

SOS Signal

Stamps on Stamps Collectors Club

The Consequential Sequence

By Martin Hirschbühl with illustrations by Lou Guadagno

Ode to Stamp Collecting

When was a folly so pestilent
hit upon
As folks running mad to collect
every spit upon
Post-office stamp that's been
soil'd and been writ upon?
Oh for Swift! such a subject his
spleen to emit upon.

Colonel Sibthorpe
in *Punch*, 1842

Inside this issue:

Austria 1850	1
On Stamp Collecting	2
A Consequential Sequence	5
New Issues	6
SOSCC News	7
Classifieds	7
More New Issues	8

If you're collecting SOS, then you are in touch with the most "philatelic" topic of them all! As an additional pleasure, you're lucky enough to do it "worldwide".

This enables you to have some close views into the postal history of many countries you've probably never heard of before. Nearly each country has already issued one or more SOS and the remaining ones will follow. And that's quite a lot! More than 200, I guess? Some countries disappeared, others changed their name once or twice, some separate, and others unite.

One fine day, I declared the happy shoe-box-days of collecting to be over. It wasn't hard to find some albums and pages to mount my average SOS collection. But very soon, I was faced with the "sequential" question: who comes first and who's to follow?

My old stock list based on a German "Michel Catalog", divided by continents: Europe, America, Africa and so on. In this way, all Latino-Hispanic countries with similar backgrounds would be located together. This wasn't very satisfying, because I wanted a mixture of countries in a

more "random" manner, but with a logical sequence.

Why not "according to the alphabet"? It's so simple and easy to find. Yes, but it's not universal. Our German friends seek their country under "D", not "G". In alphabetic order, Albania will be followed by Algeria. But what do they have in common? It's just the same Mediterranean sun shining down on them, nothing else. That's not enough to become neighbors in my SOS album.

Once again: who comes first? Well, Great Britain of course; they invented the postage stamp. And who's to follow? Yeah, I've got it...my hometown Zurich (Switzerland) in March 1843. And what's next? Brazil, August 1843, followed by Trinidad, USA and Mauritius, all in 1847. Like a string of pearls, they made their appearance: Bermuda, France, Belgium, Bavaria (for Germany), Australia and Spain and so on up to Bophuthatswana in late 1977.

That was it, indeed! I accepted the fact that all those German colonies were stuck together. It was only natural, because they issued their first stamp accordingly in 1897.

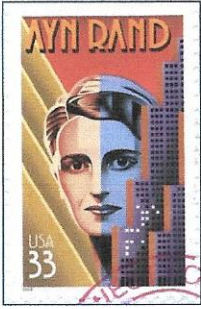
(Continued on page 5)



A Messenger of the Little Post in Vienna

The first stamps of Austria were issued in 1850 and featured the imperial arms — a double-headed eagle.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century — over a hundred years before Rowland Hill's postal reform in England—the Austrian postal service was charging a flat rate on letters irrespective of distance carried. One half of the fee was pre-paid, the other half paid on delivery. The *Little Post in Vienna* which was privately run was started in 1772 and its messengers both delivered and collected letters. They carried a small, numbered tin post-box and a rattle with which they attracted attention as they progressed through town, thus acquiring the name *Rattle Post*.



Ayn Rand on Stamp Collecting

By Ayn Rand

“It is not the place for whims, it is not a world for those who like the chaos of indefinable, shifting, whirling, drippy emotions. It is a world for orderly rational minds.”

I started collecting stamps when I was ten years old, but had to give it up by the time I was twelve. In all the years since, I never thought of resuming the hobby. It left only one after-effect: I was unable to throw away an interesting-looking stamp. So I kept saving odd stamps, all these years; I put them into random envelopes and never looked at them again.

Then, about a year-and-a-half ago, I met a bright little girl named Tammy, who asked me – somewhat timidly, but very resolutely – whether I received letters from foreign countries and, if I did, would I give her the stamps. I promised to send her my duplicates. She was eleven years old, and so intensely serious about her collection that she reminded me of myself at that age.

Once I started sorting out the stamps I had accumulated, I was hooked.

It was an astonishing experience to find my enthusiasm returning after more than fifty years, as if there had been no interruption. Only now the feeling had the eagerness of childhood combined with the full awareness, confidence and freedom of age.

My first step was to acquire a Minkus Master Global Stamp Album. In a year and a half, it has grown to four volumes, plus four special albums – and my collection is still growing, at an accelerating rate. No, I have not forgotten Tammy: I send her piles of duplicates every few months, and I feel very grateful to her.

In all those years, I had never found a remedy for mental fatigue. Now, if I feel tired after a whole day of writing, I spend an hour with my stamp albums and it makes me able to resume writing for the rest of the

evening. A stamp album is a miraculous brain-restorer.

I am often asked why people like stamp collecting. So widespread a hobby can obviously have many different motives, which I have observed also in some of the stamp collectors I have met.

The pleasure lies in a certain special way of using one’s mind. Stamp collecting is a hobby for busy, purposeful, ambitious people – because, in pattern, it has the essential elements of a career, but transported to a clearly delimited, intensely private world.

A career requires the ability to sustain a purpose over a long period of time, through many separate steps, choices, decisions, adding up to a steady progression toward a goal. Purposeful people cannot rest by doing nothing; nor can they feel at home in the role of passive spectators. They seldom find pleasure in single occasions, such as a party or a show or even a vacation, a pleasure that ends right then and there, with no further consequences.

The minds of such people require continuity, integration, a sense of moving forward. They are accustomed to working long-range; to them, the present is part of and a means to the future; a short range event or activity that leads nowhere is an unnatural strain on them, an irritating interruption or a source of painful boredom.

Yet they need relaxation and rest from their constant, single-tracked drive. What they need is another track, but for the same train – that is, a change of subject, but using the same method of mental functioning.

Stamp collecting fulfills that need.

It establishes a wide context of its own, interesting enough to hold

(Continued on page 3)

Ayn Rand on Stamp Collecting

By Ayn Rand

(Continued from page 2)

one's attention and to switch one's mind temporarily away from exhausting problems or burdens.

In the course of a career, every achievement is an end in itself and, simultaneously, a step toward further achievements. In collecting, every new stamp is an event, a pleasure in itself and, simultaneously, a step toward the growth of one's collection. A collector is not a passive spectator, but an active, purposeful agent in a cumulative drive. He cannot stand still: an album page without fresh additions becomes a reproach, an almost irresistible call to embark on a new quest.

In a career, there is no such thing as achieving too much: the more one does the more one loves one's work. In collecting, there is no such thing as too many stamps: the more one gets, the more one wants. The sense of action, of movement, of progression is wonderful – and habit forming.

There are also certain differences.

Stamp collecting is an adjunct of, not a substitute for, a career. A career requires problem-solving – creative problems, technical problem, business problems, etc. Stamp collecting requires a full, focused attention, but no problem-solving; it is a process of cashing in on the given and known. If one makes it a substitute for productive work, it becomes an empty escape; an unproductive mind does not need rest.

The course of a career depends on one's own action predominantly, but not exclusively. A career requires a struggle; it involves tension, disappointments, obstacles which are challenging, at times, but are often ugly, painful, senseless – particularly in an age like the present,

when one has to fight too frequently against the dishonesty, the evasions, the irrationality of the people one deals with. In stamp collecting, one experiences the rare pleasure of independent action without irrelevant burdens or impositions. Nobody can interfere with one's collection, nobody need be considered or questioned or worried about. The choices, the work, the responsibility – and the enjoyment – are one's

“There is constant change in the world of stamps, and constant motion, and a brilliant flow of color, and a spectacular display of human imagination –”

own. So is the great sense of freedom and privacy.

For this very reason, when one deals with people as a stamp collector, it is on a cheerful, benevolent basis. People cannot interfere, but they can be very helpful and generous. There is a sense of “brotherhood” among stamp collectors, of a kind which is very unusual today: the brotherhood of holding the same values. In the midst of today's cynical inversion and corruption of all values, one seldom meets a person with whom one has any interest in common; most people today do not actually value or enjoy anything. Stamp collectors have a wide latitude of individual preferences, but the basic principles of the hobby are objective and clear-cut. A stamp collector would not reject the one-cent British Guiana on the grounds that it is unique – and he would not exchange

it for a dozen German Inflation stamps on the grounds that these were more fashionable since more people used them.

The pursuit of the unique, the unusual, the different, the rare, is the motive power of stamp collecting. It endows the hobby with the suspense and excitement of a treasure hunt – even on the more modest levels of collecting, where the treasure may be simply an unexpected gift from a friend, which fills the one blank spot, completing the set.

This mood of lighthearted benevolence is particularly important to people whose careers deal with grim, crucial issues – as, for instance, a writer who studies the trends of the modern world, or a surgeon who faces the constant question of life or death. It is not an accident that a great many doctors are stamp collectors.

Careers of that kind require such a ruthless discipline of total dedication that one can become almost depersonalized. That is why an hour spent on an activity whose sole purpose is one's own pleasure, becomes such a restoring, invigorating life line.

When one turns to stamps, one enters a special world by a process resembling a response to art: one deals with an isolated and stressed aspect of existence – and one experiences the sense of a clean, orderly, peaceful, sunlit world. Its rules and boundaries are strictly delimited – the rest is up to one's individual choice. But one does not choose blindly, one deals with firm, intelligible, changeless things. There is constant change in the world of stamps, and constant motion, and a brilliant flow of color, and a spec-

(Continued on page 4)

Ayn Rand on Stamp Collecting

By Ayn Rand

(Continued from page 3)

tacular display of human imagination – but there is no change in the nature and purpose of stamps. Nobody tries to claim – as people do in other fields – that a wilted scrap of lettuce from his garbage can is a superior kind of stamp. It is not the place for whims, it is not a world for those who like the chaos of indefinable, shifting, whirling, drippy emotions. It is a world for orderly rational minds.

But – it is asked – why not collect cigar bands, or coins, or old porcelain? Why stamps?

Because stamps are the concrete, visible symbols of an enormous abstraction: of the communications net embracing the world.

An inextricable part of even a casual glance at stamps is the awareness of what a magnificent achievement they represent: for a few pennies, you can send a letter to any place on earth, to the farthest, most desolate corner where human beings might live – to Greenland or to the Cocos Islands (population 1,000). Those bright little pieces of paper will carry your words across oceans, over mountains, over deserts, and still more difficult: over savage frontiers (the most savage of which are not on the underdeveloped continents). Stamps, as a postal institution, are only 130 years old. Think of the human ingenuity, the technological development and large scale synchronizations of effort that were required to create a world-wide postal system. (You may curse the inefficiency of your local post office – and the ones abroad may be worse – but look at the total picture of what they are accomplishing.)

While the world politicians are

doing their best to split the globe apart by means of iron curtains and brute force, the world postal services are demonstrating – in their quiet, unobtrusive way – what is required to bring mankind closer together: a specific purpose cooperatively carried out, serving individual goals and needs. It is the voices of individual men that stamps carry around the globe; it is individual

“An album page without fresh additions becomes a reproach, an almost irresistible call to embark on a new quest.”

men that need a postal service; kings, dictators and other rulers do not work by mail. In this sense, stamps are the world’s ambassadors of good will.

Stamp collecting gives one a large-scale view of the world – and a very benevolent view. One feels that, no matter how dreadful some of mankind’s activities might be, here is a field in which men are functioning reasonably, efficiently, and successfully. (I do not mean the political set-up involved, I mean the technical aspects and skills required to deliver the world’s gigantic tonnage of mail.)

When I hear in the news the name of some country that I discovered only through my stamp album – such as Tonga or Niue – I feel a touch of personal recognition, like an affectionate greeting. Stamps give one a personal value-stake, a kind of proprietary interest in distant lands which, otherwise, would remain mere names and empty abstractions. (Some countries are abusing this and putting out an unconscionable amount of philatelic

waste, more stamps than could possible be used for legitimate postal needs. But collectors are free to ignore them.) A stamp album is like a world tour, with the advantage of focusing selectively on the best aspects of various cultures, and without bitter disadvantages.

Speaking esthetically, I should like to mention the enormous amount of talent displayed on stamps – more than one can find in today’s art galleries. Ignoring the mug shots of some of the world’s ugliest faces (a sin of which the stamps of most countries are guilty), one finds real little masterpieces of the art of painting. In this respect, the stamps of Japan are consistently the best. But my personal favorites are two smaller countries whose stamps are less well known: Ryukyu Islands and Iceland. If this were a competition, I would give first prize for beauty of design to two stamp of Iceland that feature stylized drawings of trees.

In conclusion, I want to say a personal “thank you” to a man whose extremely generous interest and guidance have helped me to find my way in a very complex field: Mr. Jacques Minkus. The infectiously irresistible enthusiasm he projects for the world of stamps, and the glamour of the philatelic establishment he has created give him an unusual position in today’s cheerless world: the head of an empire dedicated to human enjoyment.

Editor’s note: This original essay by noted author Ayn Rand was written for and copyrighted by Jacques Minkus, the man who started the Minkus catalog and album publishing line. It was first published in 1971 in Vol. 6, No. 2, *Minkus Stamp Journal*.

Ayn Rand was the subject of a US stamp in 1999, shown on page 2.

The Consequential Sequence

By Martin Hirschbühl with illustrations by Lou Guadagno

(Continued from page 1)

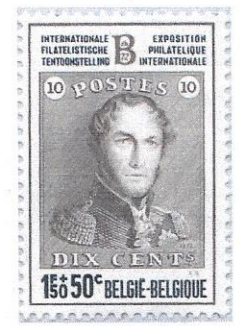
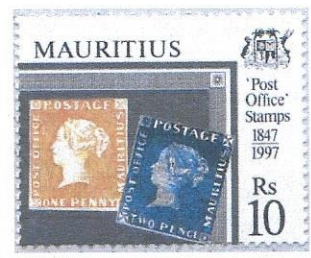
My old list produced some 25 years ago, included all SOS-issuing countries of that time. In the meantime, some additional ones appeared. But, fortunately, I later decided to reduce my SOS collection to the Max (some of you might have read about it). That's why my list was never brought up to date. In these beautiful new computer days, anyone should be able to continue it. You are hereby kindly invited to make your contribution to the cause. If you're finished, please think of me under martin@hirschbuehl.ch.

You will find out that sometimes it's a little tricky. Switzerland, for instance, was once divided into "counties" such as Zurich and Geneva (first stamp in 1843) or Basel with the famous dove of 1845. The Swiss Federation was founded in 1850; the so-called "Rayon" stamp was the first valid for the whole country. In such a case I listed the country under 1843, not 1850.

I've never really made the decision for East Germany: should it be 1949, the year of its first own stamp or 1945, which saw stamps of the Russian occupation or 1850, the first stamp of Saxony? I made the choices based upon my minor knowledge of postal, territorial or political history. This became an interesting journey for me. Should I list Norfolk Island in 1948, when it issued its own stamp, or maybe 1853 when the former mainland called Van Diemens Land emitted their first stamp? Question after question; but that's exactly where the SOS fun started. It's a creative way of collecting.

What else can you ask?

From top left: Great Britain Sc#642, Switzerland #B607 S/S cut-out, Spain #778, Germany #B309, Switzerland #492 Brazil #2413a S/S cut-out.



From top above: Niue Sc #244a, Austria #572, Bermuda #136, Trinidad & Tobago #218, Mauritius #849, Belgium #B883, Marshall Islands #637 S/S cut-out.

New Issues by Lou Guadagno (new on list = *)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Values</u>	<u>Stamp Reproduced</u>	<u>Reason for Issue</u>	<u>Scott #</u>
✓ 02 11 02	Argentina	* 2 x 75c	Corrientes #1	50th Anniv. FAEFW—2v—1SOS	2209-10
✓ 02 09 09	Bosnia/Croat	* 80	Bosnia-Herzegovina #14	Stamp Day	91
✓ 02 10 09	Chile	* 160-230p	Chile #1057-8 partial in background	America	1375-6
✓ 03 00 00	Cuba	* P 1.00	Cuba #tbi in margin, #390	S/S 510th Anniversary, Founding of Havana	To come
✓ 01 10 00	Dominican Rep	\$P 5.00	Dominican Rep #193	Stamp Day	1377
✓ 02 06 23	Egypt	125pt	Egypt #318-21, Netherlands #1, etc.	S/S 50th Anniversary Revolution	1822
✓ 02 08 30	Gambia	6 x 10d	#1108a-b, many in margins	150th Anniversary, Stamps of Netherlands	2660a-f
✓ 02 10 04	Italy	€ 0.41	Italy-Roman States #6	150th Anniv. Papal State	2514
✓ 03 05 09	Italy	* € 0.41	Italy #tbi-(in exhibition logo)	Veronafil Exhibition 2003	To come
✓ 03 02 07	New Caledonia	* 70fr	New Caledonia #77	100 Anniv. Jubilee Overprint Stamps	To come
✓ 03 03 13	Portugal	* .30-.70E	Portugal #1, 2, 3, 4	150th Anniversary, First Stamps of Portugal	To come 2541-
✓ 03 00 00	Romania	* 3000 L	Wallachia #14	Impr. Env. 140th Anniv. Stamp Unified Princ,	To come
✓ 03 00 00	Romania	* 3000 L	Moldavia #1	Impr. Env Baricada Phil Club Anniv Exhibit	To come
✓ 02 10 00	Romania	* 1500 L	Moldavia #1	Impr. Card HUNFILA 2002 Exhibition	To come
✓ 03 00 00	Romania	* 1500 L	Moldavia #1	Impr. Card (5) – various philatelic subjects	To come
✓ 03 03 00	Romania	* 1500 L	Romania #167 proof, unvalued	Impr. Card—Centenary issue of 1903	To come
✓ 03 03 00	Romania	* 1500 L	Romania #160 proof, unvalued	Impr. Card—Centenary issue of 1903	To come
✓ 02 10 01	Trinidad & Tob.	\$3.75-5.25	Trinidad & Tobago #119	Golden Jubilee, QE II, 3v—1 SOS	650-2
✓ 02 10 09	Uruguay	\$P12.00	Uruguay #1,7,8,9,17,23,25,26,33	S/S: 175 Years of Postal Service	To come



Top-Argentina #2210, New Caledonia 2/7/03, Romania imprinted cards 1903 centenary issue; Bottom-Portugal 03/13/03.

Classifieds

TIMBRES THEMES (Topical Stamps)

1221 Fleury E CP 35046,
Montreal, Canada H2C 3K4

**NEW ISSUES,
WANT LISTS,
TOPICAL APPROVALS**

Free price list available

A 10% discount will be given
to SOSCC members

MasterCard and Visa

Tel: 514-383-6248

Fax: 514-388-0157

Email:

janiced@topicstamps.com

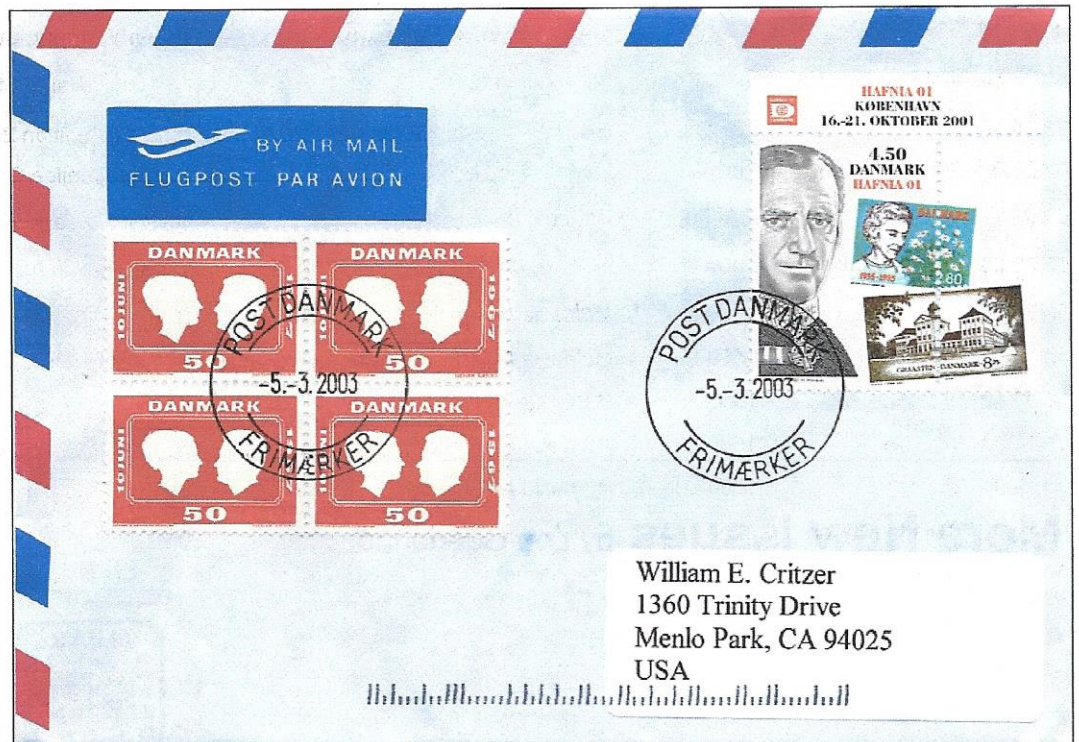
Internet:

<http://www.topicstamps.com>

SOSCC News by Bill Critzer

An exchange forum is forming. Member Gunter Schraml of #403-50 Water Street South, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6Y9 has offered to be the coordinator of an SOS stamp exchange forum for SOSCC members only. All the details can be obtained from Gunter at the above address or preferably by email to: gws18@shaw.ca. Please take advantage of this opportunity.

Below is one of the 4 stamps issued October 16, 2001 by Denmark for Hafnia 2001. The stamp shown is Sc #1211, reproducing #775 (Queen Ingrid) and #1003 (Graasten Palace. This set is Sc #1210-13 plus #1213a, a souvenir sheet of four values and also #1213b, a se-tenant strip of four values. My thanks to Martin Hirschbühl for preparing and sending this attractive cover.



Neighbors had always exchanged good wishes at Christmas, but it took the development of a cheaper and more efficient postal system to extend the greeting to friends and relatives in other town and villages. Christmas cards as such were introduced in 1843. They owe their origin to the initiative of Henry Cole. Fewer than a thousand of these professionally hand-colored cards were sold at one shilling each. The design represents in the side panels the spirit of Christmas charity and, in the center, a large Victorian family toasting the absent friend and addressee. About twelve of these cards are known to exist. The stamps are Christmas Island Sc #90a-e, issued 8/27/79 for the death centenary of Sir Rowland Hill.



The first Christmas card, 1843.

SOSCC was founded in 1954. It is a non-profit philatelic organization serving a worldwide membership and is open to persons interested in stamp on stamp designs, stamp anniversaries and related topics. Dues are \$11 per year for members residing in North America and \$14 elsewhere.

Officers serve without compensation and are reimbursed only for expenses incurred on behalf of the club. You are cordially invited to associate with us. Please contact the Secretary Treasurer or use our website for more information and to become a member.

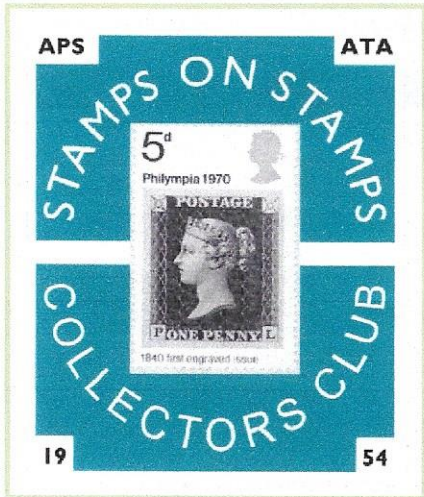
Stamps on Stamps Collectors Club

William E. Critzer, Editor
 1360 Trinity Drive
 Menlo Park, CA 94025
 USA

Phone/Fax: 650-234-1136
 Email: wllmcritz@aol.com

President	Gaston Barrette	403-2765 Chemin Sainte-Foy Sainte-Foy, Quebec G1V 4S4 Canada
Vice President	Michael Merritt	73 Mountainside Road Mendham, NJ 07945
Secretary/ Treasurer	Alf Jordan	156 West Elm Street Yarmouth, ME 04096
New Issues	Lou Guadagno	1772 E. 51st Street Brooklyn, NY 11234
Editor	Bill Critzer	1360 Trinity Drive Menlo Park, CA 94025

Email addresses may be found on the SOSCC website.



More New Issues by Lou Guadagno



Uruguay #1971; Romania imprinted envelope Unified Principalities and imprinted card HUNFILA 2002; Chile #1375-6.