



Philately for a lifetime of enjoyment

The *Postscript*
Tallahassee Stamp & Cover Club
1904 Nanticoke Cir
Tallahassee, FL 32303

President's Message from Mike Francis

It is now June 2004 and hopefully everyone that intends to has paid their dues. I plan to have a membership list inserted into the next issue of the *Postscript*.

The TSCC is in a sound financial position at this time in part due to the donations of stamp collections from members and non-members alike. Let's all hope that this continues.

The call is still going out for more members to give presentations at the meetings. The offer is still on the table for help from myself and several other members in case someone feels uncomfortable presenting in front of people. Such a phobia is very common and understood by those of us who have no trouble standing up in front of people and "running our mouth" as they say.

If you are hesitant about presenting give me a call or send me an email. Something will be worked out. We can especially help you in the format and content of your presentation. Remember also that you do not have to speak for any specified length of time. If you just have a short ten minute presentation, then the club members want to hear it.

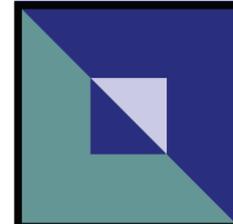
In our July meeting we will be discussing the formation of committees for the October Stamp Show. Last year's show was well received and successful. Let's all get together and see if this year's show can be even better.

As you can see from reading this issue of the *Postscript*, I have created most if not all of the

articles. I really need more members to develop articles of personal interest along philatelic lines. If you can get such articles, along with any graphics, photos, etc., to me it would be a tremendous help.

With a future stash of articles at hand, publishing the *Postscript* can be rather simple because it is now in Microsoft Publisher format. I can basically copy and paste along with some editing for format and a *Postscript* appears.

Even if you don't like to write, give it a try. The editor(s) will help you deliver an article. Take a chance and see what happens. Mike



THE *Postscript*

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Special points of interest:

- Wanda Blinn has moved to the Miami area to be close to her grandchildren. We all wish her the best.
- Bob Tedcastle passed way this past Spring. TSCC offers our thoughts and prayers for his family.
- A special thank you to Vivenne Robinson for donating her family's stamp collection to the club. It is a nice, modern Canadian collection.

Mule Train Post Office *by Mike Francis*

This past April the editor's wife traveled with a group of 21 other women on a wonderful excursion into the Grand Canyon. She sent me the post card shown below and also took a digital photo of the United States Post Office at the floor of the Grand Canyon.

In Supai, on the floor of the Grand Canyon, the US Post Office is housed in the same building with a café, guest lodge, elementary school and tribal offices. It is the only place in the United States that conducts its business by mule train. Visitors can send postcards with the coveted "Mule Train Mail -

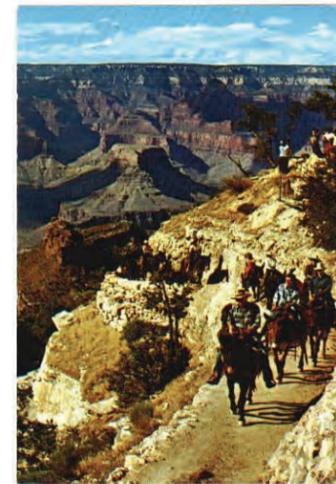
Havasupai Indian Reservation" postmark.

For those interested, the post card arrived at my Tallahassee address about a week after it was mailed at the Supai Post Office.

The mail is literally carried by mule train from the base of the Canyon to the rim. This is the only mule train postal transportation left in the United States.

It is said that if you mail your letters in the morning that they will be in Sedona or Phoenix the next morning.

It is interesting to note that most of the supplies, equipment and trash are hauled in and out of the Canyon by helicopter.



The Photo above is one of a typical Grand Canyon mule train that carries the mail in and out of the Canyon. Below is an actual photo taken by Christine Francis of US Post Office in Supai.



More Mule Train

The Havasupai Indians are the only indigenous Canyon peoples that continue to live in the Canyon today and manage the village of Supai on Havasu Creek. Supai is

the tribal center. While the Grand Canyon is a National Park, the area set aside for the Havasupai Indians maintains tribal reservation status and belongs to the Havasu-

pai.

In the United States, there are US Postal facilities on many of the large Indian reservations.

Very Early Mail Delivery Systems *by Mike Francis*

We all know that the first official postage stamp came from Great Britain in 1840. This was soon followed by several other Commonwealth countries, Brazil in 1844, other European countries, and the United States in 1847. These events represented the advent of modern mail delivery. Before these times, mail was delivered, as it is today, by courier of some form, and possibly with a postal mark or some other form of tax.

The earliest documented

postal systems or organized courier services were in Egypt around 2400BC, in Assyria between 1700 BC and 500 BC, and China from 1120 BC to 200 BC. These postal systems were eventually followed by Rome, the Islamic delivery systems and the Medieval systems leading up to the era of Charlemagne. The last of the early postal systems was, for many centuries, the Thurn and Taxis.

While all these elements claimed to be the first earli-

est postal systems which may or may not have used franking, the best documented early system comes from the Qin Dynasty (221 BC-207 BC) with some of its roots going back to the Zhou Dynasty (1122 BC-256 BC). Historians have no problem making the claim that China's Postal Service has a validate claim to being the oldest operating system in the world. Chinese mail delivery today can be traced unbroken all the way back to the Qin Dynasty.

About Thurn and Taxis *by Mike Francis*

In 1505 the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian established an Empire-wide postal system. To manage the system and keep it away from the hands of the Church and the private monastery mail systems, the Emperor appointed Franz von Thurn und Taxis as administrator. Von Thurn und Taxis was well experienced in postal systems since his family had operated a postal system among the Italian states since 1290 AD. History tells us that Thurn und

Taxis family operated the Holy Roman Empire's mail delivery system from 1505 to 1806 when the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved. The Thurn family continued to operate the system under private contract with various government entities until it was absorbed into the German Empire sometime after 1871.

At the right is an image of Scott 54, Thurn and Taxis, 1862, valued at \$22.50 used in



the 2003 Scott's Volume Three Catalog. Mint is valued at \$7.50

Other Mail Delivery Systems *by Mike Francis*

We have read about Mule Train delivery in the issue of *Postscript* but there are many other systems used to deliver mail. For example, we all know about the planes, trains, boats and the trucks and cars used today. It would be interesting to collect covers from as many of the transportation methods of mail as possible. One may be able to collect used mail samples from the following methods used through out modern history to deliver mail: the

bobsled, hot air balloon, local rocket transfer, the space shuttle, mule, submarine, tin can mail, water basket mail, gondola delivery, early carrier pigeon (this is a hard one) and any other method that may have been used to deliver mail.

If one were able to collect as many covers and/or cancellations from these various forms of postal delivery, it would make for a very nice exhibit.

What is going to happen to the future collecting habits of the philatelist now that electronic mail is starting to make huge inroads into the conventional or traditional mail delivery systems. Those old covers will become more rare and possibly more valuable in the distant future.

If you think you have a valuable stamp collection, by all means have it insured and/or stored in a certified fire proof safe.

Identify this stamp?



Last issue featured the stamp to the left in the "Identify this stamp?" section of the *Postscript*. For those who could not identify it, the stamp is an 1876 Turkey stamp issued under the Ottoman Empire and is listed as Scott 52, valued at \$10 (2003). It is a 5 piaster on a 5 piaster stamp with the overprint stated in French. The stamp itself is the familiar Cres-

cent and Star of the Turkish Caliphate seen on many of the early Turkish issues. This stamp was not difficult to identify because of the French **5 Pres** overprint. If the **5 Pres** was not present then the collector must take some level of caution in the identification process. The oval Arabic overprint exists in five different varieties starting with Scott number 8 to Scott 47. The easiest method of matching the overprint is to examine the

bottom part of the oval. This part of the overprint is the most unique and one should be able to identify their early issue Turkish overprint in short order.

Take a look at the stamp on the right and see if you can identify it.



See if you can identify this stamp.

Tools of the Trade *by Mike Francis*

If you are always getting out the watermark fluid to find that elusive watermark, a look at the moderately priced SAFE Signoscope 72 might be of interest.

This device is a battery operated watermark detector with optional AC power pack available.

The Signoscope T2 runs

anywhere from \$90 to \$140 and you can even find it on eBay once in a while. It is very easy to use but you have to remember to tighten down the lens clamp if you really want to bring out the watermark. The unit is also excellent for finding repairs and re-gummed stamps.

Below is can see an image

of the T2 and its larger, more expensive brother, the T1 which runs around \$300-350. If you have the funds, the T1 is a far superior unit but the T2 can hold its own in the watermark detection department.



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