

# The Cover Story by Phil Fettig

## What Makes a “Well Centered” Stamp?

Consideration of many factors are required to decide what makes a good stamp for your collection. We each may have a preference but we all can decide that centering is a major component of this process. I am sure your choice of the two Norse-Americans (Scott 620) on the cover (Figures 1 & 2) was the stamp show in Figure 2. To get help in making your grading decision, you need to look no further than your Scott Specialized Catalogue of U.S. Stamps. The illustrated guide found both in the front and the “yellow pages”, the Scott Stamp Values by Grade section shows what you need to know. The important difference between the sections is the front one gives you a grade influenced by the year of issue and is what a description of “very fine for the issue” means. In other words, the centering on a 1925 issue might be considered barely fine the same could be very fine for one from 1861. Another example of this are the beautiful 1869 Pictorial issues. They were printed in such a manner that was so small as to make it near impossible to have large margins usually found in higher grades. The second chart in the middle of the Specialized is of a grading scale. It allows you to determine a more defined determination of how your stamp is centered and assigns an adjusted catalog value. It gives a range of eight grades of used, mint and mint never hinged. This becomes a major importance when pricing a stamp for sale. I recently sold an expensive item and used the chart in the front section. Had I used the centering standards appropriate for the issue in the front section, I could have charged much more.

Figure 3



Back to your choice of the Norse-American issue – Printing stamps in 1847 was crude compared to 1925 when these were processed. Neither method could come close to the computer controlled methods used today. Did you ever think of why one sheet of stamps contained well centered items and others did not? Well, you would have been wrong! A sheet from 1925 could have had all kinds of different centering, on the same sheet. The two stamps being discussed here both came from the bottom row of a plate block of 8 (Figure 3). You can clearly see that in the short space of four positions, the stamp on the left should grade a strong F-VF (value \$4.50), while the one on the right stays fine (\$2.75) by a minuscule distance. Since this stamp was issued in sheets of 100, I think it is fair to project that individual items ranged up to VF or better and down to very good which is the old “average”.

Figure 4





My next example is so inexpensive (cv .25 in most grades) we will not consider values. I chose this common definitive, Scott 632, because I had a full sheet to show the range of centering. **Figure (4)** shows the sixth row from the top of this precancel sheet. You can clearly see the differences in grade as you move from right to left. **Figure (5)** is barely fine while **figure (6)** is fine-very fine for the small image stamp.

Figure 5

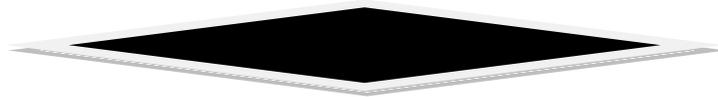


Figure 6

Now, which Norse-American did I chose? ...neither – I like the one in **figure (7)** which I believe is graded as extremely fine with a value of \$20.00 or even extremely fine-superb at \$47.50. What do you think?



Figure 7



## Closed Album; Olga Vucemilovic



It is with great sadness that we have learned of the passing of Olga on December 16<sup>th</sup>. Her husband – George joined the CFSC April of 2007 and Olga followed January of 2010. Their presence at meetings was always dependent on it fitting into their extensive and wide ranging travel plans. They both had childhood ties to Split, Croatia where the two met as nineteen year olds –63 years of marriage followed. Additional ties to Astoria, NY and St. Petersburg, FL – kept them on the move most of the year. A celebration of life was held on December 23<sup>rd</sup> in St. Pete Beach with an internment to be held at the Cemetery of Our Lady of Angels in Imotski, Croatia.

Every encounter with Olga was a pleasure, with her ready smile and light touch. We will miss her – and her cooking. Olga and George went out of their way to provide food to club events –

even when they were not attending.

Rest in peace, dear lady -- you will be missed.