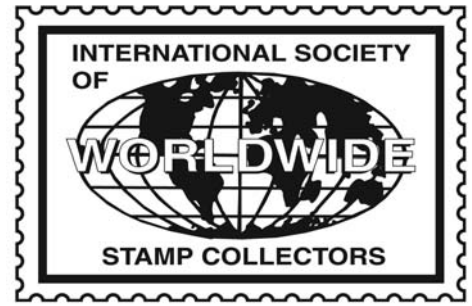


# The Circuit



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## Ventures in Printing: Classic Multicolored Postage Stamps

by Sandy Stover (#2325)

*Editors Note: This is the second article in a series, adapted from a book on classic multicolored postage stamps currently being written by the author. Mr. Stover is a retired college professor who returned to stamp collecting a decade prior to retirement, gradually accumulating a modest worldwide classic collection of approximately 22,000 stamps. Mr. Stover also maintains modern collections in select countries, including Germany, Canada, and the former Soviet Union countries.*

The previous article surveyed trends in printing methods used to produce classic multicolored postage (CMP) stamps. This second article is a further general survey of CMP stamps with respect to producer countries, subject types, postal function types and value/rarity. Future articles, less general in content, will discuss specific CMP stamps (grouped by printing method), especially those issued prior to World War I.

### *The Dominant Producers*

My inventory of CMP stamps lists 55 countries that are producers of the 432 stamps. This is only one-fifth of all classic issuing entities—confirmation from another perspective that the effort to produce CMP stamps was fairly limited. Countries that issued CMP stamps are listed in Table 1 (see page 6), in order of total number of Scott major listings that are CMP stamps for each country. Additional columns list total number of sets represented and total number of discrete designs. For the purposes of this analysis, I have coined the term *discrete design* in reference to elements of a stamp's

design other than color or denomination. In other words, two stamps with different colors and different denominations, but with all other design elements the same, have the same discrete design. (An exception to this rule is the case where a denomination numeral is the subject of the stamp, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina Scott J1-13. Here, each of the thirteen stamps is considered to have its own discrete design.) Number of discrete designs is perhaps the best indicator of extent of production (of the three criteria presented here).

An in-depth discussion of multicolor stamp-printing extent (or *challenge*) would need to address

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## In Memoriam

~ Thomas Pomaski ~

We were saddened to learn that Thomas Pomaski (#410) passed away late last year. Tom was co-manager of the Omni Exchange. Despite health problems that ultimately required him to be on dialysis, Tom ably ran his circuit and was of great help to the other managers. He accepted dialysis with stoic equanimity and only complained that it tied up a lot of his time. Many of us enjoyed corresponding with Tom over the years and he will be missed. We extend our sympathy to his wife, Jane, and his family.

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NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE:

January 20, 2008

# Semi Crazy

by Bob Voss (#2182)

**I** started accumulating and collecting stamps over fifty years ago. It all started when I was eight years old and my father was sent on an extended business trip to Denmark. The stamps he used on his letters home were bright and brilliant Denmark definitives. My mother saw my fascination and connected me to an adult collector who mentored me into the hobby of stamp collecting.

Fifteen years ago, I had soaked and sorted and purchased enough stamps to turn our four bedroom ranch into a two bedroom bungalow. Something had to give. I decided that I needed to take control and specialize. But I loved the global nature of worldwide collecting and I was stumped as to what direction my hobby would take me. One evening, I was looking over a lot of stamps I had purchased from a fellow collector at our local stamp club when I realized it was an assortment of semipostal stamps from Austria. The stamps were beautifully engraved. The extra numbers on the face of the stamps fascinated me. I wondered, "What charities do the stamps support?"

That evening, I made the fateful decision to narrow (ha, ha) my collecting interests to worldwide semipostal stamps. It has been a decision I have never regretted. By the way, I live in the same house and my spouse of many years is still wondering when she will get her guest bedrooms back.

I hope to write a series of articles for *The Circuit* regarding collecting semipostals. For this first article, I would like to share with you (in David Letterman style) the Top Ten reasons to collect worldwide semipostals:

10. While remaining global, collecting worldwide semipostals does narrow the collecting field dramatically.

9. Many countries have limited semipostal issues, thus making it possible to experience the satisfaction of "completing" a country. I remember the joy when I located, from the legendary dealer John Ross in downtown Chicago, the last Japanese semipostal I needed for my collection.

8. The educational nature of stamp collecting is enhanced through learning the causes of the many charities brought about by social needs resulting from war, natural disasters, man-made disasters and diseases.

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Single/Dealer/Club 2 yr. membership: \$27.00\*

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Dues include six newsletters per year. You may pay for up to three years at a time. For an application or further information, send a SASE or an IRC to:

Terry Myers

ISWSC Executive Director

9463 Benbrook Blvd. #114

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TMyers6497@aol.com

### Advertising Policy:

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Per column inch: \$5.00

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\*Camera Ready means ready to paste up or scan and print. Reductions and typesetting extra.

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NOTE: State abbreviations = one word; "P.O. Box 1234" = two words; ZIP Code = one word.

**Make all checks payable to "ISWSC" in U.S. funds. Send text and payment for ads to *The Circuit* Editor (see page 2).**

# Postcards from Albania

by Terry Myers (#736)  
ISWSC Executive Director

Part of my around the world tour this year involved taking a cruise ship from Venice to Athens with several port calls along the Adriatic East Coast. Indeed, we thoroughly enjoyed visiting places like Dubrovnik, Croatia and Kotor, Montenegro. As usual, we sent a series of postcards from each country we visited.

Apparently our cruise line had decided to try out a new port for their itinerary – Sarande, Albania. There



was no dock so we had to take the life boats to shore. The local tour agency had completely messed up and there were no taxis, buses, or even local hosts around. We decided to at least take a long walk into the town to see the local

SIGHTS. It turned out that there really weren't any.

Albania has had a really bad financial period and hasn't recovered much from the prolonged communist dictatorship. I had visited other parts of Albania in the past and wasn't expecting a lot. This town was supposed to be a new beach resort, but after a brief spurt of building, the money ran out and there were literally hundreds of unfinished condominiums. There didn't seem to be any organized trash removal system and every vacant lot was a massive dump – and we watched the rats running back and forth across the streets. The very few stores only sold beach related items or were tiny snack shops.

When we finally got back to our departure area, we noted one tiny store front that actually had some postcards on display. The proprietors turned out to be a very friendly older couple who were delighted to have some customers. They didn't speak any English, but they could understand my wife's Russian. And they indicated they were willing to take our Euros as we didn't have any local currency. We decided to buy 15 cards. But then there was the problem of stamps.

Initially, the owner told us he had plenty of stamps and produced several nice commemoratives for us. But then it turned out none of us had any idea what the international postal rate would be! If we used even double the local rate, we would exhaust all of his stamps. So we took a wild guess and also reduced the number of cards. The owner and his wife happily searched in all of their drawers and found a few more stamps of various vintages and denominations and we decorated the cards with postage. And they insisted on mailing the cards for us.



Albania, Scott 1549.

Of course, not one of them has ever arrived!

## President's Message

by Joanne Berkowitz (#98)  
ISWSC President

As the deadline for this message (November 20) is right in the middle of my visit to India, I will report back in the following issue. I do want to again thank everyone who has stepped up to replace retiring program managers, volunteered to run for office, wrote letters, or helped out the club in any way.

One of the purposes for establishing this club was to allow worldwide collectors to have contact with other worldwide collectors to exchange material. So, if another member contacts you, please at least respond to the contact – even if you do not wish to exchange stamps.

In the Internet age, we are bombarded with less than savory contacts. Please let us know if you are solicited by any person or organization you believe to be less than honest. Our mailing list is only for ISWSC members' use.

# Semi Crazy

Continued from page 3

7. Stamp album pages are inexpensive and easy to produce through "Stamp Album" CD software advertised regularly in the philatelic media. One only has to download the semipostal pages.

6. Stamp shows are a blast, because almost every dealer has something to offer the semipostal collector.

5. Collecting semipostals has resulted in many wonderful trading opportunities with other collectors. Many of the regular stamps I accumulated in the past are now being traded for semi's.

4. Semipostal stamps have excellent resale value. Notice I did not say they are a good investment. I collect stamps as a hobby. My retirement is funded by "safer" investments. However, many semipostal issues were not purchased or collected because of their higher initial cost, resulting in fewer quantities available for future generations. I do not intend to make money on my collections when it becomes time to recycle them

back into the philatelic community, but I feel I will get more bang for the buck with my semipostal-only collections.

3. Semipostals are ripe for research. Very little is known in the philatelic community about the result of the fund raising efforts of these stamps. I enjoy looking into the social impact of semipostal stamps.

2. As a result of collecting and researching information regarding semipostal stamps, I have developed many wonderful relationships with collectors, exhibitors and dealers. I am thankful for the many wonderful relationships that have enriched my life.

1. Collecting worldwide semipostal stamps and covers has given my life a sense of emotional and psychological balance. I may be "semi crazy", but this hobby has rescued me many times from the many travails of life, providing me a respite from occupational trials and tribulations.

*Mr. Voss is a retired Lutheran Pastor and an APS part-time stamp dealer, doing business as Lake Edge Stamp Service. His passions beyond stamps include grand parenting, fishing and music.*

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## Annual Stamp "Grab Bag" Offers Unique Swapping Opportunity

**G**SWSC member Marvin Warner (#248) has once again graciously agreed to host the Annual Stamp Grab Bag program. This unique, once a year, program works as follows:

1. Submit 100 used stamps (off paper), all in one category – either all Large, all Small, or all CTO. (Use 1" by 1" to distinguish Large from Small.) Do not send damaged, obliterated or otherwise undesirable stamps.

2. Stamps should be in a packet (e.g. glassine), not loose, one packet per envelope. Multiple submissions are welcome. To encourage further trading, you are welcome to enclose a memo or ID in your packet or you may remain anonymous.

3. Each submission **MUST** include a self addressed stamped envelope (SASE). Submissions without a SASE will be sent to the ISWSC Director of Stamp Outreach as a donation. You are requested to indicate the stamp category (Large, Small or CTO) on the lower left hand corner of both the envelope and your SASE to help minimize errors.

4. February 2008 is the four week "open window" for submissions. Mail packets (please use commemorative stamps!) and SASE to:

Marvin Warner  
4766 Redbrook Ct  
San Diego, CA 92117-3353

5. You will receive a packet (in your SASE) from the same category (Large, Small, CTO) that you submit. Please send stamps that are of the quality that you would like to receive. Your comments, after receipt, are solicited.

6. Neither the ISWSC nor Marvin Warner accepts responsibility for the quality or quantity of the contents of the packets – YOU are the program. Use discretion. If you don't like the exchanges, please don't send them back as new offerings.

7. This program is open to all members of the ISWSC.

So, why not give it a try? The worst that can happen is that you lose 100 unwanted duplicates and some postage. On the other hand, you just might find some usable stamps or, better yet, a new trading partner.

Thank you, Marvin for making this unique swapping opportunity available to our membership!

# Ventures

Continued from page 1

numerous factors not included in Table 1, for example: (1) date of printing—an indicator of printing technology available; (2) printing method; (3) design difficulty with respect to the printing process; (4) size of issue; and (5) production standards. The printing challenge represented by a single early *intaglio* CMP

definitive (one of the Iranian, Chilean or Austrian portraits to be discussed in a future article) was certainly far greater than that encountered in the printing of entire photogravure sets issued late in the classic period, for example Switzerland *National Fete Day*, 1940 (Scott B100-105) or Yugoslavia *Automobile and Motorcycle Races, Belgrade*, 1939 (Scott B94-97).

Such nuance aside, there is no evidence in Table 1 of an *outstanding* producer of CMP stamps. The list does suggest, however, that Switzerland and Russia were in the forefront of nations willing to take on the ventures

**TABLE 1 – Countries that Issued at Least Four Multicolored Postage Stamps, 1840-1940, by Number of Scott Major Listings that are Multicolored, Number of Sets Represented, and Number of Discrete Multicolored Designs**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Number of Scott Major Listings</u>	<u>Number of Sets Represented *</u>	<u>Number of Discrete Designs</u>
Switzerland	42	6	36
Russia (Imperial and Soviet)	35	6	28
Dominican Republic	32	9	10
Mexico	23	3	6
Iran	20	4	7
Mozambique	18	3	3
Paraguay	17	3	8
Germany	17	1	17
Lithuania	15	4	6
Austria/Bosnia & Herzegovina	2/13	2/1	2/13
Greece	15	5	10
Ecuador	14	2	2
Mongolia	11	3	9
Guatemala	11	1	11
Brazil	10	5	7
Honduras	10	2	5
Azerbaijan	10	1	4
Panama	10	2	2
Columbia	9	1	9
Spain	7	5	6
Yugoslavia	7	3	7
Portugal	7	2	3
Tannu Tuva	7	1	7
El Salvador	6	5	5
Uruguay	6	1	1
France	4	3	4
Belgium	4	1	4
China	4	1	1
Romania	4	1	1

**Countries with one, two or three multicolored postage stamps, 1840-1940:**

Barbados, Bavaria, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Danzig, Estonia, French Equatorial Africa, Haiti, Heligoland, Iceland, Indo-China, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Manchukuo, Nicaragua, Peru, Portuguese Guinea, Saar, Togo, Turkey, Yemen

\*Stamps not in sets are counted as representing a “set of one”.

of classic multicolored printing. These two countries would rank first and second on either *number of major listings* or *number of discrete designs*. On the other hand, it is also true that one large set constitutes one half of the total Russian CMP stamp production and almost two-thirds of the Swiss CMP stamp production, which may suggest (at first) a lack of variety and printing challenge. But further consideration will, I believe, suggest otherwise.

(A possible objection to this list is that it includes three *local postage stamps*: Switzerland, Scott 3L1, and Russia, Scott L10 and L11. Here I am simply following Scott *major listing* practice. This practice presumably reflects distinctions between *private local stamps* and *government-issued local postage stamps*, as discussed by Kenneth Wood in *This is Philately* [Wood, 1982, vol. 3, pp. 733-34]. Thus, private multicolored Christmas Island stamps, mentioned below, are *not* included in the list.)

#### *Design and Printing Complications in Three Large CMP Stamp Sets*

The Soviet Union, subsequent to Imperial Russia's issuance of 16 CMP stamps, produced 19 CMP stamps, including one large (17-stamp) photogravure (?) set (*All-Union Agricultural Fair*, Scott 794-810; Figure 1). This set appears to be in *process color* and was issued in 1940 at the very end of the classic period. Its lateness notwithstanding, it is the first effort by any nation to use process color in creating postage stamp images with a *naturalistic, color-photographic effect*—albeit with rather crude results. The original images were color photographs, which were then reproduced in “full color” by the Soviet printing process. (This discounts local and private issues of Christmas Island, 1924, cited by Williams and Williams as the very first “postage” stamps printed in process color.) (Williams and Williams, 1971, pp. 138-9)

But was the Soviet stamp-printing venture really all that groundbreaking? It should be noted that there are numerous examples—earlier than the Soviet stamps—of what I regard as an *artistic* form of process color: for example, Greece, Scott C1-C4, and Yugoslavia, Scott B94-97. Still, these earlier stamps do not represent an attempt at full-color *photographic* effect.

There are further complications in assessing the degree of innovation represented by the Soviet stamps: Williams and Williams report that, while the stamps do create *apparent* full color, this is not the result of process color in the often used sense of *three-color* or *four-color process*, since only two of the ink colors (blue and red) are process colors, while the other two (green and yellow) are *mass* colors. Adding even more

complication, the same authors report a different printing method than that reported in the Scott catalogue—relief rather than photogravure. (Williams and Williams, 1971, p. 418) The picture that emerges, then, is of a rather *cobbled together*—yet undoubtedly



**Figure 1— Multicolored stamps from three large classic sets. Left to right: Switzerland (Scott B11), Russia (Scott 794), Germany (Scott B18).**

*daring*—printing adventure. (The horror of Stalinist policy looms as a dark 1930's backdrop to the agricultural topic of these stamps. That is a topical discussion waiting for another article.)

And as for Switzerland, it is true that two-thirds of its total CMP stamp output is a single relief-printed semi-postal *Coat of Arms* series (Scott B10-14, 17-19, 21, 23, 26, 27, 30-33, 35-39, 45-47, 53-55; Figure 1), spanning a printing history of thirteen years (1918-1930). But it is also true that the intricate multicolored design of these stamps, involving distinct arms-elements and decorations in (respectively) *both* centers *and* frames, is indicative of a high degree of design variation and printing challenge.

Like Switzerland, Germany also relief-printed a well-known *Coat of Arms* series (Scott B12-18, 23-32; 1925-29; Figure 1); but the German stamps vary only in the coats of arms, colors, denominations and year of issue—not elsewhere in the design. On the other hand, the German stamps include two ink-colors in the non-distinct part of the design—the part occupied by the German *eagle* and oval field—while all of the Swiss frames are printed in one ink-color. I can only imagine, then, that both of these *Arms* issues—like the Soviet *experiment* in process color—were laborious, risky, multicolor printing adventures.

#### *Subject Types*

We now know that multicolored stamps played a rather small role in the drama of classic stamp production. But is there something unusual or special about that role? Do CMP stamps differ significantly from classic stamps in general, other than in color? Having taken a sample of *all* classic stamps, I can

# Ventures

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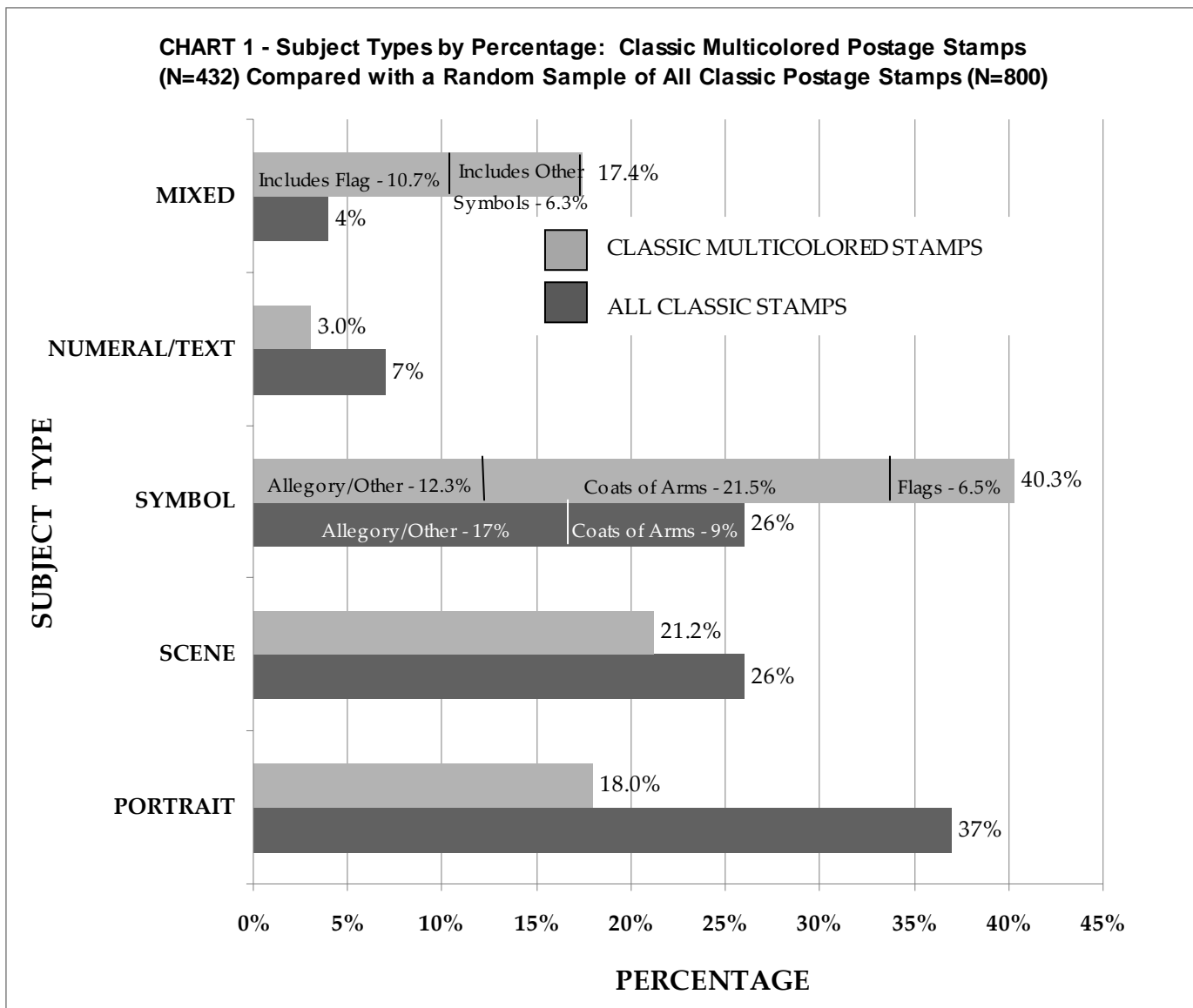
compare estimates from that sample with data from the inventory of 432 CMP stamps. I am not aware that such a sample has ever been used before, so it may be that generalist collectors will find the all-classic estimates interesting *apart* from the data on CMP stamps.

Chart 1 compares the 432 CMP stamps with a sample-estimate of all classic stamps with respect to the frequency (percentage) of five very broad subject types: *portrait, scene, symbol, numeral/text* and *mixed*. Because purely symbolic subjects are so numerous in the case of CMP stamps, that category has been divided into three sub-categories: *allegory/other, coat of arms* and *flag*. I realize that this categorization is somewhat arbitrary. Numerous stamps with a symbolic center (vignette) have multiple types of symbols within that center.

(Design elements within a stamp's frame are not counted as subjects.) For simplicity, if there is a prominent flag among the center symbols, the stamp has been counted in the flag category. The same is true for coats of arms. Symbols combined with prominent portraits or scenes (all within the center) are classified, on the other hand, as *mixed*, as are portraits combined with scenes, etc.

It is the large percentage of symbolic subjects that I find particularly noteworthy: 40% for the CMP stamps compared with 26% for classic stamps in general. The difference is actually greater than this, however, for almost all of the *mixed* CMP stamps include a symbolic element as one of the subjects. Counting both purely symbolic subjects and mixed subjects (with symbols), well over half (57%) of CMP stamps have some sort of symbolic or part-symbolic subject.

Furthermore—and again counting both purely symbolic and mixed (including symbols)—approximately 38% of the 432 CMP stamps feature either a flag or a coat of arms within their center design.

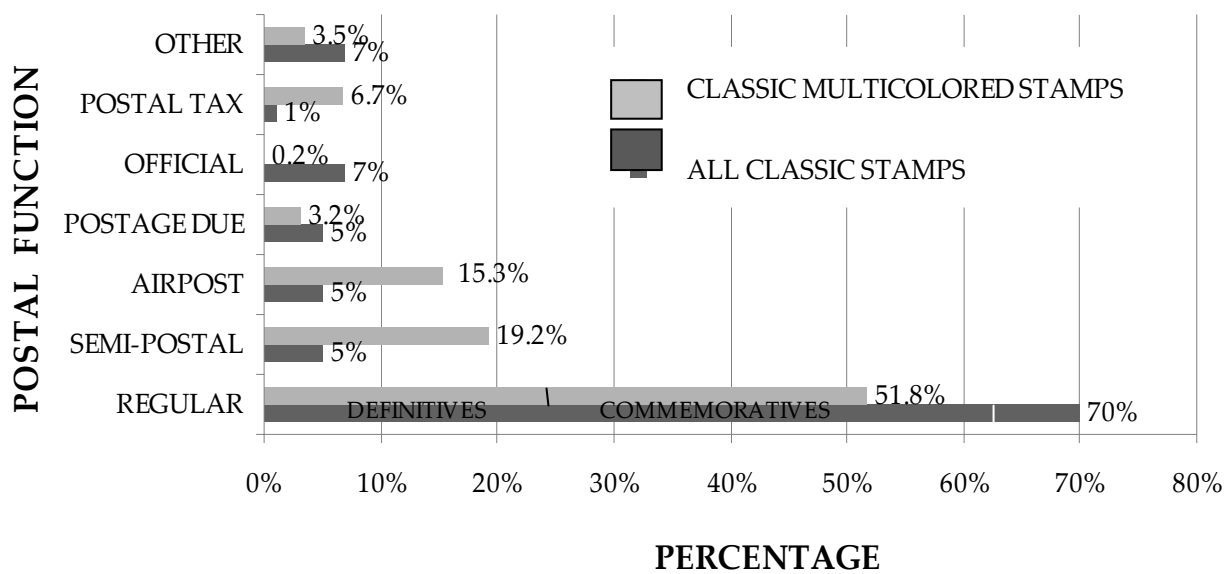


In comparison, stamps with coats of arms or flags are sample-estimated to be approximately nine percent of *all* classic stamps—higher than one might expect, but still far less than that of the CMP stamps. (The nine percent consists almost entirely of stamps with coats of arms, the printing of monochrome or bi-color flags

were precisely in the frames of recess-printed portraits (Austria and Chile), as well as, surprisingly, in the frames of relief-printed coats of arms—the arms themselves remaining monochrome (Imperial Russia).

Thus, it is not surprising that stamps with portraits are a *reduced* portion of CMP stamps—18% compared

**CHART 2 - Postal Functions by Percentage: Classic Multicolored Postage Stamps (N=432) Compared with a Random Sample of All Classic Postage Stamps (N=800)**



during the classic era having been understandably infrequent.)

This suggests that, indeed, multicolor *did* fulfill a special role in classic stamp production. It is no surprise that many nations would use their early ventures into multicolor printing in order to render in full color the symbols of nationhood, patriotism and regional pride (for cantons, states, etc.). Moreover, in the case of producers who wished to include multicolor within the stamp’s center, there undoubtedly was a preference for symbolic subjects, which could be printed in multicolor using *mass separation*—as opposed to portraits, which (considering the center alone) were almost always limited to one ink color. Of course, *frames* of portraits (even of coats of arms) could, reasonably, be multicolored (or of two colors different than the center color). As will be discussed in future articles, some of the early—and most admirable—uses of multicolor

with 37% of classic stamps in general as estimated by the random sample.

Only in the case of *scenic* subjects is there a relatively similar proportion among CMP stamps and all classic stamps: 21% compared with 26%. For many stamp collectors, especially those who began the hobby as children, classic scenic stamps often possess what might be termed *exotic aura*. What are a stamp’s qualities that create this aura? Does multicolor add potential for this aura? Are there scenic CMP stamps that are especially exotic? These are questions for another article.

*Postal Function Types*

Nine types of postal function are represented among the inventoried CMP stamps: (1) *regular*; (2)

# Ventures

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*semi-postal (or charity); (3) air post; (4) air post semi-postal; (5) postage due; (6) postal tax; (7) official; (8) franchise; and (9) war tax.* Also, both *definitive* and *commemorative* stamps are well represented among the *regular* issues, although in some cases it is not clear which of these two categories best applies. Chart 2 compares the percentage of postal functions for CMP stamps with the same for the sample-estimate of all classic stamps.

Pierre de Lizeray, French philatelic writer, refers to his country's four 1939 multicolored semi-postals (to be described in a future article) as "trial printings", having been printed on the very first press modified by the Beaune-Lambert invention. (de Lizeray, 1969, p. 17) It would not have been surprising had the great majority of countries adopted a similar practice, printing their first multicolored stamps in small quantities of commemorative or non-regular, particularly semi-postal, issues.

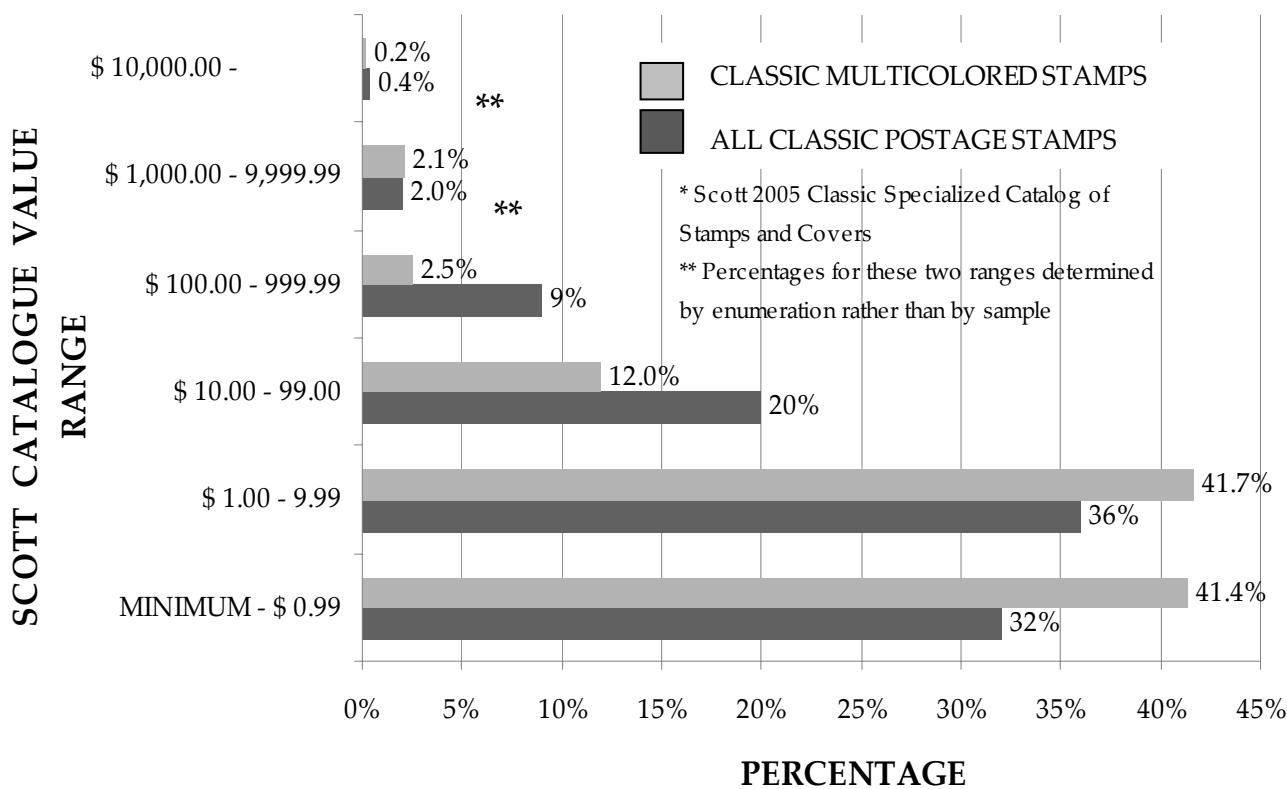
The proportions of commemoratives (28%), semi-postals (19%) and air post stamps (15%) are, indeed, higher for the CMP stamps than for classic stamps in general. But while limitations of production undoubtedly did occur to some degree, there are a surprisingly high number of definitive issues amongst the 432 stamps—as many as 24% (105) of the total. (This compares with a sample-estimated 62% of *all* classic stamps that are definitives.) While *size of issue* is certainly a better indicator of the risk undertaken—information that I have not gathered for the CMP stamps—this limited analysis shows that numerous countries (21 of 55) ventured into the printing of CMP definitives.

### Catalogue Value/Rarity

Since the catalogue value of a stamp is a relatively accurate indicator of its rarity, Chart 3 serves as an analysis of both value and rarity of classic multicolored stamps. The chart compares CMP stamps to a random sample of *all* classic stamps. It demonstrates the relative *commonness* of CMP stamps: for example that

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**CHART 3 - Scott Catalogue Value Ranges, Mint/Hinged Condition, by Percentage\*: Classic Multicolored Postage Stamps (N=432) Compared with a Random Sample of All Classic Postage Stamps (N=800)**



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# Floor Sweepings? Junk?

by Bill Kiepura (#503)

Well, maybe. And maybe not. Recently a big lot came in and when I got to the bottom of the box, I had found about 30,000 stamps, all off paper. The former owner did not think much of this material for I found one envelope with the notation



“floor sweepings” on it. I did not agree, for over the years, I have found that almost any stamp will be valued and cherished by someone.

I am sure that the good doctor will cherish the forgeries. Tom will want the numeral cancels for his collection. The perfins, several hundred in number, will go to a member of our local club. The odds and ends that look like stamps such as seals, cut squares and fiscal cancels will go to Jim, who takes me wherever I want to go. (Since my car was totaled a couple of years ago and I am getting too old to drive, a new car is out of the question.) Many of the town cancels will wind up in Robert’s collection. I know of no collector interested in the several hundred Belgian precancels, but feel sure that someday I will get a call for them. The unknowns and unusual items have gone to Richard to price and, in the coming months, you will be seeing a lot of them.

What is left? Is it useless? No – twice a year our

club has a penny night and these stamps will be out on the table. The club sells them for 5 cents each. Still, there is a lot left.

Each year, our club holds a stamp show in one of the local malls. What is left will be on the table and any



kid who is interested can take any number so that he or she can start a collection. As you can see, it’s not junk. Many thousand of these stamps will wind up in new homes and receive a warm welcome.

*Mr. Kiepura is an ISWSC member and a stamp dealer.*

## Italian Stamps – World’s Best?

by Alessandro Artini (#2451)

Another ISWSC collector, I believe a friend of mine, suggested this question for writing an article. While it is a difficult question, I agreed with him because of the location I find myself. As a beginning collector who mostly enjoys swapping used stamps, I thought I wasn’t the best person to do this. But I like the idea of writing an article for the first time and I started to think.

I love the idea of starting with a US stamp about Dante and linking this very important personality of both Italian and world literature to Ravenna, where his remains lie. And then start to write about an important yearly philatelic event called Gifra (translated, *Those Philatelic Days of Ravenna*) and also some numbered and rare volumes prepared for the occasion by the local philatelic club, which happens to have the same name and surname: Dante Alighieri.

And now I’ve done it. But something else was coming to help me. Those who don’t know the Italian language or aren’t a member of the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL) maybe aren’t aware of the dealer Vaccari. Not only can you find his advertisement in each quarterly issue, but also some

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# Swap Circuit Report

by Randy Smith (#1111)  
Swap Circuit Coordinator

As the annual enrollment period for participating in the Swap Circuit program is fast approaching, now is a good time to provide a report on the program, share some thanks (and a few complaints!), and encourage ISWSC members not currently enjoying the benefits of the program to join in the fun.

During the past year, 105 members have been participating in the Swap Circuit, down slightly from the 112 members participating the previous year. Seven members joined the program in 2007.

Each of the five circuits comprising the program (Large, Small/Definitives, CTO, Super, and USA) is managed by one or more manager, without whom the program could not operate. My thanks to John McArthur (#768), John Seidl (#1646), Bill Silvester (#1058), Bob Armstrong (#1392), and Larry Veverka (#2363) for all of their work on behalf of the members!

I am still looking for one or two individuals who would be interested in managing the Small/Definitive circuits. If you are interested or would like information concerning becoming a manager, please contact me. (See page 2 for contact information.)

I am pleased to report that the program continues to have very few complaints. Recently, however, a long time member of the program wrote to share a few comments. One of his comments concerned the poor quality of stamps some members put into the circuits. Please remember that the quality of the program (and therefore the quality of the stamps available to be swapped) is dependent on the members participating in the program. Managers do what they can to remove unwanted material (including sometimes using stamps from their own stock) and fees members pay each year are used to buy additional stamps, however if members take out quality stamps and replace them with common or damaged stamps, the entire program suffers. Please—only put in stamps that you would want to get in return.

Another comment made by the member concerns the covers used to mail the circuits to members. Reused envelopes or envelopes intended to pay bills are generally not welcomed by circuit members—a new, plain white envelope (or better yet, one with a little

creativity added) would be welcomed. Most importantly, nice commemorative stamps should always be used on the cover, as the stamps received on the cover are another reason for members to participate in the program.

Finally, a comment was made about damaged stamps included in the circuits—including those sent out by the manager. Speaking for all the other managers, we do our best to screen out damaged stamps, however some will slip by—or even become damaged in transit. Most managers put in a few extra stamps to make up for this possibility. If you receive damaged stamps, please remove them and note it on the routing sheet.

Over the years, I have received more positive comments than negative—a tribute to the members participating in the program. Current members will be receiving their renewal notices in late January, however if you have yet to participate in this program, please contact me for information on how the program works. You'll add new stamps to your collection while finding a use for your duplicates! You may even develop philatelic friendships and trading partners!



## Italian Stamps

Continued from page 12

presentation of philatelic books. This dealer has a very fine and detailed website ([www.vaccari.it](http://www.vaccari.it)) and is used to send out newsletters written in English and Italian. In one of the last newsletters, there was news among so many others (detailed images of stamps and covers, rare and not, recent or old) better answering the question that gives the title to this article. It sounds only like publicity, but I think the best way to introduce you to Italian stamps and philately is not by my talking, but providing you direction to where you can find the answers by yourself.

I almost forgot to mention the Italian forum at [forum.filateliaefrancobolli.it](http://forum.filateliaefrancobolli.it), where you can find me under the nickname Althinkart. More than 1500 collectors of Italian stamps and others meet at the forum to exchange ideas and answer questions, however it is in Italian. But some understand English, so you can try that anyway.

*Mr. Artini is the immediate past Secretary of the ISWSC. He currently is collecting stamps of Argentina and would welcome contacts from others with similar interests.*

# Whatzit? – Wrong Again

by Richard Barnes (#2425)  
 Whatzit? Coordinator

I received, in a stamp exchange from Denmark, a group of Orchha State stamps. I receive many stamps with funny writing on them because I collect Middle East and North Africa. Initially, I thought these were fantasies. I was wrong. When talking about my discovery with She Who Must be Obeyed, I was reminded that this was not unusual for me.



Figure 1

Orchha is an Indian Princely State. Even the Scott catalogue recognizes the stamps of the Orchha State. However, Scott does not recognize this particular set of stamps. I checked my Michel catalogue and there is a set of 20 stamps issued in 1935. A check on eBay found an offer from an Indian address of a 1935 MNH block of six 1 Rupee stamps (Figure 1) listed as SG #19, with a catalogue value of approximately \$64. I now know what I have.



Figure 2

I am wrong again. I have two sets of these stamps with exactly the same design but different centers (Figure 2). The lithographed frame design of both stamps is the same. In Figure 1, the center portrait of a young Sir Vir Sing Deo Bahadur is a cropped computer image. The center portrait of Figure 2 is a matching lithograph. I therefore conclude that Figure 2 is the genuine stamp.



Figure 3

You are correct – I am wrong yet again. I compare Figure 2 with the illustration in the catalogue. In Figure 2, the background behind the portrait is STRIPED. The background of the portraits illustrated in the catalogue are clear – like Figure 1. The perforations among the stamps I have vary from 9 to 13.5. This set is catalogued as perforated 11.5. Both sets I have must be forgeries.

The philatelic press has provided a lot of space to the proliferation of forgeries of all stamps now being produced in India. The ad on eBay not only provided the address for you to send the money to in India, but

also had a note that all sales are final. The frame of these stamps is very good. Only the center has changed, so I suspect that both sets are from the same source or the plates for the frames changed hands.

Am I correct in thinking that I have two sets of the same stamps that are modern Indian forgeries? Anyone have more information to confirm or to contradict these thoughts? Perhaps I might even be right?



Figure 4

The Chinese stamps listed as Whatzits in the previous issue of *The Circuit* are not listed in the Scott catalogue. It turns out that all four stamps illustrated are actual postage stamps. Figure 1 and Figure 2 were issued in 1940-1941. Figure 3 and Figure 4 were issued in 1948-1949. They are listed in both the Michel catalogue and the Mandarin edition of stamp catalogues of the Republic of China. Figure 5 is a postal savings stamp issued in 1942-43. The design is listed as the "Old Coin Issue". This information was found in the "Kuo An Stamps and Coin Service" catalogue in Taiwan. There was no information on the German label.

The first two Whatzits this time are plain little stamps. I am guessing Figure 3 is a Thia revenue. The next stamp (Figure 4) is what I think is an India revenue. The Chinese stamp (Figure 5),



Figure 5



Figure 6

depicting a fort on the Great Wall, is what I think is an overprint. What is the original stamp? What is the use of the overprint? Finally, this small bright label (Figure 6) reminds me of a Mongolian stamp, but I can not say why. If any member has any information on any of the Whatzits, please contact me so that the information can be shared for the benefit of all.

Finally, I am accumulating a number of Spanish post-Civil War labels in the Whatzit file. Is there anyone out there that can assist me in identifying these labels?

\*\*\*\*\*

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# Free Album Page Software

by Rick Simpson (#1703)  
ISWSC Webmaster

Ever wanted to make your own album pages? Maybe you want to show off some special items in your collection or you collect topics rather than countries and want an album for just those stamps. A computer and printer is the ideal way to make such pages. It can let you draw lines and boxes, position text and pictures, then save your work for future use or changes. Sounds great, right? But to do these tasks, the computer needs the right software program. To create album pages you can use programs especially designed for page creation or you can use a general-purpose drawing program. Perhaps you have already investigated such programs and have found that they can be expensive – up to a couple of hundred dollars in some cases! But did you know that an ideal program for page creation is available free of charge?

The free program is Open Office Draw, part of the Open Office suite of programs for performing common office-oriented tasks. Like the Microsoft Office package, it contains modules for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations and database management. Draw is a program that does not have a parallel in MS Office and is used to create drawings, diagrams, flowcharts and similar line-oriented tasks. Open Office is community-supported freeware developed by a worldwide group of programmers, so this is not some “trial” version you later have to pay for! It can run on a variety of operating systems, including Windows and Linux. It can be downloaded from the Internet or installed from

a CD-ROM disk if you do not have an Internet connection. To download it, go to [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org). You can download the entire suite of programs or just the Draw program.

Besides being free, another big advantage is that Draw and the other Open Office products have excellent (free) documentation available, as well as online help forums to answer your questions. To download the documentation, go to [documentation.openoffice.org](http://documentation.openoffice.org). Here you can download an entire introductory book about Open Office that has a twenty-page introduction to the Draw program. Also available is a comprehensive manual just for Draw. And Draw has been “localized” for use in over fifty languages!

The Draw features that make it useful for album page creation include:

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## Ventures

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approximately 83% of these stamps (mint/hinged condition) are valued at less than \$10.00, as compared with an estimated 68% of *all* classic stamps (mint/hinged condition) that fall within the same range.

Because the multicolored stamps were, on whole, produced later in the classic era and include no items older than 1876—with the exception of the relatively rare *Basel Dove* (1845)—this comparison is not surprising. Still, I cannot help but sense a trace of irony: that stamps so adventurously produced are, in many cases, so common.

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escapesunlimited@hotmail.com; B, B (to 1960),  
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fuzzylojice@aol.com; B (to 1973), G, Adv (35),  
DD, 3, tallships, Christmas
- 2555 **Earle Johnson** (exp. 12/31/08)  
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johnef@iwvisp.com; A, D, Adv (65), EE, 1, 4,  
5, 6
- 2556 **John Crain** (exp. 12/31/08)  
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