

THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN PHILATELIST

JOURNAL OF THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB



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THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB

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ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Robert Taylor
828-447-4699

Vice President:
Bob Bouvier

Treasurer:
Stan Kumor

Secretary:
Jay Rogers

APPOINTED POSITIONS

50-50 Fundraiser: Lucille Lamy

Auctioneer: Jay Rogers

Membership: Larry Oliver

Journal Editor: Randall Chet
Email: randallchet@gmail.com

WHO TO CALL

If you cannot make a meeting, club event, presentation, or have a question or a suggestion, please contact:

Robert Taylor
828-447-4699

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Asheville Stamp Club meets at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, 1617 Hendersonville Rd, Asheville, NC in the Blue Ridge Room of the Community Center at 1:30 pm on the third Sunday of each month. Bring stamps and covers to sell, trade, or show. There are Nickel Boxes and Envelopes of stamps with new material being added all of the time. The Club's 2017 Scott catalogs will be at the meeting; 2019 World Classics, US Specialized. As always, there will be the 50-50 Drawing and Door Prizes.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Spring is approaching after a relatively mild winter especially compared to what we see on the nightly news from the upper mid-west and the northeast areas. I LOVE western North Carolina!

A couple of months in and it is very rewarding to see all the new members. By naming Marcia deBary our honorary member, we remain able to use our magnificent facility as our meeting room. What a joy to see Marcia and her faithful seeing eye dog companion at our February 17th meeting.

We have incurred several club donations of miscellaneous albums these past few months which allows us to offer them to members at our 5 cent a stamp table. The response has been outstanding! At a point in time in the near future, the club will offer the remainder of the albums at a very nice discount during one of our bi-monthly auctions.

I'm surprised with all my short term memory concussion issues, that I was able to remember (I think) some events from our February 17th meeting. One was our gold medal winning display from past president, Dick Hall, regarding the 1939 Swiss National Exposition. Wow...that was a lot of work put into all those displays.

In addition, Frank Wheeler, gave us a presentation on his trip to London last Fall regarding his visit to the famous Stanley Gibbons store plus his trip to the national museum where countless one of a kind treasures are on display.

I look forward to our subsequent meetings and to share information and expertise from some of our renowned members with all our new members.

Best regards, Robert

ASC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

COLLECTOR DEALER (CIRCLE ONE)

I COLLECT _____

RECOMMENDED BY _____

Please print, fill out and bring to a club meeting with \$10 payable to ASC, or send to Jay Rogers, Secretary ASC, 15 Hickory Court LN, Hendersonville, NC 28792.

SMOKE SIGNALS

Fakes Fakes Fakes and more Fakes! Once the stories started coming in, I noticed a theme was developing. First I received the latest installment of Fakes News from Larry Oliver. Then Scott Martz contributed one of his Variety Hunter columns having to do with fake perforations. And that reminded me of a faked roulette stamp I saw at Jim Haxby's place. You can read all about this ugliness in this issue!

Our next meeting is this Sunday March 16. Unfortunately I will be out of town so I hope y'all have a good time. It's an auction meeting so be sure to do some spring cleaning and bring out the goods! Bill Churlik says he will have another big box of mixed world, some used and mint US line pairs, and a few miss perforation US stamps, mostly coils, and the usual other stuff. Robert Taylor will be bringing some of the other club donations like supplies and has some International Albums which just came in. The 5c cent table will also have five new albums to pour over, so bring your nickels.

Finally, for the April meeting, Bob Bouvier is planning to present in on the subject of Canadian Precancels. Till then, good stampin'!

Email your articles, letters, classified ads, auction items, and comments for the Smoky Mountain Philatelist to Randall Chet: randallchet@gmail.com Deadline for the May-June 2019 issue: April 25th

RUSSIA 1957 *Bill Churlik*

Scott# 1995

Commemorating the Sikhote-Alin meteorite

At around 10:30 AM on February 12th, 1947, eyewitnesses in the Sikhote-Alin Mountains, Primorye, Soviet Union observed a large bolide brighter than the sun that came out the north and descended at an angle of about 41 degrees. The bright flash and deafening sound of the fall were observed for 190 miles around the point of impact. This was not far from Luchegorsk and about 270 miles northeast of Valdivostok. The smoke trail, estimated at 20 miles long, was visible for several hours. The meteorite entered the atmosphere traveling about 8.7 miles per second. It broke apart and the fragments fell together. At about 3.5 miles, the largest part apparently broke up in a violent explosion. It is estimated that about 100,000 pounds survived the fall. The fall covered over 1/2 square mile with craters up to 85 feet across and 6 feet deep!

P.J. Medvedev, a Soviet artist witnessed the fall as he was sitting at his window working on a sketch. He immediately began drawing the fireball when it appeared. His drawing was used for the stamp issued by the USSR on November 20th, 1957.

The picture to the right is of fragments of that meteorite. I recently bought these from a meteorite dealer that I met in Denver.



FOURNIER FORGERIES OF THE FRENCH COLONIES NAVIGATION & COMMERCE SERIES OF 1877

Larry Oliver

As the (supposedly) ancient Chinese proverb goes: “May you live in interesting times”. The news media (I grew up in it) was once revered for its objectivity and factual reporting. So much for history! We have been introduced to obstruction, even obliteration or ignoring of facts in today’s reporting. While this is not a political statement, the proliferation of the phrase “Fake News” and its iteration in many news sources, has become a byword of our times.

Not to be outclassed or obscured by the commercial media, we philatelists have our own version of “Fake News”. My intention is to explore (but not exploit!) the presence and detection of fakes, forgeries, and fantasies in our philatelic world. I hope you enjoy the series, however long it may be, and be assured that I welcome comments, ideas, and suggestions, whether they be opposing or supportive—learning about our hobby is the goal.

Larry

“François Fournier (24 April 1846 – 12 July 1917) was a stamp forger who thought of himself as a creator of “art objects” and a friend of the little man.”¹

He copied many French issues, most notably, the 1877 issue for the French colonial empire, the Navigation & Commerce issue (see Figure 2). He considered his business as creating facsimiles, not forgeries, and even titled his journal and price list “Le Fac-Simile”.



Figure 2

Many of his stamps carry a handstamp on the reverse that states it as a facsimile (see Figure 3). His intent was to make stamps available to everyone, without having to pay the high prices demanded for the high values. But many unscrupulous dealers got ahold of the stamps without the back handstamp and sold them as genuine.



Figure 4

His forgeries - for they are indeed that, despite his claims - are readily recognized (Figure 4). The differences between genuine and Fournier forgeries are most prominently recognized as:

- the forgeries lack a belly-button
- the plate of fruit up-raised in the hands of the right-hand figure is amorphous, ill-defined, and even “blobby”

Other features that are different are apparent when comparing a genuine and a forgery side-by-side. I strongly urge you to check the examples in your collection: the forgeries are plentiful and are of ALL values, and ALL colonies, including the very low values. “Used” copies were also forged, including forged cancels, and surcharges were forged, so beware!



Figure 1: François Fournier

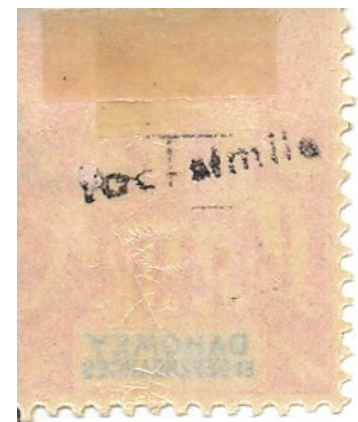


Figure 3

FLAWS IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MAKEUP OF A PHILATELIST

Larry Oliver, while not admitting to being personally psychologically flawed!

Some people collect cars, some people collect quilts, some collect little figurines and some (OK, many) collect coins. No one accuses them of having mental obsessions because of their interest! But stamp collectors - or philatelists - are often derided as “weird”, “reclusive”, “antisocial”, or “nerdy”. While I believe those terms to be a compliment, the general public is less positive.

Lets approach the issues objectively. Or, biased, as I am in favor of the collector. But we have to recognize that we collectors of little pieces of paper have some quirks! So lets explore them...

Who but a stamp collector would:

- Deal with a hobby that relies on keeping trash: the excess envelopes and such that almost everybody tosses.
- Try to document history with little bits of paper with ink smeared over the face of it or an old envelope, torn and tattered by the ages
- Succumb to the whims of a stamp printer who spews out millions of stamps from countries like Grenada, St. Vincent, or Sierra Leone who produce stamps only to fill a spot in an album page regardless of the philatelic usage
- Be able to tell the difference between the image of George V and George VI (except for a Londoner, of course)
- Gets excited about little pieces of paper with ragged edges
- Collects pieces of paper with ink smeared all over the design
- Allow a group of self-proclaimed “experts” to say one stamp is better than another, to raise its value solely based on a micrometer measurement of the margins? (We can all tell a stamp that is better centered than another, do we really need a high-priced panel to confirm it?)
- Accept a worldwide postal union that cannot settle on a standard nomenclature or definition of color?
- Accept that forgeries of some stamps sell for more than the genuine originals?
- Realize that some 25c stamps are forged as often as \$1000 ones?
- Call an “envelope” a “cover”?
- Call a postage stamp an “adhesive”?
- Be confused about the difference between a “tongs” and a “tweezers”? (hint: the only difference is what side of the Atlantic you are on)
- Get excited about a printing error that an underpaid pressman made in 1880? (Like many inverters?)
- Enjoy reading someone else’s 100 year old letters?
- Would enjoy looking for minute differences in the designs of stamps (which “we” call flyspecking, and are proud of it!)
- Learns how to lick a tiny portion of hinge without drooling on the stamp? (I call it “puppy tongue” when the drool causes the stamp to adhere to the page)
- Is well-known by the local post office staff as the person who uses all those old stamps on their mail that they have to add up each time we send something?

- Be upset when they receive an item with stamps that have not been cancelled?
- Pay attention to the back of a stamp?
- Know the difference between “rose carmine” and “carmine rose” (even if they disagree with other collectors!)?
- Know where Quelimane, Horta, and Hatay are? (Or were?)

And, who but a stamp collector’s spouse would:

- Put up with a room full of albums, pages, books, glassines, and random stuff for years?
- Be glad that he/she is spending time away with little pieces of paper rather than out with the gang drinking, playing cards, or fooling around?
- Allow the dining room table to be taken up with paper that cannot be touched?
- Keep from vacuuming the sacred stamp room for months on end to avoid sucking up that inverted Jenny we all cherish? (Dream on, collectors!)

Lets not forget our ultimate friends, the stamp dealers!

Who but a stamp dealer (or their spouse) would:

- Put up with working for 50c/hour?
- Have so many unused US postage stamps that they do not have to buy stamps for 25 years?
- Sell US stamps at less than they were purchased for?
- Tolerate listening to a collector arguing about the price of a 50c stamp?
- Allow that other spouse to buy that van just to carry that dusty stuff around and be gone for 2-3 days at a time to sell a few hundred dollars of stamps (reminds one of the fishing stories, doesn't it?)?

This article is dedicated to all the stamp collectors, dealers, and the spouses who enjoy or tolerate this crazy hobby that has kept me enthralled for >50 years with all its benefits and have ignored the downsides.

ROULETTED REVENUES - DON'T GET BURNED!

Randall Chet



Roulette is a casino game-of-chance named after the French word meaning “little wheel”.

About the only thing the game of roulette has in common with the process of “rouletting”, is it too is done with a “little wheel”. Rouletting uses small cuts in the paper instead of holes. It was used by a number of countries, predominately during the 1850's. U.S. revenue collectors are probably most familiar with the very common 1898 “Battleship” revenues and 1916 Wine stamps, however, rouletting as a way of separating stamps goes back an additional fifty years, and actually predates perforating.

In England, 1847, Henry Archer constructed the first rouletting machine, the “Archer Roulette”, to separate stamps. His plan, submitted to the Postmaster General on 1 October 1847, was referred to the departments of the General Post Office and the Inland Revenue. Two such machines were built. After experimentation both machines proved to be failures. Archer then abandoned this approach in favour of perforation, a process which used rows of small round pins to punch out the holes. In 1848 Archer patented his perforation machine.¹ One of the downfalls of early rouletting machines was the constant need to laboriously sharpen the knife wheels. Another downfall was rouletting so weakened the paper that the stamps tended to fall apart in routine handling. By 1857 the vast majority of postage stamps around the world were perforated.²

The first official US *Federal* Revenue roulettes began appearing with the Second Issue Proprietaries and a very small number of Proprietary Die stamps (Match and Medicines), all on watermarked paper. I say *Federal*, because various earlier *State* revenues are found rouletted.

Both the Second Issue Proprietaries and M&Ms are quite scarce. It is suggested by Christopher West (Eliott Perry) that since so few of these rouletted stamps are found that they must have been done all at one time and for a very short duration. Referring to the match stamps which exist rouletted, we find the Alligator stamp (RO8d) was first issued in January, 1880, and the E. K. Smith (RO169d) stamp was last issued January 24, 1881, so it is apparent the rouletting was done sometime between these two dates, which is the period covered by the

Figure 1: Could this possibly be a \$7000 stamp? Let's find out.



later printings of the National Bank Note Co. and the earlier printings by the Bureau. It is certainly unlikely the Bank Note Co. would have any reason to change from perforating to rouletting, but at that time the Bureau had begun printing large quantities of tax paid stamps and delivering them rouletted and may have found it necessary or convenient to roulette some of the documentary and proprietary stamps for a short time rather than to perforate them.³

It is the previously mentioned E. K. Smith match stamp (figure 1) that caught my eye when I was visiting Jim Haxby recently. Knowing the scarcity of this particular stamp (*from a 1994 census: 10, with 8 of those faulty!*), I did not get too excited. And with a quick check under a glass, sure enough, this was obviously a fake, and not a very good one either. *“Collectors should be extremely careful about this issue. A certificate of authenticity from a well-known expertising service is an absolute requirement for this stamp.”*⁴

It’s not surprising that this stamp is one of the most faked of all the M&M roulettes. Scott currently catalogs this stamp with a value of \$7000 — *and that’s in italics!*

With that said, let’s take a look at the characteristics that point to its inauthenticity:

- True roulettes gauge about 6, and as the gauge of the perforated stamps is always 12 it is a very simple matter to take a perforated stamp, cut off every other point between the perforations, and obtain a fake which gauges very close to the genuine. Of course the shape of the roulette “nibs” are very distinctive, and in this case the careless forger neglected to “square off” the shape of most of the remaining perforations. Figure 2a
- The shape of real roulette nibs should be squared off, and many times there will be a “dip” at the base of the nib, where the paper fibers have pulled away from one or both sides of the nib. Figure 2b
- The rouletted slits between the nibs should not be at different angles, Figure 3a, but absolutely straight. Figure 3b



Figure 2a

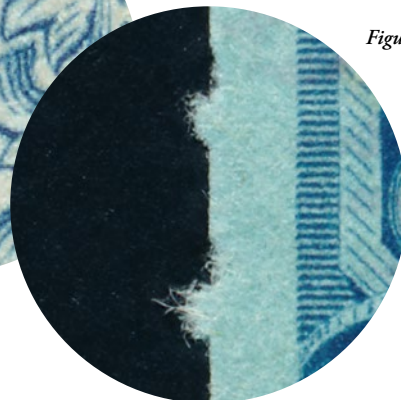


Figure 2b



Figure 3a



Figure 3b

- Finally, cutting off every other perforation usually leaves the stamp too small, and any roulette with smaller margins around the stamp design than perforated copies should be open to suspicion. Theoretically the roulettes should measure as much from top to bottom and from side to side, exclusive of points, as the same stamps perforated measure including the points of the perforations. Size, however, is not an absolute certain test of genuineness, as jumbos can be found from which to alter, but usually extra wide copies are not long enough and the extra long copies are not wide enough, as is the case with this example.

I advise against buying any valuable roulettes at auction online, as seldom are scans good enough to detect fakes, but if you do, pay attention to return policies. These helpful hints should protect you while buying roulettes in person though. Be careful out there!

References:

1. *Postage stamp separation*, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postage_stamp_separation
2. *Perforations*, John Apfelbaum, <https://www.apfelbauminc.com/blog/post/perforations/>
3. *U. S. Revenue Stamps. Documentary and Proprietary. Chapter XXIX*, Meekel’s Weekly Stamp News, September 15, 1917, p. 303
4. *Census of United States Match and Medicine Stamps*, Michael Aldrich, 1997, p. 62

SHOWS & EVENTS

• **March 30th & 31st** Asheville NC
Stamp & Postcard Show
Comfort Suites Outlet Mall
890 Brevard Road
Asheville, North Carolina.
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4
Contact: Cary Cochran, 800-560-5310

• **May 10th & 11th** Johnson City, TN
HOLPEX 2018
Holston Stamp Club and Bill Vance
Best Western Hotel & Conference Center
2406 N. Roan Street
Johnson City, TN, 37601
Fri: 10 - 4, Sat: 10 - 4

• **June 22nd & 23rd** Asheville NC
Stamp & Postcard Show
Comfort Suites Outlet Mall
890 Brevard Road
Asheville, North Carolina.
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4
Contact: Cary Cochran, 800-560-5310

• **June 22nd** Brighton, MI
Sterling Kingbrook Summer
Sale Auction 2019B 1 pm
Sterling Kingbrook Auctions
455 E. Grand River, Suite 103
Brighton, MI 48116
Mark Vervaeke, 810-220-6000
SterlingKingbrookAuctions.com

• **July 27-28** Charlotte, NC
CHARPEX 2019
Worrell Bldg
Central Piedmont Community
College
1228 Elizabeth Avenue
Charlotte, North Carolina 28204
Sat: 10 - 6, Sun: 10 - 4
Gene Zhiss, signup@charpex.info
Phone: 704-553-8110
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THE CASE OF THE #423D – THAT WASN'T



Here you can see what appears to be a very nice used example of #423D, which is perforated 10 x 12. These were production experiments running the old perf 12 wheels in one direction and the new perf 10 wheels in the opposite direction. These are very rare and is a \$10,000+ stamp.



Except I believe this one is a fake!

Take a look at the second picture; this example is actually a pair. Its first anomaly gives this away as a fake. If you look at the top of the right stamp, the perforations change from perf 10 to 12 shortly after transition from the first stamp to the second. This is not known on this variety, which is a HUGE red flag. The second issue is the perforations are VERY rough and irregular. They measure correct for number of perforations, but they do not match the perforations of genuine stamps. Third this stamp is the wrong color. It should be a deeper green. This all leads me to believe that it is a fraudulently perforated pair of imperforate stamps – not the genuine 10 x 12. Finally, also almost all known genuine examples of this specific variety are *precanceled!* Mostly Dayton OH.

When I first spied this pair, my heart skipped a beat then raced for about a minute. Then my hope sank like the Titanic when I realized it was a fake.

I am reminded every day that variety hunting for me is most often the excitement of the hunt — the thrill of finding something elusive. And this day had it all — including the agony of defeat. Like the old Wide World of Sports opening, first the rush of the ski jump, only to fall down the mountain, crushed with defeat once again.

But I'll keep hunting. You do the same!

Scott



How Do You Value A Million Common Stamps?

Robert Taylor

My latest “strange” appraisal occurred in early February of this year. The client was selling his bookstore and he called me about appraising his stamp accumulation. I met him around noon and started trying to comprehend what was involved regarding the stamps.

He had a few sparse albums along with a lot of supplies such as boxes of unused glassines and 40 packages of Showgard mounts. Within the confined area where I was working was a 42 drawer file cabinet similar to the card catalog files that you find in a library. These are quite heavy and fairly pricey at auction. The drawers contained mostly world mint stamps from A to Z. Probably 100,000+ stamps but unfortunately, they were all relatively modern stamps when I sampled about 7 drawers. Last week I picked up the file cabinet with the help of fellow stamp club member Scott Martz (aka “The Muscle”).

I went through box after box diligently searching for valuable stamps but this accumulation was right up there with “weird”. Within the many boxes were 1,000’s of glassines containing what looked like at least a million USED MODERN STAMPS from Canada. All the glassines were Scott numbered and filed neatly.

Why would this person spend so much time sorting and filing this many used modern Canada stamps?

Also within the boxes were 1,000 plus covers but again, many were modern. He did have some other Philately such as old life insurance policies, some U.S. modern plate blocks, etc.

Strikingly missing from the collection were U.S. stamps other than some plate blocks. Another puzzle for sure unless they had been already sold to another dealer who understandably passed on the purchase of the Canada material and the file cabinet.

After some soul searching, I reluctantly made my offer. Most of the bid covered the beautiful oak filing cabinet with a glimmer of hope that there may be enough value within the 42 drawers to justify my price. He then said he was awaiting a response from another appraiser (maybe someone even crazier than me) in a few days. A week later he called and said I was the winning bidder.

I have to question my own sanity for bidding on this stuff other than I liked the file cabinet and have room for it in my home office. And now that the cabinet is successfully down in my office, the real work begins. Between Scott and I, maybe we will determine a value equal to my “winning” appraisal price. Hmm...I’m not too sure of this one.

Oh well, we go on from here, Robert

