

THE “QUASI MASONIC-RELATED” STAMPS

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These stamps are actually quite attractive, although Louis Armstrong the famous musician was not a Freemason and the stamps were issued strictly for collectors. In other words, they are not stamps made for a postal purpose.

The practice started many years ago, and our Club brethren at the time were “aghast.” For certain the cost to print and market stamps is far less than what can be collected from sales. However, before one condemns such stamps, it is important to realize that the countries that produce them do not have much money. What many North Americans spend in a day is often more than people in such countries earn in a month. In the country that produced these stamps (Sao Tome E Principe), the average annual income is \$1,396.90 US dollars..

Of course, such countries know this and they are looking to “pick up” on our spare cash. A few dollars is absolutely nothing to most of

us, and when told that such stamps are not intended for postage and we were “fooled,” we simply say, “so what.”

Should we buy such stamps? In many ways, it is a form of charity and I don’t have a problem with it. Keep in mind that we do get something of value and the stamps are official stamps in most cases, although they have a dubious character.

Nevertheless, if one wants to be a purist, then the Scott Catalog is your rule and guide. If the catalog does not show the stamp or stamps, or if there is a special note stating that they are not “postal purpose” stamps, then you have the “official” word.

The other side of this issue is when stamps are issued for a postal purpose but the government that issued them is not “official.” However, in some cases the government becomes “official” so all the stamps produced become “approved.”

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