

The response to the SCCS "Private Express Mail" items has been more than we anticipated. Looks like it has opened up an entire new area of collecting. Several collectors have asked what the future issues would be and a few even offered suggestions as to topics.

We are going to pursue one of the suggestions and here is the rough outline of it. Some astronauts (those that did not fly a mission) have never been fully honored. Maybe the SCCS "Private Express Mail" carrier stamps would be a good way to remedy that.

Not counting the 35 astronauts selected in January 1978 (for which we did locals and covers) there were seven different groups of astronauts chosen. Over the period of the next year or so, we plan to honor all of them. So as not to overwhelm the collector at any one time, we plan on limiting it to groups of about 6 or so per issue.

The first group will be the original seven Mercury astronauts that were selected in April 1959. Since the anniversary of John Glenn's "Friendship 7" flight will be coming up on February 20, that appears to be a most logical "first day of issue." Here are the details:

We will have a booklet (#2 in the series) containing one pane of eight stamps. Seven will picture the seven Mercury astronauts (Carpenter, Cooper, Glenn, Grissom, Schirra, Shepard and Slayton) and the eighth featuring the Mercury Project emblem. We will offer the booklet as one item and a set of eight covers as the other. Delivery will be about two weeks after the first day of issue.