

Phil's Corner

So, You Want To Be a Dealer? By Phil Fettig

Whether or not you admit it, deep in the hearts of most collectors, there lurks a strong desire to be a Stamp Dealer. What can you do about it? Ignoring it certainly is one way to handle it. However, maybe there is another path without going through all the work and cost of opening a business checking account, obtaining a state sales tax number, completing a fictitious name filing and making appointments with an attorney and/or an accountant. The simple way to go is....eBay. You will have to register with eBay and supply a credit card number. You will also have to link a bank account to PayPal. Here is a major warning – DO NOT use your main checking or savings account. Instead open a small secondary account and use that. There has never been a problem with eBay or PayPal having accounts hacked, but just in case, you do not want to put your main accounts in danger.

I know you may have heard eBay is getting real hard to work with....don't worry, it is absolutely true...however it is not impossible to make some money. The biggest problem a dealer has to face is not



finding a customer – it is find the right product to sell.

I'm sure you have something you want to sell so now let's see if somebody wants to buy it! Since you are not thinking about opening a store or taking a table at a show, but instead trying eBay let us look at what is being sold there. Take a

simple example – you have 5 or 10 extra first day covers of the moon landing issue C76 that you think will sell. Enter C76 in the search box on eBay. The column that appears on the left will list all countries having a C76 - click on United States, then Covers, then FDCs (1951-now). Look at the number show under listings. At this writing it was 190. These are active listings for purchase. Now look down the left side and click on completed. There were 457 listings that ended in the past 4 months. Now click on sold. Successful bids reached 190, not a bad total. Now the fun begins – look back to the upper right side for the sort menu. Click on Price: Highest First. You can forget the highest as they may be multiples, autographed by an astronaut or expensive for some other reason. You can also ignore the cheapest. The question is – can you live with selling it for somewhere in the middle prices? You also should resort it by End Date: Recent First. This will give you an indication if the price trends.

Next time I will discuss photographs, descriptions, fees paid and most important, how to treat your customers.

[Editor's Note. eBay is a way to sell those items that simply can't be sold in the local club environment. The global nature of eBay opens a marketplace that can many times be appropriate for highly specialized material. While online sales may not be for everyone, it certainly is an option for those that are so inclined. Speaking from personal experience I have found eBay to be a good venue for both selling and buying. Most importantly it is of the utmost imperative -- that common sense dictates how you handle yourself in this wild and wooly world of online sales.]

Charlotte Stamp Club by John Latter

I recently had the opportunity to attend the monthly meeting of the CSC. A few of the members knew me but many who didn't know me went out of their way to welcome me – not just committee members but from among the rank and file – a very friendly club.

The facility where they meet is very good, well lit and with good access. The meeting starts at 2PM and goes on as long as necessary – typically ending about 5PM.

There were about 50 people there -- men, women and included 3 young people! That's not bad for a club with a total membership of +/- 75. There were three 'visitors' including me and, like at CFSC meetings, each was welcomed & encouraged to say a few words. I told them that I brought greetings from CFSC & told them a little of our club. They were interested in our door prize system of getting all the attendees at a particular meeting to sign in. One committee member thought that they might adopt the scheme.

In place of the regular philatelic presentation (which can last up to an hour or so), for this meeting they had arranged for five mini presentations – great idea & on all different topics – my favorite was about Zeppelins used as bombers during WW I – I sure learned a few things.

Each month they hold a live auction. The lots are laid out in 3 classes: USA, Foreign, Supplies. One is encouraged to view the lots & if interested in a particular lot, to attach an adhesive sticker (supplied by the club to the lot. Prior to the auction, all those lots without a sticker are withdrawn. This is a good idea in that not only does the entire auction proceed quickly but the energy is kept up by all lots called have at least one bidder. There were a number of lots that were contested strongly. As lots are won, the youngsters take the lots directly to the successful bidder. Like CFSC, a record of sales is maintained on a laptop. Unlike CFSC the club does not take sales fee from the final price.

After the auction was concluded, we lined up to pay for our winnings (I bought 2 lots!). While this was going on, refreshments were served.

The visit was a wonderful way to spend a Sunday afternoon and I'm so thankful for the hospitality shown. Jean and I also had an opportunity to visit Charlottes rather cramped aircraft museum. The A-320 that was the center piece of "THE MIRACLE ON THE HUDSON is the main attraction. There are a number of related exhibits and two movies – one of the rescue and one of the recovery of the A-320 from the river. Well worth a visit.

Pictures of our Members in Action, Pictures by John C. Robbins



Some of our members sitting after a meeting in October of 2014 – just having a chat.
[L-R] Robert Fisher, A. Stephen Patrick & Jim Archbold



The meeting on 01.15.15 had a cried auction handled by our long time member, A. Stephen Patrick – he is front and center holding the large white thing!