

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

Have you ever been puzzled by unusual stamps that you have acquired? I am pleased to announce that we now have an expert on call to answer your most perplexing questions. As you will see, Phil A. Tellick has both a deep and wide command of philatelic matters. Address your questions to Phil A. Tellick care of Stephenoelbrett@gmail.com for the best advice you will ever get at a price you can afford: free! We hope to publish the Ask Phil column as a regular newsletter feature.

Although I have pursued several collecting interests over the years, there is one collection that I continue to maintain since I began collecting in my youth and that is my worldwide collection. Some of you might wonder – what's the point, you can never complete such a collection. That is quite true but as I have discovered, worldwide collecting takes many forms. I have prepared a series of articles that explores the various ways in which collectors have attempted to build such collections. I would be very interested in learning of your reactions to these articles whether it takes the form of suggestions, corrections, aspects that I have ignored, or your own distinct approach to worldwide collecting. As I have discovered, there is much to learn and share about building a worldwide collection.

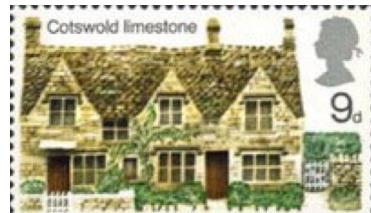
Last, we have a short piece by George Land on stamp expertization. You may recall that George spoke on this topic at our January 2018 meeting. He provides further insights on this important topic based on an article he wrote for *The Circuit*, the journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors.

Ask Phil A. Tellick

Steven Brett and Paul von Gottfried

Dear Phil: I discovered a couple of stamps in a packet that have no country name on them. Just a small representation of Queen Elizabeth (I think) in the right corner. I think they may be valuable errors. What are your thoughts?

Phil: Yes, that is the Queen and what is strange is that she hasn't aged as seen on the recently issued stamps. So, that may be an additional error. The commemorative topics are typically British. Until I see more of these I can only speculate. On the other hand, I have a few stamps



that have the Q.E.II profile on them but the country named range from *Great Britten* to just *Britten*. I have one showing Prince Harry and the stamp has *Untied Kingdome*. These might be great rarities. My guess is that you have the very common ageless Queen error stamps. My advice is to look for *Untied Kingdome* errors.



Dear Phil: In a shipment from Kenmore Stamps they gifted me with a sheet of Sharjah Christmas seals. Sheik Abdul Raman Haffez is pictured feeding a reindeer from his Mercedes 500S. Should I be grateful?

Phil: Are you grateful for the sheet of Christmas seals or the Sheik's generosity in promoting the conservation of reindeer? Please write back.

Dear Phil: Mystic is offering historic DDR stamps that contain genuine remnants of the Berlin Wall. They claim that these sets will gain in value as they are scarce. What are your thoughts?

Phil: President Reagan asked Premier Gorbachev to tear down the wall and not the Postmaster General so I doubt if these stamps are authentic.

Dear Phil: I inherited my Uncle Lou's stamp collection. There is some really great material in the two albums he kept. I am having trouble transferring what I've inherited to my collection because Uncle Lou used Crazy Glue to keep the stamps in place. He also used Crazy Glue to keep his pants up, but that's another story. What is a good way to "unhinge" these stamps?

Phil: If Uncle Lou is buried in a mausoleum and you have a key, feel free to disturb his remains. Just kidding. There is no way to save this collection. You can, however, trade with someone who uses Scotch tape to affix his or her stamps. Use *Linn's Trading Post Column* and see who responds. Let me have their contact information because I also have a writer who may swap some Middle East Christmas seals for them.

*Dear Phil: My Uncle Ralph left me his specialty album of Spain through 1940. While thumbing through this fabulous collection I stopped in my tracks when I saw the 1930 Goya set (and what a set!) including the 3 nudes (*Naked Majas*). I find myself in a terrible compulsion to view this set with my magnifying glass—sometimes a dozen or more times a day. Help me, please—I only wanted to collect U.S.—I swear.*

Dear Uncle Ralph's Nephew: Before you lose your Merit Badge (or more) I want you to follow these instructions: First, mail the offending stamps to me- they do not belong in your collection! Replace these stamps with three 2010 Kate Smith 44 cent commemoratives (USPS 10-085). Should you feel compelled to view the Naked Maja's once more before mailing them to me (by FedEx) hold the magnifying glass in both hands and sin no more.

Dear Phil,
I just got the new stamp honoring the NRA. It's printed in sheetlets of 20. The sheetlet smells of gunpowder. The writing on the back of the sheet states that real gunpowder was used in the production. I'm a little concerned about keeping this sheet with my other modern postage from the good ol' USA.

John Winchester

Phil: Dear John, I would be very careful with these stamps. I personally use them to start a fire in my barbecue. I did contact the USPS. They said not to worry. Congress issued a statement supporting the stamps. The Democratic minority offered a rebuttal. The USPS said these stamps have water-activated gum. They will be the only stamps with water-activated gum issued this year. Simply lick the back when using on a letter. Then light your tongue on fire for being stupid enough to buy them. Not to worry. Most have been stockpiled by NRA members. However, there have been 13 reports of member homes spontaneously combusting.

PVG

The Ways of Collecting Worldwide Stamps, Part 1

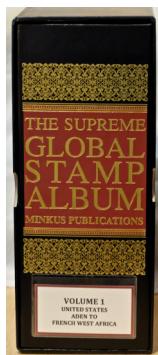
Dennis Buss

When many of us starting collecting stamps in our youth, we began with a worldwide collection. Perhaps we received a basic starter album as a gift and started from there. Many of these childhood collections were abandoned but a few of us never out grew the fascination of collecting the world. Over the years I became intrigued by the many ways in which our club members and others have collected worldwide stamps. Because well over 570,000 different stamps have been issued since the appearance of the Penny Black in 1840, worldwide collectors have had to answer two basic questions:

1. Given the abundance of stamps to collect, will I place any limits on what to collect?
2. How will I store my collection?

The two questions are closely related. For example, given cost or space limitations you may decide to confine your collection in some particular way. By examining the more

practical storage question first, it becomes easier to decide what limits, if any, you may wish to place on your worldwide collecting goals.



What are the options available to the collector for housing a worldwide stamp collection? The answer to this question depends upon whether you prefer an album-driven approach to worldwide collecting or whether you prefer a more flexible, open-ended approach to storing your collection. Many collectors desire the guidance that a printed album provides. This is sometimes referred to as "collecting to the album." The stamps are chronologically organized by each stamp-issuing entity. The album provides essential identification information including date of issuance, watermark, perforation, color, format (sheet, coil, booklet), and paper variations along with numerous illustrations. All of these features enable the proper placement of the stamps giving the page an overall pleasing appearance.

Nevertheless, some collectors view these features as needlessly confining.

Inevitably, most collectors find interesting stamp varieties for which no place is provided in the album. Do you look for an open space on the page and write in essential information thus upsetting the appearance of the page? Enough of these entries tend to make the collection look a bit sloppy. Of course, one can add pages for such varieties but the page placement is often out of context with the overall sequence. Such considerations lead worldwide collectors to using stock books, stock pages, or user-designed pages to house their collections. Instead of relying on the album editors to organize the collection, the collector relies upon a worldwide stamp catalogue for guidance. Essential identification

notations are written by the collector and placed with the stamps. As new stamps are acquired, new pages are added or rearranged. Instead of looking at page after page of unfilled spaces, this open-ended approach enables the album to grow with the collection.

Given these two basic approaches, below is a list of options I discovered through discussions with our club members, what I have found on internet web-sites, as well as from various philatelic journals and books. As each option is considered, I plan to identify the pros and cons associated with the particular collecting approach.

Printed Albums

Comprehensive Albums (by years and coverage)

Selective Albums

Period-based Selective Albums

Abridged "Sampler" Albums

Single Specimen Albums

Non-Printed Albums

Stock Books

Stock Pages

Collector-made Pages

Comprehensive Printed Albums

First, it should be noted that no commercial printed album has space for all of the stamps issued since 1840. The matter of completeness is complex. Some albums do not include all the major perforation, watermark, paper, format and color varieties. As a result, you may have to add your own custom designed pages. Most of these albums do not include spaces for official, military, parcel post, telegraph, local issues and other "back of the book" varieties. Consequently, these albums will not house all the 570,000 plus "regular" postage stamps that have been issued since 1840. Instead, comprehensive albums vary by their degree of completeness.

The *Scott International 1840 to 2015* album comes in 47 binders of 18,880 double-sided pages priced at \$9,999.99 from the Amos Press. The first four volumes represent a condensed version of the classical period from 1840 to 1940. The complete set has space for approximately 250,000 different stamps, less than half of the 570,000 total cited above. Nevertheless, the Scott International represents the most complete version of a commercial worldwide printed album available.

The *Minkus Supreme Global 1840 to 2017* album, also published by the Amos Press, is a worthwhile alternative to the Scott International. The Amos Advantage website lists the Minkus Supreme Global album pages from 1840 to 1976 at a price of approximately \$1,700. This does not include the cost of at least ten binders needed to house the pages. Although current supplements are available, according to some worldwide stamp collecting blogs, there are gaps in the Minkus coverage with a few supplement years missing between 1976 and 2017. Nevertheless, it is an excellent printed album as its coverage of the classic period is more complete than the Scott version. The most recent supplements are based on the Scott catalogue numbering system whereas the older supplements are based on the obsolete Minkus catalogue numbering system.

Steiner Pages 1840 to 2017 are available on the internet as a downloadable file or as a CD. The cost is \$50 for a one-year subscription that entitles you to download just over 200,000 single sided pages of United States and worldwide stamp issues. The Steiner

website claims that the pages cover major varieties from all eras and all stamp issuing entities based on the Scott Catalogue. Once you download the pages, you can then print them out on your own printer and paper. The 8½ by 11 inch format allows the pages to be inserted into any three-ring binder once they have been punched. It should be noted that while there are printed “boxes” and written descriptions (dates of issue, denominations, perf numbers, watermarks, etc.) for each stamp, the album does not provide any stamp illustrations. However, the descriptions are sequenced in accord with the Scott worldwide catalogue. At \$50 the Steiner pages look like an incredible bargain, however, you do have to figure in the cost of purchasing and printing the pages along with the binders to house the album. Ideally one would use acid free, archival quality paper of a heavier stock. Moreover, printing with a more permanent laser printer is preferred over using an ink-jet printer.

Why might some worldwide collectors choose not to purchase a comprehensive pre-printed album? Cost is an obvious consideration. The idea of spending ten thousand dollars just to buy the Scott International album is a non-starter for many, if not most worldwide collectors. Imagine how many stamps one could buy with that amount of money. Even if such an album is purchased, the presence of all of those blank pages serves as a constant reminder of the stamps that you do not possess. Even if you had a 100,000 plus collection, you would still only cover a fraction of the spaces available in your album. Then there is the consideration of space. Do you have enough sturdy shelf space to store up to 50 large, heavy binders? There is also the question of time. How long will it take to build at least a reasonably sized collection given the 570,000 plus stamps already issued? If one were in his or her early fifties, such a goal might seem doable. I’m not sure it makes much sense to start such a collection at the age of 75.

Next is the question of value. Before deciding to build a *comprehensive* worldwide collection, the collector needs to come to grips with the stark reality that nearly all of the stamps that he or she will collect will be nearly worthless. Even though over 500,000 different stamps have been issued, many, if not most of these separate issues were printed in the millions and a few were printed in the billions. There are good reasons why many stamp shows feature penny boxes brimming with cheap stamps. Here is how one worldwide collector put it: your first 10,000 stamps are worth a penny each, the second 10,000 are worth two cents each, the third 10,000 are worth three cents each and so on. Under this formula, a collection of 30,000 different worldwide stamps would be worth \$600. Clearly, the building of a comprehensive worldwide collection should not be viewed as an investment. Unless your heirs are made aware of this reality, they will be greatly disappointed in what is offered for grandpa’s or grandma’s “old stamp collection.” It is always important to remember that you are buying mostly cheap stamps and that is exactly how stamp dealers will assess your collection. Therefore your worldwide stamp budget should be guided by the strategy of buying the most stamps for the least amount of money. The great pleasure in building a comprehensive worldwide collection will still be there as you wisely spend your money.

Without trying to be overly negative, there is another consideration regarding stamp values. By this I mean the turning point when many postal authorities no longer released stamps primarily to satisfy legitimate postal needs or to commemorate authentic national events, personages or country-specific topics. Most of the commentators I have read on this topic agree that this shift occurred in the early 1970s. This was the time when many countries decided to exploit the stamp collecting market by issuing useless stamps – what we collectors cynically call “wallpaper.” The number of such issues increased exponentially since the ‘70s. So the comprehensive worldwide collector has to ask whether he or she should spend hard earned money on stamps that have little or nothing to do with the culture, history, flora, fauna, landscapes, or important figures of the issuing country. What is the value of collecting stamps when many of them became little more than gimmicks to boost postal agency revenues?



Despite these difficulties, there remains the compelling lure of filling spaces, not just a few spaces, but as many as we possibly can. The satisfaction of filling a page in your printed album spurs one on toward the elusive goal of completeness. We bid on worldwide collections offered in auctions, we buy kiloware, we trade with other collectors, we save the stamps posted on mail from all corners of the globe. Whatever the source, we find fascinating stamps that give us a picture and insight into faraway places and the great events of the past. What do we do with them? Save them, of course. Where do we put them? In our comprehensive worldwide pre-printed album!

Mark Your Calendars

WINEPEX 2018

**October 5-7 at the Marin Civic Center,
the North Bay's only major stamp show.**

**Sponsored by the Redwood Empire Collectors Club,
Winepex is celebrating its 25th anniversary.**

The show features single frame exhibits and a dealers' bourse.

More Thoughts on Expertization

George Land

There are plenty of early U.S. and other foreign stamps that the ordinary, untrained collector needs help with. The odds are against you having the good one instead of the cheapo. But even if it is the low-value stamp, it is nice to know, rather than wondering.

My own problem with expertization is not a matter of identification. It is about the *condition* of the stamp. The expertized stamp always includes a detailed report on condition, whether you want it or not. Often, I do not. The professionals have a variety of specialized, high-powered equipment and the ability to use it. They will find any little, bitty defect that I cannot see nor was I aware of. Suddenly, the stamp you thought was in decent condition, no longer is. Maybe you thought you could sell it for a nice price. But not with that condition report on the expert document! Neither you nor the buyer could see those tiny defects but now they are exposed for all to read about.

Only once have I been pleasantly surprised with the condition report. I sent in Sardinia #4 for examination. It is ugly as sin and very difficult to distinguish its features and to make a sensible identification. The report came back as genuine without a single word about condition. Their high-powered equipment was unable to discern a single problem on my 161 year-old stamp!



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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Paul von Gottfried, Don Test, Dennis Buss,
Susan Dixon, Steve Brett, Jerry Campbell, and 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 or a more extended article about some aspect of philately, your submissions are welcome.

See Dennis Buss, the Newsletter editor.