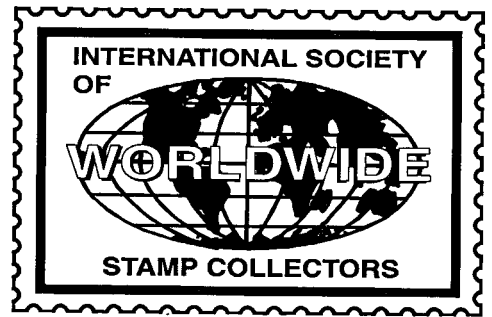


The Circuit

May/June 2004 • Volume 22 No. 3



Affiliate of APS (#151) & ATA (#89)

www.iswsc.org

The Official Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors

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President's Column

by Randy Smith (#1111)
ISWSC President

I need some volunteers! Since January, the position of Vice President of Public Relations has been open. Tom Fortunato (#379), past vice president, has graciously continued to serve in this capacity, but unfortunately he is ineligible to continue in the post because he has already served two consecutive terms in the office.

While Tom can provide more details concerning the duties he has performed, the basic duties of the office are to promote the ISWSC, monitor and assist the ISWSC Regional Representatives, and annually secure an Elections Chairperson. Other volunteer opportunities (at-large Board of Director candidates and an election chairperson) are described elsewhere in this newsletter. If you would be interested in serving the ISWSC in any of these capacities, or if you would like more information about the positions, please contact me.

Occasionally, a chain letter or two momentarily crosses my desk. I say momentarily because as soon as I see what it is, the letter is deposited in my garbage can. While I don't believe in superstition or any of the threats of ill that will come if I break the chain, others are deeply bothered by such letters. E-mail chain letters are particularly popular, but I still occasionally see the kind that comes in the mail.

Recently, another ISWSC member received a "forever stamp exchange" chain letter, requesting the ISWSC member send a certain quantity of stamps to the first name on a list, add their name, then send duplicate lists to several other "friends". The ISWSC member asked me what should be done. My response - throw it away! While members are free to decide on their own if they wish to participate in such letters, please do not include them in any ISWSC mailing, such as in a Swap Circuit, OMNI circuit, or sales circuit. Those who choose to participate in such chain letters do so at their own risk.

I continue to be concerned over the decline in our

membership. After a steady decline, our membership stabilized recently, however this past month saw another drop as several members did not renew and were subsequently dropped from our roles. To address this decline, I am looking to you for ideas on how to retain our current members and/or how to encourage new members to join. In a future column, I'll discuss the various ideas submitted. If there are some especially good ones, I may even announce a brand new membership initiative!

Until then, Happy Stamping!



SAFE: Stamp Hats!

by Randy Smith (#1111)

In this issue of the newsletter, I'm beginning a new column entitled "SAFE" - Stamp Activities for Everyone. The purpose of the column is to share stamp project ideas that can be enjoyed by everyone - young or old, novice or experienced. It is a column that will (hopefully!) be written by you, the members



of the ISWSC, through your submission of ideas for SAFE projects. If you have an idea for a SAFE activity, please contact me!

I have never liked throwing a stamp away - even a damaged one. But what can you do with a bunch of damaged stamps? One option is to send them to a charitable organization such as Stamps for the Wounded, but here's another use that just might get a youngster interested in our hobby - create a stamp hat!

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Please include a
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**DEADLINE
FOR THE
NEXT ISSUE:**

MAY 20, 2004

*Please remember that the Editor does not mail
out The Circuit. If you have any questions about
your Circuit mail service, please contact Randy
Smith, Tom Fortunato or Tony Zollo. Thank you!*

SAFE: Stamp Hats!

Continued from page 1

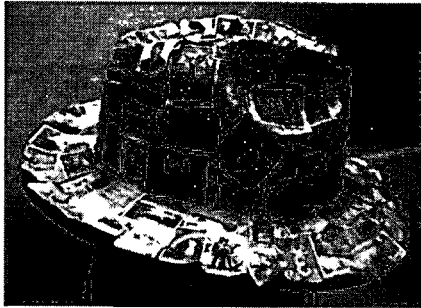
While this project takes several hours to complete, it can be done in stages and only a few items are needed:

- Plastic Hat
- All Purpose Craft Glue
- Damaged Stamps
- Tongs (optional)

To prepare for the project, visit a local party or fabric store and purchase the desired number of hats. I found an all-black hat with a simulation velvet finish for around \$2.00. Don't forget to also pick up some craft glue for attaching the stamps to the hat. (I used Allene's Tacky Glue, but any general purpose craft glue will work.)

Now it's time to move on to the damaged stamps! If you have children working with you, allow them to pick out stamps that they would like to have on their own hat. Or, if the hat is to be a surprise, you can pick stamps that would interest the recipient - stamps depicting

a particular topic, stamps from one country, stamps of all one color - use your imagination! Young children can use their fingers, but older children should



be encouraged to use tongs to select their stamps - this will allow them to practice using tongs without risking injury to quality stamps!

Once a number of stamps have been selected (a few hundred stamps are needed to cover an average hat), begin gluing stamps to the hat. (Young children will need assistance with this!) Spread a small amount of glue on the back of a stamp (don't use too much glue or you'll have a mess!), then position it on the hat. Put glue on another stamp, then position the stamp next to the first stamp on the hat. Repeat the process until the hat is covered in stamps. Hint: By carefully selecting stamps of various sizes and shapes, the entire hat can be covered with very few gaps showing. Using a black hat also made gaps less noticeable.

Allow the hat to dry, then wear in pride! My children wore their hats to a local stamp show and became the hit of the show. Dealers knew they were interested in collecting and several gave them free stamps for their collection. Other adults in attendance even wanted their own hat or one for their grandchildren!



Dues/Advertising Policy

Dues Information:

Single/Dealer/Club membership: \$12.00*

Youth membership (under 18): \$10.00*

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

*Plus 250 large commemoratives for the Youth Program or equiv. donation in US\$. Dues above are for one year and include six newsletters per year. You may sign up for three years at a time. For an application or further information send SASE or IRC to: ISWSC, P.O. Box 150407, Lufkin TX 75915-0407, 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.

Stamp and Cover Preservation

by Arlene Sullivan
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(Note: The author has a B.Sc. in biology from Simon Fraser University and recipes listed are proven effective and safe!)

It isn't only the moneyed collector of classic stamps and rare covers that needs to be concerned about the proper handling and storage of his collection. No matter what kind of philatelic material appeals to you, there are a couple of things that you can do to ensure that your stamps, postcards and souvenir sheets will last in good condition for many years.

I found a couple of books (check your local library) that provide good general overviews of how to look after paper artifacts. The first is *An Ounce of Preservation — A Guide to the Care of Papers and Photographs* by Craig A. Tuttle, Rainbow Books, Inc. (ISBN 1-56825-021-5). This paperback is a nice introduction to care and preservation of your paper collectibles, not too technical but a useful overview of topics such as paper, inks, recognizing deterioration, how to store paper, and simple repair techniques.

The second is a much more technical book oriented toward the conservator of books, but it is worth a read particularly for those storing and displaying classic stamps. The information I give below on deacidification of paper comes from this volume. It is *The Practical Guide to Book Repair and Conservation* by Arthur W. Johnson. Published 1988 by Thames and Hudson, London (ISBN 0-500-01454-X). This is a good read for the chapters on Materials, Adhesives, and Chemicals alone.

Information on the chemistry of stamp "oxidation" and its reversal come from an excellent article in the first quarter 1998 issue of *BNA Topics*, the journal of the British North American Philatelic Society. "Rejuvenation of Stamp Colours with Hydrogen Peroxide" written by L. Kruczynski is a very readable report on Mr. Kruczynski's investigations into some of the mechanisms of stamp discoloration and how to reverse them.

WHEN YOU BUY

Mould and Mildew

Preservation should start from the moment you inspect potential purchases. Look closely — do you see any signs of staining, mould or water damage? Does the album or cover have a musty or sour smell? Is the paper damp, and is it fragile and easily torn? These are signs that the material may be contaminated with mould or mildew, and while it may be a really good buy, think twice about purchasing; you may be taking home more problems

than the stuff is worth.

The main problem with albums and covers that carry fungal growths of this kind is that even with a good airing, a dry storage area, and careful handling, mould and mildew can spread to uncontaminated material in your collection and under the right circumstances can cause considerable damage. Fungal growth weakens paper, making it fragile and harder to handle, and can cause staining and color changes in stamps and paper. Under conditions of dampness and sluggish air circulation — basement or attic storage, for instance — fungi can spread incredibly quickly and cause the loss of a collection in a matter of weeks. So avoid purchases that show the signs of mould and mildew contamination. If you must buy, make sure that your purchase is given a thorough airing in a dry place, and store it well away from the bulk of your collection. Always wash your hands after handling these kinds of pieces to prevent spread of the fungal spores to uncontaminated material.

Paper Condition

Especially if you are buying older material, carefully inspect the condition of the paper for pinholes, thin areas, and tears. Take a look at the color of the stamp, too; is it faded or darkened? These are signs of paper deterioration that could have occurred for a number of reasons - usually improper storage. Exposure to sunlight, cigarette smoke, emissions from automobiles or coal plants, and even handling of the stamps with fingertips instead of stamp tongs can cause changes in the paper that weaken the bonds that hold the paper fibres together. Pin holes and tears can then occur with even gentle handling. Exposure to even small amounts of acid from atmospheric pollutants or handling can cause "oxidation" of the stamp ink. Acidic compounds will also cause paper deterioration, so be aware that changes in ink color can mean changes in paper quality, too. Orange inks of the Victorian period seem to be particularly susceptible to this kind of color change — examples of the 3c small Queens of Canada, for example, can be almost black.

Special Cases

It also pays to know something about the printing and gumming of the stamps you are purchasing. For instance, "Ostropa" souvenir sheets issued in 1935 in Germany (Scott B68) are often found mint without gum. A gummed sheet in this case is not a very good buy as the gum was formulated with sulphuric acid which over the years has caused the paper of gummed sheets to deteriorate. Collectors who knew

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Don't Miss Another Chance . . .

to add that "one-of-a-kind" item to your collection!



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