

# THE SRSC NEWSLETTER

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



Vol. 6, No. 3

January 2018

## Editor's Note

Dennis Buss

Once again, Steve Brett's wit shines through not only at our meetings but also in our newsletter as he treats us to two more articles. It has become quite apparent that Steve should be declared our resident philatelic humorist. Your editor concludes this issue with a review of a highly recommended book on the pleasures of collecting stamps from "dead countries." As a worldwide collector, these frequently neglected entities deserve a second look. I hope you agree.

## New Year Resolutions of an Addicted Stamp Collector

Steve Brett

Being a club member means sharing so I'm letting you in on my 2018 New Year's resolutions. I am already busy with Resolution #1. I am cleaning out my desk that is the "shop table" of my favorite past time. What's this? Jeez, it's my Rewards Statement from Mystic. I've been looking for this for months. Goes to show you that tidying things up pays off. Wow, I must have spent a fortune, I have 4,445 points. Hey, I can get the Scott 638 Garfield, for 4,000 points. That's a \$5.95 value according to Don Sundman. I think I'll go for that. Whoops! The postage and handling charge on the "free" order sheet is \$ 6.95. Well, I'm only a dollar in the hole if I get this free gift. I'm going to call my Mystic Stamp Advisor to see if I can get a waiver on the postage and handling. Here's their number: 1-800 -433-7811 (I wonder if this is really a free call). "Hello, may I speak with Ms. Delgado, my advisor? She's taken a leave of absence for a month? Is she OK? Really, she was sexually harassed while working in the Mystic Wish Fulfillment Department?" (Not a good move as far as working in that department goes). "OK, then please do let me speak with her associate, Bob. Oh, he's out for a month too? To be honest, this is getting too complicated just to get a Garfield definitive. I'll call back in a month. Merry Christmas to you too and to my advisor."



Now, onto to Resolution #2: Inserting five years of annual worldwide supplements into my binders. Here's the 2009. Why did I ever buy it? I got this phone call from JMS Stamps in Napa. Jeanne called me to let me know my supplement came in. I asked, "Did I really order this?" "No," answered Jeanne, "but you always do, so I ordered it for you. Come by and pick it up - I don't want to get stuck with it." (Neither did I). Now, it's in front of me and I have to unscrew 18 two-post binders. (Like I really want to update Tokelau Islands

from 2009 -2014). But here's the big upside, I have a chance to add the short set from Kenmore's *Stamps of the Cats of the World* to my collection.

Resolution #3 is a real no-brainer. I've been looking forward to coming to grips with the real value of my Sand Dunes collection. I think I'll start with Ajman and work through to Oman today. This is way too much fun and rewarding to do in one day! OK, here's nice set from Ajman: *Roy Rogers & Dale Evans Centennial* including Dale Evans. Hey, it's not in the catalogue. Neither is my long set of *The Life of Ray Charles*. Can you beat this, none of these stamps are in Scotts. Well, let's move along to Manama. I'm sure that the significance of the *Rin Tin Tin -75 Years in Show Business* set isn't lost on the editors of Scotts. It's not in the catalogue, either. I'll be darned. At this pace, I will get to Sharjah before lunch. I guess I'll have time to tackle my collection of back-of-the book Bulgaria tomorrow.

Resolution #4: I really have been spending too much money by indulging in my stamp collecting mania. I've got to cut back on my own or enter into a twelve-step program for addicted stamp collectors. I have this clipping from the Kenwood Press for a therapy group that addresses all forms of addiction – including, eh, the addiction of collecting. The therapist sounds interesting, nay, impressive: Sheik Rashid bin Said al Maklum. OOPS!

**ATTEND WESTPEX 2018**  
**The Bay Area's Premier Stamp Show**  
**April 27-29**  
**San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront Hotel**

## **The Miracles of Stamp Collecting**

Steve Brett

Have you ever noticed that you are left un-amazed by Linn's *Amazing Stamp Stories*? What would be amazing is finding that a cancelled Polish set of 7 domestic dog triangles that you purchased from Mystic Stamps in 1985 for \$ 4.50 is now catalogued in Scott at \$50.70. Now that's amazing! But, then you wake up. I am dedicating this article to the real miracles of stamp collecting. These are miracles that I think some club members will readily identify with.

Miracle #1: *Now where did it go?* A perfect example, sadly, is a set of Persian stamps I own, originally Scott 771- 785. I say "originally" because when I last visited this nice set, Scott 785 (cancelled) had disappeared. It had slipped out of the old its *Crystal Mount*. Of course, it must have slipped into the binder seam. No, not there. Well, let me look on the shelf where the *H through I* ring binder has been sitting. No, it didn't slip downward. It is just gone. But where? This is the miracle of stamps that slip out of a mount. They just evaporate. Or, have they been beamed up to an undisclosed planet where all missing stamps go? I have a reservation with Elon Musk for the space shuttle flight to the planet of missing stamps. When I land I will scoop up all my missing stamps and will feel that it is money well spent.

Miracle #2: *The binder post with shallow head screw*. In this bona fide miracle the shallow screw top easily succumbs to the devious turns of the flat head screwdriver. In a few twists the screw is removed from both posts and the pages come out nicely. OK, time to pile in the album pages. Done. Next, replace the flat head post screws. But, this is crazy.

No matter what I do, the screws will not behave. The more I work the screw the more the metal shavings come off the screw. Let me try this screw on the other post. That doesn't work either. This is Miracle #2: the post screw that fights back. "Honey, do you have the contractor's number who did our kitchen?"

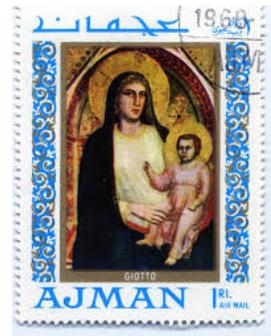
Miracle #3: *Global Album Supplements*. How come it never fails to happen that over any recent 5-year period there are three times as many supplemental pages for Lesotho or Burkino Fasso than France, Great Britain, Canada combined? This is the miracle of nitwits who make decisions about supplements.

Miracle #4: *The miracle of Showgard seconds*. The seconds are perfectly good. But, try stretching the full price product, even slightly to fit a stamp that may require either a size 24 or 25, kaboom. It rips.

Miracle #5: *The miracle of the missing stamp tong*. Yuri Geller, the famous mentalist made pencils and nails bend just by using the power of his mind. I invited him to my home to find all my missing stamp tongs. All he found were missing love letters from the late 1960's and they were NOT from my wife. But, he also located a raw beefsteak for my left eye and that was useful.

Miracle #6: *The best source for religion on stamps*. I've collected Vatican stamps for decades because it was a sure thing for my religion topic. Now I find out that Ajman, Dubai and Sharjah issue many more Christian depictions. Now that's a miracle!

Miracle #7: *Printing error or miracle?* This one comes from the Netherlands. It is a centennial stamp that commemorates the life of their famous son, Vincent Van Gogh. The stamp's vertical perforation just happens to bisect his left ear through a printing error. Now, you tell me if that isn't a true philatelic miracle?

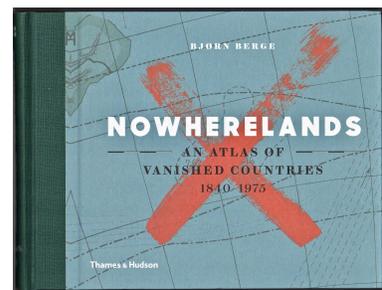


I would enjoy hearing from you about your Stamp Miracles. Please feel free to write or meet me to share your experiences.

## Book Review

Dennis Buss

Most worldwide collectors are familiar with the so-called "dead country" issues. Who today remembers places like Heligoland, Obock, Labuan, Alwar, Inini, Allenstein, Batum, Biafra, or Upper Yafa? No doubt many stamp collectors do. These are entities that at one time in the past issued stamps but no longer do so. Many have since been absorbed into other countries as former colonies gained their independence or as the result of redrawn political boundaries. The stamps coming from these places represent a fascinating facet of worldwide collecting not only for their philatelic interest but also because of their fascinating histories.



Bjorn Berge's book, *Nowherelands: An Atlas of Vanished Countries, 1840—1975*, published in 2017 by Thames & Hudson Press, tells the story behind fifty of these nearly forgotten entities. The book is organized into six time periods: 1940-1860; 1860-1890; 1890-1915; 1915-1925; 1925-1945; and 1945-1975. Within each time segment he provides vivid descriptions of six to ten different vanished countries. Often quoting the



accounts of travellers who visited these places, he portrays the geography, history, and principal historical figures that made each place distinctive if not notorious. Berge has a knack for seeking out the unusual. For example, we are treated to a recipe for making goat soup in the chapter on Obock. We learn why Batum, an oil depot on the Black Sea, became a vital enclave for British interests in 1918 as its navy made the transition from coal burning to oil burning

vessels. One of the legacies of colonialism was the creation of independent countries that were rife with ethnic and religious conflicts. This occurred in Nigeria with the break away state of Biafra claiming the rights to extensive off-shore oil reserves. Intolerable to Nigeria, a horrific civil war ensued. In the face of widespread famine, Biafra sued for peace. For many stamp collectors this kind of background information would be reason enough to read Berge's book.

But there is another motive for why his book deserves your attention – he is a stamp collector. For each country described, Berge adds a photograph of one or more stamps from his collection. He pays particular attention, not only to the design of the stamp, but also to the cancellations applied to them. In so doing, he demonstrates why his dead country stamps are best viewed as historical artifacts. They provide an entrée into a place and time that documents significant historical movements such as the fall of monarchies, colonial expansion and independence movements, ethnic conflicts, the rise and fall fascism, world wars, and the cold war. But they also tell us about the people behind these movements whether they be villains, scoundrels, rogues or heroes. Each of these places has a story to tell and Berge provides a vivid and captivating account that is sure to interest the stamp collector.

## 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>

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