

The Cover Story

What Happens When Your Ad Ends Up In The Wrong Newspaper?

By Phillip Fettig

Advertising is an important aspect of any business and it is even more important than most. Why, you ask? Well, the need for customers is common to all, but stamp dealers do not have the luxury of calling the factory for a truck load of new material. (Of course, if you deal in nothing but new issues that will not be the case – but few can survive on those alone). Dealer “A” may sit behind the table at a show, or a desk in a store, and wait for collections to walk in, but it really takes more than complacency to be a success. Dealer “B” decides that having the company name familiar to collectors, as well as making known that collections are being sought, may be a better business plan. This is where advertising comes in. It can take the form of newspaper, telephone book yellow pages (getting smaller!), philatelic publications, show programs and club newsletters. The CFSC Bourse is an excellent example. Another method is direct mailings, but that will not be a part of this article as I have little experience with this type, except for show publicity. Some may consider “word of mouth” as a method of advertising, but I consider it mostly an end by-product of all the other efforts.

Ann started at A & R Stamp & Coin as employee in 1984, became a partner in 1985, and the sole owner and operator in 2001. During that time the store used the time proven phone book listing and newspaper ads. In addition the business was a frequent booth holder at shows around the state including FLOREX, SARAPEX, SUNPEX and other smaller events. This meant many show program ads and even more important, being seen by the public. One of the mainstays was weekly display ads in the Osceola Gazette and the Orlando Sentinel. Back in that time period the Sentinel had insert issues for each county, for example Osceola Extra and Orange Extra. The ads were changed around to indicate special sales or Holiday related items. **Figure (1)** is an example of one weekly display ad.

One day in 2002, Ann received a call from a lady who stated she had seen the A & R ad in the Sentinel and had some stamps that she wanted to sell. Ann asked a few basic questions concerning the material and decided that it would be worth a look. She then asked for the address and directions. The answer: Mt. Dora in Lake County! Ann set an appointment for a time that I would be off work and could accompany her. (At that point in addition to working for the Circuit Court I held the position of Head Janitor and Box Toter at A & R). On the given day, we arrived at a pleasant home full of beautiful dishes, plates and other artifacts. It seems she was an active antiques dealer. Her late husband had always wanted to be a stamp dealer, something that many of us get caught up in. Unfortunately, the gentleman died before he put his plan in action. His widow had no interest in extending her thriving business to include philately.

We soon found ourselves in a room full of albums and boxes. This clearly was the biggest collection we had ever attempted to evaluate. Ann already had a nearly complete set of new Scott International Albums in the store and now we were faced with 43 more of them. **Figure (2)** shows a few of them. The big difference was these had stamps in them. And, contrary to what most dealers find, the most stamps were in the early albums and decreased in the newer ones. We divided them up and started making notes. (Before we finished we had 12 legal sized pages, some on both sides). There were also two banker's boxes of unused supplements for the albums and those are not cheap by any means. Then came 10 more albums of various types and amounts of stamps covering both world-wide, Canada, Trucial States and the United States. Covers were not neglected, ranging from a small, but nice, group of U.S. 11's, W/W, U.S. and no collection is complete without the United Nations! **Figure (3)** is a small portion of the many U.S. & W/W covers. A box of miscellaneous contributed a few hundred loose stamps and a U.S. White Plains S/S with perforation separations and disturbed gum. And, last, but not least – a whole bunch of U.S. singles, blocks, strips & sheets which amounted to several thousand dollars face value. We discussed our options and agreed that we needed some time to evaluate our notes and so advised the owner. She readily agreed and I think actually was pleased that we were not rushing our offer. Prior to departing, Ann asked her how she had come to call A & R. She spoke right up and told her it was the display ad in the Lake County Extra edition of the Orlando Sentinel. Ann thanked her and we departed.

A few days later we called back and made an offer which was accepted. Prior to going back to pick up the material, Ann called her account contact in the Sentinel Ad Department and asked how the ad got in a paper two counties to the North. The explanation was sometimes they do not have enough ads to make up a page so they just throw fillers in, at no extra cost, so the page does not have a huge blank spot! So that is what happened, at least this time. A newspaper ad placed in a location over 50 miles away and unknown to the advertiser pays a huge dividend.

Next time – The Saddest Purchase We Made.

Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers



A Game-Changing Honor

In mid February 2013 came the amazing news that I was under consideration for inclusion in the American Stamp Dealer Hall of Fame. My gut reaction was to pass. I am an enigma: more than forty years of professional life has made me well known, yet I am shy and reticent.

Find me in the limelight and I'll clam up; I'm way more comfortable one on one or in a small arena. However, I rationalized my chances as negligible considering the vast array of talent past and present to choose from.

Come early May, Randy Neil called to let me know that I was to be honored with the Hall of Fame award. My mind buzzed contemplating the attention.

Randy would interview me one evening during NAPEX, Washington D.C.'s prestigious show. Being well dressed for the photo was natural because I wear a Jos. A. Banks shirt & tie to every show I attend. I always bring a sports jacket.

We met at a glorious Italian restaurant for the interview. Between the stories back and forth, the wine and a birthday celebration a couple of tables away, it was a joyful evening.

Randy admonished me not to reveal what was happening until publication of the award in the July-August 2013 issue of **The American Stamp Dealer & Collector** magazine.

I kept to the pledge excepting one friend on my Michael Rogers Inc staff, John Grubbe. John and I speculated what a game changer this award would be. Truly a heady experience was coming.

John and I started kidding Coleen Nagy, the MRI comptroller who had her own office. Together with a yardstick, with great

A scene from NAPEX, a huge annual show in the McLean, Va., suburb of Washington, D.C. For years, Michael Rogers' firm was a mainstay in its bourse.



emphasis on our movements, we measured out the dimensions of her doorway. Then we shook our heads saying "Nope, it won't fit." Then she began curiously guessing "What in the world is Mike going to put in my office?"

Her answer came when the award was published in mid June. Gleeefully I told her the measurements were for my supersized ego!

I knew the article was published when we started to receive congratulations. Randy had provided me with an advance copy so I showed it to my staff. Though my name was on the company, each person there was part of the award.

I marvel that I am now included with John Walter Scott, Jacques Minkus, H.E. Harris, Herman Herst and Robert A. Siegel. Stanley Richmond is a personal hero; I admire his integrity and gentlemanly demeanor. Some years ago, I purchased a superb China collection described as intact, and I can assure you it was. That collection came from Daniel Kelleher Auction Co, when Stanley owned it.

I greatly enjoy writing. In order to write, one must understand the flow of a story.

I've always been a story teller. Most likely I picked it up from the family. Mom

& grandparents, aunts and uncles, recalling their times long ago, filling in with details of Europe and growing up in Brooklyn, before my time. The New York City that I grew up in of the 1960's took place in more innocent times. Inquisitive as I was, I would strike up conversations with strangers on the subway and in Manhattan. I was curious and observant.

But to write! I have written *Linn's Asia* column since 1989. Those columns are easy to author because they are fact driven. Randy Neil has heard a great many of my stories over the years. He had asked me quite a few times to write for the **ASD&C** magazine.

Frankly I found it intimidating. Easiest way to commit a faux pas is writing about oneself. I flipped that thought around on its side: I have never been reluctant to laugh at myself. If I were to write something about myself with an unintended meaning, oh well.

My "Reminiscences" column has two themes. It is partly autobiographical. You will also find purely factual articles. I'll tout other stamp dealers. What you won't find is negativity. Philately is so enjoyable with the opportunity to meet good people. It always has been! ☒