



The Philatelic Communicator

Quarterly Journal of
Writers Unit 30, American Philatelic Society.

Volume 25, Number 1, Whole Number 95. First Quarter 1992.

Circulation of United States Stamp Hobby Periodicals

By Ken Lawrence

Table 1
The Top Ten in 1991

<i>Linn's Stamp News</i>	75,203
<i>The American Philatelist</i>	55,665
<i>Scott Stamp Monthly</i>	20,511
<i>Stamp Collector</i>	18,547
<i>Global Stamp News</i>	16,000 to 17,000*
<i>Stamps</i>	13,733
<i>Topical Time</i>	6,696
<i>The Stamp Wholesaler</i>	4,713
<i>Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News</i>	4,293
<i>First Days</i>	3,680

Except for *Global Stamp News*, these figures are the average paid or requested circulation for the year, taken from the annual circulation statement required to be filed and published by authorized second-class mailers.

* *Global Stamp News* is sent by bulk third-class mail, and thus is not required to file a circulation statement. Subscriptions are free on request. The 16,000 to 17,000 figure is editor Jan Brandewie's estimate of the number of requested *GSN* subscriptions; she mails additional copies to various lists to reach her total monthly circulation, guaranteed to advertisers, of 25,000, and distributes up to 5,000 more at stamp shows.

The top ten U.S. stamp hobby periodicals had a combined average paid or requested circulation per issue of more than 200,000 during the year preceding October 1991. That's pretty impressive.

Table 1 shows how they rank.

The next tier below these, at the 1,000 to 3,000 level, would be such scholarly or closely focused publications as *Philatelic Literature Review*, *The United States Specialist*, *Japanese Philately*, *The German Postal Specialist*, *The American Revenuer*, *Precancel Forum*, and *The Philatelic Exhibitor*. As nearly as I can determine, those magazines seem prosperous, but are more subject to the vagaries of their specialties and the personal skills of their editors than are those in the top-ranked group.

I know no way to learn the U.S. circulation of foreign stamp publications such as *China Philately* (distributed here by Unicovery) or *Philatelic Exporter*, but some of them may be significant. Nevertheless, I would guess that the grand total of all stamp periodicals circulating in the U.S. exceeds 250,000 but probably falls short of 300,000, so the top ten pretty clearly determine the hobby's public face.

Although *Linn's* overwhelmingly dominates the weekly market, the broader context shows that there's plenty of room for diversity, certainly a favorable condition for writers.

If and when the new Smithsonian/National Stamp Museum magazine and *U.S. Stamps & Postal History* (the John Hotchner/Randy Neil quarterly) appear, they will further enrich the

►► Page 19.

President's Message

By Charles J. Peterson

A phrase by Mark Kellner in the last issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*, Fourth Quarter 1991, page 53, caught my attention. He referred to the WU membership as "either professional or semi-professional writers . . ." That's a sufficiently loaded assertion to warrant closer examination, even if we wrench it out of context in doing so.

What constitutes "professional and semi-professional" in

►► Page 21.

My Secret of Time Management

By John M. Hotchner

All good things come in threes. My series of two articles on how to use your time efficiently would be incomplete if I didn't describe for *PC* readers my secret of secrets: My "TO DO" list. It allows me to forget what I have to do.

What? That sounds like a contradiction in terms. What I mean by this is that my list—which I maintain for six weeks into the future—allows me to unclutter my mind. There is "a time

►► Page 22.

The Philatelic Communicator

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NEXT:

How to Edit a Society Journal

DEADLINES

For receipt of copy by the editor

Second Quarter February 20, 1992

Third Quarter June 20, 1992

Editor's Bulletin Board

Congratulations to Bob de Violini. The newsletter he edits for the Channel Islands PC Users' Group, *The Outer Edge*, won the *Byte* magazine Best Feature Articles award for "under 12-page" newsletters.

Kudos to Jim Magruder for his December 21, 1991, editorial in *The Stamp Wholesaler*, which gave readers a glimpse of why many stamp dealers and Postal Service brass are angry with Rich Drews, executive director of World Columbian Stamp Expo. There's probably more to come whenever *The Insider* gives us the scoop. Before Magruder, all I heard was cussing and grumping.

1988 Redux. In the catalog for the December "President's Sale," Ivy, Shreve & Mader give the Scott value of a used U.S. 1¢ Franklin green coil waste single, Scott No. 594, as \$1,850, adding the comment, "extremely undercatalogued in our opinion." Quite true, but that was the 1988 Scott value. The 1992 Scott shows a value of \$3,500. Every lot I bid on in that auction had a 1992 Scott value equal to or higher than the 1988 value cited.

Denise Axtell, the editor of *Stamps* magazine, is not a member of the American Philatelic Society, but she is a stamp collector. She described her collection, unearthed as she and her husband moved into a new home, in the September 14, 1991, issue of *Stamps*: "There were two shoe boxes (not the kind that barely hold a pair of sneakers: these are boxes big enough to hold men's cowboy boots), two cigar boxes, and a drawer full of stamps, first day covers, and pictorial cancellations I have collected in the last year and a half."

Stamp Collector should have a new editor by the time you read this. David Schiller's last day was scheduled to be January 10. His departure came just as Schiller had begun to mature in the post. I especially enjoyed his December 7 editorial defending philatelic columns that delve into political and historical controversies, in opposition to the opinion of his British columnist Philip Halward in the same issue. Nori J. Muster's byline will presumably exit also; she's Schiller's spouse.

"*Attention Philatelists!*" That's how Paul Harvey began a November 22 news report alleging that a record price for a 20th Century stamp—\$57,000, he said—had been realized at a London auction. I called to tell his associate that some stamp collectors, especially owners of U.S. 1918 24¢ Curtis Jenny inverts, Scott No. C3a, have paid more than that for their 20th Century stamps, but he wasn't interested. Perhaps Harvey carelessly cribbed a report that called the £30,000 plus ten percent that Sotheby's realized on November 21 for the used 1904 6d dull lilac brown overprinted "I R Official" a record realization for a 20th Century *British* stamp.

Look it up! In the September 8, 1991, *New York Times*, Barth Healey called the American Philatelic Society "the world's largest hobbyist group." In the December *Scott Stamp Monthly*, Les Winick called APS "the largest stamp organization in the world." It isn't either. The Bund Deutscher Philatelisten in Germany has 100,000 members. A few years ago the now defunct East German group, Philatelistenverband im Kulturbund der DDR, had 80,000 members. I imagine the Russian and Chinese collector organizations are pretty big too, and may outrank APS.

▶▶

Look it up again! In his December 14 *Stamps* column, Herman Herst Jr. wrote, "The last commemorative to have straight edges was the 3¢ Inauguration stamp, Scott No. 854." Not so. A few that come immediately to mind are the 20¢ Horace Moses commemorative, Scott No. 2095; the 20¢ Family Unity stamp, Scott No. 2104; and the 22¢ Rural Electrification Administration stamp, Scott No. 2144.

John T. Nugent, immediate past Vice-President East of WU30, has been expelled from APS "for failure to pay for philatelic material, failure to pay for auction lots, and failure to respond to official APS correspondence," according to the December *American Philatelist*. Nugent had resigned from WU30 before then.

Confession. It isn't true that Gordon Morison and Don McDowell's motto at Postal Service headquarters is, "If it ain't broke, break it." That's just a rumor I made up.

Mini English Lesson. A whole comprises its parts. Parts do not comprise a whole. A whole is not comprised of its parts.

Deadlines. Second Quarter, February 20; Third Quarter, June 20. Ken Lawrence □

Correcting 'The First Rough Draft of History'

By Mark A. Kellner

Journalism, it is often said, is nothing more than "the first rough draft of history."

But when that draft is wrong, who corrects it? And how?

It appears an incorrect news story is going to be permitted to stand by the editors of the nation's top-circulation philatelic weekly, *Linn's Stamp News*, even though its editor-publisher knows there is a problem with that article.

Here's what happened:

The Basic Story

On November 12, 1991, Senior Assistant Postmaster General Richard Strasser issued a memorandum to the United States Postal Service's field offices. The memo, actually written by Pete Davidson, who heads the USPS Office of Licensing, said the agency was to quit the "knick-knack" business by February 1, 1992.

The Strasser-signed memo brought to a close an experiment where the USPS sold t-shirts, coffee mugs, teddy bears, and other gewgaws alongside postage stamps and philatelic items. All the gifts had a philatelic or postal theme, but they were incidental to the basic USPS job of selling stamps and delivering the mail.

As has been said in *The Philatelic Communicator* and elsewhere, the souvenir racket has not been universally well-received. In Congressional hearings and in discussions with collectors, USPS officials from Postmaster General Anthony M. Frank on down have heard the complaints. Finally, the agency acted.

Reporting the Story

The November 12 Strasser-signed memo was provided to several reporters, including William McAllister, a staff writer for *The Washington Post*, and myself. The *Post* ran a story on November 19; *The Washington Times* ran a brief on the following day. I filed a story on the subject for *Stamp Collector* newspaper on November 20; it appeared in the issue dated November 30.

Both *The Washington Post* and *Stamp Collector* correctly reported that the order to stop selling knick-knacks came in a memo from Strasser. *The Washington Times* cited no postal official, by name, in its reportage.

Linn's Follows the Press, Gives PMG Credit

In its December 9 issue, *Linn's* reported that the USPS planned to quit the souvenir-selling business. Like *Stamp Collector*, *Linn's* put the story on page one. Unlike *The Washington Post* (November 19) and *Stamp Collector* (November 30), the editors of *Linn's* put no byline on their story.

What *Linn's* also omitted from its story was, frankly, the truth. Six times in the *Linn's* article, its unnamed writer attributed the ban on "trinkets" to PMG Frank, even though both Strasser (in direct conversation) and Davidson (through USPS spokeswoman Robin Minard) affirm that Frank had nothing to do with the writing of the November 12 memo.

The *Linn's* article's attributions could not reasonably be considered an editing error. Not only does the attribution of statements to Frank appear six times, with no other attribution in the story, but contextually, the entire article is framed as representing a written statement from the Postmaster General.

Linn's Stonewalls

I telephoned *Linn's* editor-publisher, Michael Laurence, on December 3, a day after I received my copy of the December 9 issue, to speak with him about the story.

He was most cordial during our conversation, and said he, too, had noted the discrepancy between my report for *Stamp Collector* newspaper and the one his own publication ran one week later. He averred that "this wouldn't be the first time we were wrong," and promised to look into the matter.

I have not heard from Laurence since December 4, nor have I seen a correction in the December 16, December 23, or December 30 issues of *Linn's Stamp News*. I am given to understand, indirectly, that no correction is forthcoming. While I hope I am wrong, it would appear that publication of such a correction should be made sooner, rather than later.

Running corrections in newspapers is encouraged throughout the industry. Newspapers from *The Washington Post* to *The New York Times* to *Stamp Collector* to *Linn's Stamp News* all do it from time to time.

A notice by *Linn's* that it had reported the story incorrectly, that the USPS memo had been signed by Richard Strasser and not Anthony M. Frank, would have ended the matter and enlightened the paper's readership. Moreover it would have set—and kept—the record straight.

Unanswered Questions

By not running a correction and by the way *Linn's* reported and printed the story, several questions arise:

A. When was the *Linn's* December 9 article first written, and by whom?

B. Was the piece a rewrite of *The Washington Post's* story, a story carried by a wire service such as The Associated Press, or a story from another periodical?

C. Why has *Linn's* chosen not to correct an apparent error of fact and attribution, one pointed out both by another printed example (*Stamp Collector's* report) and by a phone call from a subscriber, namely this writer? ▶▶

D. How much trust does any newspaper deserve when it fails to act responsibly in its handling of news and reader complaints?

A Personal Note

Writing, as I do, for its chief competitor, *Stamp Collector* newspaper, I have a burden and a blessing in bringing up a question about *Linn's Stamp News*. Let me explain.

The burden is that of being charged with excessive self-interest in bringing this matter up. I can only say I hope the same standard is applied to me and to my writing that I seek to apply to *Linn's*, where, after all, my writing for the philatelic press began back in 1972.

The blessing comes in the fact that, having covered the same issue that *Linn's* has apparently inaccurately reported, I know the facts. And surely the facts should be the best defense against any charge of self-interest or professional "envy." □

Editor's footnote: In the Spring of 1991, I obtained an unsigned Postal Service memorandum titled, "PHILOSOPHY: Produce and Promote the Fewest Items to Maximize Net Revenue." I believed it to be a policy statement, but couldn't prove it. One item in it stated, "Focus on producing and promoting stamps/stamp products; leave the postal-related merchandise (stamp pins, t-shirts, ornaments, etc.) to our licensing agent." Yet at the Congressional hearing in June, Gordon Morison continued to defend the postal-related products. Perhaps there's a bigger story here that hasn't yet been reported. Strasser vs. Morison? Davidson vs. Don McDowell? Frank dodging bullets? □

Sorry State of Syndicated Stamp Columns

By Terence Hines

The "stamps" columns that appear in daily newspapers are usually sorry things that, at most, rehash new issue press releases. Barth Healey's column in *The New York Times* is a shining exception, but it is an exception.

An especially shoddy example of a newspaper stamp column ran on December 15, 1991, in Gannet's *Citizen Register* in Westchester County, New York. This was a syndicated column by Syd Kronish.

About one-third of the column was headed "Dr. King tribute," and consisted of an unpaid ad for a "special memorial collection" of stamps honoring Martin Luther King Jr. offered by the International Stamp Collectors Society for \$14.95. The "collection" contains five stamps with a total retail value of around \$1. Somehow Mr. Kronish forgot to inform his readers of this little detail! □

The Silver Ceiling

By Barth Healey

It's no fair! I was invited to play in a golf tournament, but they gave me a whiffle ball. That is the approximate position of stamp columnists in the general press when it comes to literature awards.

For example, to quote from the third edition of the *Manual of Philatelic Judging*, page 82, "The author (of a newspaper column) may never win a gold medal, but definitely can aspire to a respectable award if he goes beyond the press release level in his writings."

I entered the fortnightly column that I write for *The New York Times* in the literature competition at STaMpsHOW '91, and won a silver medal with the unofficial notation "at the top of its class." But let me quote further from the critique sheet: "Evaluation criteria for general literature exhibitions in essence put a ceiling on columns and articles by judging them under standards more applicable to handbooks and special studies."

Exactly.

Here I am, with my heaviest wood, plunking down my whiffle ball 17 yards from the tee, while Edmund A. Bayley (*Barbados*), Barbara Mueller (*Congress Book*), and Harlan F. Stone (*Postal History Journal*) are sending 220-yard shots down the middle of the fairway.

Bayley, Mueller, Stone *et al.* work a lot harder on their projects than I do on mine. Handbook and special studies and heavyweight journals are far beyond my capabilities. Newspaper writing is ephemeral, but doing it right is hard, and those who succeed should not be patronized with a pat on the head as merely "respectable."

Establishing a "best in class" within the current judging criteria is not the answer, for, as my critique sheet rightly notes in its semi-apology for my silver medal, this "might elevate a pedestrian entry due to the absence of more deserving items." If the current criteria must stand, perhaps one way out would be "felicitations," when appropriate, to recognize particularly strong entries when such exist.

Better still would be a sort of addendum to the *Manual of Philatelic Judging* that would correct this inequity, and indeed a draft of this addendum already exists in Charlie Peterson's computer as cjp\cklst.jdg, dated July 18, 1990, titled "Some Considerations for Evaluating Philatelic Periodicals." The first standard is crucial: "What are the objectives of this periodical? (Read: column.) How well does it appear to meet them?" And, further on: "Is this of interest to a small or a large group?" And, still further on: "Do the contents match the purpose of the periodical? How well written are the articles?"

Surely these are the questions that should be asked of newspaper columnists, rather than questions about the scope of original research. Since most Sunday sections that we appear in end up on the bottom of the cat's box by Tuesday, perhaps "significance" in the philatelic sense is not a good criterion for columns; rather, "significance" should be measured in the impact on readers or the importance of keeping the hobby alive among non-collectors.

A third possibility is simply to eliminate the "articles and columns" category in literature competitions. There is after all the Lidman award from the Council of Philatelic Organizations, and now there is actually money attached to that award! (All I got was a free trip to Cleveland.) But with COPO we are more or less preaching to the converted; it's very much an in-house sort of contest. Shows open to the public should offer the suggestion, at least, to marginal collectors that there are places to keep up with the hobby in an informal way in the general press, and the hobby needs all the help it can get. □

Pick of the Litter-ature Award IX

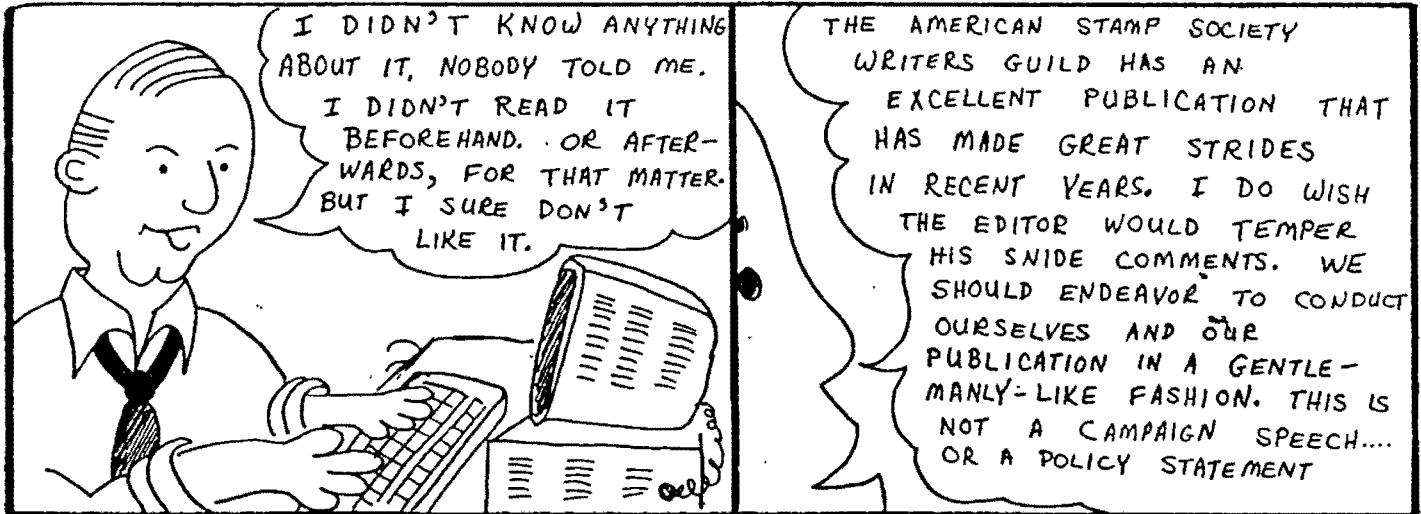
By Ken Lawrence

Janet Klug, the anonymous editorial cartoonist of *The Stamp and Tongs*, is this quarter's winner. Since most WU30 members

THE SCURRILOUS-ADVENTURES OF THE A.S.S. WRITERS GUILD

THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

THE NEW PRESIDENT



THE A.S.S. VEEP

THE EDITOR



Scurrilous Adventures

probably haven't seen the Clermont County (Ohio) Stamp Club newsletter, I'm reprinting several of the cartoons here, by permission of editor Ken Stewart. (Above, and following pages.)

The ability of editorial cartoons to irritate people in power was aptly demonstrated recently, when President George Bush asked newspaper publishers to "put Doonesbury in the obituary section." In a smaller but similar way, the *S&T* cartoons, especially those that poke fun at APS, have drawn Randy Neil's ire, thus proving their effectiveness.

(Though I have criticized anonymous and pseudonymous stamp writers before, I would not have blown Janet's cover had not *S&I* included her name in one of Randy's published letters. On the other hand, since some of the cartoons are directed against WU30's foibles, it's nice to be able to report that a WU30 Council member drew them.)

Editorial cartoons are a central fixture of U.S. publishing; it's odd they are so rare in stamp journalism. It would be good for the hobby if other talented people would follow the example set by Janet Klug and *The Stamp and Tong*s. □

Computer Corner

Word Processors are Not Page Layout Programs

By Kenneth Trettin

In talking with other philatelist computer users and reading what they have published in various places, it has become very apparent that there is considerable confusion—if not outright wrong perceptions—as to what *word processors* and *page layout programs* are and what they are not. Without a doubt, these misconceptions have been fostered by software publishers and their advertising copywriters.

Advertisements tell of word processors with "desktop publishing capabilities" and page layout programs with "built-in word processors." This misinformation is compounded by poorly informed and unknowledgeable sales personnel more interested in making a sale and moving on to the next customer than truly helping (or admitting they cannot help) the customer at hand. ▶▶

Unfortunately, you may be that customer receiving the bad advice.

I have seen several instances where an editor/publisher struggles to produce a journal with a high-powered word processor that is just not up to the demands being asked of it. (Joe Frye and *The Philatelic Communicator* happen to fall into this category. This is not to disparage the work Joe does or the appearance of the *PC*; simply, *WordPerfect* is only up to about 80 or 90 percent of the job.)

Alternatively, I have seen an instance of an author struggling to produce a book using only *Quark Express* because a salesman had told him that the program had word-processing capabilities.

Yes, the abilities of the word processor and the page layout program do overlap considerably, but in reality they are two distinct types of programs. They each have their own distinct uses and when used properly will compliment each other, forming a powerful cohesive team. Each deserves to be looked at separately, then as the team.

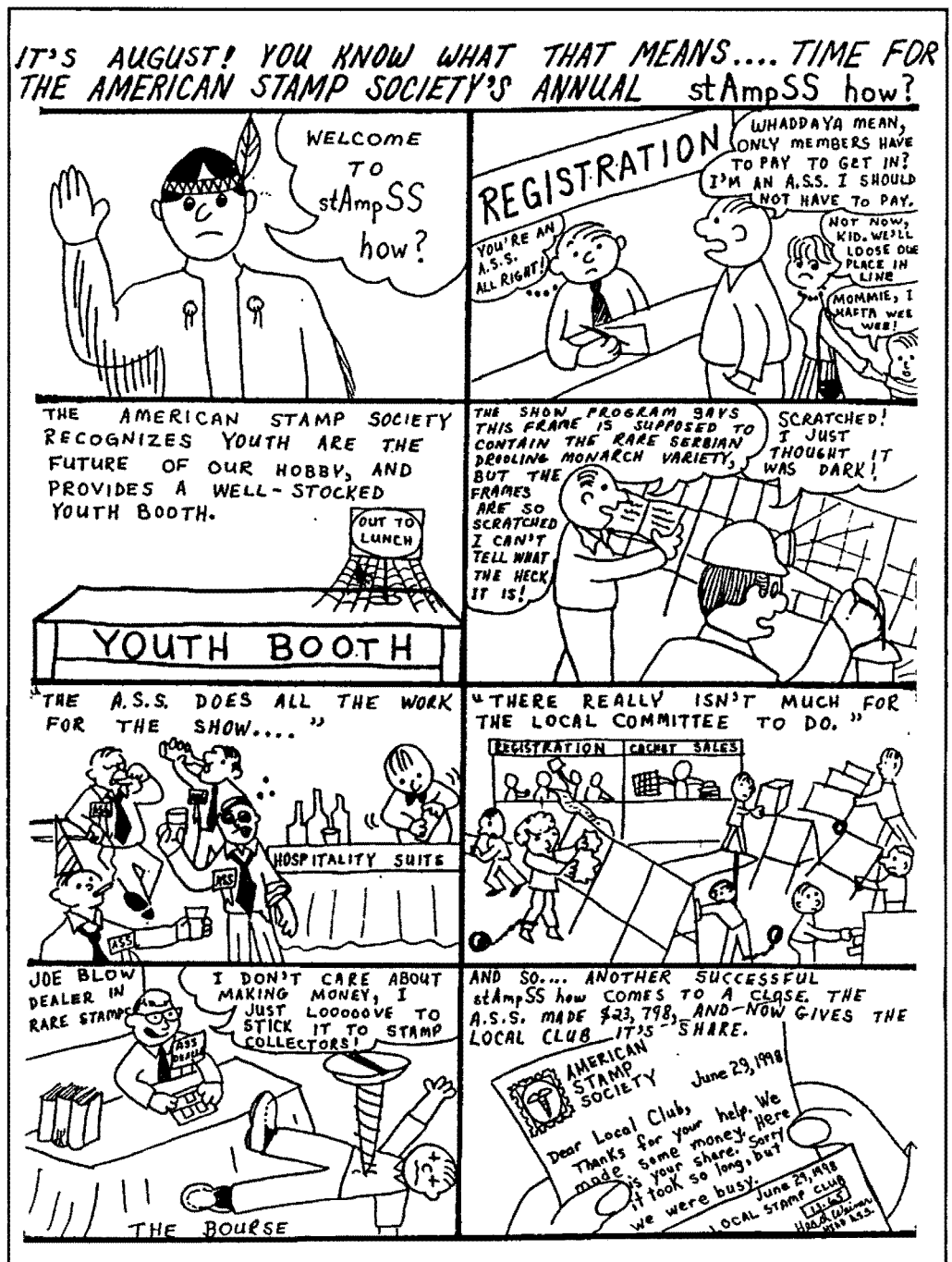
Word Processors

Word processors exist for at least every type of personal computer made. The most basic word processor is simply a text editor; it provides a means for keying text into a computer, making various types of changes and corrections to the text, and then providing for some means of saving the text for future use and possibly printing a copy.

Real word processors go beyond this basic text editor by providing a host of various other options. The number and the capabilities of these options along with the ease with which they may be implemented determines the differences between competitive programs.

These options can include, but are not limited to, many of the following: page margins, type size, type face, line spacing, justification (left, right, center, full, forced), spell checking, thesaurus, headers, footers, auto page numbering, auto dating, indexing, footnotes, table of contents, multiple-column printing, the ability to read files from other word processors or to save files in the format of other word processors, the ability to incorporate graphics (these can be simple rulings, drawings, or images from a scanner), word/character counting and even grammar advice.

Undoubtedly there are more options than these. The ability to implement any of these options varies between word processors; as an example, two word processors may both offer the



It's August

ability to create headers or footers but one may offer the ability to make left- and right-hand page headers and footers and the other may not.

When purchasing a word processor one should consider the options carefully. Normally the more options and the greater the ability of the options the greater the cost and the harder the program is to use. (There are exceptions to this rule as with any rule.) Not all computer users will have a need for all the options offered by a high-powered word processor; as an example Microsoft has published *Write*, which is a simplified version of their very popular program *Word*, for those users who do not need all of the options, the extra cost, or the increased complexity of operation.

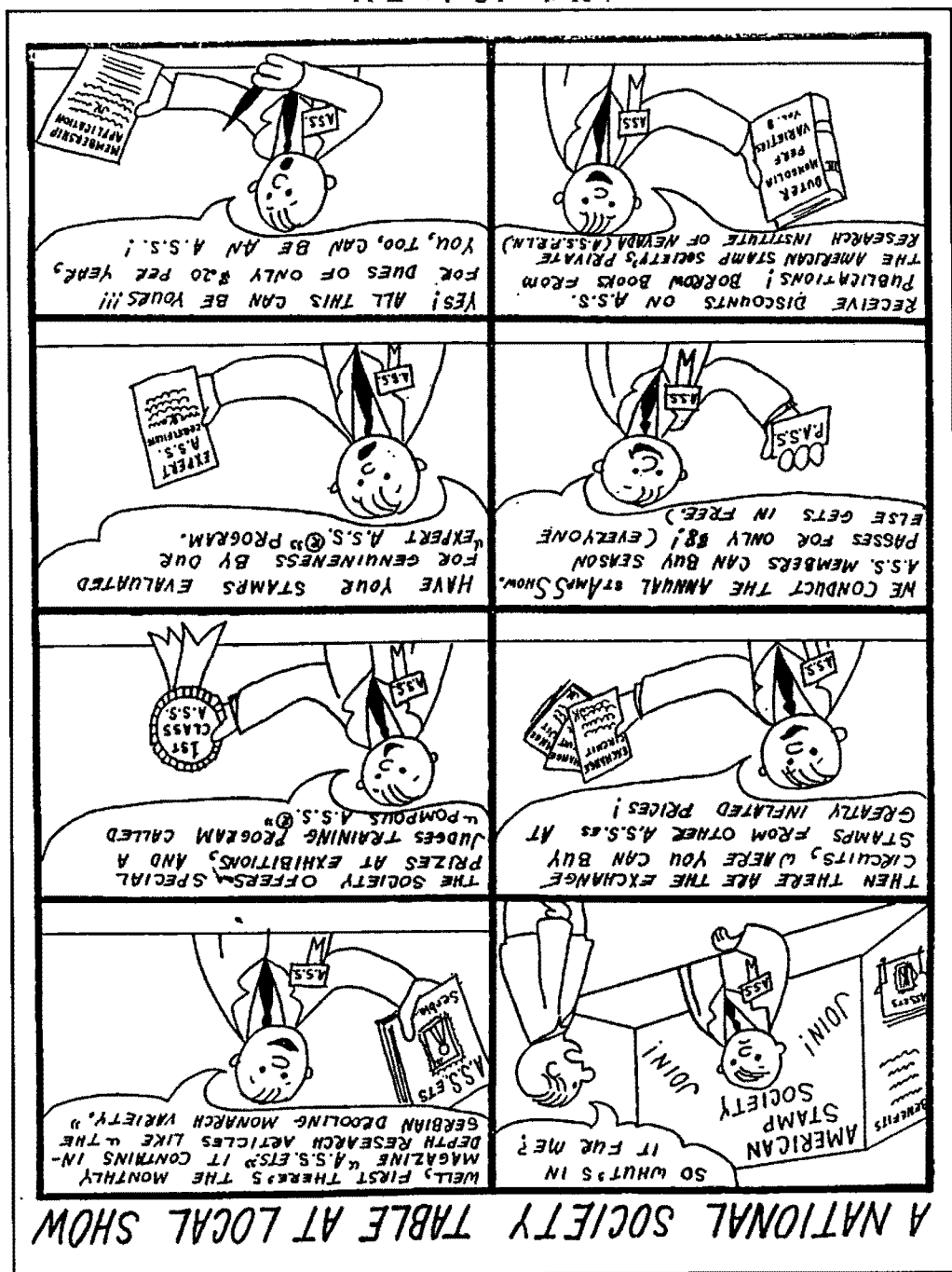
Determine what you will be using the program to do and

Each of these items can be modified in various ways and other items. You can place various clippings, letters, photographs, drawings, of various elements on a page in a rather free-form type of placement. By contrast, the page layout program allows the arrangement of the page now continues onto the next page. bottom of the page now continues onto the next page. is now part way down the page; an article that ended at the subsequent pages changes; an article once at the top of a column the center of the string and now the location of every article on In producing a journal such as the PC, add a paragraph to everything that follows the change. type face, the type size, adding or deleting text can affect within the string, but changing the is a string. You can change elements the text produced by a word processor But they remain a string; likewise another position in the string. any bead or group can be moved to those of another color; the position of removed; beads can be exchanged for additional beads inserted or some be pulled apart anywhere and necklaces. These strings of beads can apart plastic beads once used for continuous string, much like the pop- produces should be thought of as a The text that a word processor results you desire. may not always be able to get the is not completely flexible and you ed page will look like, the procedure mine to a large degree what the print- bilities. While you are able to deter- typewriter with vastly expanded capa- word processor is much akin to a from that of the word processor. The layout program is completely different The basic concept behind the page

Page Layout Programs

be for ease of use. layout program; your real need will formatting will be done with the word processors, as much of the be less need for the more complex using the layout program, there will word processor. Also if you will be gram can import the files from your processor with a page layout pro- If you will be using your word become necessary for you to exchange files. co-workers are already using should it the program is compatible with what future. Do not forget to consider if what you might ask it to do in the

A National Society Table



must be done in a special window which in reality is much like a text editor and not like a full-featured word processor.

Page layout programs are best used along with a word processor (and additional painting, drawing, and scanning programs). Page layout programs all have the ability to import files created by a word processor or other programs and place them on the page where you wish them to appear. In the case of text, it is then formatted after being brought into the layout program.

Page layout programs differ greatly in the manner in which they place elements on the page and what kind of elements they can place. They all work with a mouse or other pointing device. They have various types of rulers, movable guides, and column guides to aid in the placement of the various page elements.

Some have the ability to import and automatically format data from a data base, which can be a great aid in the creation of directories, indexes, and catalogs. Prices vary just as greatly as the programs' abilities.

It should be noted that almost all publishers have demonstration programs available. These are normally complete programs except for the lack of some critical abilities such as the ability to save your work to your computer's disk drive, or they will print a statement on every page that it was created on a demo version of the program. These demos are normally free or available at little cost and do give you a tremendous opportunity to try several programs before making a financial commitment.

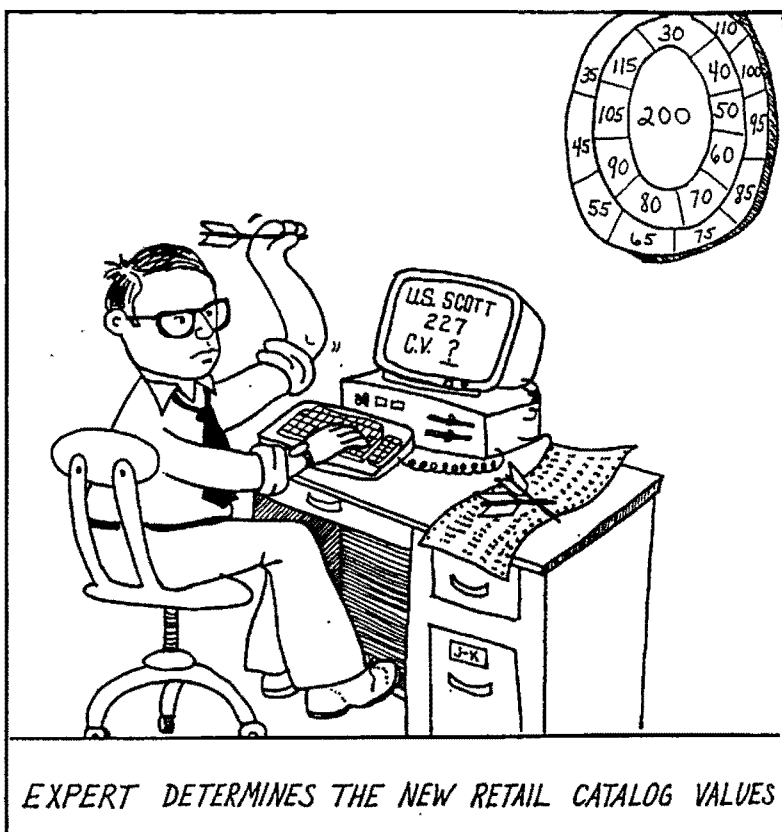
A Real Life Story

To properly make all of this fit into place and add veracity to my statements, I must conclude with a real life story. I have been the editor of *The American Revenuer* for over fifteen years. Since the middle of 1985 this ten-times-per-year magazine has been desktop published using a *Macintosh*, *LaserWriter* and *PageMaker*. This makes it possibly the first philatelic publication to be produced in this manner, or at least one of the very first.

My standard method of working is to key all my articles into the computer using one of two word processors—*MacWrite*, the first *Macintosh* word processor and a very simple one, or *MacWrite II*, a second generation word processor with many more capabilities than I need to use with *PageMaker*—and to print a proof copy.

Every article, even those only a paragraph long, is saved to disk as a separate file. This is an important factor in efficient use of a page layout program. Advertisements are normally created in either a draw program or as another *PageMaker* file and individually transferred into the *Macintosh*'s scrapbook where they can be quickly recopied and placed on the page when laying out an issue of the journal.

PageMaker has the ability to create templates which when opened by the program create a copy of themselves that is then saved to disk as a new file with a new name. This allows the



Expert Determination

use of boiler plate such as banners, mastheads, covers, and society officer lists. It also recreates the same page format for each new issue and the same list of paragraph styles that can be used to format text.

Using *PageMaker*'s place command, any desired article is then imported into *PageMaker* and placed on the page. Headlines and text are formatted as desired and arranged on the page. Spaces for halftones are created; normally captions are entered directly in *PageMaker* rather than being imported with the article.

Computer-generated drawings or scanned images are also imported and placed on the page. If any page is edited, elements changed from one page to another, illustrations resized, or any action taken on any page, it can be done knowing that it will not affect anything beyond that element.

I have worked with articles up to fifteen pages; these are all one element if they originate from one word processor file. When making a change early in the article it will affect the rest of that article but not any other article.

Pages are printed while the work is in progress and finally camera-ready copies are printed on the *LaserWriter* for the printer. Halftone PMTs are waxed into place on the camera-readies or windows placed for halftone negatives.

While it would be possible to produce this magazine using *WordPerfect* or *Microsoft Word*, the effort would not be worth the end result. Word processors and page layout programs are different, they both have their specific niches to fill; and, most important, do not let anyone fool you into believing either type of program can do the work of both. Do not fool yourself into believing either type of program can do the work of both. □

The Closet Collector

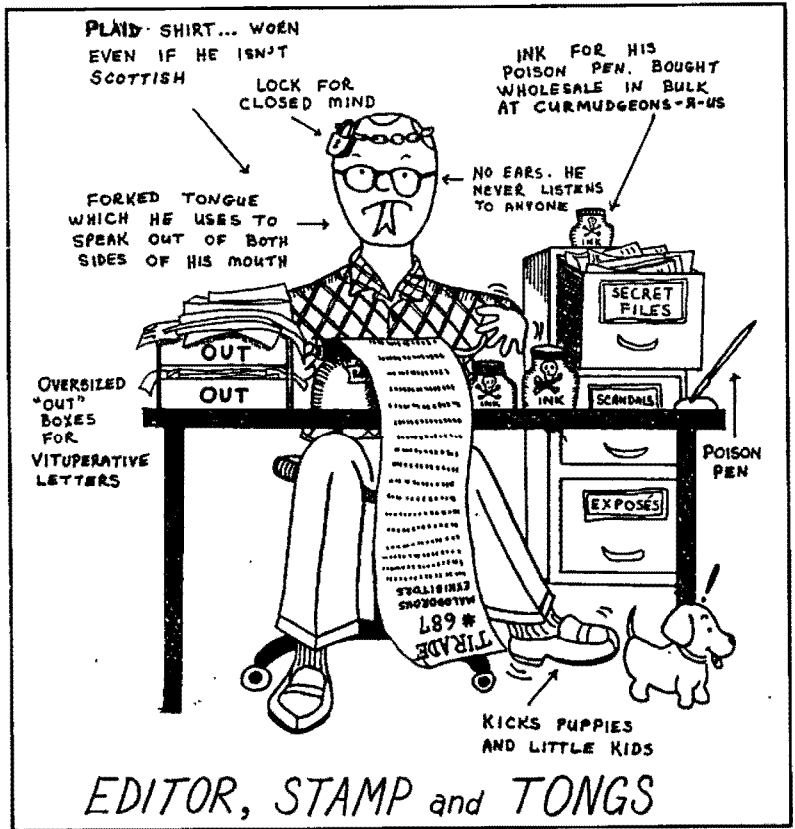
By Duane Koenig

Elobey, Annobon, and Corisco! If romantic places can lead a lad to collecting, novelist William Styron confessed (*New York Times Book Review*, Aug. 18, 1991) to a seminar at Key West on travel writing, these Spanish Guinea islands gave incentive to him.

"During the philatelic period of my late childhood, a period whose ardor succeeded my passion for raising carrier pigeons, I had come upon a moderately rare stamp from Elobey, Annobon, and Corisco. By moderately rare, I mean that the Scott catalog priced the one I owned, a used specimen, at \$2.75, which in those Depression days was a large enough sum to make a small boy's stomach squirm pleasurably . . ."

While his picture of that adhesive was faulty, he correctly remembered "other stamps in my collection that I greatly admired—a huge Greek airmail with gorgeous pastel facets rather like a stained glass, a gaudy number from Guatemala featuring a quetzal bird with streaming tail feathers," etc.

Once at a history convention about the time of his 1968 Pulitzer Prize for *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, I shook hands with Styron. Little did I fancy that when in service on Saipan during World War II he was a closet-collector, sometimes repeating like a mantra, Elobey, Annobon, and Corisco, "that archipelago whose name itself was an incantation." □



Editor

Letters

From Mark A. Kellner: Some thoughts on the business of "What Do They Pay?" as raised by Stephen G. Esrati:

1. The amounts Esrati notes as being paid by philatelic publications appear rather low for a field where some weekly publisher's ad and/or subscription revenues are said to be well into the six-figure or even seven-figure, range.

Let's look at the numbers:

According to the November 18 issue of *Linn's Stamp News*, for example, there are 72,175 paid subscribers. A one-year subscription retails for \$33; two-year subscriptions go for \$59. If you take half the two-year sub price, \$29.50, and multiply it by that current paid subscriber number, you get subscription revenues of \$2,129,162.50.

Stamp Collector's circulation hovers around the 19,000 mark. One-year subscriptions are \$29.90; two-year subs cost \$49.90. Halve that latter number and you get \$24.95. That figure, times 19,000,

equals \$474,050 in subscription revenues alone.

Time won't allow a calculation of advertising revenues, but readers might want to try their own calculations and add those numbers to the subscription revenues. I won't begin to discuss the economics of running an operation the size of *Linn's* or *SC*, but I have to wonder whether there aren't a few more pennies available to pay writers, at least in the budget of one of the publications.

However, for many years, philatelic publishers—and writers—have accepted what the market will bear. I include myself in this category and still do. But it's a conundrum that while publishers need us as much as we need them, we're not willing to stand up and demand better pay for our work.

It will be up to writers in the hobby to start demanding a better share of the wealth in proportion to the value they provide when writing for a given magazine. It is entirely possible that magazines may grab even more readers when the overall quality of writing and reporting improves.

2. It's good that Esrati has (or had) a Canadian bank account. I fear for the rest of us.

A recent chat with my friendly (?) banker revealed that the cost of cashing a check from Canada could be as much as half the face value of the check, if it were under \$100. Over \$100, you can still expect to pay \$45 or so for collection fees. Perhaps that free trade pact (the one that lets the USPS have stamps printed in Canada and not pay duty!) should have featured some equalizing of bank fees.

3. Esrati raises the question of rights in stating that the current editor of *Linn's*, Michael Laurence, doesn't like the simultaneous publication of articles in his paper and *Canadian Stamp News*.

Wouldn't that depend on the rights Esrati contracted to sell to *Linn's*? If they agreed on "First North American Serial [Publication] Rights," which is the industry standard and the default understanding between publishers and writers, then Esrati may not have been acting fairly by selling the same article to CSN he sold to the Sidney firm. If the rights were "First U.S. Rights," well, those rights end at the 54th parallel. ▶▶

Perhaps the greatest lesson is to put such agreements in writing. It may not even be necessary to have the other party sign such a letter; your sending a written recap of a conversation, coupled with the magazine's acceptance, publication of, and payment for an article should do the trick. Of course, a lawyer should be able to help with this one.

Overall, however, I believe the important thing is for publishers and writers to realize each will be treated more or less as we teach the other side to treat us. If we act professionally, supply good articles that get the subscribers writing in, we should expect a reward.

If we put up with poor treatment, we deserve what we get! □

From Richard B. Graham: Not knowing whom else to thank, I wish you would convey my appreciation to whom-ever it is appropriate for the APS Writers' Unit recognition of my efforts in philatelic writing. From the sheet that was given me giving the reason for the award, it was possibly for quantity of writing rather than quality. Regardless of the reason, it was quite unexpected, and is much appreciated. □

From Huguette Gagnon (to Diana Manchester): I would like to mention, since you are involved in the philatelic literature competitions, the incident encountered at PIPEX '91 last May. We were in all seven entrants, and none of the literature was displayed for the public to view. When I inquired where it was, I was told that it was not displayed since they could not find a secure place for it, although there were security guards in every exhibition room.

I find this unusual. One reason why I personally like to enter literature competitions is that the public gets aware that we exist as a philatelic society and to generate interest in our field of collecting. We were awarded a silver, which I am still waiting to receive along with the judge's critique.

I do not think that it is right to offer competition to one section of philately and not be able to show it. I am sure you would feel the same way.

I have always appreciated the judges' critiques and this is what has helped me to improve our *Menelik's Journal* over the years. □

From Ken Lawrence: Les Winick's defensiveness toward criticisms of the Arthur Salm Foundation report (Fourth Quarter 1991, page 60) is understandable but unfortunate. As I wrote in my Third Quarter review, the task the foundation has undertaken is meritorious. Unfortunately, his responses tend to confirm, rather than to allay, the concerns I expressed.

Les cited ANSI/NISO Z39.48-199X, the standard for archival paper. The intention of the standard is that such paper, and therefore books printed on it, should last, under archival storage conditions, for hundreds of years.

Because the environment around us continues to deteriorate—that is, to become more acidic (as in *acid rain*)—Z39.48-199X's standard for alkalinity gets notched up every several years. Thus the current standard, adopted in 1984, requires pH 7; the draft, to be adopted during the 1990s (hence the suffix 199X), will require pH 7.5. As I quipped in a letter to Les, at the rate we're going, the only acceptable pages will be those made of anhydrous sodium hydroxide, the strongest alkali.

If you desire to own album pages that will last hundreds of years, by all means require them to meet this standard. But that says nothing at all about the stamps you mount on them, because the standard was not designed to address that problem. The standard would be pertinent to stamps if attempts were made to persuade stamp-issuing entities to print stamps on gummed paper that meets the same ANSI/NISO standard. That would indeed be a quixotic quest. The most recent USPS stamp paper specifications I have (dated March 11, 1989) make no mention of pH, and many recent stamps are acidic.

Another area of confusion is the matter of buffers, called alkaline reserves in the Salm report and in most archivists' literature. Paradoxical though it may seem, the buffer actually *lowers* the pH of the page, compared to the alkalinity without a buffer. A buffered system combines a strong base with a weak base (base is a synonym of alkali, antonym of acid), which together resist acid reactions.

Impregnated into alkaline paper, the buffer protects the paper from acid attack, and thus ordinarily lengthens its life. For that reason, Les is wrong to assume that

if a stamp is acidic, its acid will "migrate" to the buffered alkaline page. The purpose of the buffer is to prevent that happening as much as possible.

(*Migrate* is an inappropriate term, though archivists occasionally misuse it this way. When acids and bases combine, they do it by ionizing and reacting, thus creating new compounds that take the place of both, not by drifting from one place to another. These new compounds—salts—will tone or stain stamps, unless by good fortune they are colorless.) For these very reasons, not all alkaline storage materials used for archival purposes are buffered. Glassine envelopes are a good example. Archivists have a choice of buying them with or without alkaline reserves, because the buffer chemicals themselves can harm certain materials, notably photographs. In those instances, the archivists' strategy is to discard and replace the holder when it is no longer safe.

Most glassine envelopes sold to stamp collectors are unbuffered, and therefore chemically unstable. Collectors often notice the browning that takes place within five to ten years. Because they lack buffers, acidic stamps do react with the alkaline constituents of fresh glassines, and it is often possible to see toning of both the envelopes and the stamps after just a few years.

Despite Leonard Hartmann's attempt in his Fourth Quarter letter to split hairs over a definition of paper to exclude the forms most commonly encountered, I have several stamp albums printed on newsprint in 1942, containing stamps that have been mounted on them since that time. The pages are browned at the edges and somewhat brittle, but the stamps and hinges show no discoloration or other signs of degradation. Since in this case the albums themselves are the collectibles, archival technique would call for deacidifying them. Some day I may be forced to that remedy, but for now I'm satisfied. I have plenty of stamps on acidic covers a lot older than 50 years that are still in fine shape. Acidic paper is not, by itself, the menace that some believe, at least not in the lifetime of one collector.

By contrast, a member of my local stamp club has an album filled with mint and used United States stamps up to the 1980s, mounted on home-made (probably

acidic) pages. The used stamps are hinged, and in uniformly perfect condition. The mint stamps are in transparent acetate stamp mounts, and most are ruined by brown stains. I believe scientific tests would show that the protective sleeves of the mounts are chemically inert, and therefore safe for most practical philatelic purposes, but the adhesive, whatever its chemistry, has migrated (in the true meaning of the term) around the open ends of the mounts to the edges of the stamps inside. Here is a problem for which collectors need an urgent warning.

Although I do not regard acid album pages as a worrisome threat to stamps, the tests I proposed for them are reasonable. The "feat" for which Les Winick would award me a Nobel prize—synthesizing acid rain—is frequently performed by high school students at science fairs.

Leonard Hartmann's sophisticated technical knowledge led him astray on some points of my review. For example, my objection to reporting pH test results to two decimal places did not impugn the

scientists who conducted the test or the accuracy of their equipment. The problem is with paper itself. It would be difficult to find a single sheet of paper with that degree of uniformity from one edge to the other.

If the significance of a test is, say, plus or minus 0.1 pH units, it is misleading to report a reading of 0.01. Even to test the significance would require repeated blind (preferably double blind) tests of snips from a single page, from other pages in the same batch, from supposedly identical pages purchased at different times and places, and so forth. The Salm report makes no mention of such tests.

Les Winick believes the Salm report is clear and unambiguous. I haven't yet met two readers who agree on what it says and means.

Even seemingly unambiguous standards may require proper interpretation. My publisher, for example, prints archival library books only on uncoated paper, believing that an offset-printed image on

coated paper is anything but permanent. The Collectors Club of Chicago, striving for the same degree of permanence, obviously disagrees. The book *Postage Due* by George B. Arfken "is printed on Sterling Litho Gloss, an archival quality, buffered, acid-free paper," that is coated.

Worse, the book's frontispiece is a glossy color photo on Agfa paper, bound into the book. It's less than a year old, but already the buffered alkaline facing page has attacked the photo's emulsion and caused damage. An unbuffered glassine interleaf would have prevented this problem.

If such difficulties can snare people who diligently apply ANSI/NISO standard Z39.48-1984 to the exact purpose for which it was intended—the archival publishing of books—much greater difficulties await those who attempt to extrapolate the standard to a field it was never meant to address. That was the point of my review of the Salm report. It has not been refuted. □

Reviews

A Different Congress Book

By Barbara R. Mueller

Production and Procurement of Postage Stamps: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Postal Operations and Services of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, House of Representatives, one hundred second Congress, first session, June 5, 1991. Serial No. 102-15, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1991. ISBN 0-16-03542304. 187 pages, illus. Stapled, self-cover. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402. \$5.50.

No member of the Writers Unit and few outside knowledgeable observers of the contemporary philatelic scene need to be told of the dissension that resulted from Ken Lawrence's "open letter" to Gordon Morison and Anthony Frank in the First Quarter 1991 *Philatelic Communicator*. The issues raised there were included among those covered by the Congressional hearing of June 5, 1991, a full record of which is contained in this GPO publication.

We usually don't think of Congressional reports as literature but in this case the content makes it a fascinating historic reference. It also has sociological value, demonstrating the seriousness with which philately as a hobby and business is regarded in current legislative circles.

Although the philatelic commercial press "made hay" of the various controversies leading up to the hearing, following it the media did not report in great detail, and what it did print was

filtered through the unofficial notes of their reporters. Now that an accurate official record is available, will these papers give equal space to a thorough analysis of the findings? I know that as editor of *The Essay-Proof Journal*, which deals with stamp production, printers' histories, etc., I have found much useful information here which I intend to reprint for the benefit of future philatelic researchers.

The structure of a report like this is fairly simple and plain. Word-for-word transcripts of the remarks and questions of the subcommittee members and the responses of the witnesses are followed by their formal prepared statements and exhibits. (It should be noted that none of the witnesses testified under oath.) Then at the end is printed "additional material submitted for the record" in response to questions posed during the hearing or by subsequent written requests from the subcommittee. Perhaps the most objective "meat" is found in that material.

For example, Gordon Morison's letter of July 22 answering seven specific questions from "why does the Postal Service have problems forecasting the need for stamps?" to "why has the Postal Service decided to allow the use of the Olympic rings on stamps when in the past the Service was opposed to advertising on stamp products?" not only reflects positively on Morison's grasp of the issues but contains data that should correct much misinformation and scuttlebutt.

The same may be said of the response of Bureau of Engraving and Printing Director Peter Daly to another set of seven questions. Philatelic writers for U.S. specialist publications should not let these answers nor such a resource as the actual form used for private sector contracts for the manufacture of postage stamps pass by unnoticed. ▶▶

The voluntary statement of Richard C. Sennett "for the record" dated June 19 goes far to clear up the alleged mystery about his role in stamp production and the interrelationships of Sennett Enterprises, Stamp Venturers, Senprise, and the private stamp printers. Will the general press pick up on this, too?

Letters from officials of Scottsburg, Indiana, lauding the work of Multi-Color Corp. located there, and from the George Schmitt Co. of Branford, Connecticut, parent of Guilford Gravure, another stamp printer, demonstrate the desire of the private sector for Postal Service contracts. Letters from Diane Apfelbaum, then president of ASDA, and Dr. Roberto Rosende, chairman of the Philatelic Foundation, are not really germane to the investigation, being merely laudatory to the Postal Service for its relationship with organized philately.

The testimony of the Government Accounting Office people and U.S. Banknote Co. executives Stanley Kreitman and Tom Harris was not especially illuminating. Kreitman made such questionable statements as "our company was founded by Paul Revere and Alexander Hamilton." I am sure the students in The Essay-Proof Society will have something to say about that!

The only two witnesses from the philatelic sector were treated with courtesy and Ken Lawrence, at least, seemed to have impressed Chairman Frank McCloskey of Indiana with his thoroughness and lucidity. The testimony of one Charles L. Jones III, a collector and USPS clerk from Phoenix, was more in the nature of typical letters-to-the-editor complaints about postal marketing. Nowhere is there any evidence that the subcommittee faulted the Writers Unit, the PC, and APS for open criticism of the Postal Services policies and personnel.

Ken Lawrence's testimony included his original PC "open letter" which was entered into the official record. One must concede, regardless of one's personal views about the appropriateness of Ken's actions, that his written statement and a subsequent letter of July 22 addressing issues that came up in the hearing towered above most of the other argumentation presented by the non-philatelic witnesses. Evidently Congressman McCloskey felt the same, and he expressed, as recorded on pages 143-145, a personal warmth and even hospitality toward Ken.

A report like this is graphically unimpressive, even repelling to the type of reader who hates to plow through page after page of unrelieved, old-fashioned typography. But the yields that will follow that plowing are well worth the time and effort expended by any philatelic writer. □

Worldwide in French

By Charles J. Peterson

Yvert et Tellier Catalogue de Timbres-Poste 1992. Published 1991 by Éditions Yvert & Tellier, 37 rue des Jacobins, F-80036 Amiens Cedex, France. Soft covers; in French. Three volumes: Vol. 1, France, 5¼ by 9¼ inches, xxxvi + 490 numbered pages, ISBN 2-86814-041-6; Vol. 3, Western Europe, 8¼ by 9¼ inches, 1112 numbered pages, ISBN 2-86814-039-4; Vol. 4, Eastern Europe, 8¼ by 9¼ inches, 635 numbered pages, ISBN 2-86814-037-8. Available in the U.S. from Subway Stamp Shop, 111 Nassau Street, New York, NY 10038, at \$22.80, \$50.00 and \$41.60, respectively (add 10 percent for shipping).

There are still four publishers who attempt to maintain worldwide stamp catalog coverage: Scott, Gibbons, Michel, and Yvert. It's getting increasingly more difficult for the latter, which some years ago went to a staggered publication schedule.

Each year Yvert issues an updated Volume 1 for the mother country, plus two volumes for the rest of Europe. Volume 2, covering former French colonies and possessions, is now on a biennial basis, while the three-volume overseas coverage is presently running on a four-year cycle (a new edition of O-Z countries will appear next year).

For linguistic and political reasons, Yvert has been the dominant international catalog series for much of Africa and Asia, and for a number of Eastern European countries, as well as in France herself and in Francophone Western Europe. Anyone carrying on extended philatelic exchange or correspondence with such countries found the appropriate Yvert volumes almost indispensable. Aside from such considerations, there's little to recommend the current Volume 3 or 4 over their U.S., German, or British counterparts. (It will be interesting to see if and by how much the politically acceptable Yvert declines in popularity now that the walls of Eastern Europe have fallen.)

Volume 1 is a different story. It alone is in color, with clear and attractive illustrations. While not a specialized edition, it carries helpful detail on printing quantities, tagging varieties, booklets, coils, official meters, stationery, millésimes, proofs, FDCs, ballons montés, precancels, specimens, parcel post, occupation and liberation issues, and telegraph stamps. New to this edition is an illustrated section on uncommon postal usages of the classic period, and a short table of domestic single letter rates, 1849-60. There's also a section on major 19th century cancellation types, with pricing of cancels on individual stamp issues (singles and covers).

Volume 1 also covers Andorra, Monaco, and United Nations, and carries a priced listing of yearly Europa issues.

All volumes carry indexes to stamp subject matter for the majority of countries, which would be a significant plus if it weren't for the fact that they're so wretchedly done. Even for the mother country, which has eleven pages of two-column listings under four major headings, there are far too many "lost" citations under "anniversary," "centenary," "homage," etc., without the cross-listings to the people/events/institutions being celebrated. The 20th anniversary of the World War I Armistice is cited under "anniversary" and "Armistice"; the 70th is only under "anniversary"; for whatever reason, Martin Luther is alphabetized under "M"; the identification of the tuberculosis bacillus by Robert Koch is of course cited as "discovery," with no entries for Koch or tuberculosis. Not a particularly big thing, but if they're going to spend that much effort and space on something you wish they'd do it right.

In summary, the France volume has enough special interest material in it, at a reasonable enough price, to be worth the purchase by a U.S. general collector; the other volumes aren't recommended. □

British Slogan Cancels

By Mary Ann Owens

Slogan Postmarks of the Eighties by Cyril R. H. Parsons, Colin G. Peachey, and George R. Pearson. 6¼ by 9 inches, soft cover, 136 pages, 1990. ISBN 0-904548-05-8. £5.95 from Colin Peachey, 19 Moorland Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1NH, Great Britain.

Slogan Postmarks of the Eighties is the third in a series of books devoted to slogan postmarks. Earlier books are *Slogan Postmarks of the Seventies*, published in 1980 and reprinted in 1989, and *Collecting Slogan Postmarks*, published in 1986 and covering the period from the beginning in Great Britain in 1917 through 1969. All three books are co-authored by Cyril R. H. Parsons, Colin G. Peachey, and George R. Pearson. The latest book has a tribute to Pearson, who died in April 1989.

The first 18 pages are devoted to the Introduction, Background, and Postal History chapters of the period. They are very thorough in their descriptions although the authors assume at times that the reader owns the previous two volumes. And, most owners probably do. The Postal History chapter discusses the controversial "Jesus is Alive" slogan and its effect on other planned publicity slogans, the 1989 green ink slogans, and the 1990 red ink slogans.

Chapter 4's ten pages continue with the "Post Code" Slogans of the earlier books with a brief introduction for those who do not own the others.

Chapter 5 is 60 pages long and is the main reason for the book. The chapter starts out with amendments to the 1986 book followed by slogan postmarks carried over from the *Seventies* book. They are followed by descriptions, time periods, and illustrations of the slogan postmarks being discussed in chronological order. To the authors' and publisher's credit, the illustrations are all sharp and clear.

Chapter 6 of five pages covers slogan postmarks used exceptionally, outside of any announced or planned dates of use. Chapter 7 of 16 pages lists local publicity slogans used in one town or a small area of towns, again in chronological order. Chapter 8, one page long, covers "Maritime 'Slogans'" and the two pages of Chapter 9 list "Slogans used at FPO's." Chapter 10 has eight pages for slogan postmarks used in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Slogan postmarks that do not fit conveniently in any of the above chapters are shown on the five pages in the Miscellaneous chapter, Chapter 11. Chapters 6 to 11 all open with amendments to the previous books plus a list of those carried over time-wise from the previous books.

The book concludes with an index in two parts. The first is an alphabetical list of the slogans according to text legend or by promoter or advertiser. The second list is the alphabetical town index. Both indexes are correlated with the code numbers and letters of the various slogans to be found in Chapters 5 to 11.

Several groups of collectors can benefit from the information in the book, other than slogan postmarks collectors. Postal history collectors interested in a particular town or area need only to turn to the index for a list of appropriate slogans. The thematic collectors will be looking for slogans on themes they collect. While many of the themes will be obvious in the index, most collectors will also go page by page trying to locate their themes on other non-obvious slogans to add to their collections. It was what I had to do for the themes I collect. □

New Topical Handbooks

By David A. Kent

Watercraft on Stamps by Katherine A. Kirk, editor. American Topical Association, 1991. ISBN 0-935991-11-5. 6 by 9 inches, soft cover, 170 pages, illustrations. \$17.00 from the American Topical Association, P.O. Box 630, Johnstown, PA 15907.

Collect Fungi on Stamps by John-Paul Greenewich. Stanley Gibbons Publications, Ltd., First Edition, 1991. ISBN 0-85259-293-0. 5¼ by 8¼ inches, saddle stitched, 58 pages, illustrations. \$14.50 from Lighthouse Publications, P.O. Box 705, Hackensack, NJ 07602-0705.

It would be hard to find two more contrasting topical handbooks. The pair, in fact, could provide object lessons, positive and negative, to those who contemplate preparing a topical handbook.

The watercraft book is the most no-nonsense handbook that ATA has published in some time. There is a brief introduction to explain the style of the listings—by Scott catalog number within country, with the year of issue, denomination, description of the vessel, the year it was completed where appropriate (very helpful for named vessels, as many have had the same name), the owner at the time depicted, and a code outlining the prominence of the vessel in the design. The book then plunges directly into 138 pages of close-set listings of stamps, covering some 17,000 vessels, according to ATA (I did not try to count).

"Watercraft" is an apt title, for the vessels listed range from battleships and ocean liners to rowboats and canoes. After this impressive—indeed, daunting—listing, a 26-page alphabetic appendix lists named ships that have appeared on stamps, providing country and catalog number, an aid to those who only collect the larger ships. The back inside cover contains a promotional announcement for ATA and its Ships on Stamps Study Unit. And that's it.

Clearly watercraft on stamps is a huge subject, and this handbook has been eagerly awaited by those with an interest in the topic. Nevertheless, the sheer volume of the listings, page after page of gray text, is bound to intimidate any but the most dedicated collector of the topic. Only eight pages of illustrations break up the text, all pages from a collection or exhibit.

The result brings mixed emotions. Clearly watercraft is a gigantic topical subject, and adding more illustrations or commentary would have increased the size (and cost) of the book to an unacceptable degree. An attempt to divide the topic into categories probably would have been futile, given the wide range of ships involved. Far too many vessels would not fall into neat categories, and a large selection of "miscellaneous" would have been pointless.

Nevertheless, one wonders whether there might have been some way of avoiding all those pages of gray text. The effort here represents computer technology in its youth, and we can only hope that desktop publishing will mature (and fall in price) so that it will be feasible to use it for this type of handbook soon.

Gibbons's fungi handbook represents the opposite extreme. This is a relatively new topic, and most of the 650 stamps listed were issued in sets. Gibbons illustrates at least one stamp of

each set, and includes prices (in Sterling), as it offers to sell each set at the price listed. It provides for a much more open and attractive setting which would certainly make the topic more accessible to the beginner.

Gibbons also provides some explanatory text, but virtually all of it is devoted to detailed scientific explanations of the process of classifying fungi, which may be beyond the beginning collector. Indeed, although many references are provided, virtually all are scientific rather than philatelic.

The book includes a nine-page section listing the scientific identification of all families of fungi, and an 11-page list of stamps by species rather than country. A four-page appendix includes lichens, and another three pages discusses mycorrhizas, fungi which grow on the roots of trees, such as truffles. This last is the most perplexing, for it lists only stamps which picture the trees involved rather than any of the fungi themselves.

Greenwich limited the listings only to face-different stamps, excluding perforation and watermark varieties. A plus—the introduction specifically states that the handbook is complete through the March 1991 issue of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, which helps the user continue his or her own checklist on the subject. The minus, for the American collector, is that Gibbons catalog numbers are used.

The disappointing omission in both books is any effort to extend topical philately into any other philatelic elements beyond mere stamps themselves. The watercraft handbook includes U.S. postal stationery, undoubtedly because it is listed in the *Scott Specialized*. Certainly ship-related postmarks is a broad enough subject to deserve a handbook in itself, but one wishes for some discussion, however brief, of other stationery, postmarks, meters, and the entire broad range of the many aspects of philately beyond pure stamps. Neither handbook offers one.

Despite these shortcomings, both books are highly recommended for the topical collector interested in these subjects. The ATA handbook fills a long-standing need for a new book on the topic, and Gibbons offers the first book that I know of on what most collectors simply call "mushrooms" on stamps. Even if we can't afford to eat truffles, we can read about them. □

On Philatelic Literature

By Ernst M. Cohn

Bibliography of Periodicals Devoted to Philatelic Literature, by Brian Birch, 5½ by 8½ inches, soft cover, saddle stitched, 38 pages, 1991. \$2.00 (\$5 overseas) postpaid, from Friends of the Western Philatelic Library, P.O. Box 2219, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

Six and one-half pages suffice to list all of the periodicals devoted to philatelic literature. Add four pages of indexes and two of introductory material, and you have the contents of this little booklet, except for the tantalizing illustrations of the first pages of some of that literature in the possession of the author.

The languages of these periodicals are almost exclusively English and German, the conspicuous exception being Swedish. One appears to have been in Italian, but little more than its title is known to the author. A Dutch publication appears, but in English.

Such is the dismal record of international philately's interest

in publishing (and supporting) chronicles concerned exclusively with literature about our hobby!

The author has performed a most useful service in compiling this reference work, and the Friends have done a great job in making the results of Birch's study available, both in a most handy format and at a rock-bottom price. Thank you all!

Every philatelist not completely absorbed in filling empty spaces on printed pages should have a copy of this reference work—and *study* it! □

World War II Censorship - U.S.

By Alan Warren

The Censorship of International Civilian Mail During World War II: The History, Structure and Operation of the United States Office of Censorship, Steven M. Roth, 8½ by 11 inches, stiff covers, 104 pages, stapled, 1991. La Posta Monograph Series Volume 6, La Posta Publications, Lake Oswego, OR, \$16.

Ten days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order establishing the office of censorship and the censorship policy and operating boards. Author Roth provides a brief background of U.S. censorship during the first part of the twentieth century. Then follows a list of the postal service orders issued by the Postmaster General and a detailed picture of the postal division and its various units.

Roth sketches the purposes of each unit including the inspection, operations, and registered and condemned mail units. Much of his writing is fascinating, such as the specifics of how the examiners worked. These include a list of their tools, and advice on avoiding problems such as opening the right end of the envelope so that the stamps would be partly covered with the resealing tape.

The magnitude of the censorship effort is seen with statistics such as the fact that 1,382 examiners in New York were responsible for reviewing the mail of over 300,000 internees and prisoners of war held in this country. Special regulations governed the handling of diplomatic and official mail as well as parcel post. A device known as the Flexoline System was used to keep the names and addresses of suspect correspondents before the examiners. Roth concludes by describing the winding down of censor activities toward the end of hostilities.

Scholarship and research of source documents seem to be the order of the day for Steven Roth. There are ten dozen footnotes for fifty pages of text, and these are given at the end rather than disrupting the writer's flow. The major source is nearly 1,000 shelf-feet of boxes of censorship records in the National Archives.

Some of the documents are reproduced in the appendices such as the table of organization of the Censorship Office, some examples of examiners' labels and handstamps, a memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover to President Roosevelt following his assignment to be in charge of censorship, and some of the postal censorship regulations.

The printing and design of the book are top-notch. The two-column text on each page is enclosed within a box frame, giving

a distinguished appearance to the printed page. Typeface and size make for easy reading, and quality of the illustrations of covers is excellent. Publisher Richard W. Helbeck is to be commended on setting an example for monograph production. □

World War II Censorship - German

By Alan Warren

An Introduction to German Censorship 1939-45. 5¼ by 8¼ inches, stiff covers, 12 pages, stapled. ISBN 1-872744-04-4. £3 plus £1.50 postage per order from Chavril Press, Bloomfield, Perth Road, Abernethy, Perth PH2 9LW, Great Britain.

My first thought on seeing this thin pamphlet was why is it needed in light of Karl-Heinz Riemer's classic work on the subject (even if his *is* in German)? The answer is found in the introduction to the current work in which the unnamed author admits Riemer is to be sought for in-depth study. This little booklet merely introduces the beginner to the subject of German censorship during the Second World War.

The censor stations of Berlin, Cologne, Vienna, Copenhagen, etc., are listed, and the major tools of censorship are illustrated, i.e., handstamps, machine marks, and resealing tape which this author refers to as "labels." In so few pages there can be no explanation of the myriad varieties of these devices which are detailed in Riemer, and the illustrations cover only a few of the many markings to be found on censored mail during this period.

Even the few paragraphs on values of the markings direct the reader once again to Riemer, reminding us that little is to be found here. Unless you merely want an elementary view of German censorship, there is little need to seek out this title. □

Confederate Patriotics

By Barbara R. Mueller

Confederate Patriotic Covers and Their Usages by Benjamin Wishnietsky, 144 pages, 7 by 10 inches, softbound, illustrated, 1991. David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 611388, North Miami, FL 33261-1388

As described by the author, who has edited the American and Confederate States stampless cover catalogs and written extensively for the *Confederate Philatelist*, this book is an "assemblage," not a catalog. He feels that more than the previous listings by type with a limited number of covers illustrated is needed, so he categorizes the cover designs and illustrates 239 notable examples of each, many of which are in color. Thus visually the coated-paper book is quite impressive; it is a good browsing book for the lover of fine covers, but the omission of any bibliography or reference list limits its utility as a study tool.

Nowhere is there any reference to the listing of the *George Walcott Collection of Civil War Patriotic Covers* by Robert Laurence, the pioneer studies of Van Dyk MacBride, the listings in the Dietz works, or *The Handbook of Civil War Patriotic Envelopes and Postal History* by Robert W. Grant. The reader is left completely unaware of the fact that other, more extensive compilations and studies exist.

Eleven pages of general information precede the cover assemblage, which is presented in two-to-a-page format with

identification and comments printed in caption style. They add to specificity and should be read in conjunction with the initial introductory material. That material includes data on secession and admission dates, Confederate postal rates, usages with U.S. stamps and by express companies, stampless paid covers, postmasters' provisional covers, late U.S. usage, and letter sheets. Also set out are the listing categories, some of which are as small as one (river scene) and others as large as 25 (the seven-star flags). In all, there are 20 such categories.

Special attention is paid to "condition and prices" and "pricing factors other than condition." While occasional dollar amounts for an auction price realized are given in the individual cover captions, no effort is made to value all. Instead, they are described as "extremely rare" (one to five covers reported), "very rare" (six to ten), and "rare" (11 to 25). This is the only concession to commercialism.

These numbers indicate how limited and esoteric this area of postal history is, so perhaps it is good to have a newly available, up-to-date survey to add to the earlier, heavy-weight tomes. But in no way does the Wishnietsky book supersede them and indeed, it is not intended to do so. □

Electronic Dictionary

By Charles J. Peterson

I recently succumbed to a promotional mailing for Houghton Mifflin's *American Heritage Electronic Dictionary*TM (*AHED*). What I got was in several respects less helpful than I had hoped or anticipated based on the prospectus, but I did find a few features that may be of interest to writers and word buffs.

First of all, the dictionary just doesn't seem large enough or contemporary enough for my needs. The blurbs say it carries complete definitions for over 116,000 words; I have the feeling that this figure is highly misleading. *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*, for example, claims 190,000 definitions, but it frequently groups words derived from the same root under the same headword; the *AHED* appears to count such derivations as a separate headword.

More to the point, I tested *AHED* against some of the less common words I had reason to use during a three-hour stint of writing. It failed on: anorexic, argonaut, CAT scan, corn dollie, Domesday Book, fractal, metalanguage, recombinant, scriptorium, semiotics, *Weltschmerz*, and wind shear, to name only a few, all of which were fully treated in *Chambers*. There's no possibility of adding to the dictionary entries, nor to the thesaurus. If you have to keep reaching for the hardbound dictionary, there's not much reason to pay for the electronic one.

The entries consist of headword, pronunciation, brief definitions, etymology (usually), synonyms (frequently) and usage (sometimes). The pronunciation symbols need some getting used to, and in most cases pronunciation is shown only for the primary word.

Thus, under the main entry "philately" there's "phil·a·tel·ic (fil·uh·tel·ik)—adjective" and "phi·lat·e·list—noun," with no real clue regarding accentuation of the latter word.

The thesaurus feature is actually the 600,000-synonym, separately-titled *Roget's II Electronic Thesaurus*. It's useful for looking up alternatives, but unlike the *WordPerfect*TM organic thesaurus (for example) it does not provide antonyms as well as

synonyms and it has a rather cumbersome "move" function rather than a quick one-step replacement procedure.

There's an anagram function, useful for word games—about as effective as any number of shareware programs—and a "wild card" mode which allows the user to look up a word even if only a few letters are known. The search function is the most powerful and potentially useful tool, as far as I'm concerned, because it allows recall of a word by designating two or more characteristics linked by AND, OR, NOT. "Collecting AND stamps," will bring up "philately."

Special symbols can also be used in search mode for such features as etymologies, plural nouns, symbols, usage notes, special fields, etc.; thus, "<EY> AND (Thai OR Persian)" brings up all words derived from those two languages. This is of course limited by the depth of entries in the dictionary, and you may well be disappointed in the meager results; for example, my search for all instances of foul or offensive usage ("<US> AND offensive") only turned up "foul," "papist," "personality," and "pig." Our high school dictionaries were richer than that!

Finally, there's the question of costs. There's an operating cost in terms of 256KB on a hard disk, if *AHED* is used without a word processor; in conjunction with a word processor, the memory requirement jumps to 384KB (for a less-than-standard word processor) or 512KB (with any standard system).

The base price for *AHED*, delivered with a softbound copy of Claire Cook's *Line by Line: How to Improve Your Own Writing* (listing at \$8.95 if bought separately), is \$77 plus \$7.50 postage/handling from Writing Tools Group, Inc., One Harbor Drive, Suite 111, Sausalito, CA 94965.

It's also available as part of *The Complete Writer's Toolkit*, a \$129 plus \$5 shipping offer from Systems Compatibility Corp., 401 N. Wabash, Suite 600, Chicago, IL 60611 [mail order prices from other vendors are in the \$85 range]. The *Toolkit* adds Houghton Mifflin's *CorrecText*TM (grammar, style, punctuation and spelling checker, and a dictionary that accepts additions); *The Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations*; and *Written Word III*, a grammar and punctuation guide. This package calls for 512KB of RAM, and a hard drive with at least 5MB of available RAM.

AHED by itself definitely doesn't appear to be a bargain, when you can get the larger package at a few dollars more. It's also questionable whether the *Toolkit* is worth it. If your need is for a powerful spell checker and good thesaurus, it's probably wiser to invest in a top of the line word processor such as *WordPerfect*TM (street price about \$250 for version 5.1). If you don't have a sophisticated word processor and don't plan to get one, the combined offer will definitely be helpful. Otherwise, use *CorrecText*TM (the only truly powerful piece of the package) and the quotation collection and keep the rest of the toolkit in the box. □

LITERATURE AWARDS: Sescal '91

Handbooks, Special Studies

Gold: M.M. Mayo, *Anatolia*.
Vermeil: S. Bierman, M.D., *The World's Greatest Stamp Collector; and More of The World's Greatest Stamp Collectors*.
W. Crowe, Western Roundup.
J. Lievsay, Philatélie à la Française.
Silver: G. Kelly, *Catalogs of The Fiscal Stamps of Switzerland—Vol. 3, Proofs, Printer's Waste & Counterfeits; (second Silver) same, Vol. 4, supplement to Vols 1-3.*
J. Kerr, Korean Kingdom and Empire Philatelic Catalog and Handbook.
B. Krause, Advanced Stamp Collecting.
Silver-Bronze: J. Grigore, *NYRBA's Triple Crash Covers, Outlaw Flight, and its Postal Markings.*
W. Kane, Uniform Fourpenny Post in Ireland.
Bronze: J. Kerr, *Japanese Occupation of Burma.*
E. Krohn, Eisenhower Philatelic Catalog.
M. Rogers, Chinese Postal Stationery Guide Book.

Periodicals

Gold: *Postal History Journal*, The Postal History Society, H. Stone.
Vermeil: *The China Clipper*, China Stamp Society, D. Alexandar.
Journal of Sports Philatelists, Sports Philatelists International, J. La Porta.
Mexicana, Mexico Elmhurst Philatelic Society International, E. Nissen.
The United States Specialist, Bureau Issues Association, C. Yeager.
Western Express, Western Cover Society, A. Patera.
Silver: *The Philatelic Foundation Quarterly*, The Philatelic Foundation, M. Zelenak.
Scalpel and Tongs, Medical Topics Study Unit, R. Chakravorty.
The Revealer, Eire Philatelic Association, P. Ryan.
Ukrainian Philatelist, Ukrainian Philatelic & Numismatic Society, I. Kuzych.

Silver-Bronze: *Coil Line*, Plate Number Coil Collectors Club, H. Brown.
Maneapa, Tuvalu & Kiribati Philatelic Society, F. Caprio.
The Philatelic Observer, Junior Philatelic Association, K. Weigt.
Bronze: *Korean Philately*, Korean Philatelic Society, J. Kerr.
Springfield Stamp Club News, Springfield Stamp Club, P. Martin.

Articles

Silver: J. Helme, *Panama: American Bank Note Co. Index Cards: Issues Other Than Air Mails, The Collectors Club Philatelist.*
Silver-Bronze: P. Jeannopoulos, *Haiti: Differentiating Forgeries of The 1902 Provisional Issues, Haiti Philately.*
Bronze: J. Fohn, *Alamo 9¢ Stamp First Day of Issue; First Days.* □

Chicagopex '91

Names followed by E indicate Editor; others are Author(s).

Vermeil: *Anatolia*, M. Mayo.
Classic United States Imperforate Stamps, J. Rose.
Philatélie à la Française, J. Lievsay; H. Stone.
The American Revenuer, The American Revenue Association, K. Trettin.
Silver: *The Place of Stones—The Mafeking Siege Stamps and Banknotes*, J. Campbell.
The Czechoslovak Specialist, Society for Czechoslovak Philately, Inc., M. Vondra, E., also Special Award (Periodicals) "For excellent service to its membership and subject."
Rossica, Rossica Society of Russian Philately, G. Combs, E.
Scalpel & Tongs, Medical Subjects Unit, ATA, R. Chakravorty, E.
Ukrainian Philatelist, Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society, Dr. I. Kuzych, E.
Silver-Bronze: *Advanced Stamp Collecting*, B. Krause.
Korean Kingdom and Empire Philatelic Catalog and Handbook, 2nd edition, J. Kerr.
NYRBA Triple Crash Covers, Outlaw Flight, and Postal Markings, J. Grigore Jr.

Stamp Collecting is Fun, I. Orenstein.
The United States Specialist Index—Volumes 1-60, Bureau Issues Association, R. Hall (compiler).
State Revenue Newsletter, State Revenue Society, P. Martin, E.
Bronze: *Chinese Postal Stationery Guidebook*, M. Rogers, E.
Specialized Album for Stamps of The German Republic, Vols. 1, 2, 3, J. Taylor, E., also Special Award (Handbooks), "Sets a new technical and aesthetic standard for album pages."
Korean Philately, J. Kerr, E.
Certificates of Participation:
China's Postal Services, Dr. C. Chia-Hua.
Japanese Occupation of Burma, J. Kerr.
Gene Kelly's Revenue Philatelist, G. Kelly, E. □

George Blizil Awards-1990-1991

Articles written for
The German Postal Specialist.

First Place: Oliver W. Clemons Jr., *The Transatlantic Flight of The Dornier DO-X.*
Second Place: Larry Nelson, *A survey of The Postal History of The Litzmannstadt Ghetto.*
Third Place: Jerry Jensen, *Stamps & Computers—a happy marriage.*

Honorable Mention: (alphabetical order)

B. R. Beede, *Buying Philatelic Items from German Auction Firms* (Jan. '91); *Some Notes on Courier Mail Service* (July '91).
W. T. Farber, *Once more: Rubber Stamps to Complement Senders Address on International Mail, 1946-1949*, (Oct. '90). "Gebühr Bezahl" on International Mail from Germany, 1946-49?, (June-July '90).
R. E. Griffin, *Authorized International Mail from Germany before April 1, 1946*, (May '91). *Volume of International Reply Coupons Received in Germany 1946-48*, (Aug. '90).
Ken Lawrence, *Anti-Fascism on German Democratic Republic Stamps*, (Oct. '90).
Diana Manchester, *Exchange Control 1918-1923*, (April '91). *Margin Markings of Inflation Period Sheets*, (Feb-March '90). ▶▶

H. E. Peter, *The Horseshoe Cancel of Bütow*, (March '91).
D. V. Young, *Findings of The Reader Survey*, (Feb. '91).

Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum

United States — Books

Gold: *The Congress Book 1990*, Barbara R. Mueller.
The Expert's Book, P. Schmid.
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Vermeil: *News in The Mail; The Press, Post Office, and Public Information, 1700-1860's*, R. Kielbowicz.
The Post Offices of New Hampshire, Rarity Guide, R. White IV; S. Hartwell.
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The Watson Postcards, Robson Lowe.
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Stamps, Coins, Postcards & Related Materials—A Directory of Periodicals, D. Robinson.
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Silver-Bronze: *Birds of The World in Philately, Supplement II*, Dr. B. Cruickshank.
Bit of History from Christmas Past, D. Moore.
Duck Stamp Rarities, B. Dumaine.
The History of Mining on Stamps, J. McKenna.
How to Collect Stamps, H. E. Harris Co.
Ludwig Van Beethoven, A Checklist of Postage Stamps, J. Tornare; I. Lawford.
North American Wildlife, D. Moore.
Rural Branches of Wisconsin Post Offices, Revised Edition, F. Moertl.
Stamp Collecting is Fun, I. Orenstein; H. Nakano.
The Wild Side, S. Datz.
Bronze: *The Chronicle of Time*, D. Moore.
Love 1990's, D. Moore.
Owney, Mascot of The Railway Mail Service, J. Bruns.
The Postage Stamp Life of Benjamin Franklin 1706-1790, W. Carr.

Periodicals

Gold: *Postal History Journal*, Postal History Society.
Vermeil: *The Philatelic Foundation Quarterly*, The Philatelic Foundation.
Silver: *U.S.C.S. Log*, Universal Ship Cancellation Society.
The EFO Collector, EFO Collectors Club.
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The Philatelic Communicator, A.P.S. Writers Unit 30.
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Silver-Bronze: *AR Gwenan*, Apiclub.
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The Prospector, Arizona Precancel Club.
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Silver-Bronze: *Complex '90 Directory*, Combined Philatelic Exhibition of Chicagoland, Inc.
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Untag: A Postal History, (Africa), P. Reiner.
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Opal, (Turkey), Oriental Philatelic Association of London.
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Silver: *Forerunners*, (Africa), Philatelic Society for Greater Southern Africa.
The N.S.W. Philatelist, (Australia), Philatelic Society of New South Wales.
The Belgiphile, (Belgium), American-Belgian Philatelic Society.
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Philandorre, (France), Société d'Étude Philatélique et Postale de l'Andorre.
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Nicarao, (Nicaragua), Nicaragua Study Group.
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South Pacific Perfin Bulletin, (South Pacific), Perfin Club of New Zealand and Australia.
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PhiLITex '92

Flash! PhiLITex '92 entry deadline has been extended to February 29.

PhiLITex '92, first international philatelic literature exhibition in North America, will be held November 4 to 14 at Thé Collectors Club in New York.

PhiLITex '92 is co-sponsored by The Philatelic Foundation and The Collectors Club. The show program includes a catalog, opening reception, international jury, seminars at the Foundation, awards ceremony, and other special events.

An unreserved public auction of high-value philatelic literature, comprising one-of-a-kind lots of single items or sets with a minimum market value of \$100 per lot, will be held by



Ivy, Shreve, and Mader Philatelic Auctions on Monday, November 9, 1992, at its gallery in New York.

The auction firm has retained philatelic dealer Philip T. Bansner to accept, describe, and evaluate lots, and compile the catalog. Consignment deadline is December 1, 1992.

Sellers must contact Bansner at P.O. Box 2529, West Lawn, PA 19609, (214) 678-5000, fax (215) 678-5400 before shipping any lots to him. Lots must have a minimum value of \$100. □

Press Prizes for Genova '92

The Italian Ministry of Posts, with the Organizing Committee, has arranged a press competition to promote Genova '92, the World Exhibition of Thematic Philately to be held in Genoa on September 18 to 27, 1992.

It is open to journalists of all countries, for articles related to Genova '92 in daily, weekly, or monthly press, or radio and television services between January 1 and July 31, 1992.

The jury includes representatives of the Ministry of Posts, Italian Press Federation, Journalists Association, Italian Philatelic Press Union, and Federation of Italian Philatelic Associations, with the assistance of a secretary.

There will be two sections, one each for Italian and foreign

journalists. Prizes will be awarded in each section:

- First prize, Lire 10,000,000.
- Two prizes of Lire 5,000,000.
- Five art-plates in silver.

To enter, authors shall send by registered mail, with their name and full address:

- 5 Copies of the press articles;
- 2 Copies of the radio and television entries, on tape or VHS cassette, with typed transcription.

Entries must be received not later than August 31, 1992.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Segreteria Concorso Giornalistico Genova '92, Ministero P.T. - Direzione Generale, Viale America 201, J - 00144 Rome, Italy. □

Cardinal Spellman Museum 1992 Fair

The Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum, Weston, Mass., will hold its Sixteenth Annual Philatelic Literature Fair on Saturday and Sunday, March 28-29, 1992.

Highlighting the event will be an auction of philatelic literature on Saturday, March 28 at 5 p.m. It will feature general and specialized literature. □

►► Circulation . . . (From page 1.)

landscape, and conceivably could help push total circulation well above the 300,000 level, even if the weeklies suffer somewhat from advertising dollars lost to these emerging competitors. (Publishers assume that the total money put into advertising does not grow, it merely gets redistributed, and may actually be shrinking.) Thus it is possible that the 1990s will set new records for stamp periodicals, whether or not the downward trend continues for the weeklies.

Even without new entries, the top ten picture may be quite different next year. According to Jan Brandewie, *Global Stamp News* is still adding about 1,000 new subscribers per month. If the growth continues, her paper will be in fourth, possibly even third, place by the end of 1992.

The commercial weeklies, which compete heavily for advertising market share, have generally been declining in recent years, despite occasional spurts by one or another of them. But circulation of the more laid-back society publications has been growing, reaching a peak in 1989, and only now has flattened or begun to decline slightly, as Table 2 shows.

The apparent two-year decline is not a proven trend, because *First Days* circulation dropped during the turmoil of changing editors, when the magazine fell way behind schedule. Now that its regular appearance has been restored, perhaps membership in the American First Day Cover Society can recover and grow. Naturally, a magazine is not the only benefit of membership in a stamp organization, but it is an essential one. ►►

Table 2

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
American Philatelist	51,232	51,685	53,389	54,842	55,336	55,578	55,665
Topical Time	6,848	6,640	6,871	6,825	6,784	6,781	6,696
First Days	3,782	3,780	3,949	3,919	4,053	3,801	3,680
Total	61,862	62,105	64,209	65,586	66,173	66,160	66,041

Table 3

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Scott Stamp Monthly	19,445	20,666	21,839	18,124	21,148	20,835	20,511
Stamp Wholesaler	6,119	5,609	5,178	5,411	5,248	4,955	4,713

Figures don't lie, but . . .

By Ken Lawrence

Each autumn Jim Magruder, editor and publisher of *Stamp Collector* and *The Stamp Wholesaler*, summarizes the circulation figures of the four U.S. stamp weeklies in a way designed to put the best gloss on the flagging fortunes of *Stamp Collector*.

He accomplishes this with two sleights of hand. One is to use circulation figures for the single issue nearest the filing date rather than the annual average; the other is to use average figures for the year 1977 as the standard against which to compare recent numbers.

By choosing the circulation of a particular issue rather than averaging the numbers over a full year, Magruder skews the data considerably. Aside from whatever benefits may accrue in puffing a particular September issue, it obscures the aggregate trends. (That figure can be manipulated; one way is to conduct a major subscription drive in the late summer.) In three of the last four years, *Stamp Collector's* nearest-to-filing figures exceeded the annual averages for those years, but they did not signal a reversal of the steady decline.

Magruder justifies his fixation on 1977 because it was "the all-time high year for philatelic weeklies." But he knows, and conceals from his readers, two essential facts that invalidate his analysis. *Linn's* circulation was temporarily bloated in 1977 by participation in one of the mass-market lottery promotions, and *Stamp Collector's* circulation dipped that year.

Here is the context that Magruder omits:

	1976	1977	1978
<i>Linn's</i>	91,079	96,662	89,463
<i>Stamp Collector</i>	23,654	21,782	23,335

Any comparison of a recent *Linn's* figure with its 1977 figure will exaggerate its decline over the intervening period, whereas any similar *Stamp Collector* comparison will minimize its relative decline.

If Magruder wants to show how much each publication has dropped from its peak, the proper base year for *Stamp Collector* would be 1981, when *Stamp Collector* climbed to 28,784. Measured against that standard, *Stamp Collector's* 1991 figure of 18,547 is down 35.6 percent, substantially more than the 23.7 percent he gives for *Linn's*, and a huge amount more than the misleading 13 percent he concedes for his own paper.

The Table 2 figures seem to confirm that Ameripex in 1986 did give a boost to the main philatelic organizations, as reflected in the circulation of their publications, but that World Stamp Expo in 1989 did not. If this means a festival that celebrates every level of the hobby does draw fresh blood to our ranks but a glorified bourse doesn't, the effect of World Columbian Stamp Expo should fall somewhere in between those results.

Even among commercial stamp publications, the picture is more complex than what the weeklies' figures show. To make this point in its most extreme form, consider the comparison of *Scott Stamp Monthly* and *The Stamp Wholesaler* figures shown in Table 3.

Scott Stamp Monthly, which features new-issue catalog listings cross-referenced topically plus entry- to middle-level collector-oriented articles and advertisements, bobs along in the 18- to 21-thousand range, with a significant bump after Ameripex that disappeared as quickly as it came. At the same time, the principal trade-oriented publication is on a steep downslope.

It is possible that all *The Stamp Wholesaler's* losses can be blamed on editorial neglect and mismanagement. Except to give dealers a chance to get their pictures in the paper, it

Even the lower figure is sad when contrasted to *The American Philatelist's* impressive gains during the same period:

	1977	1981	1991
<i>American Philatelist</i>	40,664	50,321	55,665

Linn's learned the bitter lottery lesson in 1977. New subscribers gained from such promotions are not stamp collectors. They don't buy from advertisers, and they don't renew. Presumably *Stamp Collector* learned the same lesson in 1981. *Stamps* has had similar results in the past couple of years, and is now reaping the disastrous consequences.

These points alone would be sufficient to dismiss Magruder's comparison as one based on the least valid, least representative statistics. The reality is even worse when you factor in the full force of the stamp speculation frenzy in 1977.

What honest analyst would regard that period as a standard? What intelligent prospective advertiser would be impressed by such a comparison? What corporate headquarters will be deceived for long by such sophistry?

Instead of denying and falsifying reality, Jim Magruder ought to address the problems that have proven so costly and humiliating to *Stamp Collector* and its owner, ABC Capital Cities. If his paper were to reclaim its special niche on the U.S. philatelic landscape and deliver its message well, we all would have reason to rejoice. A few years of that, and temptation to cook the circulation figures would evaporate.

Footnote: Readers who have followed Jim Magruder's attack on me and the Writers Unit leadership in the September 21, 1991, issue of *Stamp Collector*, and his backhanded compliments in the December 14 issue, may be tempted to read these criticisms as my response. That would be unfortunate. While I appreciate the irony of a purebred free-marketeer like Magruder urging writers and editors to grovel before government authority, and am grateful to those who rose to my defense in his letters column, I do consider his editorials to be an exemplary exercise of First Amendment freedom. Though he and I plainly disagree, the opinion he presented is not his alone. If he had submitted the same texts here, I'd have published them, knowing that he was giving voice to a sincere minority among us. Also, Magruder sides with the angels in the ongoing struggle to open APS Board of Directors deliberations to the membership. □

heavily duplicates *Stamp Collector*. Its most thoughtful original material is dated and obsolete, substituting stamp market nostalgia for stamp trade savvy. But those problems aside, I think even a superbly crafted stamp trade magazine (comparable to *Philatelic Exporter*) would be in serious trouble right now in this country.

Thus the comparison to *Scott Stamp Monthly*, with arguably the most consistent circulation of any commercial stamp periodical, and therefore the one most comparable to the society publications, yields a stark contrast. (The *Scott* magazine has overtaken *Stamp Collector* in the number three spot since 1989 simply by maintaining a fairly level circulation as *Stamp Collector* fell.) I present these *Scott* versus *Wholesaler* figures side-by-side to demonstrate in the most exaggerated way what I believe is true overall, but in a more subtle form:

Those stamp publications that address a clearly defined sector of the hobby with what is primarily a cultural message have been thriving throughout the past several years, whereas those that are preoccupied with the commercial, business side of the hobby—including the weeklies—have been on the decline. (At present *Mekeel's* is an exception, but won't significantly alter this interpretation unless and until it approaches the circulation level of *Scott*, *Stamp Collector*, and *Stamps*.) ▶▶

Besides Ameripex and World Stamp Expo, one other major news event occurred during the period under review: the drastic change in Scott's catalog pricing. Most collectors welcomed the change or were indifferent to it, but the most powerful and vocal representatives of the stamp trade were offended, and made their views known. *The Stamp Wholesaler* was an important vehicle for them, which probably accounts for the paper's modest upturn during 1988 and 1989. (Perhaps other factors also contributed. I'm not privy to the timing of SW's deal with the American Stamp Dealers Association to include a subscription with membership, for example.) Once the Scott controversy cooled, SW's pattern of declining circulation reasserted itself.

As for the weeklies, their publishers present yearly interpretations of their circulation figures, but only in comparison to their competitors.

Not surprisingly, Michael Laurence expressed satisfaction that *Linn's* circulation is more than double the combined total of the other weeklies, in his November 4, 1991, "Editor's Choice" column. He properly used the average annual paid circulation figures, but I think he should also have noted significant aspects of circulation closest to filing date in two cases:

Mekeel's under John Dunn's direction has still not peaked (average 4,293; latest 4,447), and thus for the third consecutive year continues to grow while the others decline, whereas *Stamps* is dropping precipitously (average 13,733; latest 10,686). Dunn, naturally, pointed out both facts in his November 1, 1991, "From the Editor's Desk" column.

The biggest drop in average circulation, seven percent for the year, occurred at *Stamp Collector*. As he has done so many times before, publisher Jim Magruder, writing in the October 26, 1991, *Stamp Wholesaler* and the November 9, 1991, "It Seems to Me" column in *Stamp Collector*, tried to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear by playing slick tricks with the figures. (See sidebar.)

All three publishers deplored the decline in the weeklies' combined circulation and attempted to explain it, both Laurence and Magruder taking their analyses back to the mid-1970s. But because they excluded comparisons with the thriving society publications, the picture that emerged is more dismal than the larger picture can justify.

Stamps, on the other hand, made no editorial mention of the circulation figures, and that is the paper that does appear to be on the verge of catastrophe. Its sister publication, *Stamps Auction News*, has an average paid circulation of only 536, yet it teems with advertising. Is there a lesson here for publishers of society publications that have three or four times as many subscribers but little ad income?

Conventional wisdom has it that the rise and fall of the weeklies' circulation paralleled the stamp speculation binge of the 1970s and its subsequent bust. There is something to that, but Michael Laurence pointed out to me a deeper insight. The real peak circulation occurred in the mid-1970s; after that, a lot of collectors bailed out as prices soared. The market continued its rise for a few more years, and didn't crash until 1980.

Assuming he's right (and I do), many of the subscribers

we lost from 1976 to 1980 were serious hobbyists with modest amounts of money to spend on stamps, whereas the departures of the past decade were often speculators in search of greater fools. I don't mourn the latter, and that's why I think the society publication figures provide a better measure of the hobby's health than those of the weeklies.

However, there are lessons here for the commercial publishers too, if they are paying attention. Advertising and market information are less important factors in building reader loyalty than they once were. Exploratory and explanatory writing on popular collecting subjects are more important. Reader services comparable to society membership benefits may also become necessary to keep circulation up. But with or without promotional gimmicks, it is difficult for commercial publications to compete with those that enjoy tax-exempt status and subsidized postage.

A less tangible but significant factor is the image each publication projects as a reservoir of information. *Stamp Collector* all but ceded this turf to *Linn's* when it ceased promoting its reference library and supplies (color filters). The more recent helter-skelter book promotions cannot substitute for the once-authoritative presence of the Ken Wood volumes, and the anticipation of new additions. That image is an asset quite apart from whether publishing and maintaining a reference library is profitable *per se*.

Obviously the cost of subscriptions also has an important effect on circulation. As Table 4 shows, the cost of subscribing to all four current weeklies is seven times as much as the cost of their five counterparts 20 years ago.

	1971	1991
<i>Western Stamp Collector</i> (twice/week)	\$ 3.25 (weekly)	\$ 29.90
<i>Linn's Weekly Stamp News</i>	4.00	33.00
<i>Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News</i>	1.50	15.00
<i>Stamps Magazine</i>	3.90	23.50
<i>National Stamp News</i> (thrice monthly)	2.00	-----
Total	\$ 14.65	\$ 101.40
Regular cost of a one-year subscription without discounts.		

Readers at every level are seeking an unprecedented degree of sophistication from their stamp publications. The society magazines seem to have responded to these expectations more readily than their commercial counterparts. Over all, the condition of philatelic periodicals is very encouraging. To the extent that weaknesses exist, examples showing how to address and overcome them are also present. □

Thanks to Virginia Horn for research assistance. □

► ► President's Message (From page 1.)

the philatelic writer's world? If the standard dictionaries are valid guides, the phrase encompasses those writers who (a) make their living from (philatelic) writing; and/or (b) compete for livelihood or reward against other writers; and/or (c) engage in philatelic writing for pay or gain but not as a full-time occupation (the "semi-professionals"). The definitions certainly don't seem to take in occasional writers, or those who write from other than commercial motives. ► ►

Such elitism was not and is not the philosophy of the Writers Unit. If it were, I'd hardly qualify as a member, let alone as an officer of the organization. *It is* our purpose to provide the information, standards, assistance, criticism, tips, models, and encouragement that will help any philatelic writer—"player" or "gentleman"—attain the highest levels of skill.

Ken Lawrence has emphasized that the Writers Unit encompasses all forms of philatelic writing, from newsletter to slick journal, from article to comprehensive handbook. I'll add to that by noting that our inclusiveness must not only deal with all the various genres but also with all the different levels and orientations of practitioners. We've been ignoring a large population pool of occasional writers—to some degree in our *Philatelic Communicator* content (which can be heavily in-group at times), and to a much larger degree in our recruitment efforts.

Frankly, our recruitment efforts have been weak, poorly distributed among members, and generally limited to authors/editors who have reached a certain level of prominence. We can all do better, particularly if we remove a mind set that limits our consideration to the "professionals and semi-professionals."

How many of you journal and newsletter editors ever think to propose one of your authors or editorial associates for WU membership? Do you fail to do so because they're not "professional" writers? I imagine they'd take your WU membership endorsement as a compliment. I also expect that your publication would benefit from their sharpened skills and increased confidence as a consequence of WU 30 membership.

How many of you have at least one WU 30 membership application form to give to a prospective member? If you don't, contact George Griffenhagen; he'll send you as many as you need.

So we have a challenge. If we agree that the Unit is an open, non-elitist organization for the encouragement and improvement of all forms of philatelic writing, by all varieties of philatelic authors and editors, we need to work on recruiting. My response to the challenge is to set a goal of at least five recruitment letters a month to eligible non-members; I'm asking each of you to commit to two recruitment efforts for all of 1991.

And to Mark Kellner, my apologies for appropriating a somewhat careless phrase as the basis for a sermon; as penance, I promise to send out five additional recruitment letters this year for every new member coming in under your sponsorship. □

►► My Secret . . . (From page 1.)

to every purpose under Heaven" and once an item is on my list, its time is defined and I can forget it until I reach the point when I *need* to worry about it.

There is a certain tyranny about a list. After all you wouldn't put something on a list unless it's important to you. That's the down side of an otherwise very positive method of organizing what you need to do. There's a way to reduce that negative, but first let's look at the mechanics of putting together a TO DO list.

My list uses letter size sheets of paper in two formats: Monday through Wednesday, and Thursday through Sunday. The first is in three columns across the top—headed, for instance, "Mon (9/23)," "Tues (9/24)," "Wed (9/25)."

Entries under each column can include: family events, birthdays, regular meetings at work, special events, tasks around the house, phone calls to make and return, paydays, writing assignments, long-term projects, library due dates, appointments, away dates, stamp club and civic meetings, *etc.*

To make the list easy to scan for what I need to focus on in real time, I've developed a shorthand:

* = things to do at work

E = things to do at home

O = around either = a high-priority item.

The TO DO list is done in monthly increments. When I have one month of pages remaining, I do the next four to six weeks, with respective entries and specific new items I know about at the time I do the list.

As additional things come up, or items come to me, I add them.

The morning of a new day, or the night before, I transfer undone material, identify home and office tasks, and assign priorities. The review involved in doing this puts me in charge of that day.

Earlier in this piece I promised a method for reducing the tyranny, which might also be called "anxiety," that lists can cause.

It is that I use the list as a planning document. I enter an item not when it *must* be done, but when I should get started on it. For instance, on May 10, there will be a note "Nanette bd 5/23;" giving me plenty of time to search out the perfect birthday present for my wife.

I also break down tasks: "Write a Book" might divide down into "Define subject matter," "Do outline," "Do first two chapters in draft," *etc.* By planning out a sequence of achievable events the grand task becomes achievable.

There is a second element to avoiding the tyranny of lists: "Stay Loose!" Be realistic in your evaluation of the tasks you assign yourself—and the due dates. We *all* tend to take on too much and to psychologically beat ourselves about the head and shoulders if we don't measure up to our own expectations.

There is no need for this. As you use your list, you will gain a better understanding of what you can fit in, and you will be less likely to take on things you can't fit.

You should also get used to the concept that you can't do it all. *No one* can do it all! So you can safely and comfortably get used to moving unfinished items onto succeeding pages when necessary. Learn to ask the question—and answer it honestly—"What is the worst thing that can happen if I don't get X done?"

There are precious few things that can't be delayed for good reason.

The good reason may include urgent items that are imposed on you at work, opportunities you *must* take to stop and smell the flowers, and many more.

And one more thing: Just because it isn't on the list does not mean that you shouldn't do it. Quite the contrary. *You are*

in charge of the list. It isn't in charge of you!

I've developed a couple of additions to the TO DO list that help me. I'll mention them briefly.

- **A rough financial planning sheet:** Two columns showing expected income and outgo by category for the next two months. They should be in rough equilibrium.

- **A weekend commitment list** on a single sheet of paper divided into 50 horizontal blocks so that a year ahead can be covered.

- **A chronological expected travel/stamp show list** for which I've developed codes to indicate where I am in meeting expected judging and exhibiting commitments, and in travel planning/arrangements.

- **A list of writing and related commitments** with date(s) of next submission(s).

These sheets are stapled to the end of my list and are consulted, added to, or revised as needed.

If maintenance of this list sounds overwhelming, it isn't. It takes effort that can be—and often is—given in meetings that don't require my full attention, while watching the TV news, or while riding to and from work.

There is one risk to emptying your head into a well-constructed TO DO list. What happens if you lose the list?

That's happened to me twice in 20 years. After the panic subsides, there is nothing for it but to get busy and recreate the list.

Should you do something like this? I would say it is worth a try.

Should you do it precisely as I do? No. Each person has to develop what works best for him or her. But I hope to have given you a starting point.

WU members who missed either or both of my prior articles, "Twenty Secrets of High Productivity" (Second Quarter 1988) and "Twenty Secrets of Inspiration" (Third Quarter 1991) can receive them on request in exchange for an SAE and 25¢ in stamps for one article, 50¢ for both. Send requests to the author at P.O. Box 1125, Falls Church, VA 22041-0125. □

▶▶ Secretary-Treasurer's Report (From page 24.)

Contributions

The following members have made contributions over and above their 1992 membership dues. We thank:

- 0078 Barbara Mueller of Jefferson, Wisconsin.
- 0113 Charles J. Peterson of Laurel, Maryland.
- 0769 Howard I. Singer of Hollywood, California.

Handwritten notes:
Thurs (10/10)
Fri (10/11)
Sat (10/12)
Sun (10/13)
or Cleveland 1PM
Bicentennial folder
Deliver to Lisa
MIDAPHIL file
Call Joan Hough
Look at fair ads
Correspondence files

- 0943 William Thomas Lockard of Wellston, Ohio.
- 1511 Robert D. Rawlings of Healdsburg, California.

Membership Dues

Dues notices for 1992 were mailed the first week of December 1991. Over 220 members have paid, the income of which is not reflected in the Treasurer's Report. If you have not sent in your 1992 dues, please do so now! Thanks!

The Secretary-Treasurer thanks the many who sent with their membership dues Holiday Greetings and/or congratulations on his assuming editorship of *Topical Time*.

Help Us Keep Your Address Current

Some members are still not sending timely address changes to me, and the USPS charges the Unit 35¢ for each notice of address change. Please remember the Unit when you have an upcoming address change and send it to me as soon as known to avoid missed issues and save Unit funds.

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

Writers Unit 30, APS
 2501 Drexel Street
 Vienna VA 22180
 Address Correction
 Requested

BULK RATE
 U. S. Postage
 PAID AT
 Memphis TN
 PERMIT 957

TO: Col. James T. DeVoss
 9 Nittany View Circ
 State College PA 16801-2458

Secretary-Treasurer's Report (As of January 5, 1992.)

We welcome new members who have joined since our October 15, 1991, report:

1609 Ella R. Sauer, Route 1, Box 501, Dent, MN 56528. Free lance writer for *The American Philatelist* and *Philatelic Exhibitor*. Sponsor: Steven J. Rod.

1610 Gene Kelly, Zelgstrasse 7, CH-8253 Diessenhofen, Switzerland. Author: *Catalogs of the Fiscal Stamps of Switzerland*; Editor: *Gene Kelly's Revenue Philatelist*. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

1611 Richard B. Graham, P.O. Box 14338, Columbus, OH 43214-0338. Editor: *Chronicle*, (U.S. Philatelic Classics Society); Co-author: *Establishment of the First U.S. Government Post Office in the Northwest Territory*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

1612 Peter Bylen, P.O. Box 7193, Westchester, IL 60154. Editor: *Belize Collector* (Belize Philatelic Study Circle), and *El Faro* (Associated Collectors of El Salvador). Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

Treasurer's Report

This Treasurer's report represents the period December 1, 1990, through December 1, 1991, and includes the cost of editing, printing, and mailing four issues of *The Philatelic Communicator*. The Unit spent \$1,643.11 more than income in 1991. A budget cap for editing, printing, and mailing costs for each issue in 1992 has been placed to avoid cost overruns.

Cash on Hand, December 1, 1990 \$ 2,779.04

Income

Membership Dues	\$ 3,240.00
Contributions	50.00
Sales of the <i>Communicator</i>	62.50
Bank Interest	137.41

Total Income \$ 3,489.91

Disbursements

Printing and Mailing the <i>Communicator</i>	\$ 4,180.50
Editor's Expenses	662.06
President's Expenses	162.77
Secretary-Treasurer's Expenses	122.69

Total Disbursements \$ 5,133.02

Cash on Hand, December 1, 1991 \$ 1,135.93

Table of Contents

Circulation of United States Stamp Hobby Periodicals . . .	1
President's Message	1
My Secret of Time Management	1
Next Issue Feature	2
Deadlines	2
Editor's Bulletin Board	2
Correcting 'The First Rough Draft of History'	3
Sorry State of Syndicated Stamp Columns	4
The Silver Ceiling	4
Pick of the Litter-ature Award	4
Computer Corner	5
The Closet Collector	9
Letters	9
From Mark A. Kellner	9
From Richard B. Graham	10
From Huguette Gagnon	10
From Ken Lawrence	10
Reviews	11
A Different Congress Book	11
Worldwide in French	12
British Slogan Cancels	13
New Topical Handbooks	13
On Philatelic Literature	14
World War II Censorship - U.S.	14
World War II Censorship - German	15
Confederate Patriots	15
Electronic Dictionary	15
Literature awards	16
Sescal '91	16
Chicagopex '91	16
George Blizil Awards 1990-1991	16
Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum	17
Coming Literature Shows	18
PhiLITex '92	18
Press Prizes for Genova '92	19
Cardinal Spellman Museum Fair	19
Secretary-Treasurer's Report	24

The Last Words

By Joe F. Frye

Question: Where to put any last words? □

▶▶ Page 23.