

Pamphlet 'Generates' Scouts On Stamps Unit

By William E. Hoffmann

When Harry D. Thorsen Jr. of Winnetka, Ill., an ardent Scouter stamp collector, published a modest 32 page pamphlet "Boy Scout Stamps of the World" in 1949, little did he realize the far reaching effects this booklet would have.

Publication of this work generated a great deal of interest in this topic and Thorsen soon had about a hundred corresponding 'devotees' bound together by a common interest — Scouts on stamps.

The original pamphlet illustrated 35 issues of postage stamps honoring and recognizing Scouting, Scouting events or Scouting personalities and

included about a hundred stamps issued in 18 countries.

The latest edition released in 1968 contains 64 pages, lists 219 separate issues from 115 countries and describes and illustrates nearly 500 different stamps related to both the Boy Scout and Girl Scout movements.

In November 1951 Howard Bearce of Kansas City, Mo. invited Thorsen to join a new stamp club called "Youth Organizations on Stamps," and this invitation resulted in the organization of the "Scouts on Stamps Society" with Thorsen as president and Bearce as editor of the society's journal "S.O.S." which first appeared in April 1952.

First directors of the society were W. Arthur McKinney of White Plains, N.Y., Michael C. De Vito, Warehouse Point, Conn.; Milton Rogers of New York City was named first vice president and treasurer and Willard Boyles of Shelby, Ohio was the first secretary.

At the end of the first year the society's club roster carried a list of 80 members — 35 of which are still active! By the end of the next year there were over 200 members, and at the present time the membership is approximately 1400. At the Boy Scout Jamboree in Idaho last summer 125 new members were signed.

Because of worldwide interest in the society, the word "International" was added to its official name in 1956.

The objectives of SOSSI are three fold: to promote international goodwill and understanding by means of Scout philately; to carry on a continuing study of stamp issues relating to the Scouting movements, activities

and individuals associated with them; and to share and distribute such information with its members and others interested in Scouts on Stamps and the Scouting movements.

Membership is not limited to those who are or who have been related to the Boy Scout or Girl Scout movements in their native countries, nor is SOSSI organically related to any of the national Scout associations, although it maintains a Cooperative relationship with them and the World Scouting Bureau.

During the past several years, however, there has been an accelerated growth in the number of junior members, most of which are active members of Boy Scout, Girl Scout or Girl Guide associations.

SOSSI keeps in active contact with other Scouts on Stamps clubs located in Britain, Austria, the Benelux countries and Japan

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