



DOUBLE TAKE
A WHIMSICAL LOOK AT
COLOR OMISSIONS ON U.S. STAMPS

MIKE SMITH

18TH APRIL 2024

Introduction – Why Colored Omitted Stamps?

If you have read some of the newsletter articles I have written or heard a couple of my club presentations in the last couple of years, you know a little bit about Mike's philatelic collecting passions. When I became serious about stamps around a decade ago, my focus quickly centered on investment-grade classic U.S. stamps. My goals when buying used material is to collect only stamps prior to U.S. Scott# 218, or calendar year 1890.

This led to my second collecting interest that I have pursued aggressively within the last 5 years – colored cancellations. My goal for a used stamp is to strive for a light face-free cancel if in black, or a colored cancel that compliments the stamp. Many colored cancels carry premiums as well, an added bonus! From an investment perspective, the bonus is obviously the additional price premium; many of which are grossly undervalued in the Scott catalogue (in Mike's opinion). However, I was more intrigued with the beauty and rarity of colored cancel stamps, particularly when they compliment the color of the stamp itself.

But I'm not done yet! I felt the modern section of my U.S. collection was ignored and I needed a way to pique my interest to get those albums out and open them up occasionally. While perusing auction catalogues recently, I saw many color omitted stamps from the 1960's and up that were very cool! The bug hit as quick as the flu and the rest is history!

Color omitted stamps became a third thrill of collecting for me

Color Omissions on U.S. Stamps – Rules, Gotta Have Rules!!

Per Scott Catalogue of Errors on U.S. Postage Stamps, 17th Edition:

“In order for a stamp to be a color-omitted error, 100% of the affected color(s) must be absent from the design. The presence of even one dot of color disqualifies the stamp as an error. The stamp must be able to pass scrutiny under 30-power magnification.”

Data Resources:

- 1) 2023 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers, 101st Edition, released October 2022, Amos Media, Sidney, OH
- 2) Scott Catalogue of Errors on U.S. Postage Stamps, 17th Edition, Amos Media, Sidney, OH
- 3) Scott Catalogue of Errors on U.S. Postage Stamps, 16th Edition, Stephen R. Datz, Amos Media, Sidney, OH

Colored Omissions – How Did That Happen?

If I Only Knew

There is little information on how color omissions occur on stamps. Per Scott, color-omission results from one or more colors unintentionally omitted from a multicolor stamp. Most color-omitted errors result from the complete lack of a color(s) during process-color printing. In process-color printing, the printed image is broken down into multiple basic colors, typically Black, Yellow, Blue (or Cyan) and Red (or Magenta). Each color is printed by a separate plate/cylinder/sleeve. During the printing process, the individual dots mingle/merge to form a full-color image.

Stamps with color-omission errors are usually lithographed, engraved (or both) or photogravure. All three processes involve lines or dots to form the image.

It can be assumed that the total absence of a particular color or colors is the result of zero ink present during the printing process.

A very few color-omitted errors result from a paper fold or extraneous paper adherence that essentially blocked a color from being printed. These are most noted on earlier BEP Engraved issues and are very rare. We will see an example of this in the presentation.

Color Omissions on US Stamps – Some Stats

- Errors Span over 85 years!
 - Earliest documented issue – Scott# 702a, 2-cent Red Cross, May 21, 1931
 - Next documented *regular* issue (28+ years later) – Scott# 1137a,b,c, 8-cent Ernst Reuter Champion of Liberty – December 29, 1959
 - Latest documented issue – Scott# 5172a, 5-cent USA & Star, Feb. 10, 2017
- Total number of US stamp listings with color omissions = 573
 - Most are regular/commemorative issues = 412 (72%)
 - 161 (28%) are from the Back of the Book (aka BOB) – let's ask BOB:
 - Airmail = 12
 - Postage Due = 6
 - Stamped Envelopes = 71
 - Aerogrammes = 16
 - Postal Cards = 45
 - Air Postal Cards = 6
 - Federal Duck Hunting = 5

[**How Many Do You Have??**](#)

The Earliest Documented Color Omitted Error

U.S. Scott# 702a – Red Cross, May 21, 1931 – Red (Engraved BEP) Omitted
(Not in Mike's Collection)



Normal Stamp – 35 cents



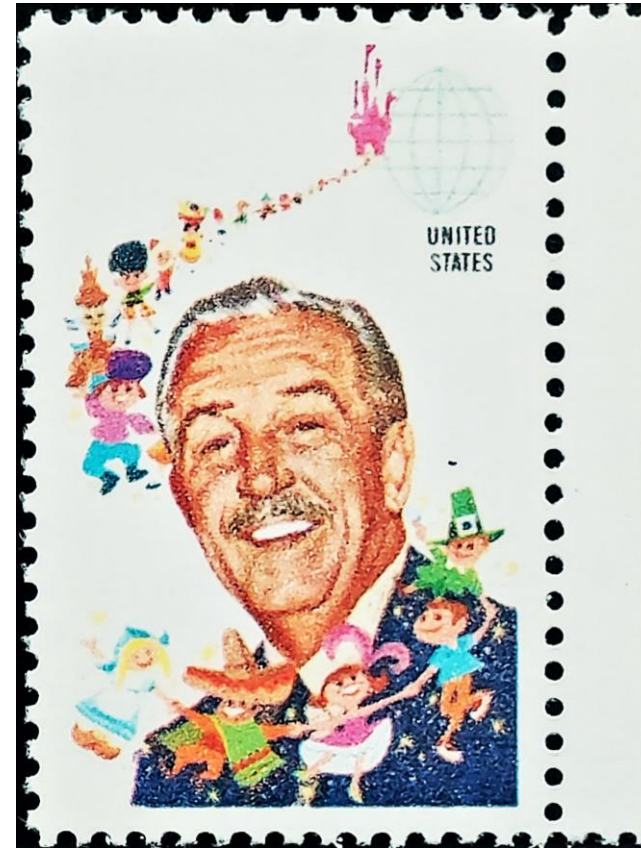
Error Stamp – \$40,000
(1994 auction price!)

Unique, 1 known – resulted from a paper fold preventing
entire application of the red cross

U.S. Scott# 1355a – Walt Disney, Sep. 11, 1968 – Ocher (Photogravure) Omitted
It truly is “A Small World After All”, Especially with the Ocher missing – Walt must be turning over in his grave!



Normal Stamp – 40 cents

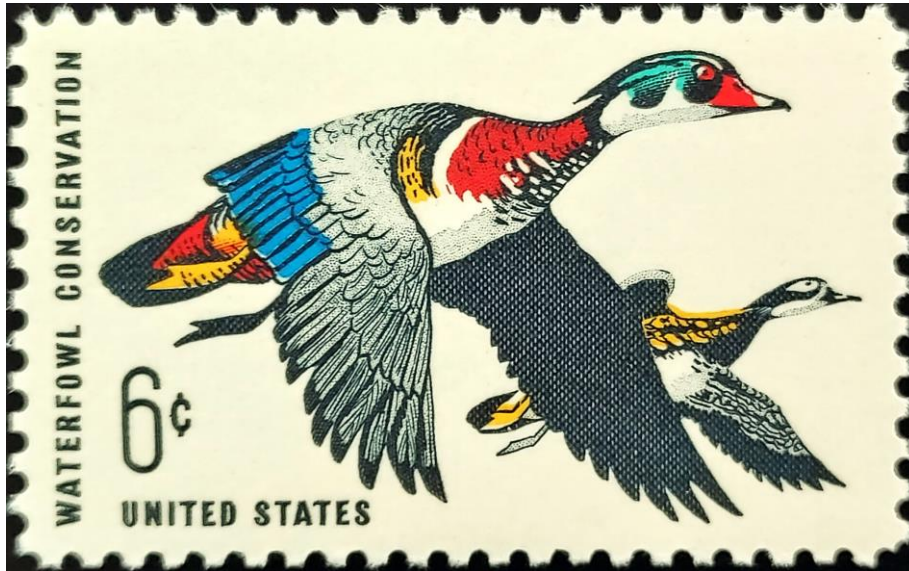


Error Stamp – \$300
Qty. = 400 to 500

Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1355d – Black (Photogravure) omitted = \$1,750 (Qty. = 35 reported)
- Scott# 1355f – Blue (Photogravure) omitted = \$1,500 (Qty. = 35 reported)

U.S. Scott# 1362b - Waterfowl Conservation, Oct. 24, 1968 – Red & Blue (Lithographed) Omitted
Will Somebody Pass The Duck Sauce Please? I Need Some Color Back



Normal Stamp – 30 cents



“The Ugly Duckling”
Error Stamp – \$350
Qty. = 150

Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1362c – Red (Lithographed) omitted = \$1,750 (unique, 1 used copy recorded)

Mike Just Has To Laugh!!

For the Waterfowl stamp we just looked at, and for many other listings in the Scott Catalogue, there is a note as follows:

**“*Dangerous* fakes exist of Nos. 1362b and 1362c.
Authentication by experts is required”**

Britannica Dictionary definition of DANGER. 1. a [noncount] : the possibility that you will be hurt or killed.

Danger Will Robinson!

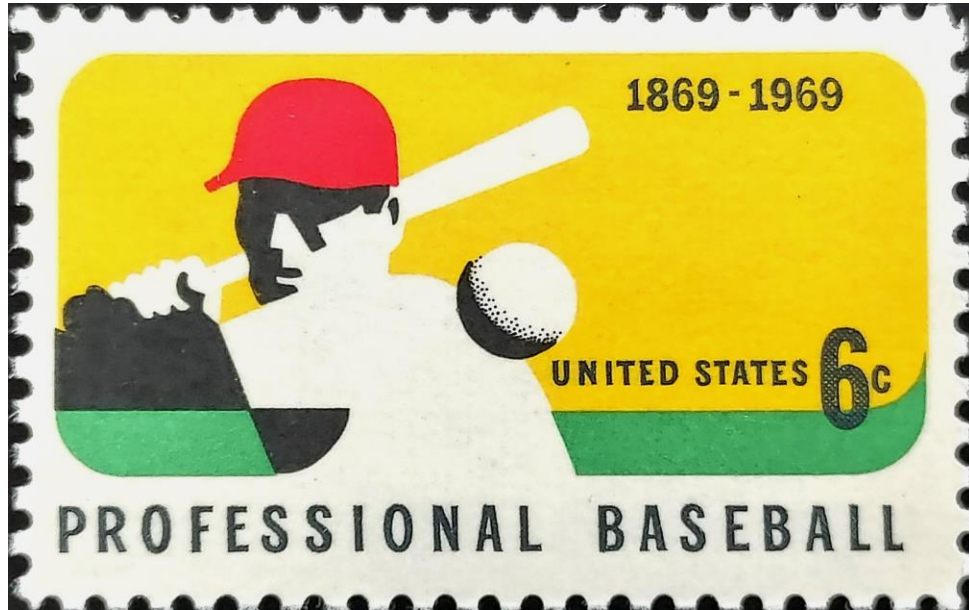
Use caution, these stamps can hurt you, perhaps even kill you, LOL!!

Isn't there a better word like Caution or Beware??



The PF/PSE (aka Robot) is protecting Mike (aka Will Robinson) from the dangerous duck stamp (aka death ray)! 😊

U.S. Scott# 1381a – Professional Baseball, Sep. 24, 1969 – Black (Engraved) Omitted Swing and a Miss



Normal Stamp – 45 cents



Error Stamp – \$500
Qty. = 300+



(Not in Mike's
Collection)

- While not a Color-Omitted Error, this is a cool example of a significant downward shift of the Black Engraving
- There is also one reported unique stamp with a complete double impression of the Black Engraving, Ref. Scott# 1381c valued at \$5,750 (recently sold in a Siegel auction on 9/28/2023 for \$3,250)

U.S. Scott# 1415b, 1416b, 1417b & 1418d – Christmas Toys, Nov. 5, 1970 – Black (Photogravure) Omitted Ghostly!



Normal Stamp – 30 cents



Error Stamp – \$1,750 each
Qty. = 2 Blocks plus 5 – 6 each
single reported (Rare)

My Stamps Are Individual Singles

U.S. Scott# 1415b & 1416b - Christmas Toys, Nov. 5, 1970 – Black (Photogravure) Omitted
Double Take – Let's Look At These More Closely



Am I A Birthday Gift or
A Christmas Toy?



What Country Am I From?

U.S. Scott# 1417b & 1418d - Christmas Toys, Nov. 5, 1970 – Black (Photogravure) Omitted
Double Take – Let's Look At These More Closely



Look Ma, No Hands
I Mean No Legs!



Space-Age Doll Carriage
Floating Along The
Conveyor Belt of Life

U.S. Scott# 1470b – Tom Sawyer, Oct. 13, 1972 – Black & Deep Red (Engraved) Omitted
Need More Paint, Tom



Normal Stamp – 30 cents



Error Stamp – \$800
Qty. = 150



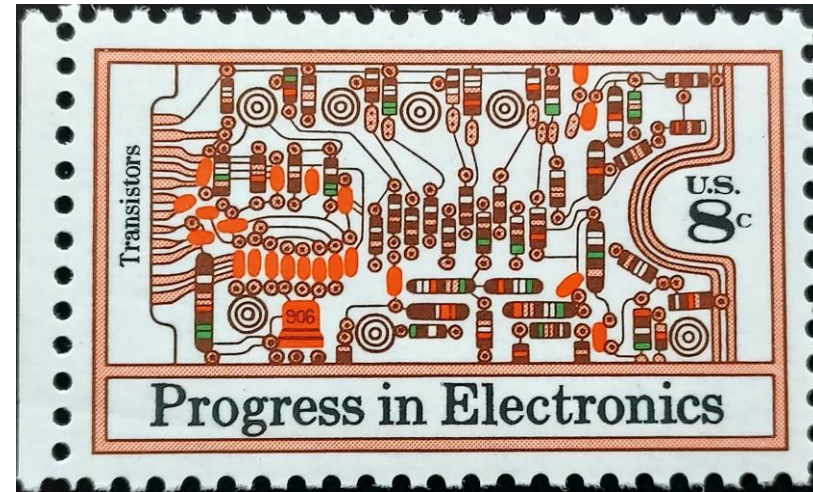
Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1470c – Yellow & Tan (Lithographed) omitted = \$1,100 (Qty. = 50 including unique Plate block)

U.S. Scott# 1501b – Progress in Electronics, July 10, 1973 – Tan & Lilac (Lithographed) Omitted
So Much For Progress



Normal Stamp – 30 cents



Error Stamp – \$600
Qty. = 50

Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1501a – Black (Engraved) omitted = \$300 (Qty. = 300 - 400)

U.S. Scott# 1506a – Rural America, Wheat Fields and Train, Aug. 16, 1974 – Black & Blue (Engraved) Omitted

“Little House Train on The Prairie” – except they forgot to print the little train ☺



Normal Stamp – 30 cents



Error Stamp – \$500

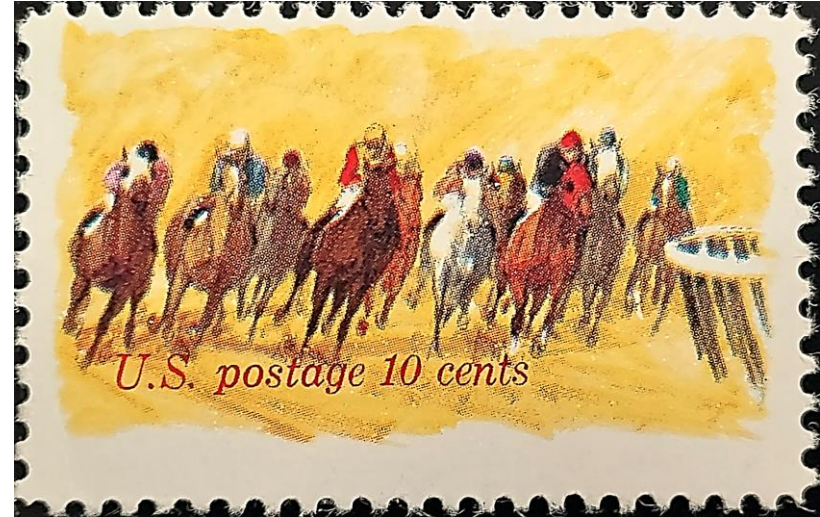
Qty. = 100

Note: Both of the other stamps from the Rural America series, Scott# 1504a & 1504d (Angus and Longhorn Cattle) as well as Scott# 1505a (Chautauqua Tent and Buggies) contain color-omitted errors

U.S. Scott# 1528a – Horse Racing, May 4, 1974 – Ultramarine (Photogravure) Omitted
Off to the Races, I Guess



Normal Stamp – 30 cents



Error Stamp – \$500
Qty. = 75 - 100

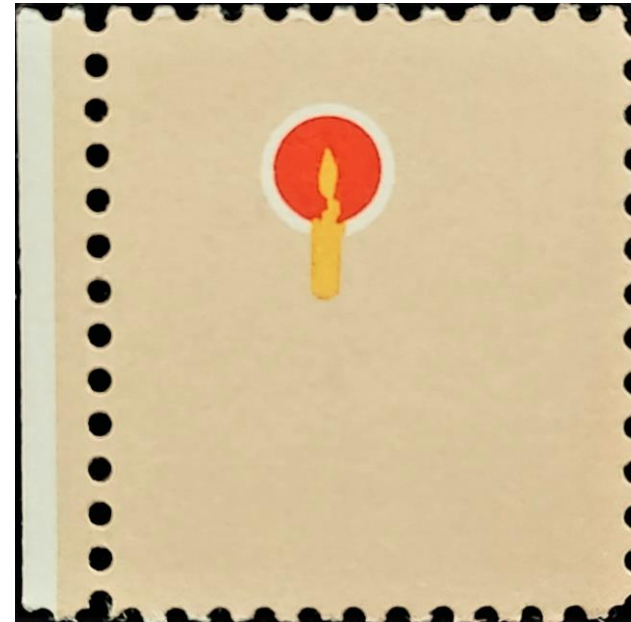
Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1528b – Red (Photogravure) omitted = \$1,750 (Qty. = 1 – 4 reported – must have no traces of Red under 30x magnification)

U.S. Scott# 1610a – Candle Holder, July 2, 1979 – Brown (Engraved) Omitted
Don't Burn Your Hand! Will somebody get me a candle holder please?



Normal Stamp – \$2



Error Stamp – \$175
Qty. = 1000+

Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1610b – Tan, Orange & Yellow (Lithographed) omitted = \$175 (Qty. = 300 – 400)



← While not a Color-Omitted Error, this is the famous CIA invert from this issue (interesting story behind this one!). Single discovery sheet of 100, 5 of which were used before its discovery and presumed lost to philately.

- Scott# 1610c – Candle Flame inverted = \$17,000 (Qty. = 95)

(Not in Mike's Collection, But I Wish!!)

U.S. Scott# 1826b – General Bernardo Galvez, July 23, 1980 – Light Yellow, Red, Blue & Brown (Lithographed) Omitted

What's That Doo-Hickey?



Normal Stamp – 30 cents



Error Stamp – \$550
Qty. = 50

Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1826a – Dark Brown, Claret & Light Gray-Blue (Engraved) omitted = \$550 (Qty. = 50)

U.S. Scott# 1938b – Yorktown – Virginia Capes Se-tenant pair, October 16, 1981 –
Black (Engraved) Omitted
Does Anyone Have Google Maps Please??



Normal Stamp (se-tenant pair) – 90 cents



Error Stamp (se-tenant pair) – \$275
Qty. = 80 pairs + 10 of each single

U.S. Scott# 1938 var – While Not An Omitted Color, a Cool Variation Nonetheless!!

“Over The River And Through The Woods...”

Wait, the river is on land!! Someone Call Grandma and Tell Her We’ll Be Late



Other variations for this issue include:

- Scott# 1938d – Black (Lithographed) omitted = No value in Scott or Datz (Qty. = 2 pairs, both of which occur in a unique plate block of 4)

U.S. Scott# 2031a – Science & Industry, Jan. 19, 1983 – Black (Engraved) Omitted
No, You're Not On Dope – but the USPS Was!



Normal Stamp – 40 cents



Error Stamp – \$750 *
Qty. = 40

* Per Scott: Transition multiples exist and sell for a premium.
The only known sheet of 50 contains 40 of the error and 10 transition stamps along the entire bottom row

This transition multiple from the bottom right corner of the only sheet with Mr. Zip is unique!

U.S. Scott# 2479b – Fawn, Mar. 11, 1991 – Red (Photogravure) Omitted
Oh Deer! I'm Not Anything Like Rudolph, Nothing Is **Red** About Me



Normal Stamp – 35 cents

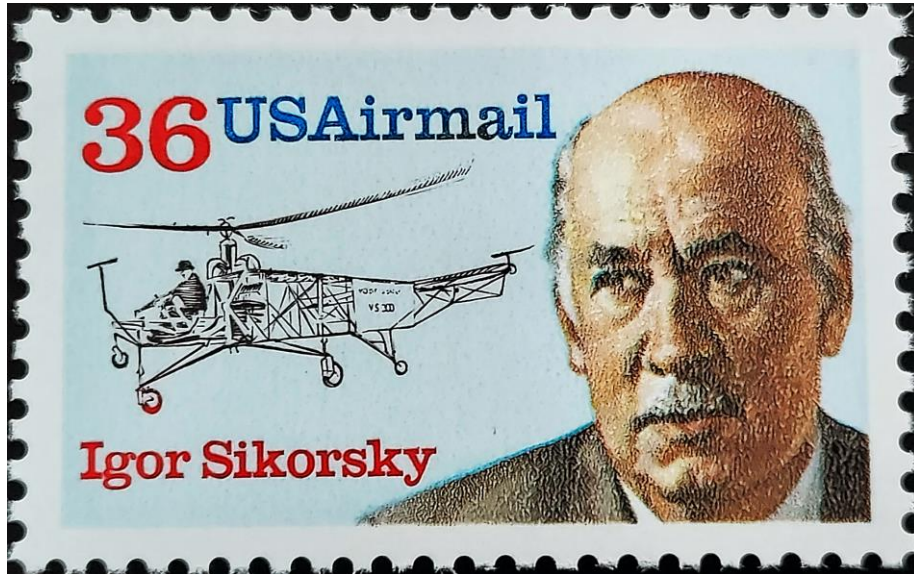


Error Stamp – \$425
Qty. = 100 reported

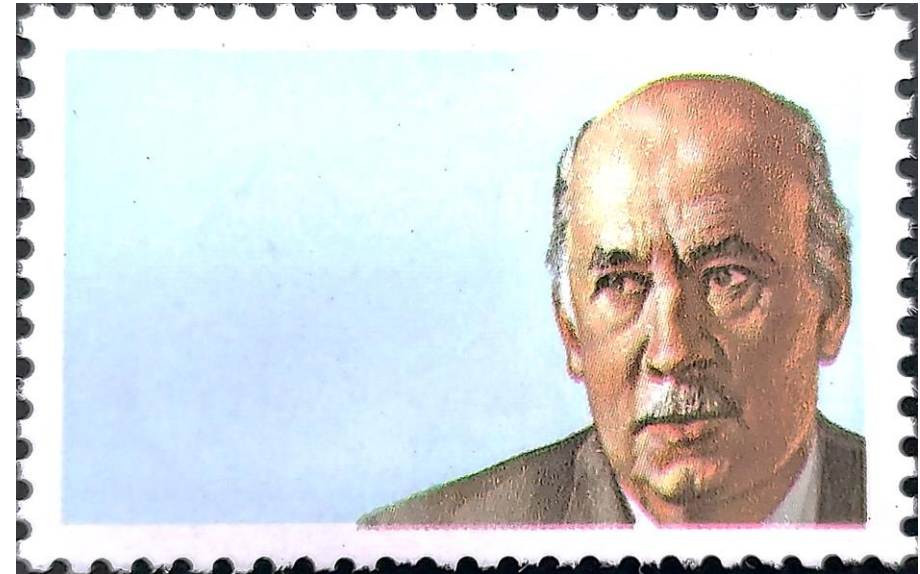
The non-omitted colors are misregistered
Note the shadowing effect



U.S. Scott C119a – Igor Sikorsky, June 23, 1988 – Red, Dark Blue & Black (Engraved) Omitted
Who Stole My Helicopter?



Normal Stamp – 70 cents



Error Stamp – \$900

Qty. = 50 including one plate
block of 4

Note: There are some examples reported with just the red “36” and “Igor Sikorsky” engraved inscriptions omitted in varying degrees; however, red specks are visible under magnification on all examples reported to date. Therefore, it is not considered to be a true 100% color-omitted variety. Values range from \$125 to \$150 depending on the degree of red omitted.

*As you can see, philately offers a fun
side to stamp collecting!!*

I Hope You Enjoyed The Show

Closing Remarks / Comments / Questions