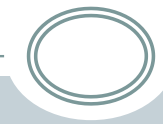


Philatelic Calendar – or Puzzle?



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Why Solving Puzzles feels so Satisfying, especially during a Quarantine.

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- This was a wellness article I read in *The Washington Post* (May 4, 2020). I am not an aficionado of the conventional kind of puzzles. But as a stamp collector, I've enjoyed puzzle-like activities such as determining the cancel on a German or Austrian stamp based on the clues left behind when it was soaked off of an envelope.
- Stamp collecting affords many puzzle-like activities; plating the pre-Civil War 3¢ Washington's has been called the "world's greatest jigsaw puzzle." And, of course, the simple act of filling an empty spot in an album with a much sought-after stamp is like putting another piece into a puzzle.

An Idea for Assembling a Philatelic Calendar

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- The article I referred to explains that people who enjoy solving puzzles get a thrill from the “eureka moment” that comes from finding the piece or answer that you were searching for. I’ve started to put together calendars to experience that small but tangible thrill.
- I created a grid on MS Word that can be cut up and inserted into ordinary Vario stock pages (This is a page from my 19th Century Germany calendar).
- This method, which does not require hinges, makes it easy for me to “upgrade” cancels if I come across a nicer one. It will also be easy to break up the calendar if I want to do.



Calendar Themes

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- I have thousands of ordinary stamps from Germany and Austria. Both countries frequently killed their stamps with the postmark, so I have lots of dated material for calendars.
- Some of the calendar themes that I've created are:
 - 19th Century
 - Definitive issues: e.g., separate calendars for Germania Issues (1900–1922), Hindenburg's (1933–1942)
 - Inflation: A general calendar for stamps postmarked between 1921–1923, and a special High Inflation calendar of German stamps cancelled between August and December 1923.
 - World War II

A Way to Organize and Enjoy my Accumulation

- Many of the calendars that I've already started are filling up rather quickly.
- The key date to completing a calendar is leap day; I've found that Christmas Day and New Years Day cancels are tough, but not as hard to come by as one might think.
- Creating several calendars might not fit your collecting style, but if you like going through hordes of low-value material, or are big on those little rewards or aha moments that come from solving puzzles, having one or two to work on might be a fun diversion from your more meaningful philatelic pursuits.

What does Solving Puzzles have to do with a Pandemic, anyway?

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- The greater good is probably not why we're so keen on jigsaws, mysteries and other insight-giving activities in times like pandemics.
- A quote from the article . . . “Puzzles give psychological order to the chaos we feel,” Professor Marcel Danesi says. “When you come out of it, when you've solved the puzzle, then life seems to work better. I've had anecdotes throughout my life and experiences where, as people do puzzles, they seem to come out better in terms of mental health.”

What are These?

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- They are cigarette coupons, and it looks like they have redemption offers on them.
- But I don't know when they were issued, and I can't read them.
- Does anyone recognize them?

