practices, the General Accounting Office, the philatelic press, and the federal Freedom of Information Act as alleged by the letter writer. Ridiculous.

And what logic is there to your writer's linking stamp manufacturing policies with treatment of the philatelic press?

As for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing relationships with the Postal Service, no defense of the Postal Service is necessary as there is enough information available to writers from independent studies and public procurement documents to note that the Bureau has stated it must devote more of its resources to manufacturing currency than in the past, and therefore must cut back in stamp production.

To accommodate the Bureau, the Postal Service, which after all must have stamps, has turned to find private sector compa-

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The Philatelic Communicator

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**BALLOT IN THIS ISSUE.
BE SURE TO VOTE !**

**DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF BALLOTS
AUGUST 12, 1991.**

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
IS JULY 20, 1991**

IN MEMORIAM

José Luís Guerra Aguiar

I don't know how many philatelic writers have been commemorated on postage stamps, but my late colleague and friend, J. L. Guerra, is. That's how I confirmed he had died, though I suspected it when several of my letters went unanswered.

Guerra was nearing retirement the first time he invited me to visit Havana, but even after he retired and his health waned, Guerra remained boisterous and enthusiastic when the subject was stamps, regaling his visitor about the marvels of our hobby late into the night, brushing aside his wife's pleas and doctor's orders.

Born in Cienfuegos in 1914, Guerra began collecting stamps at age nine. As a teenager and young adult, he specialized in airmail as well as in Cuban stamps. In the 1940s, his attention shifted to Cuban postal history. He wrote many articles on these subjects, and in 1955 he published a general catalog of Cuban stamps. He was an exhibitor, and an internationally qualified judge.

While Guerra was highly respected for his philatelic knowledge, his writing, and his generosity toward fellow collectors, few stamp hobbyists in the 1950s were aware that he was also a revolutionary with ties to the guerrilla movement, led by Fidel Castro, that overthrew the Batista dictatorship in 1959. Had Guerra not been both a passionate lover of stamps and a dedicated revolutionary, it is likely that Cuba's philatelic treasure would have been neglected, and perhaps lost, as has happened in so many countries.

In 1960, Guerra was appointed Director of Stamp Emissions in the Ministry of Communications, and in 1965 he founded the Cuban National Postal Museum, located at the ministry, serving as its director from then until his retirement four years ago. His two most important books, *Historia Postal de Cuba* and *Estudio Sobre la Primera Emision Postal de Antillas Españolas*, are published by the museum.

Guerra enlisted all of Cuba's most advanced collectors, regardless of political persuasion, in the task of assembling the finest material from every period for the museum's permanent collection. Just as important, he chased away the New York dealers with fat wallets who offered him fabulous bribes for "just a few good stamps and covers, that no one will ever miss."

Whatever the future holds for Cuba, tomorrow's collectors will owe a debt of gratitude to J. L. Guerra, a true philatelic Renaissance man.

Adios, compañero.

Edgar Lewy

Although I never met Edgar Lewy face to face, and I disagreed with many of his published opinions, I have long regarded his work as indispensable for all philatelic writers. Now that we no longer have him eavesdropping for us on the Strand, I am even more confident of that opinion.

Lewy assigned himself an impossible task, watching and reporting on all the world's new stamps while cherishing the hobby's nostalgia for the spartan days (real or imagined) when

stamps were issued for one purpose only. Thus he not only supplied the listings that everyone wanted, but peppered the reports with clever barbs that made them entertaining and even habit forming.

Now that Lewy is gone, stamp publishers must hire entire platoons to take over new-issue monitoring. To date they have found no effective substitute for the irascible tone that made his compilations so much fun to read. Other writers who decry the flood of new issues convey more petulance than wit.

Had Lewy limited himself to that task, the trade would have loved him. But he was just as quick to toss darts at the fakers and forgers and flummoxers as he was to target their rivals, the stamp agents.

Late last year, he telephoned from London, and recruited me to two of his pet causes: unmasking the hypocrisy of the anonymous FIP-ASCAT-IFSDA blacklisters who appointed themselves our saviors, and tracking the flow of Peter Winter's ProPhil Forum "replicas" as they pollute ever loftier levels of the philatelic marketplace.

I shall do my best to keep these banners flying for him, well aware that, even from the grave, he will be far deadlier in his aim at his carefully chosen targets than I can ever hope to be, but proud that he regarded me as a suitable partner in these battles. *Ken Lawrence* □

Articles

Writers Can't Kill Philately

By John M. Hotchner

Since Mark Kellner in his "On the Death of Philately as We Know It" (First Quarter 1991 *PC*, page 4) has ascribed to me agreement with one of the building blocks of his thesis, I am compelled to throw in my two cents.

Yes, I agree that philatelic writing is "fun writing" in that I am comfortable with the subject, it is not the major source of my family income, and no one lives or dies because of what I say. However, writing well—on any subject, in any forum—is a craft that demands focus, involvement, care, and significant amounts of time. From that vantage point, the result may fit Kellner's definition of sharing my love affair with philately and its people, but the process of creation is not "fun." I would call it satisfying, but not fun.

Let me now wade deeper into Kellner's pond. His piece mixes several calls for action—both against certain practices and for others. He applies these to the general philatelic press, to *The Philatelic Communicator*, and even to philatelic columns in the non-philatelic press. In spite of this boiling cauldron of thoughts, I do believe that anyone who reads the article should get his drift.

But I would suggest that his title goes well beyond what is proven by his text. Philately prospers today precisely because most of its adherents enjoy working with stamps. What is written in the general philatelic press or a society journal will not persuade a dedicated collector to quit, or persuade a novice to start. Its value is, I think, generally limited to its influence on whether a subscription is renewed by the small portion of the collecting public that subscribes or joins.

Still, our writings *should* try to infuse the reader with enthusiasm—to pull him or her deeper into the hobby. The sweetness-and-light brigade talking about what fun the hobby is makes a significant contribution. But the reality of the hobby is that stamps are only half of the equation. People are the other half, with all the emotions and conflicts that complicate any other field of endeavor, some *felt* very deeply.

I do not object to expressions of those feelings in any forum as long as they are logically and responsibly expressed. Let the writers write about what's on their mind. Those feelings are as likely to stir passion and involvement in the reader as are discussions of the fun aspects of the hobby.

It is the task of editors to try to balance content in individual publications so that they reflect the reality—positives and negatives—of the subject area.

That said, I would agree with what Kellner implies—that we writers do have a responsibility to state our position as positively as possible without excessive whining. □

Shutchy Mouf'

By Joe F. Frye

When should or must you just "shut up"?

Finding the right spot to close a sentence; paragraph endings; chapter or subdivision conclusions; article or novella or what-have-you windups. Choices. Choices.

A further choice of shutting-up places is found in *what* you say, *how* you say it, *when* you say it—that is, not only the time of day or calendar but the timing inside your piece, and *where* you say it—in what context or how it may be phrased. This can be continued *ad nauseam* by including *to whom* you say it . . .

When you make a mistake in producing a printed piece, as author, typographer, editor, or printer, it is graven into the memory of the nitii pickii as "When Abu Hassan -----."

Your own name, of course, is to be inserted in place of Abu Hassan's.

I will leave those who have read the *Thousand and One Nights* to smirk at *that* one.

When you find yourself about to write—or having just written—something that makes you hesitate even slightly about it being appropriately stated, written, or even appropriate at all, re-ask yourself (and answer the question honestly) if what you wrote, or have written is:

- a. Honest
- b. True
- c. Useful to human beings
- d. Hurtful to anyone or anything
- e. Necessary to say
- f. Unavoidably urgent to publish

And so forth. Think about how *you* would feel if author X or editor Y said something like that about *you* in print for the world to see.

No, I'm not endorsing Br'er Rabbit's exhortation to say nothing if you can't say something good, but I am suggesting you *think* about what you are writing, printing, and publishing. Think. Don't just glance your eyeballs over it.

There are a few pitfalls, beartraps, and tiger pits in producing to-be-published materials which the uninitiated—or sometimes the initiated—may encounter which are not widely recognized. One "don't," to be aware of, for example, is don't

you overlook that last look at your product. Run your careful eyes up, down, across, and between the lines. Be sure you see *everything* you need to see. And act upon the obvious and the not-so-obvious with care. That which you quickly pass over might be an item which you could regret when that, or which, appears in print.

Look at the preceding paragraph again, and see whether or not the "that" and "which" usage was correct. (The usage of those two words *is* of course labored and belabored, to make a point.)

And. Is not a good word to start a sentence with. But. Ain't either. Neither. Nohow. Ain't *wrong*, necessarily, but like blowing seegar smoke around in a high-class restaurant, it ain't all that *right*, neither.

Wolf stuff. Huffery-puffery. Unpad your verbiage and give your readers a rest. Remember that some of the better-known and long-lived comments and sayings (trite perhaps, but useful) are brief. *Cogito, ergo sum*.

You aren't supposed to end a sentence with with. (No, you ain't, either!)

The computer even knows better than to use the first sentence of the preceding paragraph. Its word checker or speller or whatever your program calls it will gag on the "with with" as a double word; your correqt wrytre program will scream at you for ending the sentence with even *one* of those little (they are four-letter, after all!) nasteigh words, and so it goes.

If your writing or talking gets the message across in an understandable and mercifully brief fashion you have succeeded. If it comes across a bit muddy and blabbery you haven't necessarily *failed*, you have merely obfuscated.

Amphigourish pedantical pedagogueries notwithstanding, I admit unhesitatingly to the vice that all good polysyllabists never eschew: never use a two- when a ten-syllable word looks or sounds purtier, smarter, or more-tickets-speakwriterish.

Now, can any of you remember where those first three words in the preceding paragraph appeared frequently in print over a several-year period? (Purists: I did *not* look them up, not having at hand an Unabridged, but my memory of their *sound* is reliable, I think, so don't jump my case if it is a tad unspelt-rite.)

Sum fuss about inventing words. Why not, ifyekinfitchy-sintsinnit and the other guy follers you?

Too many tickets and not enough common grace and thoughtfulness, sad to say, burden us. Let us celebrate the joy of each other and our thoughts with malaise toward none, chary tea to all, and have less squabbling in the crib. □

Why for Literature Competition?

By Kenneth T. Stewart

Having written and edited newsletters for 17 years, I continue to marvel at how most members of any given endeavor have no idea of what newsletters are supposed to do.

Through friends I get copies of newsletters from other stamp groups. Some of these groups are famous; others are not. What these groups, for the most part, have in common are newsletters that are professionally printed, well-edited, and patently worthless when it comes to selling the group to new members. Without a constant stream of new members all groups are going to die. New members are what dynamic groups are all about.

One of the newsletters I see averages four to six pages and has nice white space, a nice constant banner, a good listing of coming events, the needed rah-rah for coming projects, and very little about stamps, almost nothing for the novice or intermediate collectors—and it's boring.

Another has many more pages and is very well-printed and edited. It has lots of pictures and lots of club news. Curiously, several times in this newsletter one or more writers have mused about how the average age of the group is going up.

To me, an outsider, it is obvious why this is happening. The pictures in this newsletter are all of old people. The newsletter is mostly devoted to the club's famous members winning this and doing that. There is absolutely nothing in this newsletter about stamps.

What normally shy, intermediate or beginning collector would even consider going to a meeting after seeing this newsletter, let alone consider joining this group? Yet both of these newsletters have won very decent awards in literature competitions and will do the same again whenever they are entered.

Newsletters are the life blood of any group! Yet they are rarely judged on whether or not they are addressing the needs of their sponsoring groups. What is judged is their aesthetic appeal, who the judge knows in the group, how important that group is, does that group sponsor an accredited show, etc. They are judged this way because the vast majority of the literature judges have no idea what the function of a newsletter is and are, therefore, only able to judge it in these meaningless parameters. The most important area, that of importance to the hobby, is completely ignored.

The newsletter of a growing group that is drawing new people into the hobby is far more important to the hobby than a five-volume pseudo-scholarly work on the Dragon Stamps of China. This little problem, importance to the hobby, is what is wrong with literature competition and why it should be ended.

Since no one is going to fix the problems of literature judging as it stands today, why not do away with it? Then put together a panel to see if it, literature competition, is really needed and then empower another panel to find a way for judges to judge items they don't know anything about.

A poorly printed, poorly written publication that contributes to the commonweal of the hobby has merit that a professionally printed publication devoid of utility has not. Both should be judged on both their strengths and their weaknesses. At present they are not. I don't think there are but a few collectors out there who would ever be capable of doing this. So let's just do away with literature competition as a good try that isn't workable in a constructive sense. □

Colopex Literature Critique

By Janet Klug

As one who has been openly critical of literature competitions and critiques and the lack of useful feedback that usually emanates from these events, I am here to eat my words publicly.

I recently attended the Colopex (Columbus, Ohio) literature critique as a spectator, not as an entrant. Colopex chief literature judge Mary Ann Owens and her panel of judges, Jason Manchester, Cheryl Ganz, and apprentice Patrick Walters,

conducted the best literature critique I have ever attended.

Addressing first those authors and editors who were present, each member of the panel commented on the technical nuts and bolts of publishing a book. Included in the discussion were tips on assembling a bibliography, the importance of a title page and the information it should contain, and the desirability of having a work edited before going to press. Although moot points for the books already in print, the tips were valuable for those like myself who have books "in the works."

When the discussion moved to society journals, I had expected usual comments about white space, headers, footers, and pagination. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised when the jury gave advice on how to capture the readers' attention with a good illustration on the cover.

Editors were told how to highlight illustrations so they don't "float off the page." All of this was specific how to do it advice.

Ways to improve illustrations and reproductions were discussed. And much to my delight, even the rather abstract (but essential) concept of how well the publication served its readership was considered and discussed.

I liked the idea that each judge addressed specifics of how to improve the readability and usefulness of the journals. I learned a lot. Congratulations, ladies and gentlemen of the Colopex literature jury. □

Bulletin Board

New Stamp Publication 1. In a speech to the Writers' Breakfast at Rompex, James H. Bruns filled us in on plans for the National Postal History and Philatelic Museum. In response to John Hotchner's question, Bruns confirmed that the museum will issue a slick magazine modeled after other Smithsonian publications such as *Air and Space*.

New Stamp Publication 2? Also at Rompex, I overheard buzzing about yet another new stamp magazine on the drawing boards. Or was it my imagination? If one of our well-connected insiders can be persuaded to share the secret, we outsiders will be grateful.

Old Stamp Publication Kaputt? The headline story of *The Obliterator* says it might be the last issue, and the end of the Pictorial Cancellation Society. What a shame that will be if it happens, just as pictorial cancels are building a larger following closer to the hobby's mainstream.

Catalogs. Scott has announced that it will list all stamps, in defiance of the ASCAT edict. (Scott pulled out of ASCAT several years ago.) Three cheers for Scott! Will Michel stop listing them all, now that it is ASCAT's most important member? Is Michel represented on the committee that issues the monthly blacklist? The names, please, Monsieur Kroo.

Stamps in the News 1. By far our most amusing recent clipping is the April 5 *Houston Post* editorial, "Stamp of Disapproval," sent to us by R. A. Emmet. It begins, "The Postal Service deal to have at least two U.S. stamps printed in Canada is reminiscent of a deceased fish left on a pickup dashboard for a couple of weeks in August. It may not be illegal, but it sure smells." The rest recites information you read here first. True, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* covered the story, as did many other media, but none of those approached the Houston editor's gift for aromatic simile.

Stamps in the News 2. The April 8 issue of *Time* pictured the 35¢ Dennis Chavez stamp over the headline, "Not Made In the U.S.A." This was a decidedly less strident poke at the Postal service than the one from Texas. All the same, I doubt it's what Don McDowell and Gordon Morison had in mind when they decided to seek wider coverage for their products in the mainstream media.

Stamps in the News 3. Once bitten by the philatelic bug, *Time* persisted. The May 6 issue illustrated the Soviet Union's stamp commemorating master spy Kim Philby. That issue's cover story, "Scientology, the Cult of Greed," includes a vignette of the Wall Street Ventures stamp scam, and a quote about it from Michael Laurence, but fails to mention the company's central figure, Marc Rousso.

Tomorrow's Cliché. Fleetwood's brochure promoting its *America's Greatest Military Heroes* collection says, "The Proofcards form a compelling, philatelically-correct, complete collection." I don't know what philatelically correct means, but it appears twice more in the brochure, so I'm betting this is a phrase with a future.

Computers 1. The April *German Postal Specialist* includes an article titled "Stamps and Computers—a happy marriage," by Jerry Jensen. It's an introductory article that's especially useful for producers of literature, because it shows the graphic possibilities of using a scanner to reproduce stamps and postmarks.

Computers 2. Charles Yeager sent an article, "Publishing Without Boundaries" by Jack Powers, from the April *Publishing & Production Executive*, that treats the full range of computer systems from entry-level desktop publishing to sophisticated systems costing up to \$150,000. Any stamp organization pondering a switch to modern equipment would do well to study this report before committing money to a particular system.

Computers 3. Jeffrey Needleman sent an article that complements what Bob Greenwald wrote here a few issues back. "New Opportunities Ahead in Book-on-Demand Publishing" by Don Lancaster can be downloaded as DEMAND.TXT from GENIE's PSRT Library. (Those who don't know what that means probably can't get much use from the article, but can get it from me anyway.)

Computers 4. David Lyon writes, in the April *Lingua Franca*, "Among other ills, computer-literate students tend to be afflicted by what newspaper editors call 'screen-itis,' the tendency to polish whatever is visible in one screen and ignore overall coherence. The result is a 'clean' but incoherent or empty essay. As one history teacher noted of the essays by her sophomore students at Harvard, 'At the level of the individual paragraph, the writing was often very good, but there was no train of thought linking it together. They would even repeat a sentence later in the essay, as if they never read it all the way through.'"

Humor. The forthcoming environmentally-friendly "green" stamps on recycled paper, to be issued April 1 by the Common Market Postal Administration (ComPost for short) are the subject of a *Philatelic Exporter* article. Editors in search of fun filler material for club newsletters might want to recycle it toward the end of March next year (after securing permission, of course). Drop me a card if you'd like a photocopy.

Ken Lawrence □

Pick of the Litter-ature Award VI

By Ken Lawrence

Jeffrey L. Needleman is the easy choice for this quarter's award. The April Fool satirical issue of his *Going Up!* newsletter is the most entertaining piece of philatelic literature to cross my desk in a long time.

WU30 Council member Steven J. Rod thought so too, and it is on his initiative that we are reprinting it, with Jeff Needleman's permission, and furnishing it as a gift pullout in this issue of the *Communicator*, so that every member may enjoy it.

It is especially pertinent to our members, because so much of it is a spoof on this bulletin and those of us who write for it.

Needleman is clever as an imitator ("Imitation is the most sincere form of philately," he says), and he even included a splendid parody of one of his own "investment" promotions, right on the front page.

He also grasps the limits of satire. He reprinted an article by Joe Puleo verbatim from *The Stamper*, realizing that he could do nothing to improve it.

The thing I don't understand is why Needleman is in the stamp business. Perhaps that too is a form of comedy. □

The Paper Collectibles Hobbies

By Ken Lawrence

What hobby has Herman Herst Jr. as a favorite writer, raconteur, historian, insider, and all-around expert? What hobby's leading auctioneers include Superior Galleries and William A. Fox Inc.?

Autograph collecting.

The answer to this teaser quiz highlights something relatively new in our stamp hobby, even though these links are probably as old as collecting itself. As our hobby undergoes internal changes that I have discussed before—from country collecting to topical collecting, from stamps to covers, from Zepps to Ducks—our external face is changing too.

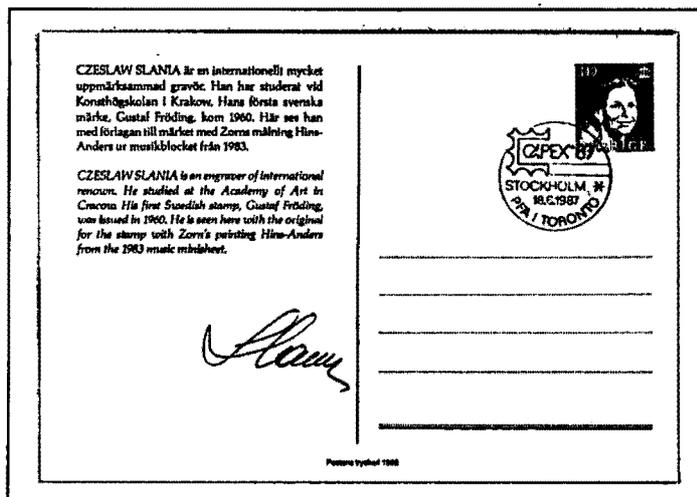
A generation ago, stampandcoincollecting was a firmly welded phrase; but no longer. True, some members of the stamp trade continue to cast an envious eye on the big money that (often foolishly) continues to pursue collectibles with tangible value, but pursuit of that pot of gold is part of the reason that the commercial market for stamps continues to crash throughout the English-speaking world at the very time our organizations are larger and stronger than ever, and sales of supplies (albums, mounts, and other equipment) are robust.

We have a classic problem of perception here. The main group of people who desire to sell us stamps continues to employ an obsolete analogy. Our hobby once shared many common traits with coin collecting, but those days are past.

At bottom, most of us are freeloaders.

That's why the typical profile of a stamp collector's life—starting in childhood with a gift of some stamps; building a collection in an album, then putting it aside for adolescence, courtship, and career-making; finally returning in maturity—is so predictable.

Coin collectors used to be similar kinds of people, starting with their pocket change and building from there at little cost—not as extreme as we wastebasket scroungers, but close.



Czeslaw Slania's autograph enhances this Czapex '87 Souvenir postcard, but philately has not yet acknowledged its close kinship to autograph collecting.

They got elbowed out in the 1960s by the new-issue speculators who cornered the market on specific mints and dates, and that crowd was similarly displaced by the mint-state 65 precious-metal manipulators.

Meanwhile, despite attempts to drag philately along a similar course, we have retained our fundamental cultural trait, and thus have drifted away from coins and in a different direction, one that is broadly called paper collectibles, embracing everything from the world's most important historical documents to flea-market kitsch.

This has caused some distress, particularly when we veer too close for comfort toward certain constituents of this group of hobbies, especially comic books and sports cards, and those headaches are likely to persist. But in the main, it is a desirable course and, in any case, an inevitable one.

Writers would do well to accustom themselves to the entire area now, while the relationship is still forming. Today we can have a positive influence on the future, but only by recognizing and accepting its general shape.

Each member of the paper collectibles family includes its own moneybags elite, just as ours does, but the dominant outlook is still the notion that highly prized and important material can be obtained cheaply or free. That unstated underlying philosophy is the basis of the affinity (and, for now at least, the reason why comic book and sports cards collecting are misfits here, in spirit more akin to coin collecting).

The hobbies worth watching and cozying up to are autograph and manuscript collecting for sure, which then overlap collecting of rare books and old newspapers, but I'd also include political items collectors in the same sorority.

Autographs are not new to philately of course, so it would be a wise move for some philatelists to join the Manuscript Society even if their only purpose is to keep watch on their rivals in pursuit of the same rare and valuable covers bearing Abraham Lincoln's frank. A lot of fine space covers and other topical philatelic material circulates through the Universal Autograph Collectors Club, along with signed celebrity photos.

I've added some prize covers to my various collections from

auctions that stamp collectors never hear about, especially Hake's Americana. But if you enter this field, prepare to accept a different set of rules. Don't expect anyone to reduce your bid to one increment above the underbidder.

The Manuscript Society is the elite organization for this sector of the hobby. Its quarterly journal *Manuscripts* is as professional and scholarly as any. Members also receive a pamphlet-size quarterly bulletin, *Manuscript Society News*. Annual dues are \$25. Write to David R. Smith, Executive Director, 350 N. Niagara St., Burbank, CA 91505. (Dave Smith is also the director of the Walt Disney Company archive.)

Whether or not you decide to join, I would recommend acquiring the 172-page paperback book *Autograph Collector's Checklist* edited by John M. Taylor for your writer's reference shelf. It is a Manuscript Society publication, available for \$15.95 plus \$1.25 shipping. For any area of U.S. or Confederate postal history, airmail, and many topical interests, it is guaranteed to expand your knowledge.

The Pen and Quill is published six times a year by the Universal Autograph Collectors Club. Regular dues in the U.S. are \$25 per year. Write to Chris Wilson, Secretary, P.O. Box 6181, Washington, DC 20044-6181.

Two commercial publications, *The Autograph Collector's Magazine* (ten issues per year, \$25) and *Autograph Quarterly & Buyers Guide* (four issues, \$8) are published by Joe Kraus, P.O. Box 55328, Stockton, CA 95205, the former for hobbyists, the latter for dealers, speculators, and "investors."

A smaller private effort is *The Autograph Review* (six issues per year, \$12.95) from Jeffrey W. Morey, 305 Carlton Road, Syracuse, NY 13207. My sample copy focuses on sports and space personalities.

One publication that specializes in the older and more expensive items is *The Collector—A Magazine for Autograph and Historical Collectors* (\$2.50 per issue, two issues payment in advance, normally six or more issues per year), which doubles as a scholarly newsletter and a dealer price list for Walter R. Benjamin Autographs Inc., P.O. Box 255, Hunter, NY 12442.

The collector who pursues today's autographs needs *The Celebrity Home Address Newsletter* (six issues per year, \$9) from Allen Thompson, 4343 Monaghan Pt. Rd., Alpena, MI 49707.

The Newspaper Collectors Society of America publishes *Collectible Newspapers* six times per year. Annual U.S. dues are \$18. I highly recommend the June 1990 issue, "Newspapers and the Post Office," including "Newspaper Collecting and Stamp Collecting—Hobbies Made for Each Other," available for \$5, and *A Primer on Collecting Old and Historic Newspapers* by Rick Brown for \$1. Write to NCSA, Box 19134, Lansing, MI 48901.

For \$25 annual dues, members of American Political Items Collectors receive an annual membership roster and plastic ring binder to store it, the quarterly magazine *The Keynoter*, and the monthly tabloid newspaper *The Political Bandwagon*. Write to APIC Secretary-Treasurer, P.O. Box 340339, San Antonio, TX 78234.

The Political Collector is a monthly commercial tabloid (\$12.50 per year) from PC, 420 Madison Ave., York, PA 17404.

A monthly commercial magazine that embraces nearly all

these interests is *Paper Collectors' Marketplace* (\$17.95 per year) from PCM, P.O. Box 128, Scandinavia, WI 54977-0218. This I would recommend only for buyers, sellers, and those who need market information. It has very little information about the collectibles themselves.

No one has a crystal ball that can tell us our hobby's future with perfect accuracy, although it will be interesting to see what kind of speculation John Dunn elicits in response to his offer of a 100-year subscription to *Mekeel's* for the best projections.

Despite the uncertainty, following the organizations and publications described here, and blending that information with the observable changes already taking place in philately will probably yield as accurate a glimpse of the future as any, and more accurate than most.

The list is unlikely to be complete, but certainly is representative of our broader cultural environment, but only as it exists in this country. The condition of the stamp hobby is quite different overseas, particularly in the non-English parts of the world. I'd be pleased to receive articles that would extend the picture internationally.

Members of our hobby who take a positive view of these trends should give some thought to how we can welcome many of these kin into our own ranks. One obvious way would be to take a more generous view of so-called collateral material in our exhibition rules.

Now would be a good time for writers to begin introducing our readers to these allied hobbies, and our hobby to their publications. □

Letters

From John F. Dunn:

I have a feeling there are some people who prefer the old, orderly world in which there were three weekly newspapers to discuss, *i.e.*, *Linn's*, *Stamps*, and *Stamp Collector*. Recent submissions to the *Communicator* would reinforce that view.

Just catching up on my reading, I couldn't help notice that Robert Greenwald once again slights *Mekeel's* in his fourth Quarter 1990 comparison of headlines. He had promised *Communicator* readers a long, long time ago to review *Mekeel's* once we had a chance to demonstrate the direction in which we are going. That review never appeared. Now, in looking at headlines, he somehow jumps past the content and can only comment on the ads at the bottom of our page 1.

Incidentally, for those who care, we intend to continue to run ads at the bottom of the page. First off, the advertisers who are there now stuck with this paper when it was down and out, and I am not one to say "thanks but now that we don't need you . . ." Secondly, perhaps page one coverage of ads is not taught in journalism schools, but we're not in journalism school, we are in the business of offering our readers what they want to see. Stamp newspapers are supposed to have lots of ads. Readers will tell you that it's part of the appeal of the publication.

As for Weill ads not attracting want lists, Bob is right, but for the wrong reasons. *Mekeel's* readers probably won't send Weill want lists based on those ads—because the ads are all *buy* ads. (On the other hand, Dale Enterprises runs a weekly sell ad just adjacent to the Weill ad on page 1, and Dale Hendricks tells

us that the best customer he ever got—and one he still has—came from just such a *Mekeel's* ad.) So we are going to keep ads at the bottom of page 1. Hopefully most readers and reviewers will start at the top of the page.

Now, back to the missing coverage in Bob's review of headlines in the four weekly newspapers. To fill in the gap for *Communicator* readers, I picked up the most recent six issues of *Mekeel's* (Bob wrote that he was working with five or six issues from each publication), and these were our leads:

- *March 29, 1991*: National Issue . . . (part of our serialization of the as-yet-unpublished book, this issue on the Newspaper stamps of 1875-1895) and "Stone Age Stamps Discovered" (an attempt at April Fool's humor on the part of your editor).

- *March 22*: World War II (a July to December 1940 review in our continuing chronological series) and "Why Does the Chicken . . ." (an original article comparing prices for various Fancy Cancels in the recent Christie's auction and explaining why the Running Chicken commands such a comparatively high price).

- *March 15*: Topical Highlights, by Dave Kent (this article in his series being on Centennial Issues) and "From the Editor's Desk." (I don't often put myself on page 1, but we were announcing a year 2091 predictions contest in which a subscriber could win a free 100-year subscription to *Mekeel's*).

- *March 8*: "It's Show Time" (a special edition), with intros to three shows (Garfield-Perry, Interpex, and World Columbian) to the left and "Secrets of Stamp Show Success," an original article by Ed Hines, to the right.

- *March 1*: "National Issue . . ." with photos of each Department's Official Stamps across the page, that being the subject of this edition of the serialization.

- *February 22*: *Mekeel's* First Day Cover edition, with the date change on the U.S. Savings Bond issue to the left and "The Cover Tradition," a reprint of a commentary on FDC's from a 1940 *Mekeel's*, on the right.

Now I ask you, with content like that how can someone only see the ads at the bottom of the page? And yet it happens. Some people just do not want to accept that *Mekeel's* has complicated their writing lives by becoming a factor in the newspaper field.

Another case in point, but this one more understandable: In the First Quarter 1991 edition, Dane Claussen, in responding to Al Starkweather's broadsides in the previous issue, gets into discussions of the stamp newspaper field as if only three publications existed. Even when he refers to readers' preferences, somehow he finds no one who prefers *Mekeel's* to any of the other three. And yet, we are the only publication whose subscription base is increasing . . . rapidly at that. *Someone* must like us. (I'm not ready to call it a landslide, but in point of fact, I receive many letters indicating that we have become the "first read" for collectors.)

Given the blasts and counter-blasts being fired, I suppose I should be content not being mentioned in Dane's letter, or Al's piece before that. But I think it is important to make the point that writers need to adjust to the new reality. I am here to tell you that *Mekeel's* is a serious factor in the philatelic publishing world. We may not be as big as the others, but we are carrying as much hard content as, if not more than, any other weekly—on Page One and throughout the paper. And we intend to continue to move further in that direction. So please, writers, if you want to tell the whole story, when you start comparing

three publications . . . make it four.

Incidentally, on a totally different subject, I can't let this letter go by without also applauding Ken Lawrence for his First Quarter 1991 "Open Letter." It's a courageous piece of journalism. As my way of thanking Ken for his efforts, I'm going to send copies to my Congressman and Senators, and I suggest that other writers do the same. □

From Bill McAllister:

Thanks so much for your letter on communications problems with the Postal Service. As one of the new kids on the block, I do not have the sense of history that you do. It was most helpful.

I can only date my difficulties in obtaining information from the relatively recent departure of Hugh McGonigle. He was a storehouse of knowledge and usually could answer my questions without having to turn to anyone for advice. I have tried to get a lunch with Gordon Morison to raise some of my concerns about communications needs as I see them, but we've never set a date. *

I have known that the cover makers are on a mailing list that gives them advance information on upcoming issues, supposedly so they can design their cachets. Writing only a column a week in *The Washington Post* and having to do some of them on coins, I must admit that I have not tried to shake the letters loose. It should, however, be readily available with a Freedom of Information request.

Tony Frank held a luncheon about two years ago for a group of stamp writers and it was very helpful. I think we all need more background on their thinking about issues and the direction of the stamp program than we are getting. I requested all first-day speeches in an effort to make up for this gap, but found them devoid of much news. □

* This letter was written March 19. Bill McAllister has met with Gordon Morison since then.

From H. E. Harris Jr.:

I compliment you on your marvelous well-written letter to the Postmaster General published in *The Philatelic Communicator*.

It was a masterpiece of excellence—and I believe you could be a first rate prosecuting attorney! Maybe it's not too late!

I enjoyed it thoroughly and read it with great admiration and envy. □

From Leonard Piszkiwicz:

Congratulations on taking the USPS to task on their recent stamp production and issuing policies in *The Philatelic Communicator*. I have felt that over the past five years or so the USPS has been getting less and less forthcoming about new issues, which makes life harder for small-scale cachetmakers like me.

I do cachets for fun, so I don't have to meet the necessities of running a business. But it still makes it very hard to generate artwork and print envelopes for servicing UOs (which is what I like to do) when stamp designs are released only weeks before the first day.

I'm not on the USPS's cachetmaker list, so I don't get advance info. And I don't really care to get into that loop. When cachetmaking stops being fun, I quit.

Overall, it appears to me that in this area, and also in the

operation of the Philatelic Sales Division, USPS management seems not to care about servicing customers when it interferes with their bureaucratic rules. Of course, they're a monopoly; they don't need to meet competition with good service.

I fail to understand why KCS is now getting contracts to produce stamps, since their first effort, the F booklet, was so poor. All of those that I've seen, including five I bought from PSD/Kansas City were very poor quality—booklet edges cut crooked, perfs crunched in the folding of the booklets, extra adhesive blotches sticking stamp surfaces together, and panes folded through the stamps rather than the perfs in some booklets. □

From Terence Hines:

Congratulations on your letter to Frank and Morison. This is just exactly the kind of muckraking reporting that the hobby needs. I only hope it goes some way toward cleaning up that house of vipers commonly known as the USPS administration.

You've done a real service, not only to the hobby but to all USPS users, by revealing the corruption in that organization. Why not send a copy of the *PC* to the producers of *60 Minutes*? Wouldn't it be great to see Morison sweat as he's being grilled by Mike Wallace?

Also, let me tell you how much I enjoy each and every issue of the *PC*. There is controversy in philately, as there is in any area of human endeavor. To try and ignore it, or gloss it over with pages of vacuous "nice-nice" talk and mutual admiration society fluff, would not only be nauseating, but would keep important issues hidden, and thus unresolved. Those who can't tolerate the slightest hint of disagreement would be better off watching re-runs of *Rainbow Bright* cartoons. □

From Les Winick:

This is being written with mixed emotions. *The Philatelic Communicator* has become a tremendous medium under your editorship whereby I actually look forward to receiving each issue and generously clip and copy articles for follow-up.

That's the good news.

The bad news is that I am uncomfortable with some of your recent articles. They were fascinating reading, but do they belong in the Writers Unit publication? For example, is your open letter to Frank and Morison a subject for this type publication, or should it have been submitted directly to the general philatelic press? It came across as a high-class Joe Puleo-type exposé-type article.

My other problem with this particular article is that *Linn's* ran it simultaneously with the *Communicator*. Did you send the article to all papers at the same time, and only *Linn's* chose to run it at once, or was it just sent to *Linn's*?

I enjoy controversy and have been known to initiate it at times. Perhaps that's what makes *The Philatelic Communicator* "must" reading for those of us who peruse every philatelic journal. □

Ken Lawrence Replies:

I'm glad you thought the open letter was high class. As for Joe Puleo, he seems to be writing for Stamp Collector under the name David Schiller.

The letter belonged in the Communicator because it demonstrated the first plausible explanation behind USPS's refusal to

provide information to writers that used to be routinely, cheerfully supplied. It was pure coincidence that it went out shortly before Bill McAllister broke the story in The Washington Post about the 35¢ Chavez stamps being printed in Canada, with the result that my report was linked to that one in the national media.

In reality, as I demonstrated, the scandal goes much deeper, and has little to do with Canada. Although I wrote not a word about Canada, Puleo/Schiller charged me with jingoism in the ensuing flap.

The Albany demagogue, finding what I actually wrote and said to be insufficiently provocative, attributed to me several statements and opinions that I do not hold and never have. An embarrassed Mark Kellner, who shared the byline over a portion of the diatribe, disowned it. Puleo/Schiller, still smarting because I refused to supply him my sources and documents, but desiring an opportunity to "stand by" his screed, hopes that I will send him a complaint. Things seem to be getting desperate at Capital Cities' stamp subsidiary.

Nevertheless, it is their fault, not mine, that Stamp Collector avoided the story for the first two weeks after it broke here, in Linn's, and in the national media. As soon as the First Quarter issue was printed, I instructed Joe Frye to mail copies first-class to all four weeklies, and he did so. Due to a foulup in communication, Linn's actually got it a day later than Stamp Collector, and work on the Linn's story commenced at that time. True to form, Stamp Collector flubbed it, then cried foul, while publishing Don McDowell's answers to creampuff questions.

While I was drafting the open letter, I consulted writers with both Linn's and Stamp Collector for input, criticisms, and suggestions, and incorporated nearly all of them. Without exception, they were supportive. So were other stamp writers who aren't affiliated to either weekly. I avoided consulting writers who have past or present financial ties to the Postal Service, or who are personally close to top USPS brass, for obvious reasons.

Naturally, expressions of opinion cannot be enforced; people are free to change their minds. One writer who called to express his enthusiastic endorsement of my open letter was Robert Rabinowitz. Later, after seeing his superior's reaction, he reversed himself and blasted me in his most recent Coil Number Exposé.

All these are normal, predictable, healthy consequences of controversy at its best. That's what the author of the First Amendment intended. We should celebrate the fact that it works so well, even when applied to an aspect of the writers' craft as relatively obscure as ours. □

From Charles Teed (to Postmaster General Anthony M. Frank and Assistant Postmaster General Gordon D. Morison):

As a stamp collector, a weekly philatelic writer in *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, and as one keenly interested in the welfare of the Postal Service I am perturbed by the feelings and the comments of Ken Lawrence in *The Philatelic Communicator*, journal of the APS Writers Unit No. 30.

He has criticism of Don McDowell, based on lengthy contact and experience. I defend McDowell. I am one who has less extensive contacts than Lawrence does but I have very positive feelings about McDowell's attitudes and abilities.

Mr. Morison, I believe you know me slightly from conversations and questions during our meetings in Denver and most recently at Tucson. My father was an office manager for a small company and a keen user of the mails, seeing that train times were met, correct postage and interesting stamps were used.

I grew up using and admiring the Postal Service and have continued in an attempt to be an informed postal user.

For 20 years or more I have been an active collector and writer.

The Postal Service is important to me both as a user and a philatelist. Thousands—millions—feel the same in varying degrees depending on age and background.

The Postal Service needs improvement in this day of high-tech and competition. It needs better service to the [small] segment of philatelists. I feel that stamp design needs to move ahead from the simplistic "sticker" style.

McDowell may be guilty of certain things—but I am far distant from knowing of these.

I do know, for example, of his wit and understanding in representing the federal government in such a first-day ceremony as the one in Window Rock in 1986, delayed an hour by tribal wrangling in Council session—and then another half-hour by the Medicine Man's invocation.

He met the unrest by a crowd of school children and a modest handful of adults by his pertinent remarks, much abbreviated. He brought honor and appreciation to the postal system by his skills in human relations at that moment. I had met him at other times and held him in high regard. I still do.

Certainly within the framework of your skilled understanding of the public's need and the ladder of authority within the department you can make use of his background without upsetting the values you have, arranging ways to avoid conflicts.

Even from my place in the distance of Colorado and my limited experience in small towns and cities I still feel the need for elimination of delay and (the frequent mention of) red tape. Actually I do have ten years of experience as a news photographer in El Paso with a million people in that center with Juarez, complications of a dual city straddling the nation's border.

As you can see my experience is opposite to that of Mr. Lawrence, my solution much more in McDowell's favor. □

From Russell H. Anderson:

I have just completed a close reading of the second copy of *The Philatelic Communicator* received as a new member of the Writers Unit. It now is the second publication I read cover to cover. (The other is *Time* magazine.)

Long ago I learned to check my facts in articles written but I find there is always something someone will notice that may be incorrect. A recent *mea culpa* letter to *Stamp Collector* indicates that my own relatives in Norway took me to task for an error. I am sure I saw the information I used but cannot find it in my files now. Someone else was also wrong but I failed to check it out in another source.

Although not privileged to know the details, I am happy to see the open letter to the Postmaster General and Assistant Postmaster General. It is time someone laid it on the line for writers and collectors. They provide the publicity which helps enhance the income of the USPS. I too abhor some of the poor graphics, especially since my collections of Scandinavia illustrate what excellent engraving and even offset products can

be—albeit their printing runs are considerably shorter.

I am probably more of a casual writer than "free-lance" as quoted in your new member listing. It is more fun to pass on what I have learned than it is an income-producing endeavor.

I must agree with writer Mark Kellner that it is past time for writers to stop carping and provide upbeat articles to encourage new collectors. Write to the scoundrels directly rather than for publication. I avoid attempts to cut up the USPS for occasional lapses in service. Considering the volumes they process it is amazing that there are not more horrendous goof-ups. There are certainly plenty of incompetents in a service of that size to provide them.

As to articles on the use of computers and word processors, at my age switching from my ancient Smith-Corona and my long-term facility in its use would create trauma that I'd probably not survive. With research at hand, one rewrite is usually sufficient. More power to the younger writers who accept the new equipment, enjoy its use, and thereby produce the excellent letters and articles they have published. As for me, back to the well-built machine that occasionally drops a bolt out of the bottom but still keeps going! □

From Randy L. Neil:

Comments on *The Philatelic Communicator* Whole Number 91 for what they're worth:

1. I applaud the motivations behind your open letter "treatise" to the USPS folks and, though they may be standing on thin ice with their possible questionable relationships with stamp printers, I can understand the lapses that have occurred in their relationships with media and with "customer service" from their Kansas City cave operation. They've made sea changes in their marketing operations and glitches are bound to occur . . . even in the best of "companies." They do seem to be working out these bloopers.

Often forgotten in the "mixmash" of criticism that often is delivered to them in torrents are the "good works" they are doing . . . though these good works may be entirely self-motivated. When *Linn's* saw fit to cover your open letter on page one, virtually hidden on page eight was a *true* front page story: the USPS's experimentation with a local youth club in Denver, Colorado. This kind of work—together with their massive Ben Franklin Stamp Clubs program—is the singular "hope" philately has in bringing our hobby into viable competition with baseball cards and Nintendo. Organized philately has profoundly dropped this torch . . . and thankfully, the USPS saw fit to pick it up. Once again, though, they're doin' it for themselves, but the payoff will benefit all of philately in the long term.

2. We are, to my knowledge, the only organization that chooses to list "Delinquent Members"—a policy that I consider to be abysmal. Members may have their own, quite valid reasons for not renewing their dues and they do not deserve to be publicly chastised for it.

3. Mark Kellner's article, "On the Death of Philately As We Know It," was right on the mark. In contrast to the very readable "people-oriented" material that appeared in the philatelic press three decades ago, today's periodicals are simply missing the boat. One of stamp collecting's chief drawing cards is its people . . . and, in ignorance of this, the press just isn't giving this side of the hobby its due. *Stamps*, sometimes, is an

exception when they run their attractive photo features showing people at stamp shows. Personally, I've fought for getting the "people" back into philatelic journalism for ages. And thank heavens Pat Herst continues with us. Readers love his brand of writing . . . though most editors go after very little of this kind of thing from others.

4. Mark Kellner again. To him I say: "Go, and Buy Thee an IBM PC." I won't belabor my viewpoint by spending too much time picking apart his, but it wouldn't surprise me if he wears an Apple logo on his shorts. I have a full-scale IBM PC 386/SX with 3 MB RAM, 80MB hard drive and all the necessary software . . . purchased for a ton less than his \$5,000 estimate. I use Microsoft Windows and it runs like a well-tuned Jaguar. And I stayed away from Macintosh because the computer hardware and software industry is leaning so heavily towards the IBM product environment (pick up the giant 600-page *Computer Shopper* at a grocery store and see how long it takes and how hard it is to find an ad for Apple stuff). Macs are great, but so are IBM's and their clones.

5. John MicGlire's reply to Al Starkweather's article might have reinforced the point of view that Al is a former disgruntled employee of *Stamps*, but the fact remains: *Stamps* is in sore need of a unique identity which, under Dan Milliman's editorship, they were fast on the way to getting. If I could get something from *Stamps* that I couldn't get elsewhere, I'd renew my long-lost subscription. MicGlire remarks, "*Stamps* is flourishing." Maybe on the ledger where its publisher's pen may see a bit of black ink from time to time, but the "personality" of the periodical only shows us rare glimpses of the magazine's past glory. Magazine? Did I say that? Oops. When it converted to tabloid format, *Stamps* shot itself in the foot.

6. *The Philatelic Communicator* I think could use a bit of refurbishing, if you'll pardon my criticism here. Suggestions: Long articles need subheads. Headlines might stand out better if they were set in sans-serif type. Spacing between end of one article and the headline for the next is too narrow. How 'bout some unique logotypes for regular features such as the "Letters" column, etc? The content is great, but I'd like to see it "broken up" better for readability. □

From Mark A. Kellner:

At the risk of continuing old threads, I feel it necessary to clarify some comments I made in *The Philatelic Communicator*, First Quarter 1991 issue, as well as to reply to some editorial comments offered by the editor.

As mentioned in a discussion today, I had submitted a *manuscript* of an opinion piece—not a "Letter to the Editor"—for the "What Others Are Saying" column in *Linn's Stamp News* during December 1989, long before I was active in resuming regular writing for *Stamp Collector*. In both my conversation with Mike Laurence of *Linn's* and in my letter to him, I said this was offered for publication. It was *that* opinion piece which was sliced and diced for the "Letters" section; it is *that* practice to which I object, and to which, I'd suggest, most writers and editors would also object.

My comments concerning Gary Griffith's reporting on the "make up" non-denominated stamp were deliberately sent to you for publication in the *PC*, because I believe it is in this forum, and not, say, in *Linn's* directly, or even in *Stamp Collector*. I don't believe that my pointing out Mr. Griffith's

tactic will "kill" philately any more than your comments (on pages 2 and 3) will cause a fatal injury to philately. Take either of our comments and put them in the public press, and the whole matter takes on a different cast.

As to my comparing *Linn's* with *The New York Times* it's worth noting that you, Ken, started that one last year in the *PC*. And I'll give \$100 to the charity of your choice in exchange for documentation, for solid proof, that a *Times* "knowledgeable source" is someone on the rewrite desk or at the end of a phone line.

Since I know—all too well, thanks to my mirror every morning—that I'm prone to errors as I contribute to newspapers which provide "the first rough draft of history," let me conclude this missive by noting one of mine. □

In your comments on "Back to the ABCs of Journalism," you note that Reuters news service and *The Christian Science Monitor* (the article is a part of the proper name) erred in stating Jesse Jackson was "the first living black and second living person to become honored on a United States postmark . . ."

I picked up the "second living person" line in a story I wrote for the March 16 issue of *Stamp Collector*. My notes indicated the USPS confirmed this; the story quoted Michael O'Hara of the USPS's Office of Stamp and Philatelic Marketing on the subject.

According to the *PC*. I was wrong. *Mea culpa*. I knew I should have collected some more postmarks these past 18 years! □

Ken Lawrence replies:

No doubt this exchange is becoming tiresome for many readers, so we shall close it out with this letter and response, unless some writer other than Mark Kellner or myself deems further commentary useful.

*I still agree with the Linn's practice to which Mark takes exception. It is the editor's decision, not the writer's, how (or if) to publish a submission. That is especially so when a "manuscript" is a reply to a previously published article, or an embellishment. In this issue of *PC*, an item Kellner sent as an article appears as a letter.*

It was a New York Timesman many years ago who taught me the "knowledgeable observer" trick. I shall not name him, so my favorite charity will have to forgo the donation, but he is today a deservedly well-respected writer for another important big-city newspaper. Barth Healey's letter that follows says this is no longer tolerated at the Times. To me that means the Times has changed.

*However, my quip in the last issue obscured a more important point, which is the key difference between hobby journalism and journalism. We philatelic writers are not, and cannot be, disinterested observers, as reporters for the major media are supposed to be. We are experts in our field, and we properly consult one another for information, analysis, opinion, and confirmation. I telephone Linn's staffers frequently, and have used them as sources, by name, many times. If Mark Kellner does not consider his *Stamp Collector* editor worth consulting on the record, that should not be regarded as a proud boast.*

Michael Laurence's aim of making Linn's our hobby's newspaper of record cannot be achieved by mimicking models that do not apply. Even as a mere columnist for Linn's, I can

assure Mark that readers are aware of Linn's mission, whether or not they can articulate it.

At the opposite pole, no one I know, whether naive or sophisticate, can articulate Stamps's mission. John Dunn is attempting to supplement the joy of stamp collecting while avoiding the sorrow in Mekeel's, and he is increasingly successful. That leaves number two, Stamp Collector, undefined, which I suspect underlies this correspondence. It's the reason I have risked boring WU30 members with it. If nothing else, Mark Kellner is "trying harder" in his Washington cockpit, and wants us to know it.

I have no objection to that. In fact, the healthiest thing for us all would be to have at least two competing weeklies that are must reading.

If the principles Mark endorses are applied uniformly, the worst offender would not be Gary Griffith, but Belmont Faries, Mark's predecessor at Stamp Collector. Yet in reality it was Belmont's dual role as insider and reporter that gave Stamp Collector its edge. There's no way for Mark or anyone else to duplicate Belmont's achievement, so instead he competes aggressively with his Linn's counterpart on essentially the same turf, crows about his scoops, and cries foul when he's bested.

Meanwhile, though, Stamp Collector has lost an important element of its distinctiveness—not the only one, of course, but Kellner's me-too approach to covering the Washington scene, and similar writing by other recently recruited columnists, has diminished the impact of 13 annual special-focus issues and the in-depth scholarly features that used to be Stamp Collector's trademark.

When I wrote for Stamp Collector from 1982 to 1987, everything from my monthly coil columns to my investigative reports of official wrongdoing had a style, depth, and character—especially timelessness—in keeping with the overall editorial strategy, entirely different from the qualities required by Linn's. SC's adherence to its editorial principles secured a loyal, spirited readership, much of which has since been lost.

As its new editor gropes his way, readers must guess what each new issue of Stamp Collector will bring without any confidence their expectations will be fulfilled. I hope it won't be long before David Schiller's mission becomes clear, and that he'll inspire his writers to a proud level of achievement. If he succeeds, there will be little need for exchanges of this sort.

The irony of Mark Kellner's taunts is that he labors every trivial complaint against Linn's while shying away from his paper's egregious offenses against established ethical norms. Mark telephoned me to disown the headline and first two paragraphs of the lead story in the April 20 Stamp Collector, "Unsubstantiated charges swirl around USPS Canada printing," and to denounce David Schiller's companion page 4 editorial as "pure ad hominem, which I deplore."

The page 1 article purports to be "By Mark A. Kellner and David Schiller," though it contains elements Kellner says he didn't know about in advance and would not have approved. Schiller emphatically "stands by" the tampering, but Kellner has not yet resigned in protest. Both men, quick to hurl stones at anything bearing a Linn's logotype, would do well to put their own glass house in order.

As to Mark's parenthetical note on style, I reject it. Although I still tinker with this quarterly's style sheet, my rules for rendering publication names are pat. No matter how many

writers refer to STAMPS or STAMPS magazine, it appears here as Stamps. When I wrote "... The February 20 Christian Science Monitor . . ." in my First Quarter column, it was correct. If Kellner writes "... The February 20 The Christian Science Monitor . . .," one hopes his editor will rescue him. To understand this point, consult Edward D. Johnson's Handbook of Good English (whose complete title is The Handbook of Good English), pages 178-180.

And yes, I do recommend that philatelic writers collect postmarks. □

From Barth Healey:

Glad to have gotten the latest issue of PC on time. Whatever it was that was done right, let's do it again.

Couple of comments: At the rate that Mark Kellner is going, the complaints that Ken Lawrence uses up too much of our ink will shift to his output. But since he seems to be a fan of mine, do let him have all the space he needs.

Regarding Mark's note about Linn's staffers quoting their colleagues: Gary Griffith should at least be given full marks for candor in identifying his "observers" as being other journalists. Too many writers hide behind weasle-words like "sources" to disguise the fact that they are quoting their bar-mates.

However, the note to Mark's letter that said "knowledgeable sources" turned up a lot in *The New York Times* is wrong. Such a label, and similar ones like "sources," are *verboten*. This is not to say that such constructions don't slip through the copy desks; they do. But Allan M. Siegal, the assistant managing editor in charge of lucidity, never fails to castigate the offenders publicly. We are under strict orders to put the "source" in some context: Democratic legislator, e.g., or recently dismissed Boeing executive, or whatever, so the reader can decide for herself whether the "source" is offering a balanced comment.

The most curious case occurs when our *Times* colleagues should be quoted and are not. Careful readers of *New York Times* earnings reports, and some labor stories regarding the *Times*, may find the phrase "executives of The Times declined to comment." Don't the *Times* executives trust their own reporters to quote them correctly? A reader might wonder. □

From John F. Dunn:

Stephen Esrati, writing on *The New York Times* coverage of the stamp field, jumps from Dick Sine (who wrote for a few months) to Barth Healey. Yoo, hoo, Stephen! There was another writer in between. (Yours truly.) It wouldn't matter much except that I have some information that might be of interest:

The reason the *Times* does not cover the New York scene much is because the stamp column is a national column. Less so than when it was carried in the Arts & Leisure section, but still part of the *Sunday Times*, which is sold across the country. As for content, I was the first to trim back the USPS new issues coverage. I did write on new issues from time to time; also on auctions, gave coverage to the major societies, and just about anything else I felt might interest *Times* readers and help the hobby. Of course, USPS news had to be covered, because it was of interest to readers, but not in the detail that had become the trademark of Sam Tower's tenure. We did cover the major New York shows, auctions, etc., since they had special appeal across the country, but general New York coverage would have been inappropriate given the national readership.

My experience differs from Dick Sine's. When I wrote the column, no one told me what to write, or not to write. It was easy to figure out that the average *Times* reader was not looking solely for new issue news. It's too bad the *Times* has cut its stamp coverage in half, but I suppose it was inevitable. While I personally felt that Barth Healey's columns were interesting, I thought that in taking the column in a different direction, he lost touch with the *Times*'s readership base. I don't think that was a factor in the cuts, which probably are more attributable to the decreasing impact stamp collecting has on the general populace. □

From Barth Healey:

It is a bit unclear, but I think Stephen Esrati was implying in his note in the Fourth Quarter *PC* that the *Times* cut back by half the stamp and coin columns because, as the headline says, they were "Not as Fit to Print Anymore."

He's wrong, in part because he misunderstands what a stamp column in a general publication should be, in part because he may be unfamiliar with the financial state of newspapers generally.

The columns were cut back solely as a cost-saving measure, as I explained to Mike Laurence in a phone call soon after the announcement, and as Mike noted in a subsequent column of his in *Linn's*. Because of the advertising configuration of the second book of the Sunday paper, making space on the Pastimes page for the bridge column (which had been elsewhere in the book), meant we could cut back the entire book by two pages, an enormous savings in newsprint.

Among the other things that the *Times* has dropped have been the Al Hirschfield cartoons in the Weekend section, several of the Tom Bloom cartoons on the sport pages, the Mary Cantwell column in the Home section, the "Works in Progress" feature at the back of the Sunday magazine, etc. You get the idea.

No, I do not report the full details of each new issue. *Linn's*, *The American Philatelist*, and many other publications do this. So does the USPS, with its posters in every post office lobby. I do, however, alert the general reader to new stamps, as I did in 14 of the 42 columns published last year. The general reader (my audience) just wants to know about stamps in general. First-day collectors get all the data they want from many other sources.

Nor do I cover auctions, except for the occasional blockbuster. With a news hole of about 16 inches every other week, and with no skill or interest in philatelic financial analysis, I would be doing the general reader a disservice. One thing I have done, which Stephen Esrati may have missed: I have raised the consciousness of Rita Reif, who covers art and other auctions for the *Times*, and she routinely touches base with the major houses when philatelic auctions take place.

For the same reason, I do not cover the New York philatelic scene. This "scene" involves, what, 5,000 people? Our Sunday circulation is 1.8 million, and perhaps half of them do not live in New York City. As a small, additional technical matter, the Pastimes page is not zoned for the eight editions of the *Times* printed across the country. Thus, everyone gets the same page, and we try to be diligent about keeping parochial stuff off such pages.

Judging from my mail, the column in the *Times* is quite a

success. I get perhaps ten letters a week, about evenly divided between general readers who want to know more about stamps and specialists in an area I may have touched on who want to amplify or clarify or sometimes correct something I wrote. That is just the mix of readers the *Times*, as a general publication, must aim for: interesting enough for the browser, sophisticated enough to be read by the specialist.

And to extend this already over-long *apologia pro vita mea*, a small factual error: John Dunn, who is doing such a nice job with *Mekeel's*, was my immediate predecessor at the *Times*, not Richard Sine. □

[The Fourth Quarter 1990 issue, mailed December 28, 1990, took 66 days to reach Healey in Port Washington, N.Y. by Bulk Rate mail. Many others have complained of slow delivery of that edition. iff.]

From Jane King Fohn:

The APS Chapter Activities Committee newsletter and show program contests are sister contests. They operate similarly, as set forth in the 1990 APS CAC Show Program Contest guidelines.

Robert de Violini, David Kent, Ken Trettin and I judged the 1988 APS CAC Newsletter Contest. The contest is an educational exercise with the critiques of paramount importance, and then the recognition of hard working club newsletter editors. This is not a literature competition as described in the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging*. Judges are chosen from among the previous year's gold-level entries, and may or may not be APS accredited literature judges. With this in mind, the chairman and jury members may enter the contest.

In 1988 my local club, the Austin-Texas Stamp Club, entered the contest. Included is the evaluation sheet that I kept during my reading. I disqualified myself from the judging as you can see on the reverse. I put a great deal of work into judging the newsletters as did the rest of the jury.

Thirty-three chapters participated in the 1988 APS CAC Newsletter Contest, and we read about 350 individual newsletters! The chapter editors received praise for the good points which tempered constructive criticism for improvements.

I hope that I have clarified the handling of these contests. You may refer to these materials for the *Communicator* to clarify the purpose of the APS CAC Show Program and Newsletter Contests. The real "Letter to the editor" should come from John Hufnagel, chairman of the APS CAC Newsletter Contest. □

From Larry Rosenblum:

The Fourth Quarter issue of the *PC* was full of interesting and varied items, but your comments about the Booklet Collectors Club cannot go without comment.

I am personally insulted by your statement that I and the other officers were not aware of the history and current operation of the BCC until you told us about it. Your comment shows more arrogance and even less accuracy than your original article. Since you did not bother to contact me before writing your original piece (dare I say that I was snubbed?), you cannot possibly draw any conclusions about what I did and did not know. I expect an apology.

I take my responsibilities as second highest officer of the BCC very seriously. I reply to all members who write. Any

thoughts you had regarding problems in the club's operation should have been addressed to me personally.

I also emphatically disagree with your statement that the *PC* is the logical place to discuss the internal workings of a philatelic organization. You may criticize the editorial policies of the journal editor, the physical appearance of the journal, and the timeliness of the journal's arrival (I note that the fourth quarter *Interleaf* arrived before the *PC*, so beware of glass houses), but that's where the logical subject matter ends. One-sided views of the club's operation don't belong in a journal whose topic is philatelic writing.

I did not want you to print the full text of my earlier letter concerning the BCC because its subject was not appropriate for the *PC*. However, your editorial irresponsibility is a proper subject for the *PC*, and you are welcome to print this letter in its entirety. □

Ken Lawrence replies:

Larry Rosenblum is mistaken in some of his allegations, but I am not at liberty to refute them. □

From Larry McInnis:

Martha Jane Zachert wrote in her letter to Georgé Griffenhagen that she is exceedingly tired of "personal vendettas and snide remarks" in *The Philatelic Communicator*. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the world worked that way? There would be no wars, no crime, no abuse; every day would be Smell-the-Roses-Day.

She wrote that the *PC* should produce interesting, useful material to help "those of us who try to write and produce interesting, useful material for our readers."

But after reading the contradictory diatribes of Mark A. Kellner, what is there to be learned?

More to the point, what is to be learned from the ridiculous communication from Norman J. Collins?

I've tried to wade through it several times. Let's see if I've got the gist of it: Ken Lawrence reviewed a specialist tome, *The Foreign Post Offices in Palestine 1840-1918*, Volume I, and Collins didn't like the review for some reason. He then launched a scare-monger attack on the reviewer, stating that certain quotations in the review are "libelous."

Collins said Lawrence should publish an apology "... for his libelous remarks at the very least." He refers to libel three times. The *pièce de résistance* is this: "By his remarks being published, this could leave the Writers Unit and himself open to litigation."

What could Ms. Zachert learn from Collins? First, that he knows diddly-squat about legal matters. I didn't even go back to read Lawrence's review because I know of no reviewer who has been sued for libel, and some reviews are vicious. I've written some.

I've had this type of amateur-lawyer threat made about stuff I've written over a dozen-plus years, from some small disgruntled dealers, minor auction houses, publishers with delusions of grandeur, from the infamous Marc Roussso, from people with a vested interest in getting their own views into print through malleable columnists and many more.

My answer in each and every case: if you think you have a case and can get a lawyer dumb enough to agree with you, then sue!

Of course it hasn't happened.

Some dealers and some publishers are particularly quick to react to criticism in print. Everything should be presented in a nice, rosy, favorable way. Report the auction lots that brought above estimate or catalogue; forget those that went as bargains to the buyers. "That's negative. It hurts the market. You're doing a disservice to philately."

To borrow a word from a Ken Lawrence review of a Stephen Esrati column: Baloney.

If the writers and would-be writers want to be better, and so do a favor to their readers, then pay attention to some of the snide remarks. And to other remarks that some will always take as snide, such as Lawrence's recent "Back to the ABCs of Journalism" in the 1991 First Quarter edition.

Perhaps we can all learn from a story about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He attended a reception at an early age, not long out of his brilliant childhood. A guest asked him, "How should I go about writing a symphony?" Mozart is said to have replied, "It's rather complicated; why don't you try something simple to start?" The guest was aghast: "But you were composing symphonies when you were much younger than I!" To which Mozart replied, "That's true. But I didn't have to ask how!"

There's another applicable story: Bennet Cerf, a noted wit and book publisher, was asked at one of the zillion New York cocktail parties he attended: "Tell me, Mr. Cerf, what is the length of the average novel?" Cerf replied, "About 50,000 words, on average, I would say." The person who asked the question was overjoyed. "Thank God!" she exclaimed. "I'm finished!"

If we can't have an exchange among ourselves, where should it be? □

From Jeffrey L. Needleman:

The *Communicator* certainly has gotten a lot livelier and more controversial since you took over. And that's good. Stamp writing is nearly always incredibly dull, so your publication is quite refreshing to me. □

From George M. Martin:

What seems to be a long time ago, was a time that I was a member of the group that met together and organized Writers Unit No. 30. Dave Lidman was the first president and I followed him as president. I have been on the council ever since I ended my term as president.

The Unit was formed for the purpose of encouraging and improving philatelic writing as the main focus. However, we had a third goal, and that was to create philatelic friendships and to provide fun for our members and visitors. And a fourth project was to provide recognition for outstanding writers.

I think that our goals have been met quite well but on the other hand I also feel that there is room for improvement. I especially regret the fact that too many people want to eliminate the fun that we have had at our annual breakfast—a breakfast that sent our members and guests home with a laugh in their hearts.

As I have assured you I am a staunch believer in the editorial prerogative of a good editor. I do not expect any editor to write just what I would like to read. Sometimes I downright disagree with what the editor might say. But this is what makes

for good writing.

When I first read your open letter to the postal people I felt that you were trying to point out that a situation within the department has prevented adequate information for the majority of philatelic writers.

I do feel that toward the end you got carried away as I do not consider that our journal is considered to be in the field of investigative writing. (The results have been very interesting and reached the lay press and even into Congress.)

In that same issue, however, on page five you published a letter received from one Bill Hagan and here I think you overstepped and failed to recognize that the first portion of the letter was a rather clever introduction and presented a legitimate inquiry. You classify the matter as a crank letter and state that what he wrote is bunk. I do not consider it to be a crank letter and he certainly has a right to make a legitimate inquiry.

Actually your answer does not really answer his question. The last paragraph of your answer was, in my opinion, insulting. Bill Hagan is entitled to an apology. He is a well known philatelist and has done a lot of work.

Which brings me down to my next comment and that is that I feel that you as an editor should not be calling names. You should not be throwing around insults that are usually unmerited and you should be more circumspect with your language.

I have heard the point made that you overload the journal with letters to the editor and that is perhaps right, but I do not agree entirely. I think that the size of the letters to the editor should be limited and that if they are worthy of a full article status, that is what should be encouraged.

Taken as a whole I think that our Journal has improved and that great progress is being made.

A good journal should create some controversy if we are to be able to judge both sides! □

From William Hagan:

Re publishing my letter on pages 5 and 6 in the First Quarter 1991 issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*: The letter was, as I'm sure most readers will understand, mostly tongue-in-cheek.

I expected you to be amused and then supply me with the address to Philart [sic; he means ProPhil Forum] or give countless references where the address to this firm was published. You did neither.

My refusal to supply you with names I asked for this address, or to join your organization, is my business. But really bothers me is your use of the word despicable.

Mr. Lawrence, my views are not despicable. I expect a full apology in the next *Communicator* for using that word. And, by copy of this letter, I am recommending to the officers of Unit 30 that you be relieved of your position as editor.

I am also recommending, that your personal attacks against others be reviewed. I would ask the officers of Unit 30, if they persist in keeping an editor who calls correspondents despicable, that they at least have peer review of your output.

Further I think you should publish this letter so others will know at least one writer thinks you would be better off playing dominos. There, a personal attack for no reason what so ever. How does it fell Mr. Lawrence? Well, take comfort, at least I didn't call you despicable.

Definitely Not Sincerely Yours, □

Ken Lawrence replies:

Though Bill Hagan displayed no modesty, no civility, no shame, and no hesitation when he defamed our hobby's press, he sure did wail when his words were published and refuted. Just a few months ago he disparaged the editors of our weeklies as craven self-censors; now he demands that I be muzzled for expressing an opinion he doesn't like. On top of that, he has the gall to demand an apology.

To quote an old pun: sorry, no apology.

Readers may decide for themselves whether Hagan's tongue was in his cheek when he answered my letter to him with this:

"The press is basicly [sic] a bunch of cheerleaders. You hear about forgers who have been active for decades only after they retire. Are you telling me that not one of them ever wants to advertise in a journal or the popular press!! Come on."

It has evidently never dawned on Hagan that when forgers market their wares, they don't call them forgeries, since their purpose is to defraud collectors. I have exposed two of them myself in Linn's and in this quarterly, thus putting an end to some of the fraud. Both had been peddling their products to unwary collectors through Linn's advertisements.

The case of Peter Winter and his company, ProPhil Forum, is unusual in that he does market his material openly as "replicas." (Furthermore, his activities are fully profiled, while he is still active, in Varro E. Tyler's new book, Philatelic Forgers, Their Lives and Works, and have been detailed in the main stamp publications of the U.S., Britain, and Germany.) Winter leaves the fraud to others down the line, as Werner Böhne attests, but he has no need to advertise; his customers beat a path to his door.

However, as I pointed out both privately and in print, I did publish a review of the ProPhil Forum catalog in The Philatelic Communicator. It was in the Fourth Quarter 1989 issue, pages 62-63, complete with address and price. Besides that, I know five dealers, and there must be many others, who market forgeries described as such. If Hagan were really interested in acquiring counterfeit stamps, rather than in floating false charges against stamp publications, he could have found them rather easily, even if he couldn't afford WU30 dues or the cost of a back issue. He could, for example, advertise an offer to buy forgeries. That isn't his aim, however. He closed his New Year letter to me with this:

"... I would make you a challenge. I'll write the Linn's of the world with an ad that offers forgeries. I have only a few, but I'm not worried. No one in our freedom loving press will accept it anyway."

I read that as a protruding tongue, an abundance of cheek, and a contemptible—yes, despicable—disregard for facts.

Bill Hagan owes Linn's an apology. □

From Ernst M. Cohn:

Most philatelic publications, if they mention changes in postage rates at all, do so only to complain about them and postal services generally. I find such negative commentary not just unoriginal and boring but also unproductive.

What I should like to see, instead, is a table of the new rates, at least those rates that concern philatelists most. It is sometimes possible to get tables of the new rates from the post office, but they apparently are never complete. The remainder

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From Barth Healey:

As an example of poor communications from USPS, I thought you would enjoy the enclosed flyer, which was sent to me because I hold a precancel permit.

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Greater Long Island
Postal Customer Council
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ITS
Spring Seminar and
Luncheon



SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
Gene A. Del Polito, Ph. D.
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- 7:45 AM-8:45 AM: Registration & Continental Breakfast
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- 8:45 AM-10:15 AM: Round Table Consultation Sessions.
One-on-one discussions on First Class, Second Class, Third Class, Business Reply, International Mail & Transportation
- 10:30 AM-12:00 Noon: Repeat of Sessions
- 7:45 AM-2:30 PM: Exhibition Hall-See the Latest Mailing Services & Equipment Available for Businesses of All Sizes
- 1:00 PM: Grand Banquet Luncheon with Special Guest Speaker, Gene A. Del Polito, Executive Director of the Third-Class Mailers Association

REGISTRATION FORM

Enclosed is my check for \$_____ to cover the first reservation at \$40.00 and _____ additional reservations at \$35.00 each for the May 8, 1991 PCC Seminar. Fee includes choice of workshops, consultation, continental breakfast and luncheon.

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Among the snippets of information that I cannot find are:

1. Site of the seminar, and
2. Phone number to call when you cannot figure out the site of the seminar.

of the rates I then have to get by phone.

Members of the Writers Unit presumably are interested in books, perhaps even in sending and receiving same. One does not have to be a book publisher, dealer, or even librarian to engage in such practices.

Our members, therefore, ought to be told what it costs to ship books from/to individuals. There is a special 4th class rate for that, and I've never seen it in print. Well, if you print it, it will be! The endorsement on the address side is—

BOOKS — Special 4th Class Rate.

The rate is \$1.05 for (up to) the first pound, 43¢ per additional pound for the second to sixth pound or fraction thereof, and 25¢ per (fraction of a) pound thereafter. I do not

know the top limit.

Individuals sending books to libraries get a further break, if they add to the above endorsement the phrase "Library Rate." The address itself must include the word "Library."

These still lower rates are 65¢ for the first, 24¢ for the second to seventh, and 22¢ for additional pounds (again, I do not know the upper limit). Those limits can doubtless be had from the post office of your choice.

I am not aware of any special book rates for overseas, as far as individuals are concerned. Am I missing something? There are, of course, printed matter and small packages rates for overseas, but no specific reductions for books.

That reminds me, I have to go back to the post office and see whether they have a more complete schedule for overseas

rates yet. □

[Available at major post offices free: Postal Bulletin, special bulletin PB 21781A, January 24, 1991, 96 pages, includes most domestic and international postage rates and fees likely to be of interest to our readers. Joe Frye] □

**From Fédération Internationale de Filatelie,
International Federation of Stamp Dealers' Associations,
and Association Internationale Éditeurs de Catalogues
de Timbre-Post:**

The three international philatelic organizations, FIP-ASCAT-IFSDA, which have been publishing the violations of the Philatelic Code of Ethics of the UPU, are just drawing the attention and sensitizing the opinion of philatelists to such ever menacing harmful issues. In no way are they interested to dictate to philatelists what to collect or not to collect. Similarly FIP-ASCAT-IFSDA have no motivation or personal interest in listing the violations.

We strongly deplore the scandalous insinuations being levied from some quarters for their own personal gain, as our sole aim is to protect philately. □

Ken Lawrence replies:

This is absolute bunk.

If the three organizations really want to refute the charges, why do they still refuse to answer Edgar Lewy's simple questions: Who decides what goes on the blacklist? How were they (he? she?) chosen? What criteria do they use in selecting just a handful from a multitude of code violators?

Of course they want to tell us what not to collect. If the FIP-IFSDA-ASCAT blacklist succeeds, the stamps that many of us wish to collect won't be issued at all. How then will we collect them?

The policy is plainly a ploy by a self-appointed cabal who see the value of their stock declining as collectors shift their interest, attention, and money away from classic and country collecting toward topical and thematic collecting.

As an example, the cover of the March FIP Flash depicts nothing but Walt Disney stamps, with the word HARMFUL! across them. Inside, Alexander D. Kroo, Secretary General of ASCAT, writes that although some new issues are acceptable, it is "not right to flood the market with stamps depicting 'Donald Duck' or 'Mickey Mouse' . . ."

In other words, countries are permitted to issue what he likes but not what I like. And if they persist, he'll see to it that I'm not permitted to exhibit my stamps in international competition. He wants to ban the stamps that bring more young people to philately than any others. Do you believe his sole concern is the wellbeing of the hobby?

If FIP-IFSDA-ASCAT wish to ban exploitative stamps, let them begin with the 1935 Silver Jubilee issue, the precedent for today's stamps they don't like, and all the subsequent issues that imperial vanity demanded for coronations, births, weddings, and anniversaries.

On the Silver Jubilee stamps, several dozen countries held captive by Britain were required to depict on their stamps a man they had never seen but had good reason to loathe. By contrast, most people in those poor and remote countries have enjoyed Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, and share a greater cultural

affinity with them, for better or worse, than they ever had with the Crown.

But imagine the howls if these and the literally thousands of other exploitative stamps that celebrate empire were to be banned from FIP-sponsored shows. □

From Mark A. Kellner:

Response to my treatise on why philatelic writers should scrap their IBM-compatible PCs for an Apple Computer Macintosh continues to pour in.

Noted philatelic writer and stamp-investment savant Jeffrey L. Needleman, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, took to his Macintosh and used the CompuServe electronic mail service to pass along the following:

"I've enjoyed seeing your reappearance in the philatelic press (congratulations on a couple of scoops, by the way)—but didn't feel the urge to contact you until I read your article about using a Macintosh in the last *Communicator*. I agree with you completely. I've also gone the route from CP/M through today. (Actually, I got started before you because I'm older. As a kid I used to play with an IBM 650 and an IBM 1620 at Watson Labs near Columbia University in NYC. The 650 used vacuum tubes, punch cards, and had to be programmed in assembly language when I started. Gosh, I am old!) But when I got the original 'fat' Mac [with 256K of RAM]; I got hooked.

"All that I would add to your article is that the Mac is perfect for philatelic illustrations as well! I've just added a LaCie Silverscanner to my setup (it's an OEM version of the Epson 300, with the Mac interface internal; shipped with copious software including a plug-in module that works with Adobe Photoshop). With it, I find I can quickly and easily put digital stamp "photos" into my own newsletter and examine individual stamps at extremely high resolution (up to 1200 dots-per-inch with the software I own). A few months [ago], Ken Lerner wrote in *Stamp Wholesaler* newspaper that his IBM scanner can't scan a plate block because of memory requirements. Adobe Photoshop uses virtual memory on the Mac (even without System 7), so you're limited only by your hard disk space. (I do full 24-bit color scans onto a Syquest removable 44 MB cartridge. You can easily get a full 8½ x 11 page on that.) The Mac is the clear choice for all aspects of publishing. I now print my newsletters on a service bureau's Linotronic on film and just take it right to the printer. Saves time, money, and a lot of work. No more paste-ups. No more re-shooting of illustrations that came out bad. No more complicated resizing.

"I'm planning to provide *Linn's* with illustrated camera-ready copy for my ads in the future.

"Joe Frye and the IBM crowd are all sincere, hard-working, and intelligent. But when I read that a local computer store had sold him on an IBM system, I cringed. Look at all the problems he's had! If he had chosen a Macintosh, he could have avoided all that pain."

Although I don't have much experience with scanners (yet), Mr. Needleman sounds as though he knows whereof he speaks. Also, the just-received May issue of *MacWorld* has high praise for a new Epson scanner which can take the toughest color image and squeeze it into a Mac. At the low end, Canon has a "camera" called the Xapshot [*sic*] which will store images on a floppy diskette and which can be processed by the Mac. It is advertised for under \$500 in some of the Mac magazines, and

should a photo hobbyist *and* philatelist get their hands on one, I'd love to hear of the results.

The bottom line is that not only is there something else the Mac is good for, but that the uses of *any* computer are limited only by the imagination and enthusiasm of the user. I've not yet seen Mr. Needleman's newsletters, but his description is intriguing. Image processing is going to be a major boon to this hobby and to those of us who want to see it grow in the future. The time may be now for those of us who are so inclined to get started, and in so doing lead the future, instead of waiting to play catch-up.

Is there anyone else out there using their computers for interesting philatelic publishing pursuits? I'd love to know about it: my address is Apt. 412, 2230 George C. Marshall Drive, Falls Church, VA 22043-2573; my phone number is (703) 560-4806; and I can be found on the CompuServe, America Online, and MCI Mail networks. □

From Kendall C. Sanford:

I have had an Apple IIe computer and an Epson MX-80 printer for the last seven or eight years. I have been quite happy with my Epson, which is a nine-pin dot-matrix printer. It is rugged and works well.

With a program I have, called "Printer Control Program," I can print any one of 20 different type fonts.

I use "emphasized double strike" to do my exhibit pages, and it is hard to tell that it was printed on a dot-matrix printer.

A friend recently had a Panasonic model KX-P1080i printer that he didn't need any longer. It is also a nine-pin printer, and Epson MX-80 compatible. I tried it and found it prints just as well as, if not better than, the Epson.

It also has a selector on the front for draft or near letter quality (NLQ) print, which the Epson does not have. The other advantage of the Panasonic is that it prints a lot faster than the Epson.

I highly recommend it, as a good inexpensive printer. □

Reviews

The World's Greatest

By Myron Hill

The World's Greatest Stamp Collectors and More of the World's Greatest Stamp Collectors by Stanley M. Bierman. 5½" by 8½", soft cover, slipcased, 269 and 215 pages. ISBN 0-940403-25-0 and 0-940403-27-7. *Linn's Stamp News*, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. Two-volume set, \$29.95 postpaid.

The first chapter sets the stage, summarizing early courier systems during the time of the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians and seals dating to 2800 B.C. The story continues through the development of the first modern postal service in Europe by the Thurn and Taxis family, who opened a postal route in 1505. Later developments in England and America and issuance of the first postage stamps are included. Finally, the beginnings of stamp collecting and the sale of stamps by dealers leads to the biographies of 20 collectors in the first volume.

Each chapter leads to the next so the book flows in a logical sequence and each collector is pictured. Some of the more famous collectors include: Col. Edward Green, Thomas Tapling, King George V, George Worthington, Alfred Caspary,

Alfred Lichtenstein and Louise Boyd Dale.

A collection of "great" personalities from any field may invite controversy because of names that are not included. The author explains that he chose the "most interesting" persons for the book. Thus the word "greatest" in the title overstates the importance of some persons included and may mislead some readers. One can think of collectors not included, such as King Farouk, and wonder why one chapter is devoted to the philatelic forger James A. Petrie. While his story is interesting, he was hardly a collector, let alone a great collector.

The inclusion of Henry Mandel and John Klemann is also questionable. Some of the collectors who do not have a full chapter devoted to them, such as Stanley Gibbons and John Scott and their famous companies, are mentioned frequently throughout the book. Reference to the index will lead the readers to their stories.

The book is well written and easy to read; it is more than mere stories about famous collectors. The histories of some of the great philatelic rarities, the "Aristocrats of Philately," are integrated into the biographies.

This sometimes results in a choppy story of a stamp. For example, the British Guiana 1856 one cent black on magenta is contained in the biographies of Ferrary, Hind, and Burrus. This does not seem objectionable because the biographies are the main purpose of the book, so stories of stamps should be broken up where necessary. Reference to the index will allow the reader to follow the story of a particular philatelic rarity.

Unfortunately, there are no pictures of the rare stamps and covers described in the text. One or more color plates of these would have improved the book greatly. The average reader may never have seen pictures of Hawaiian Missionaries or the British Guiana "Cottonreel" issue. Although no catalog numbers are given and the stamps are not hard to find in a catalog, pictures would have "completed" the book nicely.

The book also relates philatelic stories. One of these is the rise and fall of Shanahan Auctions in Ireland. The methods and reasoning used to detect forgeries of specific stamps are described. This gives some insight into the extent of philatelic knowledge of the collector involved and the techniques used to expertise stamps. Every biography contains references to source material.

The second volume, like its predecessor, gives insights into the personalities of famous philatelists and glimpses into their collections. It records how some philatelic gems were acquired and eventually disposed of, including prices paid for some rarities.

This volume covers only United States' collectors from approximately 1890 to 1950. Among the 16 collectors, all deceased, are Philip H. Ward, Jr., the famous stamp dealer and journalist who had his own collection of U. S. and world classic stamps; John Seybold, "The Father of Postal History;" and Dr. Carroll Chase, "The Father of Scientific Philately." Other famous collectors include Henry Gibson, Henry Lapham, and Joseph Steinmetz.

Unfortunately, the most famous collector, Franklin D. Roosevelt, is not even mentioned. The book illustrates the collectors, but it fails to picture any of the philatelic rarities discussed.

The biographies relate the business and other interests of each person. A significant part of each story tells how various

rarities were acquired and their prices. Prominent dealers who helped them build and sell their collections are always noted, usually with short biographical notes. Other philatelic stories woven into the biographies include the circumstances surrounding the discovery of stamp caches and postal history rarities such as the Carroll-Hoy, Ludlow-Beebe, and Augustine Heard finds.

The material contained in these books is not readily available elsewhere and it makes a useful addition to one's philatelic library. Since sources are cited, these books can be used as a starting point for further research by the student. It is hoped that a third book about great collectors living today will be published in the future.

The philatelic writer should find these two books useful as an occasional reference and source of background material. □

A Second Opinion

By Terence Hines

Editor's note: I reviewed Jon Rose's Classic United States Imperforate Stamps in the Fourth Quarter 1990 PC, page 109, complete with bibliographic and ordering information. Here Terry Hines presents a more critical view.

Jon Rose has produced a book which, while excellent in many ways, has some serious flaws that detract from the usefulness of the book. This is especially unfortunate as, with a minimum of effort, the flaws could easily have been corrected.

The book is divided into eight chapters, one chapter each for the two stamps of the 1847 set and the five stamps of the 1851 to 1857 series. A single chapter discusses the 1875 reproductions of the 1847 5¢ and 10¢ stamps.

Each chapter is rich in information and any reader not an expert on these stamps will learn much by reading this book. I certainly did. Each chapter is well illustrated with photographs showing the actual stamps and stunning covers. In addition, there are diagrams showing different plate varieties of several stamps.

Rose's discussion of these plate varieties is excellent. His detailed description of the mind-numbing minutiae that distinguish the eight varieties of the 1¢ blue Franklin that are each assigned a major number in Scott (numbers 5, 5A, 6, 7, 8, (8), 8A and 9) shows, although this probably wasn't Rose's intention, the absurdity of considering each of these as a different stamp. In reality, there are only the most trivial of differences between these stamps.

The same can be said, of course, for the four varieties of the 10¢ Washington that are given full number status by Scott (numbers 13-16), as well as the varieties of the perforated versions of these designs, issued in 1857. One can only wonder why these fly-speck varieties received such catalog status in the first place.

Rose not only discusses the stamps themselves, he also discusses the reasons for their issuance (although this is not always known), the rates they could pay, and the types and colors of cancels that can be found on the different denominations. He indicates which types and colors of cancels are the rarer and illustrates the postal history aspect of each chapter with photographs of some of the most spectacular covers showing these classic stamps.

It would have been helpful to include somewhere in the book, perhaps as an appendix, a table listing the various rates in effect during the period of use of these stamps, so that this information, which is scattered through the book, would be organized in one place.

While the discussion is generally excellent, Rose does occasionally leave annoying loose ends. In a couple of places he mentions that the 1847 5¢ and 10¢ stamps were demonetized in 1851, but he never says why. This is a question that will occur to any reader.

On page 8 two sentences are devoted to the Wheeling, Virginia, grid control markings. Rose tells us that these "were not used to cancel the stamp" but never explains what they were used for.

On page 54 it is stated that the 1¢ Franklin "shows what may be the first true precancels" but then no further information is provided. I'd like to know where these were from and why they are considered the first true precancels.

The most serious problems with this book lie in the area of copy editing and bibliographic information. While I found only one trivial typo, other aspects of copy editing have been done very poorly. The text is often jumpy with extraneous sentences tossed in in no logical order. The grammar is sometimes simply awful.

Thus on page 13 we find the following grammatical horror:

There was only one sheet of 200 copies of the orange brown and black of the 5¢ and 10¢ overprinted diagonally SPECIMEN.

Another example, on page 8:

The hotel marking is generally not struck upon the stamp, if ever, but is a private handstamp marking . . .

These sorts of errors seem more common in the first few chapters.

The bibliographic aspects of the book are totally inadequate. Time and time again Rose quotes other sources without giving a hint about where the quote is from. Bibliographic citations in the text are non-existent, inconsistent, vague, or adequate without any seeming pattern. There is no bibliography in the book at all.

The effect is to make it essentially impossible for anyone to use this book as a gateway to the full literature on these stamps. Contrary to popular opinion, proper bibliographic citations do not make a book (or paper) boring and pedantic. They simply make it easier for an interested reader to find out more about an aspect of the topic that interests them. That such citations are lacking in this "handbook" is inexcusable.

This book is apparently the first in a series of handbooks to be published by Linn's. I certainly hope that future volumes will be better copy edited, and will adopt a consistent and informative style of adequate bibliographic citation. □

Thematic Handbook

By Ken Lawrence

A Handbook on Thematic Philately by Prof. V. K. Gupta, with a foreword by Mary Ann Owens. 5¼" by 8¾", hard cover, illustrated and indexed, 192 pages. 1989. Available from B. D. Gupta, 140 S.F.S. Flats, Ashok Vihar, Phase IV, Delhi, 110052, India. U.S. \$25 plus postage (\$3 registered surface or \$6 air.)

This book is not really a handbook of thematic philately, and those who expect it to be that will surely be disappointed. It is a handbook of international thematic *exhibiting*, and for those in need of such a reference it is superb, despite an excessive number of typographical errors.

The author is so committed to his purpose that the organization plan of the book itself is a perfect example of thematic organization.

Because there is a dearth of good books on topical or thematic collecting, one has a tendency to embrace every book that comes along. Unfortunately this one teaches all the wrong lessons to everyone except the would-be world-class champions.

It teaches the reader more about what not to collect than what to obtain, and often those are the very items that might bring new blood into our ranks.

On the other hand, writers who bear that problem in mind and work around it will find this volume quite useful, because Gupta describes and illustrates material that topical writers often neglect, and tells how to search out the unusual.

Of course, if you are planning to compete in the big leagues, you must have this book. □

Topical Annual

By Martin Margulis

Scott 1991 "By Topic" Stamp Annual. 8½" by 11", soft cover, 122 pages. Scott Publishing-Co., 911 Vandemark Rd., Sidney, OH 45365. \$9.95 postpaid.

By Topic 1991 Stamp Annual is a listing of all the stamps issued in 1990 broken down into more than 80 topics. Some stamps, because of their subject matter, are listed in more than one topic. The information comes from *Scott Stamp Monthly*.

Some stamps are illustrated, some in color, most are not. The black-and-white illustrations leave something to be desired in clarity.

There is a one-page plus introduction, in which the American Topical Association (with its address) is mentioned in passing.

Many pages of advertisements, primarily of Scott products, but also dealers of both stamps and supplies, are also included.

The stamp descriptions vary in usefulness, but many assume you have some knowledge of the topic you collect. For example, insect names are in Latin. Enver Hoxha is listed, his 80th birth anniversary, but nothing about him. In many cases not much more is needed because the subject is self-explanatory.

If you want to know about prior issues in your topic look elsewhere. You also won't know if the stamps are part of a set, or how large the set is. (The introduction does warn that you might have to buy complete sets to get the stamps you want.)

I can't see what use this book would be to any writer, aside from the purpose for which it was issued. It should really be used in connection with Scott catalogs and ATA books on the topic of interest. Other books might also be needed depending on your field of interest.

It would be most useful in public libraries, schools, or stamp clubs where a number of people could consult it.

Next year the content will be in Scott's and the book can be relegated to the recycling drive. □

Use the Ballot in center this issue. Vote!

Small But Important

By Ken Lawrence

The Postage Rates of Germany 1906-1923 edited by Diana Manchester. Inflation Study Group of the Germany Philatelic Society, 1991. 5½" by 8½", saddle stitched, 36 pages. ISBN 0-924796-1-6. Available from Diana Manchester, P.O. Box 3128, Columbus, OH 43210. \$9 (\$8 to GPS members) postpaid in the U.S. (add \$1 foreign).

Under Cover Addresses of World War II by Charles R. Entwistle. 5½" by 8½", saddle stitched, 24 pages. ISBN 1-872744-01-X. Available from Charles R. Entwistle, Bloomfield, Perth Road, Abernethy, Perth PH2 9LW, U.K. £ 6.

The Provincial Surcharges of China - A Guide to Identification and Priced Catalogue. Story Post, Brussels, 1990. 5½" by 8½", saddle stitched, 26 pages plus three clear film overlays. Available from Story Post, Rue du Midi, 57, Zuidstraat, Brussels, Belgium. 650 Belgian francs plus 50 francs postage.

The Yak Posts of Dogor by Col. Dobson-Bligh. Asiatic Monograph Series. Number 31. Brussels, 1990. 5½" by 8½", saddle stitched, 24 pages. Available from Story Post, Brussels.

The common denominator of these pamphlets is that they are small but fine items of philatelic literature, to the extent I am qualified to judge.

Diana Manchester's compilation of German inflation rates has been needed for some time. I have been using a crazy-quilt file of tables from the Michel catalog, clippings from *The American Philatelist*, articles in the ISG newsletter, and letters from the late Herman Halle to understand my covers, but readers have caught mistakes in my articles more than once. With this compendium, I should be able to get them right.

Entwistle's booklet is really the only place to look up addresses you suspect of having served a secret purpose during World War II. Without it, you must check dozens of articles in obscure places, and even more elusive auction catalogs. Even then, you'd miss a lot. This doesn't have them all, but it's the most complete available.

The nice thing about the China surcharge guide is that it makes everything simple with its superb illustrations. Once you have the hang of it, the surcharges printed on the clear film overlay give you a positive identification. This method should be widely copied for other areas that pose difficult problems of identification.

The Yak Posts of Dogor ought to be required reading for every philatelic literature judge. (All right, I admit it. It's a spoof of scholarly philatelic studies. But that's why it should be required reading. The author has a perfect feel for the pompous, vacuous style that often bluffs as erudite knowledge. Besides judges, everyone can have fun with it, but it came as a gift, so I don't know the price.) □

Czeslaw Slania - Stamp Engraver

By Russell H. Anderson

Lennart Bernadotte Presents Czeslaw Slania's Life's Work. xii + 221 pages, 10" by 11½", three-ring binder format. 1898. Mainauverwaltung Graf Lennart Bernadotte GmbH, 7750 Insel Mainau, Germany. Approximate price \$40.

This *tour de force* of the work of Czeslaw Slania has been reviewed in several publications briefly. It is usually of most interest to collectors of Scandinavian stamps, and to the small coterie of Czeslaw Slania enthusiasts.

Slania of course has been publicized in a number of articles and at least three booklets describing his career, with illustrations of his engraving art. He is listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the most prolific stamp engraver in the world. His genius in his field is more than numbers, however. Speed, detail, extremely accurate portraiture, and diversity accompany his prolific production.

This book's production deserves consideration by all publishers of philatelic materials. Literate writing is at a minimum, since the loose-leaf publication features exact color reproductions of all stamps, cinderellas, and currency engraved by Slania prior to the date of publication. In addition, 58 full-page transparencies of stamps or sections of stamps are enlarged to show engraving details. The transparencies can be projected on an overhead projector.

Obviously the attention to detail, excellence of reproduction, and quality of printing could not have been achieved at the indicated price without either subsidy or a non-profit approach. Bernadotte, who is a master micro-photographer, produced the original negatives and is an admirer of Slania. He undoubtedly produced the book at cost.

The production serves as a model to strive for by stamp researchers working on publications in any specialty. For example, a definitive review of variations of early classic United States stamps using this format would score a triumph in philatelic publications.

The price of such a volume, including a minimal profit, would probably exceed \$100 if produced in the United States. But it would become the definitive reference and be well worth the price.

Philatelic publishers should study the book about Slania's work, and consider emulating some of the techniques. □

Coffee Table Stamp Book

By Alan Warren

Stamping Our History by Charles Davidson and Lincoln Diamant, Carol Publishing Group, New York. 1990. 272 pages, 11" by 11", hard cover. ISBN 0-8184-0532-5. \$49.95.

Since stamp collectors may not want to inform their friends and neighbors about their hobby for security reasons, you may not wish to leave this lavishly illustrated tome on your coffee table.

The authors are both collectors. Davidson brings his advertising experience and fine arts talent to this production, and Diamant provides the history.

Thus the book is meant to dazzle with its many enlarged photos of United States stamps, as well as to present "The Story of the United States Portrayed on Its Postage Stamps" as the subtitle states.

Instead of the traditional approach of presenting the stamps chronologically as they were issued, the authors retell our country's history from its geologic makeup, through native settlers and colonists, the various wars, and ending with our nation's contributions to the space program.

The National Parks stamps kick off the first chapter on

geology. The "inhabitants" include not only Indians but also fish, birds, and bison as seen on our country's stamps. The "explorers" are highlighted by the Columbians, and the Jamestown and Pilgrim Tercentenary sets.

The history of America proceeds with examples of stamps showing Revolutionary War figures and battles, and the expansion and settlement of the western part of the nation.

The authors jump back and forth in the catalog to make their points. For example, in discussing the acquisition of Alaska, they reference in two sentences the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific set, the Territorial issue of 1937, and the Jack London stamp (for the Gold Rush!).

The use of illustrations is contrived in many cases. For example, the description of early motor vehicles is not illustrated with the normal 4¢ Pan-American, but with the invert, Scott 296a.

In fact the color depictions, which should serve as an enhancement of the story of our nation, detract in many cases. When the stamps are shown slightly enlarged in color, they are quite lovely. When they are greatly enlarged, which occurs almost every other page, they become overpowering. And when only a portion, such as the central vignette, is enlarged to fill the entire 11 by 11 inch page, even the beauty of fine engraving technique becomes lost.

The color renditions are fairly good and approximate what the original stamps look like, but they are not perfect. More important, there is no philatelic knowledge shown in this book. The only reference to stamp collecting is the use of Scott catalog numbers throughout the text. The sort of reader most likely attracted to this book is not a philatelist, so the catalog references are useless. I suspect most serious collector will flip through the pages, quickly become bored, and put the book aside.

Some useful information is found in a "Philatelic Reference" at the end, consisting of a table of the stamps used in the text with their catalog number, designer, subject, year of issue, and subject source such as a painting or photograph. A subject index concludes the volume. Serious collectors will want to avoid this book, or wait until it is remaindered. □

Bermuda Airmail Again

By Kendall C. Sanford

The Airmails of Bermuda 1925-1989, A Specialised Catalogue and Illustrated Price List, second edition, revised and enlarged, by William J. Clark. Published by The Havemeyer Press, Greenwich, Connecticut. \$24.95 postpaid. (\$14.95 to purchasers of first edition, plus \$1.50 postage)

In the First Quarter 1991 issue I reviewed the first edition of this catalog. After it was published, Clark received so many corrections and additions that he has already come out with the second edition. Most of the errors and omissions have been corrected.

The catalog lists and prices all known covers from first and special flights to and from Bermuda, and most covers are shown. The significant point noted by this reviewer are the prices of scarce items. The following are a few examples:

- March 1947 Washington AMF to Bermuda by Pan Am—5 pieces recorded—\$5,000.
- Boston AMF to Bermuda—5 pieces recorded—\$5,000.
- May 1958 New York to Bermuda by Eagle Airways—4

pieces known—\$7,500.

- August 1960 New York to Bermuda by Eastern Airlines—flown aerogramme—1 known— \$5,000.
- New York AMF to Bermuda—2 pieces known—\$2,500.
- Same flight—aerogramme—2 pieces known—\$2,500.
- December 1965—Bermuda to Toronto by Air Canada—\$600.
- Bermuda to Halifax—\$600.
- April 1969—Chicago Post Office to Bermuda by Eastern Air Lines—\$7,500.
- May 1979—Bermuda to Philadelphia by Eastern Air Lines—5 pieces recorded—\$5,000.
- May 1984—Bermuda to Chicago by American Airlines—10 pieces recorded—\$2,500.

I am sorry, but such relatively modern first flight covers are just not worth those prices, no matter how few pieces were flown. It appears that Clark has used a sliding scale for pricing, based solely on the number of pieces flown, and without regard for a realistic market for such flight covers.

Also, the author has added much too high a premium for pilot autographs. A few examples are:

- January 1940 Bermuda to Norfolk by Pan Am—normal covers \$125, and pilot autographed \$500.
- March 1947 Washington & Boston to Bermuda—normal covers \$150, and pilot autographed \$500. Bermuda to Boston normal cover \$250, pilot autographed \$750.
- August 1947 Bermuda to New York by Colonial Airlines—normal cover \$50, Bermuda to Washington—normal cover \$100, pilot autographed on either one \$500.

The best example of the pilot autographed covers being totally out of line with the normal covers is the one from the March 1969 Northeast Airlines first flight from Boston to Bermuda. The PO dispatch is \$10, and the AMF dispatch is \$5. Now . . . are you ready for this? the pilot autographed cover from either one is \$250.

The same goes for his pricing on cachet varieties. For example, the normal cover from the May 1948 Trans-Canada Airlines inaugural from Bermuda to Montreal or Toronto is \$50. But—get this—the price for a purple cachet variety is \$500.

When you compare these prices with those for modern first flight covers in the American Air Mail Catalog, there is no comparison. I give Clark credit for the basic job he has done on the catalog, and the information it contains. However, he is totally out of touch with reality on his pricing.

I am afraid many collectors and dealers are not going to take the pricing seriously, this one included. □

Spring Essentials

By Ken Lawrence

Scott 1992 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. Volume 1, United States, United Nations, Canada, Great Britain and the British Commonwealth. 8¼" by 10¾", soft cover, 23A + 1166 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-89487-162-5. Scott Publishing Co., 911 Vandemark Rd., Sidney, OH 45365. \$30 postpaid.

Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1990 by George Amick. 5½" by 8½", soft cover, 335 pages. Linn's Stamp News, P.O. Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365. \$18 postpaid.

These are the two essential references for nearly every stamp writer each spring. This year I was privileged to read George Amick's manuscript in advance, thus not only getting a preview of what was to come, but a greater appreciation of the massive job he manages under a killer deadline.

It is pointless to repeat the superlatives each year, but a couple of points do merit mention. One is that the yearbook really should be read cover-to-cover before you put it away for reference consultation. A lot is material you have seen in the weeklies during the previous year, but a surprising amount is new, and the kind of material that will suggest articles worth writing.

Another is "The Year in Review" chapter, which adds coherence and perspective to episodes that were quickly forgotten.

Scott, too, is so familiar that there isn't a lot to say, especially now that the controversy over its retail pricing policy has subsided. But the new minimum price of 15 cents per stamp, and pricing sets as such, rather than simply as the sum of the parts, brings the book into line with today's merchandising.

For that, Scott cannot be faulted. But precisely because that is so, writers will need to be especially vigilant in anticipating misuse of Scott prices that differ from past abuses. Common mixtures of 100 stamps will now have a *Guaranteed \$15 Retail Value!*

I applaud the policy of listing everything, an issue I have promoted for the past ten years. Scott is off to a fine start by including Grenada Grenadines, St. Vincent Grenadines, Bequia, and Union Islands. Topical collectors will rejoice. □

Foreign Stamp Catalogs

By Ken Lawrence

Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue. Part 1. British Commonwealth 1991. \$ U.S. Edition. Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd., 8¼" by 11¾", soft cover. xGB100 + 1125 + unnumbered advertising pages. ISBN 0-85259-269-8. Imported by Lighthouse Publications, P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705. \$39.50.

DNK Deutschland Briefmarken-Katalog 1991 mit Europa-CEPT. Leuchtturm Albenverlag GmbH, 4½" x 6¼", soft cover, 760 pages. Imported by Lighthouse Publications, P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705. \$12.50.

Michel Junior-Katalog 1991. 4½" x 7¼", soft cover, 631 pages. ISBN 3-87858-823-2. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. 12.00 Deutsche Marks.

Michel Deutschland-Spezial-Katalog 1991. 6" x 7¼", soft cover, 1464 pages. ISBN 3-87858-123-8. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. 58.00 Deutsche Marks.

Michel Briefe-Katalog Deutschland 1991. 6" x 7¼", soft cover, 656 pages. ISBN 3-87858-445-8. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. 42.00 Deutsche Marks.

Michel Ganzsachen-Katalog Deutschland 1991. 6" x 7¼", soft cover, 416 pages. ISBN 3-87858-620-5. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. 42.00 Deutsche Marks.

Michel Übersee-Katalog Band 1. Mittel-und Nordamerika 1991.

6" x 7 3/4", soft cover, 1850 pages. ISBN 3-87858-737-6. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. 84.00 Deutsche Marks.

This batch of stamp catalogs from abroad is exceptional and noteworthy. As usual, the Stanley Gibbons red book is an essential reference for British area collectors and writers. The novel feature is pricing in U.S. dollars.

The surprise to me, given the way the anti-Scott campaigners used the threat of this book as a prop for their cause, is the absence of their advertisements from its pages. Evidently the Gibbons sales staff didn't bother with a pitch for new U.S. dealer ads, so we can't really tell how many of the group that promoted this book really view it as a sales asset.

Last year's preface predicted a rosy future for the stamp market, anticipating a surge in demand following Stamp World London. This year's preface acknowledged that the expected growth did not happen, and its most ambitious prediction is "stability."

As usual, I made my annual comparison of the Scott and Gibbons prices for the pound-value Australian Kangaroo stamps, the focus of so much heat two years ago. The Scott prices are still a bit above actual retail, and the Gibbons prices are 50 to 100 percent higher than Scott.

The minimum prices, on the other hand, are identical, both publishers having raised them. The new Gibbons minimum is 10 pence, rounded to 15 cents in conversion, which is the new 1992 Scott minimum.

Thus, the exceptional and noteworthy features of the new Gibbons catalog don't necessarily make it a must buy if you already possess a recent edition, unless you find the dollar prices so convenient, as opposed to multiplying pounds and pence by 1.7, to be worth the purchase.

The German catalogs, however, are must buys for specialists and writers, because they have complete listings for East Germany, because that market is up, and therefore, especially if you are a buyer only every several years, this is the year to have.

Both the DNK and Michel Junior are pocket size, but the DNK has a lot more information, and keeps first-day covers with the stamp prices, instead of hiding them away in a separate chapter as the little Michel does. DNK includes some postal stationery, GDR self-service registry labels, and even some specialized coil material. It has an English-language introduction.

If you're really serious, don't scrimp. Buy the Michel specialized, and the cover catalog (Briefe), and the postal stationery catalog (Ganzsachen). The cover catalog has added more than twenty years to GDR listings—right up to the very end. The next editions of that one, and the stationery book, are at least two years away.

The Central and North America catalog was an essential reference for a recent series I wrote for *Linn's* on modern Nicaraguan stamps, and any serious topical writer would find it equally useful.

Once Scott catches up on everything as promised, we may not have to rely so heavily on Michel. At present, these books are the state of the art. □

Ballot in center this issue. Vote!

German Coil Catalog

By Myron Hill

Michel-Handbuch-Katalog Rollenmarken Deutschland 1991. 6" by 7 3/4", soft cover, 228 pages. ISBN 3-87858-4466. Schwaneberger Verlag, Munich. 26 Deutsche Marks.

Collectors have come to expect great detail and thoroughness in Michel catalogs. This catalog of Germany's coil stamps is certainly no exception. It lists and prices coils from the Third Reich, Danzig, World War II occupations, Bund, Berlin, and DDR. Coil wrappers are also pictured and priced.

German coil stamps, unlike U.S. coils, are perforated on all four sides. They are usually identified by a counting number that appears on the back of every fifth stamp. This characteristic means that coils are collected differently from U.S. coils. The catalog prices 3 and 4-digit numbers, odd and even numbers, single numbered coil stamps, strips of 3, 5, 6, 11, and endstrips with 1, 6, or 11 stamps. Prices for paper and watermark varieties are also listed in the same detail.

Coil pairs without numbers are also listed. These can be identified by a broad perforation, a pointed perforation, or an extra perforation where the stamps are joined. There are separate price tables for all mint and used coils.

This catalog appears too specialized for most collectors of German coils. Michel Deutschland-Spezial prices coils, and that summary of coil prices is probably sufficient for most collectors.

Persons who want to purchase the catalog should remember that it does not contain a German-English translation of terms and symbols. For readers unfamiliar with German, a separate card with a translation is available. Be sure to ask for it when buying the catalog. □

Literature Judges List

Bill Bauer, Chairman of the APS' Judging Accreditation Committee, has provided the following list of currently accredited literature judges (as of March 1, 1991). We print this so that members of the Writers Unit interested in establishing a literature exhibition will be aware of the pool of qualified judges from which they can draw.

Many of these people are also accredited for philatelic judging, but both tasks should not be imposed on the same person during one philatelic exhibition. Mailing addresses can change, and so are not included. Should the show committee not have a judge's current address at hand, it is available from the APS, P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803.

If any of our members are interested in becoming accredited in literature, please contact Bill at P.O. Box 1449, Spring, TX 77383 for information.

Adams, Jeanette Knoll	Indianapolis, IN
Balough, Joseph J.	El Paso, TX
Bauer, William H.	Spring, TX
Clark, Douglas N.	Lexington, GA
Cohn, Ernst M.	Dothan, AL
de Violini, Robert	Oxnard, CA
Ganz, Cheryl	Chicago, IL
Graue, James W.	Valleyford, WA

Hahn, Henry	Fairfax, VA
Harrison, Horace W.	Baltimore, MD
Hess, Winand	Del Mar, CA
Hotchner, John	Falls Church, VA
Jefferson, James E.	Redwood City, CA
Luft, Stanley J.	Golden, CO
Manchester, Jason	Columbus, OH
Martin, George M.	Yakima, WA
McCann, Dr. Peter P.	Indianapolis, IN
Meier, Harry C.	Palmyra, VA
Newman, Lowell S.	Basking Ridge, NJ
Owens, Mrs. Mary Ann	Brooklyn, NY
Peterson, Charles J.	Laurel, MD
Rosenberg, Howard L.	Des Plaines, IL
Schumann, Stephen D.	San Francisco, CA
Seifert, Fred F.	Albuquerque, NM
Sellers, F. Burton	Sun City West, AZ
Skavaryl, Russell V.	Columbus, OH
van Ingen, Louise	Placentia, CA
Vogel, Hal	Willingboro, NJ
Walker, Patricia Stillwell	Lisbon, MD
Warren, Alan	Philadelphia, PA
Winick, Lester E.	Homewood, IL
Zielinski-Clark, Mrs. Nancy B.	Lexington, GA

Active Apprentices

Dillaway, Dr. Guy R.	Weston, MA
Lawrence, Ken	Jackson, MS
Martin, Peter D.	Springfield, VA
Trettin, Kenneth H.	Rockford, IA
Tyler, Paul E.	Potomac, MD
Wald, Kimber	Daisy, MD
Walker, Patrick	Freeland, MI

Literature Awards

Colopex '91

Category A - Handbooks and Special Studies

Grand Award

The 1990 American Philatelic Congress Book. Barbara R. Mueller, editor.

Gold

The 1990 American Philatelic Congress Book. Barbara R. Mueller, editor - Felicitations.

Vermeil

The Postal History of the Cayman Islands. Thomas E. Giraldi and Dr. Peter P. McCann, authors.

Anatolia. Menachim Max Mayo, author.

Silver

The Postal History of Christmas Seals. Douglas K. Lehman, author.

Silver-Bronze

Stamp Collecting. Barry Krause, author.

Bronze

Baseball on United States Postage Stamps. James F. Danner, Author.

The Forgeries of the Red Cross Small Albert Heads of 1914. Harry Dober, author.

Stamp Collecting is Fun. Michael Orenstein, author.

Category B - Philatelic Periodicals

Grand Award

Ukrainian Philatelist. Dr. Inger Kuzych, editor.

Vermeil

Ukrainian Philatelist. Dr. Inger Kuzych, editor.

The China Clipper. Donald R. Alexander, editor.

British Caribbean Philatelic Journal. Mark W. Swetland, editor.

The Confederate Philatelist. Stefan T. Jaronski and Genevieve M. Gwynne, editors.

The Interleaf. Gerhard G. Korn, editor.

Postal Stationery. John R. Weimer, editor.

Silver

Bio-Philately. Alan J. Hanks, editor.

The EFO Collector. Howard P. Gates, editor.

Haiti Philately. Dr. Gerald L. Borino, editor.

Ohio Postal History Journal. Martin Richard and George T. Ball, editors.

The Petro-Philatelist. Feitze Papa, editor.

Yule Log. Kathy Ward, editor.

Silver-Bronze

Forerunners. William C. Brooks VI, editor.

Maneapa. Frank Caprio, editor.

Menelik's Journal. Huguette Gagnon, editor.

Meter Stamp Society Bulletin. Richard Stambaugh, editor.

South Atlantic Chronicle. Everett L. Parker, editor.

Springfield Stamp Club News. Peter Martin, editor.

Virginia Philatelic Forum. Peter Martin, editor.

Bronze

Korean Philately. James W. Kerr, editor.

Latin American Post. Piet Steen, editor.

Maximaphily. Gary Denis, editor.

Permit Patter. Florance Sugarberg, editor.

The Poster. Howard Wunderlich, editor.

El Faro. Jeff Brasor, editor.



Paragon Literature Grand Award:

Anatolia. Menachim Max Mayo, author.

Best In Class

Handbooks and Special Studies:

Anatolia, Menachim Max Mayo, author.

Periodicals:

The China Clipper, Donald R. Alexander, editor.

Columns and Articles:

"In the Beginning," column in *The American Philatelist,* Bill Olcheski, author.

Gold

Anatolia, Menachim Max Mayo, author.

Vermeil

The China Clipper, Donald R. Alexander, editor.

The Posthorn, Gene Lesney, editor.

Silver

Catalog of Philadelphia Postmarks, Part 2, Tom Clarke, author.
The Garfield-Perry Stamp Club, 1890-1990, A Brief History, Dale R. Pulver, author.

Germany Philatelic Society 40th Anniversary Anthology, Diana Manchester, editor.

Great Britain Philatelic Literature: Annotated and Priced Listing, Second Edition, Tom Current, author.

Occupied Poland In World War II and Holocaust, Seventh Edition, Edward T. Superson, author.

Pennsylvania Postal Historian, Tom Clarke, editor.

Silver-Bronze

Newfoundland Specialized Stamp Catalogue, John M. Walsh and John G. Butt, authors.

Stamp Collecting, Barry Krause, author.

Noble's Catalog of Cacheted Presidential Inaugural Covers, Edward Krohn, editor.

Maneapa, Frank Caprio, editor.

Scalpel and Tongs, Ranes C. Chakravorty, editor.

Forerunners, Bill Brooks, editor.

"Editorial Consultant's Notes" column in *The Canadian Philatelist*, Ralph D. Mitchener, author.

"In the Beginning" column in *The American Philatelist*, Bill Olcheski, author.

"Scandinavian Literature Notes" and "Transfers and Reentries" columns in *The Posthorn*, Alan Warren, author.

Bronze

Baseball On United States Postage Stamps, James F. Danner, author.

Eisenhower Philatelic Catalog, Edward Krohn, editor.

Scandinavian Collectors Club Member's Handbook, William H. Lamkin, editor.

Stamp Collecting Is Fun, Michael Orenstein, author.

Calgary STAMPede, Dale Speirs, editor.

Watercraft Philately, Robert L. Tessier, editor.

The Texas Philatelist, Jane King Fohn, editor.

"Censorship In Ireland During World War II, 1939-1945" in *The Revealer*, Charles J. G. Verge, author.

"Mysterious Big City Duplex & Mysterious Ovals Revisited" in *LaPosta*, Tom Clarke, author.

"Stamps" column in *The Ottawa Citizen*, Ralph D. Mitchener, author.

"The Question Box" column in *First Days*, Alan Warren, author.

Non-Competitive Entries

The Airmail Special Delivery Stamps of the United States, Ralph L. Sloat, author.

The First U.S. Postal Museum, Herbert R. Collins, author.

Postal Himal, Leo Martyn, editor.

The Postal History of Christmas Seals, Douglas K. Lehmann, author.

The Springfield Stamp Club News, Peter Martin, editor.

Top Dollar Paid, Stephen R. Datz, author.

Ukrainian Philatelist, Ingert Kuzych, editor.

Virginia Philatelic Forum, Peter Martin, editor.

The Wild Side, Stephen R. Datz, author.

The Philatelic Exhibitor, John Hotchner, editor.

The Philatelic Communicator, A.P.S. Writers Unit 30, Second Quarter 1991. Vol. 24, No. 2, Whole No. 92.

Coming Literature Competitions

PhiLITex 92, the first international literature exposition in North America, will take place November 4 to 24, 1992, in New York. Sponsors are The Philatelic Foundation and The Collectors Club, with support from the Interamerican Federation of Philately. PhiLITex Bulletin No. 1, including entry rules, may be obtained from Harlan F. Stone, Philatelic Foundation Director of Education, 21 E. 40th St., New York, NY 10016.



Genova '92, the world stamp exhibition to be held in Genoa from September 18 to 27, 1992, will include a competition for thematic literature only. For information write to the United States commissioner, George Guzzio, 134 Berkeley Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217.



The 1991 Lidman Prize national competition for writers of philatelic articles in non-philatelic publications is now open for entries. Deadline for submissions is October 1, 1991. Rules and an entry form are available from Council of Philatelic Organizations, P.O. Box COPO, State College, PA 16803-8340.



The prospectus and entry form for the Colopex 1992 literature exhibition, to be held in Columbus, Ohio, from October 9 to 11, 1992, are now available from Dr. Jason Manchester, Literature Coordinator, P.O. Box 3128, Columbus, OH 43210.



January 11, 1992, is the deadline for entries in the 1991 APS Chapter Activities Committee Show Program Literature Competition. For information write to Jane King Fohn, Route 2, Box 352, Leander, TX 78641. □

►► Gordon Morison Replies (From page 21.)

nies under competitive contracts for gravure, intaglio, intaglio/offset and offset stamps in all existing configurations—coil, book and sheet—and in new configurations which market research has shown the public wants.

While I can understand the writer's personal appreciation for intaglio stamps, I can't accept his proposition that all other stamps are inferior. And neither do many collectors, as shown by annual surveys by one of the publications for which he frequently writes. The surveys have resulted for years in gravure stamps and intaglio-offset stamps—many in the defamed "poster" motif—being named "best" every year. Your writer, assuming he voted, apparently feels the other ballots were invalid.

The availability of information about our stamp program to all media on a simultaneous basis is of continuing concern to all of us in postal management, including the office director whom the writer defames for alleged attacks on the philatelic press.

Yes, we could release partial information sooner than complete information, but we don't believe that would serve collectors very effectively. And yes, because of a number of factors, we have had to rely on the press to more actively cover us instead of being spoon-fed to the traditional extent. But it was an extremely cheap shot to describe as "quiet diplomacy" meetings between me and my staff and representatives of many areas of philately. In one meeting, we were asked to give a

publication a week's head start on major announcements because they were being "beaten" by enterprising reporters from a daily newspaper and a wire service. I said "no." Does anybody really believe the Postal Service should try to ensure weeklies, or columnists writing weekly, can't be beaten by dailies or wire services? How about "protecting" monthlies from dailies? Shouldn't we all rejoice that stamps are at last considered as "real" news by general circulation publications?

As for advance notice to first day cover and album manufacturers, we provide that because it is in the best interest of collectors. These firms face leadtimes far in excess of newspapers. If covers and albums are to be ready, they must be put into production well in advance. If we were a private company, we probably would produce these items ourselves, using unreleased internal information to get ready for the demand. We have developed the criticized advance notice to give our marketing partners time to get ready. Yes, occasionally one of them—or even our own philatelic catalog—goes public ahead of our philatelic press release schedule. That is when I hear some in the philatelic press say "foul."

We are addressing how we might release the information given these partners simultaneously to all. That will require greater lead time in our planning because news media will want more details than currently are included in the advance notices. A result may be that each writer or a publication editor will need to do more research by himself. Maybe that's not a bad idea.

I am available—and so is our maligned office director—to meet with interested writers to forge more of an understanding. I had already scheduled events for collectors and dealers to talk with postal management at the APS Spring meeting in Denver and at NOJEX in Secaucus, NJ, in May. As many collectors know, I have attended most of the recent APS meetings and other stamp shows to answer questions and I shall continue to do that. Obviously, the philatelic press and daily press representatives are welcome.

If there is such a chasm as your writer points out, it should and will be fixed. But not through one meeting with one writer or one publication's representatives.

A number of other stamp policies not raised in your publication's "open letter" have been discussed with various groups within the hobby, and I have even heard from leaders of the philatelic community that relations with the Postal Services are good and getting better. We are committed to better relations with the philatelic media also, but question whether the way to attain them is through loose-cannon publishing of the work of unedited pieces such as your "open letter."

Gordon C. Morison, Assistant Postmaster General □

▶▶ President's Message (From page 21.)

Since I don't collect U. S. stamps, I didn't really miss them. It was many months before I realized that these releases weren't showing up any more. When I thought about it, I felt that they were just clearing out their mailing list, and dropping any person who wasn't actively involved in preparing a stamp column.

So, after reading through Ken's letter several times in search of what he was really saying, and finally locating (I think) the

main point of all his verbiage, it appears that this disappearance may well have been due to the USPS becoming more careful of whom they let know about forthcoming stamps and postal stationery releases. I understand, from hearing it second-hand, that USPS releases sent to cachet-makers bear a warning, reading (approximately) "Do Not Release to the Philatelic Press."

If this is the case, my personal feeling is that the USPS has gone overboard on security here. They seem to be afraid of releasing any information that might be of benefit to the stamp collecting population before the USPS is ready to let them know about it. However, USPS feels that it is okay for the commercial people involved in preparing cachets for first-day covers to have the advance knowledge, as long as they don't let anyone else know what they are up to.

I have received a letter from Gordon Morison written in response to Ken's "open letter." Gordon's cover letter said, "You may wish to place it in your publication." I have sent it to Ken with the request that it be given the same prominence as he gave his own letter. I ask that you please read it. He makes some very good points.

And a final musing on this topic: Did Ken perhaps first present his "letter" to Mike Laurence for publication in *Linn's*? Did Mike turn it down, preferring to use its publication elsewhere (as in the *PC*) as a departure point for some "commentary and reaction" writings by other members of his staff? Were we used by *Linn's* in this matter?

But enough, already. All this has really little to do with the day-in, day-out work of someone putting together a local stamp club newsletter or writing a column for a specialty journal, and that is what this publication should really be concentrating on—help for the philatelic writer.

New subject—This issue will not be mailed until after the APS Spring Meeting in Denver. George Griffenhagen has made the arrangements for the traditional WU Breakfast and we expect to see a number of our members there. The next WU Breakfast will be in Philadelphia—see the STAMPSHOW registration wrapper on the *AP*, or the stories in the philatelic press, for WU Breakfast ticket details.

We will not have enough of the WU officers and council attending Romplex to hold a board meeting there. That will have to wait until August and STAMPSHOW. That is also where the new set of officers will take over. □

▶▶ Secretary-Treasurer's Report (From page 48.)

Council 1991-1995 (Vote for three)

Dane S. Claussen (WU30 #1243) of Milwaukee, WI. Professional newspaper editor and publisher; former executive editor, *Stamp Collector* and *Stamp Wholesaler*; current president, International Philatelic Press Club.

Mark A. Kellner (WU30 #1013) of Falls Church, VA. Former staff writer, *Wilkes-Barre (PA) Times Leader*, *Federal Computer Week*, *MISWeek*, and *UNIX Today*; Washington, DC, correspondent, *Stamp Collector*.

Martin Margulis (WU30 #1477) of Bronx, NY. Journalism student; former teacher and guidance councilor; president, Empire State Postal History Society and editor of their *Bulletin*.

Norma L. McCumber (WU30 #0772) of San Diego, CA. Journalist and historian; former president, Conference of California Historical Societies; former editor, *Universal Postal Union Collectors News*; presently authoring *Postal History of San Diego County*. **Augustine H. Serafini** (WU30 #1506) of Oshkosh, WI. Ordained priest, Community of Our Lady; author, *The Divine Remedy* (masterpieces depicting the Madonna); editor, *COROS Chronicle* (Collectors of Religion on Stamps).

Daniel J. Siegel (WU30 #1033) of Havertown, PA. Attorney; JPA legal counsel; founding president, Collectors Club of Philadelphia; president, Philadelphia National Stamp Exhibition (SEPAD); general show chairman, 1991 APS STaMpsHOW.

Alan Warren (WU30 #0066) of Philadelphia, PA. Chemist; secretary, Interphil '76; current secretary, Philadelphia National Stamp Exhibition (SEPAD); recording secretary, American First Day Cover Society; author since 1956, "The Question Box" in *First Days*.



In accordance with the Bylaws, retiring President Robert de Violini will serve as Chairman of the Council 1991-1993. Other members of the Council whose terms expire in 1993 are Janet Klug, George M. Martin, Russel V. Skavaril, and William L. Welch.

A ballot is enclosed with this issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*.

Deadline for receipt of ballots is August 12, 1991.

Welcome

We welcome the following new members who have joined WU#30 since our March 7, 1991, report:

1592 Robert M. Turmelle, 8 Birch Street, Waterville, ME 04901. Editor: *Waterville Stamp Club News*. Sponsor: John M. Hotchner.

1593 Dr. Peter P. McCann, Marian Merrell Dow Inc., P.O. Box 68470, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0470. Author: *Postal History of the Cayman Islands* (Triad Publications, Weston, MA, 1989). Sponsor: Janet Klug.

1594 Ingert John Kzyzch, 7758 Condor Court, Alexandria, VA 22306. Editor: *Ukrainian Philatelist* (Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society). Sponsor: John M. Hotchner.

1595 Richard C. Schulman, 8 Talbot Lane, Smithtown, NY 11787. Free-lance writer: *United States Specialist* (Bureau Issues Association). Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

1596 Joseph E. Foley, P.O. Box 26, Short Hills, NJ 07078. Columnist: *The American Philatelist* ("President's Message"); Editorial Board: *Collector's Club Philatelist*. Sponsor: American Philatelic Society and George Griffenhagen.

1597 Charles William Dean, P.O. Box 24118, Lexington, KY 40524. Editor: *Henry Clay Stamps Notes* (Henry Clay Philatelic Society). Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

1598 Gary Griffith, P.O. Box 65745, Washington, DC 20035. Free-lance writer for *Linn's Stamp News* and *United States Specialist*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

1599 Julius Grigroe, Jr., 425 Harbor Drive, Venice, FL

34285. Author: *NYRBA's Triple Crash Covers, Outlaw Flight, and its Post Markings*. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

Resignations

0660 Harry C. Meier of Palmyra, Virginia.

1156 John T. Nugent of Meriden, Connecticut.

Moved—No Forwarding Address

1561 Garry Weinberger of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Closed Albums

We regret to report the death of:

0630 Edgar Lewy of London, England, died February 16 following major surgery. Former secretary of the British Philatelic Traders' Society; founding editor of *New Stamps*.

1474 Charles "Sherry" Kettler of Kirkwood, Missouri, died February 10 of cancer. Was editor of *Philatelia Chimica et Physica* (Chemistry and Physics on Stamps Study Unit).

Help Us Keep Your Mailing Address Current

Some WU#30 members are still not sending address changes to the WU#30 Secretary-Treasurer, and the USPS charges WU#30 30¢ every time they have to notify us of the address change. Prompt address change notices also assure that WU#30 members receive each issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* without delay.

George Griffenhagen
WU30 Secretary-Treasurer
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180.

The Task is (Nearly) completed

By Joe F. Frye

In case you wondered, the First Quarter 1991 issue was placed in the post office on March 21, 1991.

This issue has 26,084 words, according to the *WordPerfect 5.1* program used to produce it.

It is 1:25 p.m. Monday, June 10, 1991, as I write this. Production on this Second Quarter issue began after noon Tuesday, June 4. Delayed a day by Memphis's usual rotten weather when you want to operate electronic gear.

I hope to mail this issue Friday June 14 or Monday June 17, depending on how quickly the printer can produce this 40-pager.

It would be helpful if you'd note on your "Survey" form the date you received this issue.

During the one-day delay noted above I tried to catch up on some back reading, including a recent copy of *The American Philatelist*. A letter to the editor from the editor of *Sossi Journal*, official publication of the Scouts on Stamps Society International (APS Affiliate) noted his address as Germantown, Tennessee—a Memphis suburb.

Neither of us was aware of the other until I phoned him that day. He has graciously sent me a copy of the June 1991 issue and I'll review it in the next *PC*.

Details on the journal and society available from Corresponding Secretary Kenneth Shuker, 20 Cedar Lane, Cornwall, New York 12518.

P.S. Someone out there might write me sometime. □

Writers Unit 30, APS
 2501 Drexel Street
 Vienna VA 22180
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TO:

Secretary-Treasurer's Report (As of June 4, 1991.)

Election Time

In accordance with the WU#30 Bylaws (Article III), "Officers shall be elected for two-year terms, while members of the Council shall serve terms of four years, with one-half of the Council being elected at two-year intervals. Elections shall be held in the odd-numbered year by mail ballot of the membership. A nominating committee shall be appointed by the president [Jane King Fohn served as 1991 Nominations Committee chairman] . . . who shall present a slate of candidates to the secretary-treasurer not later than the second Monday in May.

. . . The Election ballot shall be prepared by the secretary-treasurer, and shall be distributed to the membership in the official publication of the Unit mailed not later than June 15th.

. . . Only those ballots received by the secretary-treasurer not later than ten days prior to the date of the A.P.S. annual convention will be counted."

Since STaMpsHOW '91 will be held August 22-25, the deadline for receipt of ballots is August 12, 1991.

So that you will know the candidates, it has been decided this year to publish short biographical sketches.

Here are your candidates:

President 1991-1993

Charles J. Peterson (WU30 # 0113) of Laurel, MD. Retired Federal employee; editor *Philatelic Literature Review* 1971-85; president, APS Writers Unit 1981-82; president, FIP Literature Commission; author, APS *Judging Manual* literature chapter.

Vice-President, East 1991-1993

Steven J. Rod (WU30 #1389) of South Orange, NJ. Professional social worker; executive secretary, American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors; author, *Introduction to Stamp Collecting and World Stamp Expo '89 Official Exhibition Guide*.

Vice-President, West 1991-1993

Robert D. Rawlins (WU30 #1511) of Healdsburg, CA. Retired Navy captain; convention coordinator, Universal Ship Cancellation Society; editor, *USCS Log*; author, *Naval Cover Cachet Makers' Catalog* and *USCS Convention Manual*.

Secretary-Treasurer 1991-1993

George B. Griffenhagen (WU30 #0318) of Vienna, VA. Retired pharmacist; president, American Topical Association 1976-79; treasurer, Council of Philatelic Organizations (COPO); secretary-treasurer, APS Writers Unit since 1980.

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Please complete and return Survey, facing page 35.

GOING UP!

April, 1991, Volume 30, Number 4

A Little Help

Every business runs into unexpected delays now and then. My luck ran out the last week in February. I changed computer systems and the changeover was not smooth. The new machine arrived without a serial number and had to be returned. (I couldn't get insurance or a warranty repair without a serial number.) The replacement machine was dead on arrival, with no video output; it needed a new logic board. The 8 MB of 80ns RAM I ordered from a discount chip seller turned out to be regraded 120ns chips, with the "12" marking carefully inked out! At least one of the chips was also bad; all had to be replaced. A 105 MB hard disk drive

I've been using for two years has been acting a bit flaky (with random seek errors) and had to be returned to Massachusetts for a warranty repair. If you don't know what I'm talking about, that's OK; I don't really understand what I say about computers either. Although the March newsletter was nevertheless mailed on March 4th to all, some of the February subscription orders didn't go out until March 12th. And it became clear to me that there was no chance of getting the April newsletter and all the March orders out on time, except with a little help from my friends.

So I revved up the FAX machine and contacted some of the best and some of the fastest writers in the philatelic press, and a few of each responded. I got by with a little help from my friends. My thanks to each and every one of them. The rest of this issue is devoted to their guest articles and columns. Enjoy.



Flag Over Mount Rushmore
Released on March 29th, this coil will benefit from the demand of patriots who still remember the War in the Gulf. We especially recommend the coils of 3000. The printing is limited to just under ten billion, although more might be printed some day. We expect most will be used for postage, and that few intact coils will be around a hundred years from today. VF NH of course. Price \$1087.50 per coil, which is just 25% above face value.



U. S. 703a variety, F-VF H

This Mt. Rushmore forerunner was the inspiration for the new 29¢ Rushmore stamp. It is exceedingly scarce. POR.

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Only In America

I received, via the daily mail, a card from Mr. Dan Milliman, one of our columnists. He is also one of our many former editors. He said I should go to Redonda for my vacation. (Mr. MicGlire wants all of us to wait and take our vacations in the summer. But I can dream!!!) So I went down to the mall. I went into a travel agency in the mall. I asked to book a weekend in Redonda. (Mr. MicGlire says I can have Friday and Monday off too that weekend! He really does like me. Everyone else just gets one day off.) Well, I found out there was no plane to Redonda from New York. Someone there even said that Redonda was just a big old rock with goats!! Well, I says, Mr. Dan Milliman would NOT tell me to vacation with goats. I am editor of STAMPS magazine, I says to her, and I seen stamps from Redonda. Do you think they're for goats? I asked her. For sure, that put her in her place. So write to me if you know how to

book a weekend in Redonda!! Or just call here. I work here 90 hours each week. But it has to be in my budget. I don't have too much saved up. Mr. MicGlire doesn't believe in paying extra for overtime.

Now next I'm going to say something controversial. My mother told me not to. She says I shouldn't make waves. You got a good job, Karen, she says, you shouldn't make waves. But I'm going to say it anyway and hope all you readers know that this is America and I am the editor and I have a right to my opinion just like you have a right to yours. So here goes.

I think our boys and girls in Kuwait did a good job. I think they were brave. They fought for democracy and won. I am proud of them. **So there.** After all, this is America. Where except in America could I get to be editor of STAMPS magazine?

It was a year ago that editor Mr. Al Starkweather left STAMPS magazine. I asked Mr. MicGlire who was gonna put out the magazine that week. I remember what he said. He said, well honey, how about you. You type good and I like your looks.

That's what America is. It's a country where a hard working High School Graduate like me can go from being a compositor to being an editor. (Mr. Al Starkweather used to call me a typist. I am not a typist. I AM A COMPOSITOR.) And I don't even know anything about stamps!!!

GOING UP!

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APRIL 1991



It happened in Sioux City, Iowa, at an annual convention of the Trans-Mississippi Philatelic Society. We were approached by a tall dignified fellow, appearing very much like the proverbial impression of an undertaker, which he was. He...

Oh, I *have* told this story before? OK. Let me start again.

Back in 1919, William Colthrap decided to build a bank in Vernal, Utah. He bought the bricks in Salt Lake City, more than 175 miles away. When he checked the costs of transporting the bricks, he learned that the cheapest method was sending the bricks via parcel post. So he packed the bricks and...

Oh, dear me. I've also told *this* story before? Well, let me just give a few tips.

Did you ever have trouble finding a stamp ad in a newspaper or magazine that you saved? Just mark on the cover the page number of the ad and ...

Oh, that one too! Gracious. How about the Commissioner of Auctions story? Really? The real reason why the baby Zepp C18 is so common? Oh, no! What of the reason that Friday's lunchtime business was always so good at... Good heavens!

This week I murdered noted postal rates expert Henry W. Beecher.

All right. All right. I'm going to tell you a story that I've never told before. It's a fresh story. This week I murdered noted postal rates expert Henry W. Beecher.

I didn't mean to kill him. I like Hank. I like everybody. But legally I was the proximate cause of his death, and I am responsible for it.

It all started when Hank called me on my toll-free number. (Back in 1968 I refused to run again for office in the ASDA because I was too old. I am still too old. I am retired. But, well, I guess I sell a stamp or two now and then, and I do have a toll-free number for orders or NEW stories.)

"Pat," he said, "I've made a new discovery! I have found a cover

mailed from Haiti in 1889 to Ithaca with twenty-nine cents postage due assessed! There were 55 gold centimes in Haitian postage on the envelope. The basic UPU rate for sea carriage was twenty-five gold centimes, or five cents in U. S. funds. Haiti assessed a surcharge for sea carriage of more than three hundred miles, so that's the equivalent of ten cents per half ounce. But the 1893 *Postal Laws and Regulations* number 514 combined with ruling number 273 in the January 1884 *Postal Guide* said that a letter subjected to double rates upon the payment of the full amount chargeable thereon at the single rate if not prepaid at least one full rate was unmailable unless at the double rate levied in the country of destination on prepaid letters in countries that charged more than the basic Union rate, unless revised since the time before April 1, 1879 when the original Union treaty was in effect, if not unpaid without carrier delivery in Ithaca in the morning only when the moon is full provided a gardener is on duty!"

His explanation excited my interest, although it made absolutely no sense to me.

His explanation excited my interest, although as always it made absolutely no sense to me. So I said: "Very interesting, Hank. What's your conclusion?" "Isn't it obvious," chortled Hank. "There must be some regulation no one knows about that allowed the charge of 29¢ postage due instead of the proper 36¢!"

At that point a bit of impishness came over me. I regret it deeply. It might have been caused by something I ate.

"Hank," I said, "what if the clerk made a mistake." "No," Hank replied, certainty in his voice, "the clerks of those days were carefully trained, highly responsible individuals. They took pride in their work. They didn't make mistakes." "But what if he did, Hank?" I asked. "What if he added wrong, or he missed a regulation somewhere?" I heard a slight sob. "What if he were just drunk?" "No! No! No!" shrieked Hank, growing increasingly more agitated. "It couldn't be. It couldn't be. If that were possible, why, most of my previous articles might have been wrong." "Hank, people make mistakes," I said. "No!! Not a postal clerk!" he replied. The stress was obvious in his voice. "Hank," I said, "what if a postage due stamp has fallen off the envelope?" Dead silence from the other end of the phone. "What if a Haitian stamp were missing?" I heard his heart racing. It was pounding so hard that I almost stopped typing a column while speaking to him. (I type from the time I wake up until the time I go to sleep. I don't have to think much about it

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

any more. It's a gift.)

And then I said something I will regret saying until the day I die. (It must have been the pickles. They always madden me.) "Anyway, Hank" I said, "who really cares about any of this stuff?" I heard a choking sound, and then a thud.

An hour later the phone rang with the news that Hank's album had closed.

Epilogue

As we were going to press, my fact-checker learned that Henry W. Beecher was alive and well. When questioned, Pat Herst sent the following to us.

Yes, I made up the story about murdering Hank. I was desperate for something new to write. I have many, many stories that I haven't told before. They are interesting, well-written, informative, and above all humane filled with enormous insights into the human comedy. But I can't publish them yet. The people I write about haven't died yet. These darned stamp dealers seem to live forever.

When I heard that Roger Weill had died on March 2nd at age 81, I was tempted to release the stories about him. But Raymond and George are still alive and it is just too soon to write about poor rich Roger. Say, did I ever tell you about Alfie? Boy, there was a dog. He once...I did? Oh, drat.

Inside Report...

Linn's and Laurence are corrupt. Read the articles in this issue and remember, when I print something, it's iron clad! Which brings me to another

Editor's Choice

by Joseph J. Puleo, Jr.

issue. Law suits. Another question which seems to pop up is, "Joe, why don't they sue you," or "Joe, aren't you afraid

of being sued?" Some people have said that with all the articles we published, you would think someone would sue us. Let's examine each case. "Attempted bogus cover scheme backfires on Linn's editor." Why didn't Mike Laurence sue us? How could he? We printed the truth. Another one, "Stamp fraud conspiracy exposed." Now some people have said that with all the damaging material in this article and all the players we named, someone would sue. Nope! Again, we printed the

truth. Or better yet, how about "Michael Laurence, the pornographic kingpin of philately." Laurence didn't sue and in fact won't, because it would open a can of worms he doesn't want opened. These were all articles we published in the past. Now this article. Will Pacific sue? Quite frankly, I doubt it. They're more than welcome to, but they have nothing to gain and even more to lose. When you're bogus and you've been nailed, do you sue?

The hippie, drug and free sex generation. These are the people running this hobby.

You see, in this great country of ours, we all have the right to free speech and freedom of the press. I took that opportunity and gave myself and you, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. As long as you print the truth and support it, the justice system and the American people support you. It's that simple. And I believe that as long as I attack a corrupt system, corrupt organizations, corrupt dealers, I'm doing the right thing. Something which has been long overdue.

That's right, the system is corrupt. This is a little far fetched but think about it. The people in office grew up in the 1960's. The hippie, drug and free sex generation. These are the people running this hobby. The same rebellious kids of

the '60's are now in office in philately. Can you imagine the drugged up hippies of the '60's defending this country? Can you? I can't. This generation is out only for themselves. That's the key and I said a mouthful. They're out for themselves. For the most part, this was a corrupt generation (please no letters on this). Mike Laurence fits right in there with his liberal, left wing antics. This man is corrupt and even worse, he has you believing whatever he wants because of the power of that great Linn's machine.

Stop Press!

At press time I [JLN] learned that noted stamp dealer Phil Chatsworth had died of a heart attack while working in his office at 3 AM on Saturday, March 30th. Phil was 91 years old. I asked his widow Babs, a fixture at his side for many years, about her plans.

"I loved Phil dearly and I will miss him. He always told me that we couldn't afford a vacation, that we couldn't afford a cruise. We've lived in the same crummy apartment for fifty years. Our car is ten years old. I asked Greg to take a look at some of these boxes lying around here. He said he estimated they would fetch 1.9 million dollars at auction. Phil had holes in his socks. These boxes are worth millions? What was wrong with him? What was a man his age doing working at 3 AM on Saturday morning, anyway? I'm getting rid of all this junk and will start living for once. You stamp dealers. You're all crazy!"

His business will not be continued.

SW

The Stamp
Wholesaler

Volume 55, Whole No. 1180

Combined with STAMP RETAILING, the MARKET NEWSLETTER
and the WHOLESale STAMP ADVERTISER.

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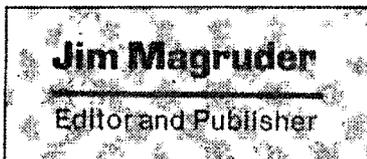
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Lucius Jackson,
Editor and Publisher, 1937-1978

A magic advertising word

As you know, I approved wholeheartedly when the ASDA put its 1991 dues structure into effect. I thought it was very important that the leading trade organization take steps to get on a sound financial footing. The dual rate structure, with auctioneers and trade suppliers paying twice what ordinary dealers paid, seemed ideally suited to accomplish that goal. We live in changing times. The ASDA's action had my full support.

As you know, I also approved wholeheartedly when the ASDA cancelled its new dues structure upon complaints from auctioneers and trade suppliers. I thought it was very important that the leading trade organization be responsive to the demands of its members. The quick capitulation of the ASDA board to its more powerful members seemed the best way to demonstrate precisely that responsiveness. The ASDA's action had my full support.



The ASDA is now preparing revised plans to meet the deficit in its latest budget. I don't know yet what the board will decide. But I can assure you it will have my full support. Whatever it is.

I hear carping and complaining all the time from stamp dealers. "Jim, my ad didn't get a response." "Jim, when I lowered my price my old customers all asked for refunds." "Jim, how do you justify your ad rates? You charge several times more than *Linn's* per thousand."

Well, the reason these ads don't fetch a good response is that they are bad ads. We have buyers. We reach people with money. So if they don't respond, it has got to be your fault. You simply don't advertise enough. You think that you can take a half page ad twice a month and make an impression. But that doesn't work for every type of stamp business. Sometimes you have to take full page ads in every issue month after month even if you get no response at all, just to establish a presence and get name recognition. I tell them that. But do these cheap so and so's listen? No. They go to *Linn's*.

We have commissioned numerous expensive research studies to find out the least-costly way to get responses from our readers. Our latest research shows there is a single key word that will make your advertising more effective than ever before! I guarantee that if you make proper use of this word, you will get more responses than ever. Your cost per inquiry or customer will go way, way down. It is virtually a magic word, recognized as such in all advertising media.

That word is FREE.

Let me show you how to use that word to make your advertising get results like never before. Suppose you were advertising a set of U. S. C13-15 VF NH for \$2500.00 but didn't sell it. Try running that same ad again with just one small change. Instead of saying: "U. S. C13-15 VF NH \$2500.00" say "U. S. C13-15 VF NH FREE!!!" You will be amazed by the response.

Remember, our advertising department will be glad to help you FREE with copywriting and layout. We have a collection of clip-art from books published in the 1940's. Illustrate your ads with secretaries sitting at manual typewriters FREE! Use our fabulous collection of big pointing fingers FREE!

Our ads aren't FREE. They should be. I've gone to my bosses and explained the magic of the word FREE. I've told them that advertising inches will go up and up if all the ads were FREE. But they just refuse to listen to a man of vision like myself. They did agree to let me stay up all night April 1st to accept ad orders by phone at a discount. Hardly anyone responded. Well, if those ads had been FREE they'd have responded! I know that for a fact.

We don't validate parking

I asked Stephen Esrati to write this column for me. He drove all the way to Ohio from Canada to drop it off. But he never turned it in. He called me from the parking lot to ask if we validated park-

Editor's Choice

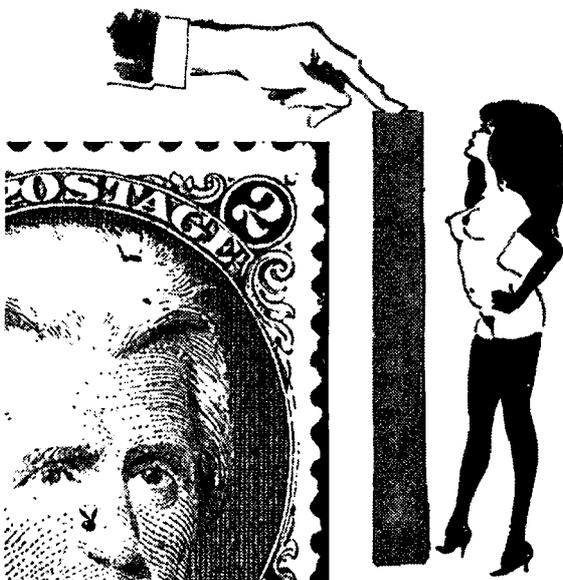
By Michael Laurence

ing. When I said we didn't, he just stormed off in a huff muttering something like "I'm a stamp journalist. I shouldn't have to pay for parking." So, much to my surprise, I find myself writing a column (something I try to avoid doing most of the year).

[NOTE FROM JLN. That's all I'm going to publish of my mock column by Michael Laurence, editor/publisher of Linn's. I just can't get worked up talking about the usual things. It's true Laurence was an editor at Playboy and Oui. I can't criticize him for that; I envy him. It's true that some crooked dealers advertise in Linn's, but I don't know that I would act any differently about them if I were in his shoes. Linn's does act to correct any problems brought to its attention. Small crooked advertisers get bounced when problems are continual; larger advertisers tend to stay so long as specific complaints are resolved. Newspaper publishing is a tough business, especially for a hobby in recession like stamps.

I figure the guy's been worked over pretty good anyway, by Puleo and others. Look at it this way. Here you have a sophisticated Harvard-educated man who spent his earlier years cavorting with Hef and Playmates at the Chicago mansion. Now he's in Sidney Ohio. His parties are attended by aging, sedentary stamp writers. His parent organization, Amos Press, is run by a bunch of prudes. I think the guy is suffering enough. Some would say living in Sidney is punishment enough.

But I did spend some time working on the graphic meant to accompany the column, so I'm running it anyway. Credit should be given to LeRoy Neiman and Playboy for the line drawing (non-stamp) portion, taken from the September 1989 issue without permission. (Hey, it's just a joke. My newsletter is free to all.) Speaking about jokes, the one given here is a clean one. Well, isn't it?]



LINN'S PARTY JOKE

Why do mice have small balls?

Because very few mice know how to dance.

Principles of Good Philatelic Journalism

By Ken Lawrence

On March 15 an unusual letter arrived at my post office box, addressed to me.

It was a #10 business envelope. My name and address were typed by what looked like a laser printer. The postage was metered. The return address showed it was supposedly mailed by Jeff Needleman in Ann Arbor, Michigan, but Jeff hadn't phoned to let me know to expect anything and the secret code word wasn't on the outside. [Sorry, Ken. I forgot! Jeff] So I did what I always do. I called the Postal Inspectors, the FBI, and the local police bomb squad. (I am not paranoid. My wife and I get death threats by phone from the KKK.)

Anyway, turned out it was just my buddy Jeff asking for my help in filling up this late issue. I'm glad to oblige. I'll have to ramble a bit, which is something I never do in my articles. After all, I am rushed for time. Alright? Alright!

My writing is meant not only to inform but also to be an example of journalism at its finest

Let's talk first about the word *investment*. My father the stockbroker used to take me upon his knee and stentorically inform me: "Master Burg, a true investment must pay dividends or interest. Anything else is just a speculation." I've never forgotten those words. Some of you uninformed people have written to me saying that the language has changed. Do you really expect me to agree that anything bought

with the intention of being sold for a profit is an investment? Well, no sirree Bob! Your house is not an investment. No stamp is an investment. A good education is not an investment. Investment is a word that still means precisely what my father the stockbroker said it meant when I was young. And none of your new-fangled "modern" dictionaries mean anything to me. My dictionary was published more than a hundred years ago, and that's good enough for me! Alright? Alright!

Let's talk next about good journalism. I've told my readers time and again that my writing is meant not only to inform but also to be an example of journalism at its finest. When I called Joe Puleo a deadbeat in *The Philatelic Communicator*, I got a few letters asking me if that was responsible journalism. But you careless readers forget that I gave you the evidence I had for my charge in that same article. I told you that I got a call from some woman (I think she said her name was Susan) who claimed to be from some telephone company somewhere. She said that Puleo was questioning some phone calls on his bill. Well, that's good enough for me. Some of you ask if a good journalist should check facts, get proper identification, investigate both sides of the issue. Some of you even said that you, too, had questioned long-distance calls appearing on your bill now and then and that didn't mean you were deadbeats. Some of you said that you don't care if Puleo is a deadbeat, but do care whether or not his charges of corruption against the PF and Linn's are true. You all miss the point. Puleo is scum. I know it and you know it. Don't waste my time. If you're interested in good journalism, I tell you what you should be doing in my articles. Just remember to do what I say, not do what I do. That's simple enough isn't it? Let's try another example.

Here's what I say in my column in Vol. 23, No. 4, Whole No. 90, page 87: "Philatelic literature must measure up to higher standards of ethics and accuracy than ever before." And I do play fair. As

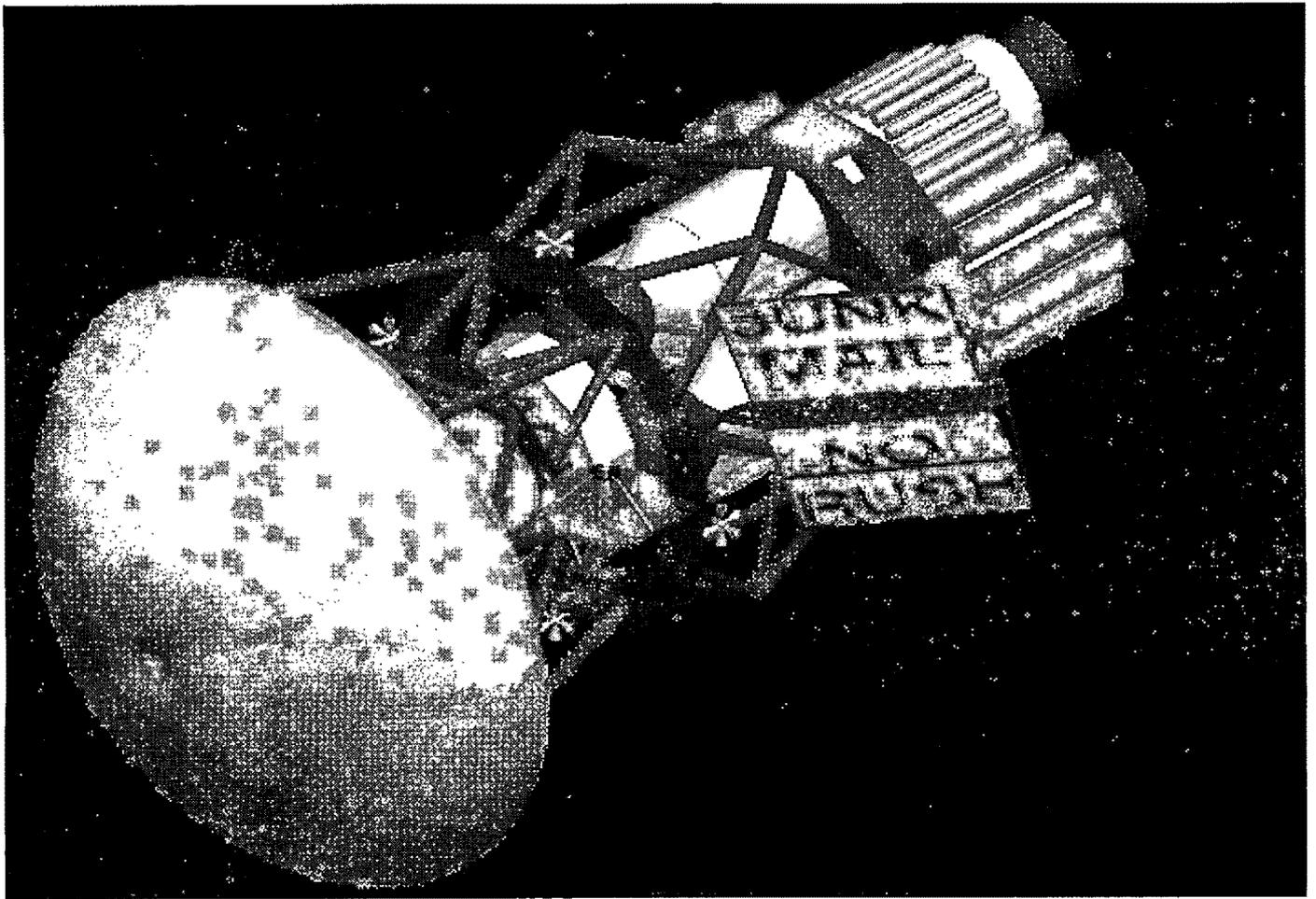
I say (*op. cit.*: p. 97) "Joe Frye and myself...don't abuse our privileged access to copy. If he or I wish to respond to a writer's point of view, we must wait until the following issue, just as the rest of you must wait." Why then do I respond to, for example, Bob Rabinowitz's articles in the same issue as published? Because I'm the editor and I feel like it. It's not bad journalism. Like I've just told you, only pay attention to what I say my principles are. Don't pay any attention to what I actually do.

Alright? Alright!

A brief note from Joe Frye. The laser printer broke down again. I've read another 1000 page volume about how to use WordPerfect and I think I'm getting the knack of it now. Please use a lot of foreign accent marks in your writing so that I can show off my new knowledge. ΞϞΑΌÊ;ÇϞÛÛ. Hey, how did that get in there?

Odds and Ends

One excellent source for philatelic literature is Philip Bansner, Box 2529, West Lawn, PA 19609. His latest 84-page pricelist contains many hard-to-obtain in print books, and many more out-of-print classics, all at quite reasonable prices. You can call him any time from 8 AM to 10PM eastern time at 215-678-5000...Pat Herst's new toll-free number is 800-321-6180...Ken Lawrence did indeed call the authorities to investigate a mysterious package he received last May 17th. Turned out to be a promotional egg from Steve Ivy Auctions. (I am not making this up!)...I had fun writing the newsletter this month. I don't know why I'm spending a small fortune to mail it out to you, though, since there's nothing in it to buy. Make me feel better by ordering something from the previous two newsletters, or by subscribing to one of my three services...A little song, a little dance, a little seltzer down the pants...One last thing. Joseph Puleo's article is from *The Stamper* for Sept./Oct. 1990, p. 13. I did not write it. Every word was written by Joe. (I tell you, I am not making this up!)



The Search For Extraterrestrials Continues

Alan Shawn Feinstein tries a direct mailing addressed to "Occupant—Any Planet"

Jeffrey L. Needleman

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