Call for Nominations

At this year’s WISCOPEX, which will be held May 8-9 at the Hart Park Arena in Wauwatosa, you will be given the opportunity to elect or re-elect nine WFSC officers. With this in mind, the following briefly describes what each position involves and hopefully will motivate you to consider running for one of these offices. (Note that the offices of secretary and treasurer are not a part of this year’s elections. Those individuals were elected at WISCOPEX ’98 for a two-year term.)

President (two-year term) —
- preside at all WFSC and Executive Board meetings, when present
- sign all acts or orders necessary to carry out the will of the WFSC and Executive Board
- act as the representative of the WFSC at all functions outside the WFSC
- appoint various committees spelled out in the WFSC bylaws and annually appoint an auditor to examine the WFSC financial records
- announce the names of new Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame inductees and present the annual WFSC Dealer Recognition Award at the WISCOPEX awards banquet

Vice President (two-year term) —
- assume the duties of the WFSC president in the event that he or she is absent, incapacitated, suspended or removed from office
- perform duties delegated by the president
- oversee all WFSC matters pertaining to youth activities, including assisting member clubs with youth programs, ideas and advice
- act as the WFSC representative for youth activities at functions outside the WFSC

Regional VP (six elected to one-year terms) —
- contact member clubs within the VP’s respective region; visit each club at least once a year, if feasible (clubs in each region are listed in each issue of ATPF)
- act as a liaison between member clubs and the Executive Board
- solicit nonmember clubs for membership in the WFSC

I hope that you now have a better idea of what these officer duties include. If you or someone you know might be interested in helping your federation by serving in one of these offices, please contact: Vern Witt, 2422 North 9th St., Sheboygan, WI 53083 (920) 458-3767. I know that Vern would be happy to hear from you.

If you feel that you might be able to help the WFSC in any other capacity, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you.

Club News

ROGER SZYMANSKI HONORED BY MILWAUKEE-AREA CLUBS

Milwaukee-area clubs will hold their 13th annual Distinguished Philatelist Appreciation Dinner on March 21, 1999. This year’s honoree is Roger Szymanski. He was selected for the honor because he has repeatedly supported the hobby of stamp collecting. Roger has served several Milwaukee-area clubs over a period of many years.

The 1999 event is hosted by the Polish American Stamp Club.

(continued on p. 3)
## Show Calendar and Registry

List your show, bourse, auction or event

FREE for WFSC member-club shows — classified rates for non-members and all other events

### March 6-7
**STAMPFEST '99**
Milwaukee Philatelic Society
St. Aloysius Gonzaga Hall
1435 S. 92nd St., West Allis
(Contact: John Fagan, 214077470 Lily Rd., Menomonee Falls, WI 53051 — (414) 251-0617) (M)

### Mar. 20 & Apr. 17
**STAMP AND COIN FAIR (bourse)**
Wisconsin Valley Philatelic Society
Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Cedar Creek Mall, 10101 Market Rd., Waukesha (Hwy. 167 - exit 185)
(Contact: Jim Johnson (715) 395-4326) (M)

### March 27
**BAYPEX '99**
Green Bay Philatelic Society
Ramada Inn Green Bay
2750 Ramada Way, Green Bay
(Contact: Gordy Lindner, 1002 Amberly Tr., Green Bay, WI 54311 — (920) 465-6692)

### April 10
**OUTAPEX '99**
Outagamie Philatelic Society
Columbus Club
2531 N. Richmond St., Appleton
(Contact: Al Marcus, P.O. Box 11, Appleton, WI 54912)

### May 8-9
**WISCOPEX '99**
Hosted by Wauwatosa Philatelic Society
Hart Park Recreational Bldg., North 72nd & West State St., Wauwatosa
(Contact: Claude Girarde, 253 Highland Ave., Grafton, WI 53024 — (414) 377-9590)

### June 19-20
18th ANNUAL SHOW AND BOURSE
Northwoods Stamp and Coin Club
Nicolet College, LRC Building
County G, Rhinelander
(Contact: Larry Marten, 3295 Hancoc Lake Rd., Harshaw, WI 54529 — (715) 282-5636)

### June 26-27
**TRI-PEx '99**
Italian Amer. Stamp Club, North Shore Phil. Soc., Polish Amer. Stamp Club
St. Aloysius Gonzaga Hall, 1435 S. 92nd St., West Allis
(Contact: Robert Renak, NSP, P.O. Box 17832, Milwaukee, WI 53217 — (414) 351-1519) (M)

### July 30-August 1
**NATIONAL TOPICAL STAMP SHOW '99**
Hosted by Waukesha County Philatelic Society
Grand Milwaukee Hotel
4747 S. Howell Ave., Milwaukee
(Contact: Robert J. Mather, 556-W29562 Roanoke Dr., Waukesha, WI 53189 — (414) 968-2392)

### WFSC Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Greg S. Schmidt</td>
<td>(920) 722-1449 (<a href="mailto:geschmidt@rbe.com">geschmidt@rbe.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Allan C. Marcus</td>
<td>(715) 341-3465 (<a href="mailto:careen@kwausera.com">careen@kwausera.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Deanna Jahnke</td>
<td>(920) 722-1449 (<a href="mailto:jahnke@kwausera.com">jahnke@kwausera.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Division</td>
<td>Mary Ann Bowman</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1451, Waukesha, WI 53187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Region VP</td>
<td>Christopher Northwood</td>
<td>P.O. Box 1451, Waukesha, WI 53187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee Region VP</td>
<td>John Fagan</td>
<td>(715) 282-5636 (<a href="mailto:johnf@wauwatosa.com">johnf@wauwatosa.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE Region VP</td>
<td>Roger Oswald</td>
<td>(715) 282-5636 (<a href="mailto:rogers@wauwatosa.com">rogers@wauwatosa.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE Region VP</td>
<td>Raymond Wood</td>
<td>(715) 282-5636 (<a href="mailto:raymond@wauwatosa.com">raymond@wauwatosa.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Region VP</td>
<td>Valerie Coker</td>
<td>(715) 282-5636 (<a href="mailto:valerie@wauwatosa.com">valerie@wauwatosa.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST CENTRAL Region VP</td>
<td>Paul T. Schroeder</td>
<td>(715) 282-5636 (<a href="mailto:pauls@wauwatosa.com">pauls@wauwatosa.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Please Patronize our ATFP Advertisers!

**ACROSS THE FENCE POST** is the official publication of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and life member of the APS since 1953. For WFSC membership information, contact the Central Office.

**ATFP** is published monthly Sept. - Apr.; bimonthly May-Aug. News of Wisconsin collectors, club news and gratis original articles related to philately are welcomed. The editor accepts submissions in any format, but reserves the right to make minor editing changes to conform with our style sheet. Material not carrying an individual copyright notice may be reproduced only by not-for-profit organizations, provided the author(s) and publication receive credit for any reprinted material. Unless explicitly stated by an officer in conjunction with official WFSC business, opinions expressed by individual authors are not necessarily endorsed by the WFSC.

Submission deadlines are for the month preceding month of publication as follows: advertising—1st of the month; editorial matter—5th of the month. Send editorial matter and stamp show calendar and cover listings to: Karen Weigt, Editor, ATFP, 4184 Rose Ct., Middleton, WI 53562 — phone (608) 836-1509 (karenweit@compuserve.com). Send ads to: Jim and Renee Seiler, Advertising Managers, ATFP, P.O. Box 247, Reedsburg, WI 53929 — phone (920) 772-4297. For a complete list of advertising rates and policies (display, classified and listings), see the July-August ‘97 issue of ATFP, or request a copy from the advertising managers.
The artwork is complete (or at least far enough along) and it’s time to get the word out about your club’s annual show cover. You’ve submitted your offer information for the traditional listings in the philatelic press, but did you remember the Internet? You can post the same information at the following sites, and it’s free:
- Usenet newsgroups —
  alt.collecting.stamps
  rec.collecting.stamps
  rec.collecting.stamps.marketplace
- www.delphi.com/stamps (Online Stamp & Cover Bourse section)
- stamp collecting forums found on CompuServe and America Online

The Wisconsin Valley Philatelic Society (Wausau) chose another route by going through a commercial Web site advertising service. The cost of such services varies and usually includes Web page design assistance. To see the WVP’s illustrated WaUSAPex ’98 cover ad go to: www.phoenix2000.com/wausapex/.

As a reminder, ATPF also provides a free listing, and display ads are inexpensive. An example is the ad submitted by the WVP’s and shown below. It promotes covers the group acquired as a result of providing canceling assistance at a Hospice stamp first-day ceremony sponsored by the Comfort Care & Hospice Services of Wausau Hospital.

New WVP’s officers are: Pres. Bruce Goetsch, VP Mike Lenard, Secy. William Grosnick Sr., and Treas. Fred Ziemann.

What others are doing

The Ripon Philatelic Society reports that its 1998 programs included stamp trivia, videos, auctions, show and tell, a quiz, and a Christmas party. RPS officers for 1999 are: Pres. Marge Beuthin, co-VPs Beth Walters and Roberta Comfort, and Secy. Donna Mueller.

What’s in a name? The Oshkosh Philatelic Society recently discussed changing its name to Oshkosh Stamp Club. Some time ago, the Waukesha County Philatelic Society considered the same change. In the end, both clubs decided to retain the more formal “P” and “S” words.

Here’s some interesting results of a WCPS member survey regarding programs: American Philatelic Society slide programs were favored by a ratio of 4-to-1, but at a frequency of no more than three per year. Overwhelmingly favored were once-a-year competitive activities such as stamp bingo, scavenger hunts, trivia games, and programs where members are required to prepare materials at home. Show and tell received 100 percent approval. The most favored activities were auctions and programs that include member participation.

Exhibiting and Judging

continued from p. 1

“That’s more like it,” I told him. “That’s your work, how about doing it that way?”

“OK” he said, “but my dad’s going to be mad.”

It wasn’t the neatest layout ever shown, the printing wasn’t perfect, but the judges from the local stamp club realized the exhibits were the first ever by these kids, and guess who was one of the winners going to the next WFSC convention.

In a future column, look for some constructive ideas on what you can do for your junior exhibitor, and still allow him, win or lose, to have an honest kid’s exhibit. I’ve never agreed with Vince Lombardi’s dictum: “Winning is everything.” If that was true, where would most of us be?

First Day of Issue

HOSPICE CARE CACHET

February 9, 1999

Features logo of Comfort Care & Hospice Services, Wausau Hospital

Special First Day Cancel

$1 plus SASE

Wisconsin Valley Philatelic Society

P.O. Box 71

Wausau, WI 54402
Thoughts on the Joys and Agonies of History as Told by Stamps

Part 2 — February, A Short Story in American and African American History

February is a fun month. Backed up by official proclamations and greeting card companies, we celebrate a smorgasbord of events: Groundhog Day, which lets us know how warmly to dress for the next six weeks; Valentine’s Day, which lets us make up for neglect of loved ones; the birthdays of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln fuel patriotic fires; and for those with more obscure knowledge, the birthday of Vanna White. In addition, a postage stamp issued four years ago reminded us that February is the birthday of the comic strip character “Popeye.”

February and black history

For African Americans, February occupies a central place in black history and for reasons not generally celebrated by the society at large:

Feb. 1 — The Greensboro student sit-ins that launched the modern civil rights movement began in 1960.

Feb. 2 — Birthday, author Langston Hughes.

Feb. 4 — Birthday, Rosa Parks, heroine of the Montgomery bus boycott.

Feb. 5 — Birthday, Milwaukee home run king Henry Aaron.

Feb. 6 — Birthday, singer Natalie Cole.

Feb. 8 — Marcus Garvey was imprisoned at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary.

Feb. 12 — Bill Russell, who began the Celtic dynasty, was imprisoned. And, the most durable civil rights protest organization, the NAACP, was founded on this date in 1909.

Feb. 14 — Birthdays, Richard Allen (1760-1831), founder of the AME Church; Frederick Douglass (Figure 1); and dancerg Gregory Hines.

Feb. 15 — In 1957, Martin Luther King’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference was founded.


Feb. 20 — Birthday, blues singer Nancy Wilson.

Feb. 21 — A man called the “Black Shining Prince,” Malcolm Shabazz (Figure 2), was assassinated in 1965.

Feb. 23 — Birthday (1868), W.E.B. DuBois (Figure 3), one of the founders of the NAACP.

Feb. 25 — Birthday, journalist George Schuyler.

Feb. 27 — Birthday, saxophonist Dexter Gordon.

Frederick Douglass also died during his birth month of February. Fittingly he has been depicted on two U.S. stamps.

And so, the events that have taken place in this single month cover African American history, politics, music and dance, biography, journalism, sports, international linkages, and criminal justice experience.

Woodson — the “Father of Black History”

I once tried to organize a college course based on the days of the single month of February. Could I rely on nothing but stamps as visuals? To a surprising degree, much of the story could be illustrated through stamps depicting the individuals mentioned.

Other folks or events not captured — many are still alive — may be accessed by going through the door opened by the one historian associated with February, the “Father of Black History,” Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson (Figure 4).

It was in 1926, 73 years ago, that Woodson, son of Virginia slaves, audaciously set out to create out of whole cloth an African American holiday, something that had been denied to the descendants of slaves. The holiday would be observed during the second week of the second month and Woodson called it “Negro History Week.” The second week in February held special significance because it contained the birthdays of two giant 19th century contemporaries associated with black and white history: Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Woodson earned a Ph.D. at Harvard but had “dropped out” of mainstream academia to devote his life to the scientific study of black experiences in America, Africa and throughout the world. Although he was called the “Father of Black History,” ironically, Woodson believed that there was no such thing. In his view, that which was called “Negro history” was only a missing segment of world history. Woodson took concrete steps to reach audiences of every description,
whether the intellectuals or common people, in order to correct historical errors of omission and commission.

He began in 1915 by organizing the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, with local branches throughout the country. The association promoted the study of the history and culture of the African and African-American past at every level, in diverse walks of life.

Second, in 1916, intending to help black scholars to find a medium of publication for their scholarship, Woodson founded the Journal of Negro History, which became one of the most important publications of serious history.

Third, inasmuch as he thought a learned journal and an annual meeting of his scholarly association might not reach the common folk, he established a week’s focus on black history. Fifty years later, during the national bicentennial celebrations, Woodson’s week-long black heritage observance was expanded to include the entire month of February.

**DuBois and the NAACP**

Woodson’s work was preceded by another black scholar, W.E.B. DuBois, who in 1895 was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard. In 1909 DuBois played a key role in the founding of the NAACP. The NAACP used the mails both to organize and to sustain branches around the country, including especially selling subscriptions to *The Crisis* (Figure 5), which DuBois edited. When the magazine offered vivid coverage of the plight of African Americans at home and on the war front the postmaster general declared it so dangerous that he held up copies in the mail and for a time threatened to revoke second-class postage privileges for the journal.

One of the earliest subscribers to *The Crisis* and the founder of an NAACP branch was William Miller of Madison, in whose house DuBois himself (and Booker T. Washington) resided on a number of visits to Wisconsin.

**Paul Robeson**

In plotting my imaginary course — a month in the history of African Americans and the nation — I became more aware of folk missing from this small history lesson. It was an easy next step to join the campaign to help the country express overdue pride and acknowledgment for a great citizen, Paul Robeson. The manager of Stamp Development warned me about the slowness of the process: “[e]ach year the Postal Service receives thousands of letters suggesting hundreds of different topics for new stamps.

Robinson, Joe Louis, all of whom were his contemporaries). Although he may have thought of himself as more a singer (who can be unmoved by his unforgettable rendition of “Old Man River”?) than an actor, as an actor of Shakespearean and modern texts, he ranks with many already honored by the USPS for such artistic achievements. As a courageous pioneer of human spirit, Robeson ranks with Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh, and Bessie Coleman, all whom have been honored with stamps. As a humanitarian and campaigner for human rights, he ranks with Susan B. Anthony, Ralph Bunche, and Martin Luther King, all previously and deservedly affixed to the envelope of the nation’s imagination.

**Conclusion**

There are numerous other examples that show how we differ about who is a hero. Without Black History Month many black holidays would still be hidden from mainstream Americans. The stamps that recognize African American heroes and holidays provide just small tantalizing windows on the larger ethnic story of American history. But enough of this story has been captured “philatelically” to produce both joy and agony. In other words, making a “tellable” story using stamps and other postal materials is not a bad way to combine two personal interests — stamps and history — and to beat cabin fever.

Too bad February is so short.
Kids love stories! They also love to have an adult read aloud to them. I have a collection of children's literature that relates directly and indirectly to stamps and/or the stories behind the stamps.

Books can be as simple as the colorful "Linn's ABC Book." Each page features one alphabet letter and a stamp depicting a topic that begins with that letter. To extend the lesson for older collectors, mini-lessons and discussions can be centered around some of the stamps used. Commemoratives, definitives, semipostals, and airmails can be identified. You can try to find the stamp's value in a catalog. A lesson on foreign stamp identification is possible.

There are even a few older stamps sprinkled into the contents of the book allowing for discussion on what makes a stamp a classic stamp or types of printing methods. The Penny Black (Q=Queen) can be a take-off for discussing the first stamp, the initials in the corner, four-margin copies, colored cancellations, etc. Don't underestimate the philatelic knowledge that can be imparted from this alphabet book. As a follow-up activity, have the children create their own stamp alphabet books.

More sophisticated collectors may appreciate the retelling of "Alice in Wonderland." Gerald King wrote a philatelic fantasy titled "Alice Through the Pillar-box and What She Found There." Each page is like an alphabet page with first-day covers, postmarks, and special stamps, etc., featuring Alice and the bizarre characters that she meets. For the older child well versed in philately, the play on words is witty.

One of my favorite books is "The Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters," by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. The Jolly Postman has a bag of mail that he delivers to well-known and favorite children's book characters. What is so delightful about this book and other similar books written by this pair, is that as you are reading, you open the envelopes and take out and read the letters as part of the story. Naturally the envelopes are properly addressed, stamped and postmarked.

There are many children's books that use letters, postcards and mailmen to help carry out the theme of the story. Likewise there are many nonfiction books that tell the story of mail delivery.

One area that should not be overlooked is the beginning biographies — simple to read and well illustrated — that can be used to introduce

the people that appear on stamps. The material presented is concise and factual, helping the young collector to recognize the qualities and contributions of the well known men and women commemorated on stamps.

By MaryAnn Bowman
Waukesha County Philatelic Society

Going Wild With Polar Bears
A new set of stamps issued by the U.S. Postal Service is making its debut this month. The Arctic Animals pane features five animals that have adapted to the extreme cold of the polar region. The stamps will feature close-ups of the snowy owl, polar bear, gray wolf, arctic hare, and arctic fox. These stamps will have their first-day of issue at the "top of the world" in Barrows, AK, on March 12, 1999.

Any one of those animals would make an interesting mini-topical collection and could be expanded into a one-frame exhibit. Let's "go wild" with polar bears and explore their interesting world through stamps.

The polar bear is a mammal having white or pale yellow-white fur. It grows to a length of about seven feet and a height of about three feet. Fully grown bears can weigh over 1,000 pounds.

The polar bear is well equipped to live in the polar regions of North America and Eurasia. Its partially webbed feet help it swim at a speed of about three miles per hour. Hairs on the soles of its feet make it possible to walk across the ice without slipping. Its heavy fur is waterproof and warm, while underneath its skin lies a layer of insulating fat.

Although many countries have issued stamps depicting polar bears, I have chosen to feature only stamps from countries that are the polar bear's natural habitat.

The first U.S. stamp to show a polar bear was part of the se-tenant 1971 Wildlife Conservation set. It also depicts a pair of bear cubs. Babies are commonly born as twins during the winter and live in a hole or den created in a snowbank.

Canada has issued several stamps depicting polar bears including one in 1953 for its National Wildlife Week, and a 25¢ definitive issued in the 1970s.

Greenland has issued a number of polar bear stamps including its first definitive set, and a common design on its parcel post stamps. A standing polar bear is shown on Greenland's definitive set from the 1960s.

In 1925, Norway issued a set of stamps to help finance the proposed Amundsen flight to the North Pole. The stamps depict a polar bear standing on an ice floe with an airplane overhead.

Searching for commemorative cancellations? In 1977, MILCOPEX hosted the convention of the American Society of Polar Philatelists. The postmark featured two penguins and a polar bear.

You don't have to visit the frosty north to enjoy seeing polar bears. Stamps, postmarks and cacheted covers can bring the king of the arctic into your home at a cost far less than just equipping yourself for a trip to the North Pole.
First Day Cover Collecting: Spotlighted or in Passing

No discussion of the focus of this column would be complete without mentioning unofficial first-day covers, which have become immensely popular these past 15 or more years. Although I’m not interested in collecting them, I’ll maintain my policy of not criticizing what others collect and refrain from stating my reasons for lack of interest in this area.

An unofficial FDC is defined as a cover with a stamp affixed to it that was acquired on its first day of issue at the first-day post office. It is, however, canceled at another post office with the first day of issue date.

There are no hard and fast rules to follow when deciding which unofficial cancels should be placed on specific covers. Collectors are free to choose any cancels they wish for their unofficial FDCs. Generally speaking, though, many tend to choose unofficial cancels from post offices that have names related to the subject of the new stamp.

For example, it was brought to my attention while I was serving as a volunteer canceler at the first day of the Wisconsin Statehood stamp that those who were seeking unofficial cancels tended to select post offices having the word “Wisconsin” in them. Specifically, I noticed that the post offices in Wisconsin Rapids and Wisconsin Dells were often mentioned. Another collector stated that he was going to Belmont, WI, the site of the first meeting of the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature in 1836, for his unofficial cancels.

In spite of my disinterest in unofficial FDCs, I do have a few in my collection which will remain there permanently because of their cleverly contrived cancels. One is for the Endangered Flora se-tenant issue of June 7, 1979, which made its debut in Milwaukee, WI (Scott 1783-86). This cover carries the standard four-bar cancel of Wild Rose, WI.

Other unofficial FDCs that I have are for the Letter Carrier stamp issued August 30, 1989, in Milwaukee, WI (Scott 2420). One of my covers for this issue was produced by Lois Hamilton. It bears a Bigfoot, TX, cancel. The other cover, contrived by Fred Collins, was canceled at Footville, WI.

I also have a set of unofficial FDCs for the Lighthouses issue of April 26, 1990 (Scott 2470-74), that were canceled at the Lighthouse Point Branch, Pompano Beach, FL.

Some years ago, when I was at the first-day ceremony for the 4¢ Carl Schurz stamp of June 3, 1983 (Scott 1847), I overheard collectors stating how they were going to Germantown, WI, for their unofficial cancels.

A collector friend of mine came up with the idea for an unofficial first-day cancel from Monroe, WI, for the stamp honoring movie star Marilyn Monroe (Scott 2967).

Perhaps the attraction of unofficial FDCs is the fact that the possibilities are limited only by the collector’s imagination and his/her ability to travel to the selected post offices. In any case, unofficial FDCs are unusual items that can spark the telling of many interesting philatelic stories as collectors socialize with one another.

If you are so inclined to obtain unofficial cancels on your FDCs, you might run into a reluctance on the part of some postal clerks to apply such cancels. I’ve been told, though, that if you recite the specific postal regulation reference, most clerks will honor your request.

Tell them that unofficial cancels are defined by postal regulation No. 233.9, which appears on p. 151 of the Postal Operations Manual.

On the other hand, Linn’s Stamp News “Postmark Pursuit” column always includes the statement:

“Requests for cancels with stamps and postal stationery not in nationwide release on the date shown in the postmark, may not be honored.”

Thus it appears that postal regulations and practice are at odds with one another. I notice, however, that the Linn’s statement refers to requests for pictorial cancels that are requested by mail. It might be different for handback service.

Even though my collecting interest for unofficials is minimal, you may find it very interesting. If so, give it a try and please let me know what you have been able to procure.

As usual, I’ve had my say. Now what is your say? ■
Who's Who in the WFSC
Member:
Merwin Leet

Merwin Leet, who prefers to be called "Mert," lives in the city of Oconomowoc with Mary, his wife of 46 years. They have two grown children, Laurie and Bill, and although Bill did collect British stamps for a time, he's no longer active in the hobby. Mert says, however, that he is about to get his grandson started in stamps. Mert has one brother and one sister and his sister-in-law is a collector.

Mert is a member of the Waukesha County Philatelic Society, the Mobile Post Office Society, which deals with railway post offices, and the Wisconsin Postal History Society. Mert is the current president of the WPHS.

Mert, who is 70 years of age, retired about six years ago from the Carnation Company's can division. Nestles had previously purchased the company and then spun off the can division to a group called Silgan. These changes, however, did not affect Mert's job.

Although he's not sure just what got him started, Mert began collecting stamps when he was five years old. He did like geography, which comes out in stamp collecting, and his father and his grandfather were mail carriers. His own mail carrier was a collector, so he did have a number of exposures to stamps.

He collected worldwide until he got into college and became interested in railway post office material. He would send out postcards to obtain inexpensive items for his collection. For a time, he was also interested in match and medicine stamps; he has some interest in other U.S. revenues as well. Mert collected Canada until his retirement, but is now considering disposing of that collection. His only exhibiting experience was many years ago when he prepared a one-frame exhibit on Wisconsin RPOs.

Other hobbies include collecting railroad memorabilia and history. He has been active in railroad photography. His wife once asked him why he took so many railroad pictures, as surely no one would ever want them. After laying dormant for many years he is now receiving many requests for these photos. The Milwaukee Road Historical Association is using two of his pictures for its 1999 calendar.

Mert is a member of the National Railway Historical Society. He is also a member of the Golden K Kiwanis, a group of retired Kiwanis members. He and his wife volunteer a lot of time at the Oconomowoc Historical Society Museum. He has been a volunteer driver for the Meals on Wheels program and a write-up about his work with this program recently appeared in the Oconomowoc Enterprise.

In terms of a most memorable philatelic experience, Mert related that the Wisconsin Postal History Society was involved in a project to catalog philatelic material housed in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin archives. Mert states that he was extremely surprised when a cover with the St. Louis Bear postmaster provisional was discovered. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin was not aware of the significance of the cover, which had been buried among other materials. The find was pointed out to the society and they have since taken better care of the cover.

Mert states that "Stamp collecting is an awfully good hobby that sure helps with acquiring knowledge of the world. It is also wonderful for armchair traveling."

We hope Mert has many more years of railroading and armchair traveling. He has our best wishes for the future. ■