

# The PhilateliKid

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

*Collect Stamps (The Most Educational Hobby)*

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

November 1, 2016

## **My wife's sable.**

A sable is not seen very often where we now live (Hawaii) so I was more than a little surprised to hear from my wife that she had a sable. In case you are not familiar with a sable, it is a coat made from the fur of a small animal indigenous to Siberia. Today, a full length sable coat costs about \$100,000.



Many of you know that Linda is a quilter. As all self-respecting quilters do, she has acquired lots of fabric over the years, which is stored by basic colors, to be used when she desires a particular shade or pattern for a quilt she is making.

The name that quilters use for their collection of fabrics is “My stash.” Stashes can be quite large, and may be worth in the tens of thousands of dollars. Even though portions of stashes are regularly used, the shopping urge seems to result in trips to fabric stores with more and more fabric being added every month. (Sound familiar, stamp collectors?) Stashes are carefully protected from sunlight, dampness, infestations, etc. pretty much like how we stamp collectors protect our stamp collections.

This stamp portrays a sable. It is on a Soviet Union stamp issued in 1984. Scott No. 5286. (Scott for some reason never got around to listing the Soviet Union as a country, and still to this day lists stamps from the Soviet Union under “Russia.”) We stamp collectors know that Russia was only one of the “republics” in the Soviet Union. The full name for the Soviet Union was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and is abbreviated on their stamps with “СССР.” The Soviet Union was created in 1917 and broke up in 1991.

Linda's sable is actually an acronym, not the animal or the coat made from its fur. S.A.B.L.E. stands for “Stash Acquired Beyond Life Expectancy.”

## **Book Review**

This is the first book review in *The PhilateliKid*. Just published is a book that is interesting to all stamp collectors, young and old, new and advanced. It is titled *Put A Stamp On It!* and was written by the famous philatelic author Herman “Pat” Herst, Jr. who died in 1999. It was written in 1994 and the manuscript was lost until now, 20 years later, but it is still fresh, funny, and interesting. It was found by his son, Kenneth Herst and it has 77 stories. Unfortunately, it could have benefitted by having an editor, for it is full of errors, misspellings, bad punctuation, and references to illustrations that do not

exist. Some stories, like Chapter 38, *Ivy Baldwin, an Unknown Hero*, has as its only relation to stamp collecting being that a stamp to honor him was **never** issued. (Quite a few people, including yours truly, never have had a stamp issued about them.) Nevertheless, there is plenty here for everyone. Here is a small taste of his humor, from Chapter 42, *The A.P.S. Numbering System*:

“About 35 years ago [Ed. note: this would have been around 1960] the American Philatelic Society appointed a committee to come up with a scheme for describing stamps that would do away with subjective judgments such as “very good” or “average.” They came up with a system that combined numbers and letters, (which) covered about everything that might happen to a stamp between the time it left the post office, and was ready to enter a cloistered life in an album. Thus a description such as 678A467B32 could reduce to ten spaces what might take two lines in print in an auction catalog.

With great fanfare, the A.P.S. announced its system, expressing the hope that the stamp trade would adopt it, and thus, collectors would fall in line. The news was greeted with the same excitement that one might expect had the A.P.S. announced that next year, July would be followed by August.”

*Put A Stamp On It* is available on Amazon.com. It is ISBN 978-1-940197-38-8. A copy autographed by Kenneth Herst is available by writing to Kenneth Herst at [kenherstbook@cox.net](mailto:kenherstbook@cox.net).

## The Future of our Stamp Collecting Hobby

Predicting the future is always a challenging exercise, because we know that no matter how hard we try, we will get some of it wrong. Actually, we will get ALL of it wrong if we attempt to drill down very far. For example, we can predict a vague occurrence such as the APS will decline in membership in 2016. What we cannot do is predict that the APS will have a net loss of 173 members this year. Nevertheless, the only absolutely wrong way to deal with predicting the future is to do nothing.

The process of predicting requires a good knowledge of the past, a good knowledge of the present, a good knowledge of trends, and an understanding that the future will not be the same as today.

Many things change very slowly and almost imperceptibly, and yet some things do change quickly and dramatically. In 1943 and 1944, during the height of WWII, almost nobody could have predicted that within 40 years the three Axis powers, German, Japan, and Italy, would be our close allies! Nobody in 1950 could have predicted that by the end of the century everybody would have a computer in their home, a portable telephone (cell phone) and music and movies on demand.

Stamp collecting in the US has gone through several phases. A century ago, stamp dealers displayed their wares by carefully sticking a pin through the stamp and mounting it on a piece of cardboard or cork for customers to see. A pinhole in a stamp was not seen as damage at all. Now, no stamp dealer would consider intentionally making a pin hole in a stamp.

Much has been written and said about the “Golden Era” of stamp collecting, which went approximately from the Depression years in the 1930s to the mid 1960’s. Some estimates at the time were that one out of every three men in the US collected stamps, including young men (boys). Most newspapers had weekly columns about stamp collecting, along with advertisements from stamp dealers. Retail stamp stores were easily found in every city.

Since the Golden Era, stamp collectors have been steadily declining in numbers. The average age of stamp collectors has been steadily increasing, to the point where it is not uncommon to attend a stamp collectors meeting and find it attended solely by senior citizens.

Countless studies have been done to attempt to determine a way to change these trends. The recommendations can be categorized into four main groups:

1. Get more retirees to start stamp collecting. This includes many who were collecting stamps in their youth, and would be expected to now resume collecting.
2. Get collectors (of all ages) who are inactive to become more active.
3. Get children to start stamp collecting.
4. Try to create an interest in stamp collecting among young adults and middle aged adults.

Let us examine each of these and see where we are headed. But first, let us look at what is being offered to potential new stamp collectors.

In the United States there are many different organizations that cater to various collecting interests. These vary from Topical collectors, perfins collectors, precancel collectors, classic era collectors, postal stationery collectors, deltiology, First Day Covers, Errors Freaks and Oddities collectors, Plate number coil collectors, to collectors of a certain types of government that no longer exist as stamp issuing entities, known among stamp collectors as “dead countries” (examples: German Colonies, Confederate States, British Colonies.) Collecting interests also go from collecting stamps from certain geographical areas (example: Middle East), to certain stamps (Numones), and of course specific countries (United States, China, Germany, Ecuador, etc.) Dozens, probably hundreds of organizations exist for specific collecting interests. These organizations are particularly interesting to long-time collectors who have specialized their collecting activities in specific areas.

However, to new stamp collectors, the first question to answer is always, “What can I collect?” Almost immediately the second question arises, “How do I physically collect?” Within a short period of time several more questions arise in a new collector’s mind. “How should I organize my collection?” “How can I use and understand catalogs?” “Where are stamp dealers to be found?” “How do I avoid getting ripped off?” “How can I show my collection to others?” “What kind of etiquette is expected?” And of course, “What do all those special terms and abbreviations mean?”

To a beginner stamp collector, there are almost no mentors any more. Gone are the friendly local stamp retail shops with proprietors who will “talk stamps” for hours with newbies. Gone are face-to-face dealers. Many of us stamp collectors today have established relationships with dealers whom we would not recognize if they sat down next to us. Relationships today are not face-to-face, but instead are created primarily by (snail) mail, texting, Facebook, email, and an occasional phone call.

One of the problems in getting a person interested in stamp collecting is that many seasoned, life-long stamp collectors seem to be afraid to show a beginner how to collect stamps, or they make it insufferably difficult to a beginner.

One of the biggest challenges today to create an interest in stamp collecting is the fact that very few pieces of mail have actual stamps on them, and when they do, frequently the stamps are very uninteresting. A patron who goes to a post office today to ship a flat rate priority mail envelope is almost never offered a stamp by the postal clerk. The clerk will automatically, without asking, create a metered label for the postage. Purchasing a single commemorative stamp from the post office usually is not possible – an entire sheet (pane) must be purchased.

These are issues that are well known, and will not likely be changing. Numerous suggestions for improvement have been offered, but none seem to work.

The (#1 group) consisting of retirees who may start collecting or resume collecting is just not developing as a significant growth group for the hobby. Although some will get interested, unfortunately the death rate wipes out any significant gains in numbers of stamp collectors.

The (#2 group) of formerly active, but now inactive collectors has not developed into a significant growth group for the hobby, and efforts in this area do not seem to be working.

The (#3) group of children is a huge group of potential stamp collectors, but almost nobody seems to have a way to get significant numbers of kids to start collecting. According to the U.S. Census Bureau as of 2015 there were about 20.3 million children in the U.S. ages 5-9, and about 20.7 million children in the U.S. who were ages 9-14. Combined that is 41.0 million, out of a total population of 308.7 million. That means that more than one out of every eight people in the U.S. are kids ages 5-14.

The National Center for Education reports that as of 2013 (the most recent data) there were 66,718 elementary schools in the United States.

It is the norm today that large cities such as Chicago or New York City have almost no stamp collecting clubs for kids, and where such a thing does exist, it is just a handful of kids who attend meetings. When kids are not members of a stamp collecting club we have found that expecting them to self-motivate (to become stamp collectors) just has not been successful in any significant numbers.

It may be noted that many efforts exist to get children into stamp collecting. My observation is that these efforts are usually tied to **education** of the child, not **recreation** for the child. There does not seem to exist any organized infrastructure to continue keeping a child interested in stamp collecting after the initial one or two times. There is very little literature created on an ongoing basis (weekly or monthly) aimed at stamp collecting for kids. There are no kid-friendly stamp stores or dealers. When a kid attends a stamp club meeting, he or she is often the only child in attendance, and the talk often is way above their head. It is hard to maintain interest in a discussion about perf gauges if you don't know what that is! The jargon is mind-boggling, and abbreviations and acronyms are everywhere, without much explanation. What is a sheet? A pane? A SON cancel? What is a Penny Black? Etc. etc. etc.

Most importantly, there is nothing aimed at making the adult parents of kids understand the joy their child will have with stamp collecting!

Think about it. Close your eyes and name within one or two minutes what a kid will find fun about our hobby. If you are unable to give even five answers, you are pretty normal. Every stamp collector who has been collecting should be able to name at least twenty (20) good things about stamp collecting for kids that are fun-oriented, not educational, investment, or research oriented. Think it cannot be done? Look to the end of this chapter to see what this author has come up with, and I am sure the list is not totally comprehensive.

The (#4 group) of young adults and middle aged adults who have never collected stamps is a very big group of prospective collectors. All I can say about that is: How is stamp collecting as a fun activity being marketed to these groups? Can you think of even two examples? (Don't say match book covers, newspaper articles, or back pages of comic books.)

Nothing is more annoying than being around a person who is full of problems or complaints, and who offers no reasonable solutions. So here goes some of this author's thoughts.

First. We must promote and market the hobby. We must know and talk about its benefits, and I am not talking about financial benefits.

Second. We must become mentors. We need to be willing to share our time.

Third. We must stop listening to (and printing letters to the editor) from whiners and complainers.

Fourth. Nobody should ever get any award that is related to our hobby unless s/he can demonstrate that s/he is a good ambassador for our hobby, and has been promoting it. And let's quit talking about stamp collectors as if they are all male.

Fifth. We should insist that every public library has several books about stamp collecting aimed at the interested person who is not already a stamp collector. Example: *Stamp Collecting for Dummies*.

Sixth. Every elementary school should have a stamp collecting club, and probably most middle schools and high schools. Every college campus should have a stamp collecting club. Start with elementary schools, and build up from there.

Seventh, every Boy Scout troop should have at least one merit badge counsellor for the Stamp Collecting merit badge.

Eighth, every newspaper should have regular letters to their editors about stamp collecting.

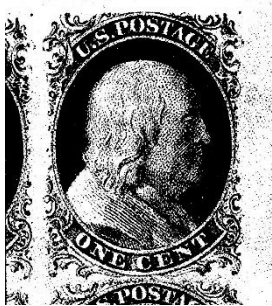
Ninth, we must make sure that acronyms and special meaning words, such as hinges, glassines, Westpex, SON, FRPSL, and FDC's are explained whenever used. (A footnote is great!)

Tenth, speeches and free samples should be done at events such as Rotary Clubs, Masonic Lodges, and other venues that are looking for public speakers.

Eleventh, every hospital and nursing home should have a regular visitor who brings stamps for free. And stays for an hour or two to help the residents learn about our hobby.

Twelfth, every company and person and that makes a living selling stamps should be embarrassed if it is doing nothing for youth. Perhaps a logo can be invented that shows that the business is committed to helping our hobby grow.

Thirteenth. All exhibits at stamp shows should have at least 25% (preferably 50%) of the exhibits aimed at youth and beginner collectors. Reduce boring exhibits that only a handful of aficionados would appreciate. Stamp shows that do not live up to this level of promoting our hobby should be boycotted.



Fourteenth. Where is our collective courage? We need to denounce those vandals who take a block of nice imperforate stamps, and ruin stamps all around just one stamp in order to create one "Grade 100" stamp. When we spot a stamp like this one, cut out of a block of stamps and thus ruining all the stamps around it, in the name of all present and future stamp collectors we should boycott it.

Perfection, or Vandalism?

Fifteenth, we need to get away from the emphasis on old, rare, and valuable stamps. Talking about prices, increase in value, and financial aspects of the hobby in a youth stamp club should be at a minimum (less than 10 seconds per month) and is unnecessary. (I have 15 years of experience with youth stamp collecting clubs, and I say this with certainty!)

Sixteenth. Okay. It is impossible to advertise on matchbook covers because they have gone the way of the dodo bird. How about something else that is equally prevalent? Let's put our thinking caps on.

Seventeenth. We need to recognize that social media (internet and cell phones) are the way that young people communicate. We must hire, if necessary, people who make our hobby a big presence in social media.

Eighteenth. Volunteers can do only so much. We need paid professionals to promote our hobby. Let us get a classification of membership in APS and elsewhere – call it the Diamond membership – (not Tiffany Club) - where to be a member you must donate at least a dollar a day (\$365.00 per year) to promoting membership among youth. And then identify ourselves as Diamond members everywhere. (Marriott does this for people who frequently stay at their properties. Why can't we do something similar?)

Nineteenth. Every meeting should have on its agenda, preferably the first order of business, "What are we doing to increase youth stamp collecting?"

Twentieth. History is loved by many, but also it is **not** loved by many. We need to quit emphasizing history so much in our hobby. It will come naturally to those who care, but the beginner really does not need to know much about the history of stamp collecting to have a lot of fun. Avoid the temptation to speak of "the good old days" or the way things used to be many years ago. To a kid more than 5 years ago is a long time ago.

Twenty-first. Quit behaving as if running a stamp collecting club for children is difficult. It is not. Even a person who has never collected stamps, and doesn't want to become a stamp collector, can run a stamp collecting club for kids and make it be a lot of fun. Ninety percent of the training can be accomplished in less than two (2) hours!

Twenty-second. Every elementary school library should have at least two books about stamp collecting written to appeal to children ages 6-12.

Twenty-third. Search engines on the internet need to be paid to list stamp collecting high on the list of hobbies.

Twenty-fourth. Although many of us could be thrilled to attend a four-hour seminar on stamp collecting, we must remember that newbies are not as committed as we are to the hobby, and after about 10 minutes, their interest starts to wane. Keep things short and to the point.

Twenty-fifth. We must remember that kids have short attention spans. For most elementary school age kids 15-20 minutes of stamp collecting is just the right amount of time. However, a month is a very long time between meetings. Stamp collecting clubs for kids should meet weekly, or every other week. Even with that, kids need to be reminded on the morning of the meeting that a stamp club meeting is being held today. The public address system that most schools have today is well suited for this type of reminder. To keep the attention of the kids, I have a special "magic" word of the day that I give out in the morning. Often the magic word is related to current events. It might be "Halloween" or "Christmas." Recently the magic word was "the Philippines." That week every student who attended received a stamp from the Philippines.

Twenty-sixth. There are thousands of stamp collectors today who just are not interested in volunteering to be with kids. An alternative way to support stamp collecting by kids is to donate the cost of hiring somebody to do the volunteer work. So if a youth stamp club meets once a week in an elementary school for 2 hours per week, then hiring an adult to coordinate and lead the club at \$15 per hour would cost only \$30 per week. When there are no volunteers, we need to hire people to do the work that needs to be done. Fortunately, the stamp collecting hobby in the U.S. is loaded with members who easily can afford to sponsor one youth stamp club for kids at the rate of \$30 per week. Let's encourage all who don't want to volunteer, to do that instead. For many stamp collectors, \$30/week is substantially less than they spend on the hobby for themselves.

Twenty-seventh. We all know that stamp collecting is very educational. But...I have never heard of a person who started to collect stamps because s/he thought it would educate them. (However, there might be one out there, somewhere. Please let me know if you are that person!) The fact is that people start collecting stamps because it is fun. Yet, let us not underestimate the educational value. One reason why a liberal arts education is considered so valuable is that it will "broaden" the person. The same is true of stamp collecting. I have no scientific study to prove this but from my own observations I believe that stamp collectors as a group tend to be "smarter" than non-collectors. Stamp collectors will know more about countries around the world, history, currencies, famous people, and a wide variety of subjects from what the Hohenzollern was (the Kaiser's "yacht"), what Umm al Quwain is (one of the Arab Emirates), who Jefferson Davis was (President of the Confederate States of America), who was the monarch in Great Britain in 1840 (Queen Victoria), and does China consider Taiwan to be a sovereign state (no.) Note: it probably was unnecessary to include those last comments contained in parentheses because as a stamp collector you already knew it! (And if you have read this far, admit it to yourself, you ARE a stamp collector.) Therefore, I apologize for insulting your intelligence.

Twenty-eighth. If you have gotten a lot out of our hobby, how about doing a little "paying it forward." Give some stuff away. If you haven't given something away in the past 30 days, why not? Let's get real. You never really "own" a stamp – you merely have temporary custody of it. Give away some stuff you have not looked at for ages, yet know somebody else would be thrilled to have. Giving DIRECTLY to a person is so satisfying. Think of yourself as the Patriarch, or Matriarch of a big family of stamp collectors. Find something that will be meaningful to a recipient, package it nicely (glassines work well) and deliver it with a little flourish. Example: I found this stamp/cover/plate number block/ plate number coil/ perfin/ precancel/whatever about 20 years ago in a box of stuff I'd purchased a few years earlier but never got around to looking at. At the time I realized it never was going to have a great value, because of the tiny pinhole in it/ toned edge/ pulled perf/ stain on the back/ hand written address/ whatever, but I also realized that almost everybody I knew had a big empty space in their album where this stamp goes. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

One thing I have seen many times it that a stamp that many collectors see no interest in, such as a used copy of United States Scott no. 1035 (Liberty Series 3¢ dark blue Statue of Liberty definitive – billions of copies sold) is VERY desirable to a kid who has never seen the Statue of Liberty. In fact, over the years I have given away many of that particular stamp, and always found that the kids who did not get it were disappointed. (I informed them that I would try to find more next week.) Recently I had a used copy of United States Scott no. 901 (hand holding torch) and found many kids wanting it, once I explained that it was the hand of the Statue of Liberty holding the torch. EXPLAINING a stamp makes it interesting. How about United States Scott. No. 1030, the liberty Series ½¢ Benjamin Franklin stamp. First, it is interesting because it is Benjamin Franklin. But to make it really interesting, just ask a group of kids how did somebody purchase this stamp at the post office. Ask, "Did somebody cut a penny in half to pay for it? Charge it on a Visa card? Write a check for half a cent?" If nobody figures it out, I suggest that TWO were purchased at the same time. Ohhhhh. How about Canada Scott no. 337? It features Queen Elizabeth II, the 1¢ brown definitive. When I ask, "Would anybody

like a stamp with a queen on it wearing a crown of diamonds?” and hold it up to show them, well, there is practically a stampede.

These are but a few suggestions. I am sure that with a little thought we could come up with hundreds more suggestions about what needs to be done to market our hobby, and make it FUN. This is especially true about marketing our hobby to young and middle age adults, which is outside my area of expertise. I am sure that we have lots of competent people who can come up with ideas, not just more of the same which have not been working, but innovative ideas that MIGHT work. It is well known Thomas Edison experimented with over 1,000 different substances before he invented a light bulb. Likewise, we must not be afraid of failing while trying innovative ideas.

A well-known saying, probably created by a very modest writer goes: Those who can, DO. Those who can't do, WRITE. Those who can't write, TEACH. As a person who has just written about this subject, let me encourage us all to DO something!

Here is a list I recently found on the internet of the top 50 most popular hobbies in the United States:

1. Reading
2. Watching TV
3. Family Time
4. Going to Movies
5. Fishing
6. Computer
7. Gardening
8. Renting Movies
9. Walking
10. Exercise
11. Listening to Music
12. Entertaining
13. Hunting
14. Team Sports
15. Shopping
16. Traveling
17. Sleeping
18. Socializing
19. Sewing
20. Golf
21. Church Activities
22. Relaxing
23. Playing Music
24. Housework
25. Crafts
26. Watching Sports
27. Bicycling
28. Playing Cards
29. Hiking
30. Cooking
31. Eating Out
32. Dating Online
33. Swimming
34. Camping
35. Skiing
36. Working on Cars
37. Writing
38. Boating
39. Motorcycling
40. Animal Care



41. Bowling
42. Painting
43. Running
44. Dancing
45. Horseback Riding
46. Tennis
47. Theater
48. Billiards
49. Beach
50. Volunteer Work

Did you notice something? Stamp collecting is not even on the list of the top 50 hobbies! I know that information on the internet is not to be taken as Gospel, but it seems doubtful that the number of people today who are stamp collecting would surpass any of these other hobbies, yet stamp collecting has so much to offer.

I believe we must get away from the mindset that promotion is *déclassé*. Promote. Promote. PROMOTE!

As promised above, here is a partial list of things about stamp collecting that make it fun and desirable:

1. It can be done very inexpensively.
2. It can be done when it is dark outside.
3. It can be done when it is raining outside. Or snowing. Or too hot. Or too cold.
4. It can be kept on a shelf, or in a box, at least initially.
5. It can be done alone or in groups.
6. There are no "losers." Everybody has fun and is a "winner."
7. It can be done by handicapped people.
8. It can be done for just a few minutes, or many hours. It is totally up to the individual when to start and when to stop.
9. It develops friendships with people whom you otherwise would never have known.
10. It is available to men, women, boys and girls. People from six years old to a hundred and six year old are stamp collectors. There are no age restrictions.
11. It can be done with very little initial investment in tools or equipment. (Compare to skiing.)
12. It is easily tailored to each person's own interests.
13. The hobby is international, and is found in every country.
14. You can collect stamps with a person even though the two of you do not speak the same language.
15. It is available to everybody regardless of religious beliefs.
16. It is a widely known and respected hobby.
17. Lots of information is readily available, yet many public libraries have precious little about stamp collecting.
18. It can be taken with you while you are on vacation, or travelling.
19. Trading duplicates with other collectors is fun.
20. Stamp collecting can be done at your own speed.
21. Most events related to stamp collecting are free to attend. (Stamp clubs, stamp shows, First Day of Issue ceremonies.)
22. It can be done in a small space, such as at a desk or even a TV tray. (Compare to playing a baseball game, or even playing hopscotch.)
23. It is safe. (I have never heard of anybody getting injured from stamp collecting.)
24. There are lots of people who can give you free advice, and advice can be provided sometimes in just a few seconds. (Compare to ballroom dancing, or skeet shooting.)
25. It will not go out of date.
26. No special clothing is required.

27. It is legal everywhere.
28. No special license or permit is required. (Compare to fishing or hunting.)
29. Stamp collecting is patriotic. When you purchase a stamp at the post office, but never use it to mail a letter, you are actually making a donation to your country. (The stamp is your receipt.)
30. Stamp collecting is inter-generational. You can do it with your great-grandfather. (Compare to trying to play a computer game with him.)
31. Stamp collecting is good for the environment. It is the original recycling hobby. (Compare to auto racing.)
32. Stamp collecting is good for hand-eye coordination.
33. Stamp collecting is artistic in nature, and allows self-expression.
34. You can do it with a member of the opposite sex, but you don't have to be married to do it.
35. If you inherit a collection from somebody, every time you look at it you will feel a connection with that person.
36. Even today there are retail stamp stores in every city, town and village. They are called post offices.

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Note: Even though we all know that stamp collecting is the most educational hobby (whatever is in second place is a distant second) that benefit is not included in the FUN benefits enumerated above. Also: Although stamp collecting can be very tied to money and investments, none of that is listed in the FUN enumerated above.

Finally, take a quick look at the biggest stamp magazines and literature being sold today. Look at the ads. There are many huge colorful ads featuring rare and expensive stamps, well beyond the pocketbook of beginning stamp collectors. If we want to attract new stamp collectors, we must show them what they are likely to collect!

The above article is Chapter 12 from an unpublished book written by Robert W. Martin. Address: P.O. Box 1809, Kihei, Hawaii 96753-1809. Phone: 408-893-1040. All opinions expressed are solely the opinions of the author. Critiques, corrections, and additions are welcome, but try to be pleasant, and not just argumentative.

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(A full color version of this newsletter is on our website.)