

History is Made Daily by The Editor

Do you enjoy doing research? If so – we have a challenge for you. You can add valuable information to the history timeline of the Central Florida Stamp Club. Large gaps in the organization's history exist simply because the information was not passed down from one generation to another. We would like to rectify that by filling in the gaps. Over the years, we have been able to mine information from many different sources, but the one source that has not been explored in depth is the Orlando Sentinel before 1980. While much of the research may require you to visit the actual Orlando Sentinel archives, a brief on-line search found that the UCF Library holds a portion of the early Orlando papers on microfiche dating from 1960 forward. The Orlando Sentinel location in downtown Orlando has a small archive from April of 1985 to the present. (Note: The Orlando Sentinel, including all of its preceding incarnations, began in 1876.)

The history of the CFSC as we know it began in the middle 1940s – and there is a chance the genesis was in the very early years of the 1940s. It is believed that there may be display ads, public service notices of meetings and show ads buried in the pages of the newspaper. Copies of anything and everything related to the club's early history is of interest. At this point, any reference to an Orlando-based stamp club could be of value as we attempt to piece together this historical puzzle.

The club has committed up to \$200 to fund this effort which does not cover a professional researcher; therefore we are turning to our club members for assistance. Not only will we give full credit to each investigator who turns up information, we will reimburse you for any copy fees incurred for any newspaper-related material that deals with philately in the Orlando area. Direct scans (if clear) to a file on a flash drive would be the preferred format. Please provide an itemized invoice for payment.

For further information or questions – see The Editor.

Member's Closed Album by the Editor

Oliver “Charlie” Branneky passed away on May 24 at the age of 89. Charlie was a returning member of the CFSC when he rejoined in August of 2014. Charlie had been a member for a couple of years in the early years of the 1990s. He quickly became a regular meeting attendee and often showed up to be part of the pre-meeting dinner group. He was always dapper and well dressed with his signature bowtie in place.



Charlie was a member of the “Greatest Generation” having proudly served his country in World War II in the 42nd “Rainbow” Infantry Division. In 1969 he moved to Orlando and started Branneky True Value Hardware on Orange Avenue located just south of downtown Orlando. His activities besides being a stamp collector also included the Whirl'N Twirl Square Dancing Club.

Soon after he rejoined the CFSC, I was talking to Charlie and made the connection with the True Value Hardware store that he owned. I had been in that store many times in the 1990s as it was the closest store of that nature to my place of employment. In one of my first conversations with him, I addressed him as “Sir” and was quickly corrected – “my name is Charlie”!

Rest in peace Charlie, your story telling and humor will be missed.



Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers

Easter in Seattle

My mother remembers Grandpa chasing after a customer who left some change on the counter in my grandparents' dry goods store, some 70 years ago—35 cents carried a lot more value back then. Grandpa ran three blocks and did the right thing. A sense of honor goes a long way with me.

Once a dealer criticized me for the friendly way I chatted with a collector. He thought me unprofessional. He said collectors respect a reserved dealer more. Sheesh! What, stamp dealers are supposed to be made of stone?

My mind is chock full of arcane information. Anyone can look up a China 1882 one candarin in a catalogue, but a dealer who is selling the same stamp with a perfin had better know its history in order to justify a sky high valuation. Collect Korean Empire? Scott warns of forgeries but doesn't distinguish between good and bad. I learned from James Kerr, the finest mind I had ever encountered.

Before I got into the China business in 1982 as one huge gulp, one might say I understudied working for others. I'm observant and sensitive. I know how I feel as a customer in a retail setting. I've applied these instincts.

Before I sold my company, we all helped with the work load. Folks calling in were surprised to speak to me instead of a secretary on the first ring. A former employer, John McDaniel, would work in his back office, I would always be the point man handling whomever walked in or phoned. John rued time spent with all but a select few; I had great fun working over the counter, mixing it up with collectors.

Mid 1980s, a pathologist from Washington state named Robert Cihak started buying from my company. He was a worldwide collector with deep pockets. Bob applied his inquisitive mind, becoming an articulate hoarder. Throughout the stamps, coins, fine books, and microscopes he collected, he became quite knowledgeable. He read the literature and accumulated, imagining that one day, he would organize his holdings. He didn't buy bales of flashy CTOs or common first days. He had the seasoned

eye and means to concentrate on key material.

For some 15 years until 1999, Dr. Cihak bought from our frequent pricelists and auctions on primarily Chinese and Asian stamps. We would chat at length, developing a fine friendship. Alas, in mid 1999, Bob was diagnosed with leukemia. This is a blood cancer disease. Buoyed by his faith, surrounded by family, and being a physician himself, Bob is better prepared to deal with the disease than most. He knows the odds of one treatment vs. the other.

Bob thought it a good idea if I were to travel to Seattle for Easter dinner 2000 with his family. His reasoning was that if he passed away, he would like to introduce me to his family so they would feel more secure while his collections were dispersed. I thought it a brilliant idea. Though I was a tad shy of invading his family dinner, I was assured I would be welcome. I'd never been to Seattle. Road trip!

In those days, I had been going on road trips by Amtrak. Travelling by rail has its ups and downs. There's a joke that if you don't care if you are minutes late, take a plane. If you don't care that you are hours late, take Amtrak.

Deluxe meal, cramped sleeping quarters, adhering to a fixed route, relaxed environment and seeing the country: Amtrak works for an older passenger and bores the younger. I was fine with it. Having friends and travelling with friends are two different points. Plotting a trip like this looked like two weeks out of town. I have a swell friend in central Florida who had worked a few out of town trade shows with me, Ricky Flanagan. Ricky is a decade younger than I, fit, with a great sense of humor and a calm demeanor. We get along like two peas in a pod.

We departed the Winter Park, Florida Amtrak station for Los Angeles on the "Sunset Limited," a route no longer in service. I booked a private bedroom to and from which meant bunk beds and a toilet + shower tucked into 6'6" x 7'7" space. Arriving Los Angeles, we transferred to Amtrak's "Coast Starlight" which ran along the Pacific spine to Seattle, a breath-

taking trip complete with wine tastings and panorama scenery.

Bob and Diane have six children plus a passel of grandchildren. Easter celebration was warm and inviting.

Ricky and I opted to return to Los Angeles by rental car. We stayed at the Shangri-La Hotel, of Art-Deco design, on Santa Monica Beach. Back in the year 2000, it was a faded pearl, yet to be renovated.

Time got away from us, that last day at the Shangri-La. It's a must to be at the train station two hours before departure. We had to return the rental vehicle. On the way to the Amtrak station, we got confused between the I-10 and the 110 freeways. With time running out, we asked a policeman for directions to the Amtrak station, only to get misdirected. We got to the train station only 45 minutes before the train was to leave.

Disaster! Frustrated passengers were milling around, trying to catch the attention of the few Amtrak officials. The overhead board said our Sunset Limited train had been cancelled due to a freight train accident on the rails. Amtrak's solution was to substitute a 50-seat passenger bus for those travelling eastward. We were told our luggage would go underneath the bus.

Space on each bus was so limited that each of us could carry only a paperback book or ladies, a small purse. Seats had to remain in the upright position. Meals would be sandwiches. Each bus had a single toilet.

I paid \$1,500 for a private compartment and we were getting two upright seats? I don't think so. Take a chance that my meds would be in a lost bag or that I would have a migraine without a way to deal with it? Not going to happen.

So I walked up to the lead Amtrak official and caught his attention. Speaking in my normal soft voice, I pointed out that Amtrak has reserve reservations for situations like this and that Ricky and I would be real pleased to go home via the trains of Los Angeles to Chicago, then Chicago to Washington D.C., then Washington D.C. to Winter Park. He checked and sure enough, there were compartments available in each train. We sure were happy to get home.

I wasn't the only stamp dealer Bob bought from. He sent us so much material to sell—stamps, postal history and literature—that we spread it over fifteen different public auctions and a great many mail sales. Preceding every Fedex shipment we would revisit by phone. Awesome guy. ☒