



# The Circuit

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*The Official Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors*

## DOG DUTIES

by James H. Bruns • *Curator • U.S. Postal History and Philately • National Philatelic Collection*

Perhaps the unnamed letter carrier in John Updike's *Hugging the Shore*, a collection of what he termed "interviews with insufficiently famous Americans," was right. Maybe dogs nowadays aren't so bad. To the carrier's way of thinking, "...you don't see real dogs like you used to. I don't know what it is. Their teeth get soft, watching television. They have the bark but not the nip..."

Perhaps dogs aren't the bad tempered bowsers they once were, although certainly many carriers would disagree. A carrier in Texas, for example, escaped danger thanks to a note from a local patron. The reassuring warning read: "Please put [the mail] on the porch if anything is too large to go in the box or hang it on the flag [of the mailbox]. And watch the dog. Don't let him get behind you. He will bite."

Of course, mail can be stopped if a patron has an overly nasty dog, and the knowledge of this has, on occasion caused some confusion. A customer in Lawton, Oklahoma, misinterpreted a common postal label affixed to some pieces of mail. The symbol is a self-adhesive label bearing the capital letter "D". Here is what the patron told the local post office in a phone call: "I got a letter in my mail today, so you be sure and tell my mail carrier that I don't have a dog and for him to go ahead and deliver my mail. The caller thought that the "D" meant something like "Dangerous Dog", meaning that his mail would not be delivered until the dog was tied up.

Dogs aren't always a letter carrier's best friend. Each year, dogs lame hundreds of letter carriers. Vicious dogs seem to follow pattern. The number of dog bites increase as the days grow

warmer. Open season seems to be in July, August, and September. Saturday is the biggest day of the week for munching on mail carriers.

Despite that bad image, dogs have played an important role in America's mail service, although they certainly don't seem to be put to the same good uses as in years gone by. Take "Dorsey", for example, who was used to haul mail in saddle bags in Bismarck, North Dakota around 1910. At about the same time, dogs were being used in winter in such places as Alaska, Michigan, and Minnesota to pull rural letter carriers around on sleds.

Then too, there's "Shep". Stephen T. Sloane, a letter carrier from 1903 to 1926, used Shep to actually deliver letters to the patrons along his route for a long time. The mutt, basically of hound dog stock, carries the mail to the upper floors of buildings along his route in Chanute, Kansas. Shep would scratch on doors until someone came to claim the mail. The dog ran mail up and down stairs from 1911 to 1913 when he was grounded by unsympathetic postal inspectors. As William Slane, the Association of Letter Carriers Centennial Con-

vention, held in Milwaukee in August 1989, postal officials thought that no dog was smart enough to carry mail, although the patrons loved Shep.

Shep's end was heroic. Although the dog could no longer deliver mail, he did accompany his owner on his rounds. On his last trip, the dog saved his master from an attack by an irate hog. As William Slane tells it, the hog went for his grandfather and Shep went for the hog. The fight seemed to last forever. Neither animal was willing to quit. In the end, the battle ended in mutual defeat. Both animals were killed. Like his grandfather and father before him, William Slane also was a letter carrier. He delivered mail from 1941 to 1971.

Like Shep, many dogs have furnished letter carriers with their own form of safe conduct. For years, Ralph Wheeler, a Washington, D.C., letter carrier who is now retired, was protected by "Seig", a giant German shepherd who would walk with him each day. "Nobody messed with me while Seig was around," recollected Wheeler recently. A short time ago another old-time carrier from Wichita, Kansas, remembered how he was protected by a black Belgian shepherd. The dog would wait outside the station for him and accompany him on his daily rounds. The carrier never really knew much about the dog, but his four-legged friend kept all unruly dogs from chewing on the carrier's trousers. The shepherd was so smart that he even figured out when the carrier was scheduled to be off. On those days, the dog wouldn't even bother to show up to escort the relief carrier. It seems he didn't much care for the substitute carrier. Dogs can be like that. ••• Submitted by Joe Palko #460



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The last month has been very busy, both philatelic and personally. I'll just tell you about the philatelic side. In May I attended ROMPEX '90 in Denver and met the Denver area membership in a meeting room arranged for us by Dalene Thomas #101. Thanks Dalene! We also had a table reserved for our organization. The meeting was attended by five members and several interested non-members. The show's hospitality room was next door so this fact may have helped. At any rate, our "talks" continued for some time after our allotted hour was up.

The show seemed to be well attended and certainly it was well managed. The only bad point I could see was the same as nearly all philatelic shows; poor lighting in the exhibit area. There was an active youth table well supplied with stamps and other items of interest to the youngsters. They were also having drawings for prizes periodically.

One new member was added to our rolls, Sergio Lugo, and quite a number of brochures were taken by interested prospects. One member from out of the area, Jim Bailey #19, showed up at the table and meeting because of our publicity. I had not met Jim before and we had a couple of good hours of stamp talks.

Two weeks later Maxine and I had breakfast with Tom Allison #42 and spent the morning talking stamps. That same evening we had dinner with Tom Ginsberg #70 and his wife. I also managed a few hours of conversation and trading with Roger Bergeson #132. I came home with a considerable amount of new material for my collection. Now, all I need is the time to work on it.

The project of contacting all worldwide collectors that are APS members is on hold for the summer, but mailings will commence when fall rolls around. It is more likely that it will be read at that time.

Now that we have gotten about all of the mileage we can out of the CTO controversy let's try MNHOG. Personally, I don't collect gum and will not pay a penny more for the above mentioned condition. I remember a show that I attended a few years ago in which someone had a satirical exhibit of a few frames of MNHOG stamps, yep, that's right, he had only the backs of the stamps on display. It drew a lot of interest and attention, but I don't think it received any awards. I believe the show chairman should have received an award though for having the nerve to show it. Now, let's hear from some of you on this topic, either pro or con. ••• Ken Jenkins (#15)

### Hints • Tips & Other Brainstorms

The index in Scott's and other stamp catalogs is a good starting place to search out unknown stamps, overprints, odd country spellings, etc. We often neglect to use the index, especially after years of catalog use, as we *know* where to find most countries. We forget the index lists a lot more than what page to find a country on. Watermark indexes in stamp catalogs can also be very helpful.

••• Irving Whynot (#490)

## SECRETARY-TREASURER'S COLUMN

Tomorrow we will be off traveling again, to an Elderhostel in Savannah and to my 50th High School reunion in Ithaca, New York, so I'm, of necessity, doing my input two weeks early.

First I want to thank the editor and all the contributors for an enjoyable May-June issue. It was most interesting and instructive.

Elsewhere in this issue is my draft proposal for identifying member's interests and attainments in much greater detail in future membership rosters, by means of space saving codes. As our president pointed out to me, we are, first and foremost a club for *stamp collectors who collect the whole world*. Therefore we don't want to start diverting our attention and efforts to other collecting specialties. Nonetheless, many of us do have sideline collections: specialties, topicals, postmarks etc. and it would be nice to know about them as well as to know personal items about our fellow members. These proposals are draft only. Let me have your comments and suggestions for improvement. After that the final version will be circulated to the club's board of directors for approval (or even, rejection.) Thanks for your patience.

It is with thanks that we acknowledge the following donations:

Newkirk	#131	\$10.00
Valencia	#447	\$1.68

### PLEASE NOTE CORRECTIONS:

Due to a typo in the last issue, Gawith (#446) was listed as collecting "both." It should have read "used." And in the March-April issue, Brazle #432 was listed incorrectly. Should have been "1810" N. Washington.

Please note new member listings elsewhere in this issue. I hope you're stamp happy, too. I sure am!

••• Herb Holland (#31)

## MEMBER ENJOYS NEWSLETTER

Great job on the recent Circuit (May-June issue)!!! Mine came in a few days ago. I've been through it about 4 times now. Made a few copies to send to friends who are not YET members of ISWSC.

This is what I like in a newsletter: lots of interesting articles and news. I especially like the cover story on Worldwide 1840-1940, because I can relate to the thought process. The CTO article on page 5 is also very good, as is the Mail Sale news. Again, these are news items that I feel are important.

And, the Hints, Tips and other Brainstorms column is always welcome. I am sending along information for the tips column that may be of interest to cancellation collectors. Storing duplicates is near and dear to all our hearts, and it is always welcome to hear how the other person does it.

I eagerly await The Circuit. I'm not asking to print it more often, nor to make it thicker or glossier. I'm quite happy with this issue as a model issue, from my perspective.

••• Joe Palko (#421)

## VICE-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

First, I want to recognize the superior quality of this issue of *The Circuit*. The editor and all the contributing members are congratulated on the content of the May-June issue. Usually, I quickly scan the newsletter and come back to read it later. This time, I started reading the first article and couldn't put it down until every article had been completed! For me, it was one of the most interesting, informative and entertaining issues that we have had for a long time.

I think the regional secretary program is a great idea, and I am sure we are all looking forward to hearing more from our new writers, especially, S. E. Rutxim! And of course, I think all will agree that our Public Relation's Officer should have a column in every issue. And now, another sign of success: the mail bid auction will be held twice a year. I can only echo the Editors' and Jim Burt's sentiments to Dr. Johnson for a "great big Thank You" and a "job well done". Indeed, a vote of thanks is due Dr. Johnson.

Donated stamps continue to come in on a fairly regular basis and a goodly supply is now on hand. If any member knows of a Ben Franklin Club or other local youth stamp organization, please have the leader write to me and I will send a parcel of stamps for use in their program. If possible, names, ages and collecting interests of the members should be indicated for information.

One leader wrote that there were 12 members in her group with others that appear from time to time. Ages range from around third grade to eighth grade. Most are boys and most collect United States. Some collect Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada, Africa and boats. Youth meetings are held a half hour before the adult group meets. She states "It's fun to see the excitement the youths show about stamps."

Keep up the good work, folks! ••• Ken Costilow (#142)

## SOME THOUGHTS ON FOUR ISSUES

All my specialized interests - U.S. PNCs - Israel Interim - Palestine Mandate - provide philatelic interest and fun. Now, I'm a new member of the longest alphabet soup yet; - ISWSC, and this looks like it will be fun. I look forward to a pleasant relationship.

I accumulate used foreign without extensive purchases. My son in New York, has been sending me stamps on paper from all over the world. His source? His employment. I have a slew of the following: Iceland - 643, Catalogue 1990 \$1.90. 666 - \$1.35. Italy - 1308A and 1308B; Catalogue \$1.40 and \$12.00 respectively. The mystery to me is, how. They arrived on letters and flats (I guess), regularly, so rarity seems out of the question. I know that rarity isn't the sole measure of value, but I, just one person, have enough of them to indicate that they are plentiful. Perhaps \$1.90 or \$1.35 is not high, (I think it is in comparison to most issues), but \$12.00 for Italy 1308B? Is it overpriced or am I missing something?

Anyway, I get a kick out of amassing. Now, I keep them in stock books, in loose country order. Time is my excuse for not devoting more effort to the collection. But I bet the fun will come, when I start filling in short sets. Oh well, meanwhile, I sit and enjoy. ••• Aaron R. Sobel (#478)

## Draft of New ISWSC Code System

The following is the draft of a code system to be used by ISWSC. It is felt such a code system would give members more information about each other's collecting interests without taking an inordinate amount of space in the roster. This is only a draft, and your comments or suggestions would be appreciated. Please send those to Herb Holland (# 31).

- A Collect all worldwide
- B Collect worldwide (Date — Period)
- C Collect mint only
- D Collect postally used only
- E Collect used (including CTOs) only
- F Collect mint or used (including CTOs)
- G Collect mint or postally used
- X Have been a worldwide collector (—Years)

- AA Age — under 15
- BB Age — 15 - 21
- CC Age — 22 - 40
- DD Age — 41 - 65
- EE Age — 66 or over

- 1 Also collect covers
- 1a Also collect covers (U.S. only)
- 2 Also collect postal stationery
- 2a Also collect postal stationery (U.S. only)
- 3 Also collect postmarks, cancellations, etc.
- 3a Also collect postmarks, cancellations, etc. (U.S. only)
- 4 Also collect precancels
- 4a Also collect precancels (U.S. only)
- 5 Also collect perfins
- 5a Also collect perfins (U.S. only)
- 6 Also collect postcards
- 6a Also collect postcards (U.S. only)
- 7 Especially like stamps of (Country)
- 50 Want to trade or exchange with other members
- 60 Want to correspond with other members
- 70 Write first
- 80 I speak English only
- 81 I speak Spanish only
- 82 I speak (Language) only
- 83 I speak English and (Language)

SAMPLE: B (to 1940), D, X (15), CC, 4a, 7 (France), 50, 80

MEANS: Collect worldwide to 1940 only, collect postally used only, have collected worldwide for 15 years, my age is between 22 and 40, also collect US precancels, especially like stamps of France, want to exchange stamps with other members and only speak English. •••

**Deadline Next Issue  
September 7th**

## Whatzit? # 90-1 Elicts Many Responses

The Whatzit # 90-1 (May-June Circuit) elicited quite a response. We thank all who took the time to help out a fellow collector. The following replies should clear-up any question of identity on this one:

1. Here is a partial answer to the Whatzit. It is a local issued by the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, i.e. British Occupation of Palestine in the WWI era. The watermark would place it correctly in this time frame. Can't help on the O.P.D.A. though. ••• Ken Jenkins (#15)

2. No positive ID on this Whatzit, but the following might help. OPDA is a revenue overprint of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. EEF is the abbreviation for Egyptian Expeditionary Forces of the British Army during WWI. This stamp may be one of Palestine # 4 through 11 as listed in Scott Vol 1. I look forward to reading the complete identification in a future issue of *The Circuit*. ••• Ralph Chapin (#158)

3. I'm pleased to help. The OPDA is: Ottoman Public Debt Administration. In Palestine Mandate — you had the EEF (Egyptian Expeditionary Force) stamps, before the civilian administration. The stamp shown is a fiscal (revenue) stamp, generally used somewhere in the 1918-24 period. In the Bale Catalog of Mandate Stamps - 1978 edition (I don't have later), it is type R-11 and carries Bale # (either 106, 107, 108, or 109, depending on stamp color). It shows a value of \$1.50. Hope it helps. ••• Aaron Sobel (#478)

4. Thiszit! The item in question consists of "O.P.D.A./5 Mil./E.E.F." on otherwise-blank paper with a British watermark (#33). E.E.F. appears in the index of Scott's catalog volume 1, which directs you to Palestine. There Scott says "Formerly a part of Turkey, Palestine was occupied by the Egyptian Expeditionary Forces of the British Army in World War I" and also "Nos. 4-11 with overprint "O.P.D.A." (Ottoman Public Debt Administration) are revenue stamps." (Turkey was known as the Ottoman empire before WWI.) Palestine's first stamps, issued in 1918, were inscribed "EEF" rather than "Palestine" and had values in milliemes and piastres (Turkish currency). Therefore,

this item appears to be a revenue stamp of Palestine under British occupation, issued between 1917 and 1924, when Britain's watermark 33 was replaced  
••• MJS #353

5. The enclosed photocopy, from the 1986 *Stanley Gibbons British Commonwealth Catalogue*, help answer the Whatzit. It is, indeed, a stamp, but primarily a fiscal one that was used to some extent for postage. *From the Gibbons Catalogue:* Postal Fiscals - Type-set stamps inscribed OPDA (Ottoman, etc.) or HJZ (Hejaz Railway); British 1d. stamps (No. 336); and Palestine stamps overprinted with one or other of the above groups of letters, or with the word "Devair", with or without surcharge of new value, are fiscal stamps. They are known used as postage stamps, alone, or with other stamps to make up the correct rates and were passed by the postal authorities, although they were not definitely authorized for postal use. ••• John Pruitt (#121)

6. The next reply gave basically the same information as the above, but added that EEF & OPDA was also applied to the British 1d. issue of 1912 (Scott # 154.) A couple days later, a second letter arrived from the same writer: In reviewing the note I sent you a few days ago, I suddenly realized I made the assumption which may or may not be true — that the design under the overprint illustrated was Palestine design A1 or that of Great Britain's # 154. I assumed the design was there but did not reproduce after being photocopied and reproduced in the newsletter. If either of the designs above is the one involved, my first ID was correct. However, if by chance there is NO design (*Editor's note: There is NO design.*) and this overprint is on blank paper, it is most likely a proof of the overprint (the watermark mentioned even confirms the correct paper).  
••• Irving Whynot (#490)

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