

# Phil the Postage Stamp by Randall Priest

## Chapter 12 -- Hurricane (Ray's story)

This is the story that Ray told us as we all listened to hear a new story.

“My story begins on, what I was latter to find out was a boat. I was in an album along with a number of my friends. The one thing that we all had in common was that we all had a lighthouse on our face. Therefore, over time, more and more lighthouse stamps have come to the album pages.

One day it seemed to be very rainy and very windy. The album, which was our home, was in a cabinet with glass doors. I could not see anything; however, I could hear the sounds of what was going on. The winds picked up and I could hear the rain coming down very hard. We also began to feel the boat rocking more than usual. This went on for some time, and then all of a sudden, as if some one had turned off a switch, it got very quiet and still. There was a deafening silence and no rain, no wind that made us all hold our breath as to what would be next.

Then as quickly as it had stopped, it started again. We could hear the sound of the wind and rain much stronger than I had ever heard. If the wind was not enough, all of a sudden, there was a crash of glass and wood cracking and breaking. Soon the wind is blowing less and less. Just when it seems to get back to normal, there is another crash and then the cabinet that we were in breaks up and the book we are in and some other books have fallen out. As the book, falls, from the cabinet, there is a splash. Now it has been a long time since I have been in water, however, there were some of my friends, who had forgotten that they started out in water, were panicking. I tried to calm them down and try to get an idea of where we were. The book we are in had been torn apart and the page we were on was floating face up. Looking around I could see that the cabinet we had been in was in many pieces. The boat that had been our home was half under water. The rain has stopped, and the wind is almost calm. In a very short time, the sun is also shining down as if nothing has happened.

My lighthouse friends and I are now trying to see what will be next. Soon we are hearing many voices trying to sort them out are of no use there are too many of them. Out of the voices I hear a voice that I know, it is my owner. There he is in the water collecting loose pages and books and putting them into another boat. He comes to the page we are on, picks it up and puts it into a pile of wet books and pages.

The next day we are on dry land. Page by page, we are separated on a table to dry. It must have been a while but soon we are stacked up and put away for some time. One day we are back on the table again. Carefully removing us from the pages, then into a box we go. So here we are today.”

After Ray's story, we all had to catch our breath. Now that is some story.

As the sun begins to go down, we must wait until tomorrow to meet some of our foreign friends.

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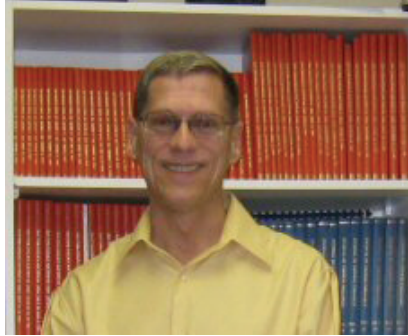
John Latter of The Collectors Exchange has been a long-time faithful participate in most every local show and of course at FLOREX. Please keep John and Jean in your thoughts over the next couple of months as John under goes treatment for a malady. We wish John a speedy recovery and fast return to the show scene.

# Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers



Patrick Ramsdell



Call my office and you're apt to be greeted by Patrick Ramsdell; do it a second time and he'll probably remember your voice. He inputs the public auctions and mail sales plus provides customer service. Patrick's been front and center with my company for twenty years now. I couldn't do it without him.

How Patrick came here is a convoluted tale.

Back in the day when MRI was very small, just a few employees on Winter Park's tony Park Avenue in a few hundred square feet of rented space, I had a problem. I'd just lost a couple of data entry employees (husband transferred, nervous breakdown) and was scraping around for another. I didn't relish the idea of placing an ad in the paper because of the value and portability of my inventory. Luckily, a friend recommended someone who worked out swimmingly named Bob.

I admired Bob because he was the single parent of a child, and I thought raising a child alone showed character and determination. He'd been laid off elsewhere. Good employee for us. After a while, as the fortunes of the company blossomed and he took the training for our new Acer computer system, I asked him what it would take to pay off all his bills and get caught up to date.

To his great surprise, midweek I cut him a bonus check in the amount of \$2,000, equal to that which he said would pay his back bills. I didn't qualify it, didn't couch it in the form of a job contract. In 1990, \$2,000 out of the blue was a tremendous amount of money. He was doing a great job, and I wanted to take the worry off his mind.

Well, Friday came, and Bob turned in his notice saying he'd always wanted to work in a newspaper, and now that his bills were caught up, what better opportunity than now? So the next Friday was going to be his last day! I sputtered that his leaving, especially since he was newly trained for a brand-spanking new

computer, was leaving me in the lurch. He said, no kidding, business is business. I said, "You'll never have an employer who'll do for you what I did and one day you'll need me." Empty words.

I had a local retired business executive that I looked to for advice so I called him. Marshall placed an ad in the Orlando Sentinel to fill the data entry position. He interviewed a few, choosing a guy named John. I thought it strange Marshall could hire someone offsite without at least sitting down at our computer.

We had a small office, four rooms was all, with the center room divided in half by a break-front. Entering the front door, folks came to a computer desk and waiting area, and beyond the break-front was the mail-room. On the left could be found the auction describers and retail, on the right was my 8 x 10-foot office.

In those days, we had the mailing list on four floppy disks, each backed up once. On John's first day, I showed him around, then sat him down. He turned on the computer and I went into my office. A while later, John knocked on my door, announcing that there was a problem. Seemed that he'd erased the G-L mailing list disk, and "somehow" the back-up G-L disk had gotten erased as well!

Well, I knew how to fix it, but I had to wrap my mind around the response, and in order to do that, I needed to calm down from this disaster.

Relief would come in the form of me going through thousands of invoices by hand, selecting viable candidates for the mailing list. Countless hours of tedious work!

I'm not a shouter. It is really difficult for me to lose my temper, so I asked John to give me a minute by myself. I closed the door of my office, walked over to a laminate cabinet, grabbing a souvenir I had of a airline flight—a one ounce bottle of rum—and had just about settled myself into a high backed chair, my legs in the lotus position, mellowing out "Zummmmm," when John interrupted my serenity, saying "You're mad, aren't you?" I got progressively more agitated, him interrupting, me trying to zone out. Finally he got it: I finally got upset! Then he said the very worst thing he possibly could have: he blamed the loss of the back-up disk data on the mail room clerk (who had not touched the computer at all). So I let him go. Oh, he made a claim for unemployment, saying we should have told him what "delete" meant:) Denied!

Sometimes it pays to know who your friends are. So I asked my good friends if they knew of anyone looking for a job. And that's when I found Patrick.

Patrick was a long time employee of Sun Bank. He'd reached a plateau in his career while, at my company, we were growing exponentially. When I hire, I make a point of saying that I can and do learn from all associates. I told Patrick that I will depend upon him. Patrick frees me to do what I enjoy most. As my executive assistant, I am relieved of much of the day to day details that would clog my time. I'm on the road often for consignments and buying. I write up most of the China/Asia in our auctions. Life is simpler and I get to play with stamps! ☒