

## The PhilateliKid

**The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)  
Collect Stamps (The Most Educational Hobby)**

[www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org](http://www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org)

June 1, 2017

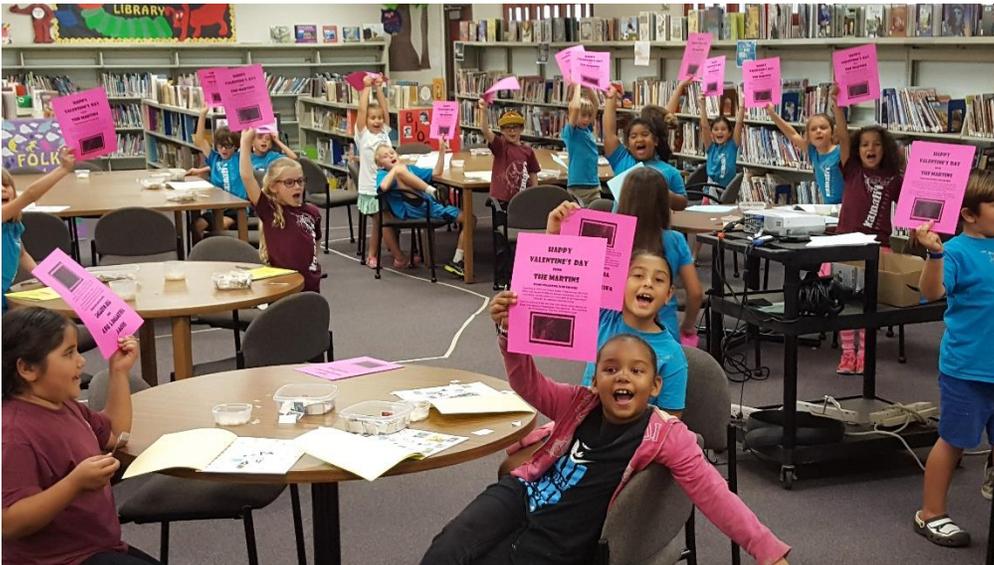
**Thought for the day:** Stephen Hawking is on record for announcing that the world as we know it will need to be evacuated within 100 years, for living on earth will become impossible for humans. That means that the young stamp collectors of today are most likely to be the last batch of new stamp collectors who will live the rest of their lives on earth, without having to be evacuated.

Evacuated? There is no place in our solar system that is compatible to life as we know it. Not enough oxygen to breathe, and not enough water to survive, not to mention incredible temperature problems - too hot or too cold – and nasty weather systems.

What has this to do with stamp collecting? Well, if you knew you had 100 **years** to extinction would you start building libraries, or would you spend what little time you have left to trying to prevent the extinction, or to preparing for a future where no human lives on earth.

For decades experts have predicted all sorts of calamitous ends to stamp collecting, and although the trend is definitely there, it still is a little hard to precisely predict when the tipping point necessary to exist as a hobby will come, leaving a few disorganized survivors. One thing is for sure: if we do not create new stamp collectors, one day there will be none.

### **Are You a Stamp Collector, or are you a Philatelist?**



To many of us, the noun “philatelist” is a synonym for “stamp collector.” That is partially right. All philatelists are stamp collectors, but not all stamp collectors are philatelists. The word “philatelist” is the word describing a person involved with the hobby of philately. But philately actually is the collection **and study** of imprinted stamps **and related material concerned**

**Valentine’s Day at Stamp Club – Every child got a Valentine (1<sup>st</sup> Grade students) with postal history. Note that philately is collection and study. Also note that not just stamps but also postal history is an integral part of philately.**

Personally, I consider myself mostly a stamp collector, and there are some who might not disagree. Nevertheless, I have spent endless hours studying stamps, reading about their subject matter, learning about the production process, and enjoying the huge way stamps have affected history. I even have gone so far as to collect non-stamps such as picture post cards and stampless covers. Deltiology is the collection and study of picture post cards, which is part of my collection.

Going to Stamp Shows is not stamp collecting, nor is exhibiting stamps. Listening to lectures and reading articles and books about stamps, meeting other philatelists and having great conversations with them, their history, and their collecting interests, is a lot of fun, but not collecting stamps. Writing articles about stamps and running stamp collecting clubs for kids is not stamp collecting.

But I am a stamp collector – no doubt about that. Why then am I reluctant to call myself a philatelist? I have asked myself why that is. Is it because I have not won any large gold medals? Is it because my collection has very few stamps that have a catalog value of over \$1,000? Is it because I find the printing process way more complicated than I care about? Is it because I really like some beautiful CTO's (cancelled to order stamps, made especially for stamp collectors) and I find philatelic covers often to be very interesting? But there is this one matter that gnaws on my conscience: I have met a few people who brag about being a philatelist, but who care nothing about the future of our hobby. To me this is about as objectionable as saying you love the Olympics, but do not support sports for kids.

I believe that if you truly love something you would want to see it continue to exist, and that you would promote it enthusiastically, especially among young people, who are in fact what the future will be. I know that when I was a boy nobody had to twist my arm to make me want to collect stamps, and the same holds true now, not just for kids but also for young adults.

### **School Year 2016-2017**

The school year has just ended, and the numbers are now final. The local stamp club for kids had 222 kids join in the 2016-2017 school year. (Each year begins at zero.) That is way down from previous years where we always had over 250 students join, and sometimes over 300. But that drop in membership is because the previous school census (population) was between 500 and 600 students. This year, there were only 393 students in the entire school. That means we still had 56.5% of all the students join the stamp club. That speaks for itself. The students are never required to attend. It is totally voluntary. In fact, they have to give up a recess to attend stamp club. The fact is that there is not a shortage of kids who want to collect stamps. Every year for the past 15 years, in three different states, the stamp collecting clubs for kids have had well over half of all the students in the entire school join.

There is however a shortage of adults who are willing to volunteer to run a stamp collecting club for kids. That is a fact also that speaks for itself.

### **Priorities – What are ours?**

Numerous studies have been made on the subject of attracting more people to our hobby. Here are a few thoughts that I believe would help:

1. No award of any kind – not even a bronze medal for an exhibit – should be given to anybody who has not shown a definite effort to promote our hobby to kids.
2. No dealer should be invited to sell his/her wares at any stamp bourse or stamp show unless they dedicate at least 10% of their inventory for sale to youth and beginners, AND promote it.
3. Any news journal should have information on its front page about youth and beginner stamp collectors, and at least as much column space in every issue that is dedicated to the future of our hobby as is used to discuss upcoming auctions where the cheapest item is \$100.00.
4. Every philatelic organization should inform its members who their fellow members are, with few exceptions, and provide an easy way for us to communicate and share with each other.
5. Fun – a three letter word, needs to be the centerpiece of every hobby, especially of ours. We need to learn how to not take ourselves so seriously. At our core, we are talking about little colored pieces of paper, aren't we?
6. Half of all exhibits in stamp shows must be from youth or beginners with less than 3 years in the hobby. This will really quickly result in recruiting more exhibits from young stamp collectors.
7. Every post office in America should have a display about stamp collecting, unless physically impossible, and it should change every 30 days and be done by philatelists.
8. When we correspond with each other, there should be a \$10 penalty for every failure to use the US mail and failure to have a postage stamp affixed. The \$10 should be placed in a fund to be spent only on promoting stamp collecting among youth.
9. The art of mentoring a new stamp collector need to be taught and learned by everybody who wants to see our hobby flourish.
10. Our printed media and electronic media need to have plentiful general-interest stories about stamps, primarily aimed at the general public and non-stamp collectors.
11. Every philatelic exhibit must have something that is interesting to beginners, or get seriously marked down, and lighting must be bright to make reading the text and seeing the philatelic items easy. Big type and **BOLD** print need to be encouraged.
12. Every Philatelic Library must have 10% or more of its material designed for youth and beginners. Okay, let's be reasonable. How about ½ of 1% ?

This may sound very abrasive to many of us, but if we are really going to be serious about this, we must recognize that the endless discussions, papers written, symposiums held, studies done, etc. have NOT resulted in fixing this huge problem. These are just a few suggestions that would make a difference. We must think and act “outside of the box.”

### **The American Philatelic Society and its Fundraising for Youth**

The April 2017 edition of The American Philatelist reported the results for the calendar year 2016 fundraising by the APS. Cash donations were \$784,462, a pretty big amount! Amounts donated for the APRL (library and building) were about \$265,843 of that amount. Pretty impressive. The amount donated for Youth was \$2,251. (That is .00287 - less than three tenths of one percent of all fundraising.) You decide if that is impressive. Where do our priorities lie? One day, will we have a beautiful library, but zero stamp collectors to use it? It kinda looks like that might happen.

Full disclosure: I am a life member of the APS.

## Got A Philatelic Library?

At some point stamp collectors begin to “collect” literature related to our hobby. When I try to think how this happened to me, I cannot remember, for it was 60 years ago. It could have been some advertising by H.E. Harris on the back of a comic book, or it might have been a clipping from our Sunday newspaper, from the philatelic page, announcing the dates and locations of upcoming First Day of Issues. Somewhere along the line, my mentor (my father) taught me how to use a Scott Catalogue, and by the age of 12 my Christmas wish list included a Scott Catalogue. Back then the Scott Catalogue contained the entire world in one thick volume. I got a subscription to Western Stamp Collector as a gift, and started to save old editions. Then I learned about various philatelic organizations which published monthly newsletters or magazines for their members, so I joined a few just to get on their mailing list. Eventually, I learned about books written specifically about fancy cancellations, perfins, and every imaginable subject including books suggesting how to collect stamps.

## Book Review

### **Fundamentals of Philately by L.N. (Leon Norman) Williams, first published in 1971**

A year ago I read a book that referenced *Fundamentals of Philately*. The title intrigued me, as I am always looking for something that would appeal to youth and beginner stamp collectors, so I bought a used copy. (Plentiful on Amazon.com.) A recent check shows at least 23 book sellers are selling this book, mostly in the \$25 - \$50 range. One used copy also is for sale by Red Rhino for \$647.68 !!!

Published by the American Philatelic Society first in 1971, it has had many revisions, and is 862 pages long. The copy I bought was revised in 1990, but includes portions that were copyrighted in 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, and 1963. Originally written by brothers L.N. Williams and Maurice Williams, the 1990 copy was published after Maurice's death in 1976 and is dedicated to him. The book is more of an encyclopedia, and although everything is in black and white (no color) there are hundreds of drawings and photographs. The book truly is detailed about many things most stamp collectors could care less about. Twenty seven (27) pages alone are devoted to the subject of paper. Over 300 pages are devoted to printing. It has a really nice 60 page long Index. This definitely is not for youth or beginner stamp collectors, but an advanced collector wishing to learn about technical aspects philately should get a copy.

What do you think? Thoughtful answers are welcomed and will be published, so please feel free to write! (150 words or less, please.) Mail it to Robert W. Martin, P.O. Box 1809, Kihei, Hawaii 96753-1809. It should be written as if the reader knows nothing about your topic, so beginners can understand it.

Visit our website at [www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org](http://www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org) or [www.yummystampcollecting.org](http://www.yummystampcollecting.org)

**Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids is a 501 C (3) organization. All donations are appreciated and if \$10 or more are provided written receipts. You also can donate via PayPal on our website.**

© 2017, Robert W. Martin

30