

PARTS, October 1972). Although they had initially demanded £19 a week (about \$45), the women accepted £16.50 plus 50 pence night allowance, with the provision that negotiations will continue on their demands for more holidays and the hiring of more staff.

Japan has achieved zero population growth, the first industrialized country in the world to do so. Although the IUD and the pill are illegal in Japan, abortion is cheap and widely used. More than 40 percent of married women have had an abortion, and about 17 percent said their first pregnancy was aborted. For contraception, the Japanese are partial to condoms, often combined with other methods.

Four women, charging sexual discrimination, are suing the State of California in order to receive pregnancy benefits under the state's temporary disability insurance. Carolyn Aiello, Elizabeth B. Johnson, Agustina D. Armendariz and Jacqueline Jaramillo are plaintiffs in two suits to halt enforcement of Section 2626 of the California Unemployment Insurance Code. Under this section of the code, women cannot collect disability benefits during the term of their pregnancy and for 28 days thereafter, even though they pay into this fund. In addition, women are denied benefits for any condition arising out of pregnancy. This provision affects approximately 200,000 working California women each year.

Male workers, however, are covered for such strictly-male disabilities as hernias, circumcisions, and prostatectomies, and the state even pays benefits to workers who are recovering from sex-change operations. With the narrow exception of alcoholism, drug addiction and insanity, male workers can receive benefits for disabilities arising out of *any* physical or mental impairment.

The women involved in the suits maintain they have faced considerable financial hardship and mental strain because of the unequal coverage. Three of the women were seriously ill due to complications arising from pregnancy, and one woman lost her job. ○

MONEY AND POLITICS:

the good fortune of the franklin mint

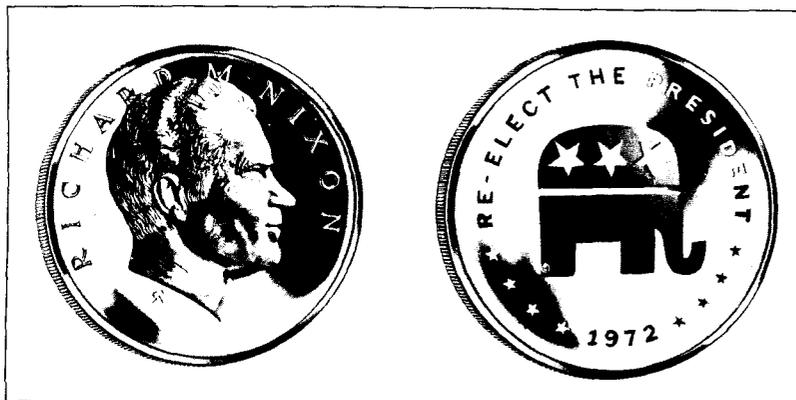
by james ridgeway

Among the various businesses looking to turn the American Bicentennial to their advantage is a Pennsylvania outfit called the Franklin Mint Corporation. Founded in 1964 by Joseph Segal, a Philadelphia advertising man, it now has sales of between \$75 and \$80 million a year, and claims to be the largest privately owned mint in the world, much larger than the mints of many governments. Franklin produces coins for several countries, such as Tunisia, Panama, Trinidad, Tobago, the Bahamas and Jamaica. But its major business is issuing a steady stream of commemorative medals for the United Nations, the American Legion, the Peace Corps, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the U.S. Olympic Committee, and whoever else will pay the price.

There is, for example, the first annual World Series medallion. Or you can pick up a series of presidential

campaign medals, 12 spoons featuring the "12 days of Christmas," and a Norman Rockwell Christmas silver plate. Mrs. Nixon is posing for a "First Ladies" series of medals, and congressional wives are known to carry about costly baubles made by Franklin Mint. An international operation, the company has subsidiaries in Canada, France and England. The French affiliate, Le Medailir SA, makes a die machine that is basic to minting operations in most parts of the world.

Over the past two years, Franklin Mint has drawn criticisms for its promotional methods. The June 27, 1971 *Washington Evening Star* carried an ad which made the following offer: "Postmasters of America invites you to build a valuable collection of medallic first day covers combining official U.S. commemorative stamps with the Postmasters' own sterling silver commemorative medals—from the very first issue." Below was pictured a rendering of an envelope with a medallic inset that said, "In commemoration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution" and "Limited Edition Proof." Elsewhere the envelope carried a label, "Authentically certified by Postmasters of America." It looked like a first-day issue put out by the government, but in fact Franklin Mint had prepared it



exclusive keepsake?

The Franklin Mint counts the Republican National Committee among its most valued clients. In the recent campaign, it struck an "Official 1972 Presidential Campaign Medal" shown above. The promotional literature described the

Franklin Mint as "the largest and foremost private mint in the world," and the medallion itself was touted as "a priceless memento" [sic], "a treasured heirloom you'll proudly display," and "an exclusive keepsake."



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COWARD, McCANN & GEOGHEGAN

for Postmasters of America, a new association of two different postmasters groups. When Segal was questioned by members of Congress about using the word "official" in this offering, he insisted that it was an "official" presentation.

In a more celebrated case, Franklin Mint offered members of the Mint's Collectors Society a special coin made from silver that "actually went to the moon." It had been carried there, the company said, by members of the Apollo 14 mission. As it turned out, the silver never actually landed on the moon. Instead, the astronauts kept it in lunar orbit at Franklin's request—against official regulations. The mint people had managed to sneak aboard 200 medals. According to the deal, the astronauts could keep 150 and 50 were sent back to the mint. After the ensuing bad publicity, NASA promised that this lunar hustle would not be repeated.

Franklin Mint apparently owes much of its success to a clever political organization which includes intimate contacts with the Republican Administration and at least one key member

of Congress. In recent years, Segal has been a major contributor to two Republican congressmen from Pennsylvania, Lawrence G. Williams and John H. Ware, III. Two of Williams' former assistants have top jobs at the mint, and Williams himself sits on the House Banking Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs, which concerns itself with coins and medals. He is known to lobby for Franklin Mint, particularly whenever the U.S. Mint threatens to infringe on Franklin's corner in coins. In addition, Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott and House Minority Leader Gerald Ford have journeyed to the mint to make pious addresses about its good works, and Segal has had his picture taken with Nixon. Three weeks after it applied for a post office to be centered in its new plant, the postal service approved the site and a new postal location, Franklin Center. It hardly fits the image of the hometown post office: to get a stamp you have to penetrate a cordon of armed guards, then find the secretary with a little stamp box on her desk. Although it's designated a post office, Franklin

phony as a \$2...

Among the ideas to come from the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission is the hitherto unpublished proposal to issue a new \$2 bicentennial coin to help pay for the event and provide a spur to the vending machine business. A private memo from R. Lynn Carroll, deputy executive director of the Commission, to Jack LeVant, until recently the director, says, "It is suggested that the Bicentennial Commission recommend as part of the National Bicentennial activities the minting of a single memorial coin which is also legal tender. This coin would be for national circulation, as a symbol and constant reminder to Americans of all that we as a nation have accomplished over 200 years of dynamic growth."

The earnings of the coin, which Carroll estimated at \$125 million, could help sponsor the bicentennial. It might have other beneficial uses: "It would obviously fit no extant

coin-operated device. The availability of such a coin, however, might encourage the extension of this industry into machinery capable of handling products of higher unit values. A wide range of products now only available for over-the-counter purchasing might then be added to the fast-services convenience market with the introduction of such a coin and its attendant machinery.

"In addition, much of what we buy and purchase today has a unit value of more than a dollar. While no calculation of increased efficiency or productivity is ventured here of the total nationwide impact of having a \$2 piece available in lieu of an assortment of change and paper currency, it is safe to say that such a coin would find ready use for such items as taxi fares, admission fees, parimutual betting, parking lot charges, paperback books, charitable donations."—J.R.

[CHEAPER BY THE COUSIN]

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(whom he numbers by the
dozens) . . . and his aunts.”**

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Most magazines really hustle for gift subscriptions this time of year, and many do quite well by it. (Ramparts, for example, sells 90% of the year's gift subscriptions in the month of November.) That is no surprise: first of all, signing up your friends and family is an effortless way to do holiday shopping, and also, what else can you buy these days for \$6?

The proposition is fairly uncluttered: renew your present subscription for another year, at a saving, and then slide on up to the bargain gift counter, where a full year's worth of Ramparts is going for \$6. Our regular subscription renewal rate is \$9.50, but for the moment it is \$6.00. For twelve bucks you get another year on your own subscription and a treat for a friend or relative. For yet another \$6.00 you can send yet another gift, etc., *ad bankruptum*.

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—HERBERT MITGANG



\$6.95
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THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

Mint's mail is handled by another U.S. post office, this one at Media, Pa.

In recent months the mint's major concern has been to get a piece of the bicentennial action. As Segal told Congress, "The Franklin Mint itself has been deeply involved in the bicentennial commemoration since 1968. We have recently completed a series of 50 medals commemorating, in great depth, the history of the American Revolution. A special edition of this series is currently being offered as the first official series of commemorative medals of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition, we are well along the way in producing a series of 200 medals commemorating every year in the history of the United States from 1776 to 1976.

"We are also producing a series of 50 medals for the National Trust commemorating America's great historic sites. Further, we are producing a series of medals honoring 12 great Americans each year, in conjunction with the gallery of the great Americans which will be fully established by 1976." The mint is also putting out an

edition of distinctive state medals to help the individual states honor the event. If the states agree to make these medals "official," Franklin will cut them in on a percentage of the royalties from the sale.

The firm's outlook is rosy for the next four years, but Segal remains alert to possible competition. Recently, for example, the U.S. Mint proposed to issue a general commemorative medal. Franklin opposed this measure as the "Vietnam of the medal industry," which would threaten to create havoc for the private medals market. To no avail. Congress passed a bill directing the U.S. Mint to go ahead and make commemorative medals. At Segal's insistence, Hugh Scott interceded with the Office of Budget and Management, and succeeded in holding the legislation back for a year, enough time so that Franklin Mint could get into the bicentennial medals business and establish a market, if not a corner, on the trade.

As if to show his gratitude, Segal forked up over \$100,000 last summer to aid Nixon in his re-election. ○

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POOR DEREK'S ALMANAC

by derek shearer

The Source Collective, located in Washington, D.C., consists of four people who have been compiling a series of annotated Yellow Pages or political Whole Earth Catalogs on movement and movement-related activities. The first catalog dealt with communications, and included lists of political bookstores, movement presses, and underground TV groups. The second catalog, entitled *Source Catalog: Community/Housing*, is now available; it is a basic resource tool for people and organizations involved in community organizing, particularly around the issue of housing.

News of political work, including publications, films, slide shows, etc., should be addressed to Derek Shearer, RAMPARTS magazine, 2054 University Ave., Berkeley, California 94704.