

The Philatelic Communicator

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Writers Unit 30, American Philatelic Society

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Second Quarter 2001

The Mission Statement

by Larry Goldberg

I am a firm believer in the need for planning in any and every human endeavor. Plans are needed to run a business, to aid the functioning of the family and to successfully publish a periodical. After all, if you don't have a plan, what are you going to change when things go wrong?

A plan does not exist in a vacuum. In order to develop a plan, one must have a set of ground rules that defines the parameters within which the plan must function. For example, if you are publishing and/or editing a philatelic journal, it would probably be inappropriate to include instructions for fine tuning a family car. To keep yourself on track, you need to develop a mission statement, a document that clearly defines the purpose and scope of your publication.

You might well say that you have edited your particular publication for years and who better than you know its purpose and scope. The truth is that the longer you have edited your publication, the more critical the need for a mission statement.

A mission statement should serve as an answer to the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of your publication?
2. Who is the reader you are trying to reach?
3. What is the publication's geographic reach?
4. What sort of writing style should be used?
5. How often will it be published?
6. What backbone (things that appear in every issue) will be included and how much space will it require?
7. Who has the final word on content?
8. Who has the final word on writing and layout?

Let's examine each of these points.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR PUBLICATION?

You need a crystal clear understanding of why you are producing your publication and what your goals are in doing so. Put this information in writing and stick to it.

Speaking from my own experience, it is easy to get off track. State your purpose in a clear, concise manner and live with it. Again, if you do not do this, you have nothing to change when you get off track.

Bear in mind—none of this is carved in stone. It should be dynamic. It should be reviewed periodically and changed when necessary to reflect the goals and needs of your audience.

WHO IS THE READER YOU ARE TRYING TO REACH?

Know your readers and their interests. Like everything else in this life, people buy what they want. In most cases, the newsletter and perhaps a bill for annual dues are the only communication between the group and its members. If you do not give them what they want, there is a strong possibility you will lose their membership.

Viewed in this way, you might say that the newsletter is responsible for more than just communications. It also plays a significant role in marketing the group. To do an adequate job of this, you have to know your audience. An annual survey is a good way to keep track of your readers' interests.

WHAT IS THE PUBLICATION'S GEOGRAPHIC REACH?

This is an important factor to keep in mind, especially from an editorial standpoint. Frequently, we might use figures of speech that are not readily comprehensible to people who do not live where we do. It is important to know what is acceptable anecdotally and even metaphorically in order to foster better communications with your readers.

Geographic dispersion can have a bearing on production as well. If a significant portion of your readership is in foreign countries, you might want to print on a lighter weight paper or go to a self-mailer format to keep postage costs down.

WHAT SORT OF WRITING STYLE SHOULD BE USED?

The more I write, the more truth I see in the importance of keeping my writing in a simple style without patronizing the reader. Typically, most people in the U.S. and Canada have comprehension problems when writing gets past the sixth grade level. Avoid big words. Avoid long sentences and paragraphs. Use illustrations freely because a picture is truly worth 1,000 words or perhaps more. Tables are also a big aid to comprehension.

Frankly, I think the typical philatelist is brighter than the norm and you can probably get away with writing at a level higher than sixth grade, but don't get too carried away; keep it simple and to the point.

►► continued on page 3

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

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

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The Quill

Joe Foley

In this issue Karen Weigt's two part article on illustrations is concluded. Examples of various approaches to producing illustrations are also given and I hope they serve the purpose. In reviewing many study group and local club journals and newsletters, quality illustrations appears to be elusive. Hopefully we will have more articles like Karen's in the future.

A SAD NOTE

As will be noted on page 13, our sister society, the Philatelic Writers Society based in the United Kingdom has closed down. I got to know some of the members in person and some through correspondence. Like many of the volunteer organizations on this side of the pond, when the ranks of those willing and able to carry on the work of the group thins, a downward spiral can easily begin.

PAGE 17

There were a good 17 pages available for this issue. Unfortunately, I have to work in multiples of four. The page left out carried details of the FIP Web site evaluation for this year. However, since anyone interested in this, undoubtedly has access to the 'net, a shortcut is to refer to the FIP Web site for details: <http://www.f-i-p.ch/> Closing date for applications is August 1, 2001. The application form may be obtained on line from Francis Kiddle at franciskiddle@talk21.com Applications may be submitted electronically or by mail to the address noted on the form.

CHICAGO AGAIN

Some time ago, I mentioned that the collectors in the Chicago area always seem to "do it right!" They continue to "do it right." A recent note from Les Winick, president of the Collectors Club of Chicago, noted a number of new features added to their Web site www.AskPhil.org Included are: a want list service available to all collectors at no charge and a listing of every illegal stamp and souvenir sheet that has been reported to the UPU and a topical breakdown of these false "stamps." Les reports that the site is averaging more than 8,000 "hits" a month and approximately 150 questions and answers each month. This is a club that is truly investing in the future of our hobby.

FAIR USE

I have asked a couple of our members to comment on the concept of "fair use" in a future issue. It's an area that all writers and editors should probably be more familiar with than most of us really are. Comments from any member on this or any other subject would be welcome.

If there is any aspect of writing, editing or publishing that you would like to see covered in *The Philatelic Communicator*, let me know and I'll do my best to have it covered.

►► Mission Statement (continued from page 1)

WHAT BACKBONE WILL BE INCLUDED AND HOW MUCH SPACE WILL IT REQUIRE?

The backbone includes things like your masthead, banner, editorial, letters, reports from officers and any other features that regularly appear in every issue. They form the core of every issue. It's a good idea to have a few of these as it cuts down on the number of articles you need to solicit for each issue.

WHO HAS FINAL WORD ON CONTENT?

&

WHO HAS FINAL WORD ON WRITING AND LAYOUT?

The truth of the matter is that the editor has responsibility for the content, writing and layout. Depending on the way your study group is organized others may be involved in the decision process. I urge you to try to get agreement that clearly defines who does what. Optimally, get your chairperson to buy in on what runs in the newsletter, but reserve final authority on the writing, editing and layout for yourself.

I currently edit and publish several periodicals. The following is a copy of the mission statement that I developed for *George VI*, a quarterly publication for the King George VI specialist collector. It is a for-profit publication and not affiliated with any study group or organization.

MISSION STATEMENT

George VI is a quarterly philatelic journal that is published for the specialist collector of the stamps and postal history of the reign of King George VI. While the primary readership is geographically located in North America and the United Kingdom, we serve subscribers throughout the world.

There are few fixed articles that appear in every issue, other than one page devoted to an editorial, one page that is reserved for letters from the readers, one page for readers' classified ads, and the front cover.

We will strike a balance between articles on stamp issues, postal history, postal stationery and revenues so that we are able to provide good coverage of the full range of King George VI philately.

The style of these articles should be written for the average person in an easy-to-read but knowledgeable tone without being patronizing.

We will accept advertising, but will maintain an editorial/advertising ratio of at least three to one.

The editor/publisher of *George VI* has final approval on the content and design of the publication.

I urge you to go through this process for your publication. It is a valuable tool for your use as well as an information piece to use for your contributors, advertisers and subscribers.

Larry Goldberg is editor/publisher of *George VI* and editor of *Precancels/Canada*, the newsletter of the BNAPS Precancel Study Group. He is also the author and publisher of *Falkland Islands Dependencies: 1946 Thick Map Issue* and the soon-to-be published monograph: *1946 Commonwealth Victory Issue: Parliament Buildings Design*. □

Cast Your Ballot for WU#30 Officers

As promised in the last issue of *PC*, the ballot for officers and Council members appears in the centerfold of this issue. The deadline for receipt of ballots in August 15, 2001.

Wayne L. Youngblood, chairman of the WU#30 Nominations Committee, has placed in nomination: Dane S. Claussen as 2001-2003 president; Barth Healey as 2001-2003 vice president east; David L. Herendeen as 2001-2003 vice president west; George Griffenhagen as 2001-2003 secretary-treasurer; and 2001-2005 Council members Ernest E. Fricks; Augustine Serafini; and Jay Smith.

All nominees except one are incumbents and their biographical sketches have previously appeared in *The Philatelic Communicator*. The exception is Jay Smith of Snow Camp, North Carolina, so here is a short biographical sketch of this nominee.

Jay Smith, a native of Ithica, New York, commenced stamp collecting at the age of seven. While still attending high school, he established a firm selling postage stamps specializing in Scandinavia which today has six employees. In 1995, Jay Smith started another firm, *The Press for Philately*, to pursue the entirely digital production of on-demand printed and electronic philatelic publications. He also serves as editor and publisher of *Danish West Indies Mails* (second edition).

The terms of office for Council members Lloyd de Vries and Kenneth Trettin do not expire until 2003. As immediate WU#30 past president, Alan Warren, will continue to serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

The newly-elected officers and Council members will take office at the WU#30 Breakfast on Sunday, August 26, 2001, in the Hyatt O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont, Illinois, during APS STAMPSHOW 2001. □

NEW EDITORS

A number of journals have announced new editors. Among them are:

Scott Stamp Monthly: Michael Baadke moves from *Linn's* to the vacancy created when Peter Martin joined the staff of the American Philatelic Society

The Circuit (journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors): Jennifer Arnold will take up the blue pencil beginning with the July issue.

Postal Stationery (journal of the United Postal Stationery Society): Wayne Menuz was named editor. The January 2001 issue was produced under his care.

German Postal Specialist (journal of the Germany Philatelic Society): Fred Baumann's first issue was the March number. Fred continues as an associate editor at *Stamp Collector*.

Congratulations and best wishes to all. May your in-boxes be overflowing with spectacular manuscripts. □

You can't want to be a writer, you have to *be* one.

—Paul Theroux

The Challenge of Scanned Graphics for Low-budget Publications

Part 2

Image Editing

by Karen L. Weigt

Every scanned image requires some editing and this is the fun part for me. I enjoy going after pixel per pixel in an attempt to achieve an image that conforms to my preferences and reproduction limitations. It's important to remember, though, that one cannot edit something that wasn't adequately captured during the scanning process.

I use *Adobe Photoshop 4*, which is considered the premier image-editing software program. It's a complete digital darkroom that provides all the features lacking in my scanner software. Although I comprehend and use only a small portion of its capability, I wouldn't be without it. Current street price for version 6 is about \$600, but it's well worth the investment.

EDITING STAMP IMAGES

I begin the editing process with any needed cropping, usually to equalize the margins of the black background on which the stamp was scanned. Next, I adjust the brightness level and then go after sharpening to improve the focus lost by the scan. I also add as much contrast as practicable. My goal is to emphasize the major subject depicted on the stamp. Although contrast eliminates some gray tones and thus detail, with my scan resolution restrictions, I'm not going to achieve a perfect grayscale anyway. And because stamp images are so small, I believe it's more important to simply emphasize the main subject. To do that, though, I want to allow myself as many editing choices as possible. Elimination of gray tones within that portion of the stamp, therefore, is carefully monitored while making any preliminary adjustments.

The burn tool is next to add depth (darken) to the detail within the main subject. I'll often dodge (lighten) insignificant background detail and then add still more depth around the outline of the major subject, making it appear to pop out from the rest of the stamp. Obviously, this isn't possible with stamps composed of only tiny detail such as those in the current *Scenic American Landmarks* series. This is an extremely difficult series to work with and too much contrast produces a grainy effect.

Other problem issues are those with a prominent subject surrounded by a similar background shade. Examples are the *Classic American Aircraft* issue's *Lightning* (Scott 3142n) and *Model B* (Scott 4142b). In color, these planes are discernable from the background sky; in black and white, they blend in to no avail. Likewise, I recently spent a great deal of time on Scott 3375, which shows the *Ohio Class* submarine under water. There's practically no contrast between the dark blue water and dark gray ship. To bring forth the subject, I had to greatly lighten the water and then burn in the outline of the ship.

Stamp production methods also come into play. When scanned as grayscale, certain engraved issues cannot tolerate a great deal of sharpening and contrast. When scanned in line-art mode, an unacceptable amount of detail is lost. *Grace Kelly* (Scott 2749) is an example. *Princess Grace* looks best with only a slight sharpening and then darkening of facial features, hair around the face and neckline, and background surrounding the rest of the image. *Dean Acheson* (Scott 2755), on the other hand, can be scanned in either mode for an acceptable result. The *Transportation* series ultimately does better as line art. Examples of other problem stamps are those within the *Great Americans* and the *Liberty* series. These issues quickly become grainy when sharpened and definitely do not make the mark when scanned as line art. Lithographed, lithographed and engraved, and photogravure issues perform very well as grayscale.

EDITING COVERS

The cancel, addresses, and auxiliary postal markings will pick up better in line-art scan mode. If the cover includes a stamp, however, it likely will suffer greatly as line art. In these situations, I have to consider which element deserves the greater amount of attention. Often it's the cancel, etc., so I'll scan the cover as line art and sacrifice the stamp. If both elements are significant, I'll sometimes scan the entire cover as line art and then carefully erase the stamp, leaving the killer lines intact. I then go back and scan just the stamp in grayscale mode. In my desktop publishing program, I import both graphics and overlay the killer lines on the stamp as they appear on the original. This technique might involve some ethical considerations for an extremely rare or valuable cover, but I see no problem if it's an item depicted for the sole purpose of illustrating a point expressed within an accompanying article.

I've been called on my penchant to over-edit postal history. At times, I tend to get so zealous about cleaning up stray pixels that I sometimes transform a ratty-looking item to unrealistic pristine condition. Authors prefer to see the real thing accompanying their articles.

PEOPLE PHOTOS

Photos of people command the reverse editing applied to stamps. People don't want every old-age line or blemish to show up. I, therefore, seldom apply sharpening or contrast and sometimes ever blur the image a bit. What is important with people is to airbrush or paint over any busy background. If I have to get near the face, I use a tone that's slightly darker or lighter than the skin. I want some contrast between the image

and background, but if it's too much, I often run into problems with *jaggies* where image and background meet. Men's smooth hair styles (or lack thereof) are difficult transition areas that require special attention to avoid an appearance of bumps on the top of the head.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING SOFTWARE

There are several desktop publishing programs on the market, but *PageMaker* is my preference. I started with *PageMaker 1* and am currently using version 6.01. My bias, therefore, is based on little more than familiarity with *PageMaker's* operations. As with *PhotoShop*, it's a high-end application with version 6.5 selling for approximately \$500. *QuarkXPress*, in the \$800 range, is today's most highly praised desktop publishing program.

Microsoft Publisher, a very popular low-end program, is considerably more reasonable at about \$100, but I'm not familiar with its capabilities.

GRAPHICS MANIPULATION

PageMaker offers several features for graphics work. For instance, it's sometimes difficult to define the edges of white covers scanned without a black background. If a black background is used, it's hard to crop that background down to a pleasing thin border. In *PageMaker*, I can either draw a border or place a keyline around the image. I can adjust brightness and contrast, overlay images, and with a click of the mouse wrap text around my graphics. *PageMaker* also allows me to rotate images and, therefore, straighten all types of graphics. For bitmaps, this is almost an essential as it is extremely difficult to achieve a perfectly straight scan.

IMAGE CONTROL

Most important, is the Image Control function. For grayscale bitmaps, *PageMaker* allows me to change my printer's default halftone screen angle and line-screen settings. *PhotoShop* does this too, but only for *PostScript* printers. Neither application will recognize this function for inkjet printers. Furthermore, the adjustment option is not available in *Word 7*, my word-processing program. In fact, *Word* even ignores halftone setting changes made in my laser printer properties folder.

It's interesting that although 85 is my printer's recommended halftone number, printouts at the default setting look more like a 100-line screen. I have no idea why this is and perhaps some techie out there can explain it. In any event, the line screen at my default setting has been determined as too fine for the press at the print shop I work with. When I change the setting from "default" to "85" in *PageMaker's* Image Control function, I get 85, as the print shop requires. What I've found, too, is that even though the recommended screen angle (angle at which the halftone dots are aligned) is 45, I tend to get better results at 50.

PAPER AND INK

The quality of scanned images is also dependent on paper and ink. Porous paper is more absorbent than coated paper, which has a hard surface. Newsprint is a good example of an extremely porous medium. Sophisticated magazines use a glossy coated paper. Low-budget publications generally are reproduced on mediocre paper that is just a step above newsprint.

When ink hits porous paper stock, it seeps in and spreads. Consequently, the halftone dots increase in size, resulting in a darker graphic. Edges on line art and text, too, are affected as they take on some fuzziness. This is called dot gain, which is particularly pronounced in a grayscale's midtones where most detail is located.

The problem also occurs with laser printer toner. For this reason, I use a high-quality laser paper for printouts of my final camera-ready pages. Its smooth surface helps hold the toner dots together and to some extent reduces dot gain within one step of the reproduction process. I additionally compensate for the problem by adjusting my grayscale graphics so they appear on the camera-ready copy a shade lighter than I'd prefer. I've found this to be particularly critical when dealing with pictures of people. If I've compensated correctly, they should be right on when they come off the press.

Inks also contribute to reproduction quality. Most print shops are now using soy-based ink, which is a bit inferior to the traditional oil-based product. To the critically trained eye, its end product is somewhat muddy. Soy inks, though, are less toxic and easier on the pressmen.

GENERATIONS

Final output greatly depends on the quality of copies as they progress through the reproduction process, and this progression is often referred to as "generations." Common sense dictates that having the original philatelic piece to work with will produce the best outcome. Thus, the original is generation one. The printout of the scanned image becomes generation two, and what comes off the press is generation three. With each step, generation one suffers loss of detail, and the needed halftone screen applied to generation two enhances the loss.

I, therefore, encourage authors to submit originals. When forced to work with second-generation images (which pushes the final output to generation four), I usually request colored photocopies. Colored copies tend to include more detail and, therefore, when scanned, reveal more gray shades. For covers, I ask the author to try to size the image to equal two columns of my three-column page layout. This gives me somewhat of a jump on the matter of sizing when it comes to the scan process.

Photographs work well, but I rarely suggest this option for philatelic material. Few authors have the required photography equipment and skills, as well as the inclination to expend the effort for my minor publication. When it comes to people pictures, I more or less have to take what I get. Snapshots are

fine (preferably glossy prints), either black and white or color, and when I plan to publish a cropping of just the head and shoulders, I suggest that the individual send a church directory photo. This creates a mind set of size and it's surprising how many people have such photos but don't think of them when requested for a philatelic publication.

Sometimes the author will offer to scan his/her own material. The images can be sent in common formats such as JPEG for files attached to e-mail or TIFF for files copied to diskettes. This procedure, however, is for the more advanced computer user who understands that I can work best with images scanned according to the specifications of my computer printer. It's important, too, that the images are scanned to the approximate size that I plan to publish them - decisions I've often not made until working on the final page layout. Additionally, it becomes somewhat confusing when I'm not aware of the scanning options and terminology within the author's software. I've had both good and bad experiences with this method.

What I adamantly discourage are offers to supply me with only printouts of grayscale scanned graphics. I can never be sure what kind of scanner and printer the author is using. If it's a laser printer, which prints images as halftones, I'll get moire' patterns when I try to rescan. If it's a poor scan, the images will lack even more resolution than that which can be attained through use of a good black-and-white photocopy machine.

CONCLUSION

Print shops are a good source of information. By inspecting a sample printout, the pressman or shop representative can tell you if your halftone dots are big enough for the press to pick up. For this reason, I always prefer working with a print shop close to home. Every now and then the committee responsible for my publication's budget will propose switching to some out-of-state printing firm that they've heard will do the job cheaper. I sorely wince at those suggestions and attempt to explain how crucial it is for the editor to have close contact with the printer.

Scanning for other purposes such as color, high-end publications, Web pages, etc., involve somewhat different techniques, and I have limited experience in those areas.

Editor's Note: When finalizing the first installment of Karen's excellent series, I applied more haste than care as I followed my "Grammatik" program without careful checking, and misspelled her last name. My apologies and also my gratitude to her for her good-natured humor in bringing it to my attention.

What follows are examples of the same cover illustrated with various equipment and techniques followed by examples of the same stamp using different approaches. Hopefully, we will be able to publish more articles on this subject.

The cover illustrations are of the same portion, slightly reduced, of a Great Britain postal stationery registered envelope with embossed indicia and a United States

postage due stamp.

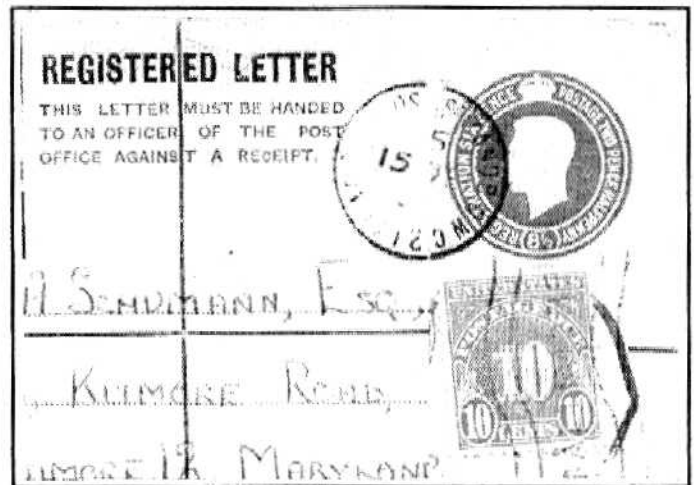


Figure 1 TIF, Scan not edited, 85 line screen, printout on laser paper. HP LaserJet 5MP. K.L.W.

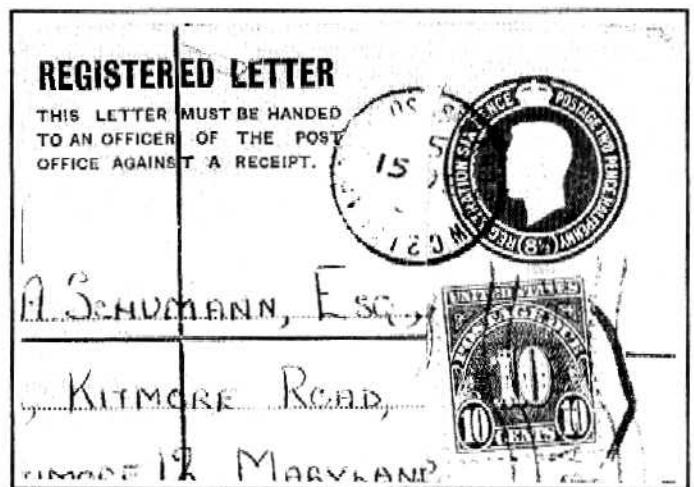


Figure 2 TIF, Edited scan, 85 line screen, printout on laser paper. HP LaserJet 5MP. K.L.W.

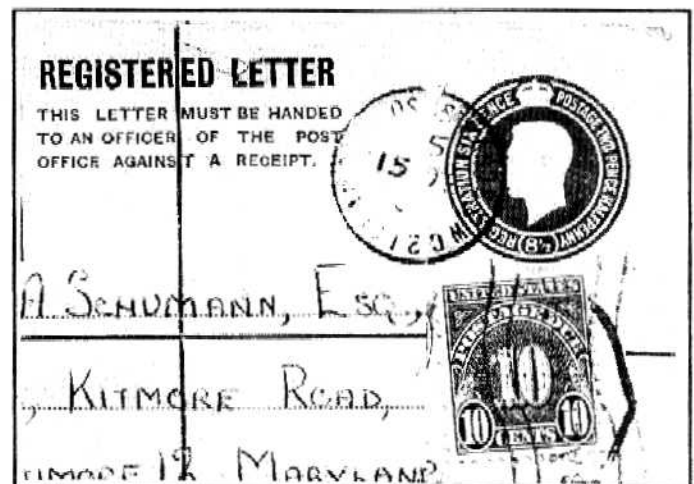


Figure 3 TIF, edited scan, 85 line screen, printout on ordinary photocopy paper. HP LaserJet 5MP. K.L.W.

Recalling Jim Graue's article in the Fourth Quarter 1999 *PC*, I went in search of a Cannon color laser copier—without success. The following three were made with Xerox copiers.

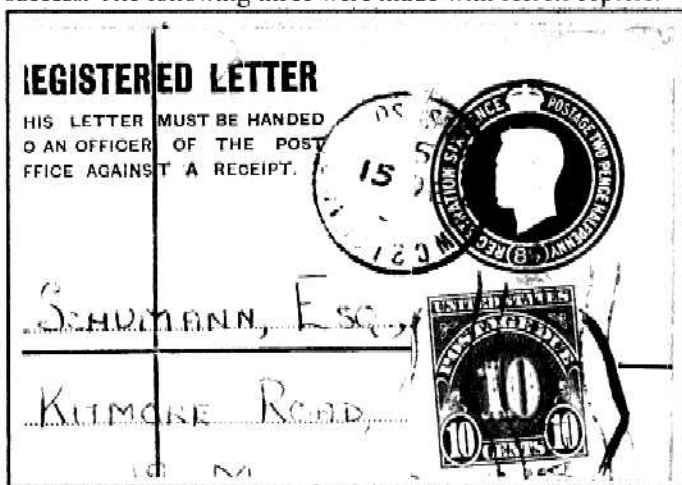


Figure 4 Xerox "DocuColor 12" printed with only black by Kinko staff on surfaced paper. JEF.

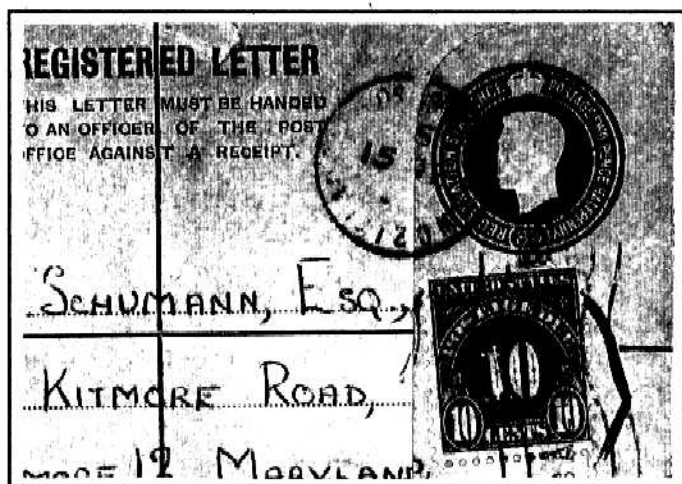


Figure 5 Xerox 5750 color copier using black toner, no adjustments, on surfaced paper, Office Depot. JEF.

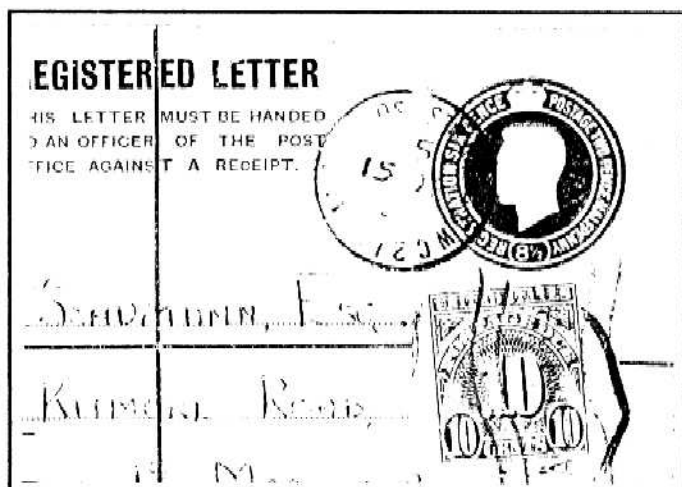


Figure 6 Xerox 5352 regular Black & White copier, mid-range adjustments, regular copy paper, Office Depot, JEF.

Next, a trial with an ink jet printer.

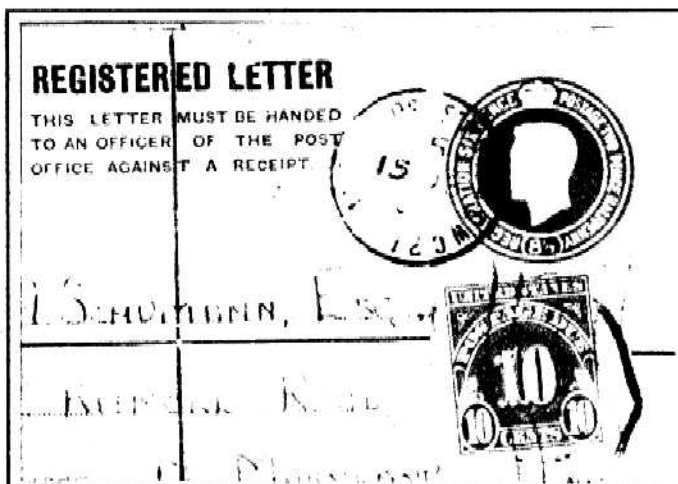


Figure 7 Image scanned with a Hewlett Packard ScanJet 4p as a "best color photo" and printed on a Hewlett Packard DeskJet 722C color printer set on grayscale, mid range, "scatter" and "best print" options, using regular copy paper. JEF.

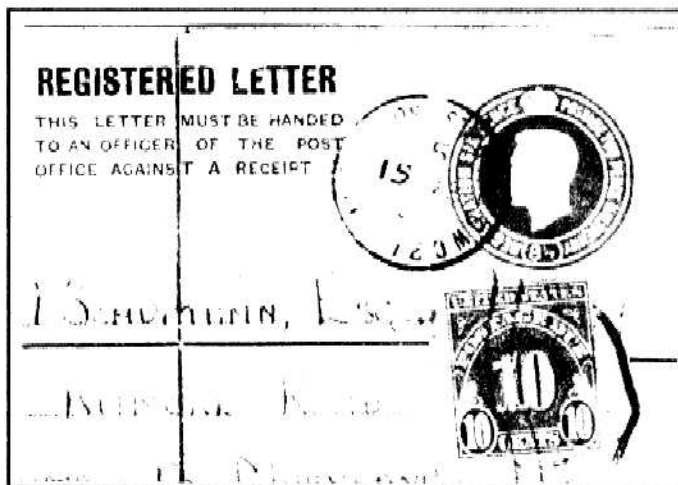


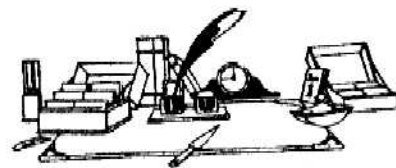
Figure 8 Same as figure 7 except that "scatter" changed to "pattern." JEF.



Figure 9 Same stamp, left-scan not edited, 85 line screen, printout on laser paper, middle-as left image, but edited and right-as middle image but on regular photocopy paper, all three TIF files. KLW.

President's Message

by Dr. Dane S. Claussen



As I write this, I am in the midst of judging, with two colleagues, possible winners of the Diane D. Boehret Awards for philatelic periodicals and philatelic books, awarded annually by the American Philatelic Congress. The criteria for both periodicals and books are that they have "significant content, importance, lasting value, and impact on philately," which made me think again about the purposes of philatelic literature generally.

In mass circulation, general audience-oriented journalism, we tend to assert that we write and publish to inform and those of us who are more honest about it also add "entertain." But of course those two goals are not exhaustive; the print media use their editorial pages in attempts to persuade, and newspapers in particular that make it clear how, when, why and where citizens can become involved in public affairs also are prompting people to act, frankly without knowing exactly how citizens will (re)act.

When the news media are criticized for using graphic language in a story about AIDS, media workers may respond that they are trying to "educate," although the media don't often go this step further than "inform" because of the implicit obligations such a word puts on them to communicate in a way that promotes learning. (And we know that the typical print news media article, without historical background for the news, and often without any context at all, written in a contrived style called "inverted pyramid" rather than in the more natural chronological order, is not designed to do much teaching.)

The news media, particularly newspapers caught up in the civic/public journalism movement (an effort to facilitate public input into government and media coverage of public affairs, and to some extent for newspapers to more aggressively use their institutional and staff members' knowledge as resources for communities), also may claim to play a heuristic role, that certain content's primary effects will be to cause citizens to think and talk with each other about covered subjects.

The media often will conveniently use the excuse that it is "warning" the public, say when they have been attacked for publishing/broadcasting pictures of a lifeless body taken from water. And media will claim to be "reassuring" people, such as when the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* rushed into print with Richard Jewel's name after the 1996 Olympic Park bombing supposedly to reassure Olympics attendees that they were safe, because, after all, a suspect already had been identified. (*The Journal-Constitution's* real motivation was to prevent itself from being "scooped" by *The New York Times*, a flimsy excuse that has everything to do with journalists' egos and nothing to do with public service.) Almost all of the mass media, let us not forget, also have a goal of making money.

Bringing this back to philately, our media are either entertaining or not depending on how you look at them. To the extent that they are all for a hobby, and hobbies by definition are entertaining, then all of our literature has that potential. But to the extent that much of our literature entertains us in the same way that many parts of general interest, mass circulation publications do, philately is a bit short.

In my memory, Randy Neil wrote personality profiles of prominent collectors and dealers for *Stamp Collector* newspaper; Gretchen Heather Mitchell for several years (until they were canned by Jim Magruder) wrote satirical columns about stamp dealers for *The Stamp Wholesaler*. *Stamp Collector* also once had a humor columnist whose name I have long since forgotten. Steve Datz has written about his experiences as a dealer with stories that were sometimes whimsical, sometimes more dry humor, sometimes slightly shocking, etc. By and large, however, philatelic periodicals (let alone our books) are a relatively humorless, one might even say, unentertaining lot. (In this sense, philately has much in common with academia, which organized philately resembles in other ways as well.)

I also would venture to say that virtually no philatelic literature primarily or even partially is designed either to start discussions (heuristic value), although occasionally someone will "float a trial balloon" concerning an important proposal or worrying trend; to reassure, to warn or even to persuade. We seldom see philatelic editorials, in the same sense as other media, in our periodicals. And when one of the goals of a particular philatelic article or book is to persuade, the most common method employed is brute force: to overwhelm the reader with evidence like a careful scholar, rather than to use the skills of a good trial lawyer or prizewinning editorial writer.

If the primary, or only, function of philatelic periodicals is to inform, or perhaps goes that step further and to educate, then it goes without saying that philatelic periodicals will want and need to do that quite well. That is a rather obvious point, but it bears repeating, because readers of philatelic periodicals who are after information, and information alone, are fairly intolerant of philatelic periodicals that can't accomplish that single task; they are looked upon by readers as publishing information that already is well known, or at least relatively easily found in other sources.

Philatelic readers also will focus like a laser beam on articles that are inaccurate or "merely" incomplete. Each of these points suggests that the editor of a philatelic periodical must be an expert (or be able to do a lot of "homework" along the way) on the subject matter, rather than simply someone who has the interest, the time and/or the equipment to edit periodicals.

Several years ago, I was approached by an important philatelic organization about being the editor of its periodical; the position is prestigious, the organization has the resources to publish a publication that is both nice-looking and fairly substantial in size, and so on. I didn't have the time to edit that journal then and I still don't now, but nearly as large an issue for me was whether I had the technical expertise in the subject matter

to be an effective editor, or whether I would be relegating myself to the role of page designer, proofreader and sometimes typist only. Philatelic periodicals can, and perhaps should, put together both formal and informal networks of experts, advisory boards if you will, that institutionalize the editor's interest in content that is accurate, complete, and original to the greatest possible extent.

That philatelic periodicals are expected to communicate primarily useful information, rather than also, or instead of, fulfill a lot of other functions, gives them more latitude as well as enforcing some self-discipline as noted above. This means that the philatelic editor can look far and wide for content that is useful to his or her readers that the content doesn't have to be in the same old format of several longer stories surrounded by shorter stories.

Philatelic periodicals can serialize long stories, and many of them have. They can publish a lot of "roundup" features under titles such as, "New discoveries," "Supplement to Johnson's 1998 article," "Key items recently on the auction block," and so on. They can publish listings, as *The American Philatelist* did with the "Serrane Guide." They can publish translations into English from foreign-language publications of important articles and feel comfortable that these are valuable uses of space. They can reprint articles from long ago (but check into copyright issues) that the specialty would be better served by having in a lot of hands rather than only of those persons who request the dusty old item from the APRL.

One of the decisions that I made when I was the editor of *The Heliograph* for the Postal History Foundation was to serialize in the journal one of George J. Kramer's exhibits that had not previously been published, or even made available in photocopied form. Part of the Postal History Foundation's mission is collecting, publishing and otherwise preserving and promoting postal history. Kramer's exhibit was at that point "available" only if one happened to see it on exhibit. The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society and other organizations had already demonstrated the importance of making available intact exhibits. Publishing Kramer's exhibit seemed like a good idea to me.

It was easier because material

from longtime *Heliograph* contributors had slowed to a trickle. And it was even easier because for the *Heliograph* to publish full-length, original postal history articles would have meant essentially competing for them against *LaPosta*, *Western Express*, the *Postal History Journal* and, to some extent, the *Chronicle* of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society; the *Collectors Club Philatelist*; the *American Philatelist*, *U.S. Stamps & Postal History Magazine*, and so on (how was I to know that the *London Philatelist* also would later take such an interest in U.S. postal history?). The Postal History Foundation's board didn't agree with my opinion that publishing Kramer's exhibit in *The Heliograph* was useful and important, and hence I became another former editor.

This brings me to my final point, however, and that is this: each philatelic periodical, which has such a narrow function even within a given specialty or region or country, as surely as any commercial publication should (must?) have a market niche of its own. It was my opinion that *The Heliograph*, when I became the editor, didn't have a market niche of its own that was both large enough and small enough to ensure both a steady flow of articles from writers and continued interest from readers. I also recall that when I and others allowed the International Philatelic Press Club to go gently into that good night, there were no protests. One senior figure observed that IPPC really had no unique function without Ernie Kehr around to run it as his own.

Finally, I noted that Krause Publications shut down *The Stamp Wholesaler* some months back by officially merging it with *Stamp Collector*, and would point out that doing something with *Stamp Wholesaler* was overdue, because of its market niche problem. Even when I was the editor of *Stamp Collector* and *Stamp Wholesaler* in 1989 and 1990, the idea that there was a large segment of stamp wholesalers who would advertise in *SW* and a large number of dealers who would scour *Wholesalers'* ads was something of a fiction. (So was the idea that there were thousands and thousands of dealers who really needed a separate biweekly, later monthly, trade publication of their own.) And yet the only alternative I could suggest was making *SW* more interesting to non-

dealing collectors and trying to sell them subscriptions; admittedly, the number of average philatelists who are interested in the nuts and bolts of dealing is probably fairly small. My more important, and surely correct point, was that *Stamp Collector* needed to be different enough from *Linn's Stamp News* to eliminate the question of how and whether *Stamp Collector* could compete against *Linn's* for news and advertising on, as I put it at the time, *Linn's* turf and *Linn's* terms. Considering the extremely limited financial resources given *Stamp Collector* by media giant Capital Cities/ABC (now part of Disney) such a competition was at best dependent upon tactical accidents such as luck, speed, personalities, and the occasional original idea.

Does that philatelic periodical that you write for or edit have its own market niche?

Please join me and the other officers and Council members of the Writers Unit, if you can, at our next Breakfast. It will be held at 8:30 a.m., Sunday, August 26, in United Rooms AB, in the Hyatt Hotel near the Chicago O'Hare International Airport, during STAMPSHOW 2001. (A ticket will be required, and due to the large attendance expected at STAMPSHOW due to its location in Chicago, buying a ticket well in advance is strongly recommended.) During the Breakfast, we'll have a lot of door prize drawings (please feel free to bring items with you or mail them to me in advance), announce the Writers Unit's election results, announce at least one more Writers Unit Hall of Fame inductee, ask for comments and questions from members in attendance, and probably have another guest speaker if we can fit it in! I hope to see you there. □

Blot out, correct, insert, refine,
Enlarge, diminish, interline;
Be mindful, when invention fails,
To scratch your head,
and bite your nails.

—Jonathan Swift

Editor's Notebook

by Kenneth Trettin

Editor's Note: Included with my dues notice from the American Revenue Association was the following message from Ken Trettin, the editor of their award winning journal. With Ken's kind permission, we are reprinting it and hope that other editors may find it beneficial. JEF

It is probably obvious to you as a reader of *The American Revenuer*, that we did not publish as many articles this past year as I would have preferred. I simply have not had as many writers as was needed. I am asking you all to help eliminate this problem for the coming year. Please consider writing for your magazine now.

The American Revenuer has much to offer authors. We have the largest readership of revenue stamp collectors in the world by a factor of many times over any other publication, in fact of all other revenue publications combined. As a result your articles will be seen by more potentially interested and interested collectors than in any other publication. This exposure can be of great benefit to your special area of collecting.

Additionally, *The American Revenuer* can offer consistent high quality reproduction and presentation. *TAR* is recognized worldwide for its quality of content and production. We can also reimburse you for your direct costs such as those incurred for photographs. We can provide assistance throughout all phases of writing and prepress production including providing you with the opportunity to view final proofs prior to publication (just say that you would like to see it before publication).

Some basic considerations for articles. Articles of all lengths are always needed. Very short articles are just as much in demand as long articles. Submissions may be sent by any method in any format including handwritten.

We tend to keep the general tone of writing in *The American Revenuer* toward the more scholarly approach. This does not mean humor or lighter forms of style are unacceptable—only that they should be appropriate to the subject. Generally, third-person present tense is preferred. Again, the rule of appropriateness need apply. (Example: if you are writing of your personal experiences in the past, use the first-person past tense.) Only on rare occasions is an exclamation mark used. Article titles should be descriptive of the contents and not an attempt at humor.

Clear, accurate communication is the ultimate goal, this goal is the overriding rule. The best illustrations are made directly from the original stamp or document. They can be sent directly to the Editor and will be returned in the same manner as received—first class mail, insured or registered. The Editor will scan the item making an electronic copy for use in *TAR*. Only the Editor handles your material; it is not sent out to someone else. However, it is realized that it is not always desirable to send the original. In that case photographs, scans, color photocopies or black and white photocopies can be sent (in order of preference). Stamps and documents should be photographed or copied against a dark background. Do not send color slides.

If you have a computer and scanner, scans of your material are acceptable. Scans should be in Photoshop or TIFF format (.tif in Windows), 8-bit grayscale. Single stamps should be scanned at 300–400 dpi, large documents at 200 dpi. All should be scanned at 100%, no sharpening. Scans may be sent on disk or as e-mail attachments.

We do reproduce illustrations in color when it is necessary to the understanding of the material or when it significantly enhances the appreciation of the material by the reader. If you feel that your article should be illustrated in color please contact the Editor for additional instructions. Clean, sharp photocopies of documents can normally be used in cases where the purpose is to show the document and not small detail. At the best photocopies will reproduce only as well as the photocopy and normally a little worse; if the copy is dull, dirty or fuzzy, reproduction will be the same or worse. If it is necessary to make a photocopy of a small item, use a machine that will enlarge, with the setting on the greatest enlargement. Make sure the glass is completely clean; use white paper to print on; a black or colored background is preferred behind the stamp or document. Do not draw lines around a document.

Photographs or photocopies should be sent loose and untrimmed. If there is the possibility of confusion among a number of illustrations, they should be identified. Taping a small piece of paper with the identification written on it to the photograph is better than writing on the photograph; write on the paper first so that the writing does not emboss or transfer onto the picture. Mail all illustrations FLAT—do not fold them, especially through the image of the stamp or document, the fold will reproduce. Do not use staples or paper clips.

The Editor may be reached by writing: The Editor, *The American Revenuer*, Rockford, Iowa 50468-0056; by phone: 641-756-3542 (this is a home phone but no one else will answer, if busy or no answer leave a message—I will return the call); by Fax 641-756-3352; or by e-mail to hogman@netins.net. □

The complete novelist would come into the world with a catalog of qualities something like this. He would own the concentration of a Trappist monk, the organizational ability of a Prussian field marshal, the insight into human relations of a Viennese psychiatrist, the discipline of a man who prints the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin, the exquisite sense of timing of an Olympic gymnast, and by the way, a natural instinct and flair for exceptional use of language.

—Leon Uris

Computer Corner

by Ken Sanford

Upgrading to Windows Millennium Edition (ME) If you are considering an upgrade from Windows 95 or 98 to the Millennium Edition (ME), you may find some compatibility problems with certain hardware you are using. Before installing the upgrade, do an inventory of your hardware and software and then check that inventory against Microsoft's Hardware Compatibility List, at: <http://www.microsoft.com/hcl> or their vendors latest drivers. Then you can make sure you get the drivers you need before installing the ME upgrade and then possibly encountering compatibility problems.

Netscape 6 Troubles: If you're thinking about upgrading to Netscape 6, the latest version, consider this: Since the release of version 6, plenty of unhappy upgraders have posted complaints in newsgroups. They report installation problems, browser freeze-ups, error messages, and difficulty accessing certain sites. Netscape has included notes on a few of the problems at: <http://help.netscape.com/netscape6/emailsupport.html>. An earlier list of "known issues" (without any solutions) is posted at: <http://home.netscape.com/eng/mozilla/ns6/relnotes/6.0.html?cp=upg#problems>.

Internet Search Engines: Focus your Internet queries with highly specialized search engines. The Web's most popular search engines aren't always the most helpful resources for finding things on the Net. Here are some specialty search engines you've probably never heard of before, but that are definitely worth bookmarking.

FINDSAME <http://www.findsame.com> : Concerned that someone may have plagiarized your Web site? Curious to know if you've been quoted online? At FindSame, you can hunt down entire passages of text on the Net. The search-engine even lets you upload documents from your computer and run searches on them from the site. Or add a FindSame command bar to Microsoft Word 2000, and run searches directly from your word processing program.

MOREOVER <http://www.moreover.com> : This search service is a must-have bookmark for news buffs. It culls headlines from more than 1,500 news sources and organizes the content into "Webfeeds," which are simply customized lists of links. Surfers can run searches by keyword, or sign up to have headlines emailed to them on topics ranging from computer software to yachting.

QBSEARCH <http://www.qbsearch.com> : If you're tired of clicking the Next button to view 'more results' at your favorite search engine, take a look at Qbsearch. The site lets you stitch together up to 20 pages of results into a single list. It can also assemble results from different search engines.

XREFER <http://www.xrefer.com> : Search for encyclopedic information, including dictionary terms and famous quotations.

"Euro" Symbol (€): Adobe is providing gratis the "Euro" symbol in several versions, including the standard format, and many others (seriffed, non-seriffed, bold versions, italic versions, etc.). The Adobe download package will allow the user to continue using current fonts with current operating systems. Download the Adobe "Euro" package from: <http://www.adobe.com/type/euro font.html>. □

Obituaries

Theodore Van Dam: Long active in the New York area, Theo Van Dam died on May 1 in Los Angeles. He wrote extensively on the philately of the Spanish Civil War and other aspects of military mail. As Barth Healey noted in *The New York Times* "Mr. Van Dam's reference works have remained in print since he began publishing in his 40's, and he contributed to updated editions well into his 80's."

His works include *A Century of War Dates 1859-1959* and *A Postal History of Spain*. Additionally, he authored articles in a number of philatelic journals. He was 84 at the time of his death.

Jerome S. Wagshal: Jerry Wagshal succumbed to lung cancer at the age of 72. He was a student and prolific writer on early United States stamps. His works were frequently seen in *Linn's* and the *Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*. For many years he has been included in the "Acknowledgments" section of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps*.

Three years ago, in a suit brought against the Philatelic Foundation, he won his contention that photographs of material may not be made available to third parties without the permission of the owner.

John Oliver Griffiths, RDP, FRPSL: Well known on both sides of the Atlantic, John Griffiths died in England at the age of 78 on April 13, 2001. His writings appeared in the *G B Journal*, *The London Philatelist* and *The Collectors Club Philatelist*. He served on the Editorial Board of the *CCP* from 1987 to 1992.

He had a number of varied philatelic interests ranging from the postal history of Mullingar to the early issues of Great Britain and South Australia to railroad thematics.

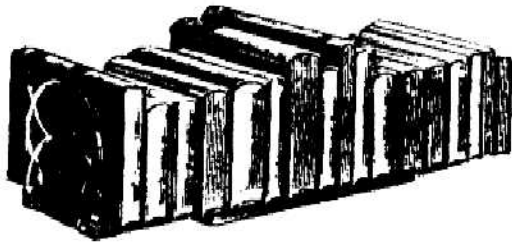
Stuart J. Morrissey, Jr.: The former publisher of the Scott stamps catalogs and albums died at the far too early age of 48. Writing in *Scott Stamp Monthly*, Michael Laurence observed that "Under his leadership, the editorial content of the Scott catalogs was greatly improved, and Scott marketing methods dramatically transformed."

Morrissey frequently contributed to *Scott Stamp Monthly*. The *Scott Classic Specialized Catalogue of Stamps and Covers* was initiated under his guidance and online and electronic products were introduced.

Michael Rupp: The Irish Group in Germany (FAI) recently announced that the editor of their journal, *Die Harfe*, Michael Rupp, passed away on April 29, 2001 in his home of a heart stroke without any prior symptoms. He was 58.

Michael was editor since 1989 and published 47 issues of *Die Harfe*. He will be missed by his family, friends and the philatelic community worldwide.

Editor's Note: These obituaries are based on writings of E. E. Fricks, David Beech, Barth Healey, Michael Laurence, Klaus Stange, Jesse Boehret, Diane Boehret, Alan Warren and the editor and material appearing in *Scott Stamp Monthly*, *The Collectors Club Philatelist*, *The New York Times* and *Linn's*. □



REVIEWS

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

***The Mail Road Across Åland* by Jan Andersson, Åland Government, Åland Posten, Box 99, 22101 Mariehamn, Åland, or their U.S. representative: Nordica, Box 284, Old Bethpage NY 11804, 2000, 76 pages, 6 x 8½", hardbound, illustrated, in English, \$10 (approximately), ISBN 951-8946-67-1.**

This fine little book was published by the Archaeological Section of the Åland government, and tells the story of the development of the main mail route across the islands, which was in use from 1638 until 1910. For centuries Åland was part of the sea route between Sweden and Finland. With the advent of the postal system in the early 17th century in Sweden, a series of farm posts was established across the islands between which couriers could take the mails. Inns, ferries, and other facilities were gradually created along this well traveled route across the mainland and the smaller islands.

The mails left Sweden from Grisslehamn in Vålö and entered Eckerö at Storby. They continued across the mainland to Bomarsund, then on to Vårdö, Kumlinge, and Brändö, eventually reaching Turku in Finland. Mail deliveries between Stockholm and Turku began once a week and were then increased to twice a week. The well-written text takes the reader from town to town, documenting the mail route with historic and current photos. While vestiges of the original mail route remain, it has largely been replaced with new highways. Still, it is possible for visitors to see remnants of the old post road and to get a feel of how the mails traveled for two and half centuries. The book offers little in the way of postal history and instead dwells on the historic route and its mileposts. Still, for the casual Åland collector and tourists visiting the island, the book gives a nice overview of what can be seen in the context of history.

Alan Warren

***"The Art and Craft of Translation"* by Elborg Forster, *Johns Hopkins Magazine*, February 2001, vol. 53, no. 1.**

The author has some thoughtful comments that those engaged in translating philatelic literature might find of interest. While the *Johns Hopkins Magazine* isn't a mass circulation publication, it can probably be found in most large libraries. Additionally, it can be found on the 'net, the address being: <http://www.jhu.edu/~jhumag/0201web/trans.html>

JEF

***Krause-Minkus Standard Catalog of Canadian & United Nations Stamps*, Maurice D. Wozniak editor, Krause Publications, Box 5009, Iola, WI 54945-5009, circa 2001, xii+351 pages, 8½x11", soft cover, illustrated, \$19.95, ISBN: 0-87341-964-2.**

In the Third Quarter 1999 *Philatelic Communicator*, the first edition of this catalog received what might generously be termed an "LTB" (less than bronze) review. While this new edition has eliminated most of the more glaring shortcomings such as the complete omission of New Brunswick, no illustrations at all for British Columbia and Vancouver Island and skipping over the last several years of Newfoundland, there is still considerable room for improvement.

There is an aura of carelessness about the catalog. Like the first edition, it does not carry the date of issue. The copyright continues to be noted as 1999 although stamps issued during November 2000 are listed. In the 1938 Newfoundland issue, the illustrations for the 4 and 7cent values are transposed. At the rear of the catalog are house ads for other Krause publications. The cover for *Political Campaign Stamps* is used for the advertisement for *Triangular Philatelics*.

A move in the right direction is the inclusion of illustrations of the differences between the original and re-engraved dies of the Newfoundland 1928-30 definitives. These appear to be the same as in my old Minkus catalog and are quite helpful.

However, there are many other distinctions that are not explained and/or illustrated. Examples include what has been nicknamed the "Flying G" on some of the official Canadian stamps. These appear to be rather confusingly referred to as "v. Overprint 417" without further explanation or illustration. The listings of the Admiral issues and the Centennial definitives continue to be disappointing. The distinction between the original United Nations 1955 souvenir sheet and the reprint is still not explained.

Many of the pricing typos appear to be corrected, but in the last review the price of \$281.00 for all of the tete-beche pairs of the Canadian 1928-9 Scroll issue was noted as an odd valuation. In this edition, the 1 and 2 cent values are re-priced at \$281.25, with the 5 cent value remaining at \$281.00.

Other aspects that lend themselves to future improvement include the inconsistency in the size relationship between the actual stamps and their catalog illustrations. In the early issues of Canada some of the "Small Queen" illustrations are bigger than the earlier "Large Queen" series. A few illustrations show the telltale moire pattern of a second order screening while others are of used stamps.

To continue to note additional deficiencies serves little in the way of a practical review. To be truly useful and, for that matter, competitive, considerable improvement is necessary. It may be that those responsible for this catalog lack the knowledge, ability and/or patience to produce a quality product.

JEF

***Sierra Leone King George VI Definitive Stamps* by Frank L. Walton, West Africa Study Circle, %Richard Payne, Anso Comer Farm, Hempstead, Saffron Walden, United Kingdom CB 10 2NU, 2001, 90 pages, 8x11½", hardbound, many ills. (incl. 4 pp. in color) and tables, US \$35 (+ \$15 S&H).**

Acknowledgments, a foreword, ten numbered chapters, references and an index are fitted into fewer than 100 pages because of the admirably concise arrangement of large amounts

of detailed information, thus easily found and read. Headings of the numbered chapters are Introduction, Tenders and Stamp Design, Sheet Format, Plate Varieties, Printings by Requisition, Printings by Value, Specimen Stamps, Stamp Properties (Paper, Gum, Watermark, Perforation, Shades), Postmarks, and Postal Rates. The introduction, though entirely devoid of tables, takes less than two pages, but every word and abbreviation is carefully chosen to explain usages throughout the book.

The author not only quotes older references that state that two panes of either 6 x 10 stamps (to 1941) or 5 x 12 stamps (thereafter) were used per sheet, he also calculated the size of the panes and concluded that only the latter format could possibly have fitted on the sheets, and he illustrates why.

The word SPECIMEN was punched into stamps that were distributed by the UPU to its members. Waterloo & Sons prepared these specimens, of which one correct type and six variants, caused by missing pins, are known to exist in the British Library. A couple more were found outside the Library. Forged SPECIMEN stamps are known, apparently not fabricated until 1970.

Postmarks are described for different periods, and 72 of them are shown on the four colored pages, though every postmark is black - but the stamps make pretty colored pictures, including shades, inverts (to have the postmark right side up, of course) and an interloper 1d stamp dated 12 May 1937 and postmarked at Pujehun on SP 16, 37.

Only the most common postage rates are given in chapter 10. "More detailed information . . . is available elsewhere," though no sources are cited in connection with that chapter. Of the seven usages illustrated, perhaps the most unusual one is the fiscal use of a 2d stamp on the receipt for a gift of £5 Sterling by M. P. Horton for the late Regina Elsie Horton from the estate of Elizabeth Marsden Cole (deceased) on 13 June 1944.

The book should be quite useful for collectors not only of Sierra Leone King George VI stamps but for collectors of British Colonies generally. It is an example of what kind of information is potentially available, how one can present it in highly compact and very useful format, and how to evaluate older information critically.

Ernst M. Cohn

United States Stamps 1927-32 by Gary Griffith, Linn's Stamp News, Box 29, Sidney, OH 45365, 2001, xii+500 pages, 6x9", soft or hard cover, illustrated, index, \$35 hardcover, \$25 softcover, ISBN (softcover) 0-940403-91-9.

This is a continuation of Griffith's well received book that covered the period 1922-26. That book was reviewed in the third quarter 1997 *PC*. In general, the same format is followed.

With very few exceptions, the quality of the illustrations is quite good. In addition to illustrations of the issued stamps, there are many associated illustrations such as essays, models, and some notable people such as postmasters general. The cover shows the painting prepared as an approval model for the 1928 Beacon airmail stamp in full color.

The "Introduction" is required reading. In it the author, while fully acknowledging the earlier work of Johl and King, explains how he has uncovered and included considerable additional new information. The approach to source citation is reasonable and explained in "A Note on the Notes" that is at the end of "Introduction." A twenty-one page index greatly enhances the book's utility.

On the whole, it is well written. One minor point is the use of the word "surcharge" to describe the overprint for the 1928 Hawaii commemorative. Even the most casual collector of United States stamps will find this an enjoyable and useful book.

JEF □

PHILATELIC WRITERS SOCIETY

When I called the first meeting of the Philatelic Writers Society in 1981, I had no thought that almost exactly twenty years later I would be closing it down.

However, it is with my deepest regret that it falls to me to have to write to tell you that at the Annual General Meeting held in London on 22nd March, 2001, a majority of those members attending the meeting voted that the Philatelic Writers Society should close due to the lack of support from the membership.

All that now remains is for the Committee to go through the formal process of closing down the Philatelic Writers Society as soon as is possible.

Personally, I should be most interested to hear of and to support any initiative to reform a writers society in the future.

Please be assured of my best wishes to you for the future.

Ronald N. Spafford

President, Philatelic Writers Society

Literature Exhibition Calendar

Coordinators of Literature Exhibitions are encouraged to submit full information, including a prospectus, for these listings. Please contact the editor well in advance of the closing date for entries.

August 23-6, 2001

A.P.S. STAMPSHOW, Chicago, Ill. Entries have closed. For information contact Ken Martin, APS, Box SM, State College, PA 16803, phone 814 237-3803, fax 814 237-6128, e-mail: kpmartin@stamps.org, Website: http://www.stamps.org/directories/dir_Shows_Exhibitions.htm.

October 5-7, 2001

SESCAL, Radisson Los Angeles Airport Hotel, entry fee \$15, (\$10 for newsletters for local stamp clubs in southern California), deadline for entries is July 16, 2001. For information contact: Ray Clary, 2752 E. Strong Pl., Anaheim, CA 92806, e-mail: RayClary@aol.com, Website: <http://www.sescal.org/>

November 16-18, 2001

CHICAGOPEX 2001, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center (formerly Rosemont Convention Center) 5555 North River Road, Rosemont, Ill., entry fee \$15, deadline for entries is Sept. 15, 2001. Two new categories are: major articles (at least 2,000 words) and auction catalogs. For prospectus applications & hotel reservation cards contact John Kevin Doyle, 5815 Lenox Road, Lisle, IL 60532-3138 or e-mail: doyle-stamps@att.net, or Website www.chicagopex.com.

□



LETTERS

Editor's Note: The differences between John Dunn and Ken Lawrence appeared to have the tendency to continue without any end in sight. Readers will recall Ken's annual report on circulation data that appeared in the 4th Quarter 2000 *PC* and John's letter in the last issue. Rather than another letter from one followed by a response from the other in succeeding issues, I requested each to submit their final words on the subject which would be published simultaneously. Their cooperation is appreciated. Both, in a sense have "the last word." The result follows:

From Ken Lawrence: John Dunn's letter in the First Quarter 2001 *PC*, and his desire that the editor should ban my opinions from these pages, was as predictable as the arrival of the annual publishers' statements.

He is plainly not cut out for the publishing business if he can't bear such criticism. Readers may judge his reply on its merits, or lack of merit, without my assistance. Readers who desire additional evidence and explanation about the difference between ephemeral circulation gains and real ones, which Dunn affects not to understand, may contact me privately.

However, two of his misleading assertions require correction:

First, shame on him for trying to deflect blame and responsibility to his editor. The dull content of his publications is strictly his own fault, not John Hotchner's (for whom I bear no grudge, as John H himself can attest). The main reason is because John D refuses to pay writers for anything better.

Second, it's true I wrote articles for *U.S. Stamps & Postal History* a decade or so ago for \$300 to \$350 each, and brief columns for \$100. But John D wrapped those facts in an insinuation he knows to be false, because we discussed it in careful, cordial, candid detail when he asked if I would continue writing for the magazine, re titled *U.S. Stamp News*, under his proprietorship.

Both the publisher of *USS&PH*, Randy Neil, and the editor, John Hotchner, acknowledged that the amounts they paid to authors were inadequate, but they promised ample rewards in the future for writers who stood with them during lean times. I took a gamble on their success, as they did themselves, and lost.

For rather obvious reasons, I wasn't prepared to extend that charity to Dunn, whose publishing ineptitude was already well established by then, and who, in any event, was not promising a brighter future for his writers. I would have stayed on at the going commercial rates for my work, which he declined to pay.

He acknowledged back then that he pays much less than his competitors (why did he not state those figures in his letter?), and less even than Randy Neil had paid. Only he could be baffled at the uninspired result.

In contrast to that, Peter Martin's first act as *Scott Stamp Monthly* editor was to offer top dollar for the best stamp writing

he could buy. *SSM's* circulation and profits soared, despite its small editorial and production staff. Might there be a connection?

John Dunn is not the only stamp publisher who resists acknowledging that creative writing costs more than humdrum filler, vanity text, and advertising disguised as editorial content, but he is the only one, so far as I can see, who demands sympathy for his obtuseness.

From John Dunn: Editor Joe Foley quite sensibly suggested that we put this issue to rest. In response, Ken Lawrence raises still more issues without responding to my previous points. So, I direct these comments to readers of the *PC*, and repeat the primary point I raised in my previous letter:

What are Ken Lawrence's credentials for writing a "Report and Analysis" on the circulation of philatelic publications? What experience does he have in the field of philatelic publishing?

As far as I know, the answer is none, and in his most recent letter, Ken is still unable to provide us with any evidence of experience in the field in which he purports to be an expert. It is not unusual for articles to be prefaced by a brief statement of the author's credentials, so, in fairness to readers I would submit this as the preface to his Reports and Analyses: "Mr. Lawrence currently publishes no philatelic publications and has zero years of experience in philatelic publishing."

In my previous letter, I also provided an example of the effect of his lack of experience, in the form of his own back-and-forth quotes on circulation builders such as *Publisher's Clearing House* and, again, Ken has chosen not to explain how he can take stands on opposite sides of the issue, or how he thought in his 1996 report that *Stamp Collector's* increase in numbers from a *PCH* promotion appeared to be "authentic and secure," then in 1997 declared that "*Stamp Collector* failed to retain the ephemeral growth from such an attempt."

I could not find it when I wrote my previous letter, but I have it at hand now, and can add that in his 1995 report he referred to hobby publications and stated, "But they do need at least enough subscribers to satisfy their advertisers, which may explain *Stamps* magazine's decision to turn once again to *PCH* lottery customers to pump up the numbers, a gimmick that brought disastrous results for its former publisher..."

"A gimmick that brought disastrous results," "authentic and secure," "ephemeral"—his words, not mine, and they demonstrate the other point I made, which is his penchant for using adjectives instead of facts to support his unfounded opinions.

(I should add, as well, that Ken makes the inexperienced mistake of equating readers with subscribers. The annual circulation analyses focus on paid subscribers, but advertisers don't need subscribers, they need prospects, and if a weekly publication can limit its paid circulation to serious buyers and sellers, then supplement that with samplings to other known-serious collectors, such as new society members and show visitors, the advertisers get more punch for their advertising dollars than if the same 'free price list collectors' read their ads for 52 straight weeks.)

As for all the "he said/he said" charges he now raises about what he wanted for his work, I repeat my previous statement: "back in 1995 I declined Ken's offer to write for us for between \$200 and \$800 an article." His letter to me was in response to a letter I sent to all writers when I took over *U.S. Stamps & Postal History*, and I have no problem with his feeling his articles are worth up to \$800 apiece. I just didn't agree with his singular point of view. If that is "demanding sympathy for my obtuseness," as Ken charges, I must confess that I can't even figure out what "demanding sympathy for obtuseness" means, much less where he came up with that conclusion.

As for his latest cries of "censorship," anyone with publishing experience would know that it is not censorship to expect a writer to know the subject in which he purports to be an expert. Lacking experience, he should at least have a body of work that demonstrates insight rather than back-and-forth guesswork.

I have no problem with the discussion of the circulation of philatelic publications; in the past, I have suggested that the *PC* would be a good place to bring together the professionals—the publishers themselves. Instead, we have Ken Lawrence's annual "publishing by the numbers"—opinions, and, like painting by the numbers, it is for amateurs, and is not up to the standards of a professional publication such as the *Philatelic Communicator*.

So, enough with the over-dramatizations, cries of censorship, and reliance on adjectives instead of facts. To Ken Lawrence I say, do the research, learn the subject, or don't bother to write on it, and to the Editor of the *PC*, and the officers and Board of the Writers Unit I say, unless we are seeking titillation, it makes no sense to present Ken Lawrence's unfounded personal opinions on a field in which he has no experience as a "Report and Analysis."

From Jun Ichi Matsumoto of Tokyo, Japan: I wish prosperity for WU#30, and every success in your future activities. I am hoping to meet many members of WU#30 at PHILANIPPON '01. □

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

(As of May 14, 2001)

Writers Unit Breakfast, August 26, 2001

The Writers Unit #30 Breakfast will be held at 8:30 a.m., Sunday, August 26, 2001, in the Hyatt O'Hare Hotel which is adjacent to the Donald E. Stephens (Rosemont, Illinois) Convention Center, site for the APS STAMPSHOW 2001. One of the features will be the presentation of awards for the APS Literature Exhibition. Tickets for the breakfast are \$20 per person, and may be obtained from Ken Martin, Director of Shows and Exhibitions, P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803-8000; Telephone 814-237-3803; FAX 814-237-6128; e-mail kpmartin@stamps.org.

Welcome Our New Member:

1867 J. Brad Baker, P.O. Box 44523, Indianapolis, IN 46244. Freelance Writer: *American Philatelist*. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

Donations:

We thank the following members for a donation over and above their annual membership dues:

- 0113** Charles J. Peterson of Laurel, Maryland (\$15.00)
- 0872** Millard H. Mack of Cincinnati, Ohio (\$5.00)
- 1447** Diane Boehret of Virginia Beach, Virginia (\$10.00)
- 1644** Ted Bahry of Carlsbad, California (\$10.00)

Address Changes:

- 1197** Albert Boerma, 106 Brabantlaan, 2101 SJ Heemstede, The Netherlands.
- 1332** Peter Mosiondz, Jr., P.O. Box 221, Glendora, NJ 08029-0221.
- 1409** Peter Martin, P.O. Box 8003, State College, PA 16803.
- 1609** Ella R. Sauer, 347 Big McDonald Lane, Dent, MI 56528-9752.
- 1624** Chad Neighbor, 28 Reluges Place, Edinburgh EH9 2PY, Scotland, United Kingdom.
- 1682** Danilo A. Mueses, 10411 NW 28th Street, Suite C-104, Miami, FL 33172.
- 1694** Mark Schroeder, 421 George Street, #200, De Pere, WI 54115
- 1707** Lillian Kent, 1179 Main Street, Leominster, MA 01453-1765.
- 1771** Charles A. L. Swenson, 827 Old Jones Road, Alpharetta, GA 30004-2374.
- 1774** Eliot A. Landau, 515 Ogden Avenue, Suite 101, Downers Grove, IL 60515-3081.
- 1845** Douglas N. Clark, P.O. Box 427, Marstons Mills, MA 02648-0427.

Resignations:

- 0240** Irving Weinberg of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 1399** Robert James Lemire of Deep River, Ontario, Canada.
- 1699** David K. Meriney, M.D. of Upper Montclair, New Jersey.
- 1745** Robert Stets, Sr., of Walterboro, South Carolina.
- 1789** Irving C. Whynot of Don Mills, Ontario, Canada.
- 1822** John D. Schmidt of East Dennis, Massachusetts.

Closed Albums:

Russell H. Anderson (WU#30 member #1591) of Torrington, Connecticut, died on November 25, 2000.

WU#30 Membership List

Writers Unit #30 occasionally receives requests for a list of its members and their addresses. It is the policy of WU#30 to provide this information only to recognized nonprofit philatelic organizations. No government agencies or for-profit corporations can receive the membership list. Any WU#30 member can ask the Secretary-Treasurer to remove his or her name and mailing address from membership lists that are provided to nonprofit philatelic organizations. □

Plagiarists are always suspicious of being stolen from.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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DOCUMENT RETENTION

Drafts and manuscripts will usually be retained for approximately ninety days after the issue in which the article, etc., appears is published. Correspondence will normally be discarded after approximately six months

WU 30 CRITIQUE SERVICE

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

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

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

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

A writer's material is what he cares about.

—John Gardner