

The Philatelic Communicator

ISSN 0147-3646

Joseph E. Foley, Editor

P.O. Box 183

Riva, MD 21140-0183

e-mail: jfoley4197@aol.com

phone: (410) 974-6380

Writers Unit 30, APS, publishes *The Philatelic Communicator* four times a year. A subscription to *TPC* is included with dues paid by members of the Unit.

Manuscripts are solicited on subjects of interest to writers, editors and publishers of all forms of philatelic literature. All submissions for publication, without exception, are subject to being edited. Opinions expressed in *The Philatelic Communicator* are those of their authors, and not necessarily of Writers Unit 30, APS, its officers, editor, publisher or agents. Letters received by the editor may be published unless labeled "Not for Publication." When possible, furnish copy, including letters, on diskettes (WordPerfect 8, RTF or ASCII). Include printed copy with diskettes. All editorial matters must be handled with the editor.

DEADLINES—For receipt of copy by the editor:

First Quarter Jan. 15
Second Quarter April 15
Third Quarter July 15
Fourth Quarter Oct. 15

WRITERS UNIT 30

Dane S. Claussen, President

1211 Buena Vista Street #4

Pittsburgh, PA 15212

412-231-5924 (home phone)

412-392-3412 (office direct #)

412-392-4730 (office message #)

412-392-3917 (office fax#)

e-mail: dsclaussen@hotmail.com

George B. Griffenhagen,

Secretary-Treasurer

2501 Drexel Street

Vienna VA 22180-6906

703 560-2413

e-mail: gbg@mail.aphanet.org

Officers of Writers Unit 30, a nonprofit corporation, in addition to the President, Secretary-Treasurer and Editor, are:

Vice-president, West

David L. Herendeen

1641-D 237th Street

Harbor City, CA 90710

310 530-9386



Vice-president, East

Barth Healey

86 Bar Beach Road

Port Washington, NY 11050-4029

516 944-9690

The Executive Committee includes the officers plus Alan Warren, of Exton, PA (immediate past president). The WU30 Council includes:

Lloyd de Vries

Ernest E. Fricks

Augustine Serafini

Jay Smith

Kenneth Trettin

Partamus, NJ (2003)

Clementon, NJ (2005)

Oshkosh, WI (2005)

Snow Camp, NC (2005)

Rockford, IA (2003)

Writers Unit 30 has as its primary objective the encouragement and improvement of philatelic writing in all of its various forms. Calendar year membership dues, payable in advance in U.S. funds through a U.S. bank or Post Office are:

USPS Zip code address \$15.00

Canada & Mexico \$17.50

All other addresses \$20.00

Please report address changes to the Secretary-Treasurer as soon as known in order to avoid loss of issues.

The *Philatelic Communicator* is printed and distributed by Wilcox Printing & Publishing, Inc., Madrid, Iowa.



The Quill

Joe Foley

Since its inception, WU30 has been closely identified with the American Philatelic Society—perhaps more closely than any other APS affiliate. Thus it is both reasonable and appropriate that the current debate on the Match Factory is reflected in *The Philatelic Communicator*.

The front page features the APS News Release on the subject followed by a commentary by WU30 Council member and APS Secretary Lloyd de Vries. My own personal opinion is reflected on page 4 followed by Janet Klug's assessment. No matter how strongly these views are held, they are personal opinions and, as we consistently point out, not necessarily those of Writers Unit 30, APS, its officers, editor, publisher or agents.

Good friends are finding themselves on opposite sides of this question and vice versa. Even in WU30, past and present members of our official family are divided. With strongly held but differing views, friendship and even civility may be at risk.

WRITERS BREAKFAST

We will hold the Traditional Writers Breakfast at STAMPSHOW in Atlantic City. It will be Sunday, August 18, 2002 at 8:30 a.m. Cost will be \$18 for tickets purchased by July 15, \$20 after that. There will also be a Writers' Roundtable Friday, August 16. See the notice on page 14 in this issue.

LITERATURE CATALOGS

Two lists of philatelic literature recently crossed my desk and may be of interest to our members. James Bendon has released a new edition of his *Listing of Philatelic Literature*. A free copy may be obtained from Bendon at Box 56484, 3307 Limassol, Cyprus, e-mail: books@JamesBendon.com. The entire list may be seen on his Website: www.JamesBendon.com. Another is the sixth edition of *Canadian & BNA Philatelic Literature* by Saskatoon Stamp Centre, Box 1870, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3S2, Canada, e-mail: ssc@saskatoonstamp.com. Both booklets include a useful precis of each listed publication.

SO MUCH FOR PROOFREADING

Never at the top of my short list of skills is proofreading. Unfortunately, some content in the last issue, most notably Gene Fricks' review and the table of contents, escaped even that effort. Gene's document was fine, but in either scanning or translating from one word processing system to another, unchecked problems arose. Apologies to all.

A PERSONAL NOTE

Late last year I was diagnosed as having prostate cancer. Priorities shifted. For several weeks I was principally occupied with various tests and obtaining opinions from several physicians. Treatment has commenced and the prognosis is good. Obviously, this has had some impact on many other activities, including editing the *PC*. My thanks for your kind words and patience. □

Imaging ... the Way I See it

by Larry Goldberg

I was flattered when Joe Foley asked me to write this article because I think the scans that I use in the periodicals and books that I publish are, at best, O.K. On the other hand, I have never been one to miss an opportunity to express an opinion. Scanned images are very important to me. As tired as the old saying about a picture being worth a thousand words might be, it still carries much truth.

All of the books we publish rely heavily on high-magnification scans for illustrations. In fact, the first book we published, *Falkland Islands Dependencies: 1946 'Thick' Map Issue*, contained more than 250 images at 5-10x magnifications. It pretty much set the standard for other books we have done and are doing.

THE BASICS

The quality of the scan and the quality of reproduction are interdependent, but not completely. One can have a good scan and bad printing and still have a reasonably good printed piece. Similarly, one can have a not-so-good scan and good printing and still get printing of a reasonable quality. You can never get a good printed piece with a combination of a bad scan and a bad printing job. I guess it is fair to say that what you see is not necessarily what you get ... and vice versa. Know what you are doing when you are creating a scan, but temper that knowledge with how you are ultimately going to make use of the finished image. Questions. There are some basic things that one must take into consideration before doing a scan.

1. What are the limitations of your computer system? If, for example, your computer has a limited amount of RAM (random access memory), some of the better imaging software like *Adobe® Photoshop®* may not be usable. *Photoshop* is a terrific program with almost unlimited potential. It is also memory hungry. The basic program takes a little more than 11.5Mb, but the program requires twice as much memory as the size of the image that you are processing. So, if you routinely plan to process large images and do some cutting and pasting between images, 50 or 75Mb is not out of the question. Recently, Adobe released a program called *Photoshop®Elements* that provides many of the same capabilities that *Photoshop* offers for less than \$100. (*Photoshop* usually sells for closer to \$500.) *Photoshop Elements* also requires less technical knowledge and less memory.

2. How do you plan to reproduce the image? If you plan to produce a photocopied newsletter, a high-resolution file will do you more harm than good. In a high-res image, there are more dots per inch. In a process like photocopying, a final image of higher than 72dpi will tend to merge and make the image appear muddy. Most offset printing is best done from an image of about 180dpi. This varies, however, so check with your printer. Again, if the resolution gets much higher, the definition of the image suffers.

When using offset, other factors also affect the image resolution requirement. For example, a publication printed on newsprint is best printed with a lower resolution image where an image printed on a high gloss coated paper will do better with a high-res image. Some instant printers use a paper plate for printing. A paper plate will not print an image as well as a metal plate. On the other hand, a press that will print right from the disk will, in most instances, take a much higher resolution file.

The *Docutech®* process, for example, works directly from the disk. It is essentially a large photocopy machine, but it will routinely do a good job of reproducing images at 600dpi. (*Docutech*, by the way, is a terrific process for short-run publications of less than 1,000 copies. The job prints directly from your disk and prints, collates and saddle stitches in one continuous process. I find it very economical for periodicals as well as soft-cover books.)

3. To what extent are you willing to retouch an image?

This is a tough question because different people have a different opinion on how far to take this. Of course, you are somewhat limited by the features of the photo-editing software you use. Some seem to feel that their imaging goal is to make an exact reproduction of an item. In other words, if you have a ratty, torn cover with dealers' pencil markings all over it, let it all hang out! Show it as it is. The other extreme is to clean it up and hide all of its faults. My own opinion is that the end use determines the extent to which you should alter an image. For example, you obviously must show an image faithful to the smallest detail in an auction catalog. On the other hand, if your image is to be used educationally, you might decide to cover up some of the faults to keep them from detracting from the point you are trying to illustrate. You might enhance a cancel in a postal history reference book. In a book on postal stationery, you might retouch a tear on the back flap of an envelope.

4. Are you willing to take risks? Let's face it; the decision as to whether a scan is good or bad is subjective. As is the case with all subjectivity, you are the judge. I also find that it does not hurt to develop a sense of what is good enough. There are times that it just doesn't pay to spend a lot of time trying for a perfect image. Are you trying to keep improving a scan because it does not offer the information that you want or if it is for your own ego gratification? Let me offer a tip on this particular topic. There are times that an image of a whole stamp or cover looks terrible, but when you crop it down to focus on a given point of interest, the same scan may work quite well. Cropping is a very good tool. (Besides, no one can see what you don't show.)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I think I've given you enough to think about for starters. Maybe it would be a good idea to stop here and give you some time to think about what I had to say. I suppose that there is a sort of irony in the fact that I have included no images in this article. Maybe in the next issue or the one after, we'll delve into some of the more technical aspects of imaging and I'll add some pictures. Also, if you have questions, please drop me a line at the address shown below.

Adobe and *Photoshop* are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated. *Docutech* is a registered trademark of Xerox Corporation.

Larry Goldberg is editor/publisher of *GEORGE VI*, a quarterly publication for the specialist collector of the stamps and postal history of the reign of King George VI. He is also the author of *Falkland Islands Dependencies: 1946 'Thick' Map Issue*, *The 1946 Commonwealth Victory Issue* and the *Post Office Identification* handbook series. Information on the publications and books can be found on the Internet at <<http://www.kg6.com/g6>> or by snail mail from LMG Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 7170, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-7170 USA. LMG Communications was awarded more than 25 medals in philatelic literature competitions during 2000-2001. □

Match Factory—Concerns

by Joseph E. Foley



Gini Horn, Bob Lamb & Horace Harrison outside the Match Factory during a 2001 visit by Harrison & the author.

I served on the jury at the APS Winter Meeting at Riverside California last month. Shortly after arrival I ran into past WU30 president and current APRL president Charlie Peterson and his wife outside the hotel. Charlie excitedly told me of the APS Board decision to buy the Match Factory. I asked what the vote was and he told me six in favor, four opposed. With that split, I couldn't share my friend's enthusiasm.

As the weekend continued, the Match Factory was an almost constant topic of conversation. This continued at the APS General Meeting and another meeting conducted on just that subject.

Flying back from California, I thought over the many concerns that were voiced. A couple of days later I sent a letter to APS President Peter McCann and subsequently shared it with others. The essence of that letter follows.

February 13, 2002

Dr. Peter P. McCann, President
American Philatelic Society

Dear Peter:

As I'm sure you are aware, there was much discussion about the Match Factory Project at the Winter Meeting. Some took place at public forums, but a great deal in private conversations. A past president should probably concentrate on the "past" part of that term, but my continuing concern for the Society prompts this letter. At the outset, let me express my very strong feeling that all concerned with this project, whether proponent or skeptic, have nothing but the genuine best interest of the APS at heart.

What follows, in no particular order, are comments that came to my attention during the past weekend. Some of these views I share, others I frankly don't have enough first hand information to assess. Regardless, at the risk of telling you what you may already know, I felt I should bring all to your attention.

A 40% negative vote by the Board on the limited

question to buy the property is disconcerting. These are the people who have studied the issue in some depth. The fact that almost half have reservations gives us all pause.

The optimism on the sale of the existing building has an unsettling familiarity to the similar confidence surrounding the sale of the first building on Fraser Street. The harsh reality of that situation was a lengthy struggle to sell that culminated in a reduced price and an unattractive requirement for "creative financing" which stretched the payment out over several years. We are attempting, again, to speculate on what the future market conditions will be when the Match Factory is ready for APS occupancy. Further, a bridge loan, or something similar, in the amount of the anticipated net sales value, will be required to cover construction costs.

In at least one of the earlier building drives, some of the sales division "float" covered some of the financial requirements. This was during a period of increasing membership and increasing sales. The risk then was minimal. Conditions have changed. Also, while serving as treasurer and chairman of the Finance Committee, I obtained approval for an accounting change whereby the 20% commission was taken at the time of sale rather than at the retirement of a book. This created a one-time benefit that was used to diminish the impact of dependence on the float. If memory serves, at about the same time and for the same reason, dues were either increased in each of two consecutive years or twice in a three-year period.

Several have voiced the opinion that there is a paucity of business experience on both the APS and APRL Boards. The existence of a viable business plan was frequently questioned as was the apparent lack of planning for alternative solutions. Conversely, reportedly, some Board members are concerned about their personal liability and the risk this project may expose them to.

Some question the need for more space noting that duplicate and infrequently required library material should be stored remotely. Additionally, some, such as old auction catalogs, might lend themselves to electronic storage rather than hard copy. Suggestions include the erection of "shell" type buildings on the existing property and/or long term lease of warehouse space.

Hard questions on financial matters have all too often been followed by soft answers. Something our sainted Irish grandmothers would have termed "malarkey" but our fathers might have used a more earthy term to describe. One rather unkind wit referred to some of these as "disappearing certainties." Examples cited were: the sale of tax credits, the USPS leasing space, financing through tax exempt bonds and the requirement to have sufficient tenancy committed before obligating ourselves to buy the building. This has resulted in a credibility gap.

Location in central Pennsylvania continues to be a sore point to many members. To those of us in the northeast, a trip to State College is not much of a burden. Beyond that, other members would like to see a location nearer a major population center served by a hub airport. There is a feeling that in today's economic climate suitable commercial space could be obtained with far less complications and uncertainty than the Match Factory.

The existing economic viability of the Society is being questioned. Answers sometimes have the appearance of vagueness or avoidance. This may be nothing more than perception, but in the absence of fact, rumor abounds. This is heightened when finances of the Match Factory Project are questioned. Skepticism was noted on:

1. Sale of the existing property at the expected price
2. Structural soundness of the Match Factory & associated cost of renovation
3. Ability to raise required funds
4. Ability to service debt of borrowed funds
5. Renting sufficient space in the Match Factory at a favorable rate
6. Flood Plain (despite 100 year history)
7. Question of full disclosure

Looking back on our three building projects, I sense a gradual diminishing of enthusiasm as we evolved from one to another. In each of those cases, we had an increasing membership. It's a hard sell in a contracting situation. There appears to be polarization not only in the membership but on the Boards. Opinions seem to range from unbounded enthusiasm to grave concern and skepticism. It may not be a stretch to note that objectivity, at times, appears to give way to emotion.

The impact of failure appears not to have been addressed — not only the impact on the APS but on the hobby of stamp collecting. Risk analysis should be undertaken.

Having said all of this, I feel obligated to offer what I hope will be a constructive recommendation. Obtain a competent "arm's length" review by a qualified third party. I've been retired too long to recommend a specific suitable consultant, but I'm sure they can be found, possibly at the university. The charge to the consultant should be three-fold:

1. Assess the real need for additional space
2. Develop and evaluate alternatives
3. Assess the Match Factory Project

To be credible, this has to be devoid of any undue influence by advocates or opponents of the Match Factory Project. If this report is favorable to the Match Factory Project, it should settle skepticism and concerns. Hopefully, it would also facilitate a level of cohesiveness that is now so sadly lacking and provide a positive base for fund raising. If unfavorable, we can avoid a costly and potentially devastating mistake. I think it would be wise to obtain an agreement with the town to postpone executing the purchase until this has been accomplished, assuming of course that the APS Board will concur with such a delay.

Let's ensure that we do not follow in the wake of Pacific 97, the British Philatelic Federation and the Society of Philatelic Americans and make the American Philatelic Society the Enron of stamp collecting.

With best personal regards, I am,

Sincerely,

/s/ Joe Foley

The building has been purchased—now what? Some of us feel that an outside opinion by a qualified consultant is still needed. Further, a moratorium should be placed on any additional expenditures until the consultant's report is received and, assuming it is favorable, a viable financial/business plan has been approved.

There have been a lot of words and not just a little emotion on this subject. However, I think the most compelling analysis is presented in Janet Klug's position paper. Janet is currently chairman of the APS Board of Vice Presidents and a candidate for president of the Society in next year's election. Her paper:

WHY I VOTED NO TO PURCHASE THE MATCH FACTORY

by Janet Klug

Position Paper Number 1, March 2002

The Match Factory is a vacant, sprawling 100-year old structure that was presented to the APS and APRL Boards as the solution to the need for more space in the Society's headquarters. The project was originally touted as a method to get the Society the space it needed and to assist the Society by providing income in the form of rents from tenants for the unused space. One prospective tenant was the Bellefonte, Pennsylvania Post Office who was interested in 22,000 square feet of space. Other attractive aspects of the project that were presented to the Board included the ability to sell tax credits received for historic preservation and financing the whole project by selling largely tax-exempt municipal bonds.

Last year I voted to approve the Match Factory on a contingency basis, and I agreed to the tentative financing through municipal bonds based on these assumptions. The purchase agreement was crafted in such a way to protect the APS should we not be able to secure a tenant for 22,000 square feet, of which the APS Executive Director, Robert E. Lamb, said, "Without a major tenant in the block warehouse building the financials do not work for us. We cannot afford to do the project without a major tenant." Lamb further stated, "if it goes to \$7.5 million we can't afford it." (APS Board Meeting, Providence, Rhode Island, August 2000).

Unfortunately, none of these things happened. The Bellefonte Post Office lost interest in the project. Then the tax credits melted away. Finally, the APS failed to secure the bond issue. Through all of this we have always promised APS members that we would not do the project if we could not afford it.

On February 7, 2002 the APS Board of Directors cast a 6 to 4 split vote to purchase the Match Factory, waiving the tenant requirement contingency. This vote was made without a business plan, without financing, without a development plan and on top of two successive years of very serious declines in the combined total assets of the APS and APRL. Those voting in favor were Nancy Clark, Lloyd de Vries, John Hotchner, Ron Leshner, Ada Prill, and Steve Washburne. Opposed to the purchase were: Janet Klug, Roger Schnell, Ann Triggle, and Robert Zeigler.

Multi-million dollar project decisions must be made in a fiscally responsible way after careful study of the facts and figures. The latest projected cost to refurbish the Match Factory was disclosed in an informational meeting in Riverside on February 9 by project manager Dennis Gilson as \$7.5 million. (See above, Lamb, "if it goes to \$7.5 million we can't afford it.")

This is why I voted NO. I did not want to break the promise made to members: **We would not do the project if we could not afford it.** □

Writers Breakfast at APS Winter Meeting

There was a large attendance at our Writers Breakfast at the historic Mission Inn in Riverside, Calif. Chairing the meeting was vice-president Dave Herendeen who introduced other officers and council members.

Our editor, Joe Foley gave his report and noted that the response to the questionnaire included with the Third Quarter issue was minimal. He then asked those present to offer their comments. This resulted in an informal "Round-Table" Discussion that included the following topics:

- Concerns on increasing mailing costs for groups with relatively small memberships, e.g., 150-175 range. One member suggested an Internet approach. Another noted that while not all collectors have convenient access to the 'net, this could be an option, with conventional hard copy still being available.
- Questions and thoughts in general were exchanged on the future of electronic and hard copy media.
- The concept of a theme for a given issue of the *Philatelic Communicator* was favorably noted.
- Comments were made about the difficulty of finding a publisher willing to take on a philatelic book. A case history was related. That particular book, *United States Patriotic Covers of World War II*, eventually published by the Collectors Club of Chicago, went on to receive high honors.
- An ongoing need for guidance on illustrations, particularly scanning, was expressed. Barbara Boal, editor of the *American Philatelist* offered some helpful comments and followed up with additional information included in this issue of the *PC*.
- It was noted that there are two kinds of writers. Those that write for more or less specialized collectors and those that deal with a more general audience including non-philatelic media.
- Dave Herendeen noted that the enthusiasm of the overall discussion suggested that a Writers' Round-Table would be worthwhile at a future meeting. Since then, one has been established for STAMPSHOW in Atlantic City—see separate announcement.

Drawings were held for the customary door prizes and the inductees for the Writers' Hall of Fame were announced. Their citations follow.

APS WRITERS UNIT HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Charles E. Severn (1872-1929)

Few Americans have been honored by being asked to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain. Our honoree today was among the first class to be inducted when it was created in 1921. This recognized his stature as one of the foremost leaders in the development and progress of the hobby in the United States.

His contributions to philatelic literature are no less impressive. While a student in public schools, he became interested in

stamp collecting and as his interest grew, he began to contribute to the philatelic press with the first number of *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* in 1891. His interest in writing also grew and he acquired an interest in *Mekeel's* in its early stages. His weekly contributions to its pages became an important part of its success. He eventually became its editor in 1897, a post he held until 1926. After that he continued as president of the Severn-Wylie-Jewett Co., which published the paper, until his passing in 1929.

As previous Writer Unit Hall of Fame inductee Fred Melville summed it up, "...of the young editors of those days nearly all were transient, [one] alone endured and established a record that will remain ever green in the Annals of Philatelic Journalism." It might also be noted that this was the era of transient periodicals—some lasted only one issue, others endured for one or a few years before folding. That *Mekeel's* survived and prospered was in no small measure a testament to our honoree's writing and editing skills.

The American Philatelic Society's Writers Unit #30 is proud to place the name of Charles E. Severn in its Hall of Fame; the latest to be inducted, joining just more than 100 of the most renowned contributors to philatelic literature.

George B. Sloane (1898 -1958)

Longevity as a philatelic writer is not by itself a qualification for the APS Writers Unit Hall of Fame, but when combined with quality, consistency and the ability to use a regular column to influence collectors and shape philatelic history, we have a package that is long overdue for recognition.

This honoree began collecting stamps as a boy and by the age of seventeen was a nationally recognized authority on U.S. stamps. His first job was with the Gorham Silver Co., but his avocation soon became his vocation. Working for a succession of dealers, he eventually opened, in 1920, his own establishment on the fabled Nassau Street; operating as a dealer, expertizer, appraiser, consultant and auctioneer.

However, it is for his literary accomplishments that we honor him today. His studies contributed much to philatelic knowledge because he made the effort to share them widely through his prolific articles in many philatelic journals. For instance, he wrote the lead article (on the U.S. Pan American Issue) for the first issue of the *Collectors Club Philatelist* in 1922 and wrote many other articles for that prestigious publication over succeeding years. However his crowning achievement is the column he wrote for *STAMPS Magazine* from its inception on September 17, 1932, until his last column appeared in the July 26, 1958 issue; a total of 1,350 columns. He had passed away on July 15, 1958, at the age of sixty.

He had a clear and concise style of writing and week after week his column packed a fund of information on US philately into a small space. He regularly brought new facts to light. Recognizing the long term value of his work, the Bureau Issues Association (now The United States Stamp Society) collected the columns in book form (Compiled and arranged by past Hall of Fame honoree George T. Turner) in 1961. It was reprinted in 1980. For many here present and for all scholars of U.S. philately, it is a standard and well-thumbed reference.

The American Philatelic Society's Writers Unit #30 is pleased to add the name of George B. Sloane to the distinguished assemblage of the very best in philatelic literature by inducting him into the APS Writers Unit Hall of Fame. □

Some Further Thoughts—*Official Airmails of Australia* CD-ROM

by Ken Sparks

This is in reference to my review of *Official Airmails of Australia* CD-ROM, in the fourth quarter 2001 *The Philatelic Communicator*. The author Ken Sparks read my review and sent me an email, criticizing me for saying there were no photos of aircraft of covers on the CD. I went back and went through the CD again. There are some photos of aircraft, however many are of rather poor quality, as they were taken from newspaper photos, which were poor quality to begin with. There are also some covers shown, such as first flight covers. The reason I did not find them when I first reviewed the CD-ROM is because the links to them are within the text as hyperlinks, and I did not click on every link within the text.

I suggested to Ken that if he had included a list of the aircraft and cover illustrations, and perhaps a page of thumbnails, it would have been immediately evident that such illustrations were included.

Ken has sent me the attached explanation of his "CD-ROM philosophy," which may be of interest to your readers.

Ken Sanford

PUTTING A BOOK ONTO A CD-ROM

Having made the decision to "translate" some of my existing books to CD ROM, the first decision was which technology to adopt. The two logical candidates were to convert to either an "Intranet" site using HTML technology or to prepare the book for use by *Adobe Acrobat* or similar. *Adobe Acrobat* has the advantage that the author/editor has much greater control over the appearance/format of the finished work. *Adobe Acrobat* readers are held on most computers and it would be an easy matter to include a copy on the CD ROM for those not holding a copy. However, *Adobe* files are much larger and slower to access.

Another disadvantage of *Acrobat* from a personal point of view is that it is harder for the reader to make copies of some or all of the text or illustrations for personal use. While this may be seen as an advantage to some, I personally feel it better to provide the reader with ease of reproduction for inclusion, say, of tables in displays.

In the forward of another of my books *Bass Strait Mails*, I say, "The reader is invited to copy the material for private philatelic and postal history purposes. An acknowledgement of the source is always appreciated." Due to an oversight, this invitation was not included in the text of the *Official Airmails of Australia*.

Advantages of the HTML technology include a higher personal skill level, ease of conversion to a web site if desired, speed of use and greater flexibility with internal hyperlinks (though recognizing that *Acrobat* has some link capability). Other advantages of HTML include the ability to include video and sound clips within the "document."

Therefore, HTML was my selection. In preparing a "book" using HTML, it is necessary to take into account not only the strengths of the new technology but also its weaknesses. A conventional book is "linear" in that the natural progression is from the start to the finish. It is also easy for the reader to know their place in the document by visual cues such as page numbers

and an appreciation of the book thickness to know the pages already perused versus the number of pages yet unread. Because it is linear, there is no impediment to "breaking" the text to insert pictures or tables. The reader's eye is able to easily ignore these intrusions if desired and skip to the text continuation.

A double page layout, depending upon font and page size, can typically present about 100 lines of text, which can be scrolled by eye movement alone. The author also has full control of page size and font type. What the author prepares is what the reader gets. The HTML document, if used effectively, is non-linear as there is no fixed path from beginning to end. It is effectively a multi-tiered document where the reader can sidetrack if required and be presented with multiple choices to be followed depending upon the information sought on that occasion.

As stated previously, the author of a HTML document loses control of much of the format. Typical screen size in use today is 1024 x 768 pixels but on older computer screens, this field may only be 800 x 640 pixels. Some users have larger screen formats. Using the 800 x 640 pixel format, the visible window on a document (after allowing for losses for horizontal tool bars and vertical scroll bars) is typically only thirty-five lines. Movement outside this window involves scrolling, which can lose visual reference. Inclusion of tables or illustrations in the body of the text makes serious inroads into the space remaining for text.

The HTML page also has "overheads" where space is used to accommodate the hyperlinks. Generally in my documents, I try to limit the scroll to two screens that can be covered using the "Page Up"/"Page Down" control. Pictures, to have any meaning, generally need to have at least one dimension in the range of 300 - 400 pixels else too much detail is lost. This represents at least a quarter of the available visual space.

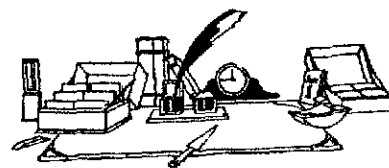
Use of thumbnails, I believe, does not present sufficient detail to provide the reader with the necessary visual cues. In the system I have adopted, the reader is presented with a "screen tip" at every hyperlink, whether it is to a picture, a table or another reference point in the document. The advantage of this system is that the reader can, if wished, ignore the link/illustration/table and continue reading the text.

A second, and most important, reason is that these screen tips can be recognized by software "readers" that have been developed for the visually disabled. We therefore have a system where the text continues to flow freely but with signposts for those who wish to seek further information at this point. One interesting innovation adopted in *Official Airmails of Australia* is the absence of a traditional index and the concept has been received without adverse comment.

My *British New Guinea Postal Legislation* CD ROM, which is of about the same size, has a traditional index at the "back" which proved to be a massive task to prepare and the result is messier than I would prefer. In doing the translation of the *Airmails*, I adopted the technique of using a central page for linking not only the appendices but also key elements of the story. By using the hyperlink system, it is easy for the reader (particularly those used to Internet work) to navigate quickly to find the desired area of information. □

President's Message

by Dr. Dane S. Claussen



Having worked myself as an editor of nonphilatelic newspapers and newsletters (as well as philatelic publications), I occasionally take for granted that volunteer editors of philatelic publications know certain points about writing, or editing, or design that I—well—take for granted. So when our editor suggested that I write a "President's Message" about what I believe the responsibilities and prerogatives of a philatelic publication's editor are, I immediately realized that this might be helpful—and something I could have done a long time ago.

The primary excuses that volunteer editors use when their performance is criticized are to the effect of, "I'm a volunteer, so be happy with what you get," or "I'm an amateur and doing the best I can." But of course one of the primary types of content published in the *Philatelic Communicator* over the years has been nuts-and-bolts information designed specifically to help "volunteers" and "amateurs." And that will continue. Moreover, volunteer/amateur editors always should keep in mind that the other organization officers, the contributing authors, and—of course—the membership at large are counting on their editor to always do the best job they can, and to get better over time.

What should editors do, and, continuously, become more skilled at? In no particular order, let me explain: The editor should be a vigorous and rigorous copyeditor and proofreader. One of the editor's main responsibilities is to make bad articles better and good articles great. This may entail cutting articles in length, either by chopping out entire sections or at least going through and editing out every unnecessary word and phrase.

This may entail asking the writer to rewrite the article. Certainly it involves correcting factual errors; questioning interpretations and conclusions; correcting spelling, grammar, punctuation and typographical errors. This may entail rearranging an article, and the editor doing a little bit of rewriting. I say "little bit," because I believe in being a "writer's editor" (trying to preserve as much of the

writer's "voice" as possible) rather than being an "editor's editor," which involves doing so much rewriting that every article sounds like it was written by the same person—and that person was the editor.

One of the biggest problems with much philatelic writing is that it is written in an essay format, chronological in order if there's a time element, sometimes so folksy that one can read for quite a while before finding out what the point is. Because this writing style is so common in philatelic publications, I even use it in this column—although in my own defense columns are allowed more latitude in style and structure. In addition, I also try to make it obvious in or by the second paragraph what the major point of my column is.

In contrast, many philatelic publications contain articles that go on and on like this: "A few years back, I was at FLYSPECKPEX, and staying in the Sheraton across the street from the show hotel, which was the Hilton. I had my wife, Millie, with me, which was unusual because she hates going to shows. Anyway, we had just finished having a lunch of crab louis salads in the restaurant around the corner when my friend Ned Nitpicker told me that our favorite dealer, Gus Glassine, was at the show unexpectedly. This perked up my ears, and I resolved to go see Gus. I got to Gus's table a few hours later, and I was flipping through one of his stockbooks like I usually do. I was carrying on a conversation with the guy next to me, from Bangor, Maine....." You get the idea. I know that philatelic editors often do not edit this kind of writing for several reasons: they don't want to offend the writer, and/or they need to fill space, so the fact that the writer is killing space is a good thing, and/or they're too lazy or too busy to truly edit the articles in their journal. But that's what editors are for.

Editors need to exercise the more broader function of editing the overall content. This is the gatekeeping function of deciding what goes into the journal and what gets left out. I know that for many philatelic publications' editors, this may

sound like an obtuse point, because they find themselves so desperate for material that they publish everything that comes their way and still beg for more.

However, editors should put more effort into increasing the supply of material for their publications so that they do not find themselves caught on the horns of this dilemma: filling a page with third-rate material or not filling it at all. After all, philatelists aren't stupid: readers will recognize as quickly as the editor did that some content is third-rate, and that reflects on the editor and the society.

I have previously mentioned in this space better and more creative uses of that "leftover" space in your journal. Let me repeat some of them. Reprint a classic, important, article from your journal, particularly if the membership turnover has been high since it was published the first time. (I believe that many society officers and editors don't have an accurate notion of their membership turnover. Consider the APS: in very round figures, the APS has assigned 100,000 new membership numbers in the past 25 years, an average of 4,000 per year. Yet if my memory serves me, the net growth in membership has been only about 15,000, so the APS also has lost an average of 3,400 members per year. What percentage of today's APS members were APS members 25 years ago?)

A second idea is to reprint (with permission) an article related to your journal's field that happens to appear in a journal in another specialty that most of your members don't subscribe to. A third idea is to draft members to write book reviews. A fourth idea is to report auction realizations of material of interest to your members. A fifth idea is to translate and reprint (with permission) an article of interest to your members published in another language. A sixth idea is to serialize key exhibits in your specialty, because—as much as you may think otherwise—most of your members will not have seen the exhibit at all, or at least not very carefully. And so on.

Gatekeeping requires an editor to have a vision the journal, and almost

surely written guidelines for himself and contributors about what the journal will take and not take. As I've also written here before, I believe that even experienced philatelic editors often underestimate the extent to which they compete with other journals for articles, even after they've realized that they're not going to get many articles by only asking for them (but they need to do that, too).

Few philatelists are going to submit their philatelic research articles to a small, obscure society publication if they can publish it instead in, say, the *Collectors Club Philatelist* or the *Postal History Journal* or the *American Philatelic Congress Book*, etc. As a separate but related point, each philatelic publication should have a fairly narrow "market niche," and editors need to monitor other philatelic publications as they come, go, and change in between.

Editors should honestly critique each issue for themselves after it is published. Philatelic publication editors should write a certain amount of material for the journals themselves. This accomplishes numerous goals: it helps fill the space, it sets a good example for other members, it showcases the editor's own research and writing skills, it provides an outlet for the editor's expertise (and he or she presumably was appointed editor based on some level of knowledge and experience in the specialty), and it reminds the editor of how difficult and time-consuming it can be sometimes to conduct research and write philatelic articles (so that the editor can provide contributors with the best possible assistance and also sympathetic encouragement).

Editors have several other key responsibilities. One is to design the overall look of the journal and individual pages. I've noticed that many philatelic publications go to either one extreme or the other: every page in the periodical looks the same, or every page in the periodical is different. The first is just plain boring, like an exhibit in which every page looks the same. The second is unnecessary and even undesirable. Editors should make sure that each page looks like it belongs with the rest, most easily accomplishing this through using a very short list of typefaces, folios, modeling the pages after book pages or magazine pages or newspa-

per pages, and so on.

Editors must write headlines and cutlines for photographs, diagrams and other graphic elements. A large percentage of "headlines" in philatelic publications are simply labels that give the skimmer and scanner no real idea what the article is about. That much of the American consumer magazine industry also is moving towards labels rather than real headlines on articles does not make it OK; if you're like me, you find absolutely maddening these two- and three-word, often "cute," headlines in so many mass market consumer magazines. (It's a sure sign that designers and marketers, rather than real editors, are in charge.)

Finally, of course, editors are managers. They need to constantly keep an eye on expenses, report expenses to the other officers, obtain permission to increase expenses (or even to decrease them, if it means lower quality paper and/or printing), reply to email and mail and phone calls in a timely and professional manner.

Editors need to be familiar with, and usually obtain, the newest publishing technology, so that when a contributor says he will send you an article through the mail on a zip disk, or send it by email as an attachment, they don't say, "Huh?"

Highly recommended is a working understanding both of journalism ethics and also media law. For example, philatelic editors are particularly in danger of publishing articles that essentially hype a collection or exhibit right before it goes up for auction. More commonly, philatelic editors and their contributors "borrow" copyrighted photographs from books, standard catalogs, auction catalogs, other philatelic publications, and so on. The "fair use" exception to U.S. copyright law, which allows one to sometimes quote hundreds of copyrighted words without getting permission, is—in my opinion—extremely narrow. And this is coming from someone who complained in a previous "President's Message" that American book publishers are exaggerating the limitations of the "fair use" exception for words.

Being a good, and especially great, philatelic editor is not easy—but then many Writers Unit members who are reading this already knew that. □

From the Top of the Pile to the Circular File

by Wayne Menuz

I've now had this job as editor of *Postal Stationery* for over a year, and my first thought is that it is a lot of work. However, in my case, I am actually more than an editor, as I am composing articles myself. Anyway, I think most editors are actively seeking articles, and unfortunately, in order to fill the pages, we have to take many that perhaps lack significant content or relevance.

The best articles are those that are the culmination of somebody's research or study. These spread the person's knowledge to a wider audience, and often have the result of others finding something to add to the body of knowledge. No one person has the opportunity or ability to see every item that exists in a particular field, nor to be aware of every previous study or article, especially if in another language. Thus, these types of articles not only spread information, but they are the catalysts that engender more.

The least desirable articles are those that I call "candy" pieces. These taste good, but do not have much substance, are not useful except as entertainment, and are quickly forgotten. These typically are those that describe an item of stationery and usually focus on the message contained (on a postal card) or the postal history of the item. While postal history is a legitimate subject if it is about the rates/routes associated with an issue, the "candy" pieces just state the item went from X to Y, has Z-types of postmarks on it, etc. The article is written as one would talk about a favorite item of stationery to another collector. It is interesting as a story, but is just a story. These types of articles are worthwhile for a philatelic journal, but only if they are relegated to a small percentage of the total.

OK, that's my take. Now, I have to get back to putting together the next issue. □

On the whole, I don't want to think too much about why I write what I write. If I know what I'm doing . . . I can't do it.

—Joan Didion

Circulation of Stamp Hobby Publications — A Report and Analysis

by Ken Lawrence

Annual Paid Circulation

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<i>Linn's Stamp News</i>	65,970	65,020	62,202	58,816	55,449
<i>The American Philatelist</i>	54,044	53,878	52,608	51,788	50,514
<i>Scott Stamp Monthly</i>	25,060	26,357	27,116	30,491	28,465
<i>Stamp Collector</i>	17,664	13,463	13,670	15,736	13,687
<i>Mekeel's and Stamps</i>	8,159	7,125	6,939	6,604	6,034
<i>Topical Time</i>	5,344	5,121	4,989	4,819	4,520
<i>U.S. Stamp News</i>	4,010	4,606	4,384	4,762	4,269
<i>First Days</i>	2,704	2,791	2,807	2,800	2,596

Alas, this year we have *no* success stories to report. Paid circulations of the main stamp hobby publications are *all* lower than they were last year. Perhaps we now can regard ourselves as free of illusions, not tempted to think that one or another editor or publisher has found the right approach for others to emulate profitably.

In looking at the chart above, try this exercise: read it as though the middle three years were omitted, like an investment portfolio evaluated for its performance over a period of five years. In that perspective, *Linn's Stamp News* has lost 10,521 paid subscribers (15.9 percent); the *American Philatelist*, 3,530 (6.5 percent); *Stamp Collector*, 3,977 (22.5 percent); *Mekeel's and Stamps*, 2,125 (26 percent); *Topical Time*, 824 (15.4 percent); and *First Days*, 108 (4.0 percent). *Scott Stamp Monthly* has gained 3,405 (13.5 percent) and *U.S. Stamp News* has gained 259 (6.5 percent). These are praiseworthy increases, to be sure, but they pale in contrast to the others' losses during that same period.

With those two exceptions, the commercial stamp publications have taken larger losses than the society journals, on a percentage basis. *Mekeel's and Stamps* has suffered the greatest fall in percentage terms. The second worst percentage decline, registered by *Stamp Collector*, reasserts a trend inherited from the previous owners, which Krause Publications had temporarily postponed and even reversed during a couple of good years. *Linn's* first-place decline, though smaller in percentage terms than those of its two competitors, is, in my opinion, a calamity possibly presaging the fate that previously befell *Mekeel's* in the 1960s, *Stamps* after Harry Lindquist died and *Stamp Collector* under James Magruder's stewardship. As an avid reader of *Linn's* and an occasional contributor, I hope this will not come to pass, but these are large, stubborn numbers. They can't be willed away.

Linn's advertisers have lost more than 10,000 potential customers in five years' time (nearly 20,000 over the past decade)—more than those numbers suggest if pass-along readers are counted—a severe setback for the trade. If the past five years' trends continue, *Linn's* and the *American Philatelist* will intersect and then switch first and second places on the chart during 2003 or 2004. Not only are the numbers for *Linn's* and the *American Philatelist* converging; so are their

readerships. My best guess is that *Linn's* decline has mainly been among the more casual or market-oriented collectors (whom *Linn's* editors call *Joe Plateblock*), while the more philatelically dedicated group, who tend to be not only buyers of better stamps and covers, but also joiners of hobby organizations, remain loyal subscribers. If I'm right, one corollary is that *Linn's* habit of taking competitive potshots at the APS may once have boosted its influence (and still evokes cheers from a whiny minority of readers), but these days that stance is probably counterproductive. Counting members of APS chapters (local stamp clubs) and affiliates (specialty societies) who do not hold individual APS memberships, the APS serves and represents about 150,000 stamp collectors, which equals the number that *Linn's* calculates as the total population of serious collectors in the United States.

In other words, one way or another the APS touches nearly all of them. In contrast, the only ways that commercial hobby publications reach collectors are through subscriptions and newsstand sales, libraries, pass-along copies, or free handouts. Besides those considerations, the APS has more potential avenues for future growth than any commercial publication has. *Linn's* future will be determined partly by the condition of the philatelic marketplace, partly by its own editorial mix and partly by its marketing strategy. Collectors, dealers, stamp clubs and national societies need the APS for many reasons beyond those objective and subjective factors and the *American Philatelist's* circulation is just one measure of their satisfaction. John Dunn, who publishes both *Mekeel's and Stamps* and *U.S. Stamp News*, gives away 10 to 25 percent of his press runs, a much higher percentage than any of his competitors (with the exception of *Global Stamp News*, whose circulation data are not available for comparison, because *Global* does not circulate by periodicals class mail). Dunn's free handouts contribute to the sag in his paid subscriptions. Why bother paying when you can get the magazines free? Consistent with that strategy, Dunn has asserted that the most important consideration for philatelic publishers is the degree to which their advertisers are favored by readers, whether those readers pay for their subscriptions or not. In that sense, he counts readers as prospects for his advertisers even though they are not paying him. Advertisers themselves anecdotally report that their ads pull disproportionately well

from the high-circulation stamp publications and poorly from the lesser ones. In any event, ad lineage has dropped along with subscriptions, nullifying that optimism. This year I will evaluate John Dunn's achievement by his own stated goals: "I can assure you that I have made *USSN* my top priority. . . . For the time being, we will stay bimonthly, but I would like your opinion on the merits of going to a monthly schedule."

Since then and throughout 2001, *USSN* continued to be published late, noting a difficulty in obtaining articles. Other stamp hobby publishers do not experience this difficulty. The top three have more articles than they have space in which to print them. They fill their editorial pages by providing greater rewards to writers. The articles they publish, in turn, attract readers who not only appreciate good quality writing, but also gratify their advertisers with more fulsome purchases. Those points ought to go without saying. I hope restating them here will forestall additional mystification of an issue dear to the hearts of WU30 members.

Finally, my "Surgeon General's Warning": This article includes both facts and opinions. The right to hold opinions and the right to voice them freely, are guaranteed by the United States Constitution, which may pose dangers to readers who are unaware of these traditions. Exercise prudence and make your own judgments, when you consider this author's report. □

►► Match Factory Commentary (continued from page 1)

The opponents say the economic situation, both for the country and for the American Philatelic Society, has changed greatly since September 11th.

No argument here.

The difference is in what to do next. The space problems at the American Philatelic Building remain. More than two years ago, I asked the library consultant, Dr. Charles Lowery of the University of Maryland libraries, how long we had before the lack of space began to affect library operations adversely.

"Two years," he said.

The opponents, both on the Board and off, haven't offered any alternate solutions.

Not only did the economy head south since Sept. 11, but so did the APS' reputation in Centre County, Pa. We dithered, we diddled, we dawdled, and gave every appearance of not being able to take a step and DO something. How can you sign up tenants for a building you don't own and may never buy? How can you seek money for a project that you don't own and may never buy?

What I voted for February 7th was to up the ante. We appropriated \$360,000 to buy a property that will cost us about \$13,000 a year if we do nothing with it. At the same time, it's already earning \$30,000 a year in rent (no-frills storage), could save the APRL about \$1500 a year in storage space rental, and the APRL pays off part of its mortgage with the APS every year.

Now let's see if the situation improves. Do the donors step forward? The government grants? The tenants?

The property is appraised at more than 1.5 times the purchase price, near where the new Interstate 99 is going, between I-80 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Lying fallow, it turns a profit.

Let's see what happens. □

Another Thought or Two on the Numbers

by Joseph E. Foley

As usual, Ken Lawrence has some thought-provoking comments in his analysis of last year's stamp publications. There may be another inference that we can glean from these data, albeit not a welcome one.

Our hobby is in a state of decline. There are several ways to look at it. The numbers that Ken presents seem to be corroborated by dwindling membership in stamp clubs and speciality organizations. Demographic studies conducted from time to time by the APS and *Linn's* usually show a group that is both decreasing and aging. Sure there are some young people, but take a look at most of the people at our bourses and exhibitions. Beyond gray hair, white hair and no hair—there's not much else.

On the up side, the number of specialty groups appears to be increasing, if the growing number of APS Affiliates is any measure. Also, the number of books and monographs published seems to be rising. The broad category of collectibles from antique guns to dolls to trains appears to prosper. I've been to a few "shows" of other collecting hobbies. The crowds are more diverse (age, dress, sex and demeanor) than we stamp collectors. At an APS convention not so long ago, my daughter quipped that APS probably stood for American Polyester Society.

Where does all this leave us? I'm not sure, but I was elated when late last year the APS announced a "Forum on Membership Promotions" to be held at State College on Saturday, April 13th. Because of some personal problems, there was a chance that I might not be able to make it, so I e-mailed Frank Sente, APS Director of Administration who was coordinating the forum. His reply on March 18 began "Dear Joe: The Membership Forum that was to have convened here on April 13 has been cancelled. None of the people with whom I, Janet [Klug], or Peter [McCann] had been in contact with were interested in coming to State College for it. Actually you are the first person to have expressed an interest in attending." I was devastated! Here was a case where the elected officials and the staff were extending an open invitation to everyone to come together in an effort to try to find a way to stem the decline and virtually no one took them up on it.

Frank went on to note that some responses had been mailed in and the possibility of conducting something at a show or STAMPSHOW. Not the same, but certainly better than nothing.

The unpleasant fact (at least to me) is that if we collectors really don't care enough to participate in something like this forum, then maybe we deserve the decline that Ken has reported. We need some involvement here, some analysis and some thought. □

EDITORS' FAQ

by Larry Goldberg

Q. In terms of layout, how do you handle tables? Should they be part of the running text or set apart?

A. I prefer handling tables like graphics. I set them off in a space of their own and refer to them in the text. □

Emphasis in Philatelic Writing

by Lloyd de Vries

The emphasis in philatelic writing should be on the mass-market.

Instead, it's just the opposite: Literature competitions (including electronic) are looking for those works with greatest scholarly mien, deepest research and, often, the most arcane subjects.

There's nothing wrong with such writing, but if stamp collecting is to grow again and lower the average age of its participants, more emphasis should be put on accessible publications with a broad potential audience, reaching out for new philatelists.

Few if any philatelists start out in our hobby collecting watermark variations of the left-handed coral pink variety of the Latvian invert of 1843 (assuming there were such a thing). Most begin with stamps off the mail, mixtures, first day cover subscriptions and mint new issues from the post office.

Yet most of the writing discussed in this journal and entered in literature competitions is about those inverted Latvians. There are no prizes in philately for reaching the biggest audience, recruiting the most new collectors, uncovering the juiciest scandal, getting the most web page views, or exposing the biggest boondoggle.

There should be.

The membership of the Writers Unit 30 is split between those writing books and research articles, and those writing news or features, often for the more "transitory" media.

The toughest stamp collecting radio piece I ever wrote was on first day covers. I collect FDCs, I make FDCs, I write about them in the philatelic press, but explaining them to non-collectors, orally, in 60 seconds (less than 200 words, of which 20 are just formatting -- "Hi, it's me." "Hey, that was me."), without jargon or buzzwords, was much more difficult than I expected.

Every member of the Writers Unit 30, I think, should, once a year, write a philatelic article for a non-philatelic publication, real or imaginary, just for the educational experience.

Writers like to be published, so I'd hope that a good number of those exercises would get into print, reaching new audiences, spreading the word about the fun of stamp collecting.

VIRTUAL STAMP CLUB SEEKS ARTICLES

The Virtual Stamp Club <<http://virtualstampclub.com/>>, one of the top stamp stops on the Internet, is seeking articles for its Web site. There's no pay. On the other hand, reprints or adaptations of previously-published articles are fine, too. And you retain the copyright.

We're looking for articles, for beginner, experienced or casual collector or even non-collector. Articles remain on the Virtual Stamp Club Web site forever (unless other arrangements have been made). You can see the list directly—just go to the main page and click on the "Archives" button at the left.

If interested, please contact Lloyd de Vries at <Lloyd@virtualstampclub.com>.

12

The Philatelic Communicator, A.P.S. Writer Unit 30, First Quarter 2002, Volume 36, No. 1, Whole No. 135

Scanning

by Barbara A. Boal

During the WU30 Writers' Breakfast meeting scanning problems were mentioned. I think that I have received images scanned every way possible.

One of the problems that I run into at The American Philatelist is that most people don't know their scanner very well. They don't think that they can change their default settings. I have done a lot of over-the-phone tutorials with authors and advertisers.

We accept 300 dpi tifs (grayscale or CMYK). Some will send .jpps. I immediately open them and save them as a .tif. (EPI, our service bureau told me to do that.) Every time you open and save a file as a .jpg it is compressed. With each save you lose a little more of the picture's detail. They also instructed me to scan within 10% (up or down) of the final output size. You can scale a scan up or down 10% without losing too detail in the picture. The larger you try to increase a scan the muddier the picture gets. The pixels stretch until you lose detail. Reducing a picture causes the pixels to compress, also giving you an unclear picture.

When I started scanning all the items myself, I would receive a critique on each scan from the EPI technical people. They would go over each page of the printed magazine and critique each picture -- on contrast, black and white points, color adjustment, etc.

I would prefer to scan the original philatelic item (most authors do send the originals), but if the author does not feel comfortable sending his philatelic material to me then I request that he send good quality color photocopies with a black or dark color background. Color photocopies have more detail of the philatelic item than black-and-white copies do.

Here are some websites on scanning that I find interesting. Also, I have attached our technical guidelines for authors. [Reproduced on the facing page, Ed.]

<http://www.desktoppublishing.com/scanning.html>

<http://www.scantips.com>

<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Imaging/Databases/Scanning/>

WU 30 CRITIQUE SERVICE

Past president Charles J. Peterson operates the WU30 Critique Service. There is no charge for the service. Details are:

Periodicals—Submit the four most recent issues. Include postage equivalent to four times the first class mailing fee. Any unused amount will be returned. Critiques can be expected in about 30 days.

Books/manuscripts—Inquire before sending, with a brief description of the item. Please include a stamped, addressed envelope for the reply. The time element for a book or manuscript can vary depending on length, other similar requests at hand and other commitments.

All submissions & correspondence should be sent to Charles J. Peterson, Box 5559, Laurel, MD 20726, phone 301 - 776-9822, e-mail:<cjp7777@aol.com>.

AMERICAN PHILATELIST

Tech Info

for Authors

Software we use:

Windows 98

WordPerfect 9

Microsoft Word 2000

Quark 4.11

PhotoShop 6

Corel Draw 9

Conversions Plus

Digital File Information

- Manuscripts should be typed and double-spaced on white paper. The editorial staff welcomes manuscripts on IBM-compatible disks, but *please also send a hard copy printout.*
- We can accept 3½-inch floppy disks, zip disks, and CD-ROMs. We also can send and receive e-mail attached files.
- When sending files via e-mail, please check with your provider as to the handling of attachments.
- We prefer files saved in WordPerfect.
- Do not incorporate pictures in the text when sending hard copy or electronic copy.
- Do not format text when sending electronic files; they often can't be unscrambled.

Resolution & Scanning

- The magazine is printed with a line screen of 133 lpi. We need 300 ppi (dpi) for resolution. We do NOT use images from the Web; the resolution quality is inadequate.
- You want as much control over your image as possible.
- Always scan with the size of your final output in mind. Changing the size of the scan up or down can muddy the picture. If you have to increase/decrease the size of the scan, 10% up or down is the recommended amount to retain the best quality in your scan. Please do NOT take an existing 72 dpi scan and convert it to 300 dpi.
- Select the color mode during the scanning process. Most scanning software offers you the choice between line art, grayscale, and color.

Bitmap — black and white only; used for black-and-white logos and line art with no grays.

Grayscale — 256 shades of gray; no color options available; used for black-and-white photographs.

Indexed color — maximum of 256 colors; can be used for color logos and photographs; used for monitor output only.

RGB — red, green, and blue — thousands of colors, should be converted to CMYK before most output.

CMYK — cyan, magenta, yellow, and black — 4-color printing is done with CMYK, otherwise known as process colors.

We use grayscale for photographs, bitmaps for line art, and CMYK for our color images.

- Saving your scan in the proper format is very important. There are many formats available and this can become confusing. We prefer a .tif with no compression. (The .tif format is the most widely used for high-end printing and is the most versatile).

Formats for use in page layout: .tif and .eps

Formats for use on the Internet: .gif, .jpg, and .png

Need help, have questions? — Don't hesitate to call Barb Boal — 814-237-3803, ext 221.

E-mail — baboal@stamps.org

Computer Corner

by Ken Sanford

BEST SOFTWARE DOWNLOADS

CNET Download.com is one of the best Websites for downloading nearly 30,000 shareware, freeware and trial programs. It is well organized and integrated with its parent site CNET. Software descriptions have lots of details, like when will a trial version expire or is an Uninstaller included? Links take you to related resources on CNET. It is at: <http://www.download.com>.

Another excellent Website for downloading shareware, freeware and trial programs is: <http://www.tucows.com>. When downloading software from Tucows, select the mirror site closest to you and the download should be faster. Free Foreign Characters Program I recently discovered a great free utility program, which provides easy to use foreign characters, such as French characters with accents, German characters with umlauts, and special Scandinavian letters. It is called "Key Wizard," and is available for download from: <http://home.planetinternet.be/~ping3828/>. I use it all the time and I love it. Whatever program you are working in, just hit CTRL/ALT/K and up pops a menu with all the characters. Select the one you want and it pastes it into your application wherever the cursor is.

FREE TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Are you fed up with so-called "technical support" from your hardware or software supplier, which lead you through frustrating recorded telephone menus and you never reach a real person, or support that you have to pay for by the minute? Try the free service "Protonic," at <http://www.protonic.com>. The tech-savvy volunteers provide good on-point help—and they do it for free. Next time you have technical difficulties or even a question about HTML, try the site's Ask a Question service.

FREE ANTI-VIRUS PROGRAM

An excellent anti-virus program, which is free, is AntiVir Personal Edition. It can be downloaded from www.free-av.com. It is right up to date and in fact it detected some viruses on my computer that had not been detected by my McAfee Anti-Virus program. My thanks to Dieter Leder, a German Zeppelin collector, for telling me about this program.

MS OFFICE & WINDOWS TIPS & TRICKS

If finding your way around MS Office & Windows seems difficult, there is advice on how to use the more advanced tasks at Microsoft's own web site at: <http://www.Microsoft.com/office/using/>. It doesn't give you warnings about bugs and inconsistencies in its products, there is another site that does provide such information—Woody's Office Watch & Windows Watch. These are weekly newsletters that provide objective insights into recent problems with Microsoft products. You can sign up for these newsletters and view archived issues at: <http://www.wopr.com>. Another useful site, which covers a wider range of operating systems

than its name suggests, is NT Compatible <http://www.ntcompatible.com>. As well as information on Windows NT, the site provides details on how to get the most out of Windows 2000 and Windows XP.

SHOULD YOU UPGRADE TO WINDOWS XP?

Windows XP is the latest version of Microsoft Windows. Some people may wonder if they should upgrade to XP in order to keep up to date. My wife has just bought a new laptop with XP pre installed. I have used it a bit to see how it differs from Windows 98, which I have on my computer. There are a few things they have removed from XP, which were in previous versions of Windows, such as File Manager or Winfile, which I find extremely useful in seeing all the files on a given drive or directory, formatting a diskette, zipping or unzipping a file, etc. I advise extreme caution in upgrading to XP.

Microsoft has made so many changes from previous versions of Windows, that some of your older programs and peripheral devices might not be compatible. You will then have to get software upgrades or patches from the suppliers of the older programs or peripheral devices. Windows XP is supposed to be more stable and less crash prone than previous versions, so each user will have to decide what they want—fewer crashes or the useful features of previous versions of Windows. I think I will stick with my Windows 98 for a while longer. □

WU30 WRITERS' ROUNDTABLE AT STAMPSHOW

by Dave Herendeen

As a result of what I thought was a rousing open discussion at the Unit breakfast in Riverside, arrangements have been made for a two-hour slot at STAMPSHOW in Atlantic City, from 10:00AM to Noon, Friday, August 16, 2002. Now, we need to have something to present. We can have a single session, or two one-hour sessions. We just need to have our act together by mid-May so that we can tell the APS our agenda for inclusion in the program, and then what A / V support we need.

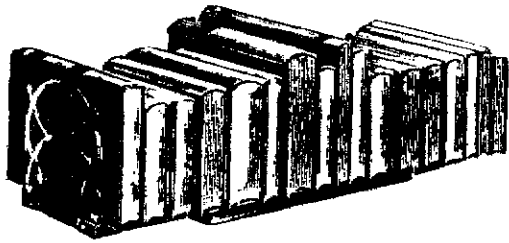
WU30 President Dane Calussen and I had a few possible topics, but let's all join in and develop this over the next month or so. We need some subject ideas and volunteers.

Rather than putting the pressure on a couple of us, I suggest we could give "team" presentations. They tend to be more spontaneous and interesting.

I'm in the process of moving, so please send your suggestions to Dane at the address (regular or e-mail) shown on page 2. Hope to see many of you in August. □

Asking a working writer what he thinks about critics is like asking a lamppost what it feels about dogs.

—John Osborne



REVIEWS

NOTE: Material for review may be sent to the editor at the address noted on the inside front cover. Reviews are also welcomed from others. Reviews from those having an interest in the item such as publishers, distributors, etc., must include a copy of the publication with the review [which, on request, we will return]. *Philatelic Communicator* reviews should be concise and stress those aspects that are helpful examples (positive or negative) for other authors, editors and publishers.

***Norske militærleirer og deres posthistorie* (Norwegian Military Camps and Their Postal History), Torbjørn Larsson-Fedde, privately printed by the author, Skotttegt. 4, 4550 Farsund, Norway, 2001, 192 pages, 7 x 10", hard-bound, in Norwegian, 350 NOK (approx. \$38) plus postage, ISBN 82-995823-1-8.**

This history of Norwegian fieldposts in that country begins with FPK No. 1, established in 1888 in Gardermoen. The detailed listing for this important fieldpost location includes the names of key personnel in charge of the office and the from/to dates they served between 1880 and 1990. The evolution of the cancels used is seen through a series of illustrations including use of the facility as an airbase.

Each chapter is devoted to an Army unit fieldpost office followed by more chapters on air and naval units. Historical information, photographs, maps, covers, and cancellations tell the story for each fieldpost location. Brief mention is made of several special camp locations at the end of the book.

A bibliography by fieldpost location concludes the book. An index might have brought additional utility to this work, but its geographical approach to the fieldpost history makes this tool less necessary. Recommended for military postal history collectors of Norway.

Alan Warren

***Stamp Collecting for Dummies* by Richard Sine, Hungry Minds, Inc., (subsequently purchased by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), 336 pages, 7¼ x 9½", soft cover, perfect bound, illustrations, various sources & prices, ISBN: 0-7645-5379-8.**

STAMPS FOR DUMMIES BOOK 'A RIOT OF ERROR'

Copyright 2002 by *Linn's Stamp News* of Sidney, Ohio
and reprinted with their permission.

Putting words and pictures together can be a publishing snake pit. Misplaced or mislabeled photographs are the most visible form of proofreading error. They're also the most embarrassing. This problem has worsened with the spread of computer-based desktop publishing tools. In the world of digital publishing, editors sometimes must approve page mock-ups on which text is properly placed, but photos and illustrations are represented by empty boxes. The editor takes it on faith that in the actual printed product, the right image will magically

appear where it belongs. We've faced this repeatedly at *Linn's* over the last decade. We've greatly diminished the occurrence of such errors, but they haven't fully gone away. Other publishers have been less successful.

The recent appearance of *Stamp Collecting for Dummies*, an introductory book for which some stamp insiders had very high hopes, shows how hurtful these mistakes can be. In *Stamp Collecting for Dummies*, lapses in just this one area—the marriage of visuals and text—fatally compromise an otherwise promising outreach work. The text is clear and straightforward, presented in the breezy, modular format that characterizes all the Dummies books: chatty prose, pun-filled headlines, off-the-wall cartoons, yellow and black packaging. Either you love this presentation or you hate it. I happen to hate it, but that's because the passage of time has transformed me (readers have helpfully pointed this out) into a grumpy, old, white male.

While the text of *Stamp Collecting for Dummies* is as error-free as any popular book on this subject is likely to get (that means a fair number of mistakes), the presentation of the photos is a riot of error. By my count, the book contains 69 captioned images. In 19 of these 69, the captions are incorrect. I'm not talking about minor or arguable mistakes of interpretation, but dead-wrong misidentification of what the picture shows. A few egregious examples should make the point.

An imperforate pair of early Afghanistan stamps is said to be a stamp hinge. A nearby illustration shows a stamp hinge but calls it a mount. A third image also shows a stamp hinge and identifies it properly. A line pair of the United States 1981 "C" coil stamp (Scott 1947) is described as a parcel-post stamp. A margin block of four of the 25¢ Clipper airmail stamp (Scott C20) is identified as "the first U.S. airmail stamp." A 20¢ U.S. special delivery stamp (Scott E20) is called a "special delivery postage due." A line drawing depicting a watermark tray and a bottle of fluid shows the bottle labeled "watering fluid."

The book's author, Richard Sine, knows better. He has an impressive resume: stamp columnist for *The New York Times*, editor of the *American Philatelist*, editorial director for the Scott Publishing Co., editor of the Minkus catalogs. In a phone conversation, Sine confirmed what's evident from the book itself: the author never got to proofread pages with images in place. Whoever positioned the images knew nothing about stamps. Proofreading (if any) was done by a dummy. Sine said he provided the publisher with text, photos and captions, all prepared in the exacting templates that give these books their consistency. Something went awry in the subsequent production process, with these embarrassing results. "The captions are right, they just put in the wrong artwork," Sine told me. He said he delivered his materials to the publisher late last summer, at a time when the Dummies group was celebrating the sale of its 100 millionth book. Simultaneously, the firm was being acquired by a larger publisher. These distractions, Sine speculates, caused the firm to drift off task.

With 100 million copies in print, the Dummies line is a publishing phenomenon. The concept originated with personal computers and the woeful lack of useful information to support them. The first Dummies book, *DOS for Dummies*, explained Bill Gates' difficult but essential software in a helpful, user-friendly format. That started a snowball. Ten years later, the Dummies firm had parleyed initial computer successes into a huge range of titles, from *Shakespeare for Dummies* to *Dating for Dummies*. The entire Dummies operation was purchased last

summer (for \$183 million in cash) by John Wiley & Sons, an old-line educational publisher.

Stamp insiders had hoped that the appearance of a stamp-collecting book in the familiar and widely distributed Dummies format would help popularize our hobby, getting display space in sales locations that conventional stamp books never reach. This still might happen. But newcomers who buy this book, unless they're not just dummies but dimwits, are likely to be put off (or at best mystified) by all those mislabeled images. In a publishing line whose mission is to present accurate specialized information to novices, such editorial sloppiness is unacceptable.

There's been some online chat about a recall of the book, but that's nonsense. Defective cars get recalled. Defective books get remaindered. To put a positive spin on this: If you collect error stamps, you might want this work as a collateral item. I haven't yet encountered *Stamp Collecting for Dummies* at local booksellers, but it's available online from the publisher's web site (Dummies.com) for \$21.95 plus shipping. [Barney & Noble is listing it for \$17.59 & their "Readers' Advantage price \$16.71-Ed.] Saskatoon Stamp Center, a regular *Linn's* advertiser, is offering the book at \$19.80, again plus shipping. In an attempt to turn lemons into lemonade, Saskatoon proprietor John Jamieson created a six-page errata listing (cheekily subtitled "editing and paste-up procedures for dummies") to accompany each copy he sells. Jamieson's listing is not complete, but it's more colorful and more interesting than the material it corrects. That's a step in the right direction. Saskatoon's address is Box 1870, Saskatoon SK S7K 3S2, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Michael Laurence

Editor's Note: This subject struck me as important enough to make sure none of our members missed it in *Linn's*. Mike Laurence graciously agreed to my reprint request.

2002 Krause-Minkus Standard Catalog of ® U.S. Stamps, Maurice D. Wozniak editor, Krause Publications, Box 5009, Iola, WI 54945-5009, 744 pages, 8½ x 11", soft cover, illustrations, \$25.95, ISBN 087349-321-4.

This is the fifth edition. There have been many improvements over the past five years. It's a fair assessment to note that most of the deficiencies observed in the earlier editions have been corrected. There is still some room for improvement, but that can be said for most catalogs.

The Krause-Minkus catalog has some very good features. Significant is "Decoding the Catalog"—where distinguishing features of similar stamps are explained and effectively illustrated. Descriptions of the designs and background information related to the stamps are much more extensive than most other catalogs. This has long been a Minkus feature. Although there are exceptions, most of the illustrations are very fine. The section on test stamps [labels] is quite useful.

There are some shortcomings. Illustrations of the major double transfers on the 1994 BEP Centennial souvenir sheet would be helpful. Some illustrations are still in need of improvement, e.g.: some U.S. envelopes & wrappers as well as some of the U.S. possessions. There are still some cases where cancelled stamps are used as illustrations. While the new AMG section is worthwhile, perhaps consideration should be given to including all printings. For example, the three printings of the Germany issues are explained, but not all three listed.

Watermarks for the earlier U.S. envelopes are illustrated on pages 432-3. The subsequent ones are noted later in the text in the listings on page 450. On that page in small type in the middle of "white space" appears: "What photo number goes here? Help me?!" This is followed in normal size with "Typical examples of watermarks 1915-60 (reduced size)," but none are shown.

There is an inconsistency where in the United States section regular issues, commemoratives, airmail etc. are separated by groups whereas in the U.S. possessions they are not. Layout could also be improved. Stamps that are identical in all but denomination have every denomination shown. There is unnecessary repetition in explaining the column headings for prices. For example on page 673 we are reminded no less than 32 times that the first pricing column is unused F-VF and the second used F-VF. Similarly, 49 times on page 696 and 73 times on page 557. Page headers could better reflect their content.

There are some features in Krause-Minkus that are not in the Scott Specialized. So far, however, there are more features in Scott that are absent in Krause-Minkus. One area where Krause-Minkus may have an edge is in marketing to the general public. In the last year or so, I've noticed a presence of Krause philatelic publications and an absence of Scott in large chain book stores.

At present, I would say that the *Krause-Minkus Standard Catalog of ® U.S. Stamps* is a useful addition to a U.S. collector's library, but not a replacement for the Scott product.

JEF

POSTMARKS ON POSTCARDS: An Illustrated Guide to Early 20th Century U.S. Postcards, Revised, Second Edition, by Richard W. Helbock, 2002, La Posta Publications, Scappoose, OR, 290 pages, 5½x8½", card stock covers, perfect binding, \$27.50 plus shipping from James E. Lee, PO Drawer 250, Wheeling, IL 6090.

One of the benefits of reviewing books is the knowledge that one picks up along the way. On the other hand, if the book covers other than ones collecting areas it steals time from the wife's admonition to, "do something about that mess in your office." In this case, the book hit one of my major collecting interests and I gathered sufficient data to offset the nagging.

This work contains sixteen chapters, four appendices, a glossary and an outstanding index. The chapter headings of part I are self-explanatory. They are: Introduction; Handstamps Versus Machine Postmarks; Circular Date Stamps & Associated Cancels; Doane Cancel Handstamps; Four-bar Handstamps; Metal Duplex Handstamps; Manuscript & Straight-line Postmarks; Anachronisms, Mimics & Non-standard Postmarks; Misuse of Special Purpose Handstamps, Machine Cancels.

Part II covers collecting postmarks by Geographic Region, Rural Free Delivery, Naval & Military, Ancillary & Auxiliary Markings, Airmail, Fairs & Expositions, U.S. Possessions, and other. The appendices cover the U.S. Post Offices established during the period of distribution for Type 1 Doanes; Naval Ships on which mail service was available on 1 June 1916; Military Posts & Naval Bases with mail service on 1 January 1901; and Postal Branches & Stations authorized to serve domestic military and naval bases 1916-1920.

The text has profuse illustrations most of which do not suffer from the soft paper used. The well-illustrated text is an