

Chairman's Message



Bentley's human.

Hello everyone and welcome to February! I hope everyone is staying warm in the Northern Hemisphere, and nice and cool in the Southern.

First things first: The IPDA Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 5 PM

EST. via Zoom. Please check the IPDA website for time and date for your own time zone (<https://ipdastamps.com/ipda-calendar/>). Also, please make sure that your 2023 dues are current, in order to attend the AGM and to vote on the motions tabled for your attention for the AGM. You should have received an email, by this time, with instructions on how to pay your dues, and if you have not, please contact Tony Tripi, the IPDA membership secretary for instructions.

I encourage everyone to go to the AGM Proxy webpage, (<https://ipdastamps.com/proxy-vote/>), and complete your votes on the various motions, or appoint a proxy to vote on your behalf. Doing this will enable your voices to be heard and will assist in making sure there is a quorum present for the meeting per the IPDA Constitution. Thank you all, in advance, for your help. I look forward to seeing and meeting as many of you as is possible in March.

Speaking of the IPDA Constitution — the second paragraph in the IPDA Constitution's Statement of Purpose says, ". . . the provision of professional and advisory services for Members who are engaged in the philatelic industry." This statement may seem, at first blush, to be fairly broad in scope, and it may very well be, and if so, it may have been intended to be. Let's look at what we as IPDA members can do to promote the above statement.

We must recognize that within the online philatelic indus-

try, there exists an almost infinite range of types of sellers/dealers — everything from what could be described as the "pre-novice" all the way up to the most prestigious and well-known dealers and auction houses in the industry. And, yes, there are those who blatantly and intentionally flout the ethical norms of running a proper business. This recognition will allow us as the IPDA to more effectively promote the ethical and selling standards that are the foundation of our Statement of Purpose.

We should look no further than to within our own ranks for guidance. Each and every one of our own members' philatelic endeavors are different in their own ways. One may only deal in high-end and rare material. Another may offer penny auction items. Some are worldwide dealers, and others focus solely on one country or a sub-specialty. To each, their own. But the common thread is that, no matter what our dealer members offer, it is the HOW that is likely more important.

With that said, we should make a concerted effort to advise and support those aforementioned "pre-novices" at the start of their philatelic journey. Spend some time and share your experience and knowledge with them. Let us not judge them for what they do not know yet, but support their efforts to learn what it is that they do not know.

It is all too easy to dismiss someone who may not be up to our own high standards as someone who is less than ethical by virtue of lack of experience or may lack the knowledge we have gained over many years — often decades, in fact. Yes, the con artists, crooks, and shysters should be called out as such. There is no place for this kind of behavior in the philatelic marketplace, or anywhere else for that matter. But, let's spend some time to encourage those who can most benefit from our collective knowledge and experience.

We have been for some time now seeking to fill the Advertising and Marketing Director role in IPDA. This is not a full-time job for anyone, rather it is an opportunity for some-

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Please Note: The articles are now hyperlinked.

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one with a little time to spend on promoting the IPDA brand in the various forms of media including social media platforms. Please put a little thought into volunteering for this position. This is a director level position (unpaid like all of them are) but it does provide for a "seat at the table," so to speak. I think you will find it to be a quite interesting and rewarding endeavor.

Also, the board is currently soliciting bids to upgrade and update our website. We would be interested in hearing from our members with any suggestions for people or companies you use for your own online presence. Please feel free to contact me directly (gqdoll@peoplepc.com) or any board member, with any referrals you may have.

Looking ahead, we are in the process of finalizing a new member survey, which I hope to get out to you in March. In addition, the board and I are planning on some periodic Zoom chats in the near future where we can focus on certain topics and issues in the online philatelic marketplace.

Moving forward (there's that word again!!!), other efforts are underway, by your board, to better engage with some of the largest philatelic organizations and marketplaces in the world to be of counsel to them and help them improve their own unique issues with respect to the philatelic market.

So . . . forward we go!!!

All our best to you and yours!

Greg Doll

Chairman-Elect, IPDA



IPDA DEALER

SPOTLIGHT

Vaccari

If there is anything, besides stamps, that philatelists like to spend their money on, it's reference material — catalogues and other specialty books providing information on all of their particular areas of interest.

Vaccari S.R.L. based in Vignola, Italy, is operated by Paolo Vaccari, the president of the company, and is represented in the IPDA by his daughter, Valeria Vaccari. Besides an array of catalogues by Unificato, Yvert & Tellier, and others (newer and older) from Gibbons, Sakura (for China), and the American Air Mail Catalog, you will find such offerings as, *The Stamps and Postal History of Ethiopia*, *Illustrated Ottoman-Turkish Postmarks 1840-1929*, and countless books covering all areas of Italian philately and postal history.

The screenshot shows the website for Libreria Filatelica, www.philatelicbookshop.com. The banner reads "Philately... a never ending passion!" and lists various philatelic subjects available in the catalogue. Below the banner, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and the Vaccari logo.

They also publish the high quality, semi-annual — and award-winning — *Vaccari Magazine*, offering in-depth studies on various philatelic subjects. A free copy of Issue #60 is available to [read here](#).

In addition, there is a daily newspaper published on the web. While it is in Italian, it is no trouble to use a browser extension to translate the pages. You can [find it here](#).

And, oh yes, they sell stamps — from beginner packets to expensive rarities — as well as hold auctions twice a year. There is much more to say than I can include here. You're best bet is to simply explore their many web sites. So, grab your favorite beverage and check these out:

vaccari.it
vaccarimagazine.it
vaccarinews.it

libreriafilatelica.it
www.filatelia-vaccari.it



Time of Meeting: March 18th, 2023, 17:00 US Eastern Standard

Please check your local country time from the IPDA Website at ipdastamps.com and from the URL provided on the website.

Meeting Location: IPDA Zoom call – details will be provided

IMPORTANT NOTE: This invitation to join the AGM and vote is being sent to all members as of 14th January 2023. However, members must have paid up membership on 17th March to be eligible to vote on Motions presented at this AGM.

Please ensure you have paid your 2023 membership renewal to the Membership Secretary at IPDAMembershipSec@gmail.com

Proxy Voting - if you are unable to join the meeting please send a Proxy vote.

To Send a Proxy Vote you can :

RECOMMENDED - Use the Online Proxy Form - There are two Options and [you only need to do one of these](#). Log in to the Members Only area on the IPDA website and from the drop menu select AGM Proxy. The options are –

Option 1 is extremely simple. It will take less than one minute. Enter the name of the Director, or the General Secretary Michael Dodd, or the Membership Secretary Tony Tripi. They will vote on your behalf. Press submit at the bottom of the page. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO Tick ANY OTHER BOXES**

OR

Option 2: you can complete the online proxy form giving your vote to each Motion. This requires you to click a box showing you vote Yes, No or Abstain for each of the Motions. This is likely to take around 3 minutes to complete as there are 15 Motions and you will need to read each Motion and decide your vote. **The motions are presented in this agenda.**

If you do not wish to Log into the Members Only area to complete a) or b) above you may still have a Director hold your proxy. This will require you to send an email to the Director, or the General Secretary or Membership Secretary, advising them that you wish them to hold your proxy - they will vote for you at the meeting - and you must copy that email to the General Secretary . ipdasecretary1@gmail.com and the Membership Secretary **IF you do not copy one of these Directors your Proxy by email cannot be accepted as a valid Proxy**

AGM Agenda

Opening remarks and welcome from the General Secretary - The General Secretary will only open the meeting as the Chairman is Chairman Elect until the motion to elect as Chairman is approved Thus the General Secretary will stand in for this purpose only.

Verification of members present, proxies received and Quorum present.

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Adoption or amendment and adoption of the minutes of the 2022 AGM – Minutes of the 2022 AGM are attached - refer Attachment 1. (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

Adoption of the Annual Reports from the outgoing Chairman, the General Secretary, the Treasurer and the Annual Audited Financial Reports and Statement and Balance Sheet. Refer to Attachment 2. (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

Election of Directors: As per the Constitution Directors need to be re-elected at this AGM if they have served their two year term - Constitution Clause 9.1. The listed Directors have nominated that they wish to stand for re-election.

4.1.1 Jon Griffiths, Director Europe (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.1.2 Lee Coen, Director USA (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

The following Director was appointed during the year by the majority of the then current Committee. – he is to be formally elected by the membership

4.1.3 Scott Payton Director Asia Pacific (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.1.4 Greg Doll to be appointed Chairman. (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

NB Lee Coen has been Chairman for the past two years and has notified us he does not wish to stand for a second term.

4.2 To consider, amend, reject or approve the 2023 Business Plan and associated 2023 Budget: refer to Attachment 3. This document focuses on 3 initiatives for 2023 and is an extension of the Plan presented and approved at the 2022 AGM - Motion to:

Approve the 2023 Business plan being in three parts and then the Operating Budget for 2023: The Business Plan may be approved in whole if all Motions are approved or in part if one or more motions are not approved:

4.2.1 Appoint an Advertising and Marketing Committee member with the caveat that the potential candidate does not have to be from within the IPDA membership but if they are not an existing member they will be give honorary membership and an honorary Directorship - (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.2.2 Approve the expenditure of up to USD \$3500 for online and social media promotional activities. (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.2.3 Approve the expenditure of up to USD \$2000 for promoting the IPDA at philatelic exhibitions and shows (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.2.4 Approve the IPDA Board to conduct a search including issuance of a Request for Proposal (the RFP) to companies or individuals to quote on modernizing the IPDA website and take action on receipt of the Proposals to modernise the IPDA website with a budget approval of up to \$5,000 (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.2.5 Approve initiating one or more membership Funding drives to raise additional funds for the upgrade of the IPDA Website (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.2.6 approve the 2023 operating budget. refer to Attachment 3 (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

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4.3 Nomination and Vote for the new Director position Advertising and Marketing as proposed in the IPDA 2023 Business Plan – assuming 4.2.1 is approved. Motion to appoint <nominee> (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain) If no Nominee is presented at the AGM the membership gives approval to the IPDA Committee to act to recruit a person to the position during 2023 at their convenience.

4.4 Nominations for other administrative positions not participating as Committee / Director positions unless already an appointed Director. Motion to appoint:

4.4.1 <nominee> Confidential List Officer (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain)

4.4.2 <nominee> Internal Auditor (Membership to vote Yes No Abstain))

To adopt or reject any special motions, including: at the time of drafting none have been received.

Any Other Business

Close Meeting.

Issued 14th January 2023 by Michael Dodd, IPDA General Secretary, Laoag Philippines.

APS StampStore transitions to HipStamp – APS Stamp Store

With apologies to the IPDA member who wrote this — due to email issues, someone could not retrieve the message in which this article arrived, and so could not find the author's name. Please contact me ted.talks.stamps@gmail.com so I can give proper attribution in the next newsletter. Thank you. — Editor.

The transition from the legacy APS StampStore website, originally scheduled for September 1, 2022, finally started on December 20th when the old StampStore closed at noon. I expected that the transition would take at least two days to upload the 250,000+ listings to the live HipStamp website. It took about five days. Titles were changed to include the APS Seller ID. Promised features like an APS member badge and member discounts may require a few months to implement.

What has changed? For the buyer, everything. For sellers, little has changed. Stamps are submitted on listing sheets. Stamps are scanned by the APS and listing content on the APS StampStore submission form is manually entered into the system. Sellers must use the legacy APS system to monitor sales, change prices, and print sales reports. It is no longer possible to search for comparable listings from the legacy StampStore website.

All 250,000+ APS Stamp Store listings are in the HipStamp - APS Stamp Store. It is possible to search for listings by catalog number or APS seller ID and sort the results. Some legacy StampStore search capabilities do not seem to exist on HipStamp. Sellers submitting new listings may find success by writing coherent descriptions with more detail than required on the legacy StampStore. Unfortunately, longer descriptions could delay new listings. Will Electronic submissions be supported in the future?

Key HipStamp searches can be saved in browser favorites. The first and most annoying feature, the HipStamp 64 item "limit" can be fixed and memorialized in a saved URL:

Increase the "limit" to 96.

<https://www.hipstamp.com/store/aps-stamp-store/?limit=96>

Add country and catalog number search.

<https://www.hipstamp.com/store/aps-stamp-store/?limit=96&sort=catalog>

Limit search to United States. The string "&parent_id = 12" is the HipStamp category ID for "United States".

https://www.hipstamp.com/store/aps-stamp-store/?limit=96&sort=catalog&category_name=united-states&parent_id=12

Example: Search for seller ID: 508608

<https://www.hipstamp.com/store/aps-stamp-store/?keywords=Seller%20ID%3A%20508608&limit=96&sort=catalog>

The HipStamp search page may take some time to understand. The search bar at the top is useful to start a search. The filters in the left panel can be helpful but depend on how diligent the seller was in filling out HipStamp "Item Specifics". HipStamp adds some context related Item Specifics that are helpful, especially the catalog number. HipStamp search depends on keywords in the title. For now, APS Stamp Store listings have minimal titles. I have been assured that adding informative titles is a priority.

Will better-quality Stamp Store listings continue to sell in the larger, more competitive HipStamp environment? I submitted 285 listings to StampStore in the spring of 2021. Only 61 remained at the winter 2022 HipStamp transition, a remarkable result. Prices of stamps selected would not support tracked shipping and few would have attracted buyers at stamp shows. Will HipStamp – APS Stamp Store remain competitive? My observations on that topic will be covered in a future installment.



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Ian Lasok-Smith (Philatelist)

6 Hough Green, Chester, CH4 8JG

Bad Listing Practices: A Case Study

by Ted Tyszka



**URUGUAY Pegasus Horse constellation southern star block of 4 **/* VF
scarce
\$36.00**

mlh and mnh are these stamps scarce ? well...less 20000 were issued of some values...yes definetly you will not see these kind of block of 4 often...lets say once each 5 years...aprox mlh mnh and block of 4

I came across this listing, recently, and I was struck by all of the bad listing practices contained within this one ad. It can serve as a textbook example of how not to sell your stamps — from title, to description, to images, to price, there is nothing to like about this listing. (Note: I changed the black background of the image to gray, for the sake of those who may print a hardcopy of the newsletter.)

Let's start with the title. The first thing I thought, after reading the title, was, what the heck does **/* mean? Slashes (usually a double slash) indicate a number range that is not all inclusive. E.g. 230//245 would indicate that the stamps come from the set of stamps #230-245, but does not include all of them. But, what do asterisks mean?

Not until I read the details did I realize this notation means some of the stamps are hinged and some are mint-

never-hinged. Asterisks are old-school shorthand denoting stamp condition. Well, okay, but a lot of younger collectors won't necessarily know this. Wouldn't it be better to put "MH & MNH" in the title, to make it clear?

I can see one reason he couldn't spell out "MH & MNH" is because he wasted too many of his title's 80 allotted characters on needless text. Pegasus, horse, constellation — okay, all topical search terms. But what of "southern star?" That is not the name of a constellation. Perhaps he meant "southern cross?" That constellation does not appear on the stamp. Needless text.

The "VF" centering designation is not only unnecessary, it is completely false. On the 24c block, especially, the design is touching the lower perfs, while there is a wide top margin.

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Scarce? How do you define scarce? The dealer says it's because less than 20,000 of some values were printed. Scarcity is determined more by the surviving number than by quantity printed. While, 20,000 is a low print run, even by today's standards, that alone doesn't justify calling them scarce.

This dealer goes on to say, "you will not see these kind of block 4 (sic) often...let's say once each 5 years." Why 5 years? Heck, let's say 10 years. Let's say once in a lifetime. There are thousands of stamps I have seen only once in my lifetime. Doesn't mean they're scarce.

The last part of the description is a killer, "approx mlh mnh." It's also approximately time to move on from this listing and never look back, but I'm not done yet; we still need to examine the images. I'll crop the images to make the points easier to see.

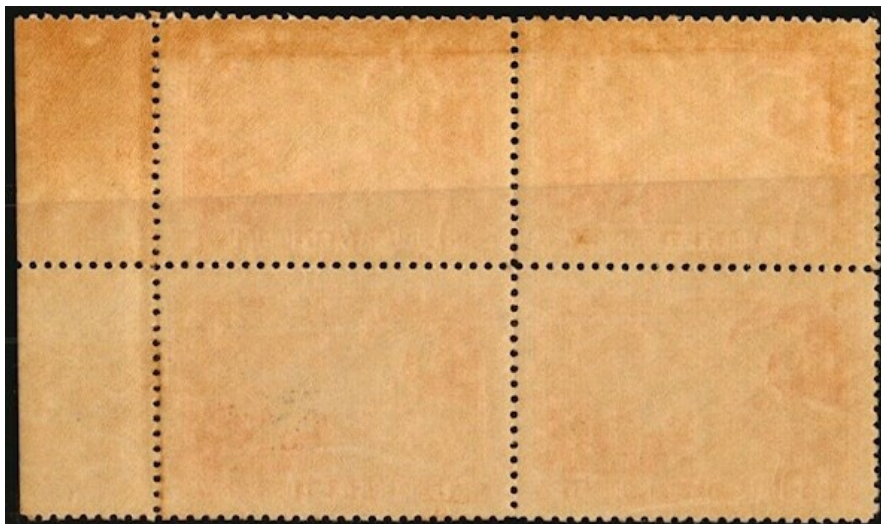


Not only is there toning in the upper right corner of this block, but, just to the right of the vertical perfs, you see a slightly diagonal line where the block appears to have been partially covered, with the rest exposed (perhaps in a hot and humid closet or drawer) and the paper to the left of the line has darkened.



In the above image, just above the top horizontal line of perfs, you can see a line of rust/toning. You cannot see the top row of perfs (if there are any) on the 30c block against the light background. And, just for good measure, the dealer bumped the block during the scan, creating a blurred band on the right side of the image.

Anybody care to look at the backside? At least the dealer was considerate enough to provide back scans.



Not a pretty sight to behold. These stamps were not stored in a proper and safe manner at all.

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Taking a look at the blocks at the top of his scan — breaks your heart, doesn't it? And why does this seller not see fit to arrange the blocks so everything is visible?

Last thing we come to is the price — \$36. Scott catalogue value for each of these individual stamps is \$3. He is asking full catalogue value for these pitiful abused stamps.

If you know anyone who would buy these stamps at that price, tell them I have a car for sale:

1967 Shelby GT500
 RARE! Only 2,000 made.
 Used condition.
 \$200,000



IPDA Newsletter February 2023

The Stamp Market

A trader's view.

Roy Lingen

This article was written in July, 2000. It is being reprinted here, both, because it is still relevant today, and to give you a perspective of the stamp market 22 years on from this article.

Many thanks to Roy Lingen for permission to reprint it. Visit his websites buckacover.com and DiscountStampShop.com

I spent the last 18 years in the Finance Industry -- the world of stocks, bonds, Fed monetary policy, breaking news and screaming traders. I was fortunate. Upon leaving that business in late 1999, with the constant help of my wife Deborah, I managed to slide us right into our full time Internet stamp and Postal History business. Our quality of life has never been greater, and I have found that many of the skills learned in "the markets" are very useful and easily transportable to our new occupation.

One of these skills is market analysis. While I will never pretend to be a full time market analyst, every trader must be able to make observations about what he sees going on around him, assimilate the data and develop a "world view" from which to operate. The stamp market, while

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"just a hobby" is a market like any other, and is subject to market forces. It is certainly possible to enjoy the hobby of philately without ever being aware of, or caring about, these forces. In fact, most collectors do exactly that. If you are among that group, the rest of this article will hold little or no interest for you, however if you have ever wondered about the dynamics behind some of the stamp market trends of the last few years, the views of this ex-trader may hold some insights for you.

The most common refrain heard in discussions about the state of the hobby is, "there are too few young people taking up the hobby. The hobby is in a state of decline". There is no question that the first part of this statement is true. Stamp collecting is having a very difficult time competing for the hearts and minds of young people when pitted against their current activities of computers and computer games. As a father to one teenage son, and an uncle to seven others ranging in ages from 8 to 15, I can vouch firsthand for the difficulty of generating an interest in stamp collecting.

Part of the problem is the current general impression of stamp collecting as an activity for "nerds". Recently, I watched a television episode of "Relic Hunter", certainly a show for teenage boys if there ever was one. When Tia Carrera, the sexy star, asked another character, a CIA agent, what he did in his spare time he answered "I collect stamps -- anything wrong with that?". Her reaction of suppressed mockery and disbelief would have been a sufficiently clear signal to any aspiring teenage boy that this is not an activity to engender respect in the female population! Possibly a better answer would have been "I study the history of the world. My favourite medium is the stamps that have been issued for the last 160 years".

A dealer I met at a show last weekend told me an interesting story on this subject. He had a two year old complete set of Scott catalogs that he was determined to give to "the first kid who came to my table. It was a three day show starting Friday. I finally gave them away late Saturday afternoon!"

The lack of young newcomers, at least in North America and Europe, is a demographic fact. However the stamp market is not uniformly weak, there are many areas of dramatic strength. How can we explain this? In this writer's opinion, it's all in the demographics, but one must look at the global picture.

Here are some personal observations of portions of the

stamp market, and how my trader's "world view" explains what I see.

Observation:

"Average" material of many previously popular countries has been dropping in price consistently for many years. By "average", I mean the type of material that the average country collector fills an album with, not sub-quality material. In other words, mint never hinged sets of the last 40 years, medium quality used stamps that are not particularly scarce, the sort of material that is easily found in the stock of any dealer who regularly stocks the area in question. The bulk of North American and European mint stamps of this time period now trade based on their face value, with much of it being recycled as current postage.

On the other hand, earlier, better material of these countries is in strong demand. The definition of "better" is any stamp that one cannot reasonably expect a dealer to have in stock, one that must be "found", either because of scarcity or condition.

World view explanation:



Country collectors ("album fillers" in dealer parlance) are dying off faster than newcomers are taking it up. Those newcomers that are starting (or returning) see the state of the market for this material, and they

also shy away and head for "more interesting" philatelic fields. The "album filler" was king during the heyday of the 1970's when everything that was bought from the post office went up in price (if not "value"). They formed the bulk of the collecting public. Also, the collectors of that time rarely bothered to be very picky, especially with used stamps. "Mint Never Hinged" ruled, and was almost the only thing that was important. For verification, look closely at the collections that were formed in the 1970's that many dealers are offering intact - you will quickly see the pattern. Now, nearly all collectors are searching for the stamps that need to be "found", not just bought from a pricelist. The result is more demand for the better items, and less for the readily available stamps, at the same time as the supply of the readily available stamps is increasing because so many of those 1970's "album filler" collections

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are coming on the market.

Observation:

The stamps of China, Southeast Asia and Latin America, previously under-appreciated areas, are doing very well.

World view explanation:

These areas have had their ups and downs over the last few years due simply to local economies and the spending power of local collectors, but in general have done very well. Why? The answer lies in three elements: 1) twenty years or more of improving economies, leading to 2) the rise of a middle class with the money and desire to collect, and 3) the Internet.

The first two are demographics in another form. When we discuss the North American and European collecting population, we tend to ignore money, like it's a relatively constant element. However, this has not always been true! There is a reason why all those German commemoratives of the late 1940's and early 1950's are so highly valued now — nobody had the money to buy them during the reconstruction!

The availability of more spending power has created more collectors, of areas that were once unpopular in the rest of the world. The result is expanding demand for stamps with a limited supply, since why should anybody have put away stocks of something that was unpopular?

So what about the Internet? An axiom of trading is that "price cannot go up in a vacuum". For prices to rise, there must be some, limited supply. Then, when a collector sees the availability of desirable things, and becomes aware that he can purchase these things if he buys aggressively enough, he begins to do just that, competing with other collectors who have discovered the same joy from these items. The Internet has, almost overnight in historical terms, allowed collectors and dealers around the world to offer items to collectors in these expanding markets, soaking up the available supply in the rest of the world.

These are the growth markets for stamps in the future. Financially improved adult populations in Asian and some Latin American countries are replacing, on a global scale, the loss of the young population in the countries with a long standing philatelic population.

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Do you have a news tip to share?

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Ted.talks.stamps@gmail.com

Now You Have Got the Sale

What Next?

The following is from member Michal Dodd. It was first published in the January issue of the Philatelic Exporter and is replublished with Michael's permission. He welcomes comments at cddstamps@gmail.com

All of the following is so obvious I questioned whether I should write this piece, especially as I am sure I have written along these line in past Newsletters

But, this came to mind because I recently saw some orders – from a friend of mine – that made me think it might be useful to write this as a reminder to us all, if nothing else. Perhaps you will skip parts, some parts may be a good reminder, or perhaps you will think, well yes I should be doing that.

Many of the sellers who sent my friend the stamps they bought did not follow all these tips and ways of handling orders. Ways and actions, as I think of it, to impress the customer and have that customer, think, I will buy from that seller again.

One point here I will talk about dealers and sellers. I use the term dealer to suggest a professional, knowledgeable, and caring person or persons that sells stamps. I use the term seller to more reflect a person who casually sells stamps. There is a big difference and merits an article in its own right.

Before I jump right in just a bit of data – and from a sample of 34 orders from 32 sellers/dealers over a period of 5 months – that is, 2 of the sellers each had 2 orders during the sample period. So, not too shoddy a sample size, I would suggest. I have simplified for ease of presentation, here, but I think you will get the message.

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Quality Criteria	No of oc- curences
Invoice included in the envelope with the stamps sent - No	11
Yes	23
Packing of stamps - stamps all lose in an envelop / glassine / 102 card - yes	28
Stamp packed with reference to the ordered items eg eBay # for example - yes	6
Mint stamps packed lose and with no mount separation	18
Mint stamps packed and protected as individual stamps - Yes	2
Stamps sent in envelope with stiffener	16
Stamps sent in envelope with no stiffener	18
Communication from seller, even just a simple Thank you note - No	16
- Yes	18
<i>Footnote – 20 orders were for Mint stamps, 14 orders were for Used stamps</i>	

So you can see a few themes here. Seller / dealer packing and communication quality is pretty uncaring, one may say.

Let's look at the Invoice, the Packing and the Commuication topics a bit more.

Invoice included with the stamps that were sent: 11 orders had no invoice. If you find that hard to believe, so did I but I assure you it is 100% correct. One well known dealer - well known in some circles maybe - just had 5 mint never hinged stamps placed between two small pieces of cardboard and selotaped tightly together. Ok, so the stamps were in the, "yes had a stiffener category," but nothing else in the envelope? Well, I think you see my point. Not good customer service.

Another point to make here, this friend of mine often buys 3 or 4 or more of the same stamp from different sellers for study purposes. While not in this little survey group it can be very difficult to know who has sent what, especially when there is no invoice or even identifying mark on the outside of the envelope. I know what you are saying, that is just not going to happen. Let me assure you I have seen it happen.

Anyway, the good news is there were invoices from 23 of the sellers. But the bad news, in my opinion, is that 16 of the sellers made no communication with the buyer. None. Not even a, "Thank you," for the order written on the invoice — the invoice being a copy of the order details generated by the online marketplace. Pretty amazing, since surely we all know that one element of a great customer service experience is excellent communications — yes, effective, timely, and polite communication.

Here at cddstamps, every customer order receives a copy of the invoice; every stamp is identified with the listing reference ID, and placed with the ID number in a mount styled card; and every customer can read our thank you for being a cddstamps customer.

Is that so hard?

Why do sellers not do it? I do not know. What I do know is those sellers, even if they have some nice stamps in what they send, are not sellers that are easily going to get onto a repeat customer list. They are not, in my opinion, quality dealers, but perhaps it could be said, just casual sellers.

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Packing Stamps: I have already touched on this but will stress again it is important to pack stamps

- A) so mint stamps cannot stick together - especially with some gums and climates. From the sample, my friend had 18 of 20 orders for mint stamps all loosely packed. That is, the stamps and gums were all touching (Fig 1). That is not a sign of quality and certainly not a sign of a seller who cares, or, one may think, who has an appreciation for what can happen to gummed stamps during the postal transit.



Fig. 1

- B) in an envelope with a stiffener so the envelope cannot get bent in the mail handling process.
 C) with the stamps – and especially where there are multiple stamps — with the listing ID showing which stamp is which in the order (Fig 2).



Fig. 2

Some buyers buy more than one copy, and if the listing ID is not there it can make the customer's acceptance of the order perhaps somewhat arduous. Yes, that means maybe the customer will not become a repeat customer.

Just one example of this last point. My friend bought 6 lots in an auction from one seller — a total of 44 stamps. The order arrived in a soft and flexible jiffy bag about 20cm by 12cm which had clearly been through various postal systems. Upon opening the bag, there was a 12cm by 8cm glassine with all the stamps inside. All just put into the glassine in no particular order. And, the order included 1 set of 10 stamps which were mint never hinged. (Image Fig 3 is a representative sample not the actual stamps.)



Fig. 3

How many of the stamps had light bending from the travels through the postal systems? Quite a few. The seller demonstrated little to no philatelic awareness, no customer appreciation for the order, as there was nothing to say who the seller was, or even a thank you note. And they won't be getting a repeat order.

Another aspect to packing stamps is to make sure the envelope used is well sealed (Fig 4). This may sound so obvious but not all envelopes are made the same. One of the orders was from the UK and a very respected dealer who as far as I know always uses the Post Office's hard backed envelope which has a very solid self-adhesive gummed seal — a sign the dealer is caring and wants to provide the stamps ordered in top quality condition and not falling out of an envelope that might open during transit.

There are a few other aspects which are so obvious it should not be worth mentioning. But seeing the sample orders my friend received I am showing a few additional pointers in Fig 4 as well.

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Fig. 4

Clear address

Correct Postage

Airmail label

if required

return address

envelope sealed

some envelopes easily
open during mail

I mentioned some of the sample orders had no identified markings on the envelope of who the seller was. This might seem hard to believe as you would think everyone would put a return address on the envelope. Not always true, or there is a return address but it has no correlation to whoever the seller was.

At cddstamps we always put a return address on the reverse of the envelope. It has paid off.

Once, we got an order returned to us from a customer in Chile. We had long ago refunded the order cost, but one year later the envelope turned up at our local Post Office here in the Philippines. We advised the customer, who was quite excited, as they had not repurchased the stamps. So, we sent them again.

Two last points to make on the topic of packaging. There may be some debate on this first point and I am not saying there is a right or wrong answer. But years ago when I was starting out on my online selling I was advised by a long time and highly respected stamp dealer to NOT use a label on the envelope that advertised I was a stamp dealer. I was told this might open the opportunity gate for theft. So we don't do that and I have to say most of the orders my friend received were in that category. Sadly, this may apply more appropriately in some parts of the world than others, but it is perhaps worth a thought.

Finally, the subject of using stamps on the envelope. This might not always be possible, I can understand that. But, given that the customer has bought stamps, perhaps they would be pleased with some nice stamps on the envelope. Again, no right or wrong, and different circumstance will prevail, of course. But, again, something to think about.

Communicating with the Customer: I have already made reference to this topic but there are two aspects I think are worth a further mention.

1. Do show appreciation that the customer has visited your store and placed an order with you. This may seem the most obvious thing to say. But with 16 of the 34 orders my friend received having no communication at all — and I don't include placing an invoice of the order as communications unless something is written on that invoice — that is a pretty unprofessional attitude on the part of the sellers, in my view.
2. If you write to the customer to ask that they leave feedback and you will leave feedback after they have left feedback, no matter how you word it, you are threatening the customer. The customer has fulfilled the order obligations by paying. Of the 34 orders received, only 2 sellers said this. A small number, but what does it say about the seller? Each to their own to decide, I think.

Perhaps I have stated the obvious or perhaps a few reminders are worth reading.

I welcome feedback, of course, but at the end of the day, if we have done the right thing because we are professional in our own behaviors as dealers, and our customers see they are getting treated with respect and receiving quality stamps, of course, then we have a good chance, I would think, of getting repeat customers.



Franklin-Washingtons

Taming the Beast

Part V: 3-Cent Type Identifiers

A guide to Identification and Fake Detection

By Scott Payton – *Classic Philatelist*

While the 2-Cent Types are challenging, many also find the 3-Cent types, though fewer in number, also challenging. However, after reading this section about the 3-Cent types, you will know that each has a single definitive identifier, which makes this issue quite easy. Identify press type, and then there is only 1 identifier needed to successfully ID the 3-Cent issues. The next installment will be fake identification, armed with everything you have learned, it's all you will need to help you conquer identifying Franklin-Washington fakes.

For a copy of our Franklin-Washington Identification Matrix please email us at scottvpayton@hotmail.com and we'll send the matrix, and the tutorial on how to use it.

3c Type Identifiers

3c identifier is reasonably simple. There are 4 types. Type I and Type II are found only on flat plate and rotary printings, and type III and IV are found only on offset press.

Each of the 4 types have a unique identifier. After determining which press type, they are, you only need to check one thing to determine the type. Look at the Toga button. If the button has 5 lines in it, it's a Type I or II. If there is a dot in the middle of the center line, it's Type III or Type IV.



The image above shows the Toga Button of a Type I. Type II is very similar, but the lines are stronger. The green arrow

row indicates the Toga button, and the red arrow points to the 5th line in the toga rope, which will identify the Type I over Type II.



This image is of a Type II, note how the rope is complete, all lines fully connect from bottom to top of the rope line, and the detail around the toga button is bold.

You will then instantly be able to ID it as a type I if the 5th line in the toga rope is missing or incomplete. It often times looks like a thick blob of ink that reaches about 1/2 way and then is either scantily thin or not there at all. (From the left, these are the slightly diagonal lines at the base of Washington's throat the lead up to the button). If the rope lines are complete, it's a Type II.



The image above shows the Toga Button of a Type III. Type IV is similar, though the dot at center may be fainter in some Type IV examples, as offset printing, particularly when under inked does not result in a strong impression.

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For the offset printing, one need only look at the "PO" in postage at the top. (In fact, a very quick way to determine if it's a Type IV is to look here first. If the P and O touch (no line between them) it's a type IV. If they don't check the button... if it's got a dot in it, it's a Type III.



Note in the image above there is no gap between the P and O and they are touching. This is a Type IV. Type III then, is with a visible line of ink that clearly separates the two letters. The red arrow indicates where to look, but the gap where the two letters touch is just above the arrow tip (I didn't want to obscure the image by having it overlay into the area to be identified).

Now, let's do a quick recap and see how fast you can ID a 3c Washington.

1. If the button has 5 lines in the button and the 5th line of the toga is rope missing - Type I
2. If the button has 5 lines in the button and all the lines in the toga rope are complete - Type II
3. If the button has a dot in the center and the P and O of postage aren't touching - Type III
4. If the button has a dot in the center and the P and O of postage are touching - Type IV

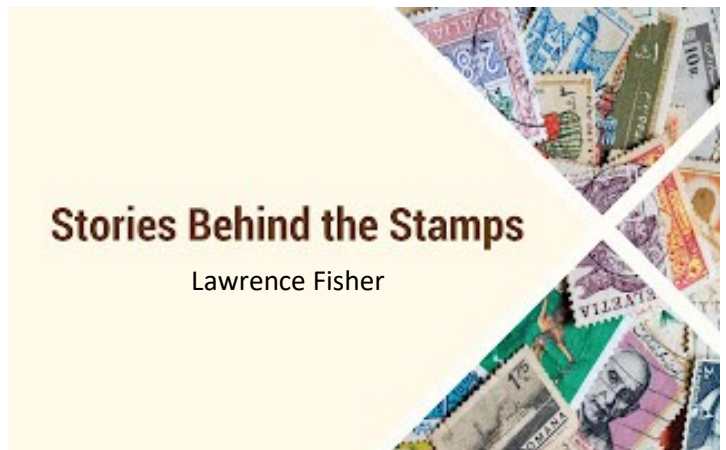
That's all you need to know in order to ID any 3c Washington. You don't need to understand Press Types to ID these. You can go straight to Typing the 3c and narrow down very fast which issue you have.

PRO TIP: If you're struggling to identify offset printings in the 2c or other printings of FW, this is a great issue to learn from. Because the button with a dot in the center of the toga button is ALWAYS an offset printing, you can compare the printing clarity to another known printing (like

flat plat, where you can easily identify them by ink spots on the reverse).

Looking at the images in this discussion, you might get the impression that you can ID them by shade. And that is possible, but I don't recommend this. Color is the least reliable identifier in any stamp issue, which is why we always look for some other means of identification first and determining by shade is virtually always a last step (especially until you get the experience of looking at thousands of copies) and is subject to many factors that may have naturally varied the color.

Also, photographed color will never match what the actual item is unless through sheer coincidence, as effects of light, quality of camera, other influences when taking the photo (including humidity) can all affect how photographed color appears. This is further compounded by the screen used to view it, if you're reading this electronically. I have 4 monitors on my computer, all "calibrated" to color and brightness/contrast standards, and when I move a stamp image around the 4 different monitors, it appears a slightly different shade on each one. There is no need to use color to ID the 3c denominations.



We recently spoke about the Israeli interim period in which the British had not yet left, but were still playing games with us and one of those games was interfering with the transfer of mail. I wrote two posts about this, one "When a label is not a label" and the other "Whiskey Mail". Here comes another in this fascinating period in our postal history.

The story is about a city called Rishon Lezion. I would not want to live there but I am in the minority because it is among the largest cities in the Israel currently one about a

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quarter of a million inhabitants. I know that is small by most countries' standards, but we are a small country, about the size of New Jersey in the USA. For us, Rishon as it is known, is so large that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish its border and the neighboring town known as Holon. But Rishon Lezion was not always so big.

In 1882 about 10 pioneers together purchased about four acres of land to establish the city. The city grew, of course, and other cities were established around it, such as Tel Aviv, Holon, and a city called Nahalat Yehuda, north of Rishon, which today is part of Rishon Lezion itself.

However in 1948, Rishon Lezion had about 12,000 inhabitants, 5% of its size today. In those days between Rishon Lezion and Tel Aviv there were orange groves, sand dunes and two hostile Arab villages, Beit Dajan and Yazor.

Remember the post about Safed and the problems it experienced in 1948? The Whiskey mail post? Not only Safed suffered, there were battles all over the country and of course the British, like today, did nothing to protect the Jewish inhabitants. The Arabs from the villages around Rishon Lezion began attacking Jewish vehicles traveling between Rishon and Tel Aviv. Shots, stones and ambushes were daily occurrences and as you might well imagine, it was not exactly a pleasant time for anybody.

Some citizens took the initiative and made home-made armored vehicles. Basically they took a bus and added steel to it, and the buses accompanied the cars that were on the road. Until, in one ambush, seven people were killed near Yazur, and all traffic to Tel Aviv was stopped.

Like today, Tel Aviv, at that time, was the center of business (not our capital), trade, post office, supplies, etc. and people had to get there and back. They had to find a way to get there and they did. They found a way that passed through fields, dirt roads to Holon and from there to Tel Aviv. Instead of 20 minutes to get to Tel Aviv, it just took about two hours.

Something I learned from spy movies is that a route must be changed so that no one could study and ambush them. So the drivers did that, especially taxi drivers. Every day they found a different way between the fields. The main thing is that the belligerent Arab units would not learn the route.

Contact with Tel Aviv was also problematic. There were no phones to speak of, and the official mail services of the Mandate were not regular — only once or twice a week — and people had a dire need to remain in contact with each other.

Here's a thought. If there are cars making trips back and forth, why can they not take and fetch mail? So the local council convened and decided to set up its own postal services. Of course it was not legal because there was supposedly still the Mandatory Postal Service. So, as always happens, they decided to set up a committee to deal with the issue and make sure that the committee had no connection to the local council, wink wink.

The committee convened and decided on the design of a stamp for the service, a stamp showing the armored vehicle that was in



service from Rishon LeZion to Tel Aviv. Since this was a local postal service of Rishon LeZion, the service started in only one direction, from Rishon.

What is amazing, here, is that from the moment of approval, stamp design, and stamp printing, until the moment the first letters came out, only eight days passed — all this in an emergency while surrounded by hostile villages. Which committee would have been successful today where most committees decide not to decide, especially if it is the UN?

The service operated similarly to a courier service. Someone who needed to post a letter would buy stamps at high prices (someone had to finance the service) and bring the stamped letter to a specific restaurant in Rishon Lezion. A courier would collect the letters at eight in the morning and travel to Tel Aviv with an armored taxi. In Tel Aviv, he would take the stamped letters to recipients and return home.

As soon as people saw that the service was successful, neighboring Nahalat Yehuda also joined the service. Of course, Tel Aviv merchants also joined in, and the same courier would collect the mail from an agreed collection point in Tel Aviv and would return with the mail.

The service operated for about a month, and was stopped on May 6th, when the postal services of the People's Administration went into operation.

Of course, collectors and stamp dealers liked the service and saw potential, and they also sent letters as curiosities, but that is life.

Thanks to Lawrence Fisher for the [Stories Behind the Stamps blog](#) and YouTube channel, for permission to reprint this article

Meet H. R. Harmer's Marketing Director

About a year ago, H. R. Harmer hired a new Marketing Manager, Alysson Baumgardner, adding to the current leadership team of Alison Sullivan, Office and Accounts Manager, and Charles Epting, President and CEO of the firm. As noted in her introductory letter, below, she started the position with a clean slate, not even knowing the word "philately," before her interview. She has taken on the challenge of her new position with enthusiasm and has, herself, now become a philatelist. Below is the introduction letter she mailed out to H R Harmer clients.

Dear Valued Client,

You've heard from Charles quite a bit lately, so I thought it might be a nice change of pace to hear from someone else. If we haven't had the chance to meet yet, my name is Alyssa Baumgardner. One year ago I accepted a job offer to become the marketing manager at H.R. Harmer. I packed my bags, got on a flight at the Denver airport and moved my entire life to New York City in two suitcases and a few boxes. The truth is, I didn't know anything about philately when I started. In fact, I only learned the word philately through the interview process. So why would I want to leave everything I knew behind for this industry?

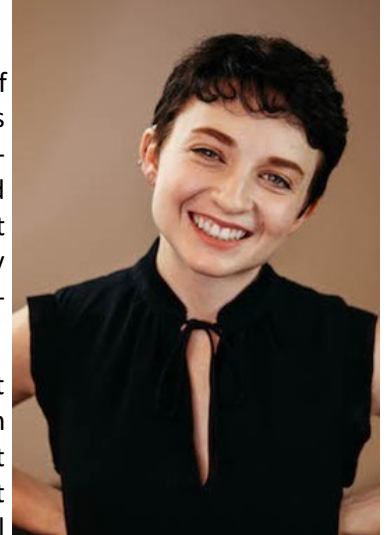
The stories don't come to life, though, without the people. My favorite thing to do at stamp shows is talk to others about their collections. Whether it's walking through an exhibit with the collector and hearing their careful and precise process of laying out their exhibit or just chatting with someone at our booth about their favorite items that they've bought at the show, it's always a joyful experience. There is something magical

Collecting stamps is not the same as collecting art or designer handbags. There's nothing overly glamorous about these pieces of paper, but isn't that what makes it so wonderful? That someone takes the time to take care of these personal stories, these little pieces of history, and hold onto them until it is time to let someone else be their guardian. There's perhaps not much to



gain from this hobby in the way of fame or glory, but each collector finds satisfaction in the quiet act of preserving the past, and that is remarkable.

Many people worry about the future of stamp collecting and that's why I wanted to share my story. I knew nothing about philately a year ago and I knew no one who collected stamps. Today I have an album of stamps and covers proudly sitting on my desk at work and I have met incredible collectors who are now my friends. You won me over with your stories and your passion, and I believe we can do that same for others. I'm grateful to be a part of your community and proud to work for an auction firm that is not only dedicated to preserving history, but sharing it.



To close, I have a small favor to ask of you:

In the next week, please sit down with your collection—I know many of you were probably already planning on doing this. Revisit your favorite pieces: find one you bought at your favorite stamp show, or the one you entered a bidding war over at auction, or the one

that isn't worth much monetarily but always brings a smile to your face. Then I want you to imagine the future of these pieces when it comes time to pass them along. What is your hope for them? How do you want their stories preserved? Who do you want their next owners to be?

Why am I asking you this? Because your answers to these questions are what help to determine the future of stamp collecting. Once you have the answers we can start building that future together.

Alyssa B