

THE SRSC NEWSLETTER

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



Vol. 4, No. 3-4

February 2016

Get to Know Your Club Members: An Interview with Dennis Buss

By George Land

Ask anyone in our Stamp Club, "Who is the hardest working Club member?" Invariably, the answer will come back, "Dennis Buss." At any kind of meeting, his notebook is always out and Dennis is writing notes that will appear in his published minutes of that meeting. He processes Club email correspondence and sends out monthly meeting announcements. And finally, he finds enough energy to publish and distribute our Club Newsletter. Whew – I need a rest, just writing about this . . .



. . . OK – I'm back and ready to discover what makes Dennis tick. It all began in 1940 when Dennis was born on the family dairy farm in New Jersey. A year later his father sold his interest in the farm and the family moved to the suburban town of Verona where Dennis grew up. Although cows were not in his future, teaching school was. Dennis entered the University of Pennsylvania as a History and Education major. Following a Master's degree at Brown University, Dennis returned to his former high school in Verona, New Jersey. While teaching History, he noticed an English teacher on the faculty, Carolyn. Dennis began staying after class and soon he and Carolyn were married.

She continued teaching while Dennis spent a year at Rutgers University completing his course work for a Doctorate in Education. She was a good fit for Dennis because she knew English grammar and she could type. She qualified for a PHT degree (Putting Hubby Through) while typing his dissertation, "The Role of the Ford Foundation in Public Education." Can you imagine 600 pages of educational research? Without reading it, I am sure it is a fast-moving and exciting tome.

Now, Dr. Buss went to Rider University in New Jersey for the next 40 years where he taught undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Education. He retired after serving as Chair of the Division of Graduate Studies. On the Home Front, a daughter was born in 1970. Soon, Carolyn was back teaching English. Carolyn had received an M.A. from Wroxton College in England and a second Master's in Humanities from Drew University in New Jersey.

As with many teachers, summers were busy. Each year saw trips to England and many other European countries, including a visit with extended family in the Netherlands. They even did an archaeological dig in Jordan. But wait . . . can you believe all these



European trips and they never set foot in Germany? I don't expect Roger Aquistapace will ever speak to Dennis again!

At age 7, Dennis noticed that other boys had stamp collections. By age 12 he was busy answering ads for free stamps and receiving approvals. While in high school and with a part-time job he bought a Minkus Master Global album. In college, stamps went on hiatus but he began to drift back in the late 1970's.

Netherlands came first. He then expanded his worldwide interests with Scott's International. A year after he retired in 2008, he and his wife moved to Petaluma from New Jersey. Now things moved quickly. He could devote more time to his stamps. He became more involved with his Netherlands collection as well as mint and used USA, the Liberty and Prominent Americans series, and even Botswana and Canada.

He currently serves as President of the Redwood Empire Collectors Club. In between eating dinners at RECC meetings, his Netherlands exhibits have won two Silvers at the WINEPEX shows, plus a Vermeil at the East Bay Collectors Club Show. He is also a member of Netherlands Philatelists of California, and they have given him much help with his exhibits.

Another sideline is his collection of "Famous Educators on Stamps." I looked hopefully for something about George Land, Susan Dixon, and Dr. Bob Kirk in this collection but found nothing. But some progress is being made because Dennis' latest interest is British Commonwealth with an emphasis on King George VI and Bob is showing him the way.

A Quality Collection by Paul Bartolomei

Editor's Note: Paul Bartolomei is the director of Palo Albums Inc. This article appeared in his latest email message to customers. In addition to the Palo line of albums the firm also sells Lindner and Davo albums and accessories as well as various stamp collection lots. They can be reached at www.paloalbums.com or by phone at 1-800-572-5967.

One of our longtime customers recently passed away unexpectedly. He had purchased four different country albums from us, and every year subscribed to our automatic supplement service. There were not any instructions for the disposal of his collection, and we received a call from his wife wanting to know if we could look at his collection and determine a value, or possibly purchase it. Of course, we agreed to this and the next day she came in with about seven boxes of albums.

It did not take me very long to realize that just about everything was worth very little - we see this quite often. As a young collector I had made the same mistake: when selling my worldwide stamp collection after 20 years of collecting, all my hopes were dashed when I realized that what I had accumulated was extremely ordinary and worth very little. I learned the hard way, just as I am sure many collectors do.

So how can you prevent this from happening when it comes time to sell your collection? How can your stamps be worth so little when you have invested all that time and money? In my opinion, there are two factors contributing to the worth of a quality stamp collection.

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First, is organization - or lack there of. As in the aforementioned case, all seven boxes were extremely disorganized. There were USA stamps in 15 different places; and, oddly enough, no stamps in the USA album. There is nothing more aggravating to a dealer than having to go through mounds and mounds of disorganized material. With lack of patience, dealers tend to go through the collection quickly and do not take the time to see what is really there. And because of this, the purchase offer is oftentimes very low.

Conversely, if the material is organized chronologically in albums or stock books, it is much easier to see what is present. Clean, organized albums enable the examiner to see the percentage of completion. They do not necessarily need to be fancy albums; even homemade pages will do, so long as all is clearly marked.

The second contributing factor to a great collection is content. No matter how well organized, if the content is not quality, the collection will not be quality. As in the case above, the USA stamps were a mixture of mint and used. All stamps from the 1800s were of the common, inexpensive type and damaged.

And as many of you may already know, any 20th century mint stamps can be purchased for under face value and used for postage. Many collectors are under the misconception that if a stamp is 50 years old, it is worth a lot of money. However, regarding USA collections, the opposite is true.

In our customer's collections, I saw the albums that he had purchased from us, as well as all the yearly supplements he had subscribed to. I was shocked to realize that there were no stamps displayed in any of the supplement pages - seven years of empty supplements. As much as I would like to think that stamp albums are worth something, they are absolutely worthless if there are no stamps in them. After all, we are stamp collectors, not stamp album collectors. In addition, my customer had a smattering of various foreign stamps, many First Day covers and dozens of stamp articles that were well organized in binders. Unfortunately, organized articles also have no value.

If you would like to recoup at least some of the money you invest in your collection, collect in an area with a solid plan. Say you collect 20th century USA: you will need to know that you will never make much money as an investment. Therefore, collect all mint, or collect all used, in order to solidify your content. A mixture of the two looks sloppy and generally has no value for a more astute collector. If you collect 19th century, go for quality, not quantity. If it is too expensive for your budget, then either wait until you have the funds or collect something else.

Knowledge of what is in high demand helps. You may want to pay attention to what the trends are. For example, China is an extremely popular collecting area right now. Stamps are being sold for almost full Scott catalog value, sometimes more. If you're savvy enough, you can sometimes guess what the next popular material may be. Meanwhile, collecting worldwide does not have much value unless one was to collect every single country with each country at least 75% complete. To do so would amount to around 2000 stamp albums - how likely is that? Even collecting 30 different countries all at once would involve spreading your time and money too thin. Specializing in several individual countries, not too many at one time, is a smarter option. Concentrating on a few at a time and making sure they are accurate and of good quality would amount to a worthy investment. If a stamp costs more than you can afford right now, just wait a bit longer and



get it later. I know this takes more time and money, but you'll be thankful for this later.

So, what could I say to the unfortunate widow? How was I to tell her that there was nothing of value in the collection of her recently deceased partner in life? Gently, I told her that she was best off donating the collection and claiming a tax write-off. And, most importantly, I stressed that she could be consoled by the fact that her husband spent many enjoyable hours with his collecting. I am sure all of you can relate to this – a hobby is, first and foremost, a passion.

But for those of you looking to get something in return for your collection, take away this: poor quality material will never result in anything but heartache. Collecting with this in mind takes more time and money, but you will be happier for it in the end. And with whatever collection you finally decide upon, don't just throw everything in boxes or envelopes – organize it!



Members are encouraged to submit articles for our newsletter. Share your enthusiasm about our great hobby. Tell us about your latest prized acquisition, your new collecting interest or write your stamp collecting autobiography – how and why did you get into stamp collecting? Submit your manuscript to Dennis Buss, Newsletter Editor.

The Santa Rosa Stamp Club

Membership is open to anyone interested in stamp collecting and who agrees to abide by the club By-Laws. Starting in 2016, dues are \$12.00 per year, pro-rated on the month of joining. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Brookdale Lodge at Paulin Creek, 2375 Range Avenue, Main Entrance, Santa Rosa.

For information about club membership call Dennis Buss at 707-774-6296 or send an email to srsc2012@yahoo.com

2015 SRSC Officers

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