

THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN PHILATELIST

JOURNAL OF THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB



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THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB

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Auctioneers: Ed de Bary & Jay Rogers

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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
Email: robertt16@bellsouth.net

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; 2012 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 here.....except you can't tell today (Monday, April 16, 2018) after the howling winds and rain from yesterday and last night. But, we all know it will start getting much nicer. The war department (a.k.a. my wife) is trying to get me to plant all the plants she buys at Lowes but I'm getting really good at avoiding her when she nears my in-home office.

Four months into the year and our club continues to prosper and provide assistance to all who need philatelic help. Scott Martz, who diligently drives up to my home here in Lake Lure twice a month to help me with some of the appraisal & purchases I do, says I need a lot of philatelic help but because of my advanced age, serious increased philatelic education may not be achievable.

The heavy rain kept some members away yesterday but our normal bi-monthly auction went very well. Many thanks to our continuing auctioneers Ed deBary and Jay Rogers in addition to our "runners" from yesterday, Marien Bradsher and Randall Chet.

Speaking of members---when I joined 7 years ago, we had 71 members. Today, our club has 79 members which is a strong testament to our viability. This is YOUR club and it will survive and grow with your input and assistance. Do not be shy---ask questions---we are here to help everyone.

Lastly, many thanks to all members who's help and input make our club what it is.

Best regards, Robert

ASC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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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

Wow - what difference a week makes! In the short week between receiving Robert's President's Letter, and today working on this edition of the journal, spring has definitely sprung! The leaves are out and the temps are in the upper seventies. It is really hard to be glued to the computer and even harder to spend time on my indoor hobbies. With spring comes time for my outdoor hobbies: cycling, baseball and tending the garden. Games begin in July so sorry I may have to miss a few club meetings. Rest assured, I'll still be putting together the journal though, so get your articles in. Thanks!

Attention all ASC members! Everyone would like to know more about each of you and your collecting interests. You might tell us about how you got interested in that area of collecting; a favorite cover; what key items of a strong collection should be; different approaches to collecting that country or topic; new finds; national societies you belong to; a favorite new issue; a story behind the stamp or who nurtured your interest; etc. If you have an interesting story of yourself with perhaps some connection to your hobby, please let me know. We will feature your story in a future ASC Newsletter! Please send your own story to randallchet@gmail.com. Thanks!



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

PRESENTATION PREVIEW

Asheville Stamp Club member Frank Wheeler will give this month's feature presentation - "A Life in Stamps - a journey from 7 to 70 (more or less)" An hour of stories, reflections, memories and touchstones highlighting the rich and beautiful hobby that we all share. The talk includes interesting tips and lessons learned highlighted by scans of notable items from his collection. A most interesting time!

Member Dealers: Are you interested in reaching more collectors? Time to take advantage of your free 2.5" x 2" display ad! You editor and designer can even style it for you. It's just one of the benefits available for Asheville Stamp Club members. And if you are reading this but are not yet a member, our membership application can be found on page 2 of this journal.

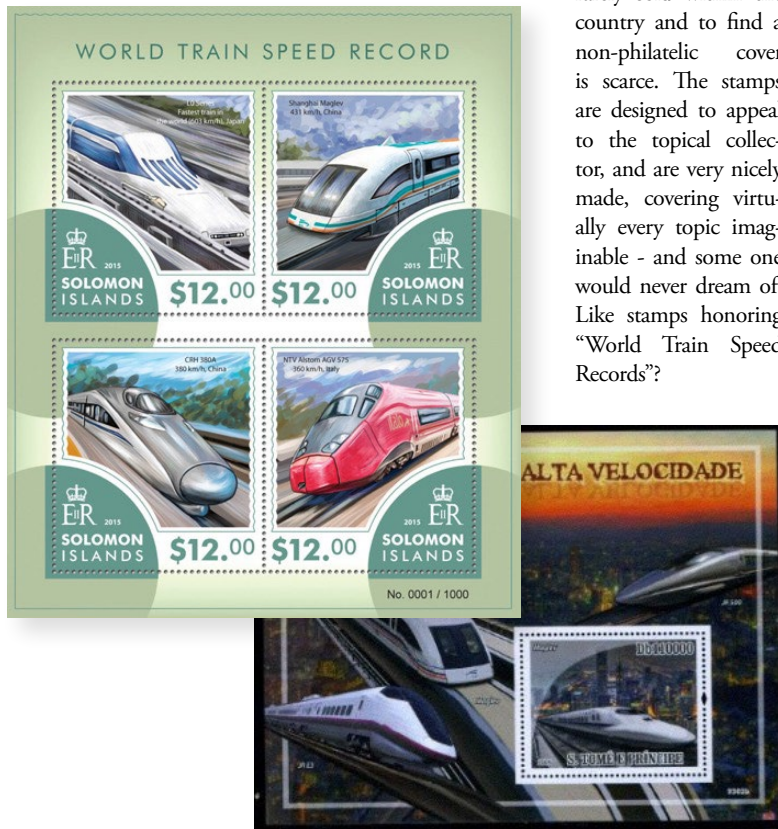
Contact randallchet@gmail.com for your ad.



COUNTRIES THAT ABUSE PHILATELY

Larry Oliver

We all know them, those countries that produce stamps solely to make a profit from collectors. Stamps that, while valid for paying postage in the country, are rarely sold within the country and to find a non-philatelic cover is scarce. The stamps are designed to appeal to the topical collector, and are very nicely made, covering virtually every topic imaginable - and some one would never dream of. Like stamps honoring "World Train Speed Records"?



Note that the value of each stamp shown is \$12 Solomon Islands, equivalent to \$1.56 US. That appears to be the actual cost of sending a first class letter in the country, although I have been unable to confirm that.

Three countries are at the top of the current list of excessive producers of postage stamps: British Solomon Islands, Sierra Leone, and St. Thomas & Prince. (Sao Tome et Principe). Using the data published by Linn's detailing the number of stamps published per country, face values, and catalog value (Scott's), I found that of the 7668 stamps issued in 2016 by 268 entities, 11.9% of the stamps came from just these three countries, and they comprised a surprising 26.8% of the total catalog value!

Even more interesting and dismaying data comes from the comparison of the catalog value of each country's stamps with the per capita income in each country:

Country	#stamps	2016 Catalog value	Per capita income
Solomon Islands	246	\$2755	\$2150
Sierra Leone	504	\$4950	\$1320
St. Thomas & Prince	162	\$1645	\$1668

Every resident of each of those countries would have to spend their entire income for the year (or more!) just to buy one copy of each of their stamps! (While not detailed here, the pattern is consistent for the last five years for these countries: this is not an aberration. *I will be glad to supply the statistics upon request!*)

Lest one think that the postal authorities in these countries are just recognizing their people's needs for postage in addition to serving the marketplace, note that the only place one can purchase stamps of the Solomon Islands is through their printer, Stamperija, located in Vilnius, Lithuania. They represent 10 postal administrations¹ and make this claim:

"Stamperija Ltd. produces diverse thematic stamps to satisfy the demand of stamp dealers and stamp collectors for many years. We are constantly trying to maintain and encourage the great tradition of philately and consider it as a particular form of art, illustrating the essential events and personalities throughout history. The team of our devoted designers does its best to create actual and meaningful postage stamps that would suit your demands."

That is a blatant admission that the postal use is subservient to the market expectations of dealers and collectors. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) is the international organization of countries that, amongst other things, sets the rules for international exchange of mail. They maintain a data base of information about each member country and their postal service, including volume and revenue. I queried the data base for information on the three countries listed above and asked what the volumes of mail were, the revenues from

¹The countries for whom Stamperija produces and is the stamp outlet for include: Central African Republic, Niger, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, St. Thomas & Prince, Solomon Islands, Togo, Djibouti, Azerbaijan, Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, & Maldives. If you compare issues across those countries, there is a striking similarity, both in topics and in design. It is clear that Stamperija is simply doing mass printings and mass marketing.

them, and the percentage of revenue that comes from philately (which is an actual field in the data base). None of the three countries reported any of that information over the last five years. Truth be told, the US did not report the percentage of revenue from philately either!

There is no reason to object to the collection of and fascination with labels that portray a topic of interest to an individual collector. The genetic makeup that defines a person who likes to collect things will drive one to accumulate all sorts of items related to the theme of their desire: from ashtrays to road signs, if the theme fits, I want it!

Philately was founded on the basis of documenting the workings and history of the postal services. One may convincingly argue that our own United States Postal Service has strayed by producing stamp designs intended mainly for market demand (I ceased collecting US stamps when the first Elvis Presley stamp was issued: Benjamin Franklin to Elvis Presley was too much for me), but all of the US stamps are legitimately valid *and used for postal purposes*.

The stark awareness that there are countries that grossly exceed postal needs raises an ethical question: Do countries that are members of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) have an obligation to place postal needs above marketing gain? Or can the individual postal administrations treat the production of postage stamps as merely a commodity subject to market demand and ignore the reason for their basic existence?

Ethical concerns are challenging. If collectors want these postally useless stamps, there may be no ethical reason to deny them. But ethics are relative: to put it in the perspective of the underlying basis of the worldwide postal services, we need to review Recommendation C26/2008 - The Philatelic Code of Ethics - from the Universal Postal Union 24th Congress.

They drafted and approved the Philatelic Code of Ethics for the use of the UPU member countries when they met in Geneva in the summer of 2008. They began the Code with an Observation:

“that postage stamps continue to have a commercial value when used for philatelic purposes,”

And *Recognizing:*

“that the Philatelic Code of Ethics [provides] valuable guidance...in maximizing the value of postage stamps to collectors and issuing postal authorities,”

And *Reaffirms:*

“its commitment to the production of high quality, ethical stamps, and to a vibrant philatelic market”.



From these preface statements, the UPU was ensuring that they are committed to the collector's interests as well as the interests of the postal authorities around the world. They view those interests in a manner that is intended to prevent fraudulent issuance and use of postage stamps to exploit collectors.

The exploitation viewpoint is explicitly spelled out in article 8 of the Code:

“Issuing postal authorities shall not produce stamps or philatelic products that are intended to exploit customers.”

So the question is: do countries like Solomon Islands, St. Thomas & Prince, and Sierra Leone *intend* to exploit the philatelic market by producing more stamps at higher value than their postal market can use?

To answer that, let's look at other articles in the Code. Article 1 states:

“Issuing postal authorities creating philatelic products shall ensure that the use of the postage stamps and other means of denoting payment of postage does not lead to the creation of such postal products as would not result from the exercise of proper postal procedures.”

It is perhaps arguable, although not rationally so, that all the stamps issued by these countries comply with “proper” postal procedures, even though the issuance grossly exceeds the utilization rate and the ability of the populace to purchase them. Whether the postal authorities are exercising intent for exploitation or they are just totally naive of the philately market - I have my opinion, but cannot prove “intent”, just outcome: which is exploitation.



Article 4 is directed towards the concern that an adequate supply of postage stamps is available and that philatelists are properly informed of their availability. Article 4.2 addresses the oversupply issue:

“...They [postal authorities] will ensure that the number of

stamps issued each year is limited to that which their market will accept.....postal authorities should respond cautiously to market demand to avoid oversupply. *They shall not saturate the market and thus drive philatelists and collectors away from the hobby.*” [Italics added by the author]

There are not many active collectors of these countries, and their stamps are often viewed with derision. Even the revered Scott’s catalog lists the stamps in “clumps”, with minimal descriptions and often words of caution about their utility and intention. The similarity in design and topics across

countries coupled with the overabundance compared to their population or purchasing power confirms that market saturation is a goal. And therefore is a violation of the Code of Ethics.

There is one other aspect of violation of the Code of Ethics that deserves brief mention: Cancelled-to-Order stamps. Many countries now issue stamps for the collector market which are cancelled, but not postally used. They can almost always be identified if they are properly described as: “used, original gum”. Article 2 of the Code of Ethics states:

“Issuing postal authorities shall not authorize such use of cancellation dies.....as would not result from the exercise of proper postal procedures.”

By no stretch of rational thought can cancelled-to-order stamps be considered “proper postal procedures”. The stamps are not postally used, nor intended to be so. No postal authority has as its mission to defraud the collector in buying stamps pretending to have been used to mail an item. The collector must regard cancelled-to-order stamps (“CTOs”) as violations of the UPU Philatelic Code of Ethics. Whether one desires to add such stamps to one’s collection to fill spaces is up to the collector: they are certainly attractive and less expensive examples of the issued stamps, but...?

The temptation for postal authorities to issue unnecessary and superfluous postage stamps to garner revenue but serve no reasonable postal need probably gains favor in the minds of the petty bureaucrats who are only concerned with greed and continuance, regardless of ethics. It is a practice to be condemned, and I am thankful that our government has not succumbed — please don’t bring up Elvis, Bugs, or Disney!

One must ask the question: why does Scott list these stamps? The editors of the Scott catalogs state their listing criteria clearly: *“The only strict criteria for listing is that stamps be decreed legal for postage by the issuing country and that the issuing country have an operating postal system.”* They go on to say that *intent* of the stamps - postal use or for collectors - is not a criterion.

Last words: I struggled with including comments about what a collector can and should do about this abuse of the UPU Code of Ethics. My approach is this article: spread the word and the awareness of the abuses. I do not know how to build a crusade against such abuses, particularly when the abusers are thousands of miles away. Please avoid the collection of “stamps” from countries that have no motive other than exploitation of collectors.

References:

Linn’s website, issue for 2/09/2018. World Stamp Costs

UPU website:upu.int

Security printers website: securityprinters.org. Note that that organization has had a Code of Ethics as well, but that page is no longer available. Draw your own conclusions.

Stamperija website: stamperija.eu

Websites of the individual countries mentioned.

Scott Catalog, “Catalogue Listing Policy”, in the front of each volume.

LUCKY FINDS AND OTHER SURPRISES

As many of you are aware, I'm a full time (albeit small time) coin and stamp dealer and certified American Philatelic Society stamp appraiser for about a 200 mile radius from Lake Lure. I certainly encounter a myriad of initial contacts which normally lead to some appraisals and none of them are rarely the same.

Several months ago, a gentleman with a British accent contacted me from the Spartanburg area to set up a meeting to look at his grandfather's stamp "collection". After spending a few minutes trying to "vet" the contact as to what he had, we decided to arrange a meeting at my local Lake Lure Ingles which he knew exactly where it was. Works for me. Saves me an hour's drive!

We met at our designated time within the Ingles Café section which works perfectly for small stamp and coin collection appraisals.

He brought in 3 boxes plus a relatively heavy (12 lbs.) 1952 edition of "The Royal Philatelic Collection Sir John Wilson Publication" with dust cover. Quite a nice item covering a full education on all British stamps. A classy product. Somewhat aged and lightly damaged but still a beautiful item. There are only 3 listed on Ebay so not an item that we come across very often.

The rest of the items in the boxes? Not so nice. In fact, UGLY!!

I gave him a price and he seemed disappointed. He told me to take it all home and review it carefully. I agreed and we parted ways. Upon arriving home, it was late so I left the rather shoddy accumulation in my car and went inside for a glass of wine.

The next day, I moved the boxes into my staging area next to my office. There they sat for a few days before I had enough energy to actually bring the boxes onto my sorting table to see what they contained.

The owner had told me his grandfather was a renowned collector in southern England during the 1930's-1940's. When he died, his wife, who disliked the son and grandson (my client) part of the family, contacted several known local dealers who willingly stopped by to review then purchase 95% of the material and left 5% of the not so nice material for the father and son, my client. I would have loved to have seen what the British dealers acquired.

The boxes contained partial mint sheets of common late 1940's mint stamps. They were so curled up from poor storage, to this day I still have them interspersed between some heavy empty album pages to hopefully flatten out the sheets. The remaining material had to be some of the worst stored and almost no value bundle ware I had ever come across. I still made a three hour effort to carefully sort out these items to see if I could actually find anything of value. I repeatedly washed my hands every half hour because of the crud and filth contained in the boxes.

Upon finishing, I called the client in Spartanburg and stood by my offer, most of the offer being the heavy publication. He accepted when I told him there was nothing there. I even offered to just buy the publication (at my original offer price) and he could have all the stamps back! Then he unfortunately knew the value he was looking for was just not there.

He did have a world grouping of pages with no binder that had many stamps stuck on the pages (not hinged). I just sold these pages recently via my consignment firm in New Hampshire at a pretty high price considering their condition. Too soon to tell what stamps attracted the consignment buyer to that listing. The buyer also has a 14 day return option if he chooses. I have my philatelic fingers crossed that the buyer does not return the item to my consignment firm ((*_*)).

Finally, I received an unwanted present from the nasty and filthy boxes. I had discovered that the boxes had contained not one but two mice and they had taken up residence in my car. Must have been in the boxes that I left in my car the first night. Within a few days, I had trapped the mice. Thank God they were in the car and not the house. The "war department" (aka Harriet) would have been on my case big time.

Ah.....the fun we have appraising and buying collections.

Happy Collecting,
Robert Taylor



BELGIUM PHILATELY: THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I

BIRTLEY BELGIANS - ELIZABETHVILLE

Edward de Bary

“World War I produced numerous new philatelic specialties. At present I am assembling a display that depicts about a dozen of them. My presentation to the ASC in March covered one, postal usages in unoccupied towns in Belgium during the war. I also mentioned a cover that I had not acquired that is an occasion to tell the story of the Belgium operated post office in England that served the temporary town of Elizabethville near Durham. When the cover arrived I prepared some text to introduce this interesting linkage between English and Belgium philately.”

A letter that encompasses a three year saga that was sent to the Belgium community in England on February 5, 1919. The war had ended. The recipient had left. The correspondence was returned to Boom of February 13, 1919 as confirmed by a Boom back-stamp of February 17, 1919. That postal pilgrimage followed the trek of Belgians who went to England to operate the Elizabeth-Birtley munitions factory. It is a testament of a little known side-bar to history and a sub-specialty of Belgium philately demonstrated by the rare English stamps with the Elizabethville-Birtley cancellation. How did this come to happen?

In May 1915, the problem of a lack of ammunition lead to naming Lloyd George as Minister of Munitions. Two factories were built at Birtley, County Durham. Sufficient labor lacked, but Belgium exiles included skilled workers. Many wounded soldiers were still capable of using their skills in the factories and there were thousands of refugees from occupied Belgium. Many of the men could not understand English, so the Belgians

worked under Belgian management at Birtley. Production began in 1915. By 1916 3,500 men were working in the new town of Elizabethville, named after the Belgian Queen. Streets. It had Belgian names and a local stream was renamed the Yser. There were a school, a hospital, shops, and recreational facilities as well as a British post office staffed by Belgian postal workers. That post office had its own cancellation device as a sub-station of Birtley.

The fighting ended in November 1918. The Belgians returned home and Elizabethville was closed in December. This explains why only a Birtley cancellation appears on the cover. The Belgium operated sub-station had closed. The last Belgians left Elizabethville May 27, 1919. British labor unions were never happy with the foreign workers so the government quickly brought the operation under British management and the Belgian expatriates returned home. Obviously, someone in Boom Belgium had not gotten the word so the letter was returned to the sender as the Boom back-stamp shows. Thus the cover truly recapitulate the Belgian exodus and return between 1914 and 1918.



The Elizabethville-Birtley Post Mark



(CASE OF THE T15



The R15c was printed in such great quantity (456,724,925 according to "The Boston Book"!), that there are any number of double and triple transfers. One of most commonly seen is the type T15 as seen here. It is listed and pictured in the Scott Specialized. The arrows point to the major doubling. The doubling is to the West and slightly South. This is my favorite of the R15 double transfers. After 10 years of looking I have only found 2. I have searched thousands of stamps for them. Moderately priced at only \$65 so it is available. And with some looking you can find them..

Here is my single – Pen Cancel, but the Double transfer is not obscured at all.

I also have the T15 on document – It is an order for payment, in this case to John Nelson Esq., in connection with American Life Ins. Co. and taxed at the 2c Bank Check rate¹. It's a beautiful document and the double transfer shows very nice. I often see these available on checks and other docs, but not this style.

Keep your eyes open as this very common stamp has several other double transfers, paper varieties, color varieties, and can also be found with freak perfs. Probably the most valuable find would be one of the few printed on green paper. A very fun issue for the specialist. Happy Hunting! Scott

¹October 1, 1872. Bank check, draft or order for the payment of any sum of money whatsoever, drawn upon any bank, banker, or trust company, at sight or demand, two cents.

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SHOWS & EVENTS

• **May 11th & 12th** 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 - 5, Sat: 10 - 5

• **May 19th & 20th** Marietta, GA
Stamp Dealers Association of GA Bourse
Mansour Center
995 Roswell Street
Marietta, GA, 30060
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 3
Contact: Len Curtis, 404-593-6838
collectemall@bellsouth.net

June 8-10 Raleigh, NC
Coin, Paper Money & Stamp Show
The Exposition Center
NC State Fairgrounds
(1025 Blue Ridge Road. Raleigh, NC)
Fri & Sat: 10 - 6, Sun: 10 - 3
www.RaleighCoinClub.org

June 16-17 Huntsville, AL
HUNTSPEX 2018
Calhoun Community College
Sparkman Building 1
102 Wynn Drive
Huntsville, Alabama
Huntsville Philatelic Club
Michael O'Reilly, mcoreilly@att.net
Phone: 256-527-4601

June 16-17 Asheville NC
Stamp & Postcard Show
Comfort Suites Outlet Mall
890 Brevard Road
(I-26, exit 33 & NC Hwy exit 191)
Asheville, North Carolina.
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4

July 28-29 Charlotte, NC
CHARPEX 2017
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

A PHILATELIC RESOURCE LIST FOR ASC MEMBERS

Two years ago, member Bob Bouvier created a spreadsheet listing philatelic resources in his possession that is intended to encourage and facilitate the sharing of published philatelic knowledge among our membership. Entries are categorized as books, periodicals and clippings. Each owner codes each entry for several sharing options that include lending and for how long, bringing to meetings [only], copying and/or scanning (with page limitations), and look-ups. Larry Oliver added his holdings that brought the totals up to 62 books, 7 periodicals, and 13 clippings. Bob is confident that other members have materials that would be of interest to our members and would welcome additions. The file is available to any current member with an email address and Bob will print off a copy for anyone who does not have an email account. Bob's contact information is found in our membership list. Thank you.

In addition, Bob has been collecting past issues of Asheville Stamp Club publications that he is sending to the American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte, PA to augment their holdings. He has accounted for all newsletters published since 2011 and is missing only one issue for 2010 (assuming it was published): The January-February 2010 issue of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist. If you have a copy of this issue, or know for certain it was not published, please contact Bob at bouv1946@gmail.com or 828-713-0270. His efforts for locating issues from 2006 on back have been largely unsuccessful. A mere handful have been located, dating back to 1970. If you know of any, please contact Bob.

STAMPS – WANTED, FOR SALE OR TRADE

Wanted! WWII US patriotic covers - especially with cachets that are "politically incorrect", humorous, or feature women. Top prices paid - which ain't much, frankly! Larry Oliver stamper707@gmail.com

Wanted! US First Issue Revenues. Large accumulations as I am looking for shades, paper types and cancellations. randallchet@gmail.com

Wanted! Philatelic Literature related to US revenues, especially any back issues of the American Revenuer, and Weekly Philatelic Gossip 1936 - 1957. Also any general periodicals 1880 - 1950. randallchet@gmail.com

For Sale! US Proprietary Die Stamps (Match & Medicines), first-third issue revenues, albums and pages. Visit MatchandMedicine.com

For Sale! USPS Commemorative Yearbooks. Mint. Few to no stamps. Years: 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007. \$5 each. randallchet@gmail.com

If you are a member of the ASC and have something of interest to list, feel free to email your classified ad to randallchet@gmail.com. As space allows, I'll do my best to include it in the next issues of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist.