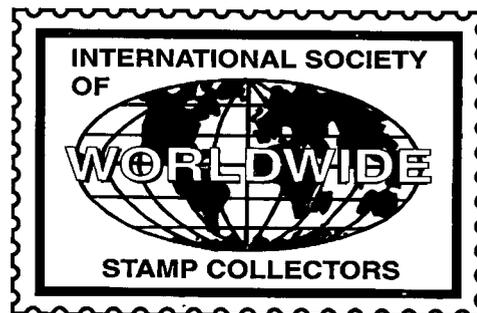


#4v

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July/August 2006 • Volume 24 No. 4

The Official Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors

President's Column

by Joanne Berkowitz (#98)
ISWSC President

By the time you read this, Washington 2006 will be over. I hope I had the chance to meet many of you in person and that you enjoyed the show in every way.

I have had fun putting together an exhibit for our booth at the show. I collected a number of pictures of members that will be part of the display, along with a description of the programs we offer.

I've also been busy cleaning up my want lists to avoid buying something I already have. I don't know about you, but I have never left a stamp show where I didn't buy at least one item twice or else find it already in my album when I get home. I also lose at least one pair of tongs but, at the last local show, I

bought a bag of miscellaneous supplies that included at least ten pairs of tongs, so I am good for at least a few shows!

We are winding up the current board meeting. Among the items we need to deal with are a bylaws revision, dues structure, the continuing issues of membership, and many small housekeeping items. We have always accepted mint stamps of equal value to dues instead of cash but we have never had a good way to dispose of the stamps.

We currently have mint stamps from Italy and San Marino. I am going to offer them for their "face" value, in US currency via *The Circuit*. It is a good opportunity to get mint recent issues for less than the dealers would charge. If no one wants them, we

Continued on page 3

May 2006 Board Meeting Minutes

Submitted by
Alessandro Artini (#2451)
ISWSC Secretary

It is not easy being the Secretary! During the month of May, just before Washington 2006, the Board met again online. The minutes of the last Board Meeting were approved.

The board voted to delete the categories of Family Membership and Gift Membership while retaining those for Dealers and for Clubs. The Youth membership will be retained with a \$2.00 increase.

The problem of disposing of stamps paid instead of dues was discussed and it was decided to retain the option as long as we are able to dispose of the stamps to members. If we cannot dispose of them,

we will consider eliminating the option.

The board authorized the expenditure of about \$250.00 to send a marketing piece to stamp clubs, using the American Philatelic Society list and selecting the clubs with more general stamp collecting interests.

The executive director was authorized to put a portion of our funds (\$5,000-10,000) into short term CD's to improve the interest rate on our money. Randy Smith will review the bylaws and make recommendations for revisions.

We also note the resignation of the Regional Representative for the Scandinavian region, Mr. Vihanto. While no reason was given, we wish him well.



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Please remember that the Editor does not mail out The Circuit. If you have any questions about your Circuit mail service, please contact Terry Myers. Thank you!

**DEADLINE
FOR THE
NEXT
ISSUE:**

JULY 20, 2006

White Powder to Junk Mixtures

by Bill Klepura (#503)

If you find some old stamps with a white powder on them, do not call the hazmat team. If you do, you will be out of your house a for long time — might have to be “debugged” and all for naught.

Back in the old days — mostly before 1930 — collectors who soaked mixtures and had large quantities of stamps would store them in boxes or tins. To save them from the critters that like to eat paper, they would slightly season the mix with sodium fluoride. This is the white powder you will find.

I have been told that if you hear the tiny feet of little critters in your kitchen or bathroom at night and in the dark, there is an easy way to stop the traffic. Spread sodium fluoride on the floor near the baseboard. This gets on the legs of the roaches and when they clean, is ingested. Sodium fluoride absorbs moisture (and their innards) and with no fluids, they die. One caution, keep in a sealed container and well out of the reach of children.

This article has been tested by our staff M.D. The

Continued on page 7

President's Message

Continued from page 1

will need to reconsider offering this as a means of paying for membership. Our non-US members cost us the most for membership, due to the cost of mailing *The Circuit* and we need to be able to recoup some of that expense.

Have you looked at our web site? Thanks to Terry and Rick Simpson, we have cleaned up the site, corrected errors and moved it to a site with less intrusive commercials. Check it out and if you note any discrepancies or errors, let us know.

I want to thank everyone who has volunteered to sit at our table at Washington 2006. We were really worried about covering the hours but it looks like it won't be a problem. I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer, with lots of time for stamps.



Dues/Advertising Policy

Dues Information:

Single/Dealer/Club 1 yr. membership: \$15.00*

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

Single/Dealer/Club 3 yr. membership: \$39.00*

Youth 1 yr. membership (under 18): \$12.00*

Family membership (up to 4 persons in one residence): \$19.00*

*Plus 250 large commemoratives per year for the Youth Program or equiv. donation in US\$.

Dues include six newsletters per year. You may sign up for up to three years at a time. For an application or further information send SASE or IRC to: ISWSC, 9463 Benbrook Blvd. #114, Benbrook, TX 76126, USA. *There will be a \$2 per year discount if the renewal is received at least one month prior to the current expiration date.*

Advertising Policy:

For reasons of accountability, only members of the ISWSC, APS or ASDA may place ads. All ads dealing with philatelic concerns are acceptable. We reserve the right to edit out objectionable language. Advertisers are expected to respond to all inquiries, so be sure you can handle the responses before you offer to trade, buy or sell. If you have a bad result from answering an ad, contact the Editor. We will try to resolve the conflict.

Display Rates (Camera Ready*) per insertion:

Full page: \$75.00

Half page: \$40.00

Quarter page: \$20.00

Per column inch: \$5.00

Six repeat insertions of the same ad for the cost of five ads (one free). We will also offer a two-sided insertion for \$125 per issue.

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

Classified Rates per insertion:

First 30 words, including name, address, and ZIP code are \$3. Additional words are 20 for \$1.

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 Editor. All addresses can be found on page 2.

The Stamp – The Story

by Roger Boneham, PhD (#436)

The Stamp

The latest Scott *Standard Postage Stamp Catalog* lists nearly thirty United States stamps showing all or part of the image of the Statue of Liberty. It's official name, "Liberty Enlightening the World," was proposed by its sculptor, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. The statue portrays a woman who has escaped the chains of tyranny (the broken chains lie at her feet). Liberty's right hand holds a flaming torch as a symbol of liberty. Her left hand holds an open Book of Law with the date, July 4, 1776, inscribed in Roman numerals. Many countries have illustrated the statue on various of their stamps. The first U.S. postage stamp to show the statue (Figure 1) was issued in 1922.



Fig. 1: U.S. Scott #566, First American Statue of Liberty stamp.

Just Broke Up Several Collections

Have huge pile of used hinges. If you collect used hinges, ask for price.

If you want to see the stamps that were attached to the hinges, ask for selection. Pick and choose at 30% of catalog or 15% if you take the entire lot.

Need stamps that catalog 20¢? Have four ounce lots ready to go, priced at 5¢ per stamp.

If your album says go and your checkbook says go slow, try my approvals of seconds at 10¢ of cat.

Album Service

Box 333 • Soledad, CA 93960-0333

ISWSC #503 • APS #7906 (the lowest no.) • PSS #490 (the lowest no.)

The Story

The idea of a monument to commemorate the treaty of alliance between France and the United States during the American Revolution (1775-1783) was conceived by a group of Frenchmen after a dinner party at the Paris residence of Edouard Laboulaye in 1865. This idea was expanded over the next few years to also commemorate the 100th anniversary of America's independence and the abolition of slavery in the United States. Such a monument, dedicated to liberty, could never be erected in Emperor Napoleon III's France because although the French government was nominally a constitutional monarchy, in actual practice it was a dictatorship. During the



Fig. 2: France Scott #28, Emperor Napoleon III.

American Civil War, Napoleon III (Figure 2) actively supported the confederate government by allowing weapons and supplies to be shipped on blockade runners from French ports. His government was unfriendly to the democratic government of the United States during and after the Civil War.

Laboulaye convinced Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, a noted sculptor (Figure 3), to design the monument. Bartholdi sailed to America in 1871 and chose Bedloe's Island as the site for the monument. As he later said, New York Harbor was the main entry point to the United States and the monument would be the first thing people would see as they came to the new world.

Emperor Napoleon III was forced to abdicate after France was defeated by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. There was a period of turmoil in French politics for the next few years but a democratic government was eventually established in 1874. Laboulaye and his group decided that the right time had come to propose the building of the statue. They formed the Franco-American Union, a

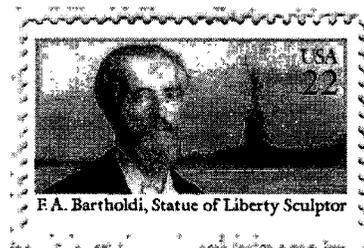


Fig. 3: U.S. Scott #2147, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi

Continued on next page

group composed of prominent French and American businessmen, to begin collecting donations. The group decided that the statue would be financed by the French and the pedestal on which it stands by the Americans.

Fund raising began in 1875. The committee's overly optimistic goal, which was not met, was to present the statue to the United States on July 4, 1876, in honor of America's centennial. The statue's right arm, holding the torch (Figure 4), was completed and shipped to the United States and was the main attraction of the Philadelphia Exposition in August 1876. The statue's head (Figure 5) was completed in 1878 and displayed at the Paris Universal Exposition. Donations were slow in coming until the committee set up a national lottery which was quite successful and by June, 1880, enough money (over \$400,000) had been raised to complete the statue.

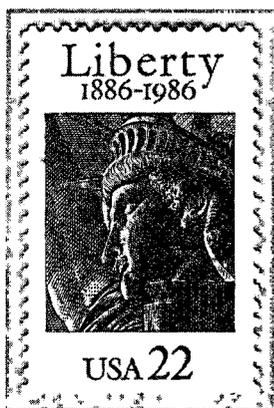


Fig. 5: U.S. Scott #2224, Liberty's Head, a dual issue with France.

project and felt that New York should fund the cost of construction.

In 1883, Joseph Pulitzer (Figure 6) said that he would publish the name of every contributor in his newspaper, the *New York World*, whatever the size of their contribution. He pointed out that the statue was paid for by the masses of French people and he now appealed to the American people to contribute money for the pedestal.

A number of African-American newspapers joined with Pulitzer, encouraging their readers to make donations since the statue, in part,



Fig. 4: U.S. Scott #1594, Liberty's Torch.



Fig. 6: U.S. Scott #946, Joseph Pulitzer.

commemorated the end of slavery. In the next two years, more than 120,000 individual contributors sent in enough money to finish paying for the pedestal and it was finished in April 1886. President Grover Cleveland (Figure 7) gave the keynote address at the dedication on October 28, 1886. An interesting note here is that when Mr. Cleveland was the governor of New York, a few years previously, he vetoed a bill passed by the legislature to pay \$50,000 towards the construction of the pedestal.

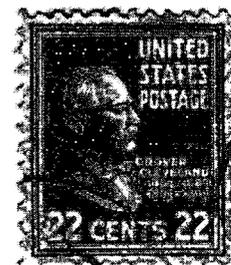


Fig. 7: U.S. Scott #827, President Grover Cleveland.

Statue Construction

Bartholdi constructed a number of plaster models of the statue, making revisions and enlarging each model. Finally he made a one-quarter size (36 foot tall) plaster model, reinforced by a wooden frame and correct down to the smallest detail. He divided this model into 300 sections by drawing lines on it. Workmen then constructed laminated wooden molds measuring four times the size of each section. As each enlarged section was completed to Bartholdi's satisfaction, the workmen pressed a large sheet of copper into the mold using steam-powered hammers and hand mallets of various sizes. The plates were a little more than the thickness of a copper penny. This technique of hammering a thin metal plate into a mold is an ancient one called *repousse*. Each section of the statue is reinforced inside with an iron strap and the overlapping copper plates are fastened together with copper rivets. The whole structure is hung from and supported by an interior framework of interlocking steel bars.

Gustave Eiffel, builder of the Eiffel Tower, designed the iron and steel interior framework which supports the individual copper sheets of the statue. Four iron posts run from the base of the statue to its top. Smaller iron bars run out from the main pillars and each bar is attached to the iron strap on an individual copper section. When you stand inside the

Surveying the Classics: Questions of Value

by Sandy R. Stover (#2325)

Like most collectors of worldwide stamps, I have had to put certain general limitations on my collecting habits. I collect only *classic major listings*, and I seldom purchase any stamp with a catalogue value of \$100 or more. This has led me to wonder:

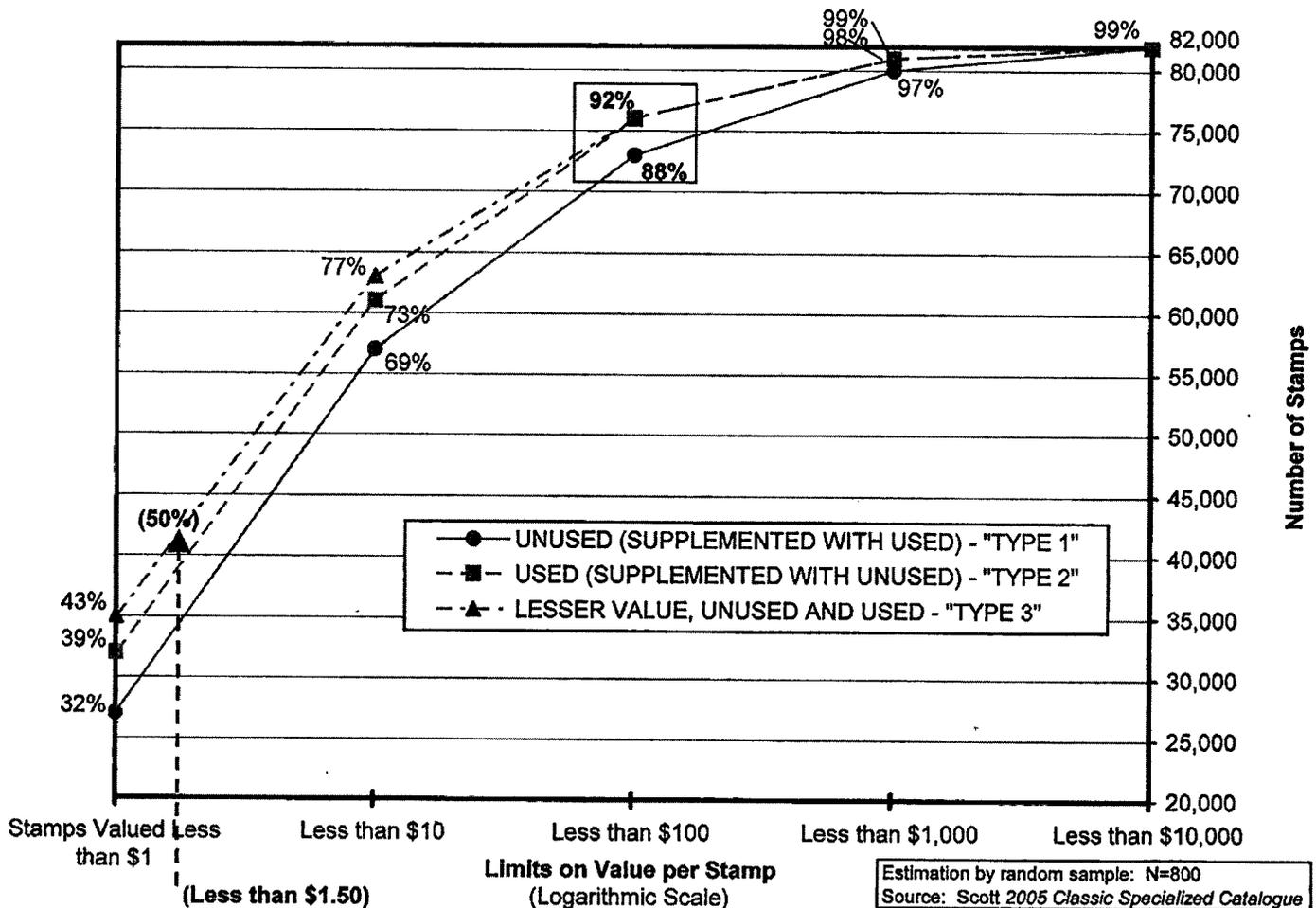
- (1) What percentage of the *total* classic collection consists of stamps valued under \$100?
- (2) Or, in absolute terms, how large would a "complete" collection of such stamps actually be?
- (3) And — more unpredictable — what is the total catalogue value of such a collection?

From their familiarity with the obvious preponderance of less expensive stamps, even among the classics, collectors are already aware that the answer to the percentage question is rather high. But how high? 70...80...90%? Providing a good estimate is more difficult than one might first suppose.

Over the past year I have been doing some philatelic research that involves a scientific sample of classic major listings. There is no need to list the details of the methodology here, except to say that the sampling frame included all categories of major listings found in the Scott classic catalogue, with the exception of post-1940 sets, revenue stamps, envelope and wrapper stamps, postmaster provisionals, and pre-stamp markings.

Continued on page 9

CHART 1 - Estimated Complete Collections of Classic Stamps (Major Listings) at Various Limits on Catalogue Value per Stamp, by Number and Percentage of Stamps and by Collection Type



Powder to Junk

Continued from page 3

fact that you are reading it indicates it passed muster.

Do you have hours to spend on stamps, but not the bucks needed to buy the stamp to fill those hours? Get involved with junk mixtures. You can buy them at a very low price. What to look for? Almost anything that might open a new field for collecting — cancels, shades, and most importantly, perforations.

Scott rarely lists a perf variety but if you check the foreign catalogs, you will find that a lot of them do. Take, for example, Bosnia. The catalog lists four perfs and added compounds. Sometimes the perfs will differ on just one side. The 6½ is very rare. Granted, you will not find these stamps in a junk

mixture. Take Austria #29. This is one you will find as it catalogs 20%. Yet one scarce perf lists at \$18. And the catalog says compounds exist. What would a compound of the \$18 stamp be worth? Certainly a lot more.

Make a collection of colors. Try and find a real Prussian blue. One time I checked five copies where the catalog says it was printed in Prussian blue. No two stamps looked alike.

Let your imagination fly when you go through the mix. And when you have extracted every possible item, send the remainder off to a collector who offers exchange. You might go through 5,000 stamps before you are through, and all for the original investment.



The Stamp – The Story

Continued from page 5

statue you can look upwards into this mass of iron bars reaching to the statue's head. All of the statue's weight is supported by the central iron pillars and none by the thin, copper outer plates.

The statue was built in the New York City harbor on 12-acre Bedloe's Island, which was renamed Liberty Island in 1956. The designers of the pedestal used the outer granite walls of Fort Wood, finished in 1812, as the base for the poured concrete foundation of the pedestal. The wall of the fort forms an 11-point star, which seems appropriate for a statue dedicated to liberty.

The Poem

A bronze plaque is located at the base of the monument. The plaque was cast in 1903 and contains a poem written by Emma Lazarus in 1883 as her contribution to the fund drive. Many people know portions of the poem; here is the entire verse. The title of the poem and the first two lines refer to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The New Colossus

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand*

*Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

100 Years Later

A fitting end of this story is the restoration of the Statue of Liberty that took place in the early 1980's. Once again the call went out for donations. This time the money was for repairing significant damage to the statue from the weathering of the metal, both the copper outer skin and the interior iron supports. And once again the American people sent in their donations as they had one hundred years earlier. In 1986, the Statue of Liberty was rededicated to the American people, this time with the keynote speech given by President Ronald Reagan. The largest fireworks display in our nation's history celebrated this grand event.

The Statue of Liberty is the largest statue in the world and the only one you can enter, which more than 5 million people do every year. Want to know more about the statue? I suggest you go to the statue's website at www.statueofliberty.org, and the National Parks website at www.nps.gov/stli/.

© Roger Boneham 2006



Eureka!

by Richard Barnes (# 2425)
From the *Edmonton Stamp Club Bulletin*
(Volume 93, Number 1)

I have finished struggling through another apple box of what Ian Paterson refers to as "stuff." A local dealer had salted the box with a couple of Sand Dunes souvenir sheets that I wanted. I tried to pay his price and leave the box. NO, I bought it, so I had to take it all. Once home, I procrastinated, but finally needed the room so I attacked the box.

What to do with all this stuff? I went through the box sorting into piles: garbage can, give away, auction lot, club auction, then EUREKA! I had struck gold. There at the bottom was a glassine with a 5 centime vermilion and a 25 centime yellow Mazagan to Marrakech, French Morocco locals.



Mazagan-Marrakech (French Morocco) locals



At the beginning of the Morocco section of Yvert et Tellier's *Colonial Stamp Catalogue* is a section of local posts. Of course, Scott catalogues ignore all locals except those of the U.S. of A. These local posts are the precursor to the Cherifien posts noted by Scott 2004 catalogue, page 1162, under French Morocco.

I know that these local posts were established by local businessmen. The name of the local stamp company describes the mail route. In this case, it was between the cities of Mazagan and Marrakech. The first local post was between Tangiers and Fez. I find the relationship between the businessmen operating the local post and the French Administration is not clear. The French had established a Morocco Postal Service in 1891 using overprinted French stamps. The French colonial authorities were efficient. Why did the colonial administration tolerate local posts in competition with the colonial postal service?

Some local posts such as the Mazagan-Azemmour-Marrakech route of 1897 issued only one



Tangiers-Fez
local post
stamp



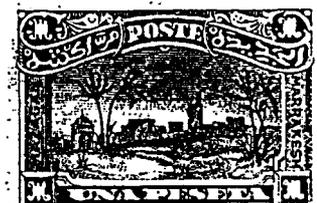
French Colonial stamps for Morocco,
overprinted "Centimos"

set of stamps while others such as the Mazagan to Marrakech route continued to issue different stamp sets over a ten-year period. Were routes quickly shut down as unprofitable? Why in 1912 were the local posts reorganized by the French colonial administration into the Cherifien Posts? This, the last of the local posts, operated in Morocco until 1915 and in Tangiers until 1919. The French Morocco Post Office operated without any local posts from then on.

An interesting article by Joe Kennedy in *Linn's Stamp News* (16 June 2003) emphasizes the intriguing complexity of Morocco philately. Just the fact that you require all six volumes of Scott catalogues to cover Morocco stamps is a complication in working with the stamps of this region.



Mazagan-Azemour-
Marrakech local of
1897; note
denomination in
Spanish



Mazagan-Marrakech
local, one of several
issued over a
10-year period

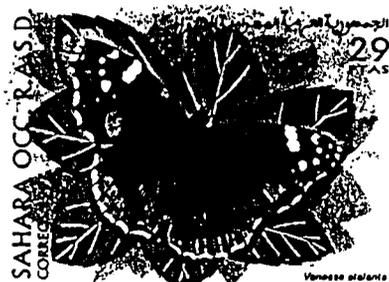
The Kennedy article — along with all other modern articles in the philatelic publications I have seen — ignore the Morocco local posts. I find this odd with the modern interest in the



Examples of the Cherifian post
stamps introduced by the Sultan
of Morocco in 1912.

Eureka!

Continued from page 8



Cinderella issued for "Occupied Morocco" by the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (exile government).

region caused by the Green March by Morocco into the abandoned colony of Spanish Sahara, ignoring the U.N. declaration.

The resulting displaced persons provided a base for an opposition Sahara Republic

Kingdom of Morocco stamp marking the "Green March" (i.e. occupation of Spanish colonial Morocco).



which is issuing a myriad of wallpaper stamps, in turn provoking a blizzard of U.P.U. bulletins and providing the grist for the philatelic community's gnashing of teeth.

Hopefully, I will again strike gold and shout "Eureka!" when a club member provides further information on the local posts of Morocco.



Surveying the Classics

Continued from page 6

Also, the sample frame was limited to stamps listed in the 2000 edition, even though the value estimates reported here are updated by the 2005 edition. (This has allowed me to study value changes over the five-year intervening period.) The total number of classic major listings estimated by enumeration (count) during the sampling process: 82,700. Finally, because I did not want to rely on a sample to estimate the very small (but very value-impacting) upper end of the distribution, all major listings at \$1,000 and above were estimated by enumeration rather than by sample.

Chart 1 contains the sample's estimates for answers to the first two questions, but the answers differ depending on which of three "hypothetical types" of collection apply: *Type 1* — all *unused* stamps except when no unused stamp is known (or the value is unknown), in which case the *used* version of the stamp is substituted; *Type 2* — all *used* stamps except when no used stamp is known (or the value is unknown), in which case the *unused* version of the stamp is substituted; and *Type 3* — always the *lesser* valued version (unused or used) when both exist, plus that small group of stamps — approximately 2500 to 3000 major listings — for which only one version exists. (While other hypothetical types are possible — greater valued, *etc.*, both versions, *etc.* — these three probably best mirror the actual strategies of most worldwide collectors.)

The three hypothetical collections are, therefore, of equal *total* size. Because there are a very small number of major listings which have no value for *either* the unused or used version — approximately

400 or one-half percent according to this particular sample — a total collection of classic stamps with at least one value, for all three types, would be somewhere between 82,000 and 82,700 stamps (given the specifications of catalogue edition and excluded categories mentioned above). Such fine points notwithstanding, both Type 2 and Type 3 collections, containing only (and all) stamps valued under \$100, would be approximately 76,000 stamps in size and 92% of the total, while the same for Type 1 collections would be approximately 73,000 stamps in size and 88% of the total.

Undoubtedly some readers of this article are not surprised by any of this — and, indeed, have already reached this level of classic worldwide completion in their own collections. But if not surprising, it may at least be thought-provoking, and perhaps also *encouraging*, to realize that a collector can accumulate 92% of the entire worldwide classic production through what seems (at first) a somewhat modest effort. Of course, the chart reveals other interesting perspectives. For example, more than *three quarters* of classic production — over 60,000 stamps in the case of a Type 3 collection — are stamps valued less than \$10. And, going even lower on the limitation scale, the sample-estimate suggests that as much as *one half* of the classic production — again for a Type 3 collection — are stamps valued under \$1.50.

Estimating the *total value* of these collections, however, may prove such encouragement to be rather premature.

To be continued in the next issue of The Circuit



Whatzit?

by Richard Barnes (# 2425)
Whatzit? Coordinator

Many of us frequently have stamps arrive on our desk that we can not identify. I received the following account from Bob Armstrong:

A while back I had a German specialist more interested in some stamps that I had than I was. So, I took the opportunity to ask him about (3) stamps from GERMANY that I couldn't identify. He stated that the 20 mark stamp [fig 1] was probably a "packet card". A packet card is a postal document (card) on which shipping information and postage is affixed (rather than the package itself).

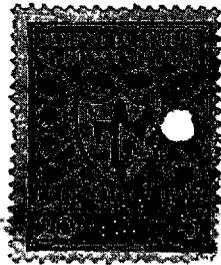


Fig. 1

Evidently, this is a European phenomenon still done to this day. Anyway, the packet card was filed as a document by the receiving company, and in the process was "2-hole punched". The stamp happened to be in the wrong place, unfortunately.

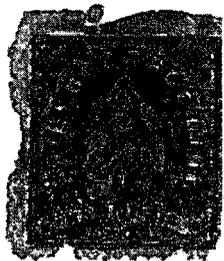


Fig. 2

He stated that the two raggedly stamps really are stamps - only they are STADTPOST (city post) stamps. German law allowed private delivery companies to process letters and post cards within a town. This was in effect from 1880's until March 31, 1903. There were 159 cities and towns that had STADTPOST stamps - over 4,000 different stamps, he

believes. Some big companies, such as HAMMONIA and HANSA, operated in many cities. There are also STADTPOST postal cards and, maybe, stamped envelopes but he has never seen any of these. Michel publishes a PRIVATPOST-MARKEN catalog every (10) years or so. Evidently, STADTPOST collecting is getting popular. The small "2" stamps is HAMMONIA CO. (fig 2) in Hamburg while the diamond shaped "5" stamp is MERCUR CO in Bochum (fig 3).

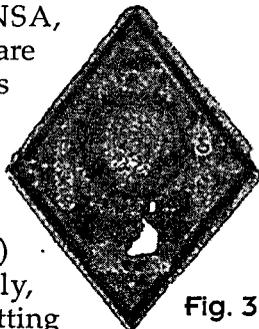


Fig. 3

Any other member who has a story of a Whatzit search and is willing to share the experience and information please send it in so we can put it in this column. This way we can all share the knowledge and satisfaction resulting from the search.

We need member assistance to identify this violet 20 cent Chinese stamp (fig 4). My guess and it is only a guess is that this is a Republic of China (revenue?) issued during the flight to Formosa period. Has any member knowledge of this stamp and the set it comes from?



Fig. 4

Using the Scott catalogue I have not been able to

identify the following two Venezuela stamps, 5c violet (fig 5) and 10c green (fig 6). At first I thought that they were #293 and #295. However, they are not on



Figs. 5 & 6



Bluish Winchester Security Paper as illustrated in Scott Vol 6. Were there reprints of this Bolivar issue? Does the security paper loose the visual effect over time? What are these stamps?

I received only one response to the March Whatzit: I have not seen this stamp before, but the type is Albanian, the T is for "Taxe", postage due in French, the cancel looks to be Durazzo, Italian for the port of Durrës, the seaport for the nearby capital, Tirana. It is very likely a fantasy or private label printed in the 1900s. Has any member more information to add?

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#1580 Manhard

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North Port FL 34287 — USA

#2189 Gellman

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Resigned

None

Returned Mail – Unknown Address

#2478 Montalbano

With a large membership, our records are always being updated (phone numbers, APS and ATA membership numbers, and age). We'd like your assistance in improving the data base, so send this information by mail or email to: Terry Myers (#736), 9463 Benbrook Blvd. #114, Benbrook, TX 76126 – USA; TMyers6497@aol.com



My Philatelic Community

by Joanne Berkowitz (#98)
ISWSC President

I was a silent member of the Sacramento Philatelic Society for more than ten years before I ever attended a meeting. I remained a member so that I could receive their newsletter, thereby alerting me to the dates of the local stamp shows. Family obligations and a work schedule that included several evening shifts a week made me reticent to leave home for evening meetings.

I attended my first meeting about a year ago and shortly became hooked. I never dreamed I would find such a wealth of information and assistance. Hank Ibsen helped me learn how to recognize the revenue cancels of the early stamps of British East Africa.

John Pavalavsky solved the riddle of why my bargain box Burundi stamps were suddenly worth hundreds of dollars. Joe Ross turned me on to the revenue stamps of Mexico and has been wonderfully helpful in identifying and collecting these issues, not to mention sharing his impressive revenue collections and knowledge.

I enjoyed seeing Anson Stout's collection of Indian revenues. And if I ever decide to exhibit, Bill Oliver is

an expert and always willing to help a new exhibitor. Everyone there seemed to have something new to offer up and share with fellow members.

I hope I am contributing back to the club by volunteering at our local stamp shows and helping to clean up at the end of each meeting. Rather than discard my used issues of Linn's and Mekeels, I leave them at the club for other members to enjoy. I enthusiastically promote the club when possible and was pleased to see that a fellow that I talked to at our last show came to our meeting and joined up.

I can't believe what I missed by not checking out the meetings until recently. Do you have a stamp club in your area? Have you ever gone to the meetings? While I've heard tales of clubs where the members were stuffy and unfriendly, it is certainly not the case where I live.

I encourage you to check out and go to your local stamp club. If there isn't one nearby, maybe you can get one going. If you live in my area, come on by. I'd be happy to introduce you to some of the finest stamp collectors around.



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