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What Is That Word?

About the origin of the word "philately" — Mr. Gurlide's correction of Kathleen Wunderly's explanation in her "Mixed Lots" column (June *AP*, page 570) must not go without challenge. The trouble is that she is entirely right. The word "philately," which is merely an Anglicized version of the French "philatélic," was never a Greek word in the first place. Like "telephone" or "phonograph," it is a manufactured word on the order of real Greek words. As Wunderly wrote, Herpin, the French stamp collector, wanting a name to honor his hobby, made up the word. He proposed it, says the *Oxford English Dictionary* (usually considered the final authority) in the November 15, 1864, issue of the *Collectionneur de Timbres-poste*. "Phil" plus "telos" is how he built his term. *Webster's Third* (our U.S. authority) agrees.

While I am at it, "oregano" comes from the Spanish "orégano," which comes in turn from the Latin "oreganus," according to my foreign dictionaries. I don't find any reference to a Greek source, although that may be the ultimate origin.

Armand E. Singer
Professor Emeritus
of Romance Languages
Morgantown, West Virginia

Honor General Stilwell

I am older than most of our members. I spent the Second World War in France, but as an avid reader of history, I am also very familiar with what took place in the Pacific theater. Through my reading I have come to know and admire General Joseph W. Stilwell.* What's keeping back the issuance of a stamp to honor him?

Marguerite Doney
Allendale, New Jersey

*Affectionately known as "Vinegar Joe" or simply "The Boss" for his no frills, no non-sense approach to command, General Stilwell served as commander of the American forces in the China-Burma-India theater during World War II.

More Tin Can Mail

The article on "Tin Can Island Mail" by Martin Doring (August *AP*, page 774) was very timely. I have an original Tin Can Island Canoe Mail cover, signed by Quensell, that was sent to me by an aunt who was serving as a nurse on a Matson liner. She mailed it in 1941, just prior to the start of World War II — it was delivered to my home address on March 12, 1945.

In the same issue of the *AP*, in Janet Klug's column "Starting Point," she mentions the 1-cent Tonga stamp design issued 1897–1934. Tonga postmaster Walter George Quensell must have had a good stock of these stamps on hand, because he was still using them in 1941!

Arthur R. Temple
Richmond, Virginia

Computer Tools

The truth of the matter about the use of computers and philately is that they are a powerful tool to an end: enjoying the hobby of stamp collecting, and sharing this joy with others.

I am dismayed every time that opinions such as those expressed by Mr. Ewell in his letter to the editor ("Computer Caveat," September *AP*, page 844) are echoed. Every tool may be used for good as well as bad. I am curious what experience Mr. Ewell has had lately in computer technology. Mr. Ewell says that computers are good for communication, but he questions whether they have had any value for philately.

I believe our future for attracting serious and occasional collectors will be through the computer medium. Look at the path our education and economy has taken. As philatelists, we must make serious efforts to follow, or risk becoming marginalized in future technology-based media and isolated from society. Fortunately, the future is neither bleak nor hostile.

Many people are engaged today in the posting of philatelic facts and sharing their interests for curious visitors to their websites. There are almost 1,500 stamp-related sites listed at Joseph Luft's Philatelic Resources (USA)

(<http://www.execpc.com/~joeluft/resource.html>). Is the Internet merely a pipe dream? Results of the 1999 FIP Philatelic Web Site Evaluation (<http://www.west.net/~stamps1/pcsg/fipresults.htm>) show that serious philately using computers is possible.

The key to exploiting the potential of the Internet and computer technology is not just communication, but collaboration. The next step is actively sharing and exchanging information globally to create new philatelic knowledge. We must travel as our stamps have, transcending international geographic and language boundaries to share our joy of stamp collecting. I invite readers to visit the Scouts on Stamps Society International website at <http://www.sossi.org>, to see the possibilities of sharing topical knowledge, forums, chat rooms, active membership lists, newsletters, and translation services in twenty-two languages. The single largest source of new members for SOSSI in the last two years has been our website.

Seize the future, be the future.

Keith Larson
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Transposed Stamps

If I understand correctly the scope of the article on "Transposed Subjects" by