

The Watermark

The Newsletter of the Valley of Ottawa Masonic Stamp Club

Our Second News Letter, Imagine That!

There is nothing like breaking bread with people to truly foster friendships, and it appears that having dinner meetings is the way to go for our fledgling stamp club.

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Russian
Mystery
Solved!
On Page 2.

Masonic Stamp Associations Around the World

Unlike other stamp collections the field of Masonic stamps is quite specialized and consequently there are relatively few stamp associations who study Masonic philately. Coupled with the fact that not all of the existing groups are listed on the Internet yet, which makes it hard to find them. The following are some of those groups that are known to me, if you are aware of other please let me know and I will included them in future newsletters.

The United Kingdom

Brother Trevor Fray a member of St. John's Lodge #70 in Plymouth started the Masonic Philatelic Club in England in 1974. Their objectives are *"The furtherance of Masonic Research via the media of postage stamps, the dissemination of knowledge gained and the quiet enjoyment of this interesting hobby."* The club began publishing a newsletter in 1976 and have continues to this day.

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We meet at Robbie's Restaurant on St. Laurent Blvd. the
4th Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm.
"It's as much about the Fellowship as it is about Philately!"

Mystery Stamps Identified!

As a result of re-visiting the Masonic Philatelic Club website in the UK, I noted that they had added five new Masonic Stamps issued by General Nikolai Yudenich (1882-1953) commander of the Russian Caucasus Army in 1919 during the Bolshevik Revolution. (See them depicted on page 6.)

The five stamps depict Masonic symbols and according to the web site each asks the question "Are you a Mason?" The web site stated that there appeared to be no catalogue references to these stamps. Being kind of guy who loves a mystery I conducted my own research and discovered the stamps listed in the Scott Catalogue under the listing of "Army of the North" in the back of the Russian section. Scott lists them as issued in September 1919 Nos. 1-5 (A1-A5) with the following notation: "The letters OKCA are the initials of Russian words meaning "Special Corps, Army of the North," The stamps were in use from about the end of September to the end of December 1919."

Surprisingly the stamps do not have a high catalogue value with the 2009 suggested price of .40 cents for mint and .70 for cancelled. Thank you to our friends in the UK for bringing these rare Masonic stamps to our attention.



Our Mystery Stamp

Boy does this one stump us!
It appears to be Greek and according to my Greek friend it reads "Grand Orient of Greece" with postal value of 25 Drachmas. Stamp dealer Abdul Aziz of Varanasi/Benares, India rajus2001@gmail.com owns this mystery stamp and it has stumped him too. We have searched high and low for any information about it and we can't find anything. So if you can help us solve this mystery it would really be appreciated because it's keeping me up at night!



Printed by the Canadian Bank Note Company
Quantity: 5,000,000
Perforation: 13.5 x 13
Designed by: Monique Dufour and Sophie Lafortune and based on the photography of François LeClair

Canadian Stamp of the Month

Although Canada Post has never produced a truly Masonic stamp, they released a stamp in 2001 honouring the work of the Masonic fraternal organization known as the "Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine" or simply the Shriners. Established in the USA in 1870 and known for their frivolity, red fez hats, little cars, clowns and parades has become famous for its charitable work for children in which they have established and fund 22 children's hospitals throughout North America. All the medical service delivered at a Shrine Orthopedic or Burn unit hospital to any child up to the age of 18 is completely free. Ironically many of people who are critics of Freemasonry, praise the work of the Shrine are often are unaware of the fact that all Shriners are Freemasons!

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Meetings for the sake of meeting can really drag a person down and when it comes to many Freemasons we have a tendency to be attending many meetings because so many of us belong to other organizations. Simply put Masons are great joiners. In trying to find a clear night for our stamp club I discovered that in the run of a month there were only two nights that didn't have a Masonic meeting happening. At least if your going to come to one of our meetings you can eat what ever you want and chat to your hearts content. Hopefully we'll see you at our next meeting. Bon Appetite!

The Editors Rant:

Call my Kooky and slap me with a fish, but I just love the folks who really hate us Freemasons. These conspiracy seeking nut jobs never cease to amaze me how they are so convinced that in our spare time we are part of an ultra secret society that runs the world. Maybe I and every other Freemason I have met in 30 years are just too incompetent? I personally find it a challenge to live up to these Koo Koo's expectations, what with having to work for a living, raising families, paying mortgages and dealing with all the other challenges of trying to survive to have the time to run the world. But I really do love these folks because they are so entertaining. Take for example the brainiack that has posted on his blog a rant about how the only way a person could get invited onto the "Top Chef Masters" TV show was to be a Freemason. I quote: *"It seems one had to be a member of Freemasonry to get invited onto this program, with the possible exception of Mr. Bayless. You can view Masonic hand signals being employed by contestants throughout the program including the opening credits."* I know this is newsletter about Masonic Stamp collecting but here is my point. The



Can you identify these three men and what is their connection to Masonic Stamps? Their stories next in the next issue of the Watermark.

fraternity has kept silent throughout its history and let people say whatever they want about this wonderful organization. But have you ever considered how many of the hundreds of thousands of good and decent men and their families could have been spared from persecution had we refuted the unrealistic, rhetoric that has been hurled at us by our critics?

It saddens me to know that Freemasons have been, persecuted, imprisoned and murdered simply because they belonged to a fraternity based on such dangerous principals such as Peace, Friendship, Religious Tolerance, Education for the masses and Charity.

My rant really does have a stamp connection, really it does. The connection is, that starting with this issue I am going to feature an "Anti-Masonic" stamp and introduce some of these monsters and whackos and tell you a little about them and their deeds. Besides if I have to be the writer, editor and publisher of this newsletter I may as well have some fun because truth is often stranger than fiction!

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included in a Masonic stamp collection. Membership is open to any Freemason who is in good standing with the United Grand Lodge of England. They have a very informative web site at www.masonicphilatelicclub.org.uk

The USA

The George Washington Masonic Stamp Club (GWMSC) was organized in 1956 as an affiliate of the Masonic Stamp Club of New York and subsequently became an independent entity in 1960. Initially the GWMSC was comprised of members primarily in the Washington DC area but now they have over 400 members throughout the USA and around the world. The GWMSC does not produce a newsletter but they do specialize in US First Day of Issue covers of Masonic significance. Instead of annual dues they have a one-time life membership fee of \$20. Annual February meetings are held at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in which the confer “the Master of Philately degree” Their website can be found at [Http://GWMSC.tripod.com](http://GWMSC.tripod.com)

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York has been publishing The Masonic Philatelist (24 pages - quarterly) since 1934. They have about 20 members in Canada and 500 members worldwide. Contact: Allan Boudreau at aabnyc@juno.com

The Masonic Study Unit of the American Topical Association was created in 1979 and is open to anyone interested in Masonic stamps. The study unit publishes a bi-monthly newsletter the “Philatelic Freemason” and its editor brother Bob Dominique also writes a regular column entitled “The Stamp Act” for the Northern Jurisdiction Scottish Rite magazine the “Northern Light” which can be found at www.supremecouncil.org

Brazil

Masonic Philatelic Club of Brazil. Contact President, Dr. Renato Mauro Schramm PO Box 3085 - 88010-970 Florianópolis - SC - Brazil. Email: clubeselo@terra.com.br



Area Resources

The Ottawa area is blessed with a number of resources for both the Freemason and the stamp collector.

For the Freemason the Ottawa /Gatineau area has three Masonic districts comprised of 33 Lodges plus it has four Royal Arch Chapters, The Scottish Rite, two Shrine clubs, one Knight Templar, two Eastern Star Chapters and Demolay, Rainbow Girls and Jobbies for our youth.

For the collector there is Ian Kimerly's Stamp Studio, five stamp clubs, and an open stamp and coin show every month at the RA Center on Riverside Drive in Ottawa (our club member George McManus usually has a booth).

The first weekend in May of every year is the ORPEX (Ottawa Regional Philatelic Exhibition) one of Canada's largest stamp shows.

There are not many web sites that offer Masonic stamps but our friend in India, Abul Aziz has over 300 Masonic related stamps for sale from his web page at http://stamps.delcampe.co.uk/page/list/cat_645,cats_id_member_00031676.language_E.html and he has graciously offer a 20% discount to anyone who references “The Watermark” newsletter to him when they place their order!

Anti-Mason of the Month

General Francisco Franco (1892-1975) was the military dictator and head of state that ruled from October 1936 to his death. This autocrat ruled by fear and suppression, utilizing a variety of iron fisted methods such as censorship, coercion, dissolving parliament, establishing concentration camps, forced labour camps, heavy prison sentences along with the death penalty.



Francó's persecution of freemasons began in 1936 following a military coup, which resulted in him becoming the military commander for the Nationalist Movement. Backed by the Catholic Church, which supported a crusade to liberate Spain from "the Judeo-Masonic-Communist conspiracy dubbed the "Contubernio" Under his leadership the slightest suspicion of being a mason was reason enough to be executed by a firing squad. By 16 December 1937, According to the annual Masonic assembly held in Madrid in 1937, all of masons that had not escaped from the areas under nationalist control had been murdered.

Francó's hatred of Freemasonry was deep seated and in 1938 he decreed that all Masonic symbols be erased from every grave marker in Spain and in 1939 he banned Freemasonry and made it a criminal offence to ever have belonged to the Craft.

In 1940 he issued a decree banning Freemasonry along with other so called secret societies claiming that Freemasonry was the cause of the of both the fall of the Spanish Empire in the 19th century and the Spanish Civil War in the 20th century.

Included in his eight-article decree, article No 5 stated, *"From the date of this publication, mason and communists, as defined in No. 4 above, will be liable to be imprisoned with a "minor jail offense", of a minimum of 12 years and one day, but this situation could be aggravated by the "Aggravated Circumstances" as explained in Article No. 6."*

Article 6 defined aggravated circumstances to be any mason who had obtained the 18th to 33rd degree or have taken part in at annual communication committee of the Board of the Grand Orient of Spain. Those convicted of aggravated circumstances were usually executed.

Francó's hatred of Freemason continued throughout his life and there are several theories as to antipathy including having been refused initiation into the Moroccan Lodge his brother Ramond Franco belonged to and having been one of two Generals who refused to join the Military Lodge "Brotherly union" in 1925. Others have suggested that being a staunch Roman Catholic he simply believed in the existence of the "Contubernio". Franco spent most of his military career surrounded by right wing clergy who promoted the restoration of church authority in concert with a military led right wing crusade against the Contubernio.

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Franco continued...

By linking Freemasons to Communists, Franco was able to convince countries like Britain, France and the USA to stay out of Spanish affairs while at the same time gain the support of Germany and Italy. The fear of Communism resulted in the murder torture and imprisonment of untold numbers of men whose only crime was to be a member of the fraternity. After the death of Franco, Freemasons in Spain regained their rights and Masonry continues to exist but not without further challenges, but that is a tale for another time.

Masonic Stamp of the Month



Arguably one of nicest Masonic stamps to be released was this miniature sheet from Belgium. The stamp was released on May 19th 2008 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the lodges “La Constance” and “Les Eleves de Themis”

Newsletter Editor

Larry Burden
 1432 Larkhaven Crescent
 Ottawa, ON, Canada
 K1C 5A1
larryburden8@gmail.com

Russian Army of the North Stamps



Feedback

This publication welcomes your comments, suggestions and contributions. Therefore in the immortal words of the alien plant in the musical “The Little Shop of Horrors”, feed me, **FEED ME** Seymour!



Future Events

- Stamp & Coin Show being held at the RA Center April 13th 0930 -1500
- Our next Meeting – April 27th @ Robbie’s
- ORPEX being held at the RA Center April 30 - May 1
- Stamp & Coin Show being held at the RA Center May 8th 0930 -1500