

The Circuit

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The Official Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors

Freemasonry On Stamps

by John Slade #1218

In ancient times a man would put his mark or seal on a message he was sending. With the advent of the postal systems came stamps with a variety of designs. Down through the years a number of stamps and fancy cancels included various Masonic symbols and activities.

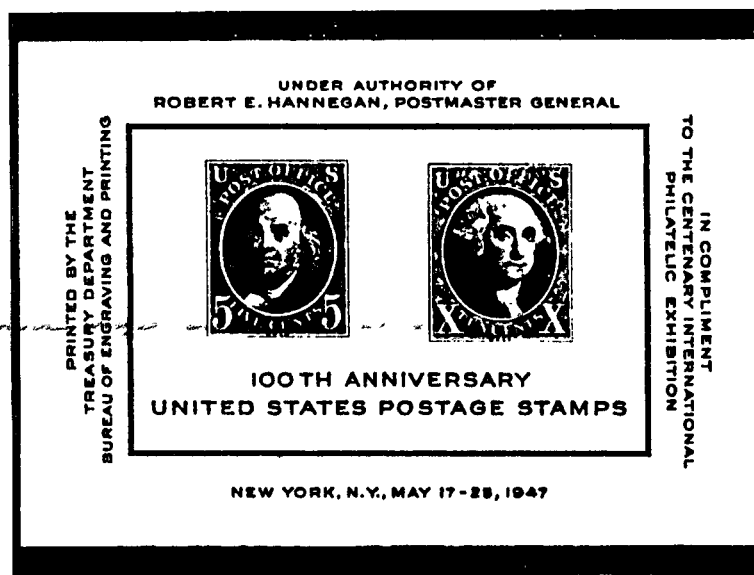
Freemasonry (Masonry) is one of the oldest and largest fraternal organizations in the world. The recorded history of modern Masonry dates back to the early 17th century. However, it is much older. It has been documented that when King Tut's remains were discovered in his Egyptian tomb, he was wearing what appeared to be a Masonic apron.

Why did Masonic symbols appear in the U.S. postal system? Freemasonry had an active, vital part in the formation of this country, even before the Boston Tea Party. At least sixteen presidents were Masons, starting with George Washington, who was sworn in using a Bible from St. Johns Lodge No. 1 of New York City. Many of the leaders on all levels of government and business were Masons who helped shape our country.

There are many philatelic tie-ins to Masonry. The square and compass are the most recognizable symbol of the fraternity and as early as 1862 U.S. fancy cancels depicted them. Many postmasters who designed the cancels were themselves Masons. There are

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Many American Patriots were Freemasons



The souvenir sheet (Scott # 948) honoring 100 years of US postage stamps, depicts two statesmen who were Freemasons. Benjamin Franklin was initiated at St. Johns Lodge (New York) and was elected Venerable of Lodge des IX SOUERS while he was a diplomat in Paris. George Washington was initiated at the Lodge at Fredericksburg, VA. He swore the oath of the office of President on the Bible of the St. Johns Lodge No. 1 (New York City). He was buried with full Masonic honors by the Alexandria (VA) Lodge No. 22. That Lodge later changed its name to Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22.



Other early Freemasons became Presidents: James Monroe (Lodge No. 6, Williamsburg, VA); James Knox Polk (Columbia Lodge No. 1, Columbia, TN); Andrew Jackson (Harmony Lodge No. 1, Nashville, TN.); and James Buchanan (Lodge No. 43, Lancaster, PA).

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Deadline: Next Issue

October 25, 1994

Items received after deadline will appear in another issue.

Freemasonry (Continued from Page 1)

many Masonic stamps which could be discussed from around the world, but for brevity I will only display a few.

Only men may be Masons, however there are several allied or independent bodies for women and our youth; such as Eastern Stars; DeMolay for boys; Rainbow and Job's

Daughters for girls. These groups operate separately from the Masonic Lodges, but normally have Masons involved.

You can find Masons in almost every country of the world except those with a dictatorship or repressive government. One of the first acts of a dictator is to eliminate organizations such as Masonry, as Hitler did. In Hitler's Germany, Masons could identify fellow Masons by the tiny blue forget-me-not flowers they wore.

Masonry's principle aims are charity and the improvement of men. The fraternity and appendant

bodies devote much of their efforts to charitable works, raising about two million dollars a day for many worthy charities around the world. The improvement of men is summarized by the motto, "Freemasonry makes good men better"

Masonry is not a religion, but to become a Mason a man must believe in one God. During all meetings the Bible is always open on the altar, a Bible just like those in your own homes. We open and close meetings with prayers. However, denominational religion and partisan politics are never discussed in our Lodges. Masonry is not a secret society and much of our ritual may be found in books in most libraries.

Masonry has one strict rule. No Mason may invite another man to become a Mason. To join the fraternity, a man must ask a current Mason.

This is a small sampling of two of my favorite subjects, stamps and



Handcarved cork cancels of the Freemasonry Symbol graced the stamps mailed at some early post offices. This 1875 Jackson definitive (Scott # 178) sports a nice example.



Masonic Symbols have appeared on stamps from many countries. The British stamp depicts the mason's trowel, square, compass and a sprig of acacia. Brazil honored an anniversary of Freemasonry in that country. Switzerland depicted operative masons on a stamp. Lebanon has depicted the Cedar on numerous definitive stamps.

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The President's Column by Tom Fortunato (# 379)

It's been a busy summer for me and typically September is the start of a new collecting "season" around the world.

As I write this I'm about to leave for the STaMpsHow'94 convention in Pittsburgh, where we will have an ISWSC meeting. This will be followed with a meeting in Toronto, Canada in September for Phil-Ex. I thoroughly enjoy these meetings when I have a chance meet members face to face and talk about stamps and ISWSC. We encourage all members who attend such shows to hold ISWSC meetings. You, too, will have a wonderful time at them! Try to plan them at least 4 months in advance of the show so that we can publicize them in *The Circuit*. I have plenty of support materials to make available at these shows.

Big news here in the US involves the recalled "Legends of the West" sheetlet of 20 stamps. Some 150,000 sheets will be available on a raffle basis. Buy ads have already been seen starting at \$20 for the \$5.80 face value stamps. Only 1 sheetlet per collector may be ordered and stringent safeguards are in place to insure that duplicate orders won't be possible. Winners will get their stamps in December - what a great Christmas gift!

Vote in this our first Director-at-Large election. Follow the directions on the ballot in this issue. We encourage all members to support ISWSC by volunteering their time and talents in whatever capacity possible. YOU make this society a reality! ••

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Secretary-Treasurer's Report by Carol Cervenka (# 498)

My apologies for errors appearing on the ISWSC Roster mailed with the last issue of *The Circuit*. Some were the inevitable result of trying to squeeze information into five columns - some are unexplained numerals that cropped up as a result of the transfer of data from one program into another - beginning with the "2" appearing after USA and before "Former President-Club Founder" in #1 Aubrey Dunne's listing, and evident in several other entries. While we corrected and corrected on this end, the same odd glitches kept coming back to haunt us all. Finally, it was deadline time and we had to go with what we had. If your listing is incorrect, please advise and I'll submit a correction with the next up-date page.

Since there was so much discussion about salaries in the last issue, and since I was one of the people mentioned I'm taking this opportunity to express my views. No one knows better than I do what it would take to pay salaries to either an Editor and/or a Secretary-Treasurer. ISWSC membership base stays around 800 (+/-) — $800 \times \$8.00 = \$6,400$. Contributions, paid in advance memberships, auction receipts, advertising, etc. boost the figure to around \$8,500. Out of this money, the majority goes to pay for the newsletter and mailing costs. Administrative costs (postage, office supplies, telephone), brochures, membership materials, Regional expenses, etc. take everything that isn't set aside for advance memberships and designated gifts to the Youth Fund. There simply isn't sufficient money to pay ANYONE, no matter how deserving, a salary. ISWSC does pay actual out-of-pocket expenses for those service managers who incur them, but the goal is to have each service self-supporting if possible.

I am pleased and proud to serve as a volunteer for something I believe in and support in the best way I can - by my efforts on behalf of the Society. Yes, it can be a lot of work, but most things worth doing are. I knew going in that the Society had great potential to become one of the leaders in the philatelic world. I have assisted in every way I can to stimulate the growth that has kept me as busy as I am, and would gladly take on more to see the Society thrive. All of us have reason to be proud of ISWSC's volunteers - few organizations can boast of the dedicated service given by so many member volunteers.

Which brings me to the probable need for a dues increase when the next Postal rate hike hits. Before that time, we would like to offer all of you who wish to do so, the opportunity to add to your present membership at the \$8 rate. The offer is for one additional year at the \$8 rate. Thus, if your membership is expiring soon, you may wish to send in two years dues. If your membership is recently paid you may extend your membership for one extra year. Please send your early renewal in BEFORE the dues increase is announced, as the offer is limited.

Many overseas members report a deluge of letters seeking trades - a few members seeking trades enclose an IRC (International Reply Coupon); many do not. USA members - PLEASE don't forget this courtesy. Quite a number of countries have been hit hard economically, and sending an IRC may be the only way you will receive a response. ALL MEMBERS SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE MAIL - EVEN IF ONLY TO DECLINE. Keep postcards handy if you have all the traders you can handle, or if the person writing seeks material you cannot provide. To those members seeking traders, please be sure "50" appears in the codes of the person you write. If you are a member who wishes to change to "non-trading member" status, please let me know,

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Freemasonry (Continued from Page 2)

Freemasonry. If anyone would like more information, I would be delighted to hear from you. Write to me at 351 Allison Avenue, Longwood, FL 32750 USA. ••

(Editor's note- A self-addressed stamped envelope or IRC would be appreciated for a reply.) ••



Even many national monuments have ties to Freemasonry. The members of Saint Paul's Royal Arch Chapter participated in the laying of the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument (Scott # 1034) in 1825. As Grand Master pro tem for the Grand Lodge of Maryland, George Washington laid the cornerstone of the U.S. Capital (Scott # 992) in 1793. James Polk assisted at the laying of Smithsonian Institute's cornerstone in 1847.

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Leader to Leader Program

by Albert H. Feinberg, Coordinator (# 361)

Since our write-up in *Linn's Stamp News* (May 30, 1994, pg. 20), we received many replies requesting information about this program. The replies come from school teachers, school districts, postmasters, 4-H clubs, former Ben Franklin Clubs, and many others.

The replies from children seeking free stamps were many. Entire stamp clubs had every member write to us. It kept us busy filling these requests at the rate of 20 a day. These requests are still coming in. I have no idea how many more will come but I do expect a lot.

The letters from children are unique. Each one gives us much pleasure. Some draw pictures, some fill in loops and some have difficulty spelling but they get their message through.

A child named Preston from Indiana said, "Please send me free stamps. I want to be smart." We sent him his free stamps. About two weeks later we received another request from Preston asking for free stamps. We sent him more stamps with a note that read, "Dear Preston, In your first letter you said you wanted to be smart. Well, Preston, it looks as if you made it. You are smart, but we are smart, too. We list everyone's name in our computer so we can tell you asks for stamps more than once."

If any members have accumulations of foreign stamps they no longer have use for, please send them to me and I will find a good home for them. My supply is getting dangerously low. My thanks to all members who have already contributed. Children favor large colorful stamps but of course will accept anything they can get.

Our Booklet of all Beginner's Columns to date is now available for one dollar that includes postage. We hope yet hear from leaders of their experiences maintaining the attention of their club members to be added to our booklet. Eventually this booklet should be a valuable asset to new leaders.

No replies as of yet from letters sent to Boy and Girl Scout Organizations. Also no reply from Mr. Jafar in Washington. I asked him to help in distributing our Leader to Leader Program to all post offices in the USA. I explained to him that many post masters that saw our write-up in *Linn's* replied thanking us for our help.

Enjoyed a visit from John Rose who was in town visiting his family. Sent a letter to Dave Park keeping him up to date and explaining the Leader to Leader Program. As you may know he is in charge of Public Relations.

If any members would like a copy of our Leader to Leader Program to hang in their local libraries or for their schools please send me a stamped envelope and I'll see you get it. ••

Did you know....???

Bhutan raises nearly US\$ 500,000 from stamp sales abroad? Their stamps are designed and produced by the Intergovernmental Philatelic Corp. of New York. Through the years they have created oddities such as stamps on steel, rose scented stamps, playable record stamps, plastic bas-relief portraits and 3-D issues. In July they released their first hologram stamp honoring the 25th moon landing anniversary. The average citizen of Bhutan receives 2.5 letters per year and mails even less, a reflection of the country's adult literacy rate of less than 15%. ••

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Returning to stamp collecting or just expanding your collection? My approvals offer 2-10¢ stamps for new areas, plus 10¢ - \$2 stamps to improve your existing collection. Bonus to new customers - \$10 Scott catalogue value worth of free stamps. Eric Van Bohemen, PO Box 361, Richfield, OH 44286 (1/1)

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Attention Worldwide Collectors! Ask for a selection of my approvals ad keep \$2.00 worth free. Also get details for two trading plans and services for want lists, topicals and new issue Canada. Overseas customers welcome. Steven Haddock, Dept. D, Box 1139, 4352 Kingston Rd., West Hill, Ontario, Canada M1E 2X9 (6/1)

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Make all checks payable to ISWSC in US funds. Send payment along with copy to the Editor.

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