

## SERPENT IN THE BOTTLE

[*Ed. note: This stamp was first mentioned in Volume 7, Number 1 of these pages by Dr. Willard Stanley. I include his comments below. It is apparent that times have changed in that most of the recent stamp issues that depict snakes show them in their natural habitat and colors.*]

Of the stamps showing snakes, very few are devoted to showing snakes as zoological exhibits. All too frequently they are stylized as a symbol of something—usually something unpleasant.

A striking example of snake symbolism is a recent issue by Turkey showing a coiled and striking snake in a bottle with two hands forcing a stopper into the neck of the bottle to confine the snake. The stamp was issued to mark the recent meeting of the 25th International Congress Against Alcoholism, which was held at the University of Istanbul.

This is an interesting example of a *tête-bêche* pair. This is a French term that means “head-to-tail” (literally “head-to-head”). It defines two stamps printed in reverse to one another. They may be printed as reverse head-to-head, reverse side-by-side, or reverse foot-to-foot. You may use *tête-bêche* stamps as pairs in payment of postage rates or as single stamps.

Turkey issued this stamp (Sc#1213a) on 10 September 1956 to promote the Congress meeting held 10–15 September. It was printed by offset both in regular sheets and in sheets with alternate vertical rows inverted and perforated 10½.



Tête-bêche Pair

Dr. Stanley also included a comment from a Mr. Everett, “An interesting aspect is that, although Turkey is a Moslem country, the inscription for this design came from the Christian Bible. It is based on Proverbs 25:32. ‘At last it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder.’” Clearly there is no such inscription on the stamp itself, so I wondered if it appeared on the margins of the sheet, or in some commemorative cachet or panel. However, my investigations have not revealed any such inscription on covers or other related material. If any reader can provide more information about this matter, please contact the editor.

## JEAN C. STOUT 2013 DISTINGUISHED TOPICAL PHILATELIST

[*Editor’s Note: The following is excerpted from and ATA press release.*]

Topical collector Jean C. Stout of Jackson, Mississippi, has been selected as the American Topical Association 2013 Distinguished Topical Philatelist, according to an announcement by DTP committee chairman Donald W. Smith. The award will be presented 18 May 2013, during the ATA National Topical Stamp Show in Rochester, New York.

Jean Stout joined ATA in 2004, and began serving as a member of the ATA Board of Directors in 2012. She is co-founder and vice president of the ATA Penguins on Stamps Study Unit, organized in June 2007. Serving as Unit Treasurer, Jean regularly teamed up with Unit Secretary Sue Rosenberg to prepare and present CD programs at the 2010 and 2011 unit meetings. During the 2012 unit meeting Jean introduced a contest for members to prepare one-page penguin exhibits to be used in a noncompetitive single-frame exhibit publicizing the Penguins on Stamps unit.

Jean also participates in the ATA Ambassador program, maintains the Penguins on Stamps Study Unit checklist, and has prepared Penguin displays at three different local libraries. She is a member of the American Philatelic Society and the American Society of Polar Philatelists. Her other topical interests include Roosters/Chickens, Sherlock Holmes, and Halloween/Horror.



Jean C. Stout

In early 1996, Jean asked her husband, R. Lamar Stout, a prominent philatelic Rhodesia collector, if there was anything she could do to help. He handed her a shoe box of stamps to soak off covers. He then bought her a U.S. Minute Man album, and she was hooked. But what to collect? The Stouts owned a wholesale company selling refrigeration and heating equipment. The company logo was a Penguin named "Polly." Jean decided to collect penguin stamps initially to illustrate a children's book for her granddaughters.

Jean Stout was born in Port Arthur, Texas. She received a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. She has been married for 52 years and has a son, a daughter, and four granddaughters. Jean has been involved with the United Methodist Women, most recently serving as president of her local unit. Other interests include visiting aquariums and zoos, organizing patio flower gardens, and identifying birds.

The ATA Distinguished Topical Philatelist Award was established in 1952 by ATA founder Jerome Husak to recognize notable service in topical philately. This award has been presented in the past 64 years to 120 topical philatelists, including residents of Canada, Great Britain, and Italy. The current selection committee, chaired by Donald W. Smith, consists of Donald Beuthel, Jack H. Green, George Griffenhagen, Dorothy C. Smith, Dalene Thomas, and Mark H. Winnegrad.

### STAMPS LACK ANIMAL DIVERSITY

[*Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the 25 March 2013 edition of Linn's Stamp News.*]

Brazilian biologists Andre Nemesio and two colleagues have analyzed the animals pictured on stamps, according to a guest blog by Laura Jane Martin on the website of the *Scientific American*.

The blog was posted Feb. 20.

Martin reported that after examining stamps offered on the Delcampe and eBay auction sites, Nemesio discovered that 60 percent of them show birds or mammals, although the vast majority of the world's 8.7 million known species are neither of those.

Nemesio said, "If someone studied the diversity of life through stamps, he or she would reach the conclusion that birds and mammals are the dominant species on earth, that elephants are perhaps the most abundant creatures on this planet, and that insects are a small fraction of nature, mainly represented by butterflies."

He stressed the role that stamps could play in educating people about the diversity of animal life, especially the "hundreds of thousands" of beneficial insects. Nemesio added that images, not numbers, will attract attention.

My comment on this study is that it was far from a scientific investigation of the issue. Searches of on-line auction sites would typically yield filtered results since sellers tend to offer primarily items that have a greater chance of selling than those that do not. One only needs to look at the collecting interests of our own Unit members to see that a large percentage concentrate on birds and mammals. Marketing experts and retail sellers are not fools. They design and offer wares to appeal to the most dominant consumers.

One would expect that species selected for stamp designs would be attractive, cuddly, or notable for some other striking reason. For example, it should not be surprising that butterflies disproportionately represent the insect world as they are very colorful and eye-catching, not lackluster, ugly, or scary like many other insects. There are at least ten times as many moth species as butterfly species, but since most moths are dull and tiny, you will less often see them depicted on a stamp.