Maestro Arthur Rubinstein
Geneva,
Switzerland

Dear Maestro Rubinstein:

I am inclosing a write up from the K.C. Star I thought you may like to keep for your files.

If you should have the time I would very much like your autograph on the inclosed card.

I have inclosed a international reply cupon for postage.

Thank you very much & congratulations on your birthday.

Sincerely,

Henry J. Lohrengel Jr.
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この切手は万国郵政聯盟の各国で、最低の切手代による普通封筒、陸海路送信の外国への封筒に交換できます。
Geneva, Switzerland — The friends of maestro Arthur Rubinstein, celebrating his 90th birthday, wished "May he live 150 years," toasting an extra half-century into the traditional Polish toast for good measure.

Mr. Rubinstein isn't far from his 100th birthday, but just how far is a matter of some debate.

He says he was born in Lodz 96 years ago, Western reference books say he's 93 and the Polish Embassy sent him congratulations on his 96th birthday.

But none of this spoiled the party. "One hundred is such too soon," he said, speaking through an interpreter. "— May he live 150 years, wouldn't that do as a toast."

The popular artist whom some people call "the pianist of the century," blew out nine candles and five small ones as well-wishers crowded into his Geneva apartment Thursday. He says he was on Jan. 28, 1887, that he "rang the bell at the gate of life as a bacteriologist and rubber guest." He was the seventh child in the family of a Lodz textile industrialist.

But among the telegrams and letters that still kept pouring in Friday was at least one that disputed the date.

"We sent him congratulations on his 96th birthday," said Polish Embassy spokesman Stefan Piwowar.

The official Polish encyclopedist lists the year of his birth as 1888 and that is his correct age as far as we are concerned," Mr. Piwowar said.


According to one account of the birth date dispute, Mr. Rubinstein's parents said he was two years younger than he was to keep him from being sent to Russia for the army.

Mr. Rubinstein's secretary, Anabella Whitestone, told a reporter the maestro was "full of pep as usual" at his party. "He blew out the candles, cut a cake and the toast was wonderful."

"We had visitors the whole day, coming in and out, the apartment was really full, his children telephoned from New York — they could not make it."

Birthday presents included a video recorder, a gift from Miss Whitestone, which allowed him to watch a 1930 Hollywood film featuring Rubinstein recitae and a Mendelssohn trio in which he was joined by violinist Jascha Heifetz and cellist Gregor Piatigorsky.

"He just loved it," said Miss Whitestone. She described the maestro as in good health.

Mr. Rubinstein first played in the United States in 1904, but his debut was a flop. Some critics said he was too classical at a time when pianists were experimenting with changes in tempo, dynamics and other excesses. He later made an attempt at suicide.

Imperator's Mr. Hurek brought Mr. Rubinstein back to America in 1917 and audiences clamored for him everywhere. It is said that Mr. Hurek changed the spelling of Mr. Rubinstein's first name to "Arthur" in those years with an eye toward promoting the pianist by a more "vatile" name.

Mr. Rubinstein became an American citizen in 1946, divided his time among Hollywood, New York, and Paris, and 30 years later gave one of his last concerts at New York's Carnegie Hall.

He always maintained an apartment in Paris, and settled there after recovering from major surgery two years ago.

His Polish-born wife, Amelia, who lives in Paris, was among the well-wishers. The two separated in 1977.
Congratulatory Notes Produce Responses for Autograph Hound

By Rob Meachum
Afternoon Staff

Henry J. Lohrengel, Jr., has nearly four scrapbooks filled with the fruits of his hobby, from such celebrities as the Prince of Wales, Mrs. Betty Ford and Jack Nicholson, actor.

Lohrengel, a 42-year-old mail clerk at the Army Corps of Engineers office, collects autographs, thank-you notes and other memorabilia. He has been at it for about five years.

He started in 1971 when he received a response to a congratulatory message he had sent to Mayor Charles B. Wheeler, Jr., after Wheeler won his first election. Lohrengel says he doesn't know how many responses he has received since then, but it's "quite a few."

His list of autographs includes Mario Thomas and Karen Black, actresses; Muhammad Ali, Peter Fonda, actor; and Roman Polanski, director.

"I just like to do it to see if they'll reply," he said. "It also keeps me out of mischief."

Lohrengel, of 121 S. Lawn, confronts the celebrities for their autographs when they visit the Kansas City area.

"If I write to them, they don't answer," Lohrengel says of the movie stars. "So I just go up to them—[let] them know who they are."

Lohrengel's tactics have worked well with such stars as Bob Hope and Clint Eastwood and Chuck Connors.

Lohrengel's tactics are different for foreign heads of state and high U.S. government officials. He says he gets his ideas on how to write mostly from things he reads in the newspaper.

In Mexico, he says,President Jorge Vilela has leaned power from Isabel Peron in Argentina. He sent Vilela a congratulatory card and received a reply in Spanish from the general's personal secretary.

"I was more surprised about him than anyone else when I got the reply," Lohrengel said.

He doesn't worry about precise addresses for his letters to foreign dignitaries—he just sends them to the person, with no address except the name of the country's capital.

Lohrengel has received thank you notes from George Bush, then ambassador to China, and Donald Rumsfeld, secretary of defense, after collecting a letter from them upon appointment to office.

Lohrengel, who owns about 25 cameras, also is a photographer for Kansas City Happorings, a monthly publication devoted to events in the area, and he photographs many local newspaper and publications. Often he sends a print to the local celebrity, too.

Usually in about two weeks he receives a thank you note.

He also photographs national and international celebrities, often from a to tow window screens. When Susan Ford was in Kansas City some time ago, Lohrengel took a picture of her and sent it to the First Lady, Mrs. Betty Ford, who promptly sent a personal note thanking him and praising the quality of the print.

Lohrengel received a thank you note for a picture he snapped of Princess Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco television, and mailed to Monaco. He also has received a Christmas card from President Anwar Sadat of Egypt.

Lohrengel, a bachelor, said he sent a picture to the Soviet ambassador in Washington and got a "Russians in Space" letter and "Russian Life" magazine for his efforts. He has yet to send anything to the Kremlin or Peking, but says he isn't worried that U.S. intelligence might open his letter.

"A lot of people know that I do this, and there's nothing wrong, so I'm not worried," he said.

Lohrengel says that his hobby is fairly inexpensive, costing about $1 for each note card he sends. If he takes a photograph, the cost is higher.

Response time varies, he says. Ben Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) took the longest to reply—nearly two months after Lohrengel sent a note congratulating him on his impending retirement. Prince Rainier and Princess Grace took only one week to send a thank you note.

"The politicians take longer because they probably dictate the letters," Lohrengel said. All of his responses have been typewritten, he said, but politicians are more likely to sign the letters personally. Most letters from foreign heads of state are sent by their personal secretaries.

With the exception of Sen. Thomas Eagleton of Missouri and Gov. Christopher Bond of Missouri and Gov. Robert Romer of Kansas, Lohrengel hasn't had any personal contact with the dignitaries and celebrities with whom he corresponds.

And he says he doesn't know of anyone else with a hobby quite like his.