

The SRSC Newsletter

The Santa Rosa Stamp Club

Promoting the study, knowledge, and enjoyment of stamp collecting.
APS Chapter #1584



Vol. 13, No. 1

February 2024

Editor's Note

Dennis Buss

In accord with our mission statement (above), how does the SRSC provide its members with the opportunities to realize the purpose of our club? I ask this question because I believe all of us should contribute to the ways we can enjoy this wonderful hobby through our club membership.

First, each meeting encourages members to participate in a short “show and tell” session by describing a special stamp or cover they have added to their collection. Our plans to purchase a new projector will make it possible for all members to see your latest show and tell treasure without passing it around from table to table. Also, you can use this time to announce an upcoming philatelic auction and stamp show. Or, perhaps you can describe a recent philatelic article or book that the members would find interesting.

Second, the new projector will enable more members to prepare a fifteen-to-thirty-minute presentation by simply bringing in their stamps, covers, album pages, or stock sheets to show off their topic while conducting a narration. PowerPoint users can continue using that option for a presentation.

Third, we provide members with the opportunity to both sell and buy stamps at our meeting auctions. Peruse our club membership list to review each member's collecting interests. This enables the seller to match buyer interests with more saleable items.

Fourth, and by no means least, you can always contribute an article to our SRSC newsletter. Here are some topics you might consider: What is your favorite stamp or stamp set, how did you become interested in stamp collecting, why did you choose to collect worldwide or a particular topic, country, or time period? Why are you interested in postal history? Why do you collect first day covers, plate blocks, pre-cancels, revenues, etc.

Our philatelic studies result in the knowledge and enjoyment that we can all share in our monthly meetings. I look forward to your contributions.

Many thanks to Stephen Brett for his latest article featuring his amusing takes on the joys of stamp collecting.

Foreign Post Offices and Philatelic Windows

Stephen Brett

It should be a joy to purchase the latest issues when travelling abroad. Purchasing collectible philatelic items at face value is always fulfilling especially after paying through the nose for perfume or a watch. I began by ducking into post offices when on a London business trip in 1980 leaving my reinsurance broker holding an umbrella and wondering where the heck I was only a few blocks from Lloyd's. It was a first for both of us. The

following are some of my experiences in various countries. Perhaps you have had your own.

The Vatican: I slipped into the Vatican Post Office and was directed to a booth. I sat down and a small window slid open and a pleasant voice asked: "And what do you have to tell me my son?" I answered, "I would like to buy the 1976 new issue of St. John's Tower." "And when was the last time you visited the Vatican Philatelic window, my son?"

Berlin: I was at an Allianz Insurance Company meeting and slipped into a post office near the Brandenburg Gate. I had to remove my shoes because they were wet as women were furiously drying the floor (with cloths that appeared to be a French flags). The Herr at the philatelic window was courteous. I had walked up to the window from the wrong side and was directed to retrace my steps following the velvet ropes (I was alone in the post office). I filled out the request form for the 1997 Centenary Issue of Rudolf Diesel's engine.



"Yes, it is in stock but unless you also buy the 300 pfennig Cultivation of Potatoes in Germany issue I will not sell the other stamp to you, Do you understand?" "You streaked our floor by the way."

Zurich, Switzerland: The main post office is near the train station where I arrived so I made a quick detour to its philatelic window before I was picked up by my broker.

The philatelic window was at the entrance and I was swiftly served. "Passport Sir." "To buy some stamps?" "Next!" Following a brief delay, I presented my passport. "And how long do you intend to be in this Post Office?" My reply was satisfactory: "Twelve minutes." "And what would you like?" I answered: "I'd like the new souvenir sheet commemorating six Swiss Entertainers and Comedians." "But there are no Swiss entertainers or comedians, sir." To which I replied, "No kidding" and walked out.

Caracas, Venezuela: I arrived at the central post office at 11:50 AM and found it closed. Apparently, there is a 15-minute break before siestas or demonstrations against the U.S. I returned at 2:00 pm to find the personnel recovering from their break. The vending machine by the steps was vandalized. The repairman was missing. I was told the detective looking for him was at the border in El Paso, Texas.



Bucharest, Romania: I was intrigued by the Romanian travel episode directed by Rick Steves and so I tacked on a short trip from Munich to this post-Stalinist city. I never made it into the post office. A cadre of young men at the steps opened their overcoats and there were more souvenir envelopes and sheets than at the old Minkus counter at Macy's Herald Square store in New York. I was also introduced to the alleged post office adjunct's sister who collected coins.

Rome, Italy: I made the mistake of having some sheets mailed to me from the Trevi Post Office Collector's Window. That was in 2012. I live in hope.

Marseilles, France: The Marseilles Central Post Office is absolutely beautiful. One might say, a Masterpiece. I entered it in a very good mood. But soon, my mood soured. At the philatelic window I requested the 1992 new issue: "Single European Market." The clerk said something in French. I asked him to please speak English, because I do not speak French. Then in perfect English he called me a "Double Idiot, first, for not speaking French and then for honoring the Single European Market which is a farce, masseur." I almost lost my right hand when he yanked the pull-down window at his position.



Amsterdam, Netherlands: In 1997 I had an interesting encounter seemingly of the Third Kind while at the main Amsterdam Post Office. When it was my turn at the Philatelic Window I pointed to the year-set to make it simple. The attendant asked me why I was waving my wand? "I just wish to purchase the set in the poster." He replied that I was the second customer trying to abduct him that day using a force field. He offered to share his prescription with me. It was in a zip lock plastic bag. He recommended I try a post office if I wanted a set of stamps and that I wouldn't find it in this space station.



The Santa Rosa Stamp Club meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 6:45 pm to 9:00 pm at the Finley Community Center, Cypress Room, 2060 W. College Avenue in Santa Rosa.

Membership dues are \$20 per year.

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

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