

The Prexies

Jan. 1993

Occasional Bulletin of the BIA 1938 Presidential Series Study Group

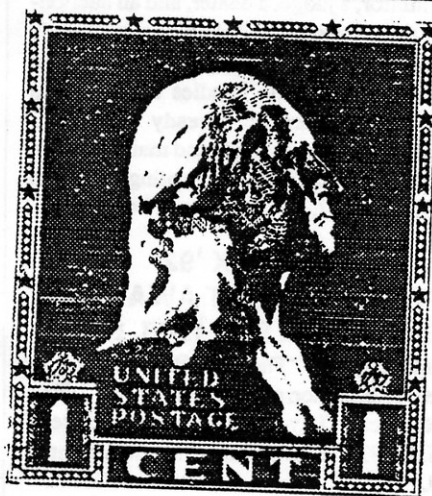
We Need A New Editor

Working on this occasional bulletin has been a wonderful experience for me...even in the short time since we formed our growing Study Group. It's been a pleasure helping the communications within our group of Prexie lovers. And even though we presently have no dues—thus necessitating the occasional and irregular nature of this little publication—a group as strong as ours needs a voice.

Because of additional responsibilities that I am having to undertake at this point in my philatelic life, it will not be possible for me to continue as Editor of *The Prexies*. This doesn't remove me from involvement in our Group, itself, but with the start-up of my new magazine and the potential for emerging duties with the APS, I am forced to cut back on several roles that are dear to my heart.

This bulletin—only a 3 or 4-times per year job—is in need of an editor. If you would be interested in taking the reins, all of us would warmly welcome you! Why not drop Steve Suffet, our Chairman, a note right now at 41-05 47th St., Sunnyside NY 11104.

With regards and much gratitude...
Randy Neil



Most of us have seen Elaine Rawlinson's winning design for the Prexie set; after all, it made it onto the stamps. But have you ever seen the second place winner? Here it is: the design by Charles Bauer, winner of the \$300 second prize, announced in August, 1938.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN by Stephen L. Suffet

So many things have happened since our last newsletter this past summer that space does not permit us to publish a full report on each. Therefore, please forgive the brevity with which I touch upon some truly important subjects. Feel free to write to me, if you wish, to discuss any or all of them in greater detail.

For the sake of organizing my thoughts I will number the topics in this report. Do not interpret this as a ranking of importances. It's just the natural order in which they popped into my mind.

1. Our annual gathering at INDYPEX in September was a mixed success, I say this because attendance was much less than anticipated. Our Saturday seminar, for example, attracted only about a dozen people. And our cover swap that evening, while certainly worthwhile, had only about half as many participants as the one held the previous year at MIDAPHIL.

On the other hand, Prexie Study Group members who exhibited did exceptionally well. Leonard Piskiewicz walked off with the GRAND AWARD, which means he'll be going to the World Series of Philately for the second straight time. Len also took home the first ever ROLAND RUSTAD MEMORIAL AWARD (donated by U.S. STAMPS & Postal History magazine) for the best Prexie exhibit, and, of course, a show gold. Two other PSG members, including your chairman, won gold awards as well. A fourth PSG member won a silver. See the sidebar report for details.

I should also mention that, despite the low turnout, the PSG seminar was very well received by those who did attend. The true highlight was Roger Listwan's presentation on collecting Prexie first day covers. It came as a surprise that several dyed-in-the-wool postal history collectors, myself included, got so excited over FDCs. Roger played to a tough audience and won them over. He deserves a lot of credit.

Credit should also go to Millard Mack, who gave a wonderful slide talk on collecting the 3-cent and 5-cent values in particular. Finally, let me mention that intended speaker John Grabowski was unfortunately delayed because he had to attend a funeral. I filled in for him, but we hope to hear his presentation next year on starting a Prexie postal history collection.

2. Our 1993 Prexie Study Group get-together will be held at STaMpsHOW in Houston next August. Planning is now only in the preliminary stages, but you can expect another cover swap session as well as "PREXIEPEX IV", another concerted effort by our members to exhibit at one show. The second ROLAND RUSTAD MEMORIAL AWARD will be given at this show. stay tuned for further details.

3. Our search for a chairman is over, at least for one more year. I have agreed to remain in the position through 1993, and our parent organization — the Bureau Issues Association — has confirmed my appointment. I can now drop the words "interim acting temporary ad hoc provisional" from my title. Just call me "The Boss!"

4. You have probably already read in *Linn's* or elsewhere about the recently discovered essays produced in the mid-1950s to test the feasibility of automated mail processing systems. These essays are now the earliest examples of U.S. stamps overprinted with luminescent tagging, and include, among other issues, the 1 1/2-cent Prexie. Will wonders never cease?

This is a developing story, and it is possible that other tagged Prexies will soon come to light. In the meantime, the hard core specialists now have at least one true rarity they'll have to acquire. P.S. Didn't George always tell Martha that she had "that certain glow" in her face? Sorry, I couldn't resist this attempt at humor.

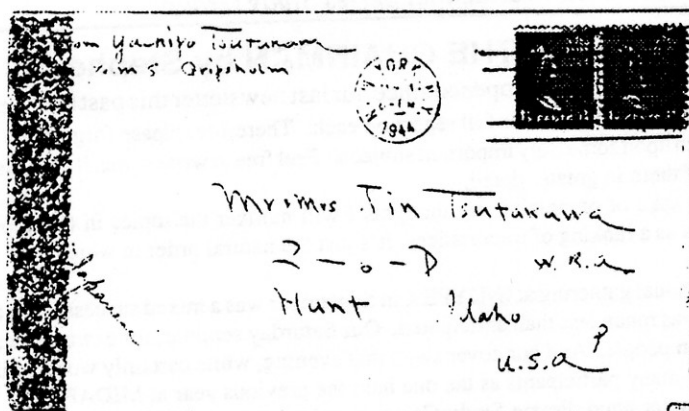
5. Our mailing list has now reached 120 names, about half of whom report that they are active Prexie collectors. We have so far been pretty vague about what constitutes a PSG member. Maybe that's the way it should be, but there is one thing I wish to be clear about: we strongly urge that you be a member of the Bureau Issues Association. We are able to get away without charging any dues of our own because the BIA picks up most of our costs. They merit our support.

If you are not already a member, you can obtain information on joining from the BIA executive secretary, George Godin. His address is P.O. Box 23707, Belleville, IL 62223. Tell him the Prexie Study Group asked you to write.

6. Work on the late Roland Rustad's comprehensive book about the Prexies is continuing. Leonard Piskiewicz has assumed the job of editing the manuscript and getting it into publication. Hopefully the book will be in print by the end of this year. Len deserves our thanks for taking on this massive project. So why not thank him in person by coming to our meeting at STaMpsHOW next August? As an entrant in the World Series of Philately competition you can be certain that Len will be there.

Civilian Internee Exchanges During World War II

by Louis Fiset



This cover is addressed to other Japanese-Americans remaining at the War Relocation Authority camp (Minidoka Relocation Center) at Hunt, Idaho. The fate of both the sender and the recipients remains unknown.

Following the U.S. entry into the Pacific war, two exchanges took place of Japanese civilians interned in the U.S. and Canada, and westerners held in Japanese-occupied territory. The first exchange included government officials, businessmen and interned civilians. The Swedish liner *S.S. Gripsholm*, carrying over 1,500 Japanese repatriates, rendezvoused with the ship *Asama Maru* at Lourenco Marques, Mozambique, in July 1942. A year later, on October 21, a similar exchange took place at Mormagao, Portuguese India, following the rendezvous between the *Gripsholm* and the *Teia Maru*, outbound from Yokohama. This exchange, to be the last of the war, included approximately 1,500 civilian internees from each side. All of the Japanese repatriates were U.S. or Canadian resident aliens or civilians interned in North American concentration camps.

The accompanying Prexie cover was posted during the second exchange voyage by a volunteer Japanese-American repatriate who composed his letter during the family's two month journey to war-torn Japan and an uncertain future. The letter was held by the ship's crew pending the *Gripsholm*'s return trip to New York Harbor on December 1, with its bartered human cargo. All letters posted by the Japanese repatriates on board were taken to the Office of Censorship's Prisoner of War Unit at the New York Field Station, for inspection during the first week of 1944. The letters were then passed into the regular mail stream.

[Editor's note: *S.S. Gripsholm mail, even today, is still very scarce and a definite plum for Prexie postal history buffs when found bearing a Prexie franking. Behind every such cover, there is generally a poignant tale or even one of intrigue.*]

OWN A PREXIE COVER ONCE OWNED BY FDR!

A 10-cent Prexie plus a 5-cent China commemorative paid the air mail postage back to the U.S. from the American Consulate in Saint Lucia on a legal size official mail cover. Stamps are tied by a July 26, 1943, U.S. Army Postal Service postmark.

This cover came from the Franklin D. Roosevelt collection, and is authenticated on the reverse by H.R. Harmer, Inc., of New York. You can add it to your own collection for a \$20 donation to help defray the expenses of the Prexie Study Group. Write to Steve Suffet (41-05 47th St., Sunnyside NY 11104) to see if the cover is still available.

By the way, special thanks are in order to PSG member Robert Toth, whose recent \$10 contribution helped pay for an emergency second printing of the last issue of *The Prexies*.

A SPECIAL DEAL FROM NEIL

Prexies have not only been on the cover, but are a mainstay of the coverage in Randy Neil and John Hotchner's new magazine, *U.S. STAMPS & Postal History*. The fourth issue of the new publication is off the press and Neil and Hotchner report that the magazine has been so successful in its first year that it's going to be here to stay.

The normal subscription price for the quarterly *USS&PH* is \$15. But all readers of this issue of *The Prexies*, and who want to be new subscribers, have a special deal waiting for them.

All PSG members (that's *you*) can receive a one-year subscription for only \$7.50. Just send your check to: Randy Neil, *USS&PH*, 10660 Barkley, Shawnee-Mission KS 66212. The offer is good only until Feb. 15, 1993.

Gum Breakers

by Louis Fiset

As part of BEP's story of gum breaker experiments between 1919-1969, several facts concerning the Prexies may be worth noting. Two breaker roller bar configurations dominate the series which, in most cases, serve to distinguish pre-eye from eye plate production, including booklet work. The earliest represents a continuation of Fourth Bureau Issue production, configuring two raised, convex, ridges per stamp, with 10.5 mm spacing. These parallel ridges slope downward right (gum side view) on both left side and right side plates, "finger printing" all pre-eye plate production. However, a small but significant production of experimental eye and early eye plates bear these markings, as well. Beginning in 1940 this roller bar design gradually gave way to broader, convex depressions, sloping downward in either direction, with the same 10.5 mm spacing. The design, present only on the experimental eye and eye plates, survived the life of the Series.

An additional configuration has recently been identified on both experimental eye and early eye plates, and consists of raised ridges sloping downward in either direction, with 5.5 mm spacing. Other designs configured during the transition period to eye plates may yet surface. Please report your findings. For a copy of *A Guide To Gum Breakers: 1919-1969* send an SASE to Louis Fiset, University of Washington SM-35, Seattle, WA 98195.

AN UNSOLICITED PLUG

L. Dann Mayo, Jr. is truly the consummate philatelist. He is a collector, a scholar, a writer, an exhibitor, a judge, a dealer, and an auctioneer — as well as one heck of a nice guy. Dann's specialty is military postal history, and quite a few of the covers he handles have Prexies affixed. If you are not already on Dann's mailing list for his auctions and mail bid sales, you can add your name by writing to him at P.O. Box 20837, Indianapolis, IN 46220.

INDYPEX '92 PREXIE EXHIBIT AWARDS

Indianapolis, Sept. 11-13, 1992

Akihiro Asano. "The U.S. Presidentials on Cover, a Reflection of War and Peace": Silver. Walter Cole. "Layout, Production, and Use of the U.S. 1938 Three-Cent Presidential Stamp": Gold.

Leonard Piskiewicz. "Usages of the Presidential Issue of 1938": Gold. INDYPEX Grand Award & PSG Roland Rustad Memorial Award & Indiana Stamp Club 20th Century Award. Stephen L. Suffet. "U.S. Presidential Series Rates and Usages": Gold. APS Medal of Excellence.