

THE SRSC NEWSLETTER

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

APS Chapter 1584



Vol. 8, No. 3

December 2019

Editor's Note

As the Santa Rosa Stamp Club closes out another year, we continue to enjoy the comradeship that comes with sharing our interest in this most enduring and fascinating of hobbies – stamp collecting. For example, our presentations this past year have covered such varied topics as the state of the hobby from the perspective



of the well-known auctioneer Schuyler Rumsey, to a review of stamp collecting trends by Stephen Brett, to the pleasures of collecting UN stamps (Stephen Brett), Irish stamps (Paul von Gottfried), Austrian stamps (Paul von Gottfried), Netherlands stamps (Dennis Buss), topical and thematic stamps (Stephen Brett). We learned about the importance of insuring one's collection (Stephen Brett). Several members participated in a stimulating session on their respective stamp curiosities and

oddities. We enjoyed watching a set of interesting videos assembled by Paul von Gottfried and we concluded the year with our annual philatelic quiz prepared by Paul von Gottfried and Stephen Brett.

If you have noticed the same names popping up on this list, you realize that our presentations have relied on all too few of our club members. Your club's board very much wants to involve more of you in making presentations. You do not need to make a PowerPoint presentation. Recall that virtually all of the oddity and curiosity session items entailed circulating said items among the members as they were described. You certainly can prepare a short talk and circulate you're the relevant material while you make your presentation. If you want to make a PowerPoint presentation there are members who are willing and able to assist you. I can assure you that you will enjoy the experience of sharing your philatelic interests and earn the appreciation of your fellow and sister club members. Make it one of your 2020 New Year resolutions!

**Attend the 2020 Great American Stamp Show
Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expressway at Trimble Road,
San Jose, January 4-5
Saturday 10 am to 6pm; Sunday 10am to 4pm**

**Advice from Uncle Phil:
Enhancing Stamp Collecting Enjoyment at Practically No Cost**
Stephen Brett

I've been a lifelong stamp collector. Most of you are too. But, how many of you have opened yourselves up to the probability that, with some simple and obvious changes in how you go about your collecting hobby, it can be vastly more enjoyable? Not only more enjoyable, but you can have more time to spend on your hobby.

Here's how:

1. Location, location, location.

Is your hobby area where you really want it? Or, do you want it somewhere else in your home? Is it centralized or scattered to many corners of your home causing you to waste time looking for and getting all you need together before you work on your first item? Are you annoyed by competing background activity, traffic and noise?

All too many of us know a better place in our home for our hobby. A place where everything we need is at our finger tips. Imagine how much better and efficient that would be and how much more enjoyable such a set-up would be. How many of you are still taking your albums out of one closet, your stock books off some

book shelves, your collecting tools out of several drawers, your catalogs from the den bookcase, then setting it all up on a kitchen table, and then removing it all at dinner time? Now is the time to start by moving everything to your dreamed of optimal site. Plan and stage the area



in such a way that your most used items are just an arms-length from your comfortable hobby chair. Provide yourself with the lighting you've pined for. Good lighting extends hobby time and reduces eye strain.

2. Organization

How much time do you spend now looking for everything you need? Definition of things: Stamps and other philatelic material you want to see or work on but have no idea or only a foggy notion of where to find it. Or, you have the needed collecting tools in hand, but you can't recall where the album or stock book is located. Or, you can't find your tongs or stamp mounts or reference book or catalogue - I can go on. But all of this searching is frustrating and time consuming and it robs us from the full enjoyment of just plain working on our collection. At practically no cost we can all make collecting more fun by simply taking a little time to organize our collection and all the paraphernalia supporting our hobby activities.

Suggestion: Number ALL or your albums and stock books and have a "key" notebook that provides the contents of each one. I use sticky labels that provide descriptive cues to the content of the album. Centralize stamp mounts and organize them by size. These should be in drawers or shelves within arms length. Same for tongs, perforation gauges, watermarking fluid and other tools frequently used. Reference books should be in the collecting area but don't have to be within arms

length. In short, when you have the urge to work on your collection, you should be able to indulge the urge in under a minute. Can you do that now?

3. Hone your collection to your primary areas of enjoyment and interest; chuck everything else.



Most of us have accumulated boxes and glassines full of unsorted excess stamps and covers that are just clutter holding us back and diminishing the enjoyment of our hobby because they remind us of lost interests as well as wasted time, money and space. When you think about it, they are similar to holding onto bales of old magazines or books we will never read again. We only hold on to them because stamps are "our baby." We

have a reflex behavior that defaults to honoring stamps, even if we don't need or want them. They are just a weight on us. Strive to concentrate on only that which gives us pleasure, lifts our spirits and enthusiasm for the hobby.

4. Unburden yourself of dealers and stamp sources that are just a drain of resources.

Out of inertia or just old habits we are denying ourselves of new and more exciting contacts and resources who might be much more useful in realizing our collecting priorities. When I spend money on an old dealer for the sake of tossing him a bone and when I finally get the item I wonder, why did I buy this? It usually cost too much or is something I really don't need (but a great unloading for him) and I realize I did the transaction only because he keeps sending me lists or nice catalogs. I feel obligated but not happy. Review all those from whom you buy and shed the mediocre. Have fun in experimenting and making new contacts. This will make your hobby more vibrant and isn't that a goal?

5. Narrow your collection to areas you really enjoy or the time periods that most intrigue you.

Realize that you are under no obligation to complete or collect areas you are tired of. You do not have to hire a lawyer to divorce yourself from areas of collecting that are both fatiguing and expensive. Realize that there are whole universes of stamp collecting that you may find way more exciting because they are more reflective of the person you are today but not necessarily the person you were decades ago. You will feel liberated if you do this and, therefore, much happier as a stamp collector.

6. After completing steps 1-5, conclude with a careful examination of your albums.

You will realize two things; first, that you really have forgotten much of what you already have. Second, there are areas that interest you more than others. This exercise identifies the areas of your collection you prize the most. Pick one and challenge yourself to become more expert in this area. You may decide to specialize in this area or sub area and that becomes a new passion that you deeply enjoy.

I hope this article provides you with ideas and the ideas blossom into activities costing minimal time yet result in huge dividends that renews your collecting enjoyment.

Sincerely, Uncle Phil

Ask Phil A. Tellick

Paul von Gottfried

Dear Phil,

I'm recently retired and subsequently was ordered by "she who must be obeyed" to get a hobby. So I dug out my old stamp album that I hadn't seen since I was 26 and took a look. It's a U.S. album. Lots of holes. I then went online and learned about the current state of the hobby. I went to the library and perused the catalogues. Now I don't care if it's worth anything. I remember I enjoyed the quiet mystery of identifying, organizing and putting something in order. It probably satisfied some hoarder urge. So I'm going to start again. I don't want to spend a lot of money. The thing is, I don't know what to collect. I haven't a clue. So how do I proceed?

Les Nessman

Dear Les,

Welcome back to the hobby. As for what to collect, well that's easy. Collect what you like. What gives you pleasure. I think the U.N. stamps are beautiful and culturally significant. But they're not worth anything. I still collect them. Same thing with Penguins. If you truly don't care about the value, then simply collect what you like. Follow your interests, things that pique your mind and heart. Many people are turning to topicals.



The other point I want to make is that there is no judgment in stamp collecting. It's wide open, anything goes. So Les, take a little time to contemplate and then jump back in. And when you do, find a local club. Get involved. The camaraderie and interesting people you meet are invaluable.

Welcome back Les,

Phil A. Tellick

Dear Phil,

What is this fascination with superheroes and monsters? I feel it's a disservice to the mission of the United States Postal Service. I'd like to see more of a focus on historical and regional stamps. The proliferation of stamps featuring mythical creatures, monsters and superheroes is hurting the reputation of the USPS. What is your take on this?

Frank N. Stein

Dear Frank,

You raise some interesting ideas. The USPS, in an attempt to bring in young collectors and to address current cultural issues, has developed colorful, attractive stamps that reflects popular culture and current entertainment events. Unfortunately, this has not helped to increase the use of first class mail. I believe the internet has been largely responsible for the decline of first class, non-commercial mail. Another factor is that collectors, for the most part, are not putting away mint

stamps the way they used to. The proliferation of older mint postage has adversely affected its market value. Almost all stamps issued in the last 60 years, with few exceptions, sell for below face value. The stamp publications are filled with buy ads with prices often below 60% of face value. I myself buy postage lots below face value. I still put aside some issues, such as Christmas or special events, to use appropriately.

As for your dislike of certain categories of stamps, that is your personal opinion and we all know what personal opinions are like.

With kind regards,

Phil A. Tellick



SRSC

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, 2060 W. College Road, 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 FOR 2019

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Paul von Gottfried

Vice President

Stephen Brett

Secretary

Dennis Buss

Treasurer

Susan Dixon

Advertising & Public Relations

Steven Brett

Newsletter Editor

Dennis Buss

Webmaster

Bill Anklam

Auctioneer

Jim Scholz

Executive Committee Members

Paul von Gottfried, Stephen Brett, Dennis Buss, and Susan Dixon

Members At-Large: Jerry Campbell, Barry Sovel and Susanne & Jim Scholz



Members are encouraged to submit articles for the Newsletter. Whether it is a short piece about an interesting stamp or cover in your collection, a more extended article on some aspect of philately, a follow-up article on a presentation, or your stamp collecting autobiography, your submissions are welcome.

See Dennis Buss, the Newsletter editor.