

# The PhilateliKid

*The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)*

December 23, 2014

Aloha and Seasons Greetings:

This year the SCCFK opened its sixth stamp club, making kids stamp clubs in three different states: Hawaii, Nevada, and California. Since September we have had 244 kids join in Hawaii. They are all students at Kamali'i Elementary School, a Title I school in Kihei, Maui, Hawaii. The school has students in grades K through 5. Kindergarten children are not permitted to join stamp club, and first grade students must wait until after the Christmas break. So, with a total school census of 500 students, having 244 join means we are likely to have over 300 join by June, approaching the record of 312 members from 8 years ago in California.

Just a few weeks ago we were worried about running out of stamps. Stamps are placed in Tupperware bowls on the library tables, and the kids get to choose what stamps they want (all free) to put into their albums. We give out about 1,000 to 1,500 stamps at every meeting, so with the approximate 5,000 stamps left, we were going to have a problem in about 6 weeks. (The club meets twice a month, but sometimes more frequently based on the availability of the school's library.) Fortunately several donors, including NSSS (Nevada Stamp Study Society, aka the Reno Stamp Club), the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library, and a couple generous individual donors stepped up and helped out.

The SCCFK was officially organized in 2002. The big news is that the IRS tax exemption became a reality this year. (A factor in the delay might have been the \$400.00 application fee required by the IRS.) As a 501 C (3) non-profit organization we can accept donations that are tax deductible by the donors. Most of the contributions in the past, other than those from yours truly, were from several very kind stamp dealers who sold us tongs, hinges, and stamps at their cost.

The fact that Kamali'i School (pronounced CAAH MUH LEE EEE) is a Title I school means that a large portion of the students are living at poverty level. A couple weeks ago, as I was leaving after stamp club, I was caught in the parking lot by the school counsellor. She said she wanted to tell me how much the SCCFK is appreciated by the kids, many of whom have NOTHING (her words.) It was such a nice thing to hear, so I want to share that joy with all of you who have been so supportive. Give yourself a big smile and know you are appreciated!

I want to give a shout-out to Brian and Lori Hunt (Hunt & Co., Austin, TX) for a very special last-minute unexpected gift of 300 mint U.S. Scott No. 1311, the 1966 souvenir sheet commemorating the 6<sup>th</sup> International Philatelic Exhibition held in the United States (SIPEX). Each was nicely packaged in a glassine envelope, allowing each student in the stamp club to receive his/her first souvenir sheet as a special Christmas gift. It may sound strange to many of us, but for many of these kids, it was the first time they had seen or held a glassine envelope! I did not have a large enough supply of glassine envelopes in the past eight years to provide one to each student, so this was a double gift for each new stamp collector.

Kids are kids, but...

Even at very young ages, the kids want (or don't want) certain stamps. At this time of year, Christmas stamps are always in high demand. Every student who wanted one got to choose two Christmas stamps this year. Unfortunately, I do not have a supply of used Hanukah, EID, or Kwanza stamps to give away. (We don't have a budget to give away mint stamps.) As it turns out, used Hanukah, EID, and Kwanza stamps are so scarce, they cost almost as much as mint ones.

By the time I got around to contacting a dealer about getting some Hanukah, EID, or Kwanza stamps, it was too late to get them prior to the Christmas break. Another example of how an earlier plan by me would have resulted in better results. I am therefore now planning for next year. Got any used Hanukah, EID, or Kwanza stamps lying around that you would like to send our way?

How do you collect stamps? Everybody I have ever met used hinges to mount stamps - once upon a time. Many of us still do, especially for more common, less expensive stamps. I have a collection of over 8,000 Bureau precancels, all but about 5 of which are hinged in my album. The way SCCFK kids collect is to first learn to hinge stamps, and then to collect by hinging. (Each is started out with his/her free album.) This is not a problem, as by far most of the free stamps given away are used, and have no gum. In the past 30 years, with self-adhesive stamps becoming by far the norm, collecting stamps off paper is problematic. We have all read numerous articles about various ways some collectors have contrived to "soak" these recently issued stamps. The method we use is to collect them on piece. I even use this for my own personal collection. It fattens up the album faster, but then, I am sure, that pleases suppliers of albums and pages.

Damaged stamps. Do you routinely throw away stamps that have tears, missing corners, creases, thins, stains, removed cancels, short perfs, straight edges, clipped perfs, "home-made" coils (i.e. fake), Scotch tape marks, "manuscript" cancels (i.e. ball point pen or felt tip markers)? How do you feel about mint stamps with no gum, or heavily hinged, or hinge remnants? How about notations on the back? Well, how about throwing those stamps *our* way. Most kids do not care much about the back of stamps, or even a few missing or clipped perforations. They can be wonderful for starting collectors. The one "damage" that is not wanted is heavily cancelled stamps. Kids just do not want them. (I sort of agree with them, but often will take one anyway, until a better one comes along.)

The Five Rules of Stamp Club are:

1. Have fun.
2. Make sure your hands are clean..
3. No food or liquids on the tables.
4. Wait your turn
5. Pick up anything on the floor.

These rules are of course in addition to the regular school rules (No running in the halls, etc.) For many years we had just the first four rules. After every stamp club meeting, I would spend 10-15 minutes on my hands and knew picking up loose hinges, stamps, and occasional pair of tongs. Finally, I smartened up a bit, and added the fifth rule. I still do have to spend a little time picking up things on the floor, but it is much faster now.

The future of stamp collecting. I could talk at length about this subject. The most important message I have is this: Kids love stamp collecting. I repeat, kids love this hobby. Please do not pay any attention to all those doomsday predictors who say kids are "too busy," kids don't "care about stamps," etc. Those people do not know what they are talking about, and where they get their information is very suspect. They are flat out wrong. I have personally said, for over a decade, that anywhere there are children, we can establish stamps clubs. I personally have started up six stamp collecting clubs for kids. Each has had over 250 kids join up. There was one exception where there were not 250 students in the entire school. In that school, however, 100% (yes, one hundred percent) of the students joined stamp club. Nobody has ever been forced to join. In fact, to attend, the kid has to give up his/her recess.

Next newsletter (if there is one): Why kids love stamp collecting.

**Comments? Write Robert W. Martin, P.O. Box 1809, Kihei, HI 96753 (Try to use a nice stamp on your letter.)**

**Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids is a 501 C (3) organization. All donations are provided written receipts.**