

The PhilateliKid

The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)

April 12, 2015

Our website is up and running. Take a look, and let us know what you think, and how we can do to improve it!

www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org

Two things to remember: The word "clubs" is plural – has an "s" on the end

The website ends in ".org" not ".com"

As of April 2, 2015, so far this school year the kids have had over 31,000 minutes of stamp collecting (all combined.)

SAD Stamps

There are many more opportunities to learn about science, nature, history, our culture, and the world through stamp collecting than ever before. Many stamp collectors have bemoaned the USPS's decision to issue customer-friendly (but not environment-friendly) **self-adhesive** (SAD) commemorative stamps. Most of the regularly issued definite stamps, from the 1¢ Tiffany lamp to the \$19.99 Arizona Memorial Express Mail stamps are now sold only as SAD stamps, because that is what the USPS has determined the public wants.

When a customer brings an envelope or a package to a Post Office in the U.S. to determine to correct postage necessary, the customer is **not** first offered stamps for franking. ("Franking" in this article has nothing to do with Facebook "franking.") After weighing the envelope or package, measuring it, and then asking a few questions about its contents, the postal clerk will offer to mail it by the most expensive means. Once a customer had approved, the postal clerk will lickety-split print out a self-adhesive postage meter label and stick it to the item. The customer can pay by credit card, the fastest way, or some slower way such as cash or check.

It is a stretch of imagination to say that postal customers "prefer" SAD stamps - because they are not offered anything else. There is never a choice of SAD or WAG (water activated gum), and usually customers are not even offered a choice between stamps or metered labels. Commemorative stamps are not offered unless requested. Then, the postal clerk will look through the pouch of stamps at that station and offer those. Unless specifically requested, some current stamps, which may be available at that post office - but just not at that window - will not get mentioned. Only a naïve person would think this is accidental. The USPS knows what it is doing, and it knows how to speed up the process of serving customers. Offering stamps does not speed up anything. If the customer does not wish to purchase an entire pane of stamps, the clerk will inform the customer that the only way stamps are sold is by full panes. That may not be entirely true, but it basically is the way the USPS wants to function.

Who is purchasing those hard- to-buy commemoratives? Based on the non-philatelic mail seen in the past 20 years - **NOT** the general public! Basing sales of commemoratives on stamps SEEN on letters and packages is a little misleading, though, because a lot of the commemorative stamps that ARE sold, never get placed on mail. They are kept by collectors who want to collect mint stamps, and by misguided individuals who think buying mint postage is a good investment.

When a piece of mail is received bearing a commemorative stamp, it is a very good bet that either the sender or the recipient, or both, is a stamp collector. To obtain those commemorative stamps, the sender had to go to a post office and request it, and if a commemorative stamp was not specifically requested, the purchaser would have received a booklet, or a coil of definitive stamps, not commemoratives. There is also a slower, more costly, and more difficult way to purchase stamps, through “Stamp Fulfillment” – but that is another story.

Post offices, for safety and security reasons, do not keep large dollar amounts of stamps at counters available for sale. High denomination stamps with values of \$2.00 or more are kept in very low supply. When a customer requests to purchase those high-denomination stamps, it is often necessary for a postal clerk to have to go to the vault to get those stamps. They certainly are out of sight, and out of mind. Even though packages are the big money maker for the USPS today, \$10 and \$19.99 stamps are rarely sold. Many postal clerks go days on end, affixing postage meter labels to packages every hour, but never selling even one stamp denominated \$2.00 or more.

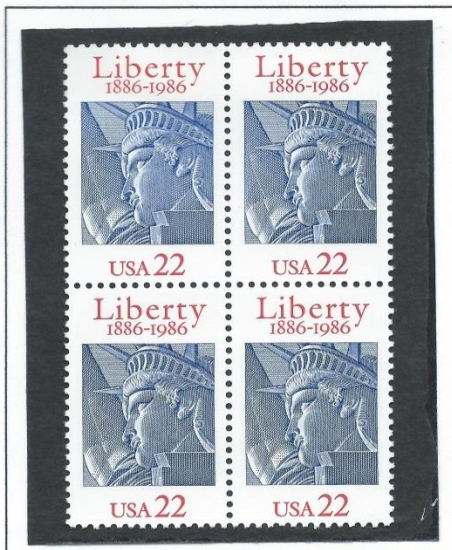
The wailing and moaning and complaining by stamp collectors have fallen on deaf ears. The reality is that the USPS places a very low priority on what stamp collectors want, and many believe that is probably **as it should be**. It is unreasonable to expect the USPS to devote time, training, energy, money, or even thought to a miniscule aspect of its income. Gone are the days when a postal clerk would carefully tear a single stamp from a sheet, being sure that none of the perforations was damaged and sell it to a customer for the 3¢ face value. Even at today’s first class rate of 49¢ it is not cost-effective for the USPS to sell a single stamp, even knowing that it will never get used. These days it is just poor management by the USPS to spend time catering to stamp collectors, especially those of us who primarily collect USED stamps. The USPS does not care about a stamp once it is used, except to ensure it does not get re-used.

It is about time for stamp collectors to finally figure out what to do with modern used stamps. The USPS is a business that caters to its customers, and stamp collectors are, and have been, a tiny, tiny piece of its revenue. Many philatelists believe we should all be very grateful for all we are given by the USPS, and stop complaining. The SAD stamps are here to stay, and the WAG is history. For many years some stamp collectors have taken a page out of the book of our 19th century and early 20th century philatelic ancestors, and collected used stamps on piece. Thus, they never have to worry about damage to stamps from soaking, which used to be, and still is, a serious problem. Many collectors use hinges, and hinged stamps on piece will never create a thin on the stamp, because the hinge is on the paper envelope to which the stamp is affixed, not the stamp. Perforations are not going to get damaged by handling because they are protected by the edges of the piece. If a particular cancel is interesting, the whole piece can be saved, thus saving the entire cancel. Stamps are never wrinkled from drying. The stamp on piece usually fits nicely into an album spaces because it can be carefully trimmed trim to fit. Another big benefit of saving used stamps on piece is not having to worry about setting your house on fire due to trying to “soak” a stamp using some flammable liquid.

In summary, the 21st Century now shouts for all stamp collectors to look at the hobby in a slightly different way. We need to be grateful and happy about what we still are getting, which is quite a lot, and modify our collecting habits slightly to save used stamps on piece.

The next page is a fun way to learn something the Statue of Liberty, the most recognizable symbol of America, and a frequently seen design on stamps. Take the short quiz and you know will probably learn a thing or two about Lady Liberty! The answers are at the bottom.

U.S. Scott No. 2224



France Scott No. 2014



Many people consider the Statue of Liberty to be the most recognizable symbol of the United States. It is located in New York Harbor on what used to be named Bedloe's Island.

T or F. The name of the island was changed from Bedloe's Island to Liberty Island in 1956.

T or F. The Statue of Liberty was designed by French sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi.

T or F. The statue was built by the same person who designed the Eiffel Tower, Alexandre Eiffel.

T or F. The statue was a gift to the US from the people of France.

T or F. The face of the statue was modeled by the mother of Bartholdi, Charlotte Bartholdi.

T or F. The statue was dedicated on October 28, 1886.

T or F. The parade in NYC for the dedication of the statue went through Wall Street. To celebrate, stock brokers threw ticker tape out their windows, resulting in the very first "ticker tape parade."

T or F. American poet Emma Lazarus wrote a poem about the statue which begins, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free."

T or F. The poem by Emma Lazarus is titled *The New Colossus*.

T or F. The statue is 151 feet 1 inch high, and stands on a pedestal that is 154 feet high.

T or F. The robed female figure represents Libertas, the Roman goddess of freedom.

T or F. The statue arises from a symbol of freedom, a broken chain, partially hidden by the robe.

T or F. In her left hand the statue holds a tablet on which is inscribed July IV, MDCCLXXVI.

All the above True or False statements are True.

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.