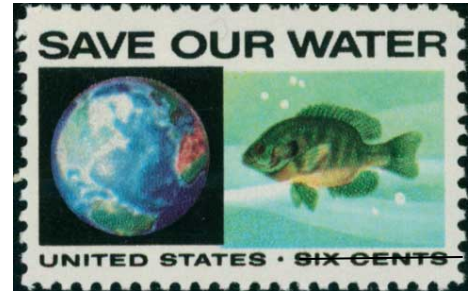


Insurance? Why?

By Michael Rodgers

We sure had a whopper of a hot summer in south Florida. Friend of mine thought it was a good idea to run the window air conditioner on max day and night in his den this August. One morning he turned on the light, finding to his great dismay the AC drain line had burst, pouring water on the shelves of stamp albums underneath. Water is a good thing for the planet Earth and for fish, not so much for stamps!

Homeowner's insurance covered the wall and floor but the stamps? Well, the insurance company OK'd only a thousand dollars even though the professional appraisal came in for \$4500 in replacement value. I thought that stunk.



As a longtime dealer who has spoken to many collectors who have sustained philatelic losses and damages, I believe the best course of action is to insure with a company that specializes in stamp insurance. The two that I have had experience with are Collectibles Insurance Agency Inc. and Hugh Wood Inc. I'm sure there are others.

Things to keep in mind: read the policy and understand the terms. That said, many stamp insurance policies do not require an appraisal and pay claims at full collectible value. These policies don't cost much.

I admit it: I'm anal. I want everything nailed down. No surprises. The last thing I want to hear in case of a loss is some insurance company discounting what my collection was insured for. To avoid that disappointment, I ask a million questions.

What set my heart racing was the agent saying that I would have to prove what I had lost. I have one of their jumbo policies so I commiserate. Even though my good stuff is in the bank, the insurance company's concerns dovetailed with my thoughts. Simply having bills of sale might not be good enough. They sure wouldn't cover every item in the collection.

It occurred to me that if someone could take pics of my stamp collection with an Apple's iPad Pro, the information could be sent to my insurance company. The pics would remain on the iPad Pro, which I'd take to stamp shows. Then I'd have a way to refer to the specialized material in my collection when buying at auction or stamp shows.

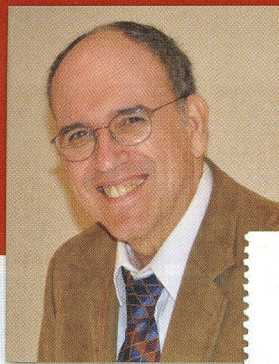
I'm great at conceptualizing and delegating. Problem here was I'm no techie so I knew what I wanted but didn't know how to express in technical terms what I wanted done. I had to find someone intuitive that would grasp the big picture and fill in as needed.

Seemed to me a graphic design student would be comfortable with computers - and thus relate to the iPad - and a sense of balance. Being semi-retired, I had no problem conforming the hours around someone else's schedule. I interviewed several candidates, selecting a scholarship student of graphic arts and computer modeling at Digital Media Arts College. After running a background check, I hired him. Congenial fellow.

Over 7,000 pics fit into a USB drive which is about the size of my thumb.

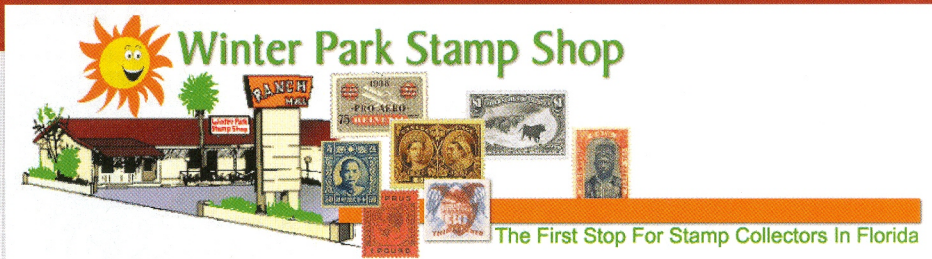
Taking the pics is just the beginning. Time is taken to make sure the pics are clear and even, without duplication. Each collection's pics are grouped into folders and labeled. Thus my six Liberia albums are in one folder as are the two albums of Japan in another for easy viewing.

The insurance company is delighted. And I will have a lot more fun buying and sharing my collections.



Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers



Some Purchases Come Easy, Some Not

Stamp dealers will tell you that it is infinitely harder to purchase interesting quality than it is to sell. Common material is in abundance while intermediate and specialized is thinly inventoried. It is a real challenge coming up with enticing stamps and postal history to ensure the customer base stays loyal.

Winter Park Stamp Shop opened in June 1978 with a fledgling United States and worldwide inventory. My stock response to "What do you buy?" was "What do you have? Those three years of working for John McDaniel (1973-76) were cautious ones: John bought for the demand right in front of him. I saw future profits walking out the door because we didn't take a chance. But it wasn't my money then, and I was John's employee.

Having a stamp shop is the best advertisement for buying a stamp collection. In order to sell, one must buy. If not in stock, collectors go elsewhere.

Many years after opening the shop, I received a phone call from a lady explaining that she had just lost her husband who was a stamp collector. Would I come to their home to examine the collection and purchase it?

I expressed my condolences at her loss. Though naturally she was upset, I inquired to make sure that my visit would not come too soon after the loss of her husband. I copied down the address and made an appointment for a few days hence.

I traveled with an employee in the company van. I always bring a thin briefcase which contains a perf gauge, tongs, pads, calculator, business cards and such things to make an appraisal easier.

Ushered into a small study on the first floor, we were shown the stamp collection housed in 32 Master Global albums, placed eight across on four bookshelves.

Sinking to my knees, I opened a random album to get a sense of the collection. Oiola! It was magnificent. Every stamp was in a crystal mount, every set was complete, every country contained wonderful material and everything was in wonderful condition. To

give you an idea, the Falkland Islands 1933 Tercentenary set No. 66-76 was there. Heady stuff for a stamp shop.

After a half an hour, I was saying to myself Oh boy Oh boy Oh boy! I just knew I was going to write a large check and that was just a quick glance. Stamp dealer heaven!

But then I woke up because the lady entered the room crying, saying "This is too soon. You have to go." She explained she invited me too soon after losing her husband. Stunned, stammering, I said I understood, just let me get up.

I have bad knees. It is a condition called Osgood-Schlatters, an inflammation of the large tendon. It was bothering me that day, so I had to be careful getting up off the floor. I guess I wasn't quick enough so she came over and kicked me right in the left knee. Few have ever seen me mad but I lost it saying "I wouldn't give you \$5,000 for this collection!" I hobbled out and went straight to my doctor. Lost two days of work.

Years later, I received a phone call, saying "I've decided to accept your \$5,000 offer." I sure couldn't remember a \$5,000 offer that I had made that had been refused but I wrote the address down and went over.

As I entered her home, I started to explain the \$5,000 wasn't an offer but an excited utterance. I wasn't allowed to explain. She accused me of dealing in bad faith and disparaged me ethnically. Red faced, I sat down and wrote a \$5,000 check for payment plus got a bill of sale.

If she had gone with the flow, I would have appraised the collection and surely the offer would have been substantially higher. But no, she had to be in control, so I did it her way. After we packed the collection in the van, my employee asked what just happened. I muttered quietly "Nasty, nasty, nasty."

In spite of the unpleasantness, it was a marvelous collection, a thing of beauty. I can still see it in my mind. And I remember the joy that many collectors had when purchasing from it. High praise where I come from. ☐

Writers: Whether Fledgling or Experienced

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