

Stupid eBay by Francis Ferguson

RARE! 1908 US Franklin 1c blue green Sc #316 Perf 12 Horiz COIL Stamp \$100,000+?
Potential HOLY GRAIL of Stamps, Used MUST SEE! High \$\$\$ (12 pictures, NO RETURNS) Results:
One bidder, \$39.99 + free shipping.



Almost every day for the last 20 years I have logged into eBay to scroll through the offerings in the U.S. section of Errors, Freaks and Oddities. Some time I find some good stuff for my collecting interests. Other times I see things that just make me want to scream in frustration. This is one of them. Why would anyone ever think that a stamp that has no certification is really a stamp with a catalog value of \$100,000 – is totally beyond me. When you top this one off by noticing the hunk missing from the lower right corner, and the fact that the left and right cut edges are not straight, one would think caution would be taken. Not so much. The buyer of this pig-in-a-poke has a rating of over the 1,000 and appears to be a long time eBay client. I truly have to believe that P.T. Barnum would have been proud of the seller on this one!

The seller of these next two items is in a class all by himself. The first item, Edison stamp of 1929 (Scott #655) came to my attention about 2.5 years ago, when it appeared on eBay for sale. I chased it from 99 cents to \$34.56 and was outbid by \$1. You might note that the stamp itself is not involved in the perforation error – it is just the margin paper. While EFO material of the Edison series of 3 stamps is difficult to find under any circumstances – this is simply a curiosity. Imagine my shock when about two weeks later the same stamp shows up again on eBay for sale with a starting bid of \$750. I had no words for what occurred. The listing gets renewed every 30 days and has now been there for more than 2 years. After some digging, I started to notice a pattern with this seller – they list items on eBay that have fantastic prices as they are all ERRORS in their mind.



The 1 cent blue Jefferson (Scott #219) is another example of that mind set. According to the listing, which has a price of \$4,000, this is a rare “flame on 1” variety – the minor reference, can be found in the definitive work “The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century by Lester G. Brookman (1967). While this is a variety as the seller claims, the fact of a 2.2 billion printing should negate any serious value. Brookman refers to it as a printing variety caused by “scooped color.” I spent 10 minutes looking through a random selection of auction catalogs in my reference library and not one Scott 219 with “flame on 1” was found. Again this is bizarre listing skating along the line of reality ---- and now things get even better! I found a listing by this same person for a non-inverted Jenny sheet. His assigned value -- \$6 million and that is the reserve amount. The write up attached to that listing is a stretch of the truth at the best and deceitful at the worst. The assigned value is more than slightly off from the Scott’s 2018 Specialized listing of \$75,000 for a complete pane of six. The truth is out there -- but not in these listings! It is incumbent in an ideal world, for the seller to be truthful – and the buyer to be educated. I have to mark these kinds of listings as “pants on fire.”

Why does any of this matter? As a long-time eBay user, both as a seller and buyer, I find listings such as these to be misleading. The larger picture is one of bad public relations for the hobby, when you have folks pointing at these kind of listings and feeling like there is some level of disreputable behavior going on. I have to agree, at best it is misleading and results in bad optics to the general public. Does eBay care? No, they do not. The position of eBay is one of them being only the site for transactions, they are not the listing police.

Just remember P.T. Barnum when you see things like this!

WHAT'S UP WITH CLUB ATTENDANCE?

by Ann Dowrick

Does it seem to you that there have more attendees at our stamp club meetings this year? Francis Ferguson (club president) thought the same thing and asked me to see if this is a summer thing, or have more people been attending. The reason he asked me to check into this is that I keep track of attendance in an Excel spreadsheet (based on the sign-in book) and this information is used as part of the Glue Awards given out at the end of the year. I compared the meetings from January through the first meeting in November for 2016, 2017 and so far in 2018.

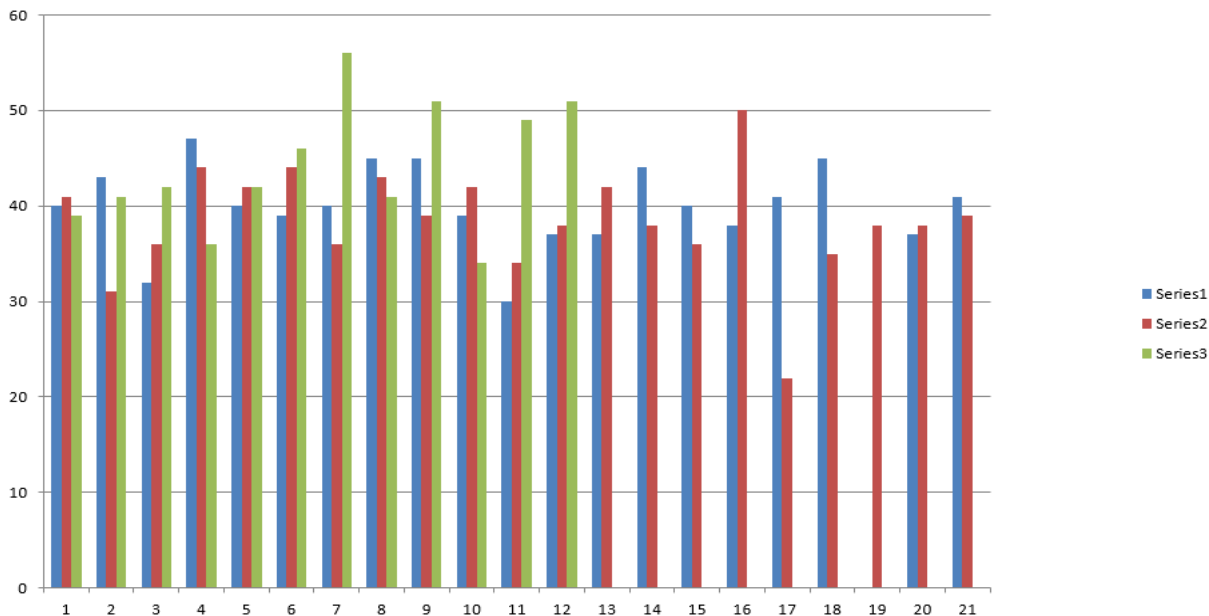
In looking at the general numbers for these years, I found that we had more overall members in 2016 (based on number of people who were members at some point during the year, not just the total at the end of the year). However, eleven of the twenty-one meetings considered had better attendance in 2017 over 2016 (though one of these meetings in 2016 had 0 because of a hurricane). So – no help there.

This year (2018) is even a greater mystery. Attendance numbers for seven of the twelve meetings so far in 2018 have been equal to or above the attendance for both 2016 AND 2017. In many cases, the attendance has been way above what we have had in the past.

Why?

Well, that's a good question and I don't have an answer. We have introduced the After Glow information sessions which may have some impact. Also, the mix of new members may be making a difference – especially if they are 'locals' and not 'snow birds.' Additionally, the programs being offered may have some influence on attendance.

We realize that stamp collecting habits can fluctuate based on outside influences on each person's personal life. All we know is that it is encouraging to see so many people attending the club meetings. If you have any suggestions to better enhance the experience, please send them to the editor (Editor@CentralFloridaStampClub.org) or to one of the board members.



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