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We look forward to hearing from you, our readers and members, for comments, ideas and articles for future issues.

We encourage advertising and correspondence between readers regarding their philatelic interests.

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★ AMERIPEX ★
 ★ ★ '86 ★ ★
 ★ ISSUE ★

Address correspondence and inquiries to:
G.L.H.S., c/o HENNEFELD
 512 Park Street
 Upper Montclair, NJ 07043



AMERIPEX...REVISITED

By Nildo Harper

Here goes a few recollections and thoughts. I was so excited when I finally decided to go - - People's Express had a special fare of \$49 each way on Wednesdays and Saturdays, so I took advantage of it. Thursday morning I was bright and early at the door of the exhibition center. There was a large crowd already waiting and you could feel the excitement in the air. Then when the doors opened it was shock at first sight: so this is what "5 football fields of stamps" looks like! The space was enormous -- it seemed like the dealer booths and the exhibits went on forever. Then panic struck: with only 3 days to "do it all" I felt almost helpless.

Luckily I had followed LINN'S advice and had carefully mapped out my "plan of attack": the first day would be devoted to First Days -- the U.S. ceremony and the other countries issuing stamps on that day. Friday, I would visit some specific dealers and view exhibits and Saturday I would wrap up my dealer visits and remaining exhibits.

Well, Thursday went without a hitch. First, the U.S. ceremony for the "Presidential mini-sheets" was so crowded (I estimated at least 1,500 people in attendance) that it was almost impossible to see the speakers (I stood during the whole ceremony). The USPS went all out -- even the Mayor of the city spoke a few words. I had a very hard time getting a program -- the person giving out the last few was literally mobbed and almost pushed out a window. I always try to get the First Day programs and have the designer and other dignitaries

AMERIPEX 86

International Stamp Show, Chicago
May 22 to June 1, 1986



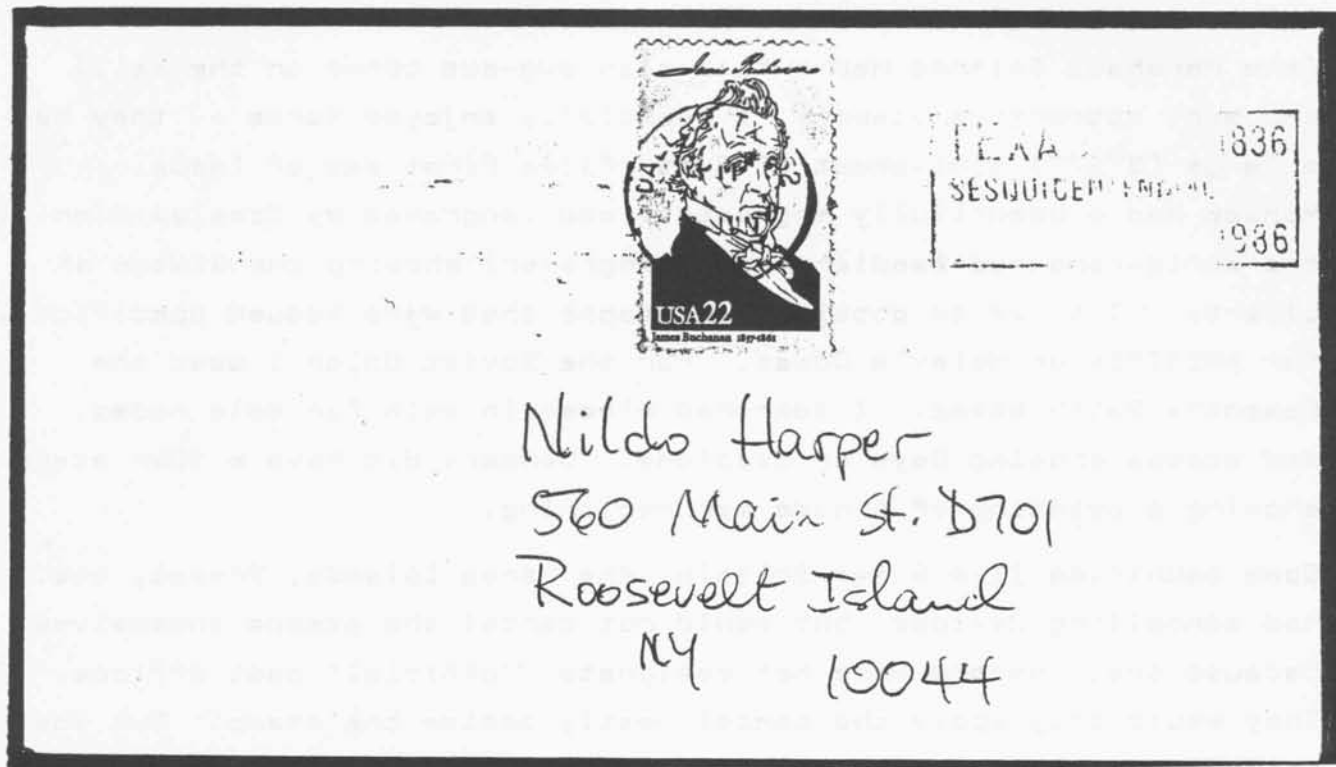
autograph it, but this time the line was so long that I gave up my quest for autographs.

That afternoon I spent at the foreign postal administrations area busily filling-up "Scott's Stamp Passport" with all the stamps and cancels of the countries in attendance (over 150 post-offices). This was a lot of fun! Many of the countries had elaborate set-ups (the Marshall Islands had a full size dug-out canoe on the wall) and many attractive stamps. I especially enjoyed Korea -- they had a large (5"x7") mini-sheet of Butterflies first day of issue. Monaco had a beautifully engraved stamp (engraved by Czeslaw Slania, the world-renowned Swedish master engraver) showing the Statue of Liberty. I tried to obtain only stamps that were issued specifically for AMERIPEX or Haley's Comet. For the Soviet Union I used the Samantha Smith stamp. I searched almost in vain for male nudes, and stamps showing Gays or Lesbians. Denmark did have a 10kr stamp showing a painting of a nude man reclining.

Some countries like Great Britain, the Faroe Islands, Greece, etc. had cancelling devices, but would not cancel the stamps themselves because their booths were not designated "official" post offices. They would only apply the cancel neatly beside the stamp. But the great majority of the postal administrations had pictorial cancels that they gladly applied to each stamp. By day's end I was absolutely exhausted!

I did boycott Inter-Governmental Philatelic Corp. They are the "agents" for about 35 countries and were peddling "Disney" stamps like wallpaper to everyone that came to their booth. I'm an avid collector of the obscure Himalayan country of Bhutan and IGPC are the agents for this country. When I asked about Bhutan, they suggested I buy stamps from Grenada (which they seemed to have a surplus). After insisting, they showed me the Bhutan Audubon bird set -- the only set they brought along to the show. What a great disservice to this little country (and, of course, I take it personally)! As you might imagine, I am writing a long letter of protest to the government officials in Bhutan, as I don't feel this is the treatment they deserve. I had really hoped they would

have their own booth at the show or at least a postal official present, but alas this was not to be. Bhutan is a poor country and I feel IGPC takes advantage of this fact. Their greed clouds everything they do. Anyway, who needs more Disney stamps? The whole world is going to get sick and throw up if there are any more of these stamps issued.



Nildo Harper
560 Main St. D701
Roosevelt Island
NY 10044

James Buchanan, our favorite president.

Friday was spent visiting dealers and viewing some exhibits. I had carefully marked which dealers I absolutely had to visit and I headed there first. Two of these, B. Alan Ltd. (Alan Benjamin) and Derek Worboys of England had been providing me some specialty material for my self-adhesives topic, mainly from the countries of Tonga and Sierra Leone. These stamps are the sticker or pressure sensitive type. I was glad to meet these people after corresponding with them for so long and have nice friendly chats. It was really delightful. Mr. Benjamin is the Agent for the islands of Tonga and Niuafo'ou (the romantic Tin Can Island) in the South Pacific. They have just reverted, because of financial difficulties, to issuing regular gummed paper stamps, after more than 20 years issuing self-adhesives. Tonga had a postal booth and I was able to meet the Minister of

Finance and together with Mr. Benjamin we discussed the end of the "self-adhesive era". It appears that printing costs have become sky high -- if at least 6 other countries would issue self-adhesive stamps, the costs would drop dramatically. They did assure me, though, that they would continue printing some stamps self-adhesives (maybe special events) and some with conventional gum. Eventually they hope to be able to afford converting back to self-adhesives exclusively.

Something very exciting also happened: Mr. Worboys introduced me to Mrs. Bernard Mechanick, the wife of the "inventor" or "father" of self-adhesive postage stamps!! Mr. Mechanick, in 1962-63, pioneered the development of self-adhesive gum for stamps and organized, planned and printed these issues for Sierra Leone and later Tonga and also a number of booklets for the British Caribbean countries (to honor special Royal anniversaries). Mr. Mechanick worked tirelessly to convince other postal administrations that "sticker-stamps" were the wave of the future. He found very few willing to change from the standard, conventional paper stamps (just as many philatelists "sneer" at these issues now). I think this "wave" is still to come. Licking stamps has to be one of the last unsanitary legacies of the 19th century.

Unfortunately, Mr. Mechanick died in 1980 and no one has carried on his self-adhesive "torch". Mrs. Mechanick and I discovered we were on the same flight back to New York, and so we had a really good talk and became friends. She is hoping to pick-up from where her husband left off and also hoping I will help her.

Saturday I looked at some of the exhibits. First I saw the blocks of 4 of the inverted Jennys which were exhibited at the Raymond Weill booth. It was really interesting to see these famous stamps. I had never seen one before (and probably never will again) and I felt a great sense of history. I also went to see the fabled British Guiana Penny Magenta, which was being shown competitively for the first time in 50 years. This stamp gave me a sense of awe, as I stared at a million dollar little piece of paper. It is a deep magenta, almost too dark to make out the writing, and there it was in the middle of a frame on an "album" page. I wonder if

this person won a large gold medal? Who could compete against him/her in that category? I also visited some of the "court of honor" exhibits and especially enjoyed the National Postal Museum of Great Britain collection of George V stamp issues, showing the original artwork, essays, proofs through the completed stamps. For some reason, I have become fascinated with the production process of stamps.

Other exhibits were just as interesting. The complete collection of Presidential free franks (excepting one which is not known to exist - I forgot which one) was also in the court of honor. I enjoyed some of the topical exhibits -- two of the Olympic exhibits were great! They were so logical, the material was so clearly captivating and well presented that you stayed with the exhibit to the end. Here I took some notes on how to prepare my future exhibits. These two exhibits



Label for the 1912 Olympic Games held in Stockholm

had many wonderful nude male stamps (Greek, Hungarian, etc.) which I didn't even have on my checklist, much less in my collection.

Two more highlights on Saturday: I had not found any Tin Can covers or Bhutan covers, so I had not bought very much in my areas of interest. Then I found a beautiful hand-painted Karl Lewis Tin Can cover from 1937, at a price of 25-40% of what these covers are now selling. As you probably know, these covers were painted by Mr. Lewis in the 1930's, and he had them postmarked from many South Pacific islands, Japan, China, and other countries in Asia. They are now very rare. Very few (5-6) were carried in the Tin Can mail service when the ships passed by Tin Can island around 1938-40. That afternoon I met with fellow "Tin Cannners" (we held our annual Tonga/Tin Can Mail Society meeting) and it was fun meeting so many people I only knew by mail. We shared a very enjoyable afternoon.

The last and best surprise also happened on Saturday. I met a dealer from India with whom I have been corresponding for some time now (who, incidentally was visiting the U.S. for the first time in order to exhibit at AMERIPEX) and he brought me some "choice" items from Bhutan, including the original artwork for the first 15ch stamp of Bhutan!!!! The painting is brilliant ruby red and gold with the Druk Gyalpo (king) on the left side, the map of Bhutan in the middle and Tongsa Dzong (the capital fortress) on the right. There were several changes from the original painting to the issued stamp: the features on the King's face were simplified, the map of Bhutan was reduced to show more of the neighboring countries, and the issued colors are more a fire-truck red and yellow than ruby and gold. I also bought a couple of other specialty items from him. This really made my whole trip worthwhile. I think it is the most exciting item in my collection, and now I'm busily trying to figure out how to exhibit it, so others can enjoy it too.

So this concludes my AMERIPEX summation. Sorry if I bored you with some of the details, but I really had a lot of fun. This was truly a world's fair of stamps -- one could find just about anything and everything inside this huge building. I hope to be around for the

show in 1995 (which I think will take place here in New York). Maybe then we'll have our own table and this way attract more members.

The Third Annual GLHS Brunch will be held Sunday, November 2, concurrent with the NATIONAL ASDA show at the Park Avenue armory in New York City. All are welcome; it would be wonderful if all our members/supporters could attend. Tri-state area GLHS'ers will receive further details in the mail as to time and place. Out-of-townners planning to be in New York for the show, write Nildo Harper, 550 Main Street D701, Roosevelt Island, New York 10044 for information. (After brunch we'll all troop to the show to see our favorite dealers. Paul and Nildo also will be exhibiting.)

Our first dues increase in our five year history will be effective January 1, 1987. The new yearly membership rate has not been decided upon, but if we stick to our former \$5.00 fee, the treasurer will be very upset!! The "Pip" photocopy bill for the Summer '86 issue totaled \$102.19, and postage amounted to \$44.02!!

Stamp Out AIDS

John Glines, Broadway producer of the Tony Award winning "Torch Song Trilogy" and last year's Drama Desk winner "As Is", is spearheading a national fundraising campaign to help the growing number of people with AIDS.

Glines is the project director of STAMP OUT AIDS, a campaign to sell stamps similar to Easter and Christmas seals, to raise funds for organizations which directly serve people with AIDS. The first issue of stamps, selling in sheets of 6 for \$1.00, was designed by New York artist Marty Luko. Future issues will be designed by such well-known artists as David Hockney, Don Bacardy and Jedd Garrett.

"I wanted to create an affordable way for everyone to contribute to this vital cause," Glines said. "For just one dollar everyone can help. Magnify one person's dollar by hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens, and you can imagine the difference it will make." His goal is to raise a million dollars with the first issue alone.

Stamps can be purchased by sending \$1.00 for each set of 6, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope, to STAMP OUT AIDS, P.O. Box 471, Prince Station, NY, NY 10012-9998. Stamps will also be available in retail outlets across the country.

Funds from this project will be targeted directly to programs serving people with AIDS and will be distributed to AIDS service organizations across the country by the National AIDS Network.

REPRODUCED FROM... September 27, 1986 STAMPS

LOOKING AHEAD ...Our Winter issue will be devoted to Canada.

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