

# Do You Really Know What I Collect?

by Phil Fetting

Sometimes I have been accused of being too serious or “dark” in my comments – ask the editor what he thought of my article on the future of stamp collecting I wrote for our 50th Anniversary issue! Also, for some unknown reason a lot of you believe I eat, sleep and collect nothing except stuff about submarines. Well, you are all wrong – I am a well-rounded (no comments please) individual with interest in many things. Since my pre-teen years I have collected at one time or another the topics and subjects mentioned in this article.

Like many, I started out as a general W/W collector which was the basis for the only really good grades I earned – history & geography. It did not take long to discover interesting topics. The stamps used to illustrate this article are representative of what I collected. Like many collections made in early years mine have been lost to time and military moves.

Figure D1



Alas, in order to keep this publication “G” rated, I cannot illustrate one of the W/W art stamps topics that caught the interest of this young man! I’m sure you can figure the rest out. Astronomy and space were other interesting topics. I went outside one night during my junior high years and as I looked up to the sky, I saw Venus sitting between the tips of a crescent moon. I ran inside and borrowed Dad’s camera and took several photos. I entered them into a school science fair and won a third prize! The award was a \$10 gift certificate from Haslam’s Books of St. Petersburg (still open!). I used the prize to buy a book on ... you guessed it – submarines! **Figure D1** shows Scott 1371, one of my most favorite stamps, the famous photo of “Earth rise” taken on the Apollo 8 space flight in late 1968.

Although as mentioned I was not a good student, I was an eager reader, especially of history and fiction. My favorite author at that time was Jules Verne. I can’t really say I collected stamps about him, but Verne’s books were full of descriptions of things that fired my imagination. In my adult life I have stood in the U.S. Navy’s version of his “Nautilus” and watched rockets depart Cape Kennedy for the Moon, just across the state from Verne’s Tampa area in his book. **Figure D2** is a French stamp showing an illustration from Verne’s “5 Weeks in a Balloon”, a fictional exploration of Africa by balloon.



Figure D2 above, D3 below

During my teen years I would spend much of the summer with friends on Clearwater Beach. Sometimes we would travel by boat to other isolated islands along the Gulf coast and camp for several days. Hunting for shells and sand dollars to sell the

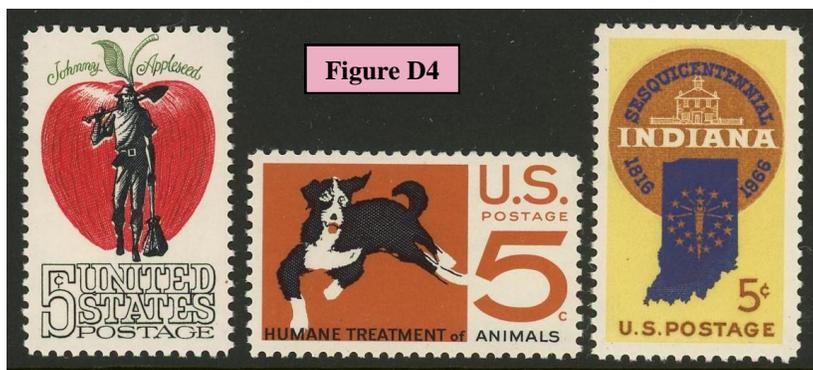


Figure D4

tourist was great fun. **Figure D3**, while not a shell found in Florida, still is an example of the type we were searching for. Unfortunately, two



things, along with growing up, took the joy away. I saw the movie “Jaws” which stopped the deep-water swimming and most of the islands now have causeways built and have been covered with motels. My next topic is more just a time period from 1966 until around 1970. While Ann & I were both collectors from the age of 8 or 9, we had not done so together other than a few visits to a St.

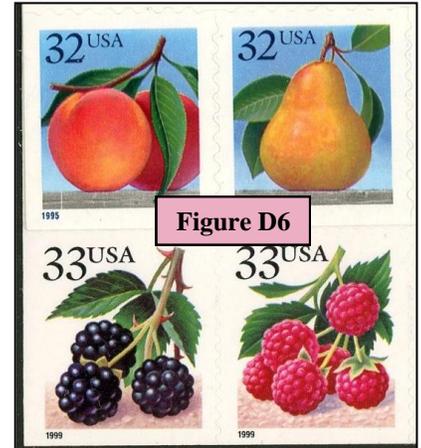
Petersburg stamp store in 1963-64 with her father. A transfer to shore duty enabled us to live together for the first time in our marriage. The period of 1966-70 covers a few moves ending in Eau Gallie, FL. I started collecting current U.S. commemoratives, both singles and FDCs. I would eagerly send off for the cover blanks and submit my own to the first day city. To this day, whenever I see the issues, I still remember the pleasure they gave me, and still do today. **Figure D4** is an example of some of these inexpensive issues.

During this time frame we also expanded our stamping to stores in Central Florida and discovered a new treat – stamp shows. In 1971 we visited our first show – something called FLOREX, held in Orlando. Little did Ann & I realize how that would change our lives.



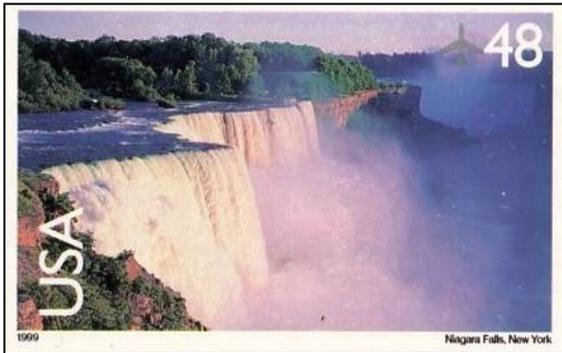
**Figure D5**

I have absolutely no claim to any artistic ability, however I have always loved color combinations. That has led to pulling out and keeping a stamp or two showing fruit and flowers. Of course, there is one other important aspect of life and color that takes a major part of our time – butterflies. Since 2006,



**Figure D6**

Ann and I have raised 17,000+ butterflies from eggs, all released in our yard. Ann collects the eggs and caterpillars from our host plants, feeds and cares for them in cages and we release them after they emerge. I do the outside plant care for the host and nectar plants necessary to support these winged things of beauty. **Figures D5 and D6** are examples of stamps with fruit, flowers, butterflies and other nectar seekers.



**Figure D7 above, D8 below**

My enjoyment of travel within the United States leads me to the last topic. During both my careers I had difficulty in being able to take leave or a vacation of enough length to travel long distances. Once I retired for good, I started on a goal to drive to the lower 48 states. Since 2006 I have driven to 47 other states and flown to Hawaii. Only Alaska has eluded me. When I look at some of the newer International Air Mail stamps, it reminds me of the trip I made to that location. **Figures D7 and D8** show two national treasures Niagara Falls and Yosemite National Park.



more about me than maybe you wanted!

Now, a final challenge – several years ago I emailed the editor a photo of a place I was visiting. He published it in this fine newsletter under the heading “Where in the world is Phil Fettig?” If you are a long-time member, maybe you remember. If not, maybe you feel like spending some of your “home detention” reading back issues. The first three club members who email me a correct answer will get a prize. Good Luck & now you know