

The PhilateliKid

The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)

www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org

October 5, 2015

Stamp Collecting at the Dentist's Office

Ten days ago I broke a crown on one of my molars, which necessitated an immediate trip to the dentist. A new crown had to be ordered, so it would take a few weeks. Because I was scheduled to travel to Singapore and India in 10 days (today) my dentist fortunately found a way to expedite the manufacture of the new crown, and scheduled me to come in this morning to have it replaced.

Normally, today is his day off, but he volunteered to come in to help me out, so long as I would not mind his bringing his daughter to the office. (She is in the 4th grade, but no school today because school is out this week for the Fall break.) No problem, and I asked him if he thought his daughter would be interested in stamp collecting. I mentioned that I would bring the stamps, a small album, tongs and hinges – all for her to keep. Wonderful, he replied.

This morning at 7:30 am I met Elizabeth, and quickly, in two minutes, gave her an album, wrote her name on it with a black marker, showed her how to hinge a stamp, and gave her a bowl full of about 200 stamps and a bowl of 400 hinges. Off to the dental chair I went, while she entertained herself with stamps for 45 minutes in the next room. When I was finished, she had become an avid stamp collector, and took with herself about 20 stamps and 40 hinges for later. She had a grand time, and I think her father may become a collector, too.

Postal Historians

Gather together a group of philatelists today and see who qualifies as a “postal historian.” What is a postal historian, you ask? At first, it may seem easy to define what a postal historian is. It is simply a person who studies postal history. Not a very helpful definition! What is postal history, and how much studying is required to qualify as a postal historian?

As odd as it may seem, there is no Society of American Postal Historians. There is not even a widely agreed upon definition of what postal history is. A working definition would have to include both the idea of history, and postal, so here's a stab at what might be a working definition:

Postal history – the study of how mail (the postal part) got delivered (past tense – makes it history.) I believe the term can be further broadened to include what currently is going on in

mail delivery, because, actually what is happening right now is actually history one second from now. To be *more* specific, the delivery of mail, unless otherwise noted, is the delivery by a governmental body – usually the sovereign nation where the mail originated, and where it was delivered, and any nations between the two that had any influence on the mail. The “between” part includes geographical areas that are not even nations, such as oceans. Also, many land areas are not technically sovereign, because they are colonies of sovereign nations, or some other classification such as a territory.

For the purposes of stamp collecting, the mail must have had some sort of fee to be delivered – hence the necessity of purchasing and affixing a stamp. However, even exceptions to that rule apply, for philately also includes the delivery of mail for free, such as when servicemen or government officials get their mail delivered for no charge, and of course, the delivery of mail prior to the invention of stamps, which were first used in 1840 in Great Britain.

Today, a great emphasis is on postal history, which includes just about every stamp collector who has ever looked at a stamp and wondered what year it came out, or what it was used for. A stamp collector becomes a postal historian the second he or she starts to research something about the stamp, or the mail.

Competitive exhibiting in the philatelic world has changed into not so much showing off the stamps a collector has, but the history behind the stamp. That includes the decision to issue the stamp, the method of printing the stamp, the distribution of the stamp, the ways the stamp was used, and how it impacted the future.

Much of the fun of collecting stamps is the story behind the stamp. Ever heard of the not-too-famous Battle of White Plains? It was a small battle where George Washington neither won nor lost, at a location that was not very important, and would have been long forgotten EXCEPT that among stamp collectors it is well known because in 1926 the Post Office issued a small stamp commemorating the event, and then made a small souvenir sheet of it containing just 25 stamps. At 2¢ each, the entire souvenir sheet cost 50¢. It is not cheap today, costing \$250.00 and up depending on condition. Many stamp collectors have stared for years at an entire blank page in their US stamp album for that souvenir sheet, which happened to be the very first souvenir sheet ever issued by the US Post Office.

The DWI Mystery

I recently read an article by Michael Rogers, a well-known dealer of stamps from China, who now is with a big auction house named Kelleher-Rogers. In the article about his career he stated that his business originally included DWI. I did not know what that abbreviation stood for. I am familiar with the term "Driving While Intoxicated – DWI" but I was pretty sure that was not what he did.

After a couple days of consternation, I decided to phone him. The nice lady who answers at Kelleher Rogers said he was away, but maybe she could help me. I asked her if she know what he meant. She explained she had worked there only a month, and had no idea what DWI stood for, but she would try to find out for me phone me back with her findings. And she did. It refers to a group of islands, formerly colonies of the Netherlands, located in the Caribbean. (Not close at all to China.) The country is NOT listed in Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue ("Scott"). It never issued stamps as such, and no stamps ever appeared with DWI on them. DWI went out of existence in 2010 with the independence of the Dutch West Indies, also known as Netherlands Antilles or Curacao or Dutch Antilles. You can find it in Scott under Netherlands Antilles. Careful to not confuse Dutch West Indies (DWI) with Dutch Indies, now no longer a colony of Netherlands and known as Indonesia. Now you know.

If you have something relating to stamp collecting that you think might be appropriate for this newsletter, please feel free to send it to Robert W. Martin at the address listed below.

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 of \$10 or more are provided written receipts.
www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org