



JULY 2005

Editor: Bill Snyder

Some Techno-Babble from the Prez

As noted in my prior ramblings, there are many factors that motivate us in regard to what we collect and why it is of interest to us. However, whether or not it is of interest to us, there is one aspect of philately that we cannot run or hide from -- the technology of philately.

During my two years as an active member of LCPS, I have come to greatly admire and respect the technical knowledge of many of our members — people who know far more than I'll ever know. However, we also have many members who are new to philately or who are returning to the hobby after several decades of family and job demands. It is for these members this article is written. Our old pros can cease reading and go back to the task of plating their British penny reds.

As a small contribution to the growth of technical knowledge, may I offer the following eight ideas:

1. Recommended is the ownership of at least one Scott catalog. In addition to listing and pricing stamps, the Scott catalogs have excellent technical sections which explain printing methods, papers, separation techniques (perforations versus rouletting), watermarks, etc.

2. For areas of strong interest there is great value in developing your own reference collections, as is done by expertizers. Two personal examples are:

- The Third Reich, Hitler head definitives have two near identical stamps for the 10pf and 12pf values. One of each value (Scott 511A & 511B) is printed through typography while the other (Scott 512 & 513) was printed through engraving technology. Having a reference set and a magnifier makes it easy to properly catalog these stamps. I'll leave it to you to discover the difference!

- When actively dealing in PRC stamps I wanted to be certain in differentiating Scott 1045 (red and black) from Scott 1045a, which is a red and gray brown variety. Certainty became simple through purchasing a copy of each one from Michael Rogers, an Asian expert, and using them as a reference set.

3. A vital tool of philately is a high-quality perforation gauge. My favorite is Linn's, clear plastic Multi Gauge.
4. Another vital tool is the color gauge. Of great value is to have and use more than one. My personal tool-kit includes the Wonder Color Guide and the Stanley Gibbons Color Guide.
5. In using color gauges, it is important to realize that over time light, heat, moisture, and fraudulent chemical treatments can cause stamp colors to change. I once submitted a potentially pricy pale blue variety for expertization, only to learn that it was a faded copy of the minimum value, medium blue stamp.
6. There are some U.S. stamps that are flat plate printed (e.g. Scott 551 — 73) and identical stamps which are rotary press printed (e.g. Scott 631 — 42). These stamps are easy to catalog through knowing that:
 - Mint rotary press stamps have gum ridges.
 - Used rotary press stamps are slightly larger due to the stretching of paper on the rotary drum.
7. When soaking British-related used stamps, it is important to be cautious if they were printed on chalky paper. Stamps printed on chalky paper were made to fade when soaked to prevent their re-use. Chalky paper was most commonly used during the Edwardian and George V eras.
8. If you are a U.S. collector, you probably go bonkers when trying to catalog and properly mount stamps in the various Washington-Franklin series. About a year ago Vice President Lou and I agonized over a few Washington-Franklins, and the best we could do is narrow the catalog possibilities down to a few numbers. If you are a serious U.S. collector, it is recommended that you purchase or borrow a specialized text on this vast and complex series of stamps. Besides resulting in a better collection, having sound knowledge can be financially very rewarding as a result of not paying too much for improperly identified stamps and by recognizing stamps that are of great value.

In closing, we are all familiar with organizations that solicit member recipes and then publish them as cookbooks. If we were to have any members with time to spare, wouldn't it be interesting to publish an expandable manual of technical information provided by our many knowledgeable members?

With best regards, *Al*

Minutes, LCPS Meeting June 8, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m. Our guest, Kenneth Kaylor, was introduced as one who collects "everything". He is encouraging his daughter, Devon, to develop her interests in stamp collecting.

Treasurer's report was read and accepted.

Minutes were accepted as per the May newsletter.

Lou DiFelice gave his first report on meeting attendance. Highest was 37; lowest 25. We discussed discontinuing the second monthly meeting for the summer, but agreed to continue the "swap" meets in July and August.

The International Stamp Show will be on May 27 – June 3, 2006, in Washington, D.C. We discussed hiring a bus trip for a day, and focused on Thursday, June 1, as a first choice; 2nd choice is Tuesday, May 30, and 3rd choice is Wednesday, May 31. We will join with the York club to support this trip, and possibly open the trip to others who want to spend a day in Washington D.C.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Wheeler, Secretary

STAMP SALES & STAMP PRICES

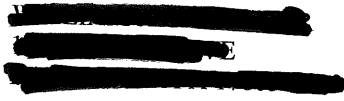
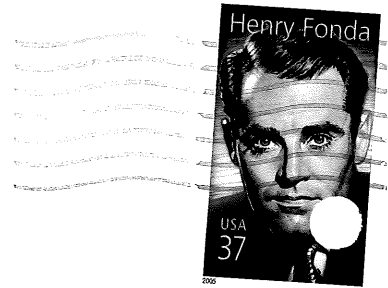
Linn's Stamp News estimates that total stamp sales in 2004 totaled almost \$950 million. Sales in 2004 were roughly 13% higher than in 2003—a development that would seem to portend well for America's collectors. The higher sales figures are primarily the result of higher prices rather than of higher volume. The contribution of on-line auctions (primarily eBay) to this total has stabilized after rising for five years and amounted to about \$65 million or 7% in 2004.

About \$400 million or roughly 40% of total sales were to collectors who read and subscribe to one or more of the major stamp periodicals. The remaining \$550 million is split among casual collectors and what Linn's terms "stamp savers." Sales of stamps and related products by the US Postal Service, principally to "stamp savers," amounted to \$240 million or about 25% of overall sales. Although one might expect that USPS sales come at the expense of sales by dealers and auctions, the opposite seems to hold: When USPS sales go up, so do sales by dealers and auction houses. USPS officials indicate that higher sales of stamps and products in 2004 can be attributed to better stamps designs and improved subject matter.

In addition to its assessment of the overall stamp market, Linn's tracks the prices of three categories of fine/very fine US stamps. The only category of

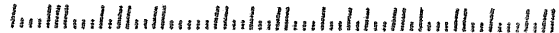


19 Circle Road
Millersville, PA 17551



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17603-4723



stamps that has experienced a price increases over the past year is US 19th Century—up roughly 4%. Prices for the other two categories—US 20th Century and US Airmails—are essentially flat or down slightly. Well centered VF stamps, Linn's indicates, will sell for roughly 60-70% of Scott value (less for mid-late 20th Century issues); with better or VF centering, expect to pay full Scott value. Buyers can expect "substantial reductions" for sound stamps with average centering.

The articles on which this discussion of sales and prices is based appear in the 6 June and 12 June issues of Linn's Stamp News.

July 2005 Meeting

The next regular meeting is at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, 13 July, at the Maple Grove Community Center. The program: Zeppelins, by our guest, Tom Howard. The buy, sell, trade, and socialize meeting is on Thursday, 28 July, at the Grace Baptist Church.