

# SOS Signal

BULLETIN OF THE  
**STAMPS ON STAMPS**  
**- CENTENARY UNIT**  
OF THE AMERICAN TOPICAL ASSOCIATION

Volume 23, Issue 3

July-September 1982

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## NEW MEMBERS

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## THE 1981 SOS CHECKLIST

Enclosed you will find the yearly checklist supplement (No. XVIII) for 1981. There are some changes in the format from previous lists. The identification section has been expanded to include a brief description (i.e. value-design) as well as catalog # and day of issue of the reproduced stamp. This has been done for several reasons.

Hopefully it will be a help to our members outside the U.S.A. who do not use Scott's as their catalog. In the twenty odd years of our unit's existence, our overseas membership has grown steadily and the checklists must serve these members also. The description should aid them in finding the reproduced stamp in their primary catalogs.

Secondly, any listing, such as this supplement, is at the mercy of the catalog producers. In order to get the list to the members at the earliest possible date since actual catalog listings may take a year or more, the editor must rely on numbers assigned in various periodicals. These numbers are often tentative, while even older issues are subject to revision or deletion. Should the assigned numbers be changed, the member, with the use of the description, should be able to find the corrected number while still having faith in the compiler's ability to read (it is very frustrating to check and recheck a listing only to find it made "suspect" or even obsolete at a later date by the catalog editors).

Another addition to the listing are those souvenir sheets which have stamp reproductions outside the border of the franking stamp. Comments received in recent months from the membership seem to indicate that inclusion of these "marginal" items was wanted.

Regrettably, even at this late date, the catalogs have not caught up with all the 1981 issues, but rather than delete these issues, I have included them without numbers. When they are finally listed, I will advise the numbers in a "checklist update" in a future Signal.

Also, several identifications, namely No. KOREA and YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC, are incomplete. In some instances, the reproduced stamps have not yet been cataloged; in others, the magazine illustrations which were all I had to work from were not large or clear enough to allow identification. These items will also be filled in when either the stamps or listings become available.

## NEW ISSUES

The following are Type A SOS:

CHAD on 15 November 1981 issued four provisional stamps inscribed "POSTES 1981"; two are SOS as they were overprinted on surplus Rowland Hill stamps from 1979. (See Photo A.)

MEXICO on 20 March 1982 issued a single value to promote the use of the postal codes introduced in 1981. Behind the cartoon "mail dove" -- the Mexican Mr. Zip -- is a cover stamped with the postal code introduction issue of November 1981. (See Photo B.)

CUBA on 24 April 1982 issued two values for Stamp Day. They reproduce nineteenth century covers processed by the English and French post offices in Cuba. (See Photo C.)

TURKS AND CAICOS on 3 May 1982 issued a s/s to honor the birth anniversaries of U.S. Presidents George Washington (250th) and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (100th). In the inset stamp, FDR is pictured examining the 3¢ Washington stamp issued 16 June 1932 (Sc. 720). (See Photo D.)

DJIBOUTI on 10 May 1982 issued two values to honor Philexfrance '82; the 80f reproduces the 20f value of the 1979 International Year of the Child commemoratives (Sc. 489) and the 140f the 150f value of the 1979 Rowland Hill commemoratives (Sc. 495). (See Photo E.)

BULGARIA on 28 May 1982 issued a commemorative to honor Philexfrance '82; reproduced are the first issues of both France and Bulgaria.

HUNGARY on 11 June 1982 issued a s/s to honor Philexfrance '82; reproduced is a 20f stamp from Hungary showing Jules Rimet, a soccer ball and the Rimet Cup, issued on 6 June 1966 (Sc. 1772). (See Photo F.)

BENIN on 11 June 1982 issued a stamp to honor Philexfrance '82; reproduced are two stamps -- from France, the Stamp Day semi-postal issued 18 March 1961 showing a Paris petite postman of 1760 (Sc. B349), and from Dahomey, the 40f stamp issued 3 August 1971 showing the emblem of the Abomey king, Behanzin (Sc. 289). (See Photo G.)

BRAZIL on 1 August 1982 issued a stamp to commemorate the centenary of the "Big Head" designs of 1882 reproduced is the 10r value of that issue (Sc. 82). In the background is an enlarged portion of the stamp. (See Photo H.)

CHINA (TAIWAN) on 9 August 1982 issued two stamps to promote Philately; one design shows a stamp held in tongs with stamps in the background, the other shows stamps in a stockbook. (See Photo I.)

NETHERLAND ANTILLES on 9 June 1982 issued a s/s of three non-SOS stamps with margin reproductions of Curacao (Neth. Antilles) 5¢ rose of 1873 (Sc. 3) and France 25c Ceres of 1849 (Sc. 6).

The following are unidentifiable types:

ITALY on 29 May 1982 issued a triptych -- two stamps with center label, to publicize Italian communications technology -- one design shows an envelope with blob stamp under an optical reader.

SURINAME on 6 June 1982 issued three stamps and s/s of three to honor Philexfrance '82 which illustrate stamp designing, printing and collecting with blob stamps.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC on 5 July 1982 issued three stamps to publicize Espamer '82 -- two values show perforated multi-color blobs.

U.S.A. issued the following 1982 commemoratives with the running "Mr. Zip" (stamp blob on envelope) in the selvedge: State Birds and Flowers (14 April), Horatio Alger (30 April), Barrymores (8 June), Dr. Mary Walker (10 June), Libraries of America (13 July), Jackie Robinson (2 August). (My thanks to Bill Rau for this information.)

The following are SOS postal stationery:

POLAND on 22 May 1981 issued a 4.20z postal card to honor WIPA '81. The imprinted stamp reproduces the WIPA emblem which includes Austria Sc. 40.

POLAND on 20 September 1981 issued a 2z postal card to note the 60th anniversary of the Post and Telecommunications Museum, Wroclaw. Included in the imprinted stamp is a reproduction of Poland Sc. 1.

USSR on 25 May 1982 issued a 4k postal card to note the Vienna U.N. World Conference-Unispace '82. The imprinted stamp includes a pseudo stamp.

INCOMING  
SIGNALS

Last year I commented on the then upcoming HAITI stamp centenary, but the year passed without a commemorative issue. Harold Arnold advises that he received word from a correspondent in Haiti that it will finally be released shortly.

KIRIBATI is scheduled to issue a set to honor the 75th anniversary of the Boy Scouts, one value of which will be SOS, reproducing a 1977 Gilbert Islands scouting stamp.

The First National Stamp Exhibition of ANDORRA will be held later this year and will be commemorated with a stamp issue, hopefully, the first SOS from this tiny European country.

BELGIUM will host an international exhibition in December 1982 -- BELGICA '82. Slated for a 20 December release are a semi-postal set of six stamps and a s/s. No design details were noted but previous such issues were SOS.

Bill Rau writes that there is an organization devoted to zip block collecting, the ZCCI (Zippy Collector's Club, International). Tomio Uyeda and he are members, and he would be pleased to sponsor SOSCU members who might care to join. A monthly newsletter, "The Zip-Me News" keeps up with the new issues and perf varieties. Dues are \$6, and the membership secretary is Robert E. Stevenson, 1225 Valley View Drive, Vermillion, S.D. 57069.

JACKSON'S  
JOTTINGS

Information in the July-Sept. '81 Signal mentions that the LESOTHO gold foil SOS were to be a series of forty, but a recent newsletter from a new issue dealer says that the 10th October release of twelve stamps are the last of the gold foil issues.

A report from the USA claims that the FALKLAND ISLANDS Rowland Hill issue had been overprinted by the Argentinians with the name MALVINAS. Since this issue was withdrawn in 1979 the likelihood is that any stocks held by the Falklands Post Office or Philatelic Bureau would have long since been destroyed. It is now known that following the invasion, all stamp stocks held by the Post Office were locked in their vaults, so the only conclusion can be that such overprints are bogus.

"Watchman" in Stamp Collecting, 1st April, thinks that the stamps of CAPE VERDE are more popular than one might think and one of the two sets he recommends is the 1977 Stamp Centenary issue.

"Watchman" in Stamp Collecting, 8th April, thinks that the VATICAN 1952 Stamp Centenary issue is showing signs of life and is worth buying at present market prices.

In the same issue he feels rather favorably inclined to the GILBERT AND ELLICE 1974 UPU set, though it is the SOS theme which makes him recommend it at the present low level; although catalogued at £3.70 mint it is obtainable for less.

"Watchman" in Stamp Collecting, 22nd April, says that FINLAND is not a country for the collector-investor, but one of the few items worth considering is the 1975 Nordia Exhibition stamp which had a printing of 431,024 -- very small for this country, but practically every copy was bought by collectors. Nevertheless, the stamp remains worth buying with its popular SOS theme.

"Watchman" in Stamp Collecting, 29th April, says that the WEST GERMANY 1951 National Stamp Exhibition set is worth buying at best. This set is marked up from £60 to £80 mint or used in the second edition of the Stanley Gibbons Germany catalog.

He mentions that he tipped the GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC 1950 Debria Philatelic Exhibition m/s just over a year ago when cataloged at £35 mint or used, and now cataloged at £85 mint, £100 used.

Among "Watchman's" "budget buys" at under £5 are:

CHILE: The 1953 Stamp Centenary pair which he says will always be wanted by thematic collectors but can be found for less than S.G. catalog price of £2.63 mint. A FDC would also be nice to have.

CUBA: Of the pre-Castro stamps he favors the 1940 issue for the Penny Black Centenary cataloged at £2.75 mint.

GAMBIA: Among post-independence issues he likes the 1969 stamp centenary trio cataloged at £1.50 mint or used, particularly as less than 50,000 sets were sold and it is a SOS design.

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: Worth buying at a bargain price is the 1949 Stamp Day single with a printing of 1 million, cataloged at £1.40 mint or used, and the

1950 Debria Exhibition single of which only 750,000 were issued, cataloged at £5 mint or used.

WEST GERMANY: Among the post-1955 issues he favors is the 1959 Interposta Stamp Exhibition set, cataloged at £2.35 mint, £3 used.

"Watchman" in Stamp Collecting, 24th June, notes that the NORWAY 1955 Norwex set was marked up from £15 to £27 in S.G. Stamps of the World catalog, almost equaling the Facit catalog price of £30, but he thinks this set will go further.

The "Stamps to Look For" column in June Stamp Magazine suggests that you pick up what you can of the CZECHOSLOVAKIA Stamp Day series while prices are reasonable and also that you try to link them with the original stamps.

The "Stamps to Look For" column in August Stamp Magazine says that the EGYPT Stamp Centenary m/s of 1966 is very elusive.

According to a report in August Stamps magazine all the GUYANA provisionals and overprints were withdrawn from public counter sales in June but will be maintained on sale at the Philatelic Bureau for twelve months.

In July Stamp Monthly it is stated by Stanley Gibbons that they are considering the possibilities of publishing checklists covering the most popular thematic (topical) subjects. Their research shows that the eleven most popular subjects do not include SOS.

THE LESOTHO  
GOLD FOIL  
FAIRY TALE  
BILL RAU

Once upon a time there was this King in the far-away, but very, very young Land of Lesotho, a kingdom about the size of Belgium and surrounded by the land of other lands. This King's name was Moshoeshoe II, and like all rulers of landlocked nations, he felt a strong urge to issue lots and lots of postage stamps.

Some time in 1980 or so, he latched onto his private secretary and commanded him to draw up a Royal Warrant which essentially decreed that: "In celebration of the 15th Year of the Nation's Independence, and. . .in celebration of the Memorial Centenary of Sir Rowland Hill. . .the Royal Postal Service issue a series of stamps depicting the most important stamps in history."

Now, as if that weren't enough, M-II-Shoe (makes one wonder if his wife's name is Goodie) further commanded that the Royal Postal Service "frost" the stamps with 20 Karat White Gold upon a surface "polished with" 23 Karat Yellow Gold.

Does this all sound like a fairy tale? Well, that's because it is! Probably the only realistic line in the whole Royal Warrant is the one that states ". . .the proof dies shall be destroyed and the edition ended for all time." As a matter of fact, there are rumors out that Lesotho may have already ended the edition for all time a little short of the 40 stamps promised.

How do I know there will be 40? I really don't. But remember, in a fairy tale anything's possible. Besides, Calhoun's says so. Now, would Stafford Calvin lie? I own an album especially designed to hold 40 different stamps, and each album page discusses a different stamp in the series. That's certainly some evidence, but not necessarily the best kind.

On Dec. 15, 1981, I wrote to Lesotho to ask if the stamps were available directly from them, and I asked about the cost.

The following reply arrived Jan. 28, 1982, six weeks later:

"We have an offer a limit number (English is only their second language) of sets of 18 gold foil stamps at R10.00 each. We are obliged to sell by set and should you be interested we shall be pleased to receive the equivalent of R180.00 by bankers draft or money order. --L.J. Keen, Manager."

After some study of his message which reads differently depending on where you insert commas, I concluded that I had achieved a certain amount of success, but that another letter of inquiry was in order before I sent them any money.

I dashed off a letter asking too many questions at once. I wanted to buy just the latest 6 stamps in the series, not all 18. I asked if I could do this. I also asked if there was going to be a total of 40 stamps in the series, and finally, I asked if they had brochures available on this gold foil series. I urged them to reply right away. The following reply arrived eight weeks later on March 28th:

"The gold stamps are still available. They are 18 in all and costs R10.00 each which is approximately \$11 United States Dollars. You are now left with the last six stamps 12-18 so please send us your order and you'll get them. --L. Mphatsoe."

Only one of my questions got answered, and somewhat erroneously at that, as #12-18 is seven stamps, not six. The exchange rate on that day was .982 to 1., so the cost per stamp was not the \$11 U.S. quoted, but \$9.82 each.

Just as I thought I'd gotten over some of the hurdles in my adventure, an unexpected one arose at the bank. I've always turned to the Bank of America for International Money Orders and drafts to foreign nations, because they know everything. Turns out, it's not so! I had concisely and neatly typed up all the data and only that data that the nice lady at the teller's window needed. I even read it to her, "I need an I.M.O., the U.S. equivalent of 60 South African Rand, payable to the Lesotho Philatelic Bureau, Maseru, Lesotho."

Lady: "Where's Maseru?"

Me : "In Lesotho."

Lady: "Where's Lesotho?"

Me : "In Africa."

I pondered over the relevancy of that discussion while she consulted her volumes of exchange rate books until she came back and told me point blank, "We don't have an exchange rate with Africa."

This set me back, as I'd heard nothing about Africa becoming a unified nation, let alone cutting off exchange. Surely, I thought, she must know that Africa is a continent, with many independent nations in it, but I told her that anyway.

She went back to her tomes for another ten minutes or so, as I amused myself by wondering if she knew that the world was round. Finally, she came back to report, "Well, we don't have an exchange rate with Maseru, either."

I calmly explained to her that Maseru was only a city (you know, lady like New York, Paris, London and others of note), and I suggested that perhaps countries were listed alphabetically by country.

She spent more minutes looking. She was really trying to help, I thought, as I kept telling myself, it's not a fairy tale. It really does exist! She brought a book or two over to me. The listings skipped from something like Latvia to Liberia. No Lesotho. I insisted that it existed, trying to conceal the fact that my faith in M-II-Shoes' kingdom had become a little shaken.

Twice during the hour or so I'd been there, she offered to make out the I.M.O. in any amount I wished to tell her to, but I stubbornly insisted that the bank tell me the current rate. I'm glad I did, or I'd have overpaid Mr. Mphatsoe by about \$7!

Finally, she called the San Francisco headquarters for help, and after twenty more minutes, she had the answer, made out the I.M.O., and I was on my way after an hour and a half. I sat in my car mulling over the whole business, wondering if this whole chain of events could possibly be real.

The system works, however slowly, and it saves lots of money over buying these stamps through dealers, as they charge from \$16 to \$25 each, for a stamp worth (?) less than \$10.

In case anybody's still interested, the address is: Lesotho Philatelic Bureau, Private Bag No. 1, Maseru, Lesotho. Doesn't seem to matter to whose attention you put it. I kind of like Mphatsoe myself. Think of it: "Dear Fatsoe..."

#### SIGNAL LIGHTS

The LESOTHO gold foil stamps have not fared well as far as catalog recognition, either. Of all the major catalogs, only Minkus has listed the issue--and only the first six stamps at that! In hopes of having numbers for the 1981 checklist, I called the Minkus offices and inquired if the second group of stamps would have numbers continuing after the first. I was told that they weren't even aware of the October '81 issue (the agency had not even sent them a publicity release), and that given the dubious nature of the stamps, they probably would not be listed.

Since these stamps are supposedly valid for postage, I am curious just what use Lesotho would have for such a high face value, and, if any were actually used on mail. It's a shame that a more realistic value was not given to these stamps, as they are quite beautifully designed and produced.

The provisional overprints issued by CHAD at the end of last year came with the re-opening of international postal service after being suspended since late 1980, due to the civil war there which involved its near neighbors. Negotiations ended the strife and allowed the government to restore normal services.

The stamps on stamps are not always reproduced as issued, as we all well know. This is really apparent when you have the actual stamp for comparison. The BENIN Philexfrance SOS are easily recognizable and "match" their black-and-white photos in the catalog, but are not really true to the originals. The French Semi-postal stamp has been changed from a green to reddish-brown color, and the Dahomey stamp has had its motif simplified. Most interesting though, is the way the designer modified its inscriptions--rather than just use wiggly lines or dots to represent the wording, he enlarged them so that they can be read with a magnifier. To do this, the top inscription, "REPUBLIQUE DU DAHOMEY" had to be on one line instead of two, and the black rectangle around "POSTES" had to be deleted. (See Photo G.)

The CHINA (TAIWAN) stamps to honor Philately are a SOS researcher's dream! The two designs have 26 and 18 identifiable stamps respectively! (Since I had the choice of getting the Signal finished or doing the identifications, I reluctantly decided to "eat my dessert last" after a "taste" to assure myself that they were indeed identifiable--but just as soon as this bulletin gets into the mail...). I'll have them done for the next Signal.



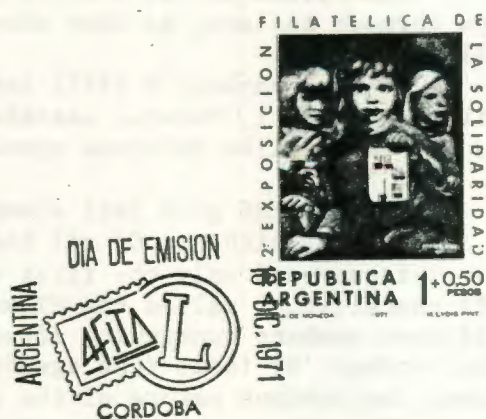
In 1964, AFGHANISTAN issued two values with a SOS design to commemorate "Philatelie." No particular reason for the issue was given at the time but I just might possibly have discovered it. In reading a book on stamp collecting, I found that a Frenchman, George Herpin, writing in the November, 1864 issue of Le Collectionneur De Timbres-Poste, coined the word "philatelie" to describe his hobby. It is doubtful that any Afghans would have been aware of this, but in 1964 their stamps were often agency planned and produced, and any reason for a topical issue would be cheerfully used. Unless it is just a strange coincidence, the stamps actually honor the centenary of the word "philately"!

The ARGENTINA semi-postal issued for the Second Lions' International Solidarity Stamp Exhibition on December 18, 1971 (Sc B55), reproduces a painting by Mariette Lydis, "Children With Stamps." In the Unit checklists the stamp blobs are listed as unidentifiable, but I always suspected the artist might have used "model" stamps as well as model children. Recently, I came across a FDC of the issue which had a photo of the painting as a cachet, and the "stamps" are a bit better defined. I was only able to definitely identify one stamp--as U.S. Sc C59, a 25¢ airmail showing Abraham Lincoln, issued on April 22, 1960. It is "cheating", but if reproductions of the painting could be found in an art book or print shop, the other stamps are probably identifiable too!

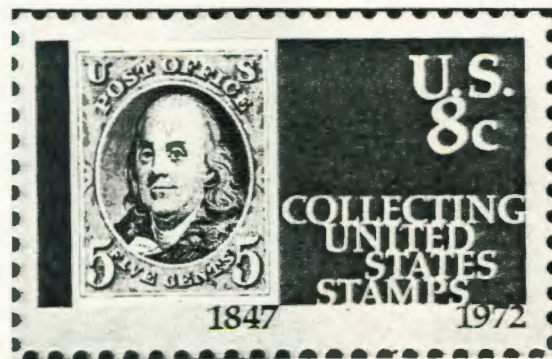
2º EXPOSICION FILATELICA DE LA SOLIDARIDAD



CIRCULO FILATELICO DE LINIERS • BUENOS AIRES  
SOBRE PRIMER DIA • FIRST DAY COVER



With the kind permission of Minkus Publishing, and Mr. Belmont Faries, we are reproducing the following photo article which appeared in the Minkus Stamp Journal, Vol. VIII, No. 4, 1973. Personally, I like #1 for obvious reasons. Did the Bureau make the right choice?



## Designs That Didn't Make It...



## and the One That Did

When a stamp honoring Stamp Collecting was first considered in 1972 the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was asked to work up design proposals using the first United States stamp, the 5-cent Franklin, of 1847, and the wording "Collecting United States Postage Stamps 1847-1947."

Four models were prepared, one by Howard C. Mildner and three by Leonard E. Buckley. Mildner's design (1) used the 1847 stamp (actually a Bureau copy of it) against a background of other United States issues.

Buckley stressed the 1847 stamp in a horizontal design (2) and was able to make it even larger in a vertical format (3) in which he met the de-

sign problem of conflicting denominations on the old and new stamps by redoing the Ben Franklin 5-center as an 8 cent stamp.

For his third design (4) he used a new size discussed but not previously used by the bureau, a "semi-jumbo" as wide as a horizontal commemorative and as deep as the "jumbo" size first used with the Eisenhower commemorative. This made it possible to picture the 1847 stamp in a relatively large size but still provide an adequate inscription.

An outside artist, Frank E. Livia of Malverne, N. Y. was asked to try the "semi-jumbo" size with the inscription simplified to "Stamp Collecting" and the 8-cent denomination larger.

Livia tried a new designing technique, photography. Photographs have been used for years as aids in stamp design, but Livia used the camera to create the pictorial design itself — an actual 5-cent 1847 stamp against a green cloth background and with a magnifying glass held directly over it (5). The inscriptions were added by an overlay.

Livia's design was approved and his stamp for Stamp Collecting was issued in New York Nov. 17, 1972 at the biggest stamp extravaganza of the year, the National Postage Stamp Show of the American Stamp Dealers' Association. **[MSJ]**

"SEARCH AND ENJOY" AND "A NATURAL PROGRESSION"  
CONTINUED

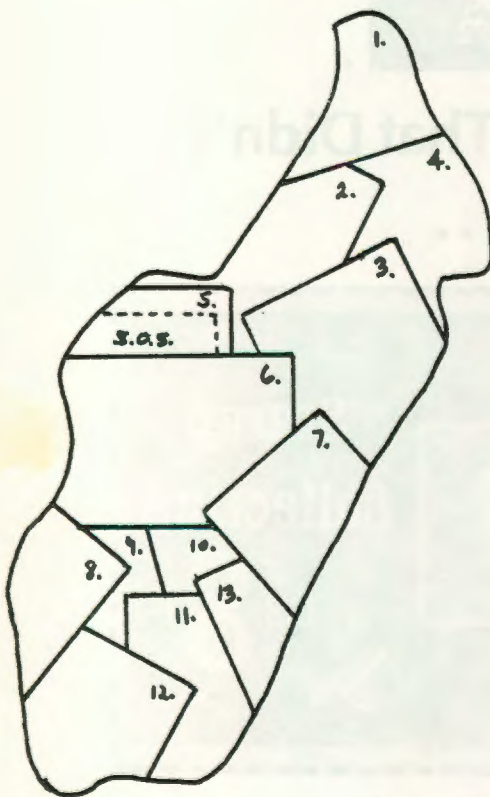
Just about a year ago, I wrote an article on identifying the PHILIPPINES multiple SOS design. By coincidence, MALAGASY has issued a similar item, not quite as challenging but just as much fun to work out.

My first glance at the stamp showed me that there would be just bits and pieces to work on with most of the SOS, and that they were randomly laid out with some upside down or on one side or the other. "Journé Du Timbre" was apparent on several of the stamps and that was my first clue on where to look in the catalog.

There are thirteen SOS inside the "map" of Malagasy and almost all turned out to be issued for Stamp Day, which limited the areas to search. However, through the twenty years that Malagasy commemorated Stamp Day, the type of stamp used varied considerably--regular, airmail and semi-postal issues were produced. The date set for the issue was changed several times too.

Happily, between Scott's and Minkus, I was able to find illustrations of all the reproduced issues and match them up with my bits and pieces.

(If you want to try this out on your own, stop here for now and then use the following list to check yourself out).



MALAGASY REPUBLIC

STAMP DAY 1981

#	MALAGASY SCOTT #	VALUE	DESIGN	ISSUED
1.	583	7a	Rural Mail Bus	(Aug 18, 1977)
2.	B20	25+5f	Post Office, Tamatave	(May 8, 1962)
3.	487	50f	Tsimandao Mail Carrier	(May 13, 1973)
4.	456	25f	Mobile Rural Post Office	(May 8, 1971)
5.	385	25f	Stamp on Stamp: (Madagascar 63-1f-Zebu-- 1903)	(May 8, 1966)
6.	600	500f	Post Office, Antsirabe	(Nov 9, 1979)
7.	B23	25+5f	Postal Savings-Checking Bldg	(May 8, 1964)
8.	424	30f	Telecommunications-Post Bldg	(May 8, 1969)
9.	C89	500f	Tananarive-Itavo Int'l Airport	(May 8, 1968)
10.	402	20f	Ministry Bldg	(May 8, 1967)
11.	366	20f	Receiving Station, Foulpointe	(May 8, 1965)
12.	B22	20+5f	Central Parcel Post Office	(May 8, 1963)
13.	588	4a	Symbolic Antenna, ITU Emblem	(May 17, 1978)

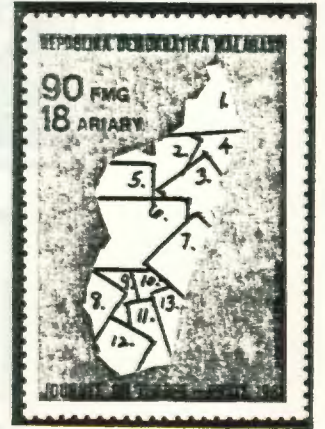
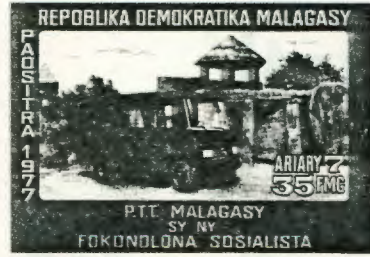
In the past, the SOS stamp--a diagram--a reproduced stamp list--and also a cover would be mounted on an album page and I'd consider myself finished. However, in line with my new ground rules (as laid out in the "SOS: A NATURAL PROGRESSION" article in the Oct/Dec 1981 Signal), this issue should have its reproduced stamps mounted with it.

The catalogs showed that except for several high values, most of the stamps could probably be acquired for under 25¢, but the biggest difficulty would be in locating them. Malagasy is not exactly up at the top of the list of collected countries, and so, not readily found at your friendly neighborhood stamp dealer. Living in N.Y.C. is a big plus though, when you are a stamp collector, so several days later and about \$10 poorer, I had the thirteen stamps on the list.

The "new look," I think, will make a very impressive display and certainly convinces any doubting viewer that the reproduced stamps are correctly identified.



MALAGASY REPUBLIC  
STAMP DAY 1981



1.



2.

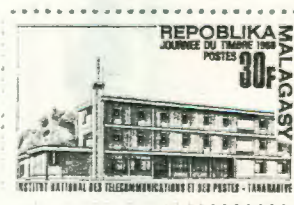
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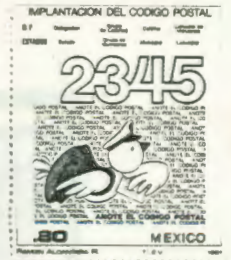
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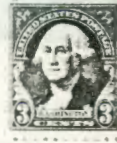
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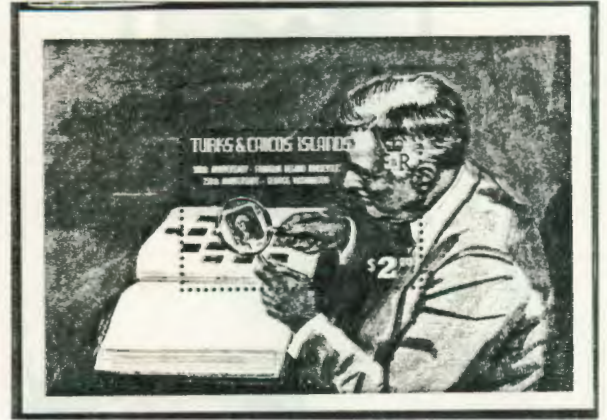
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