

ACROSS THE FENCE



Newsletter of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs

President's Message

By WFSC President Karen Weigt

Mysteries of Philately



My dictionary includes a definition of mystery as "something not understood or beyond understanding." Sounds routine when it comes to philatelic encounters. Consider all those

tiny bits of paper and our many mysteries of where did I put...? Why did I buy...? Mystery mixtures and lots. What's this thing worth? The "to be announced" mystery club program. Why was this cover sent here or there? What does the franking mean? You get the picture.

Sherlock Holmes, that famous fictional detective featured in the article on p. 4 had nothing up on philatelists. Like Holmes, we research facts and look for clues to solve our mysteries. We even use Holmes' signature

magnifying glass. We seek help in understanding by consulting fellow club members and through a variety of other means.

Although most of our mysteries end with a solution, there are always a few left hanging. Why not make your 2017 New Year's resolution to empty that box of mystery stamps and covers. Share your mystery items with your fellow Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs members through *Across the Fence Post* by sending a scan to our editor. Your mysteries could very well be solved.

My best wishes to all for a prosperous and wonderful New Year.



WFSC 2016 Accomplishments

By WFSC President Karen Weigt

The WFSC continues to be an active organization with several accomplishments in 2016. Here are some of the major actions:

- Welcomed the Tri-State Stamp Club (Dubuque, Iowa) to the roles.
- Initiated the idea of a first-day-of-sale ceremony at Two Rivers, Wis., for the U.S. Postal Service Soda Fountain Favorites issue and served as a major participant in the event.
- Staffed a table at MILCOPEX 2016.
- Enjoyed a milestone 85th anniversary convention at WISCOPEX 2016, hosted by the Fond du Lac Stamp Club.
- Started an email e-Blast mailing list of WFSC members.
- Welcomed a new *Across the Fence Post* editor, who continues to produce a superior WFSC newsletter.
- Participated in American Philatelic Society elections.
- Inducted two outstanding philatelists to the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame.
- Maintained a healthy treasury through increased *ATFP* ads and sale of items from donated collections.
- Updated the configuration of the WFSC regions map.
- Updated the WFSC benefits of membership document.
- Promoted October National Stamp Collecting Month.
- Added more educational resources on the website.

Many thanks to all who made these accomplishments possible. The WFSC plans to move forward in 2017 as a preeminent organization with another exceptional list of achievements.

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Chapter 350



Chapter 107

www.wfscstamps.org



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*Wishing You all a
Happy and
Prosperous New Year*



Happy New Year! Have you made Your Resolution?

By Ray Perry



Happy New Year Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs member. I hope that you had a wonderful Christmas and that you will have a safe, fulfilling, and prosperous 2017. If you read Karen's article on the "mysteries of philately" on page 1 you probably gathered that we would focus this issue on mysteries, and you would be right.

Karen alludes to a few mysteries related to our hobby including "why did I buy this" or "where did I put that." I could add a few of my own as I'm sure each of you could too. Things like "what country is this stamp from" or "is there any significance to this postmark." Karen suggests that we make our New Year's resolution to solve some of those mysteries existing in each of our own collections. She suggests sending your really tough mysteries to me at fiveperrys@athenet.net for inclusion in *Across the Fence Post*. I think this is an excellent idea. Send them along with appropriate pictures/diagrams and I will put them in the next issue of *ATFP*. By doing that we can enlist the support of all of the philatelic detectives within the federation. None of us are experts on all matters philatelic, but within the federation I bet that there is member somewhere that has expertise in your area and can provide the answer to your mystery. I have a feeling that many members will have similar questions and will gain education in that field based on somebody else's question(s). Not only that, but who knows what philatelic friendships might be formed from this activity.

I wanted to remind folks that there was a ballot in both the October 2016 and December 2016 issues of *ATFP* to vote for your club's favorite commemorative of 1932. We extended the

deadline to get the votes in by February 1, 2017. Please poll your club and send the results to me via e-mail, or snail mail (2214 Allouez Ave., Green Bay, WI 54311) by February 1 for inclusion in the March issue.

Speaking of mysteries, on page 4 of this issue Clete Delvaux writes on "Searching for Sherlock Holmes." I think you will enjoy Clete's research into the history of this popular sleuth. Then on pages 8 and 9, James Byrne writes on "Topical and Thematic Collecting." I think you will really enjoy Jim's down home and folksy style. Don't miss MaryAnn's "Connecting with Clubs" column on page 3. She has a nice summary of how clubs celebrated Christmas, possible solutions to a "club dilemma" and a great idea for a February program. Check them all out.

As I write this column it is not yet 2017, so I have not made any New Year's resolutions yet. I admit I haven't made a new year's resolution in a number of years. Whenever I have made them in the past they seem to fall by the wayside faster than the snow falls in one of our Wisconsin blizzards. Maybe I need to look at making a resolution that would be easier to keep, but wouldn't that defeat the purpose? Thanks to several articles in this issue I have some ideas. First idea is from Karen to dig through my collection for one of those mysteries I have not been able to solve. Second idea is to work with my local club on being prepared for the "dilemma" that MaryAnn writes about in her column. Finally, Jim Byrne writes about exhibiting and

Continued on page 7.



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Submission deadlines for editorial and advertising materials are the 1st of the month preceding month of publication (i.e. - Jan. 1st for Feb. issue). Editorial matter should be sent to: Ray D. Perry, Editor *ATFP*, 2214 Allouez Ave., Green Bay, WI 54311. Phone: 920-469-8925 (fiveperrys@athenet.net).

Send advertising material to John St. Onge, Advertising Manager, *ATFP*, P.O. Box 123, Wales, WI 53183-0123. Phone 262-893-5210 (jcstonge@gmail.com). For a complete list of advertising rates and policies (display, classified, and listings), request a copy from the advertising manager.

Connecting with Clubs

By MaryAnn Bowman

Happy New Year! At this time of year, many people make resolutions with the hope of improving their personal, social, and financial life. But making New Year's resolutions need not be limited to individuals. It might be a good exercise for your club to spend a few minutes creating their own list of projects, activities, objectives or some act of club improvement to meet during the new year.

When club members are offered the opportunity to give input, they are more likely to take some ownership and responsibility to help the club meet their goals. Have a brainstorming session to generate ideas. Then select one or two that the group can work on during the year. It might be to increase membership, give a talk at a school or local organization, prepare a display for the library, plan special activities for October National Stamp Collecting Month, give a basics program to entice beginning collectors to learn more about the hobby, or maybe even just to get your members more involved in club programming. Then involve your members in getting involved in working toward meeting the selected goal/s. Let me know if you try this idea, and then keep me informed on the progress of meeting the goal.

Holiday Parties

Many clubs take the month of December to celebrate the holiday with programming that is more "social" in nature. Frequently it also involves food and games. Some club members meet at a restaurant and leave the cooking to someone else. For years, the Milwaukee Philatelic Society (MPS) utilized the services of Dona Fagan who prepared hot roast beef for sandwiches as well as bringing the other food items to compliment the main dish. Last year, the club went to sub sandwiches with club members being asked to bring their own non-alcoholic beverage and contributing finger food to share.

ATA #5, as part of the now defunct Tri-Pex show, celebrates the season with the Waukesha County Philatelic Society (WCPS) and the North Shore Philatelic Society with pizza and members bringing their own beverage and dessert or finger food to share. Other clubs, such as the Green Bay Philatelic Society, have been reported to ask their members to bring cookies or some type of dessert or other snack.

Bingo seems to be the game of choice for many holiday celebrations. Various forms exist. Northwestern Mutual Stamp Club has been using a game created years ago that involves foreign stamp identification. Some of the Milwaukee area clubs have played a stamp bingo game created by Bob Mather. (Basically it is your standard bingo game card with the letters at the top of the board spelling out S-T-A-M-P. It would be easy for any club to create something similar just by purchasing an inexpensive bingo game and replacing the B-I-N-G-O letters at the top with the letters for "stamp.") Prizes are \$5 bills for the first time a person wins and then large chocolate bars for those lucky people who subsequently win another game or two.

The Green Bay Philatelic Society has a scavenger hunt as part of their holiday party. Members unable to attend are allowed to participate by sending their answers via mail or email. Here are two sample questions from this year: *1. This stamp celebrated two events 200 years apart, one which was the discovery of a river. The other, a related*

commercial application. 2. This is the only U.S. stamp that showed naked women. HINT: A magnifying glass would help.

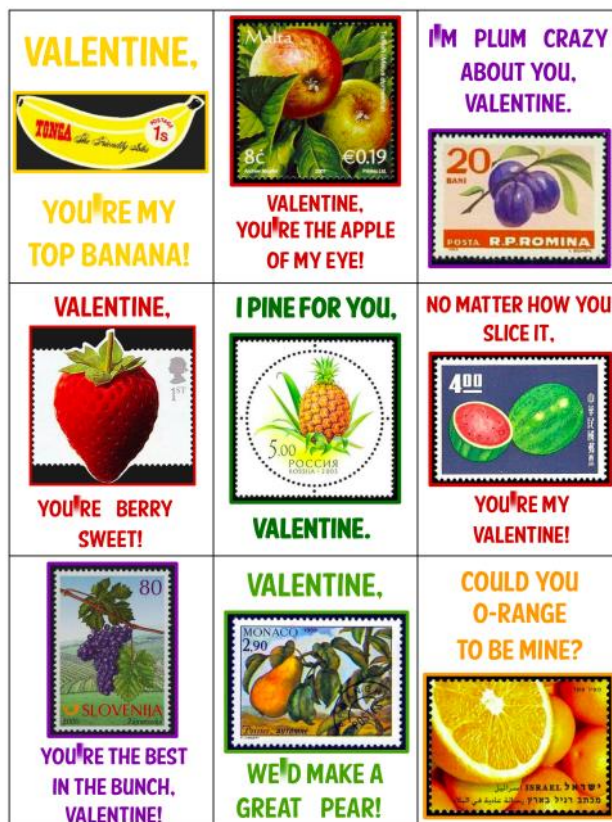
Club Dilemma

The Badger Stamp Club recently faced a dilemma that many clubs have faced. Their planned program speaker was unavailable and they had to quickly come up with a different program. Luckily they were able to substitute an APS DVD on "Canal Zone Gems." But not every club has enough time to plan and arrange for a different program or speaker. The Milwaukee Philatelic Society had just such a situation and Gary Meyer came up with a series of discussion questions that got their members thinking and sharing. Sample questions included:

1. *What is your favorite U.S. set? Why?*
 2. *If you collect topics, what is your favorite topic and why? If you are not a topical collector what topic would you collect if you decided to start a topical collection?*
 3. *What U.S. stamp do you really wish had never been issued? Why?*
- You could develop your own set of questions to use at a moment's notice.

February Idea

The WFSC website has stamp - illustrated reproducible valentines in the Youth Resources section under Fun and Games. There are five different sets with each page having nine theme-related Valentines. There is an additional set of pages that have note-sized Valentines. Here are several ways you can use them: reproduce them for distribution at senior centers, use one as an illustration for your club newsletters, or plan a program whereby club members are challenged to select their own stamp and create a valentine - be sure to provide them with an example. Shown below is an example of one of the pages shown on the WFSC website Youth Resources.



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Feature Article: SEARCHING FOR THE REAL SHERLOCK or Happy Birthday Mr. Holmes

By Clete Delvaux and Wikipedia

Although Sherlock Holmes first appeared in print in 1887 in Arthur Conan Doyle's A Study in Scarlet, his popularity became widespread with Doyle's first series of short stories in The Strand Magazine, beginning with "A Scandal in Bohemia" in 1891. After a hiatus, additional tales appeared from 1903 to 1927, eventually totaling four novels and 56 short stories. This literary output of Doyle's famous detective later became known as the "canon."

Sherlock Holmes' popularity and fame are such that many have come to believe that he is not a fictional character but a real individual. This idea that Sherlock Holmes was a real person was aided in large part by groups who combed through the "canon," searching for details to build a biography of Sherlock. One of these groups, the Baker Street



Irregulars, was founded in 1935 in New York by Christopher Morley. In London, Ronald Knox founded a similar group which invented "The Game," whose adherents also mined Doyle's stories to find "facts" to treat Sherlock as a real person.

For example, nowhere in the stories is Sherlock Holmes' birthday mentioned. Yet these groups have used internal evidence in the stories to determine when Holmes was born. Christopher Morley says that Sherlock Holmes was born on January 6, 1854, based on details in the stories. Thus a current greeting card company chooses this date as the time to celebrate Sherlock Holmes' birthday. However, another Sherlock "scholar," Laurie King, using evidence from "The Adventure of the Gloria Scott" and A Study in Scarlet calculates that Sherlock left university in 1880. If he began university at age 17, his birth would have probably occurred in 1861. I don't follow Wikipedia's math here, but suffice it to say, there is disagreement on Sherlock's birth.

Is there any evidence in the "canon" to verify when Sherlock Holmes died? Sherlock's supposed death occurs in "The Adventure of the Final Problem," set in 1891. Conan Doyle had tired of writing about the adventures of his famous detective and wanted to devote more time to his "serious" writing. So while on an 1893 European tour with

his wife, Doyle was inspired by the scene of Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland to kill off his famous detective. Holmes meets his nemesis James Moriarty at the falls and while grappling with one another, both are hurled to their deaths over the falls. Dr. Watson, who writes up almost all of Sherlock's adventures, does not actually witness their deaths, but Sherlock never returns to the hotel where they had been staying and is supposed dead.



Until 1903, Doyle managed to hold out against the hue and cry from his readers for more adventures of Sherlock Holmes. But eventually the pressure from his fans persuaded him to bring back Holmes. First, Sherlock reappeared in The Hound of the Baskervilles, although Doyle sets the story before "The Final Problem." Next, he brings Sherlock back to life again in "The Adventure of the Empty House." Doyle would continue the adventures until 1927. If we can accept that Holmes was born in 1854, then in his final adventure, "His Last Bow," set in 1914, Sherlock would've been 60 years old. In the end, we can see that Sherlock never has died.

Perhaps nothing contributes more to thinking of Sherlock Holmes as a real person than the mail that was sent to him at his lodgings in London at 221B Baker Street. In 1932 The Abby National Building Society moved into the premises at 219-229 Baker Street. For many years the Society employed a full-time secretary to answer mail addressed to Sherlock Holmes. In 1990 The Sherlock Holmes Museum claimed ownership of the address 221B Baker Street, despite its actual location between 237 and 241 Baker Street.

However, at the time that Doyle published his stories, addresses on Baker Street did not go as high as 221. Presumably Doyle chose a higher street number for the location of his hero to prevent any person's real address from being affected. Baker Street was later extended, resulting in higher numbers. In Sherlock's time, Baker Street was a high-class residential district. His apartment was probably part of a larger Georgian apartment building, the letter B probably indicating a separate address in a larger building.

In the end, we all realize that Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character. Still, when early January rolls around, when another fictional character, Santa Claus, has left for the North Pole, when Wisconsin's temperatures fall below zero and snow drifts begin to pile up, it may be a good time to celebrate a birthday party for even an imaginary character!



Closed Album – Howard M. Sherpe

Howard Sherpe, of Westby, Wis., passed away at age 72 on November 15, 2016. He was a member of the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame, Class of 1987.

Sherpe was extremely active in philately throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when he lived in Madison, Wis. He was president of the Madison Stamp Club and vice president of the Wisconsin Postal History Society. He also was instrumental in the founding of the Platteville Stamp Club. Other memberships include the American Philatelic Society, First Day Cover Collectors of Wisconsin and the Scandinavian Collectors Club.



Sherpe served as WFSC president for the terms 1979-81 and WFSC southwest region VP 1976-79. In 1979, he founded the WFSC newsletter *Across the Fence*, which was a total revamping of the original *The WFSC Bulletin*. He served as editor from 1979-85.

Being a commercial artist by profession, Sherpe was nationally recognized as a cachetmaker, and known for imbedding his initials within his designs. In 2004, he became well known as an author when he began writing a weekly column titled "Across the Fence,"

reflecting country life on the Sherpe family dairy and tobacco farm in Westby. The column was published in 12 newspapers in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota and later compiled into eight books.

Sherpe was also active with Vietnam veterans affairs.

Closed Album – Barbara R. Mueller

Barbara R. Mueller, one of the nation's most prestigious philatelists, passed away on November 17, 2016. Mueller was a native of Jefferson, Wis. When she moved to Madison in 2006, she joined the Badger Stamp Club. Other memberships were the American Philatelic Society, American Topical Association, Collectors of Religion on Stamps, APS Writer's Unit 30, and the Wisconsin Postal History Society.

In 1956, Mueller wrote "Common Sense Philately," a book that gained her national recognition. She wrote other books and served as editor of *The United States Specialist*, *Essay Proof Journal*, *American Philatelic Congress Book*, and *The Philatelic Communicator*.

Her awards and honors are of philately's highest including the American Philatelic Society Luff Award, McCoy Award, Lichtenstein Medal, Smithsonian Philatelic Achievement Award, United States Stamp Society Hall of Fame, APS Writers Unit Hall of Fame, and Roll of Distinguished Philatelists of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain.

In 2007, the United States Stamp Society founded the annual Barbara R. Mueller award for the best article published in the American Philatelic Society's journal, the *American Philatelist*.

Mueller was among the initial inductees to the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame, Class of 1976.



American Topical Association News For Immediate Release

Plans are well underway for the next National Topical Stamp Show, June 23-25, 2017. This year's show will be at the Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport Hotel, a familiar venue for Wisconsinites!

The show will feature an all-thematic exhibition, including exhibits in the new topical category, as described in the APS Manual of Philatelic Judging and Exhibiting, 7th edition, available for download under "Exhibiting" on the APS website. The prospectus, exhibit entry form and list of judges are online at <http://americantopicalassn.org>. Rob Henak is chair of exhibits.

The bourse will include dealers with topical material, as well as others who specialize in countries, covers, cachets and other areas. Many dealers have already signed on for the show.

Among the featured speakers is Barry Stagg, chairman of the British Thematic Society, who will review the status of thematic collecting and exhibiting in England. He will also show highlights of his exhibit, "Parachuting Through the Ages – The History and Development of the Parachute and Parachuting Techniques." It has been awarded large gold in international competition.

The ATA annual meeting will include a special tribute, "Remembering Mary Ann Owens, Pioneer of American Thematic Exhibiting." Owens is remembered for her international gold exhibits on the elephant and the Blue Danube. She served as a mentor to many people exhibiting today.



Barry Stagg

Federation Focus

By WFSC President Karen Weigt

Executive Board Meeting

The WFSC's fall Executive Board meeting was held October 15 at CENWISPEX in Stevens Point, Wis. Major agenda items discussed and voted upon were as follows:

Treasurer's Report

WFSC Treasurer Al Vick reported that the treasury has a healthy balance for this time of year when eight issues of *Across the Fence Post* have gone out and dues for 2017 will shortly be coming in. Sale of donated collections, increased *ATFP* ad income, and cover sales has helped maintain the treasury. He recently received another small collection that he has broken down into auction lots.

WISCOPEX 2017 (hosted by the Central Wisconsin Stamp Club)

General Chairman Larry Glenzer related that he will soon be looking into the costs of banquet dinners, which will be included in the dealer table fee. This will draw more people to the banquet. APS Executive Director Scott English and Jay Bigalke, editor of *The American Philatelist*, will be at the show with at least one speaking at the banquet. They also will be asked to conduct seminars, to be held every hour of the show.

The Holiday Inn will block off 30 rooms for the show. Publicity cards of various sizes have been printed and are being distributed. The exhibit prospectus and entry forms will be available soon, and the show cover and cancel designs were determined.

WISCOPEX 2018

There was some discussion of a possible bid by one of the WFSC clubs to host WISCOPEX 2018.

Across the Fence Post

ATFP Editor Ray Perry reported that all issues he's been involved with to date have been submitted to the printer on time. He welcomes and encourages articles and is looking for individuals to write columns on various aspects of philately. He would alternate columns within *ATFP* issues so each column would appear only two or three times per year.

Bylaws Amendment

Specific wording was approved for the bylaws amendment to appear in the *ATFP* March and April 2017 issues. The amendment has to do with reducing the number of WFSC region VPs and will be voted upon by delegates at the 2017 Annual Business Meeting.

Referrals to WFSC Member Dealers

It was agreed that inquiries about how to deal with inherited collections should be referred to dealers who advertise in *ATFP* and member dealers found on the WFSC website listing.

Next Meeting

The winter Executive Board meeting will be held on Saturday, February 18, 2017, at the Voyageur Inn and Conference Center, 200 Viking Dr., Reedsburg, Wis., a location under consideration for WISCOPEX 2018. Interested WFSC members are always welcome to attend and participate in discussions. For further information, contact WFSC Secretary Ken Grant at 608-356-7593 or Kenneth.grant@uwc.edu.

WFSC Historian Needed

John Pare, our current historian, has requested to be relieved of his position as of May 2017. Please consider volunteering to take over for him. Contact any WFSC officer or John Pare at 608-852-7358, pare16@mhtc.net.

Get Your Name on the eBlast List

Please send your email address to our WFSC Secretary Ken Grant: Kenneth.grant@uwc.edu. Our WFSC eBlasts will keep you up to date on a variety of important and interesting philatelic matters.

WFSC 2017 Dues Are Now Due

Please make sure your club's 2017 dues have been submitted to WFSC Treasurer Al Vick. Al sent all WFSC clubs a dues statement in early December. For any questions, contact Al at 608-873-3481, aavick2090@gmail.com.



P.O. Box 6, Salem WI 53168

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PNC Back Number Strips, First Flight Covers
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See us at an upcoming show
or send us your want lists.



WFSC Historian Needed

In case you missed it above, WFSC Historian John Pare is retiring from his position effective in May, 2017. The federation is looking for a volunteer to take over for John. If you are interested, please contact any WFSC officer or John Pare at 608-852-7358, pare16@mhtc.net. If you enjoy history or have any inclination to getting involved with the Federation, please give some serious thought to volunteering for this role. Thank you.



Brewing Up TOPICALS



The Editor's Turn Cont.

Continued from Page 2.

that is something that I have been considering, but always been just a little bit intimidated by the thought of putting parts of my collection out for someone to “judge.” I really like the idea of the non-competitive four- and eight-page exhibits that Jim discusses. So while it is not yet the deadline for making a 2017 New Year’s resolution, I think I’m leaning toward the exhibiting one. Then again nobody said you could only have one New Year’s resolution, hmm...

On to the fun part of the column where I get to write about some favorite aspect of my collecting interests. I have written in the past about my interest in forest conservation. My education, background, and heart is in forest management and while I spent 18 years working in a paper mill, I spent 13 years before that as an industrial forester in North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Michigan. I spent another 12 years after my stint in the mill doing consulting forestry helping small non-industrial private landowners manage their forestland. I have always admired the series of four conservation stamps commemorating forest, soil, water, and range conservation. I wrote briefly about this interest back in the May/June 2016 issue. Pictures of these stamps are shown below.



Scott 1122
Forest Conservation



Scott 1133
Soil Conservation



Scott 1150
Water Conservation

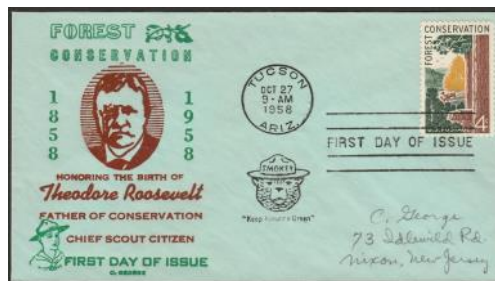


Scott 1176
Range Conservation

I really like the multiple facets of each conservation discipline that are displayed on these stamps.

I have gotten to know a fellow WFSC member who has helped me with some suggestions on collecting first-day covers. He also gave me some tips on where to find some of these covers. I started to further investigate based on the information this person provided. I checked a website of one of the dealers he suggested. Now I admit I’m a novice and some of you more experienced first-day cover collectors will get a chuckle out of this. I was totally amazed by the number of different first-day covers there are for each of these stamps. This one dealer has

over 50 different items just on the Forest Conservation issue to say nothing of the other three. So I have some saving to do and some work ahead of me if I want to collect all the different cachets for each of these stamps. I recently picked up several of these various cachets. I concentrated on the Forest Conservation issue since that is my particular interest, but I picked up some of each of the other three stamps as well. An example of each is shown below.



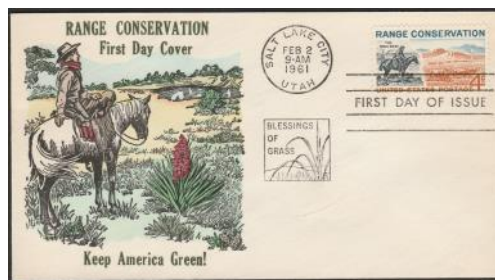
The Forest Conservation stamp was issued on the 100th anniversary of Theodore Roosevelt’s (TR) birth. TR is considered by many to be the father of conservation in our country. This particular cachet recognizes that anniversary. I have not seen anything that documents this was planned, but it almost seems like too much of a coincidence.



A beautiful cachet on this Soil Conservation issue.



A nice block of four of the Water Conservation issue on a Flugel cachet autographed by James A. Farley, postmaster general under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.



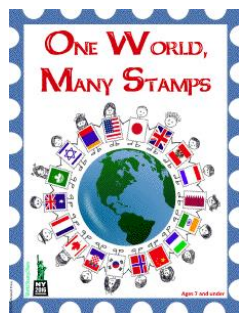
Finally the Range Conservation issue. I love the cowboy on the open range.

I’m feeling like there might be the start of an exhibit here somewhere. How about the rest of you?

Topical and Thematic Collecting: Mounting Topicals

By James E. Byrne

One of the great qualities of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs is its willingness to act on problems. Instead of filling the air with lamentations of biblical proportions about the lack of young collectors, WFSC provides resources online to make it easier for member clubs to engage with kids, materials like *One World, Many Stamps* and other activities. Instead of forming a committee to study the declining numbers of exhibitors at shows, WFSC has made it much easier for people, especially for topical collectors, to actually exhibit by doing something which will also improve their own collections. Yes, I mean those marvelous four- and eight-page exhibits at WISCOPEX.



Available at www.wfscstamps.org

People who collect major countries have always had an advantage over topical collectors. Publishers have understandably catered to the markets where the return on investment yields the best profits. How many people collect Germany and how many collect cephalopods on stamps? There are commercially printed illustrated albums, and generic pages with printed headers for some of the more popular topics, but in general topical collectors have limited choices



New Zealand. Cephalopod. Scott 1542

Making pages at home or at the library on a computer can solve the album problem. For thematic collectors, making 4- and 8-page miniature exhibits are a great option. The information about the stamps can be gathered and a story told with the stamps mounted with the text, giving the collection some class and making it uniquely your work.

Storing topicals on stock cards or sheets or in sheet protectors is an option, but it is limiting and not aesthetically pleasing. The person like me who is interested enough in trains to collect them on stamps, for example, wants to know the details about the equipment shown and that requires a mounting page with a bit of text.



Issued 25 March 1988 for the
Centenary of the Bulgarian State Railway
1905 Kh Botoev 4-6-0
Steam Locomotive and Tender

How hard was that rectangular mounting space and caption to make? Trust me here *Across the Fence Post*. If I can do it using the Microsoft Word software on my laptop, you can do it. In retirement, I have had to teach myself these things, and I am a slow learner with computer things. The chance to improve the quality of my collection, however, was a powerful motivation for this old D\dog to learn new computer tricks. You can do it, too.

What follows is an example of how a small exhibit can evolve from an accumulation of stamps with references to online exhibits on the WFSC website (www.wfscstamps.org). Another strength of our group is that it provides a place for us to share with each other what we are doing, and the website has some exhibits from previous WISCOPEX shows to stir your imagination.

As I look through the stock cards and pages of material waiting to be mounted, something I do periodically, I look for clusters of stamps and covers that tell stories. These clusters become related pages in a short exhibit. On one stroll through my flowers on stamps file, I was visually struck by a beautiful miniature sheet of six issued by Belgium in 1990. A visit to the Scott catalogue placed the sheet in a series of semi-postal stamps issued in 1988-1990 featuring the botanical watercolors of Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759-1840), the “Raphael of Flowers.” The stamps I was missing went on the want list and the small exhibit emerged not too long thereafter.



Belgium (Scott B1071)

The story, the key difference between a group of mounted topical stamps and a thematic four-page exhibit, was a brief biography of Redouté and the purpose of the semi-postal surtax. More than two centuries after he began his career, he still is

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Topical and Thematic Collecting: Mounting Topicals Cont.

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regarded as being one of the greatest botanical illustrators of all time. Because of his talent, influential patronage, and political connections, he rose to prominence during the French Revolution and the various regimes that followed, an amazing feat in itself. During his career, he illustrated over 1,800 botanical species. He chose watercolor as his medium because it allowed him to present the flowers with a life-like vitality which few botanical illustrators have ever achieved. The three souvenir sheets depict Louise-Marie (Louise of Orléans, 1812-1850), the wife of Leopold I and the first queen of Belgium following independence from the Netherlands in addition to the most attractive roses you will find on stamps.

Of course, I was mounting four sets of stamps with just enough information to tell a story. I was not writing a research paper for Art 106. The challenge of balancing the topical philatelic material with text in an attractive display was more fun than work. The stamps were more meaningful to me after I knew the background, and the final product was visually appealing, at least to me.

If you go to the WFSC website and click on "Online Exhibits," you'll find "Redoute Botanical Watercolors" so that you can judge for yourself whether I was successful with my four-pager. You will also find a number of other exhibits made by members of clubs in the WFSC as examples of what can be done.

Mark Pleyte's "First Airmails," for example, brings together stamps and covers from several countries to illustrate the early era when airplanes and airmail were both in the experimental stages and moves into the time when technological advances made airmail more than just a novelty. The variety is especially worth considering as you look through your own material for focal points around which to mount a thematic exhibit which reflects your interests and collection.

The "Hans Christian Andersen" exhibit (Scott 246-51) is an example of how a four-pager grew into something bigger with the addition of postal history. In our house, Jan collects writers on stamps. I really like postal history. The first draft of the material was just four pages long. As the covers turned up to illustrate rates and routes, the 1935 Andersen section of her topical collection grew.



Denmark. Christmas 1935

In formal exhibiting with standardized rules for judges, the Andersen exhibit in its present form is more about the stamp and its uses than about Andersen on stamps. Therefore, it does not fit the criteria to be judged as a topical exhibit. In our house, however, we have had fun working with the 1935 Denmark issue, and Andersen is an author on stamps. Because we make our own mounting pages, we can easily shift the emphasis in the collection by adding other Andersen stamps from Czechoslovakia, or Monaco. This is one of the great attractions of topical collecting. We can modify our collection and follow our interests. Topics are flexible. They invite creative thinking.

Topical collecting is also a great medium for sharing what we do with others. Everybody in your club has a full set of Prexies. How many have great roses or trains? When was the last time that you took some stamps from your collection for a show-and-tell at your stamp club and shared your special knowledge with another collector?

With a little effort, you can mount your topical, share your knowledge with club members, and get involved with the WFSC exhibiting initiative. With stamps and covers that you already have, you can try exhibiting in the friendly environment of people who regularly chat *Across the Fence Post*. Seems like something worth trying, doesn't it?

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Saturday, February 11, 2017 • 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.



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WFSC Show Schedule

(Some dates and details may be subject to change, and there will likely be additional listings.)

List your show, bourse, auction or other event here!
Contact Karen Weigt, 4184 Rose Ct., Middleton, WI 53562.
Phone: 608-836-1509, (kweigt@tds.net)

WFSC CLUB SHOWS

February 11, 2017

58th ANNUAL EXHIBITION AND BOURSE

Janesville Stamp Club
Holiday Inn Express, 3100 Wellington Pl., Janesville, WI
9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact Aimee Devine, 2111 E. Luther Rd., Janesville, WI 53545
(608) 758-1354
spanishmoss72@sbcglobal.net
Exhibits, bourse

March 4-5, 2017

STAMPFEST '17

Milwaukee Philatelic Society
Location to be announced. Greater Milwaukee, WI. Sat. 10am to 5pm
Sunday 10 am to 3 pm.
Contact: Tom Zacharias
414-321-4362 or 414-852-4019
Bourse only

March 18, 2017

BAYPEX '17

Green Bay Philatelic Society
St. Matthew Catholic Church
Multi-Purpose Room
2575 S. Webster Ave.
Green Bay, WI
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Contact: Ray D. Perry
920-469-8925, five-perrys@athenet.net
Exhibits and bourse

April 9, 2017

DANEPEX '17

Badger Stamp Club
Crown Plaza Hotel, 4402 E. Washington Ave. (across from East Towne Mall), Madison, WI
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (contact: Bob Voss P.O. Box 35, McFarland, WI 53558 (608) 838-1033
lestamps@charter.net
Judged exhibits, bourse

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May 6-7, 2017



WISCOPEX '17

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Hosted by Central Wisconsin Stamp Club, Holiday Inn, 1001 Amber Ave., Stevens Point, WI
Contact: J.D. Manville
(715) 341-5555
jadeco@charter.net
Judged exhibits, seminars, and bourse

July, 2017

(date to be announced)

BAY DE NOC STAMP AND COIN SHOW

Bay de Noc Stamp and Coin Club
Bay College, M-TEC Bldg., 2000 N. 30th St., Escanaba, MI
10 a.m. to 3 p.m. EDT
Contact: Richard Reiffers
(906) 233-5574
Bourse only

July 29, 2017

12th LAKELAND COIN AND STAMP CLUB SUMMER SHOW

Lakeland Stamp Club
Woodruff Town Hall, Hwy 47E, Woodruff, WI
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact: Dean Marin, P.O.B. 202, Woodruff, WI 54568
715-356-9453
Bourse only

OTHER MAJOR SHOWS AND BOURSES

January 21-22, 2017

Milwaukee, WI

MSDA Winter Show
Crown Plaza Hotel and Convention Center—Airport
6401 S. 13th St., Milwaukee, WI
Sat. 10 to 5
Sun. 10 to 3
Bourse only

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Rockford/Loves Park, IL

ROCKFORD '17,
Rockford Stamp Club,
Forest Hills Lodge,
1601 W. Lane Rd. (Hwy 173)
Exhibits and Bourse

March 17-19, 2017

Lombard, IL

ASDA Midwest Postage Stamp Show
Rockford Stamp Club,
Lindner Conference Center
610 E. Butterfield Rd.
Exhibits and Bourse

April 8-9, 2017

Prospect Heights, IL

MSDA Spring Show North
Country Inn and Suites,
600 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Bourse

May 19-21, 2017

Arlington Heights, IL

COMPEX '17
Chicago Area Philatelic Societies
Forest View Educational Center
2121 S. Goebbert Rd.
Exhibits & Bourse

June 23-25, 2017

Milwaukee, WI

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American Topical Association
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