

# The Cover Story

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

### Fifty Years of Club Life

In August 2018, the Central Florida Stamp Club (CFSC) celebrates 50 years of continuous Chapter membership in the American Philatelic Society (APS). The accepted application for membership is shown in figure 1. As a Chapter Member of the APS, the club has to fulfill requirements of abiding by the APS rules and ethical standards. The club also gains privileges from membership in the APS. The club gains status, has the ability to do research, gains access to accredited judges for stamp shows, the use of programs from the APS library, a monthly journal, stamp and cover circuits, and judged newsletter competitions to name a few.

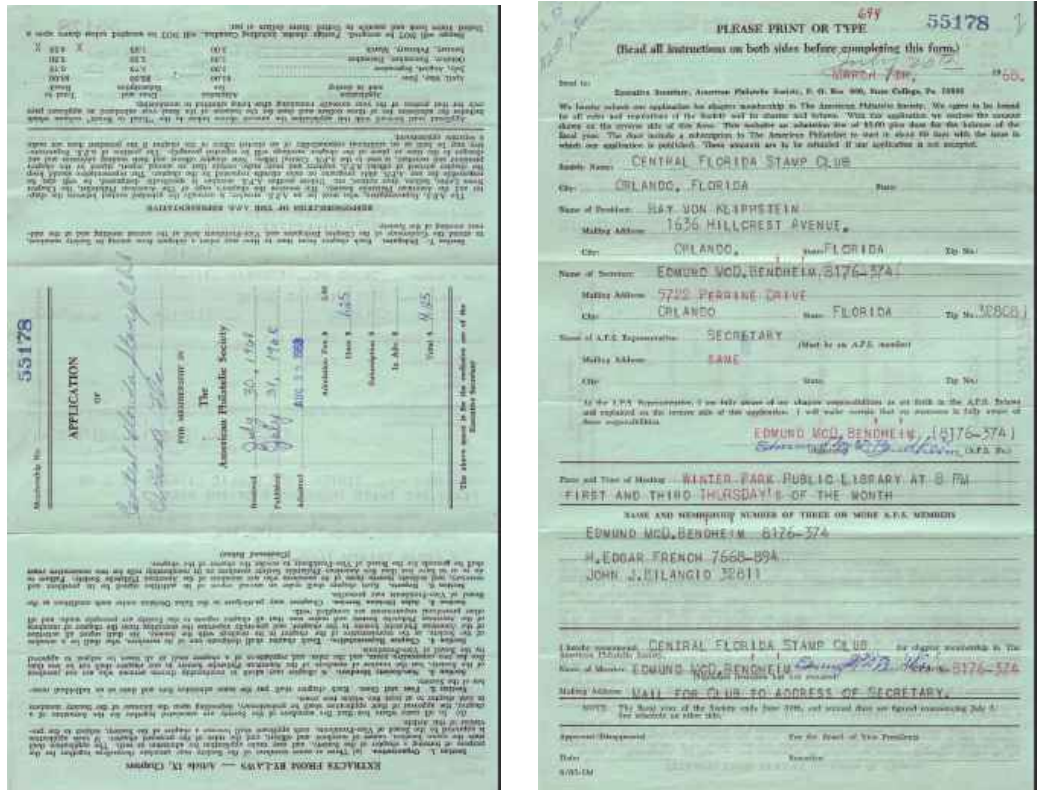
This could have been a 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of continuous membership, if the club had not dropped its earlier membership (started in July 1951) in 1961 probably due to financial reasons. Finances must have been dire to save the annual Chapter Membership fees of under \$2.00 per year.

More to the point is how the club has fared during this 50-year period. The club has been blessed with leadership that has kept it stable during the entire 50 years. The mistakes that caused the club to split into two clubs in the mid-1950s (one of the two ultimate failures of leadership) have not been repeated.

The 50-year period could be loosely divided into 3 distinct periods by leadership groups. The first period from 1968 to the mid-1980s could be called the Bomar – Berry years. From the mid-1980s to around 2000 would be the Bomar – Shirley –Estes – Patrick years. The most recent times (from around 2000 to present) would be the Ferguson – Fettig – Fisher – Patrick – Pullin – Archbold period.

Leadership comes from one person or a small group of people in various leadership positions. The named groups did not always hold the presidency during their respective periods, but the members named were very often in one or more of the lead positions, giving them the opportunity to provide continuity in the leadership. To be an effective leader, a person must have two things: 1) A vision of where the entity needs to go, and 2) An ability to involve more people in bringing that vision about (the ability to match people's talents with the needs of the entity). Note that the day-to-day tasks of running the entity do not form part of the leadership talent. The standard jobs of the board positions keep the club running smoothly but do nothing about defining and driving needed change.

A look at leadership vision, which drives club atmosphere and growth, shows a trend. The first period was a time focused on stability. The club was staid and predicable and could be boring. Very little growth or change took place. The club was being maintained on a very small budget (making the lapse of APS membership somewhat understandable). Part of this predictability may be due to long term recovery from the split. The leadership vision was one of status quo, don't rock the boat, and avoiding disputes that could rip the club apart.



The second period was marked by some growth and changes. Local stamp shows became more common in the Orlando area. While the club did not run the shows, it did support the shows both by attendance and doing registration. The FLOREX show, which had been a traveling show, changing cities each year, began a continuous run in Orlando. Show cachets were designed, made, and sold by the club.

John D. Shirley and Wade Berry spearheaded a more concerted effort to attract new members, especially youth, to the club. The club was in attendance at the Central Florida Fair passing out free packets of stamps to youth, and at other events to publicize the club. Newsletters were done, but on a sporadic basis. Near the end of this period, at the end of 1999, the dissolution of the Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs (FFSC) caused some problems but did not hurt the strength of the CFSC. The leadership vision was still one of status quo, but with efforts to attract more members to the club.

In the most recent period, many changes have been made. While the changes may appear to be random, the pattern becomes understandable when the vision driving them is seen. The vision is one of making the club more responsive to members while also encouraging members to do more to support the club. Also, technological changes are harnessed in assisting and driving the changes. The result is growth both in the number of members, the size of the treasury and club budget, and a closer more congenial friendship between the individual members; in total, a more vibrant club.

The changes are myriad but follow the vision pattern. In making the club more responsive to the membership, the club has purchased various items for use by members and provided funds for special training opportunities for the membership. Items purchased included a photographic microscope, a watermark detector, and most recently a projector for program presentations. Also, the club has purchased a set of Scott's catalogs and keeps them relatively current. A club library of reference works has been developed by Newton Kulp with a listing of the available materials published on the website. These may be checked out by members. An educational fund was started with funding coming from the sale of donation lots in the club auctions. This fund has been used to send club members to a few APS training programs when deemed appropriate.

To aid in communication within the club and to attract new members, the club became present on the web with its own web site developed by Francis Ferguson and David Allen late in 2004. During this period a lively newsletter has been edited regularly by Francis Ferguson and is archived on the website. Paper copies are distributed for members that cannot use the web site. A free monthly bourse was started in 2013 edited by Mel Borofsky to allow members to advertise their wants, or material they have to sell or trade. Again, this is published in the member's only section of the web site and paper copies are available for the members who cannot use the web site.

In order to understand where we have been and where we are going, members have started collecting historical information and artifacts. As parts of the history are written, they are published both in the newsletter and kept on the web site's history page. With records being kept by computer, more recent historical data is more easily preserved and summarized for historical trends.

Starting in 2013, an annual club picnic has been held to allow members to meet each other in a different and more relaxed setting. In 2002, a group of 3 members would meet occasionally for dinner before the meeting. The pre-meeting dinner has become a consistent gathering and the group has grown to typically 13 – 16 members. This is open to any member who wishes to come.

The club auctions were computerized in 2004 by David Allen to aid in faster post auction transactions; members who both bought and sold only needed one transaction where before they had to go through the line twice. Earlier, a minimum opening bid was added to stop the need for sellers to protect their material from lowball bids. Additional sources of material for the auctions have been found. Through the efforts of Josh Furman, the Birds of Prey of Maitland organization has started consigning their donated stamp materials to be auctioned by the club, giving advantage to both the club and the Birds of Prey. The Russell Home and Habitat for Humanity have similar connections to the CFSC. In general, the quality of the material in the auctions has improved tremendously. Since the club charges sellers a 10% fee on material sold, this improvement also increases the benefit to the club treasury.

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