

The PhilateliKid

The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)

Collect Stamps (The Most Educational Hobby)

www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org

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Planning for the Future

Imagine for a minute that you are a dealer in rare books. The lowest price for any book you sell is \$200.00. Who are your likely customers? The most likely answer is people who know how to read, and have an appreciation for valuable, rare, old things.

Then imagine that nobody today is learning how to read, nor is any appreciation for rare, valuable, old thing being inculcated into the children of today. What do you imagine will be the future be for those who sell rare books?

The answer most likely is that old people who know how to read and appreciate old books will someday die off, and that here will no longer be anybody who wants any rare old books. The dealers of rare books will all be out of business. Those old books will no longer have any market value, other than the value of the paper on which they are printed. They will be “recycled” into other paper products.

What indicators will there be that the demise of rare book collecting is coming? First, the Society of Rare Book Collectors (SRBC) will diminish in members, year after year after year. The people who are “leaders” of the Society will point out how healthy the organization is because it has accumulated a lot of money over the years, built beautiful buildings to store those rare books which have been donated to the Society when members died, and has hoarded its wealth, and is now floating in money and property because very little was expended on developing and acquiring new members.

Prior to the demise of the Society, the remaining members will hold lavish banquets and bestow on each other lots of awards. Of course, virtually none of the awards will be for bringing in new members, or spending time on the long-term development of new members. Remember, the new members have to come from a pool of people who are nurtured into the ability to read, and then to appreciate the rare books. That takes decades, and cannot be done in just a few years, no matter how much money is available to spend on such development.

That sounds pretty gloomy, but the gloom is not being seen **today** because nobody sees the handwriting on the wall! It is obvious, of course, but today’s “leaders” are so busy piling up large amount of money, they fail to recognize that a Society’s richness is NOT

measured in money, but in **membership**. One day there may be lots of money, but no members. The final meeting will be held and the decision will be to turn the accumulated wealth over to some other worthwhile organization, perhaps some club organized for members who love attending football games. The leaders of today boldly state over and over that the organization is NOT dying, even though everybody who takes even a brief look at the facts knows what is happening. A Society with a lot of money but no members is dead. (Look up what happened to the “Shakers.”)

Another scenario. Imagine a church that has a bunch of wealthy, older members. The building is fully paid for, and even has a nice cash flow from renting out spare rooms to tenants. As current members die off they leave nice bequests in their wills to the church. But... the church has no new members. When a new person occasionally stumbles in, nothing that is attractive to a younger person is being done. No Sunday School is being offered. (That costs money, and does not result in immediate profits – only long term benefits.) That church will one day merge with something else, and the hard-saved money of its members will be spent on something else – maybe even going to a different community, or even a different state. “Local” benefits will be gone.

There is a famous old saying: Rome was not built in a day. That indicates that big things almost never are created overnight. Rome was once a small city, then became the ruler of the world, then declined in importance to where it no longer is considered a major factor in the future. Five countries today own nuclear weapons: USA, Russia, UK, France, and China. Italy today owns no nuclear weapons.

Farmers know that it is important to plant seeds at a certain time in order have a crop to harvest in the future. They know that if they wait until a week before the crop is needed, it is too late to plant.

What is the future of our hobby / business of stamp collecting? Let’s look at what we value. An easy way to do that is to look at two things. First, how much money, as a percentage of our total budget, is devoted to developing new stamp collectors? Second, how much of our conversation / time is devoted to discussing the development of future stamp collectors.

The excuse that young people today are not interested in stamp collecting is not based on facts. The facts are that young people are not interesting in ANYTHING that is boring. Make it interesting and fun, and they will come. In 1989 there was a movie that had the theme, “If you build it, they will come.” What needed to get built was something new and fun. That happened. They did come. (Watch “Field of Dreams.”)

Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are greatly appreciated and if \$10 or more you will be sent a written receipt. You also can donate via PayPal on our website - www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org