

# The Messenger



April 2020

Tomas Griebing, President  
Michael Miklovic, 1st Vice President  
Rodger McReynolds, 2nd Vice President  
Armen Hovsepian, Treasurer  
Michael Keil, Secretary  
Jim McKinzie, Newsletter Editor ([jimmckinzie1@att.net](mailto:jimmckinzie1@att.net))

Waldo Public Library  
Gather at 1:00  
Meeting Starts 2:00  
**NO MEETING FOR APRIL**

## Our Secretary Reports What You Missed:

**Meeting Attendance: 41**

### Officer and Committee Reports:

**Treasurer:** \$8540.00 in the bank. Betsy will audit the books again this year. Armen again suggested investing in US Forever stamps.

**Membership:** We have 1 new member, Richard Karlslyst.

**Secretary:** Reminded everyone of the time change which begins at midnight tonight.

**Librarian:** There are two new additions to the library, *Pictorial History of US Stamps* and a subscription to *Topical Times*.

**Historian:** A souvenir card from the 1993 Midiphil has been added.

**First Vice-President's Report:** June 6 and August 1 have been set for the "introduction to stamps" programs at the library. There followed a discussion of some of the details that need to be addressed and for volunteers for these programs.

**Second Vice-President's Report:** The Grouplink discussion forum on the MPS web site is up and running. So far 4 people have signed up for it.

**Newsletter:** A new section featuring different members has been added. If you want to tell the club a little about yourself and your stamp interests write something up and submit it to Jim.

**Old business:** Scott's show will be May 8 from 10-5 and May 9 from 9-4 at the 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church in the Westminster Hall. A volunteer is needed to organize and coordinate volunteers for the show. Tables are \$150 for 1 and \$250 for 2.

The motion that the club donate \$200 to the APS program "Stamps that Teach" was withdrawn after we were unable to ascertain whether the program was being utilized by local educators.

Tomas shared some of the recommendations for budget allocations from the treasury, including purchasing a set of Scott's Catalogs for the library. After much discussion it was decided that the board would revisit the recommendations and make revised recommendations. Dale Smith will help with advertising for stamp collecting and MPS.

**New Business:** A suggestion was made that the club try to organize some sort of social event at APS events that members attend so we can get together, visit, and get to know each other better.

### Announcements:

The St. Louis Stamp Expo is March 27-29. Dale Smith and Scott Couch will both be set up at the Expo.

**Program:** The program was an extended Show and Tell with many members sharing interesting items. Thanks to all who shared.

*Respectively submitted by Michael Keil*

### What You Will Miss (if not there):

**April's meeting has been cancelled due to this pandemic. We will notify you if there is a change for May's meeting.  
Be safe and think of all the catching up we can do on our collections!**

## Upcoming New U.S. Issues:

Four issues for April have been announced.

### Contemporary Boutonniere

First Class, Forever rate  
One Design, Pane of 20  
Issue Date April 2nd



### Garden Corsage

First Class, Two Ounce rate  
(Currently 70c)  
One Design, Pane of 20  
Issue Date April 2nd



### Earth Day

First Class, Forever rate  
One Design, Booklet of 20  
Issue Date April 18th



### Global Chrysanthemum

One Ounce Letter, Global rate  
(Currently \$1.20)  
One Design, Pane of 10  
Issue Date April 24th

The U.S. Postal Service has canceled three first-day ceremonies for four stamps:

- Contemporary Boutonniere and Garden Corsage (April 2, Crestwood, KY)
- Earth Day (April 18, Denver, CO)
- American Gardens (May 13, Winterthur, DE)

The stamps will still be issued (put on sale) on the first-day dates, listed above.

"Typically, Postal Service stamp events attract 200 or more attendees," the USPS said in a press release. "The Postal Service will try to reschedule the dedications at a later date."

## Philatelic Happenings:

**Currently everything known in the philatelic world has been cancelled or postponed. Time to call your favorite dealer or get on the internet and start bidding with the many on-line auctions to get that stamp fix.**

### **From our friends at E and D Auctions:**

The auction, previously scheduled for May 3, 2020, may or may not occur on that date. As soon as public health officials lift the extraordinary measures they have recently instituted a date will be set for that auction.

### ***Answer from Last Month's Quiz:***

**In the world of philately, what does the "Scott Number" mean and why use it?**

The Scott Catalogue has become the standard for collectors in the US. At one time there were several competing catalogues. Some, like H.E. Harris, used the same numbering system for stamps as Scott's but some like Minkus, had their own numbering system.

The Scott number is used to identify specific stamps when buying, selling or trading stamps. It can also help you organize your collection and know what you have and what you are missing.

For Scott to issue a number and get a listing in the catalogue the specific stamp must have been issued for postage by the issuing country and that country must have an operating postal system.

Why use the number? Do you ever go to a show and ask a dealer if they have a specific stamp? If you know the Scott number you will be served faster since most dealers organize by country and then by the Scott number. Try going up to a dealer and saying, "I'm looking for that train stamp issued by

*Continued on pg 3*

The Midwest Philatelic Society Website is  
[www.midwestphilatelicsociety.com](http://www.midwestphilatelicsociety.com)

*Find previous newsletters, links to other stamp info and more on our website.*

## The President's Corner:

Dear MPS Members –

Wow! What an unusual time this is in global history! I sincerely hope that all of you and your family and friends are doing well. As stamp collectors in many ways we observe and preserve history, and numerous health issues have been shown on stamps over time. There have been many large scale health crises over the generations, but Mike and I know we have never seen anything of this scale during our lifetimes. For right now, our regular monthly MPS meetings will be on hold until further notice. We encourage you to use this time for your personal research, to maybe sort and organize your collection, to work on exhibits, or to connect with the stamp world virtually via phone, internet, or other electronic means. I would also request that if you are in need of some type of assistance to help manage through these challenging times, please consider reaching out to your MPS colleagues. In many ways we are a family, and I am sure that people will be most willing to help as much as we can. We will look forward to our future as a strong club, and for when we can be together again in person. Be safe and help one another.

Tomas L. Griebing, MD, MPH  
President – Midwest Philatelic Society (email: [tginkc@yahoo.com](mailto:tginkc@yahoo.com))

### Continued from pg 2:

France, I think in 1955. Do you have that?" I was at a dealer's table when that question was asked. Now with a topical dealer, they might be able to find it in their stock since they have their stock organized by topic. But with the Scott number, any dealer would be able to tell you very quickly if they have it or not. By the way, the dealer asked the collector, "Do you know what number that is?" The collector did not know. No sale was made and the collector walked off empty handed. I would have attempted to look it up for collector but a stamp valued at anywhere from \$1 to a \$1.60 is not going to excite a dealer to look very hard.



France #768  
Electric Train



US #C15  
Zeppelin Passing Globe

In this newsletter, every attempt is made to identify the stamps pictured with the Scott number. That way if you fall in love with that issue, you will be able to search for it easily. Whether you add it to your wish/want list or you search the internet for it in auctions. I am missing #C15 from my collection. Some of you will recognize that immediately as the \$2.60 Graf Zeppelin. But don't expect everyone to know what you are talking about if you blurt out a specific number. Frankly, I don't even try to memorize the numbers of stamps. There are far too many and to many countries to attempt to. Some may stick in your head but not for everyone. Especially if it is not their interest or country.

What is nice though is when you learn the basics. Such as if the number begins with a "C", you know that it is an air mail stamp, no matter the country. If it starts with a "B", then it is a semi-postal. Begins with an "O" it is an official stamp.

Get a set of catalogues or if you collect just one country, buy the catalogue with that country in it. If new is out of your budget, buy at auction or from a dealer getting rid of an old set. Or just go to your library and check one out. Whatever you do, read the beginning sections. There is a wealth of information in the front of each catalogue that is extremely helpful to understanding our hobby.

JMC

## Philatelic Ramblings:

Recently I bought a large collection of French stamps with many early classics. In trying to determine if they were genuine or not, since there are many fakes out there, I started researching the issue. In doing that I ran across an very interesting website. It is called Stamp Forgeries and the website is: <http://stampforgeries.com/>

There is a section called "Album Weeds" that was extremely helpful in identifying the "fakes" of early classic France. The website has an image of the forgery or fake and an image of the genuine stamp. If you collect any early classic world wide stamps, this is a good website to bookmark and check out. You won't be sorry.

Have you noticed a slow down when going to a web page. I have! Too many people surfing the web at home. Probably more kids utilizing the web during the day than normal. But don't let it discourage you, besides we can always pull out an auction lot we haven't gone through yet or look at one of your albums that you have not looked at in a long time. It will bring back good memories and might spark a new collecting interest.



Easter Greetings from the *USS Arizona*. Cancelled 12 April, 1936. Type 3 (AC-TTB) cancellation. Cachet by C. Wright Ritchell.

*Cover and info contributed by Michael Keil*

With the shortage of eggs, Easter might have to be a little more creative. Get the old plastic eggs out and fill some of them with interesting stamps. Give the kids or the grandkids an old album with the eggs. Be sure to pick out stamps that would be interesting to them and then throw in some of your favorites.

Who knows you might get them started collecting and give them a different interest besides gaming and the internet. Use the time to show them why you fell in love with stamps. Incorporate the use of the internet by going to websites about stamping that would interest them.

This virus could start a stamp collecting resurgence.

JMC



Finland #1509  
Rabbit and Easter Basket

## The Lost Letter, and Operation Cornflakes by Andrea Smith



“Before I started writing this book, I knew almost nothing about stamps or philately. I never thought about the people who made stamps, designed them, or even collected them” So admits Jillian Cantor, author of the book The Lost Letter, printed in 2017.

The book is a fictional account of a stamp engraver during WWII who engraved stamps for the resistance in Austria. The story is about a lost letter with an unusual stamp that excites a stamp dealer in current time. The stamp can't be identified, so he goes on a mission to discover the story of the stamp, and the owner of the letter. While the story is fiction, it is a fascinating read, and based on the true history of “Operation Cornflakes”.

**Operation Cornflakes** (1944–1945) was a morale operation by the World War II Office of Strategic Services (OSS) which involved tricking the German postal service, (Deutsche Reichspost) into inadvertently delivering anti-Nazi propaganda to German citizens through the mail. It was called Operation Cornflakes because the mail was usually delivered at breakfast. The goal of the operation was to disrupt the morale of the German people and undermine the support of Adolf Hitler. Since the mail came from within the country, it led people to believe their neighbors or friends sent it to them.

Operation CORNFLAKES began with OSS officials collecting any and all German POWs that had experience with the German postal service. They were given better meals in exchange for information in collection, sorting, canceling and delivery of the mail. The OSS and German exiles scoured the telephone directories and pulled over two million, randomly selected names registered within the Reich to send forged letters to. A unit of the OSS out of Rome claimed to have forged over 15000 envelopes a week. Within the letters contained writings about family happenings and gossip about non-existent people, the idea being that the domestic mail was not censored unlike the business mail.

In hopes of shaking the morale further in the German people, the OSS called upon master forgers to use a stamp of Hitler, but with some minor modifications. The modifications included a skull overlay that resembles a portion of Hitler's jaw having been "eaten away". The German subscript at the bottom of the stamp was also altered from 'Deutsches Reich' (German Empire) to 'Futsches Reich' (ruined empire). These stamps were known as the "Death Head" and were usually placed **inside** the letter with other subversive materials. The postage stamps used on the envelopes were forged 6 pf and 12 pf Hitler-head stamps intended to look identical to genuine German stamps of the era, though these forgeries were printed by the OSS.



The British were the first to forge the Hitler head stamp in 3, 4, 6 and 8 Pfennig values from 1941 until the end of the war. These stamps were of better quality versus the Americans' attempt at forgery because the British used actual stamp production facilities whereas the Americans did not have access to quality ingredients such as paper, ink or engravers. The American forgeries focused much of their efforts on the 12 Pfennig stamp which hosted Hitler's head and exposed skull.

The operation involved special planes that airdropped bags of false, but properly addressed, mail. The letters were arranged in forged Reichspost bags which resembled the original bags, even to the material used. The bags would then be loaded aboard bombs specially designed to deploy the bags near a destroyed train, preferably one carrying mail, and drop the forgeries in amongst the originals. When recovering the mail during clean-up of the wreck, the postal service would hopefully confuse the false mail for the real thing with hope they would be put into circulation with the rest of the mail and delivered to the various addresses.

However, all the prior planning was almost for naught because in August 1944 the Reichspost altered their franking machines on the domestic mail making the thousands of letters previously written void. One-page newspaper leaflets called *Das Neue Deutschland* which contained material that the official

## Continued from pg 5:

newspaper would never print were placed into some of the outgoing letters to be dropped by the 15th Air Force. The first mission of Operation Cornflakes took place on 5 January 1945, when a mail train to Linz was bombed. Bags containing a total of about 3800 propaganda letters were then dropped at the site of the wreck, which were subsequently picked up and delivered to Germans by the postal service. Within 1944–45 twenty missions had been completed, reporting a success rate of 50%, leaving the 15th Air Force with over 320 delivered mailbags of propaganda.



By September the next blow to the OSS operation was intelligence gathered that no domestic mail would be delivered due to wartime internal power struggle within Germany. Another major oversight by the OSS was that the ravages of war shut down many of the cities' critical services and in some cases the postal service. While some cities continued its services of mail delivery, the allied bombing had turned many residences into piles of rubble; without a physical address left to deliver the mail to, much of it was discarded. Also the simple fact that when people received mail from an unknown source, they would usually destroy it, especially if the letters contained allied propaganda, either out of loyalty or fear of punishment.

These stamps, covers and propaganda are highly collectable, and many fake ones exist. Supposedly, a cover with the Hitler death's head stamp has never been found.

### For further information about Operation Cornflakes:

The American Philatelist 1971 February. Volume 85. No 2 - 'Allied Forgeries of the Postage Stamps of Nazi Germany' - Herbert A. Friedman.

<https://www.thevintagenews.com/2016/09/05/operation-cornflakes-allies-tricked-nazi-postal-service/>  
<http://www.psywarrior.com/Cornflakes2.html> – a detailed account of Cornflakes and other operations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uy2g5ZaUih0> from APSstamps.org – Operation cornflakes S3E16

For pictures of the fake stamps:

[https://www.snupps.com/Exploring\\_Stamps/shelf/3361310--operation-cornflakes](https://www.snupps.com/Exploring_Stamps/shelf/3361310--operation-cornflakes)

### This month's quiz:

Who were Francois Fournier and Charles Hirschburger?

Find out in next month's newsletter.

Liberia #2 or #8  
"Liberia"  
Imperforate of the above #'s or is it?



Be safe, follow the recommended guidelines about the virus and we all will meet again soon. Happy Easter and happy stamping!

JMC

Canada #1208  
Electron Microscope developed at the University of Toronto by James Hillier & Albert Prebus under the supervision of Eli Burton



Hope you enjoyed this month's newsletter. Thanks to Andrea S., Mike K., & Tomas G. for their contributions. You can contribute too by emailing me for next month's issue. **Deadline for the May issue will be April 15th.** Happy stamping and enjoy this extra time with your collection. *Jim Mc*