



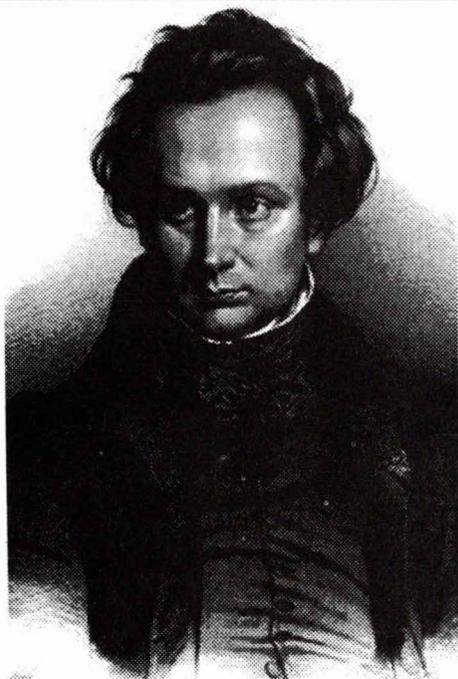
The Masonic Philatelist

A QUARTERLY
ISSN 1069-3580

VOL. 68

June 2012

NO. 2



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Victor Marie Hugo
1802-1885
Was He A Freemason?

The Masonic Philatelist

Vol. 68 No. 2

© June 2012

ISSN 1069-3580

LC# HE6187.M35

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Editor & Publisher

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Printed in the U.S.A
By Quiz Graphic Arts, Inc.
Ord, Nebraska 68862

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

THE MASONIC PHILATELIST

Published quarterly by
The Masonic Stamp Club
of New York, Inc.

Regular meetings, 2:00 p.m., 2nd
Wednesday each month except
June, July and August at:

The Collectors Club
22 East 35th St.
NY, NY 10016-3806
212-683-0559

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Victor HUGO Freemason ?

By Brother Jean-Claude Vilespy
5th Order, Modern French Rite (1784)
April 24th, 2012

Victor Hugo was born on February 26th, 1802 in Besançon and died on May 22th, 1885 in Paris. Romantic poet, playwright and novelist, he is considered as one of the most famous French writers. He was also a politician and a committed intellectual.

Victor Hugo is often regarded as a Freemason.

But was he really?

Four documents constituting the dossier FM1-312 in the Masonic Fund of the National Library of Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale) are available for our review.

1. The appointment of Victor Hugo as "honorary member" of the "San Andres" Lodge No. 9 of Havana in Cuba, November 21th, 1869.
2. The "Announcement to universal brotherhood" that the "Brother Victor Hugo" is made "Grand Inspector General and an active member of the Supreme Grand Orient of Mexico" (33th of A.:A.:S.:R.:), the 20th day of seventh month of the year 5869.
3. A letter from the "*Lancasteriana Compañia de Mexico*" signed by the B:. Benito Juarez 21 November 1869.
4. A letter from the "*Association of Free Men of Letters of Little Russia*", dated April 1881 in Kieff, entitled:
VICTOR HUGO MASTER.

We know the care taken by Victor Hugo in the "orderly dispersal" of his archives. It is therefore reasonable to assume that these four documents were transmitted to the

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Grand Orient of France, after his death, at his request. But I have not found any accompanying letter. The first two documents are understandable; the other two induce some remarks and questions:

We can note the similarity of the dates of the first three documents even if one emanates from Havana in Cuba and the two others from Mexico.

The "*Compañia Lancasteriana de Mexico*" (see website) was founded by Jose Lancaster, born in London in 1778, which promulgated a teaching method for primary school. It was set in Mexico in February 1822, then in the Republic of Grande Colombia when Simon Bolivar agreed on March 6th, 1823.

More significantly, according to José Maria Luis Mora, the members of the "Scottish" Lodge of Mexico supported the project. In view of the fact that Victor Hugo has provided the letter "*Lancasteriana Compañia de Mexico*" to the Masonic fund, we can think that he probably had knowledge of all these Masonic links.

I don't know how to interpret the content of the document concerning the "*Association of Free Men of Letters of Little Russia*" in the Masonic fund. It is signed by the President Xavier Groboda. Was he Mason? The association, was it linked to Freemasonry? I do not know.

Leopold and Victor Hugo In Masonic Iconography

I was surprised by the little informations about Leopold and Victor Hugo in the known Masonic Dictionaries despite the fact that Brother Jean Bossu (1) worked on those memberships many years ago.

Leopold Hugo, Victor Hugo's father was born in Nancy on the November 15th, 1773 and died on the January 29th, 1828;

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he was General during Napoleon's Empire. He enlisted when he turned fourteen and was appointed an officer in 1790. He managed a brilliant career during French Revolution wars and was well acknowledged on the Rhine, in Vendee and on the Danube.

On September 12, 1798, Leopold Hugo was the Master of Ceremonies of the Lodge "Les Amis de la Vertu de Paris. ("Friends of Virtue"). In 1805 he was member of the Lodge "*La Française Saint-Napoléon*" O.: of Marseille.

Between 1804 and 1806, he attended to the Lodge « Les Amis de l'Honneur Français (The Friends of the French Honor") of Porto Ferrajo, Isle of Elba. Perhaps he attended the opening of this Lodge founded on the June 5th, 1804 by Baron Etienne Radet, General, Louis Almeras and Jacques David Martin de Campredon?

In 1806, Leopold follows Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother and the King of Naples, where he was appointed major of the Royal Corsica. He is recognized in the capture of the thief and defender of native land, Fra Diavolo. In 1809 he is with the Lodge "Friendship" in Aix-en-Provence "Concorde" in Bastia, Corsica and "The Union Double" of Thionville where he was received as a Sovereign Prince Rose-Croix.

On March 10th, 1811, the family moved from Paris to Segovia where they arrived on June 11th. Sophie, the Countess Hugo, and her children were received by Count Alexandre de Grasse-Tilly(5), on October 7, 1814 with the honors due to her rank. On April 4, 1815 Leopold visited the L.: "The Union Double" O.: of Thionville with his aide-de-camps Jean Reboul and Anser, where he was received as S.: P. :. R. :.C. :. (Souverain Prince Rose-Croix), 4th "Order", last symbolic degree of the first coded Rite, before the A.:A.:S.:R.:, the "Modern French Rite" (1784).

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Concerning Victor Hugo, only Brother Jean Bossu takes notes of these documents. Various sections of the "Chaîne d'Union" of June 1883 report some matches:

On May 3rd, 1872 Victor Hugo wrote to F.: Hubert, director of the "Chaîne d'Union" (6):

"we have the same love of humanity and the same goal: deliverance. Believe you and your brothers, in my cordial sympathy".

When the L.: « Les Chevaliers de Victor » (The "Knights of Victor"), the Great Symbolic L.: of Portugal asked the Poet Richard Lesclide his opinion he answered March 20th, 1883: *"Sir Victor Hugo doesn't belong to the Freemasonry nor to any meeting. But he is the natural champion of all generous and humanitarians' ideas and so he gladly accepts the honor that you want for him, by putting you under his patronage. Believe in my best regards.*

Signed: Richard Lesclide.

Post-scriptum : our poet assures you of its sympathy. "

Conclusion

Victor Hugo's life was a true initiatory journey. Biographies were able to see three main phases: "Freedom", "Freedom, Equality" and "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity". As for his literary works, are they all made of "Strength, Wisdom and Beauty"?

It is understandable in these circumstances that Masons of all countries have seen in Victor Hugo an archetypical Freemason and wished he was one of them. How not to dream when you see a man committed so strongly on all fronts where we had to struggle for a man, for all men regardless of their commitments and whatever the risks.

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At the ritual question: "... are you Freemason? " Victor Hugo might have replied, "my brothers recognize me for such!" BUT, in France the only way to be Mason is to be initiated. Being made "Mason at sight" doesn't exist.

So, as Victor Hugo never accepted to be initiated, he never has been Mason.

Foot notes:

0- O.: signifies Orient (town) so that O.: of Charleston is Charleston !

1- Brother Jean Bossu made thousands of commented files on Freemasons. They can be accessed in the BN (National Library) in Paris.

2- BN: FM2-39

3- This Lodge worked from 5/06/1804 to 1812

4- Initiated on October 8, 1793 by the Lodge "The Perfect Sincerity" O.: of Marseille. He was appointed G.:M.: of the G.:O.:D.:F.: on December 5, 1805 and became "Souverain Grand Commandeur" in Naples. Masonry was developed in Spain after he moved there to be king in 1811.

5- Initiated in 1783 by Lodge « Saint-Jean d'Écosse du Contrat Social » (a very important Lodge in what we call in France "Eccossisme" to say (in 3 words!): Scottish Rites cradle).

He created the Lodge « La Candeur » O.: of Charleston USA.

He became « Député Inspecteur Général du Grand et Sublime Conseil des Princes du Royal Secret » then in 1804 « Souverain Grand Commandeur Souverain Conseil de France ».

In 1799 he also created the Lodge « La Réunion Française » O.: de Charleston USA. etc.

6- French Masonic Journal
7- You may read : « Un poète en Politique : les combats de Victor Hugo » de Henri Peña-Ruiz et Jean-Paul Scot by Flammarion.

Jean-Claude Vilesy
5th Order, Modern French Rite (1784)
April 24th, 2012

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The Freemasons Chronicles and History

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- Stamp Catalog, which today depicts 10800 stamps, 1273 masons in 343 countries,
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- A cancel catalog on letters,
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Its address is: <http://philateliemaconnique.com/>

It is regularly updated and you can have a look on its possibilities at this address.

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Brother Jean-Claude Vilespy

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A Singing Craft

by **Charles Henry Johnson**
PGM, PGS Grand Lodge of New York

Originally published in
One Common Purpose
by **Charles Henry Johnson**
New York, Gettinger Press, 1937

Ours was a singing Craft back in the early days. All the records left to us of those ancient Lodges testify to the important place occupies by group singing. Some of the most impressive passages in our ritual, extolling the virtues of music, bear witness to the reverence in which the art was held by the builders of our Fraternity. Further evidence is to be found in any shelf of old Masonic literature.

We look back with admiration upon those hardy Masonic forebears of ours; upon the devotion that kept them true to Masonic principles in the face of abuse, falsehood, and even physical violence – but always they went on singing, and their singing was of the secrets of the staunchness of their faith. Our Brethren had not yet delegated Lodge music to organists, quartets, and orchestras. Singing was one of the ways of giving expression to their Masonic faith and hope, and they would as soon have delegated attendance at a Lodge to a Brother as to ask someone else to sing for them, “Sing, Brother Sing” is the theme of a modern song: in those days no Brother had to be told to sing; singing was spontaneous in the practice of his Masonry.

The musical equipment of modern Lodges has tended to make us forget that we are a singing Craft. It has robed us of the one feature of the work of the ritual in which every member may be an active participant; all save our officers and the candidate sit silent on the side-lines and observe the work performed to the accompaniment of music which it should be our privilege to provide, but which we have no part in.

Even within the memory of many of us this was not true in some Lodges. My own entrance into the Lodge-room in which I was brought to light was to the accompaniment of a singing Lodge. It was not an event that merely a class of candidates and the Lodge officers were taking part in, but the entire Lodge, every man. To the initiate

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becoming a Mason was a solemn and impressive experience, but no less so to the members there on the side-lines, who literally sang the candidates into Masonry.

Musical organizations have their place, and a most important place, in our Masonic life; not a Lodge possessing a quartet, orchestra, or organ should dispense with it for a moment, but – the Lodge whose members delegate to such an organization the business of helping to confer the Degrees is losing an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

The refreshment period in other times was a time for song; too often today song and member alike disappear from the Lodge-room, the member to find himself in the ante-room and the song to become another "lost chord." Brothers in many Lodges can bear witness to the fact that no ante-room activity during refreshment can compare with lusty community singing in the Lodge-room, with the popular ballads of every age and people to draw from.

If I were to make a suggestion to a Master whose members were not coming out to Lodge it would be, "Get your Lodge to singing!" If he complained of lack of Masonic enthusiasm among his members I would reply, "Get your Lodge to singing!" To members who asked me how they could contribute most to their Lodge and to Masonry I would say, "Sing!" A Fraternity that marches on its way singing will go ever forward to new achievements and new conquests.

There are great possibilities of inspiration and unification in song. The longshoremen sang as they carried their loads aboard the ships of commerce, the sailors sang their chanteys as they pulled on the ropes, the children of Israel in their exile were comforted by singing the songs of Zion. As Lodges and individuals we need this inspiration. "Without a song the road will never end." It is a pity to neglect this inspirational force. Singing in our Lodges, singing in our hearts, will help us individually and collectively over hard spots.

From the Editor

This book by "Charlie Johnson," a founding member of the Masonic Stamp Club of New York, was at one time standard reading in the Grand Lodge of New York Library reading course for newly made Masons. We use it here to introduce our new work in progress,

Masonic Musicians

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.

MASONIC MUSICIANS

Freemason Musicians on Postage Stamps

Allan Boudreau, PhD, BF
Christopher L Murphy, BF
Robert A. Domingue

Music is beyond doubt one of mankind's greatest enjoyments. It is an artistic expression that can influence human emotion more than any other form of artistic endeavor, be it the fine arts, writing, or drama. Just when music was discovered and used by humans is difficult to ascertain. Prehistoric music is theorized by findings of what appear to be flutes at paleolithic archaeology sites. One flute, carved from a cave bear femur, is thought to be 40,000 years old. The earliest and largest collection of prehistoric musical instruments was found in China and dates back to between 7000 and 6600 BC. The *Hurrian Song*, found on clay tablets that date back to the approximately 1400 BC, is the oldest surviving notated work of music. Of course, vocal music (singing) would likely date back to the dawn of humanity.

In the course of time music became highly refined, however, right from its inception it had no boundaries—there is no limit as to how proficient and inventive one can be. Over the centuries certain gifted individuals have shown musical talent that can only be described as “astounding.” As is the custom in many countries, such individuals have been honored on postage stamps. Some of these people were Freemasons, and it is with great pride that we provide a profile of each individual’s accomplishments and the applicable stamp in this collection.

This work is in alphabetical order by the subject’s last name. His or her Masonic information (lodge and related activities) is shown last in the entry followed by the country and Scott Catalogue number for the illustrated stamp. In cases where there is more than one stamp for the individual, a representative stamp has been selected.

Acuff, Roy Claxton (1903–1992). American country music singer, fiddler, and promoter; known as the “King of Country Music.” He is often credited with moving the genre from its early string band and “hoedown” format to the star singer format that helped make it internationally successful. He and his Smoky Mountain Boys joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1938, and remained for nearly four decades. East Nashville Lodge #560, Nashville, Tennessee, USA. (USA #3812)



Autry, Gene (1907–1998). American musician and vocalist. He gained fame as *The Singing Cowboy* on the radio, in movies and on television for more than three decades beginning in the 1930s. He was also owner of the Los Angeles, California, Major League Baseball team from 1961 to 1997, a television station and several radio stations in Southern California. Although his signature song was *Back in the Saddle Again*,” he is best known today for his Christmas holiday songs, *Here Comes Santa Claus* (which he wrote), *Frosty the Snowman*, and his biggest hit, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*. Catoosa Lodge #185 Catoosa, Oklahoma, USA. (USA #4449)



Baker, Josephine (1906–1975). American/French artist, musician and performer. She joined the road tour of *Shuffle Along* at the age of 16. She appeared in the 1924 Broadway musical *Chocolate Dandies*, and performed at Carnegie Hall in 1973. In France she starred in *La revue Nigre* and in the world-renowned *Folies-Bergere*. Also, she performed in the *Zigfield Follies* in New York City. Her



musical theme became "J'ai Deux Amors, Mon Pays et Paris" (I have two loves, my country and Paris). Loge Nouvelle Jerusalem, Paris, France; Grande Loge Feminine de France. (USA #4338)

Basie, William James, "Count"

(1904–1989). American jazz pianist, organist, band leader, and composer. He led his jazz orchestra almost continuously for nearly 50 years. Many notable musicians came to prominence under his direction, including tenor saxophonists Lester Young and Herschel Evans, trumpeters Buck Clayton and Harry "Sweets" Edison, and singers Jimmy Rushing and Joe Williams. Basie's theme songs were *One O'Clock Jump* and *April In Paris*. Wisdom Lodge #102 (Prince Hall), Chicago, Illinois, USA. (USA #3096)



Beery, Wallace Fitzgerald (1885–1949).

American comic opera singer and actor. He joined the Ringling Brothers Circus at age sixteen as an assistant elephant trainer. He left two years later, after being clawed by a leopard. He found work in New York City in comic opera as a baritone and began to appear on Broadway. In 1913, he moved to Chicago to work for Essanay Studios and was cast as Sweedie (a masculine character in drag) in *The Swedish Maid*. Later, he worked for the same studio in Niles, California. Beery's powerful basso voice and gruff, deliberate drawl soon became assets and he was hired under contract to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as a character actor during the dawn of the sound film era. Beery is best known for his portrayal of Bill in *Min and Bill* (opposite Marie Dressler), as Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*, as Pancho Villa in *Viva Villa!*, as Casey in *Casey at the Bat*, and his titular role in *The Champ*, for which he won the Academy Award for best actor. Beery appeared in some 250 movies over a 36-year span. For his contributions to the film industry, he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Blaney Lodge No. 271, Chicago, Illinois. (Mali #723d)



Benda, Jir, or Georg Anto (1722–1795).

Czech kapellmeister, violinist and composer of the classical period. He had particular success with his opera melodramas, a form of musical stage entertainment which influenced Mozart. Benda's melodrama *Ariadne auf Naxos* is generally considered his best work. At its debut in 1775, the opera received enthusiastic reviews in Germany, and afterwards in the whole of Europe. Music critics called attention to its originality, sweetness and ingenious execution. Furthermore, Benda wrote many instrumental pieces including a few sonatinas. Masonically, he wrote some songs for use in Masonic festivities. Lodge Archimedes zu den drei Reissbrettern, Altenberg, Czechoslovakia. (Czechoslovakia.#752)



Berlin, Irving (1888–1989).

American composer and copyright expert. He was the most successful songwriter of the 20th century. Although, like his contemporaries he spent the better part of his career writing songs (usually both words and music) to be used in Broadway musicals, he is better remembered for the songs themselves than for the shows (and sometimes films) in which they were introduced. Munn Lodge No. 190 New York City, New York, USA. Member of the Valley of New York, A.A.S.R. and Mecca Temple No. 1 A.A.O.N.M.S. (USA #3669)



Blake, James Hubert, "Eubie" (1883–1983).

American composer, lyricist, and pianist of ragtime, jazz, and popular music. He and long-time collaborator, Noble Sissle, wrote the Broadway musical *Shuffle Along*, one of the first Broadway musicals to be written and directed by African Americans. Blake's compositions included such hits as,



Bandana Days, Charleston Rag, Love Will Find A Way, Memories of You, and I'm Just Wild About Harry. The musical *Eubie!* featured the works of Blake and opened on Broadway in 1978. Hiram Lodge #4 (Prince Hall), New York City, New York, USA. (USA #2988)

Bretón, Tomás (1850–1923). Spanish composer and violinist. He studied music at Salamanca, Spain, and played a violin in an orchestra. He then further studied at the Madrid Conservatory and also in Rome. He won a first prize in composition and went on to teach and eventually served as the director of Madrid Conservatory. He conducted orchestra in Barcelona and Madrid. He composed operas, several zarzuelas, two symphonies, chamber music and tone poems. He gained renown as a result of the success of his opera *Zarzuela La verbena de la Paloma*. Other operas were also well-received, included his *Los amantes de Teruel*, based on the eponymous legend, and *La Dolores*. After his death, his extensive output was a generally forgotten. His career spanned the majority of the musical areas of the period of the Restoration (1875–1923): Lodge Fraternidad Iberica No. 92, Madrid, Spain. (Spain #2288)



Bull, Ole (1810–1880). Norwegian composer and violinist. He played violin in the orchestra of Bergen's theater, and later joined the Musical Lyceum (a musical society). He went on to become the director of the Lyceum. He toured Germany, France and the United States, eventually becoming a high-level virtuoso. He composed more than 70 works. On October 30, 1845 he gave a concert in New York City to raise funds for the Masonic Home and Asylum Fund. A total of \$1,400 was raised—a significant amount for that time. He is believed to have been a Freemason. He is documented as a visitor to St. Cecil Lodge, New York City, New York, USA. (Norway #1604)



Cantor, Eddie (1892–1964). American "illustrated song" performer, comedian, dancer, singer, actor and songwriter. Familiar to Broadway, radio, movie and early television audiences, this "Apostle of Pep" was regarded almost as a family member by millions because his top-rated radio shows revealed intimate stories and amusing anecdotes about his wife, Ida, and five daughters. Some of his hits include *Makin' Whoopee*, *Ida*, *If You Knew Susie*, *Ma! He's Makin' Eyes at Me*, *Margie*, and *How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm (After They've Seen Patee?)*. He also wrote *Merrily We Roll Along*, the *Merrie Melodies* Warner Brothers cartoon theme. Cantor's eye-rolling song-and-dance routines eventually led to his nickname, "Banjo Eyes." In 1933, the artist Frederick J. Garner caricatured Cantor with large round eyes resembling the drum-like pot of a banjo. Cantor's eyes became his trademark, often exaggerated in illustrations, and leading to his appearance on Broadway in the musical *Banjo Eyes* (1941). His charity and humanitarian work was extensive, and he is credited with coining the phrase (and helping to develop), *The March of Dimes*. Munn Lodge #190, New York City, New York. (Grenada #2552)



Cherubini, Luigi (1760-1842). Italian composer. He studied music with his father and went to Paris where he began his career and was eventually appointed as director of the new Institute National de Musique. His operas were popular in Germany. He composed both operas and sacred music. During his life, Cherubini received France's highest and most prestigious honors. These included the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur (1814) and Membre de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts (1815). In 1841, he was made Commandeur de la Légion d'honneur, the first musician to receive that title. Member of Lodge Saint Jean de Jerusalem under the jurisdiction of the Grand Orient de France. (Guinea-Bissau #658)



The Masonic Philatelist

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Again we appreciate your generous support.

Sincerely,

Vera Felts

Vera Felts
Executive Director

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.

World Stamp Show-NY 2016 Web Site Redesign

Planning continues for America's next international philatelic exhibition, World Stamp Show-NY 2016, taking place in New York City May 28-June 4 of that year.

Up until now much of the activity has been behind the scenes, as the shows organizing committee has been busy finalizing venue arrangements with the Jacob Javits Convention Center, discussing dealer and booth layouts with decorator firms, and contracting with a firm that will negotiate for thousands of discounted hotel rooms for show-goers throughout the eight day extravaganza. Accommodation details will be available to the public starting July 1, 2015.

At the current time plans include a major face-lift to the shows most public face, its web site at www.NY2016.org. The overall design has been in place since 2005; that was nearly seven years ago and it is time for a change.

A preliminary RFP is now available for experienced amateur and professional web site developers with a philatelic background interested in preparing initial home page designs to be considered by the WSS-NY 2016 organizing committee. The developer with the best design selected by the committee will be offered the opportunity to hold the paid webmaster position running through the 2016 show.

The RFP and further details can be found online at
<http://www.ny2016.org>.

Questions may be emailed to Tom Fortunato at
stampmf@frontiernet.net.

For general inquiries about World Stamp Show-NY 2016
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Website: www.collectorsclub.org

Program & Calendar of Events

Social Hour at 5:00 PM – Exhibits open 6:00 PM
Meeting 6:30 PM
Dutch Treat Dinner nearby @ 8:00 PM

June 6, 2012

Our Neighbor to the East:
The United Nations Postal Administration
David Failor, New York, NY

June 20, 2012

Postal History of the Issue of 1847
Gordon Eubanks, Pebble Beach, CA

Summer Recess

September 5, 2012

“Doc, I Need A Drink”

The Story of Taxation of legal Alcohol
During National Prohibition
Ron Leshner, Easton, PA

September 19, 2012

Bavarian Perfins
Rainer von Scharpen, Mainz, Germany

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.

The Masonic Philatelist

October 3, 2012

Imperial Airways and its Predecessor Airlines
Barry Scott, Auckland, New Zealand

October 17, 2012

The French Shore of Newfoundland
Henk Slabbinck, Nieuwpoort, Belgium

November 7, 2012

Annual One-Frame Competition
Collectors Club Members

November 14, 2012

International Letter Mail
Crossing the Italian Peninsula
Pre-stamp Period (1815–1852)
Thomas Matha, Bozen, Italy

December 5, 2012

Boston Colonial Post
Mark Schwartz, Philadelphia, PA

December 12, 2012

Board of Governors' Open House

January 9, 2013

116th Annual Meeting
Election of Officers

January 16, 2013

Origins of the "Boxer Revolt" in China
And German Intervention 1900-1901
Jerry Miller, Glen Ellyn, IL

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.

Postage Stamp Mega-Event™

STAMPS • COVERS • POSTAL HISTORY • STATIONERY • LITERATURE • SUPPLIES

**National Postage Stamp Show
October 11, 12, 13 & 14, 2012**

**New Yorker Hotel
34th Street & 8th Avenue**

New York City

Show Hrs T,F,Sa, 10-6 Su 10-4

**Over 100 National and International
Dealers • Dealers Choice Awards**

- **Special Show Cancel • Societies/Clubs**
- **Free Lectures • Free Appraisals**
- **Kids Area: Educational Computer Activities**

Please Take Note!

• **The ASDA/ASD&C Contact Information
Has Changed**

Main Line: 1-800-369-8207

(Can be used to reach any department)

E-Mail Contact Information:

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amy@americanstampdealer.com

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(The old contact numbers and e-mail will stay active during transition)

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.