

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK Specialist

A publication of the Czechoslovak  Philatelic Society of N. America

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## Editorial Board:

Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch, Editor, P. O. Box 24, Bayside 61, N. Y.; W. Fritzsche, Canandaigua, N. Y.; C. J. Pearce, Coalgate, Okla.; J. Velek, Chicago, Ill.; J. J. Verner, Poznan, Poland. Editor Emeritus: Frank J. Kovarik.

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## EDITORIAL

Lately we have acquired an electric typewriter, not because we wish to be extravagant but rather because our usually mild rheumatoid arthritis of the fingers has become, at times, very bothersome. This transition period, from manual to electric machine, is difficult and it takes us more than twice the length of time as before to type out one page of copy. For a person who has just begun to learn the touch method, the effort is very time-consuming.

In Mid-April we visited our son who is at the U. S. Weather Bureau in Cleveland and we had the pleasure of talking with a number of our members on the phone. We spoke to members Pesek, Klain, Zahradnicek, Prokupek, Marton and Dolak, but were unable to reach members Fisher, Bardoun, Velisek, Matiaska and Show. We enjoyed a few words with the wives of members Jarousek, Kopcok and Pata. Time permitted us to see members Blizil, Kozak and Klozar. We believe our records are correct and we left out no one on our list. Except for our visit to Chicago, we have never had an opportunity to contact a larger group of our membership. We cannot sufficiently express our pleasure at the suggestion of member Klain that he will try to arrange a get-together during our next Cleveland visit in July. Fortunately it is rather easy to get to Cleveland by car considering the not excessive distance as well as the very fine fast highways leading there. We were especially pleased to hear our efforts in the editing of the Specialist commented on favorably. That is all an Editor needs to hear to make him feel all the hard labor was worth it.

In this issue, there is a very important proposed Amendment to the Constitution. Our Society has never had a provision pertaining to any type of annual or biennial meeting at which members could participate in all types of activities. This type of participation has been going on for many years in the United States and the host organization is responsible for all physical arrangements as well as the finances. Our society will not be able to gain any funds but at the same time will not be exposed to any possible losses. In addition, such meetings will make it possible to get acquainted with collectors of all types from all over the United States. We hope that members will vote in favor of it because they will benefit by it.

We understand there are some photostat negatives of the 1939 and 1940 issues of the Specialist in the Library. Therefore there is a possibility of securing photostats of those out-of-print issues. We do not have the faintest idea as to the cost of this but interested parties could contact Mr. Kosik who in turn, we believe, could get information on the subject. We have heard sug-

gestions that the other volumes no longer available should also be photostated but this could be done only at the cost of the interested members because the Society could not do it itself.

We wish to inform our members that we are receiving very fine cooperation from the Editors of the American Philatelist and the SPA Journal, Mr. Chermi and Mr. Faries, respectively. It is indeed a real pleasure to correspond with these gentlemen! Last Saturday evening, shortly after our return from Cleveland, we enjoyed seeing member Lidman and his most charming wife at the home of an outstanding postal historian. There was much philately discussed as is to be expected on such occasions.

We received very interesting comments from our national secretary which we feel we must publish here though we have not asked his permission. However, our aim is to make our members aware of the efforts of our Mr. Kosik. He writes in regard to the article on page 62 of the April issue. He refers to the December 1954 Specialist in which an article appears on page 159 with the same illustration but stating that Goldschmid was the engraver. He further says that Hirsch-Fraňek Handbuch states that Goldschmid did the job. Furthermore Hirsch in "30 Let" publication said that Seizinger was positively not the engraver. However, Pofis 1961 gives Seizinger as the engraver. We wrote our secretary, in response, that the author of our recent article may be right just because of this distinct discrepancy. We can only express surprise that the artist's name is so obscure in connection with the engraving of a fairly recent philatelic item.

In addition, we learned from our national secretary that Mr. Russell of Australia in a recent letter to him mentioned the fact that he has been a member of the PMG's Advisory Committee for the past sixteen years! More power to him.

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#### AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

As provided for by Article IX of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society, five members of the Council herewith propose the following Amendments to the Constitution:

Change number of Article VII to read Article VIII

Change number of Article VIII to read Article IX

Change number of Article IX to read Article X

Insert new Article VII, as follows:

##### Article VII

##### (MEETINGS)

a. Every two years there shall be a convention of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society for presentation of lectures, exhibition and for the transaction of business. The location and date shall be decided by the Council or by its appointed representatives on the Council acting as a Committee. Any biennial meeting may be suspended by the Council and the society may transact business by mail.

b. At the Convention (meeting) five percent of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

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Article IX of the Constitution specifies that this proposal be published in the Specialist and that members shall vote on it. Send your vote to the National secretary, Mr. Frank J. Kosik, Route 4, Box 286, Delavan, Wisc. These Amendments will become part of the Constitution thirty days after the receipt of this issue of the Specialist, unless a majority of the voting members disapprove.

## NEW YORK BRANCH APRIL MEETING

We were very happy to meet member G. Dolezal of California who is going to stay in our city for a while on business. In addition we had a guest with us who saw our announcement of the meeting in Linn's, Mr. A. Kasser.

Excused were Dr. Reiner-Deutsch who was out of the city on a trip and Mr. A. I. Kessler who is on his way to Europe. Through Mr. Stein, Mr. Kessler showed some of his Czecho rarities. Especially interesting were his trial essays and trial proofs of Karl Seizinger, engraver of many Czechoslovak stamps and bank notes in the period of 1925-38. Of special interest were the essays and the stories behind these essays of proposed stamp which were never issued. Particular attention was paid to five gutter pair strips of mixed imperforate Hradčany and Noviny issues, proving that they were printed jointly in spite of different size, issue and color.

Member Horechny showed his own new Czechoslovak album with plastic cover and plastic zipper, holding the displayed items well in place.

Members Koplowitz and Stein were appointed to arrange for the annual June dinner.

## JOSEPH C. STRNAD

We have just learned of the passing of member Joseph C. Strnad, roster No. 121, one of the older members of our society. He was a pharmacist and had also manufactured some drugs. The officers and members of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society extend their heartfelt sympathy to the widow and to the sons and other members of the family.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTED

President Dr. Matejka has appointed the following members to serve on the Nominating Committee for the nomination of officers for 1964-65:

John Velek, Chicago, Ill.  
Miles Skrivanek, Chicago, Ill.  
Ralph A. Palmer, Geneva, Ill.

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by John Velek

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## Expertization Markings of Czechoslovak Stamps

by Jan Karásek

Translated by J. J. Verner

Czechoslovak stamps examined by experts have in the past and still are marked on the reverse side, except for stamps on piece or on cover. Beside expertization markings, the markings of stamp dealers are also found on the back of Czechoslovak stamps. These markings, too, to some extent, attest to the genuineness of the stamp and usually allowed the buyer to return, exchange or to be reimbursed for a stamp marked by a dealer if it turned out to be a fake. A third kind of marking found on Czechoslovak stamps is one that designates ownership. We therefore must differentiate expertization marks from the other kinds when using markings as an aid to determine a stamp's genuineness.

During the early years following the first World War, experts put their marks on the back of the examined stamp, usually on the lower edge. These markings are also found at the top of the stamp, though rather rarely. The markings during this period were not placed in any definite position as they are today. Only in 1941 was a definite system established for the placing of expertization marks on the backs of stamps when it had been determined that counterfeit overprints had been printed on expertized stamps. The positioning of the expertization marks is listed in the catalog "Pofis." (See Translator's Note.)

The first experts on Czechoslovak stamps were Jaroslav Lešetický, a top official of the Ministry of Posts and Engineer Jaroslav Šula, President of the Club of Czechoslovak Philatelists in Prague. Lešetický, for all practical purposes, expertized everything that was submitted to him and therefore did more harm than good. He compounded error upon fraud. In short, his knowledge was primitive and he lacked any detailed study of the stamp's printing technique. His "specialty" were stamps with the "Pošta Československá, 1919" overprint.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Lešetický used four signature hand stamps. The first was simply a "Lý" rubber stamp (figure 1) which appears in purple on many stamps of the first Czechoslovak overprint series. The second expertization mark was a metal signature stamp "J. Lešetický" (figure 2) which is usually found in blue-black, black or purple. The third was a metal monogram stamp "LÚ" (figure 3) usually seen in purple or in black. The letter L represented Lešetický and U stood for the Center for Stamp Authentication which was established in Prague at the suggestion of the Dealers' Association during the early postwar years. The fourth has the same monogram as the third but was smaller and had a square border. This mark was only used on imperforated stamps. We should note that many stamps with Lešetický's expertization markings were later re-examined.

A second expert who examined stamps during the early years of the Czechoslovak Republic was Jaroslav Šula who often found himself in conflict with Lešetický. He signed only the rarer stamps of the "Pošta Československá,

1919" overprints and mostly those coming from his own stock. He was continuously at swords' point with Lešetický over the errors of the latter in authenticating stamps. His knowledge of the first overprints and early issues of Czechoslovakia were, for his period, impressive. Engineer Šula gained the great confidence of philatelists for his revelation of the Szekula counterfeits of the Siberian Field Post "Lion" stamps; stamps which Lešetický had signed as genuine.

Šula's expertization marks (two types) appear mainly on stamps of the "Pošta Československá, 1919" overprint series and are to be found in green, violet or violet-black. These expertization marks consist of stylized crown over the letter A. In the first the letter A almost touches the crown (figure 4) while in the second the A is about a half a millimeter away from the crown.

\* In addition the crown in the second mark has more detail (figure 5).



Figure 4



Figure 5

During his extensive philatelic studies Ervin Hirsch uncovered many details that could be used to identify genuine copies of the early stamps of Czechoslovakia and also uncovered many errors committed by Lešetický. His initiative led to the creation of the Philatelists Expert Committee (Tribuna) with Jaroslav Fraňek and Jan Mrňák joining him as its members. In 1935 Hirsch and Fraňek published the only existing monograph, *Československé Známky*, covering Czechoslovak Philately, and also included in this work is information on counterfeits of Czechoslovak stamps.

Stamps examined by this Committee were marked "Tribuna" (figure 6) and with the signature of Hirsch (figure 7) or sometimes that of Fraňek (figure 8) or Mrňák (figure 9). Sometimes more than one member of the Committee affixed his signature stamp to a rare stamp. At times the "Tribuna" mark will be found struck twice, one crossing the other. This was done by Hirsch during a period when he lost his signature stamp. These expertization markings were usually black or purple, but occasionally are to be found in red or green colors. The hand stamps used were of metal. The position of the "Tribuna" mark varied sometime even appearing horizontally at the top of the stamp, at times vertically or even at an angle. Some stamps during the Tribuna period were signed in black by Fraňek without the addition of the "Tribuna" mark.

*Hirsch*      *Tribuna*

FRANĚK

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 6

The Committee examined all Czechoslovak stamps issued from 1918 on, with the exception of new issues, and affixed expertization marks on them. All fake stamps examined were marked without exception as fakes by stamping "Falsum," "Padělek," "Zfalšováno" (altered) and so on, on the gummed side of the stamp. Many new counterfeits produced to the detriment of the Post Office or collectors were uncovered by the Committee. Old counterfeits, many bearing Lešetický's signature which had been considered genuine were also found and duly marked as fakes.

Hirsch and Fraňek were ably assisted by Jan Weis of Ostrava when it came to stamps with the SO 1920 overprint. Weis' research and knowledge of the overprinted plebiscite stamps was unsurpassed.

The occupation and the second World War interrupted the work of the Tribuna. At that time two experts took over the examination of stamps; Jan Mrňák, colleague of Hirsch and Fraňek and Professor Rudolf Gilbert. Both of these experts affixed their signature stamps in given positions and added the type of perforations, paper, color shade, type, water mark, and so on as it was appropriate. This was done to eliminate any possibility of intentional or unintentional misunderstandings about a stamp.

The expertization marks "JMrňák" (figure 9) and "Gilbert" (figure 10) are the best known expertization marks and also the most common. These were made with metal signature stamps using black ink. The signature stamp of Mrňák on a Czechoslovak stamp has been the most dependable sign of its genuineness from the second World War right down to the present.



Figure 9



Figure 10

The leading specialist and expert of retouches of the Dove and Chain-breaker series is J. Hanák of Brno. He has studied the plate flaws and their retouched corrections for several decades and verifies such stamps with his signature either in pencil or with a black signature stamp on the back of the stamp (figure 11). This signature appears at the bottom of the stamp parallel to or with just a slight angle from the base.



Figure 11

Counterfeit of expertization marks are known. They appear very rarely and are always obvious when examined under a magnifying lens. Some counterfeit stamps have been "signed" by counterfeited signature stamps of Lešetický, Mrňák (figure 12) or Gilbert (figure 13).

Since 1960 two new expertization marks have appeared on Czechoslovak stamps, but are as yet not very common. They are found in dark blue or black color and are metal signature stamps belonging to Karásek (figure 14) and to Šrámek, new members of the Expert Committee of the Union of Czechoslovak Philatelists,



Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 14

Beside expertization marks many marks of former stamp dealers can be seen on Czechoslovak stamps. These marks were usually made on either the right or left bottom corner on the back of the stamp. They were at times made with rubber stamp or with metal stamp. For instance we find "A. Stach, Prague" in black or in blue, "Havlas" in blue (figure 15) and a signature stamp of "Kaprás" in either black or in blue (figure 16). Of the older marks we should include the dealer marks of Hugo Suchánka, a triangle with the letters H. S. P.; Antonin Černý's fancy letters AČ and also the same letters in print form and the signature stamp of Brunner. This, of course, does not exhaust the list of commercial marks on Czechoslovak stamps. In the last several years the mark of Pofis in block letters has appeared on some stamps. It is made with a metal stamp and appears in black. Most of the stamps guaranteed by a dealer's mark usually also bear an expertization mark.

Figure 15

Figure 16

Marks of experts on stamps are a guarantee of genuineness throughout the world. These marks are also a testimony to which and how many experts have seen the stamps.

#### Translator's Note

Since many American readers may not have access to the POFIS catalog, a description of the system used in placing expertization marks on stamps is added.

Stamps without an overprint:

Perforated mint stamps—The mark appears at the bottom on the left side of the stamp and reads top to bottom.

Perforated used stamps—The mark appears on the right side bottom and reads top to bottom.

Imperforated mint stamps—Mark is parallel to base at left corner.

Imperforated used stamps—Mark is parallel to base at right corner.

Rolled or pin perforated mint stamps—Mark bisects the left corner and reads from center toward corner.

Rolled or pin perforated used stamps—Mark bisects the right corner and reads from center toward corner.

## Overprinted stamps:

Perforated mint stamps—Mark appears at bottom of stamp's left side and reads bottom to top.

Perforated used stamps Bottom of stamp's right side and reads bottom to top.

Imperforated mint stamps—Mark is parallel to base at left corner and is inverted.

Imperforated used stamps—Mark is parallel to base at right corner and is inverted.

Rolled or pin perforated mint stamps—Mark bisects the left corner and reads from the corner.

Rolled or pin perforated used stamps—Mark bisects right corner and reads from the corner.

Essays, proofs, unissued stamps and specimen copies all have the expertization mark at bottom of the stamp in the center. On stamps which are slightly damaged the marks appear slightly higher than usual and on badly damaged stamps they appear almost in the middle (perpendicularly) of the stamp. Additional signs which are used include a small circle with a 4 which indicates repair of the stamp; a wavy line indicates the stamp has an ink cancellation; a circle containing crossed lines indicate a non-postal cancellation and a circle containing four parallel lines indicates an added cancellation. As the author pointed out, all counterfeit or altered stamps are so marked.

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## PARADE OF NEW ISSUES — Edited by Frank Kosik

## Cultural Personalities and Events on New Czechoslovak Commemoratives



To mark this year's anniversaries of several prominent personalities of Czechoslovak culture and important cultural events, the Czechoslovak Board of Management of Telecommunications issued in March, 1963, a set of seven stamps with the following denominations and designs:

- 1) 20h—centenary of foundation of the "Umělecká beseda" (cultural society) in Prague
- 2) 30h—60th anniversary of birth of journalist Eduard Urx (1903-1942)
- 3) 30h—Juroj Jánošík (1688-1713) Slovak Folk Hero, 250th anniversary of his execution
- 4) 60h—Juroj Pálkovič (1763-1835), writer and translator, 200th anniversary of his birth
- 5) 60h—80 years of the National Theatre in Prague
- 6) 60h—centenary of foundation of Matica slovenská (Slovak cultural society)
- 7) 1.60 Kcs—90th anniversary of birth of the famous Czech painter Max Švabinský (1873-1962)

Design by: academic artists—Jaroslav Šváb, Martin Benka, Aurel Kajlich and professor Cyril Bouda.

Engraved by: B. Housa, J. Mráček, J. Švengsbír, J. Jirka and J. Herčík.

The stamps were printed in the Post Printing Office in Prague by the rotary recess print in one color (2, 4, 6, 7), and the rotary recess combined with photogravure (1, 3, 5), in sheets of 50 stamps. Dimensions of the stamp picture are 30x28 mm.

Three First Day Covers were issued with this emission.

# RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND PHILOSOPHY AS DEPICTED ON THE STAMPS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

by C. Hedley Osbourn

(Reprinted with permission from the Coros Chronicle)

(continued)

## Part III

### Jan Hus

Born in Husinec in Southern Bohemia, probably in about 1373. Received degree of Bachelor of Arts 1393, Bachelor of Divinity 1394, Master of Arts and ordained priest, 1396 and 1400. In 1402 Rector of University. Appointed preacher at Bethlehem Chapel; his standing text was, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Excommunicated by Pope John XXIII. In 1414 appeared before the Council of Constance. Condemned and burned July 6, 1415. His strength lay in the loving, unselfish spirit he showed and in his supreme confidence in the ultimate victory of truth, a confidence which was expressed in the motto adopted by the Hussites, "Pravda vitezi" (Truth wins). This is now the motto of the Czechoslovak Republic.

Check List: (Type A7, A211)



### The Chalice

After Hus' martyrdom the Chalice became the central emblem of the whole Hussite movement, and its adherents began to be called Calixtines (from the Latin "calix," a cup) or Ultraquists (from the Latin, "utraque species," both kinds), as well as Hussites. This symbol was used in many ways as an expression of their religious conviction that the laity had the right to partake of both bread and wine in the communion.

The picture of the "Hussite priest with chalice" is in reality the portrait of Hus himself as a young priest, painted by Alfons Mucha.

(Type A7)

### King Charles IV

It seems only right and proper that King Charles IV should be considered in this study of the Hussite movement, in that he was largely responsible for it. In 1347, he was crowned King of Bohemia. In 1348, he took the steps necessary to make Bohemia the firm basis of his power; secured the support of the nobles; and founded Prague (New Town) and the University of Prague. He was appalled with the moral decadence evidenced by the clergy of the country, and determined to reform the Church. He brought in Arnost of Pardubice, a noted preacher, and set his reforms on foot. He is acknowledged to have been a very wise ruler, and distinguished himself in everything that brought prosperity to the country. He had a deep sense of religion and religious values, and after building the famous castle of Karluv Tyn, he used to go and meditate in the chapel there, considering the vast problems of his government before making decisions.

(Type A127-128. Bohemia SP7, B15)

## Bethlehem Chapel



The Church of the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem (popularly called Betlémská Kaple, Bethlehem Chapel) was founded in 1391 by the merchant Kříž who donated the site and by Count Jan of Pardubice who built the structure and provided for its upkeep. The purpose was that the people could hear their own language used. The chapel seated 3000 people and during Jan Hus' tenure of office great crowds came to hear him. The building was destroyed in 1786 by the Josephites, followers of the Austrian king, Joseph, who considered himself a liberal, but was as much a despot as the worst of the Hapsburgs.

(Type A212, A340)

## Jan Žižka



Jan Žižka became the leader of the Hussites after the murder of Hus. A very wealthy man, he was the leader of the crowd who stormed the Town Hall of Prague, and threw the burgomaster and several town councillors from the windows of the Town Hall. Later he became the great general of the Hussites. He was born near Prachatic in Southern Bohemia. Žižka is recognized as one of the greatest military geniuses of all time. He showed great military skill. He designed "Žižka's wagons," a forerunner of the tank. These were metal-covered wagons, and they brought terror to those who were fighting the Hussites. Žižka routed the enemy again and again, never losing a battle. In spite of deeds of harshness (the age itself was a harsh one), he was a fair fighter and tried to restrain the fanaticism which characterized some of his followers. His disinterestedness and courage and the sincerity of his religious fervor are not open to question, neither is his military genius. When totally blind, he used his generals as his "eyes," and so trained them to succeed him. He died of the plague on October 11, 1424, during the siege of Přebyslav, on the Moravian frontier. The reading of his career is one great thrill. No wonder he is a national hero.

(Type A218)

## Hussite Warrior

The Hussite warriors, of which Jan Žižka formed his "invincible army," were chiefly peasants, small landowners, and tradesmen. They were equipped

with the weapons of the day, but their chief one was the "wagon-forts," i.e., wagons covered with steel, which were used not only for defense, but also for offensive action. The women took their place alongside the men in the fighting.

Like the modern Welsh Guards who in the last war used to go into battle singing, "Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah," so the Hussite warriors advanced into battle singing their great song:

"All ye warriors of God,  
Fighters for His law,  
Pray to God for help,  
And trust in Him,  
With Him, victory ever will be yours.  
Fear not those, the Lord hath said,  
Who would your body harm,  
For love of your fellow-creatures,  
He has ordered you to die,  
Therefore strengthen manfully your hearts."

(Type A250)

### Tábor

When Jan Hus left Prague at the request of Charles IV, he went to Kozi Hrádek. This became the gathering place of his followers, and great crowds gathered to hear him preach. Naturally therefore when it became necessary for the Hussites to form a base for their military operations, Žižka chose this spot and founded there a Hussite fortified town (1420). It was essentially a "Military camp." Here was a form of military republic, with community of goods and under strict austere laws. No quarrelling or theft or drunkenness was permitted. It was an ecclesiastical government with a stern puritannical character, yet democratic. Enthusiasm for religious liberty bound all the members together and created a feeling of brotherhood and equality; and this religious spirit was the secret of Tábor's successful resistance to its enemies.

The town stands on a hill, and is surrounded by running water on three sides, the river Luznice and a tributary. A great part of the ancient walls still stand. Many of the old buildings still stand, and still remaining are the great stone tables at which the old Táborites partook of the Lord's Supper in both kinds. As a fortress it was considered impregnable in the 15th century, protected not only by its lofty hill, but by the surrounding water.

(Type A185 (476) )

### Týn Church

From a painting by V. Malý. Situated in the "Ring" or Market Place (14th-15th century), memorable as the religious center of the Hussite movement, following the execution of Jan Hus.

The Týn Kirk is noted for the fine facade built by King Jiří of Poděbrad. A golden statue of the king, which represented him as pointing upward with his sword to a golden chalice, was destroyed by the Jesuits in 1623. The Týn was erected by George of Poděbrad. Its official name is the "Týn Church of the Virgin Mary." Within it is a marvelous tympani dating back to the reign of Václav II and one of the most treasured relics of the Czech Lands. From its pulpit spoke its pastor, Jan of Nepomuk, who later became Archbishop of Prague. This priest refused to disclose the secrets of the confession to the King (he was the Queen's confessor) and for this was sentenced to be drowned in the waters of the Vltava. In the Týn Church the skulls of the twelve executed Czech noblemen were kept. This square is perhaps the one spot in Prague which has witnessed the city's loftiest glories and lowest degradations.

(Type A28, A36, A158)

(To be Continued)

## Society Conventions—Why Attend?

By Art Bledsoe

Reprinted from the SPA Journal

Why do collectors attend Stamp Society Conventions? Yes, just why? Members of the official family attend because of their duties and to try to make the Society bigger and better, to cause better services to all of the members and they also enjoy the parts of the Convention that the rest of the convention attenders do.

A great number of those at a convention are there for the fellowship, to meet again those friends that they do not see for the rest of the year, to talk over the events of the past year, to hear of the new things in their collections and to meet new friends who they will also look forward to meeting at the next convention, the good Lord willing. Some of these have been attending the convention for many years and they look to it as the high spot of their years.

Most all come to look over the Show. Collectors always like to see what the other fellow has, how his collection lines up with yours; to see rare stamps and covers that they would perhaps not see any other way. The ones who have entered exhibits come to see how theirs rates with the others, to proudly point out to the friends that these frames are my stamps or covers.

Many come to see what the dealers on the Bourse are offering this year, to pick up an item that they need for their collections, to again meet friendly dealers whom they see at no other time. Lots of dealers are also collectors and enjoy the convention just as much as the others.

Some come to visit the convention postoffice, to buy stamps that are not available at their local postoffices, to mail covers to themselves and friends so they will bear the special convention postmarks, to obtain from the host Club the cacheted envelopes in honor of the event.

Some come to visit the city where the convention is held, a city in which they have never been before, in which they likely will never be again. There are more in this class than you think and these are the ones which are very pleased with the trips and tours which the host Club arranges, giving them a chance to see the interesting things of the cities along with their collecting friends, whether old friends or not. Clubs are always surprised at the number to appear to go on these events, its most always a lot more than they have expected.

Some travel many miles to attend their Society's Convention, hundreds, yes thousands of miles just to be on hand for the great event. Many are not rich in this world's goods, but they scrape to pay the cost of attending.

Collectors always like to eat together, to join after the events of the day are over in a cup of coffee and a chance for more fellowship before going to the hotel room, up next morning for breakfast with that friend. They like the luncheons, the banquet, all of it, just informal, not too much tie and tails.

Well, we have tried to answer that question, Society Conventions, Why? We hope that we have been interesting enough to make you want to attend the next convention of your Society. Your host Club and your collecting friends and your convention city will welcome you. We feel sure that you won't be sorry.

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### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

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## A PROGNOSIS FOR SPORT STAMP COLLECTING

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Some years ago this scrivener was asked to write an article on sports stamps by the editor of an encyclopedia on sports. We recall that the article then stated, among other things, that the attraction of sport stamp collecting was that a collector could secure them all at something in the neighborhood of \$5.00.

Well, once General Motors was selling at \$10 a share, so missing the boat is not a failure confined purely to those of us in philately!

The sports stamp "boat" has long since left the pier. For better or worse, a representative collection of sports stamps today is no longer a matter of an "x" number of hundreds of dollars, but an "x" number of thousands of dollars!

Since the economic laws of supply and demand pertain even in stamp collecting, the explanation is obvious; there are fewer sports stamps than there are collectors. So the prices rise!

Are sports stamps in the midst of a boom to be followed by the often inevitable bust? Granting that the boom and bust has come in other collecting fields, is there any particular reason or reasons to make it likely that sport stamp collecting will escape this fate which boosted other fields of collecting in the public's caprice, only later to dash them to the ground?

The arguments in favor of the continuing popularity of sports stamps are few, but are telling ones. For one, there is no time limit to the issuance of sports stamps. Unlike Rooseveltiana, for example, the issuance of sports stamps is not likely to come to an end.

The world is not merely sports conscious but growing ever more so. Many governments, especially our own, have long since discovered the good will qualities of their young sportsmen.

Our own have gone as emissaries to every nook and cranny of the globe selling not merely our own brand of sports, but our kind of government which makes it possible for men of good will from all racial and ethnic groups to compete as Americans without fear or prejudice.

Not only are sports stamps likely to be issued for years to come by virtually all nations, thus inspiring a continuing interest in them by present devotees; but, quite frankly, they will also win followers due to their high investment qualities.

This may sound crass but hardly makes it less the fact. Not to see this or to refuse to admit it as argument is merely to ignore deliberately a very powerful impellent.

Not all of us are geared to dismiss blithely the cost of something, even a hobby, and to refuse to consider the possibility of a return on our investment. Those who make this consideration will inevitably be drawn to sports stamps.

Unfortunately, where there is honey, there are bees—and bears. In this rather fanciful allusion, the bears are undesirables. Sports stamp issues have grown numerous and, we must sadly admit, there has been a growing number of abuses where these issues are concerned.

Obviously, the reputations of many countries and their stamp issues are unimpeachable and, just as obviously, there is a great number of countries who have placed their philatelic affairs in the hands of harpies.

This is not intended to be a long recitation of these abuses, the particular practices involved, or any suggested panacea as to how they may be ended. We point out that numerous issues have appeared, together with allied material purported to be rare, but of great dubiety.

This is not one of the plus factors in sports stamp collecting. In fact, it could well become an excrescence of such malignancy as to kill not just sports stamp collecting, but also the entire hobby of philately.



It is the belief of this writer that knowledge is the great weapon that can be used to balk those who would mulct the collector. Knowledge, for instance, would guide both the beginning collector and his more advanced brother along this prickly, though interesting, road.

Knowing which issues to shun and what agency-controlled rubbish to condemn is a major step in the right direction. There is no profit in controlling an issue if it cannot be sold.

Those countries which have bartered their reputation for a few shoddy dollars are quickly revealed and, by the concerted action of the many, who, being well-informed, boycott such rubbish, the harpies can be put to rout.

This is the biggest problem that sports stamp collecting has today because, as we have said, it is a "hot" field and attracts the attention of the "operators."

So this is the broad picture of sports stamp collecting today. The field is certainly a "hot" one. Few, if any, other fields of topical endeavor can boast so many printed handbooks as now exist for sports stamps. Each adds something of knowledge and stability to the field.

Each helps sports stamp collecting one step farther along the road to philatelic maturity and away from the mere accumulation of pretty pictures, maximum cards, unaddressed and unmailed covers, and all the other geegaws made specifically to trap the unwary.

From an international standpoint the field has grown tremendously. Europe and South America boast many sports stamp collectors. Several international shows have been held only for sports stamp collections.

Reliable sources indicate that the International Olympic Committee plans to stage a sports stamp exhibition as part of the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo. International sports stamp collecting societies are being formed or already exist.

The flow of information from collector to collector is growing apace. What has been a mere stream is growing to a raging torrent.

There is a burgeoning sports stamp organization—Sports Philatelists International—centered in this country. A local sports stamp study group meets monthly at New York's famed Collectors Club. A similar group flourishes in Los Angeles and another in Manila.

Italy's CONI, a counterpart to our own U. S. Olympic Committee, sponsors an award in the name of its famous sportsman and late president, Count Alberto Bonacossa.

This award is given quadrennially for the best sports stamp design as selected by an international jury of sports stamp collectors. The Bonacossa Medal is just one more example of the growing ties between sports collectors throughout the world.

With the growth of this field, a number of printed albums for sports stamps only has appeared. This is always a tremendous lift for any field—the availability of a printed album for beginning collectors.

Another worthwhile aid is the monthly publication, "Journal of Sports Philately," which SPI offers its members.

Dedicated to far more than being a medium for distributing such irrelevances as membership pins, decorated ash trays, rubber stamps and personalized stickers, this periodical features original articles which have not appeared in print before and which deal strictly with sports philately. It is an invaluable guide to sports collectors.

These, then, are the signs of growth—the glowing achievements and the growing pains. Nothing is to be gained without some cost and we of the sports stamp collecting fraternity have both gained, and paid, as have all who have achieved a worthwhile goal.

We welcome you to the fold—at any time. Come on in; it is exhilarating and it is growing. Be a participant, not a spectator.



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