



Lambda Philatelic Journal

PUBLICATION OF THE GAY AND LESBIAN HISTORY ON STAMPS CLUB JUNE 2004, VOL. 23, NO. 2, ISSN 1541-101X

Edna St. Vincent Millay

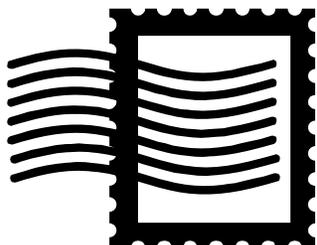


Photo by Paul Hennefeld and Blair O'Dell

The *Lambda Philatelic Journal* (ISSN 1541-101X) is published quarterly by the Gay and Lesbian History on Stamps Club (GLHSC). GLHSC is a study unit of the American Topical Association (ATA), Number 458; an affiliate of the American Philatelic Society (APS), Number 205; and a member of the American First Day Cover Society (AFDCS), Number 72.

The objectives of GLHSC are to promote an interest in the collection, study and dissemination of knowledge of worldwide philatelic material that depicts:

- ▼ Notable men and women and their contributions to society for whom historical evidence exists of homosexual or bisexual orientation,
- ▼ Mythology, historical events and ideas significant in the history of gay culture,
- ▼ Flora and fauna scientifically proven to having prominent homosexual behavior, and
- ▼ Even though emphasis is placed on the above aspects of stamp collecting, GLHSC strongly encourages other philatelic endeavors.



GLHSC OFFICERS:

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The *Lambda Philatelic Journal* thrives on philatelic articles, original or reprinted, and alternative viewpoints for publication. The editor reserves the right to edit all materials submitted for publication. The views expressed in the journal are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent those of the Club or its members. Any comments should be addressed to the Editor at one of the addresses listed.

MEMBERSHIP:

Yearly dues in the United States, Canada and Mexico are \$10.00. For all other countries, the dues are \$15.00. All checks should be made payable to GLHSC.

Single issues \$3.

There are two levels of membership:

- 1) Supportive, your name will not be released to APS, ATA or AFDCS, and
- 2) Active, your name will be released to APS, ATA and AFDCS (as required).

Dues include four issues of the *Lambda Philatelic Journal* and a copy of the membership directory. (Names will be withheld from the directory upon request.)

ADVERTISING RATES:

Members are entitled to free ads.

Non-members can place ads for \$10 per issue. Reproducible ads should be submitted, along with a check made payable to GLHSC, to the editor's address. Ads should be no larger than 1/4 page. Any ad submitted without artwork will be created by the editor and at the editor's discretion.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE:

<u>Publication Months</u>	<u>Articles Needed by</u>
March	February 15
June	May 15
September	August 15
December	November 15

Any artwork and articles received by the editor after the aforementioned dates will appear in the next available issue, space permitting.

News from the Editor

Times are changing. *Linn's Stamp News* published an article on the James Baldwin stamp on the front page a while back. Baldwin's homosexuality was brought up, on the front page no less.

However, just when you think that things are truly changing, *Topical Times* published an article on Queen Christina of Sweden. It, unfortunately, makes no mention of her sexuality. She had a relationship with her lady-in-waiting, Ebba Sparre, during the nine years prior to her abdicating the throne.

The more things change, the more that they actually stay the same.



Once again, I am in need of articles for the journal. One of the reasons that this issue is late is due to the lack of articles. As of August 1, I have no articles for either the September or December journal. I sent a letter to all of those who responded to the questionnaire that they would be willing to write something. To date, I haven't received a thing from one. It is very hard, and tiring, to piece together the journal with little help from GLHSC members.

The sad part is that this doesn't seem to be uncommon. I belong to a couple of other philatelic groups and they are reporting the same thing.

GLHSC and *Lambda Philatelic Journal* can be only as good as the members allow it to be. **I NEED YOUR HELP.**

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From the President

With less than two years left before the opening day of Washington 2006, the event's organizer's are putting on a full court press to raise capital and attendance for this premier 8 day event, taking place Saturday, May 27 through Saturday, June 3, 2006.

Organized by the Washington Philatelic Exhibition an incorporated 501c3 non-profit, under the auspices of the American Philatelic Society with the support of the American Stamp Dealers Association with the patronage of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie, it will feature 3,500 frames of competitive exhibits by collectors from around the world plus a 500 frame "Court of Honor," including the world's rarest philatelic items and a literature competition as well.

I have mentioned GLHSC's possible participation in a monetary framework in a previous issue of this newsletter. I did not receive any objections from members, so I will be releasing funds from the club's bank account in the amount of \$500 to support this international event.

The reason I feel so strongly about a donation in the name of GLHSC is this show presents a unique opportunity for us as a club to -- literally and financially -- "come out of the closet." I want to show the philatelic community that we are a viable and responsible member, and that we take our obligation to philately seriously. I have been present at a show where a couple of old time collectors were making negative comments about Paul Henefeld's exhibit, saying that it was not "real" philately. I remember feeling awkward as I walked up to the frame nearest them and remarking to my companion that this was probably the coolest and most progressive exhibit I had ever seen. Needless to say, they shut up in big hurry.

The point of this story is to illustrate how important it is to be a fully functioning member of the philatelic community. So that when anyone is tempted to denigrate our lives or collections or participation, we can just point to our contributions, and say with pride that we are indeed members in good standing of the philatelic community.



Edna St. Vincent Millay at Vassar

by Blair O'Dell

In 1981 the USA issued a commemorative stamp depicting a demure young woman. It could be said with truth that many recognized her name printed in neat script above the portrait. But undoubtedly just as many purchasers of this stamp looked blankly at the likeness and had no idea why this unknown woman was given such a significant honor.

But a few decades ago, Edna St Vincent Millay's name was as talked about as Oprah's is today. She symbolized the young women of the 1920's who discarded the long skirts and Victorian modesty of their mothers and began to celebrate life and sexuality with élan.

Edna was born to New England parents of very modest means. Her father was handsome and charming, but a slacker when it came to holding a job. Edna's mother, Cora, however, was a very industrious woman, who fancied herself as being quite cultured. When Edna and her two sisters were still quite young, Cora sent her husband packing, and secured the family livelihood by taking on positions as a practical nurse. This often required long stays away from her daughters. In today's world, this scenario would hardly be appropriate, but in turn-of-the-century New England, it apparently was quite all right for three young children, hardly teenagers, to maintain a house and keep their lives in order without the help of an overseeing parent.

Cora did not have the benefit of an advanced education; nevertheless, she played the piano, wrote poetry, and loved to read. Her devotion to the refined aspects of life were instilled in all three of her daughters at an early age. Edna was a special child. Both her mother and her sisters realized that early on. By the time Edna was enrolled in the little high school in Camden, Maine, she was winning poetry contests sponsored by the popular magazines of the era. This precocious young woman, who signed her efforts in these magazines with the middle name she preferred, 'Vincent', eventually attracted the attention of a few of the regal matrons of New York society.

These grand dames were quick to see the talent in this girl from small-town Maine. A frugal stipend was offered which allowed Vincent to apply for and secure a seat in the Vassar freshman class of 1917.

Vincent was a force to contend with. Perhaps owing to the long absences from her mother, as well as being the dominant member of the trio of sisters, she rather dismayed her patrons with her audacious behavior, arch comments, and sometimes cavalier attitude toward her course work. However, teachers, classmates and patrons alike realized that a considerable talent had alighted at Vassar. Vincent often wrote and starred in Vassar's theatrical productions, and continued, as well, to pen first-rate, mature poetry.

Her lovely face with gray-green eyes surrounded by lush bronze-colored hair, her petite body and vivacious demeanor, all brought her great popularity on campus. A classmate, Catherine Filene, was especially smitten. The Vassar girls often held dances, with many of the young ladies dressed in male drag. Vincent sent photos home of the girls and 'boys'. Her accompanying comments:

Doesn't (Catherine) make a wonderful boy? Had two dances with him and he wanted another. Just look at the way she's standing. She ought to have been a boy.

Catherine Filene was intensely jealous of Vincent's friendship with Katherine Tilt, who lived in the same boarding house with the other girls. 'Cat fights' nearly developed when Miss Filene encountered Vincent trekking up the stairs to Miss Tilt's room. In a letter to her sister, Vincent insouciantly declares, 'She's a handsome thing, very boyish, deep rough laugh, but the sweetest most charming smile when she wants to be decent for a while. Really a fascinating type. Isn't she wonderful in that picture. Couldn't you die in her arms? Fancy two dances with her in that rig.'

Vincent became adept at the intrigues and sexual skirmishes of day to day life at Vassar. For a bit of malicious pleasure, she played love object alternately to each of the adoring women. Both Misses Tilt and Filene were nonplussed by Vincent's alternating advances and brush-offs.

One of Vincent's classmates remarked:

Vincent was very definitely a person to whom others formed crushes and attachments. There were a great many of them...They simply trailed after her. And I do think she enjoyed it largely. She was different from others, from the rest of us. She had an elusive, physical charm which we didn't associate with our own sex in those days. I think I was naïve. I was matter-of-fact. Vincent was not matter-of-fact about anything.'

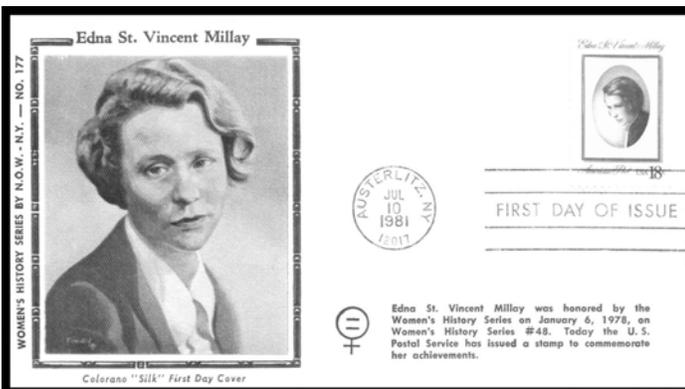


Figure 1

In her sophomore year on campus, Vincent became enamored of Elaine Ralli. Right from the first mention of this woman in her diary, the entries are replete with ambiguity. She refers to Elaine only with the masculine pronoun, and describes her with much affection. Elaine visited Vincent and Cora in Camden, Maine during summer break. Photos taken that languorous summer show two young women very much in love with each other, and it is certain that they had an intense sexual relationship.



Figure 2

By the time of her graduation from Vassar, Vincent was attracting a following of avid readers. Her poetry during this period signaled the dawn of a new era. It was flippant, defiant, witty and absolutely without peer. Her famous lines, with the remarkable reference now part of our everyday language, written in 'First Fig' are typical....

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night.
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends-
It gives a lovely light!

These four lines encapsulate the carefree, perhaps reckless spirit of the next generation of Americans who came out of the war years with a resolve to put those desperate times far behind them.

Edna St. Vincent Millay had a brilliant career in the decades ahead, winning the Pulitzer prize and many other honors for her superb collections of poetry. Her time at Vassar provided merely a taste of the interesting life she was to lead, filled with lovers, male and female, captivated by the seductive aura of this extraordinary woman.

Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1892 – 1950, is depicted on a United States commemorative, Scott #1926, issued in 1981.

The first day cover shown in Figure 1, posted at Austerlitz, New York, July 10, 1981, is imprinted with a cachet from the N.O.W. Women's Series. Millay's

country residence was located at Austerlitz. The other envelope (Figure 2), also posted on July 10, has a Greenwich Village cancellation. The photo on the journal cover, taken by Blair and Paul, provides a view of Vincent's tiny town house in the West Village.

(Source material for this article came primarily from 'Savage Beauty', the best-selling biography of Edna St. Vincent Millay, by Nancy Milford.)

Member Profile Blair O'Dell

Although I am no longer an active stamp collector, I have a considerable interest in our GLHS study unit. Paul Hennefeld, my spouse, and I co-founded this group along with Brian Lanter and Lambda Stamps many years ago. I still vividly recollect our first meeting with Brian at One Potato, a little hole-in-the-wall bar and Sunday brunch hangout on Hudson Street in NYC. That meeting got the group off the ground. Then for the first year or so we hosted quarterly get-togethers in our living room with friends Ken and Ron, who avidly volunteered to help staple, fold and stuff envelopes for the group's newsletter. Gee, that was a long while back. Who knew at that time our Study Unit would still be around and flourishing after twenty years!

Like so many gay kids, I was picked on in school for my lack of physical education prowess. The only thing in those dreaded classes I ever excelled at were 1960's era gymnastics, which included parallel bars, 'horses', tumbling, rope climbing and the like. Forget about team sports, for me they were a nightmare. Pretty much friendless, I buried myself in stamp collecting. For a kid like myself, of that era, who loved geography, it was a wonderful hobby. I would send away for any and every philatelic 'free introductory offer' that I could find listed in the back of 'Boy's Life' magazine or the latest comic book. The accompanying approval packs would often contain mysterious stamps from otherworldly places like Tannu Tuva or Nyasaland Protectorate.

As I got further into my high school years and college, my interest in collecting deepened. I became involved in my own German heritage and began to specialize in Germany and Colonies. I recollect being ecstatic when my Scott Specialty albums for Germany, German States and Colonies arrived, as well as a separate volume for East Germany. I was adamant about collecting only used stamps as it was important to me to know that they had been on an envelope at one time and had actually journeyed from one distant place to another. Even though the 'cancelled to order' German Democratic Republic stamps even still had the original glue affixed, I rationalized that at least there was a postmark on the stamp. Condition was a big factor for me too; each stamp had to be perfectly centered, with a round cancellation mark. And thin spots or missing perforations were a total taboo. By 1970 or so I had gotten almost all of the cheaper and moderately priced items, so at that point I decided to branch out to Scandinavia, with a special interest in Iceland, another one of those off the beaten track places that I loved.

Then something profound happened. I came out of the closet. All of a sudden I could explore and enjoy my sexuality. I had new friends, even a soul mate, Garry. Stamp collecting quickly took a back seat. Within two years I became a homeowner, and had a yard and garden to take care of. And then I fell in love anew with the man of my life, Paul.

Paul also had been a stamp collector in his youth, but again discovered this pastime with zest after he moved up from Texas to live with me in NJ. He had been reading *Gay American History* by Professor Katz, published in the 1970's. He realized that quite a number of the persons mentioned in the professor's book were shown on stamps, and that was really the beginning of Paul's 'Out of the Closet' gay history stamp collection.

It seemed that with all my new interests I never had the time to sit down and spend time with my own languishing albums, but I always very much enjoyed helping Paul build his own gay history topical collection. And when the first Handbook was produced many years ago, I assumed the job of chief proofreader.

Over the years we have spent countless hours building up Paul's 'Out of the Closet' thematic exhibit. Our routine never varies for the construction of new pages for his collection. Paul will write up two or three versions of text for the personage to be depicted on the page. I will tell him which one in my opinion seems to be the best, or sometimes we'll combine segments of each version. We often discuss page layout, too. There are strict rules for format and style that judges of topical exhibits closely follow.

Paul Hennefeld, co-founder of this study unit, is offering various gay-related items on eBay. These are all duplicates of material in his wide-ranging collection of gays and lesbians depicted on stamps. Check trading name 'dakotanj' on eBay periodically for an extensive selection of AIDS stamps and covers, Keith Haring items, framed stamps and gay event cancellations.



A major philatelic project in recent years has involved getting Paul's collection on the Internet (www.paulsgaystamps.com). Although done with the help of a software professional, it still required endless conversations revolving around software arcana, and why some things were doable and other things weren't. Each page had to have the philatelic material separately scanned from the text, which all had to be reentered directly into the website. What a job.

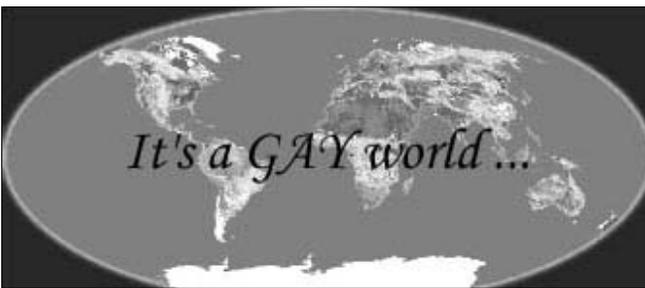
The other big task, occupying much time in the last several months, was the Handbook update. We proofed, re-proofed and re-re-proofed. Checked, cross-checked and crossed-cross-checked. It seemed like an endless job, but finally we have a super Handbook that was long overdue.

I always say to Paul that I'm not selling my collections because in my old age I will have the time to once again work on my stamps. Well, I think old age is almost here. The albums are sitting there waiting.

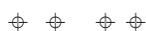
Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance:	\$ 1,484.89
Membership:	
9 1-year renewals:	\$ 90.00
2 2-year renewal:	40.00
Extra donations	15.00
Interest:	<u>9.60</u>
Total Additions	<u>\$ 154.60</u>
Sub-Total	\$ 1,639.49
Expenses:	
March Journal	<u>411.94</u>
Balance:	<u>\$ 1,227.55</u>

Gay & Lesbian Update



The listing of new issues will return in the next journal. In the meantime, here are some cancels that I have found in various philatelic magazines and newspapers.



Andy Warhol cancel used in 2003. The copy was poor. I believe it was used in Burlington, Vermont. Anyone with additional information?



Beethoven and Liszt,
Bonn, Germany, January 6,
2003



German Musical Heritage,
Milwaukee, WI, USA, July
25, 2003



Arcangelo Corelli, Fusignano,
Italy, September 7, 2003.



Bacchus, Noci, Italy,
April 19, 2003.



Hercules, San Marino,
September 27, 2003.

AIDS Update

The world has once again taken notice to the AIDS epidemic in Africa. Look for the update on the recent issues in the next journal.

Helpful Addresses

American Philatelic Society (APS & APRL)
100 Match Factory Place
Bellefonte PA 16823
814-933-3803
www.stamps.org
www.stamplibary.org



American Topical Association (ATA)
PO Box 57
Arlington TX 76004-0057
817-274-1181
www.americantopicalassn.org



American First Day Cover Society (AFDCS)
PO Box 65960
Tucson AZ 85728
520-321-0880
www.afdcs.org



Wineburgh Philatelic Research Library
PO Box 830643
Richardson TX 75083-0643
www.utdallas.edu/library/special/wprl.html

International Gay & Lesbian Archives
One Institute
PO Box 69679
West Hollywood CA 90069-0679

Homodok (Gay Archives)
Oudezijds Achterburgwal 185
NL—1012 DK Amsterdam
The Netherlands

National Postal Museum
MRC 570
Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560-0001

W2006 Goal: One Million Stamps

A two and a half year drive to collect one million stamps is being organized by Washington 2006, the international philatelic exhibition scheduled for May 27-June 3, 2006 in Washington, DC. The show's Youth and Beginners chairman, Nancy Clark, and committee member Joan Bleakley are in need of US and worldwide kilo ware both on and off paper to distribute to thousands of visitors to the show and to use during demonstrations and seminars.

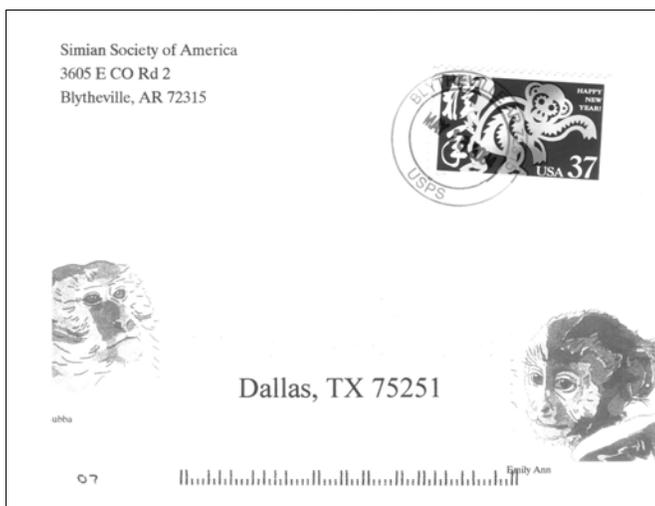
The holiday season is the perfect time of year to start saving used stamps. Begin by cutting stamps from envelope corners, leaving about 1/4 inch of paper all the way around, and removing the paper flap on the back. Discard damaged stamps, those with tape on them, and those on colored paper of any kind. Then separate them into US and non-US piles. Do the same for any donations of off-paper stamps.

Place these in envelopes and mail them to W2006 Stamp Zone, c/o Joan Bleakley, 15906 Crest Drive, Woodbridge, VA 22191 USA. These can be sent at any time. Include an email address to be notified when your shipment has arrived. Contributions of any size would be appreciated towards the effort, including larger dealer lots. As a 501(c)3 organization, individuals and companies may qualify for tax deductions to the full extent of the law for material donated to Washington 2006.



Editor's Picks

Another "Year of the Monkey" cover received in the office.



Collector seeks Postcards/Ephemera

I collect real photo postcards (gay oriented, sports/physique, nudes, affectionate couples, cross-dressing). Also, early gay magazines/ephemera. Prompt payment ensured.

Frank Serafino
61 Woodland Drive
Oak Brook, IL 60523
USA

Or e-mail Frank at:
Ffino69@aol.com