

# THE SRSC NEWSLETTER

*The Santa Rosa Stamp Club: Promoting the study,  
knowledge, and enjoyment of stamp collecting.  
APS Chapter 1584*



Vol. 5, No. 4

February 2017

## **Editor's Note**

Dennis Buss

This edition of our club newsletter starts with an article by Steve Brett. Steve proposes a regular newsletter feature where members submit articles based on the theme of *"What are you working on?"* What is filling your time as you work on your collection? Are you developing a new specialty? Are you attempting to sort out your US Franklin and Washington stamps? In Steve's words, whatever it might be, you "can address one aspect of your collecting activity to multiple aspects occupying your hobby time. Ideally, this feature will provide new ideas for members seeking the pleasurable and rewarding expansion of philately and also include invitations to members for trading or buying stamps and materials between the writer and club members." As editor of the newsletter I support this proposal and encourage members to contribute.

This issue includes an article by Jay Smith whose work has previously appeared in our newsletter. Jay has graciously agreed to let us reprint this important piece from his website that provides valuable advice to all members on preparing information on their collections. This edition concludes with a short piece by your editor that describes how he added a very nice stamp to his specialized US Liberty series collection.

## **What I Am Working On**

Steve Brett

There's nothing like rainy weather to make one appreciate stamp collecting as their hobby. It's a perfect indoor pastime. My focus became all those bags of kiloware stamps on paper. I have no idea where these came from, what was in the bags or how long I had them...except I knew I had them for many years. When I poured one bag load over the kitchen table I started to recall angry letters to *Linn's Stamp News* denouncing the U.S. Post Office for self-adhesive stamps and how that made soaking difficult and often impossible. Some collectors stated they stopped their collections as of the last year of traditional



gummed postage. I hadn't soaked stamps for years and I only had a slight inkling of what was lying ahead. I used warm water in a shallow Tupperware plastic basin designed for large cakes. Stamps began soaking in warmish water. The satisfaction of anticipating the stamps to loosen and separate from the paper on their own swept across me. I set them face down on newspaper with my stamp tongs. But, what is this! After thirty minutes a bunch of stamps wouldn't budge. I used even hotter water. Little happened. I began peeling some stamps that suggested cooperation. Some came off, some tore. But the most frustrating stamps exhibited a plastic-like residue that only would partially "let go" from the stamp. How frustrating. I used my thumb to try to rub and peel this gooey stuff off the stamp. I dunked these over and over into the hot water, only to have it stay on the stamp. When I was successful in getting the goo off the stamp, the stamp became worthlessly thin. Ech. Before I turn to our membership for better instructions on soaking these stamps, I wish to thank stamp dealers who favor us with old commemorative postage on their mailings and for covering them whole or in part with clear packing tape – nicely done!



The good news is that the continuous rains allowed me to fill two whole stock books with stamps rescued from their paper. I think I found all varieties of the U.S. flag definitives. I may also own the largest collection in Sonoma County of the 3-cent Liberty stamp. Lastly, in organizing a lot of material on those rainy nights, I started to really enjoy

the U.S. Postal Stationery I have inadvertently collected over the years. I created a ring binder with Showgard pages filled with this material. I catalogued these items and some were in the \$3.00 to \$5.00 per piece area. A lot were valued much lower but the personal nostalgic value of this material was fantastic. They took me back to my summer camp days in New Hampshire in 1953 and 1954 when campers had to drop a completed post card to their parents as admission to supper. Some of us tired of writing about the same old topics: Swam in the lake; made a copper ashtray in arts & crafts; hiked 2 miles to a pizza restaurant in Keane, etc. The usual. So, we took a ruler and divided the correspondence section of the Post Card into two columns and labeled the top of one column "DEAD" and the other "ALIVE" and all that was left was to check "ALIVE" and we could proceed to have our supper. And oh yes, sign it, Love, Stephen (Brett)

### **Do It This Year . . .**

Jay Smith

It probably has crossed your mind – the need to think seriously about the importance of preparing information about your stamp collection for your family in case you die. It's not a pleasant subject, but considering all you have probably done for your family over your lifetime, this is a small task that will help your family immensely. With the start of a new year it is a great time to do this while you are

feeling motivated.

Most importantly, WRITE SOMETHING! Just get started. It does not have to be complete, it does not have to be perfect. Just do something. You can always edit and amend your writings, but get started now even if it is just a couple of paragraphs.

In ten minutes you can probably write most of the basics that your family should know in case a family member has to decide what to do about your stamp collection. It's usually very simple...

1. List the people that you recommend that your family should contact about the various parts of your collection. Perhaps they should contact a particular German specialist dealer about your Germany collection and perhaps contact me about your Scandinavian collection. (I am happy to be of assistance to my clients' families even if I am not going to be involved in the disposition of the collection.)
2. List any people that the family should NOT contact. Maybe you know of a local collector or dealer that you do not trust.
3. It is sad to say, but I strongly recommend advising your family to be very cautious about having friends "help" with the collection. If such "help" is to occur, it is extremely important that the friends be monitored very closely. I say this from my experience of hearing, over and over again, the same sad stories of disappearing stamps.
4. If you have specific thoughts on how the collection should be sold (for example: to a fellow specialist collector, to a dealer, via auction, etc.) jot down your ideas. At the same time, point out that these are recommendations of this moment and may not apply when the sad day comes.
5. If you have any information about the value of the collection (or various parts thereof), relate what you can. And if you do not know the value, say so. Be clear about terminology, for example, be clear if you are referring to catalog value or retail value or the actual value you think a dealer will be able to pay. If you supply any catalog value information, be sure to point out that stamp collections only sell for a percentage of catalog value and that percentage will vary depending on the type of collection, the country, the rarity of the stamps, etc. [A collection of 100,000 25-cent stamps is worth a lot less than just ten \$1000 stamps.] Be frank about what you do know and what you don't know about the value. Be sure not to inflate the potential value of the collection; nothing is more disappointing than for a family to think they have been left a \$100,000 collection when it is only a \$5,000 collection. (I have witnessed the heartbreak.)
6. Be sure to explain that it may be necessary to pack up and ship part or all of the collection to a dealer located in another part of the country; that this is normal and typical. As long as they are dealing with people you have trusted over the years, the family should have confidence. At the same time, remind the family to exercise normal care and to "check out" anybody that they are considering doing business with, just like they would with any other important transaction. They should not be overly suspicious (that just causes more problems), but they should also recognize that there are some

- "bad apples" out there and they should act only when they are fully comfortable with the situation. You should also mention that, these days with so many collections being offered for sale, it is not unusual that some highly qualified buyers may have to propose making payments over time; willingness to accept payment terms may result in a much higher price.
7. In most cases, it is not necessary to take immediate action to sell a collection. Often it is best to take some time after the collector's death so that it will be easier for family members to think clearly and act without feeling stressed or pressured. Also remind them that if a potential buyer insists on "now or never", that might not be a good buyer for them to do business with. Reassure your family that they can take their time.
  8. Emphasize that if the collection is insured that the insurance premiums should probably continue to be paid (and supply for them the contact information of the insurance company; ownership information will need to be updated).
  9. Very importantly, emphasize that the collection should be well kept: It should be stored in a well-ventilated, heated/cooled area, NEVER in a basement or attic or garage, NEVER in a storage unit unless carefully monitored and fully climate controlled. Emphasize that the albums should be kept UPRIGHT - never piled horizontally (otherwise the gum on mint stamps may quickly be damaged, greatly reducing the value).
  10. Put it in writing! You may have had conversations about this with your family in the past, but often family members don't want to think about such matters and they may not have retained the information. It is really important for you to put it in writing.
  11. Make sure what you have written is kept with your "important papers", such as your will, so that it will be easily found. (Documents stored with the stamp collection are rarely found when they are needed.) If there is value information in what you have written that you are not comfortable being known by the family prior to your death, then seal up the document and give it to the family attorney with instructions (and put a statement with your "important papers" that the attorney has such a document).
  12. If you have done philatelic research resulting in documents, computer files, images, etc., that should be preserved for future philatelists, indicate how these can be located and to what people or organizations you want them given. It is too easy for a lifetime of philatelic research to be lost when a philatelist's computer is discarded.

Whatever information and instructions you can provide for your family in their time of sadness (and perhaps time of need), will be helpful to them and will reassure them. Your information will be an act of kindness and care that will remind your family once again of how much you loved them.

*(Jay Smith is proprietor of Jay Smith & Associates, P.O. Box 650, Snow Camp, NC 27349-0650. He can be reached at E-Mail: [js@JaySmith.com](mailto:js@JaySmith.com) or by Toll-Free Phone: 1-800-447-8267. Jay specializes in Scandinavian stamps as well as US and worldwide issues and collections.)*

## Why Did I Buy This Stamp?

Dennis Buss

At first glance most of you would say, “What’s the big deal? Anyone could find and buy this stamp easily and cheaply.” The 2-cent Thomas Jefferson definitive issued on September 15, 1954 is part of the Liberty Series of stamps that replaced the so-called “Prexie” series that first appeared in 1938. Scott lists the rotary press printed 2-cent Jefferson sheet stamp as #1033, carmine rose, perf. 11x10½ with a catalogue value of 25 cents both mint and used.



My purchase of this stamp is based on my interest in developing a specialized collection of the Liberty Series issues. A total of twenty-seven stamps were released including three versions of the 8-cent blue and carmine Statue of Liberty stamp. In addition, eight different coils were issued. The challenge in collecting the Liberties is not just to acquire a single specimen of each major listing. To develop a specialized collection one needs to probe deeper. You soon will discover that there are varieties for several of the stamps. For example, the 2-cent Jefferson coils were printed in both wet-plate and dry-plate versions as well as with shiny, yellow, and dull gum. In addition they were perforated with small holes and large holes. And there are tagged and untagged versions. The trick is to find all the possible combinations.

Interestingly, it was not until the 2015 edition of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* that these differences among the Liberty series were finally recognized. The outcome was to revise the listing of the stamps and to even remove one that had been previously considered as part of the series, the 8-cent General Pershing stamp. Moreover, Scott also listed catalogue values for covers where each stamp was used appropriately for a particular postal function. One of my objectives in collecting the Liberties is to find representative covers for each issue.

But to return to my 2-cent Jefferson sheet stamp. For this stamp there is only the dry printed version. No small or large hole perforation varieties. The sheet stamps were never tagged. They were all released with the same type of gum. However, there is one variety under the sheet stamp listing, #1033a, Silkote paper. “So,” you might ask, “Silkote paper, what’s that all about?” The most concise explanation of the Silkote Jefferson is found in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue*:

*Silkote paper was used in 1954 for an experimental printing of 50,000 stamps. The stamps were put on sale at the Westbrook, Maine post office in Dec. 1954. Only plates 25061 and 25062 were used to print No. 1033a (these plates also were used to print No. 1033 on normal paper). Competent expertization is required for No. 1033a.*

The catalogue value of number 1033a is listed at \$300.

Lawrence, Eeles, and Wawrukiewicz in their book *The Liberty Series*, provide further information indicating that the Silkote paper was whiter than the ordinary paper used for the stamp and that the “surface texture is extraordinarily smooth.” The chemical composition of the paper was alkaline and it had less moisture content. Presumably this paper would be more easily printed. The authors also

explain that the stamp could be used to pay third class postage as long as the printed message and signature was mailed in an unsealed envelope for local delivery. Since most of the stamped covers were Christmas cards, the recipients quickly discarded them. Too bad. Scott lists a canceled single Silkote stamp on cover at \$15,000! Needless to say, I do not have a Silkote on cover. Having read about this interesting stamp, I was surprised to see it on offer by a dealer at a stamp show that I attended two years ago in San Jose. I couldn't resist and purchased a single mint copy fully expertised for less than the catalogue value—but not too much less! That is why I bought my seemingly common 2-cent Jefferson Liberty series stamp.

## **SRSC**

**The Santa Rosa Stamp Club meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Steele Lane Community Center, 415 Steele Lane in Santa Rosa.**

**Membership dues are \$20 per year.**

**Following a discussion of club business matters, the meetings feature a philatelic presentation and a member auction.**

**For further information about the club visit our website at <http://www.santarosastampclub.org/home.html>**



### **SRSC OFFICERS**

**President**

Paul von Gottfried

**Vice President**

Don Test

**Secretary**

Dennis Buss

**Treasurer**

Susan Dixon

**Advertising & Public Relations**

Barb Greiss

**Newsletter Editor**

Dennis Buss

**Webmaster**

Victor Ivashin

**Auctioneer**

Steve Brett

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Paul von Gottfried

Don Test

Dennis Buss

Susan Dixon

George Land

Jim Scholz