

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Official Monthly Journal of the



Society for Czechoslovak Philately, Inc.

(USPS 808300)

Silver Award Interphil '76 - Silver Award Capex '78 - Silver-Bronze Praga '78

A. P. S. Unit 18

Vol. L

September 1988

No. 7, Whole No. 480

A SLOVAK FAMILY'S POSTAL HISTORY

By Mark S. Hross

(Last year when Jack Benchik organized the Slovakia Study Group, he chose Mark Hross as his Vice-Chairman. Here is his first contribution, an article based on his own family's postal history).

While many of us are looking for that elusive stamp or cover from dealers and auctioneers, sometimes those items might be right under our very noses.

My family came from Zilina, Slovakia only one generation ago. Like so many other immigrant families they collected family photographs and preserved them in tin boxes or other storage containers and thoughtfully put them away in attics or closets. Fortunately, throughout my collecting career, these photographs have also been a source of postcard philately with special stamps and cancels.

While it was a treasure trove of philatelic material, it was also a source of family history, the following being a portion thereof:



Figure 1

In Zilina, my father's mother had three brothers, Robert, Daniel and Jan(John), all of whom were involved in World War I in defending the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Robert, the oldest, was a shoe-maker, as was his father. He was killed sometime during the war. Unfortunately, no other information regarding Robert was gleaned from living relatives or other "attic" resources. The surviving brothers, Daniel and John, appeared to make their own mark on history.

From many talks and arguments with my great-uncle Dan, a wealth of information with respect to my family postcards was uncovered. Daniel, as a young man, was torn between the priesthood and a trade in pre-war Slovakia. During this time period especially, the local priests were the community leaders and entering this profession was offered only to the influential and the select few. Consequently, Daniel opted to become a tailor by serving an apprenticeship under a Jewish tailor in Budapest almost 200 kilometers south of his home.

While serving his apprenticeship, Daniel was



Figure 2

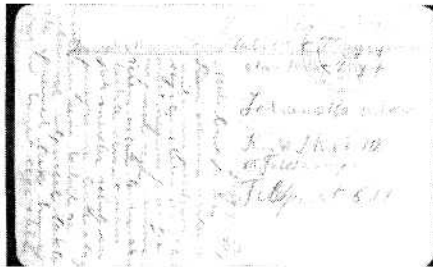


Figure 3A



Figure 3B

taken by the Slovak separatist movement. This is shown in Figure 1 which is the photograph side of a postcard from Budapest. Daniel is seen prominently displaying a Slovak separatist newspaper. It was then that he had a brush with near arrest when he refused to sing the Hungarian National Anthem while spending an evening in a frequented rathskeller.

At the outbreak of the war Daniel was one of the first to be drafted, not for his fighting skills, but for the fact that tailors were in great demand to produce uniforms! Once this need was satisfied, he was promptly transferred to the infantry and sent to the Italian front. Without saying, the "front line" food was inadequate, of poor quality and in most instances "under fire." In regard to letters sent home, of which collectors of material from this era are all so fond, Daniel was one of the few literates enlisted in his unit. Consequently, he was kept busy writing letters for others in his military company. These letters, as he explained, were written to

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Published monthly except July and August - \$15.00 per year

Second Class Postage Paid at Lancaster, PA 17604

and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST, 1511 Clearview Ave., Lancaster, PA 17601

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Figure 4A

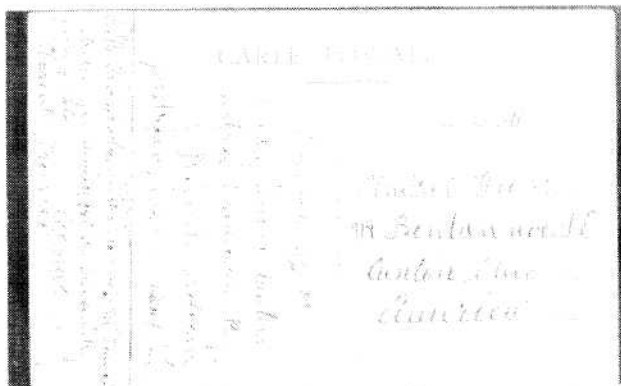


Figure 4B

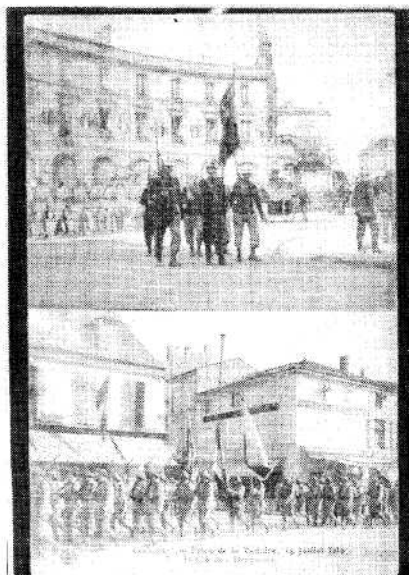


Figure 4C

families that lived in areas where post offices did not exist and to persons who could not read. Because of this, the letters were sent in care of the priest in the closest community with a post office. Upon receipt of the correspondence, the priest would send word to the family that he possessed a letter from a soldier relative and requested someone from the family to come to his parish as soon as possible.

Figure 2 shows a light moment in Daniel's military career when he and a friend had a photograph taken while astride horses. The following day, life was not as light, as Daniel was seriously wounded attempting to ford a river in northern Italy while under fire. (Ironically, Daniel's son was wounded in Germany during World War II after having his photograph taken on a horse!) Figure 3 shows both sides of a field post card from the military hospital in Kragojevatz, Serbia where Daniel recuperated from his wounds written to his brother John in Infantry

Regiment No. 112 of APO 521 (France).

While Daniel professed he was peace loving, his brother John was the opposite. John was a fighter and was fully proud of the fact that when he enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian Army he enlisted at the rank of sergeant. John later excelled at the Russian front, so much so that he was transferred to the American front in France where he was captured and imprisoned. While in a French prisoner of war camp, John elected to serve with the French in an all-Czechoslovak unit. (See figure 4 of post cards addressed to John's brother-in-law, my grandfather, in America.)

At the war's end, John returned to the newly born country of Czechoslovakia to join its army; however, by this time, the family had immigrated to America. Seeing this, John also left to join the family (presumably without giving Army its required two week's notice).

This brief excerpt of my family's history is interesting in two respects. First, it parallels Europe's history as evidenced by philatelic documents and secondly, it makes one wonder what other bits of history are packed away in closets and attics of all the many families who immigrated to America.

ARCHEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES ON STAMPS

by *Gerald M. Van Zanten*



Illustration 1



Illustration 2



Illustration 3

Archaeology has been the theme of numerous Czechoslovak stamps in the past, among them a set of five issued on September 30, 1969. This set emphasizes the importance of recent archeological finds in Bohemia and Slovakia as well as in other parts of the country. Many of these finds are linked to the Great Moravian Empire and are thus of considerable interest to historians and archeologists alike.

The first stamp of the set bears a 20 h value and, as all the stamps in the set were designed by J. Baláž, they carry numbers 1786, 87, 88, 89 and 90 in the Pofis catalog (Scott no. 1646, 47, 48, 49 and 50). This 20 h is in two parts and stamp shows two bronze objects. The top section represents a bronze belt fitting found near Sala Nad Váhom. The bottom half depicts the bronze head of the boar embellished with palm leaves on a hammered background. According to the inscription on the stamp, the find was made at Holiare. Between 1952 and 1955, some 778 graves were uncovered at Holiare in Slovakia. The boar's head dates from the early beginnings of the great Moravian Empire and is identified as the Mikulčice style. (see Ill. 1.) The total printing of this stamp was 5,837,500.

The second stamp in the set has a 30 h value and depicts a gilded bronze mount of a horse's harness with embossed human faces. It belongs to the late Avar period. The bronze mount was found at the burial place Ztávské Tůň, 25 km. east of Komárno, a site of great importance to archeologists. The burial ground dates from the eighth century. (see Ill. 2.) The stamp had a printing of 7,147,500.

The third stamp had a 1 kčs. value and is again in two parts, depicting earrings unearthed near Zelovce and Staré Město. As can be seen, there is a great difference in the types shown. Such rings were often plaited into the hair, showing a Byzantine influence. Staré Město is a kind of suburb of Uherské-Hradiště, and is situated 75 km. from Brno. The town itself is very old and dates from 1257 as a royal fortress. It has retained its medieval appearance to date. Before it was named Uherské-Hradiště the town was called Veligrad and was an important junction of trade routes between the Black Sea and the Baltic. Verigrad was one of the main centers of the Great Moravian Empire and many objects have been found in nearby tombs including gold, silver and bronze jewels. (See Ill. 3.) This 1 kčs. stamp had a printing of 3,642,500.

The 1.80 kčs. stamp depicts another object unearthed near Uherské-Hradiště showing us both sides of a metal crucifix which dates from the ninth century. This tells us that Christianity had become established there, at least to some



Illustration 4



Illustration 5



Illustration 6

The other stamp has a value of 1.60 Kčs. and pictures an ancient silver plate showing a falconer with a hawk. This plate was found near Staré Město in Moravia and dates from the ninth century. Among other items discovered there were numerous gilded

extent. The side near the top shows the figure of Christ below the imprint of a hand. This lower side show us earlier images (presumably connected with rep-Christian times). (See Ill. 4.) The printing of this stamp ran 1,172,500.

The final stamp of the set bears a value of 2 Kčs. and shows us a belt end of gold which appears to belong to the pre-Christian period of this particular district. It was found near Mikulčice where many more of this kind were found with highly individual forms, attesting to the high level of craftsmanship during the Great Moravian Empire. Mikulčice is near the town of Hodonin (birthplace of T.G. Masaryk), about 15 km. northeast of Breclav. In 1957, it was a focal point of extensive archeological activities, for it was here that the remains of a fortified Slavic settlement were discovered along with the foundation of ten ninth century churches, including a 118-foot-long basilica, a burial ground and many objects of gold and silver as well as weapons and coins. Also uncovered were the foundation walls of houses with stone brickwork below as well as vestiges of a later eleventh or twelfth century settlement. This area was identified as the center of the Great Moravian Empire. Many fortifications were built there during this era and even earlier times. It was then the word "hrad/grad/gród/gorod" was coined - the common term for "fortification" in all Slavic Languages. The printing of this 2 Kčs stamp was limited to 507,500. (See Ill. 5).

The year 1963 saw two new stamps commemorating 1100 years of the Great Moravian Empire. They were Pofis numbers 1316 and 1317 (Scott no's. 1180 and 1181). The first stamp has a value of 30 h and depicts an ancient ring with a Moravian settlements map as a background. Designed by L. Jiřincová, it was issued on May 25, 1963. (See Ill. 6.)



Illustration 7



Illustration 8

buttons used to fasten coats, all bearing rich ornamentation with plant, animal as well as geometrical motifs. This stamp had a printing of 1,760,000. (See Ill. 7.)

It was near Devin on the confluence of the Morava and Danube Rivers where archeological excavations also brought to light fortifications from the period of the Great Moravian Empire. Pofis no. 2708 (Scott no. 2571) shows four pottery cups and mugs now displayed at the Bratislava Municipal Museum

that date from the 15th and 16th century. Issued on September 4, 1985, it is part of the Bratislava Historical Motives series and bears a value of 4 kcs.

In the Prague Castle series (Pražský Hrad), there is a stamp showing a gold earring dating from the ninth century. It is the 3 kcs. value issued in 1975 and listed as Pofis no. 2173 (Scott no. 2040) with a printing of 597,000. Contrast this with the third stamp of the set of five issued on September 30, 1969 described above. That one had a 1 kcs. value.

In a set called the "Treasures of Czechoslovak Castles and Chateaus, we have yet another archeological subject, this time from the Nitra district showing a gold or bronze ornament as well as four earthenware pots. The stamp is the 3 kcs. value and has Pofis no. 2548 (Scott no. 2418). Issued in August 1982, it had a printing of 5,995,000. (See Ill. 8)

Here is but a brief sampling of the significance of archeological discoveries in Czechoslovakia, all of reasonably recent origin, through the media of postage stamps. It brings to the forefront the emphasis placed on the heritage of Czechs, Slovaks and Moravians alike. It is hoped that Czechoslovak Postal authorities will see fit to treat us to further treasures of the Great Moravian Empire as they are uncovered.

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THE DOVE

EIGHTH INSTALLMENT

*This is a continuation of the Allegory Chapter of Monografie II
as translated by Vladimír Králíček*

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During the production stages of the typography, a number of printing faults came into existence. The origin of these faults are caused by printing plates and by accidental production errors.

Faults in the Printing Plates

The sensitive surface of the glass negative was often damaged. Scratches and interrupted or missed sketching on the glass negative appeared on the metal printing plate as unetched parts which were printed during the usage of that plate. Conversely, any undesirable deposits on the glass negative by way of scratches, spots, dots, etc. were etched on the metal plate and during usage of that plate were not printed. The drawing on the glass negative could have been damaged during processing or development and before the emulsion dried. These faults are repeated on all plates produced which used that negative. Faults in the printing plates were also due to damage to the sensitive layer of the metal plate before etching, defects during etching or mechanical damage to that plate. They occurred in that phase of printing which was done with defective or damaged plates.

Accidental Production Faults

These kind of faults occurred during the latter stages of printing and were due to wear of the printing plates, their contamination and the introduction of foreign bodies between the paper and the plates themselves.

Retouches

Faults on the glass negative and the printing plate had a disturbing and telling effect on the appearance of the finished stamps. They were removed at the beginning of and during the printing run. Depending upon the stage of production and the way in which repairs were carried out, primary and secondary retouches can be identified.

Primary Retouches

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Before the printing was begun, corrections were made on the proof, the design on the glass negative and, if necessary, the sensitive layer of the metal plate before etching. Intervention by the retoucher occasionally left marks in the corrected parts which subsequently appeared on the metal plates. To the primary retouch also belong the removal of protrusions on the metal plate which were not supposed to be printed.

Occasionally during making of the printing plates, parts which were to be printed were etched, or sometimes a part of metal was broken. Repairs to these faults were difficult and they were usually carried out by filling them with molten metal, by drawing metal from surrounding areas or by hammering the metal from underneath.

Because the primary retouches were done before the stamp printing commenced, the original fault features are not known.

Secondary Retouches

Even though the most prominent faults were usually removed with primary retouching, a substantial number of additional faults in the printing plates were not repaired. As the printing progressed through its run, some of the faults were discovered and promptly repaired.

With the secondary retouches, the fault on the printing plate and its retouches on the stamps is always recognizable.

Designation of Faults and Retouches

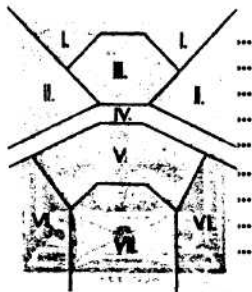
Numerous faults occur with all values of the Dove stamps issue in the printing plates, in retouches and in occasional production errors. We introduce the description of the most interesting

faults and retouches of the individual values. (During description of faults and retouches, a designation is used for left wing, right number, left margin of stamp, etc. in the sense of viewing the stamp. With values 5h and 10h, the printing plate faults and their retouches are described for both colors because the same plates or glass negatives were sometimes used for printing them.)

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For purposes of clarity, the faults and retouches are individually indicated (independently with each value) in this fashion:

- | | | |
|------------------|-----|--|
| I, II..... | VII | position mark of deviations in stamp. |
| 1, 2, 3 | | serial number of fault and retouch. |
| a, b, c..... | | after serial number - deviations of that fault. |
| R..... | | after serial number - retouch |
| RA, RB, RC | | after serial number - different retouches of that fault. |



Ill. 338

Position indications refer to this part of the stamp surface:

- I - Upper margin and horizontal decorative sketching.
- II - upper part of wing with adjacent decorative sketching
- III - tale of dove.
- IV - inscription "Pošta Česlpspvmslá".
- V - lower part of wings and body of dove.
- VI - numeral with adjacent decorative sketching.
- VII - letter envelope, head of dove, name of designer.

The 5 H (Blue and Violet)

| Position Marks | Description | Position of stamp | Plate | Blue - B Violet - V |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|------------------------|
| Printing Plate Faults | | | | |
| I/1 | Notch in top margin above dove's tail | 37 | | V |
| I/2 | Colored dot & horizontal line above top right corner | 21 | not marked & without sheet margin frame | B |
| I/3 | Colored spiral in top right corner & colored dot in left wing | 93 | Not marked & without sheet margin frame | B |
| I/4 | Strongly marked top left corner & vertical colored line | 18 | | B |
| II/1 | Right margin arching | 10 | | V |
| IV/1 | Colored horizontal below letters "SLOV" | 30 | | V |
| VI/1a | Thin colored line across dove tail, colored line in lower left wing, arching line in vertical sketching at left a "5" & horizontal line at left bottom corner of letter envelope | 21 | with numeral "3" inside sheet margin frame | B,V |

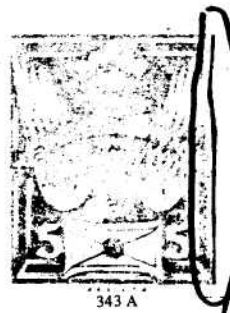
| Position Marks | Description | Position of stamp | Plate | Blue - B Violet - V |
|----------------|--|-------------------|--|------------------------|
| VI/1b | horizontal line in envelope & markings in colored line at dove's tail | 21 | | B, V |
| VI/2 | colored dot in right "5", lower part of right "5" tapering off, colored line & dot in hook under right "5" | 45 | with numeral "5" inside sheet margin frame | B, V |
| VI/3 | colored lines in right hook & in numeral "5" suffused letters "NSK" & deformed wing under letters "SKA" | 20 | | V |
| VI/4 | colored dot in envelope's right corner & in hook below right numeral "5" | 18 | not marked & without sheet margin frame | B, V |
| VII/1 | interrupted line in envelope & break in sketching of left wing | 100 | not marked & without sheet margin frame | B |
| VII/2 | colored arched line from letter "A" in "Benda" to letters "SLOVENSKA" | 24 | with numeral "3" inside sheet margin frame | B, V |
| VII/3a | large blot in envelope, break in sketching below letter "C", color blot in wings | 70 | 2 - 26 | B |
| VII/3b | as in VII/3a, except blot is smaller | 70 | 2 - 26 | B |
| VII/4 | colored dot in left part of envelope | 48 | | B, V |
| VII/5 | six colored lines & line after author's name | 51 | with numeral "3" inside sheet margin frame | B, V |
| VII/6a | three lines in envelope & line in lower part of left wing | 6 | | V |



Obr. 339. 1/1



340. 1/2



343 A



Obr. 341. 1/3



Obr. 342. 1/4
K.L.



343. II/1 B



#30
Obr. 344. IV/1
K.L.



#21
Obr. 345. VI/1a



#21
Obr. 348. VI/1b



#45
Obr. 347. VI/2



#20
Obr. 348. VI/3



#18
Obr. 349. VI/4



#100



Obr. 350. VII/1

Member of the Month

GERALD VAN ZANTEN



It is a staggering 14,000 miles between New Zealand and Czechoslovakia - and this by shortest Jet flight - but a young Gerald, listening to short wave radio some 26 years ago marvelled at the clear reception of Radio Prague's English broadcast to the United States and its relay to New Zealand. These broadcasts helped him make contacts with people in Czechoslovakia. A few he befriended. They told him of his country's history - from Žižka to Masaryk; from White Mountain to Lidice. He learned of their literary giants, their musical and artistic heritage. He compared these to the great masters of another small nation - Holland - where he himself was born and where he spent the first twenty years of his life. The similarity was remarkable and he decided to learn more of this unique country.

Gerald Van Zanten was intrigued by what is different in this world. Modern civilization could transform valleys and plains into bustling cities, trails into superhighways, carts drawn by oxen and wagons by horses into diesel trucks and jet planes. But the beauty of nature and its impact on primitive life lured Gerald to distant lands like Sumatra, Java and Borneo. He worked as a farmhand in the Waikate province of Sumatra and soon came to the realization that life need not be quite so hard and unrewarding. He heard that in New Zealand there was a better balance between the wonders of nature and the advances of civilization. There he made his permanent home. There he met and married Val. And then, selecting Napier for his place of abode, he was introduced to insurance as a professional career.

The Van Zantens have two daughters. The older one is the chief medical radiology technician at the country's largest hospital in Auckland. The other is a school dental nurse.

One might expect that as a native of Holland, Gerald collects stamps of the Netherlands first, then possibly Czechoslovakia. Not so! His Czech friends introduced him to Czechoslovak philately when most of the country's issued stamps were still reasonably accessible. And so he chose to collect Czechoslovakia exclusively. While his friends kept him supplied with stamps of their own nation, he reciprocated with stamps of New Zealand.

Eventually his collection expanded to the point where he decided to enter parts of it in various national shows. In 1978, he gathered up enough courage to try his luck at PRAGA 78. He made this the occasion for his first visit to Prague where he stayed with one of his pen friends. It was a rewarding experience in more ways than one. Much to his amazement, he received a silver-bronze award for his exhibit.

Impressed by what he saw, Gerald returned to Prague in 1984, this time with his wife, Val. Together they went as far east as Bratislava, meeting old friends and making new ones.

Gerald recognizes the intrinsic value and quality of the stamps of the First Republic - the many plate and color varieties, offsets, perforations, overprints and cancellations. But he defers to those who have studied their nuances and intricacies for years. Instead, he prefers to write about the newer stamps and more from the standpoint of the subject matter, as exemplified by some of his articles in this and prior issues. Collectors interested in history and topicals are particularly indebted to his writings.

This year the Van Zantens again returned to Czechoslovakia for PRAGA 88. But this time, they made it as part of a grand tour. Leaving New Zealand on July 10, they flew to London with a brief stop at Los Angeles. From there, they went to visit relations in Holland. Then on to Vienna via Switzerland. For a climax, Prague and the Big Show! After that, a detour to Bratislava and Budapest. Then a flight to Singapore and finally back to New Zealand by Oct. 8. You will be reading this before they actually return home. Imagine, around the world in ninety days! All that and PRAGA, too!

The Society and the staff are proud to have a member of Gerald's caliber and devotion with his flare for prolific writing and his desire to help the Society in whatever way is needed. As one member aptly put it, give us ten Van Zantens and our Society could supply the entire philatelic world with articles and special projects for the next decade.

EDITORIAL HINGES

THE BIG ONE

Like all big shows, PRAGA 88 has come and gone.

It was, of course, a stupendous event. Our Society was well represented both in bodies and in exhibits. Following this Editorial is an official list of seventy-one exhibitors from the United States alone whose exhibits were accepted for display at PRAGA 88. An asterisk in front of the name denotes membership in our Society.

The United States was the second largest entrant, surpassed only by the German Federal Republic. Out of a total of 4,500 frames available for competition, 403 were taken by exhibitors from the United States.

Because this issue of the Specialist went to print before PRAGA 88 officially opened, all commentaries on the show, the exhibits themselves, the program, the awards, including our Society's participation in the events and its own program, will be the main theme of our next issue. In order to make certain that everything is fully and accurately covered, your editor may delay publication of the October issue by as much as one week. Therefore we ask your indulgence in the event your copy of the October Specialist does not reach you on time. We hope you will find it worth waiting for.

THE SMALL ONE

Last year our Society had a new editor. When Frank Julsen notified the President that his involvement in other matters no longer gave him the time to concentrate on the Specialist, he recommended Gerald Van Zanten for the post of editor. The President liked the idea and the Board approved it. Mr. Van Zanten plunged into the job with the fervor of a hungry lion devouring an impala. His work showed imagination and enthusiasm. But Mr. Van Zanten labored under a tremendous handicap. Being domiciled in New Zealand, he found that time and expense factors were his major enemies, in addition to one of two others. You may recall that in the second half of last year in particular, your copies of the Specialist did not reach you in some instances until a month later. There was even one mailing of his material from New Zealand which did not reach our printer until 95 days later. In the meantime, the parcel was deemed lost in the mails and was frantically duplicated at its source. It is an unfortunate paradox that we, as philatelists, sometimes suffer at the hands of the same postal authorities we so ardently support.

The Board of Directors decided that with all the delays at various post offices, both domestically and abroad, and with costs running so high, a change was necessary. I was then President and my term of office was coming to an end. I decided that my talents could be better utilized as editor than as continuing President. I therefore offered my services and the Board accepted. I promptly appointed Gerald Van Zanten as assistant editor and Frank Julsen as literary editor. Again Mr. Van Zanten leaped into his post with the same zeal that he accepted the editorship the year before. Unlike an "assistant", he took charge of publicity on behalf of our journal for our European theater of operations and undertook an exhaustive project of researching and writing articles on the subject of Art and Artists on stamps of Czechoslovakia. You have already read some of these in prior issues. This issue features several more.

Besides all that, Mr. Van Zanten is credited with identifying and soliciting the services of another member, Vladimir Králíček, for the task of translating the Allegory Chapter of Monografie II. Not since Henry Hahn and Jerry Verner collaborated in the translation of "Padelky" has such a monumental job of translating been undertaken in our Society. We are all very much indebted to Mr. Králíček for this valuable and time-consuming work but we are equally grateful to Mr. Van Zanten for persuading Mr. Králíček to commit himself to such a project on behalf of our Society.

Mr. Van Zanten had demonstrated his philatelic knowledge and talents and his devotion to a Society that seeks continuous involvement of its members in order to remain a strong and viable voice in the philatelic world. In this issue, we honor him as our Member of the Month and will continue to feature some of his recently written articles.

Another Appeal

The Society is in the process of binding some back issues of the Specialist in order to offer them for sale. The purpose is to bring additional revenue into our treasury and hopefully eliminate the need of increasing membership dues. However, we ran into a snag. We were able to locate only a few copies of the May 1983 issue. Therefore your editor once again finds it necessary to request your assistance. Anyone having extra copies of that issue please send them in so that the project can be completed. Mail your surplus May 1983 Specialist to: Mirko Vondra, 1511 Clearview Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17601.

U. S. EXHIBITORS AT PRAGA 88

Prior to the opening of the PRAGA 88 International Stamp Exhibition, your editor received the attached list of exhibitors from the United States only whose exhibits had been accepted for the show. This list totals 71 exhibitors, making our country the second largest entrant, surpassed only by the German Federal Republic. The large number of U.S. entries accepted is gratifying since only 4,500 frames were available for competitive exhibiting. An asterisk before the name of the entrant denotes a member of our Society.

| <u>NAME</u> | <u>TITLE OF EXHIBIT</u> | <u>FRAMES</u> |
|------------------------------|---|---------------|
| Ackerman, G. Adolph | SOVIET AIR MAIL - THE EARLY YEARS | 5 |
| Arato, Steven | HUNGARY 1874 - 1881 | 5 |
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