

NAPEX 88  
COMPEX 88

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## U.S. Postal Service to release new booklet with se-tenant Owl and Grosbeak stamps

A new United States \$5 booklet featuring an owl and a grosbeak will be released May 28 at the opening ceremony for NAPEX 88, the National Philatelic Exhibition.

The first-day ceremony will be held at the Sheraton National in Arlington, Va., at 8:30 a.m., and will conclude with the coin-cutting ceremony that officially opens NAPEX 88.

Featured speakers include Assistant Postmaster General Gordon C. Morison, NAPEX president Milton Mitchell and the National Forest Service's Woody Owl, who is known for his "Give a hoot, don't pollute" slogan.

These \$5 booklets consist of two pages of 10 stamps each. The stamps are arranged in a se-tenant checkerboard style, so that the owl and grosbeak are se-tenant both vertically and horizontally.

The birds themselves, a saw-whet owl and rose-breasted grosbeak, have diminutive size in common. Both birds are less than 10 inches long.

The saw-whet owl, so named because of the rasping sound it

makes, appears on the stamp among eastern hemlock needles, with a multicolored background.

These tiny owls are found throughout the United States, from Alaska to Mexico, and primarily live in wooded areas.

Saw-whet owls are one of the smallest birds of prey, being only about eight inches in length when full-grown. These owls are very helpful to man, watching gardens and capturing rodents, and are often tame enough to be captured by hand.

As shown in the illustration on page 31, the saw-whet owl was featured as part of the se-tenant block of four American Owls commemorative issue in 1978 (Scott 1781).

The rose-breasted grosbeak appears on the new booklet stamp on a dogwood blossom against a solid blue background.

The grosbeak is a member of the titch family and is named for its large beak that is designed for cracking seeds. The rose-breasted grosbeak

pictured on the stamp is a male bird. The male is black and white with a rose blotch on its chest.

These birds are migratory, summering on the eastern coast of the United States and wintering in South America.

Grosbeaks are popular with farmers and are often called potato-bug birds, because they eat potato beetles.

Both the saw-whet owl and the rose-breasted grosbeak were chosen by stamp artist Chuck Ripper for this issue because they are widespread species and are small enough to lend themselves well to a definitive-sized postage stamp.

Among his stamp designs, Ripper includes last year's 50-stamp North American Wildlife pane and the recently issued Pheasant booklet that was produced by the American Bank Note Co. (See Linn's April 11, page 11).

Ripper also designed the covers for the Pheasant booklet and the Owl and Grosbeak.

The cover for the Owl and Grosbeak is pictured on page



The Owl and Grosbeak booklet will be issued May 28 at NAPEX 88 in Arlington, Va. When issued in booklet form, the stamps will be se-tenant horizontally and vertically. Booklet singles will have at least one straight edge, although the illustrations here do not show this.

31. It depicts both birds in a red line drawing, with the cent sign and type in black.

This two-color booklet cover was produced on the Goebel six-color, webbed Optimum press.

The stamps themselves were printed by a 480-subject gravure printing cylinder on the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's Andreotti press.

The printing cylinders are arranged 20 stamps across by 24 stamps around.

The colors used for this issue are magenta, yellow, reflex blue and black.

Marginal markings include a group of four cylinder numbers, one for each color used, on the binding stub and the 1988 copyright symbol printed on the inside of the booklet cover.

Ronald C. Sharpe of the BEP was the modeler for both the stamp designs and the booklet cover. Bradbury Thompson, veteran stamp designer and design coordinator for the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, was the stamp's typographer.

The art director was Jack Williams, USPS program man-

ager for philatelic design.

How to order first-day cancellations. Collectors may purchase the Owl and Grosbeak stamps at their local post office and affix them to envelopes.

Covers bearing stamps will be given preferential cancellation treatment.

Envelopes must be addressed on the right side at least 5/8 of an inch from the bottom.

Stamps should be affixed in the upper right corner, approximately 1/4 of an inch from the (Please turn to page 31)

## Philip Aster found guilty on six counts of fraud

By Jill L. Bahle  
On May 18, the 12-member jury in the Philip Aster trial found the defendant guilty on all six counts of wire fraud in connection with stamp sales after just an hour of deliberation.

The trial took place before Judge Charles P. Sifton in the Brooklyn Federal Courthouse in Brooklyn, N.Y., May 3-8 (Linn's, March 14, page 2; April 25, page 2; May 8, page 2; May 18, page 2).

Aster listened dispassionately to the verdict and spoke briefly to his lawyer, Howard Jacobs, before being led quietly from the courtroom.

Jacobs commented that while he had not expected a not guilty verdict from the jury, he was shocked at the swiftness of its deliberations.

The prosecuting attorney, Leslie Caldwell, called nine witnesses to the stand during the five-day trial. The witnesses included five victims, two Federal Bureau of Investigation agents, one expert witness and Phyllis Richard, of Linn's ad reader services.

For the defense, Jacobs called four stamp experts to give their opinions on the authenticity of specific stamps sold by the defendant and on the various dealer norms and practices prevalent in the stamp collecting community.

These witnesses included Irving Kistow of Stampazine Inc.; Jack Benchik, a former

collector; and Howard Stuewe and Lowell Newman of William Fox Auctions Inc. While these persons were called to the stand by the defense, they commented that they were not testifying in Aster's behalf.

Irving Jablon and Ronald Kronheim, part-time owners of Rita Kay Quality Stamps, contacted FBI agents after reading Linn's April 25 article on Aster's arrest, which asked victims of the accused to contact authorities.

Jablon and Kronheim opened the trial with testimonies on May 3.

Both men stated they saw an advertisement in the Staten Island Advance offering an inherited stamp collection containing Columbians, Graf Zeppelins and Trans-Mississippi to the first offer of \$10,000.

After contacting Aster, who frequently used the names John Lange and Jack Piercy, Jablon and Kronheim arranged to meet with him on Oct. 18, 1987, in the lobby of a Sheraton Hotel in Stamford, Conn.

Instead, they were met by Aster's common-law wife. They eventually purchased the collection from her for \$10,000 in cash.

Both men testified that they had limited stamp knowledge and were unfamiliar with the various ways stamps could be altered and forged.

The two men became sus-

January 1988 issue of its: *Staten Island Advance* that duplicated the one they responded to word for word.

Richard Kaye, the 38-year-old owner of a drycleaner business who was involved in the sting operation that led to the victim's arrest, was a key witness in the prosecution's behalf.

Kaye testified that his old interest in stamp collecting was rekindled by an ad he saw in a January issue of the Long Island daily, *Newsday*, that offered an inherited stamp collection with Columbians and Trans-Mississippi for \$10,000.

Kaye made four transactions, for combined sales of \$19,200, with Aster, who used the name Jack Piercy. At the time of his dealings with Aster, Kaye was unfamiliar with the terms "regumming" and "re-perforating."

After Kaye obtained an opinion on the value and authenticity of the stamps from Alan Cohen of Huntington Stamp and Coins, the Philatelic Foundation was contacted.

The Foundation, in turn, contacted the FBI.

The FBI, under Special Agent James Rossini, then set up a fifth transaction between Aster and Kaye at a White Plains, N.Y., hotel.

The entire operation was taped and used as evidence by the prosecution. In this taped conversation and two phone calls between the defendant

## Boys Town collection being dismantled and sold

By Steven J. Red

One of the most comprehensive public displays of United States and foreign postage stamps has been closed to the public. The 650 frames of stamps and coins on display for the past 30 years at Boys Town, a village in the city of Omaha, Neb., are being dismantled.

Some of the stamps have already been sold to a colorful California dealer in a private transaction that has been widely criticized by local media. The California dealer in turn consigned most of the material to auction.

In August, the Boys Town Philatelic Center closed its museum displays to the public, ostensibly for an inventory. The public displays never reopened, and all the frames have been dismantled.

The stamp display included a virtually complete collection of U.S. postage and revenue stamps, many covers, as well as stamps of Canada and selected foreign countries.

The mounted U.S. collection began with mint and used single and multiples of the 1847 stamps and continued through

Many rarer stamps were represented, in both mint and used form. In many cases there were multiple examples.

The exhibit included used blocks of four of all values of the 1893 Columbians, and plate blocks of the 1930 Graf Zeppelin stamps.

The manner in which the exhibit material is being disposed of is a source of great controversy. Articles have appeared in the *Omaha World-Herald* and other local news media raising questions about the dispersal.

Marvin Shinkman, owner of LAM Enterprises in Encino, Calif., purchased an undetermined portion of the stamps for \$37,000, according to the *World-Herald*. Shinkman was recommended to Boys Town by Leon Myers, a long-time stamp contributor to Boys Town.

Shinkman either consigned

or sold much of the material to the Peter Kenedi auction firm in California.

Kenedi President Michael Goldman recalls that "Shinkman may have mentioned that the material came from Boys Town, but I generally don't pay attention to that kind of information. I'm only interested in the stamps themselves when I'm dealing with someone I know."

After the center was closed, California dealer Albert Chang suggested to museum officials that Chang and other dealers be allowed to bid on the material.

Upon subsequently learning of Shinkman's direct purchase, Chang commented: "I think it's really unfortunate that Boys Town decided to sell its collection out the back door. The philatelic community should have been formally notified of (Please turn to page 14)

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TOTAL DISTRIBUTION... 76,799 NET PAID ..... 75,517

