

THE SRSC NEWSLETTER



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

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Editor's Note

Dennis Buss

This edition of the newsletter features George Land's summary of an interview with Paul von Gottfried, our club president. As our members are well aware, Paul has an amazing store of knowledge about all things philatelic. And we are grateful for his many contributions to making our club a success. But what about Paul the person? George tells us about Paul's interesting background and career as well as his current collecting interests.

Steve Brett has been very busy writing about stamp collecting these last few months. We are happy to publish two of his pieces. The first is based on the newsletter theme of "*What are you working on?*" where members can tell us about their current philatelic pursuits. Here Steve explains the pleasures entailed in exploring more specialized interests while maintaining his overall goal of filling spaces in his massive worldwide collection. His point? If you are a worldwide collector, there is nothing wrong in taking time out to really look at your stamps and learn more about the specific countries that issue them. And this point leads us to his second article, *Why Do You Collect Trucial States Postage Stamps?* If you are looking for a philatelic distraction, why not venture into the realm of the absurd? If you are not convinced by Steve's compelling argument for the Trucials, you will at least come away from his article quite amused.

Get to Know Your Club President, Paul von Gottfried

George Land

Move over Steve Brett, our Club has another New Yorker. Our President, Paul was a neighbor until he left Manhattan in 1960. His father was a theoretical physicist who took a job at Lawrence Livermore Lab. Thus, Paul moved to California and went on to become a "Cowboy" at Livermore High School where he graduated in 1969. He also heard the Pope calling and attended St. Patrick's College Seminary for five years, graduating in 1973 with a double major in History and Humanities. It was here that he began volunteering and



working with the developmentally disabled.

He went on to Golden Gate University where he received a Master's Degree in Public Administration (MPA). This paved the way for his work in mental health programs. He wrote the "No Barriers Program" to assist those leaving the state developmental centers, such as Glen Ellen's Sonoma Developmental Center, to transition back into the community. Paul was a long-time member of the Board at Sonoma Development Center. For 35 years, he has worked in the field of developmental "disabilities" or "delays." He also has a Special Education Teaching Credential. Now retired, Paul is a very active volunteer in the St. Vincent DePaul food distribution program. He is also active with United Cerebral Palsy Association of Sonoma County, especially "Boost" Camp cerebral palsy children. Paul has begun volunteering with Catholic Charities and is interested in the homeless situation in Sonoma County.

In the world of hobbies, there are two that receive Paul's undivided attention: gardening and stamp collecting. As a child, he was hit by all the usual illnesses but in a much more lengthy and serious manner than most of us. While bed-ridden at age 9, his doctor gave him an album and a packet of stamps. This was how Paul took off into the world of stamps. Soon, he was deeply involved with British Colonies. One outcome of his King George VI British collection has been his interest in the history of World War II. His acquaintance with Bob Kirk has led to a collection of ALL British stamps of George's reign. He now has all the KG6 pictorials from the 1930's except North Borneo (who can help?). His special interest within the British Empire focuses on Canada and Ireland. He has family in Ireland. Outside of the British Empire countries, Paul is building a collection of France.



Paul has two main sources for stamp purchases. He has been a customer of A & D Stamps for 20 years and is a good friend of the Dempsey's. He also bids frequently at Harmer-Schau auctions. A recent auction included a large lot of booklet panes formed by Past-President Martin Feibusch, with Paul's assistance.

What Am I Working On?

Steve Brett

I began a vacation from my normal pattern of worldwide stamp collecting when the rains began. Filling empty spaces country-by-country became monotonous. Even a good thing can be tiresome after a while. I began wondering, "do I own this collection, or does this collection own me?" I began a therapy of soaking stamps off paper and reported to you the challenges of that pursuit in an age of self-sticking stamps and argumentative adhesives. When the last stamps dried between blotter sheets, it was time to move on to sorting and stock-paging masses of long lost stamps stored in plastic sandwich bags. Then I started mulling over the possibility of giving up the madness of having a respectable collection from every corner of the world. How many more times was I going to open up twenty or more posted ring albums to add the annual supplement? Why



am I killing myself to keep Burkino Fasso up to date? I already have three sets of Hyena cubs at play! OK, what will I specialize in if I don't collect worldwide and what will I give up?

My impression of collecting on a strictly specialized basis is this: it eventually comes down to a stage of near-completion except for a handful of very expensive items. Some of these items are virtually unobtainable due to price or scarcity or both. The specialty collector nears a standstill status and those few remaining empty spaces are a haunt. Where does one go from there? There is that academic satisfaction derived from expertise but there's almost no possibility of completion. There's no possibility or expectation of worldwide completion ergo no similar frustration but like the Myth of Sisyphus, one keeps pushing more ring binders on the shelves and they keep tumbling over you.



The solution came to me; I can take vacations from the wearying task of adding stamps to nearly 30 fat albums by discovering fascinating sub specialties. Where do these sparks, no, lightning bolts of interest come from? The answer is, frequently from unexpected places. For example, I was watching a Rick Steeves travel episode on the little country of

Andorra. I was sure I had some Andorran stamps and now I know why they are in two languages. I pulled my A -Be album and there was Andorra and geez, I got lost in the beauty of the scenes on the stamps. So, I began ordering Andorran material and got a huge charge over "visiting Andorra" through my collecting. I started studying the little country and made up my mind to visit it someday.

The same wave of interest came over me regarding French South Antarctica. I'm a sucker for penguins and the stark pristine beauty (and freedom) of the vast horizons of ice. The stamps are absolutely gorgeous and capture everything about this extreme, remote and unique part of our globe. Over a period of months I began adding gems from F.S.A.T. and I can now linger over all the odd avian and sea creatures - and the unexpected beauty of its tortured scenery - so different from our views of Sonoma. I can visit Antarctica through my growing and carefully picked collection of its stamps.

Global stamps piling up at my desk finally called me back to the responsibility to give them a proper and deserved place in my collection. The break I took after a couple of months of specialization refreshed my old affairs with France, Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, Russia, Japan and others. I could never give them up! Way too interesting, and, most of all, they are old friends since childhood. The thought of giving these and some others up is impossible to contemplate . . . or endure.

Specializing is important, I discovered, to build knowledge but also to refresh the joy for general collecting. Where can we find that spark to suddenly find the intense pleasure of discovery in our hobby? Club presentations have awakened my interest on occasion to delve into an area I had never thought of. Stamp magazine articles that answer questions or open avenues of further inquiry can do it.

Sometimes, it just takes a set of fascinating stamps from a country I never think about and that make me ask, "I wonder if there are more like these?" Maybe we all collect because there is no end to our hobby other than the end we create. This can only happen when we cease to be imaginative (or creative!).

Why do you collect Trucial States postage stamps?

Steve Brett

I am occasionally asked in tones of pure disbelief: Why do you collect Trucial States? To begin with, there are actually two questions. The first question is why? "Why" is a universal and eternal question. Why are we here on earth? Why is there a universe and billions of galaxies, suns and even planets? Why is there God? Why are there so many forms of life? Why is there life and death? We simply don't have answers to these perplexing questions. The second question is: Do you collect Trucial States? The answer is "Yes." Now, on to my explanation by using an old time tested method. Here it goes.

T is for the terrible waste of time and the inanity of collecting stamps from Oman, Manama, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Qawain, Fujairah and Ras Al Khaimah. (The latter seven sheikdoms later combined into the United Arab Emirates.) Yet, it is fun to add a frivolous collecting passion to my more serious collecting pursuits. You cannot get it wrong when the material is both insipid to begin with and abundant in supply.

R is for the ridiculous topics. I have a long set of pre-cancelled Sharjah celebrating American television shows, for instance. I know for a fact that in most cases, the nearest electric outlet to most tent dwellers in Sharjah is 40 kilometers in distance and most Sharjans wouldn't know Lucille Ball from Colonel Sanders. But there's the TV Screen set of stamps in my album next to a series celebrating the birth of Christ and that's in a country that cut off a missionary's arm recently for carrying a Bible.



Now, how do you figure that? How can you resist such a set? Way more intriguing than a celebration of Charlie Brown and Snoopy on U.S. forever stamps. Most Sharjans would kick Snoopy like a football if they had a chance - but, wait! Here comes a Charles Shultz souvenir sheet from Oman.

U is for Unbelievable subjects. Now why would Dubai issue a series on Chanukah? Or, the life of Liberace whom they would toss from a roof for his sexual predilections?

C is for cost. You can practically complete an album of Trucial stamps, covers and sheets by selling your AMC Gremlin to a used car lot in Rohnert Park.

I is for investment. As I said, you can build an impressive Trucial States collection for very little and when you get to meet the Great Postmaster in the Sky, your heirs can give your collection away for nothing! There's no stress or pressure on those who inherit your Trucial collection - just like your collection of old magazines, there's nothing to fight over. All they need are some Hefty Bags.

A is for Animals. If you're a topical collector and you happen to focus your interest on animals, Trucial collecting is for you! Now, there is about as much water

in the Trucial States to allow animal husbandry for Gerbils and a camel or two. But, leave it to the Trucial postal commissioners to print endless sets honoring water buffaloes, manatees, seals, bison and whales, you name it! And then again, when it isn't 120 degrees in the shade, why not print some engraved Emperor Penguins?

L is for Love – you gotta love these folks: What amazing imagination and marketing savvy. Here's a bunch of countries that couldn't, on their best days, manufacture a mechanical pencil set yet no other group issues more moon landers, space ships, zeplins or flying saucers.

I could go on and on but I just spotted in *Linn's* a set of stamps coming out in June from Manama for Jack Paar's 100th Birthday. The souvenir sheet also depicts his band leaders -Jose Mellis and Skitch Henderson. I've got to get my \$2.35 in the mail to get first dibbs on the pre-cancelled sheets. Take it from someone who knows: If you like whiplash, you'll love Oman in the spring.

SRSC

The Santa Rosa Stamp Club meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 6:45 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>



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