

# San Jose Stamp Club

APS Chapter 0264-025791

Founded 1927, Club show since 1928

April 2019

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Open

### Club Website

[www.sanjosesc.com](http://www.sanjosesc.com)

### Club Blog

[www.sjscblog.net](http://www.sjscblog.net)

### Filatellic Fiesta Website

[www.filatellicfiesta.com](http://www.filatellicfiesta.com)

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the San Jose Stamp  
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# WESTPEX

**WESTPEX 2019**

Guest Societies:  
United States Stamp Society  
Military Postal History Society  
Universal Ship Cancellation Society  
American Society of Polar Philatelists  
Ryukyu Philatelic Specialist Society

4/25 - APS On-The-Road Course  
Competitive Thematic Exhibiting

4/26 - Collectors Club of SF &  
Philatelic Rangers Joint Dinner

5000 pages of Exhibits • 75 Dealers  
Auction • Meetings • Seminars

*America's Best Stamp Show*

April 26 - 28, 2019  
San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront

Schuyler Rumsey Auction  
begins April 25

Friday 10am-6pm  
Saturday 10am-6pm  
Sunday 10am-4pm

280 Frames of Exhibits  
75 Dealer Bourse  
Schuler Rumsey Auction

\$5 Admission good for all 3 days,  
Children under 15 free with adult.

Guest Societies for 2019 are the United States Stamp Society, Military Postal History Society, Universal Ship Cancellation Society and Ryukyu Philatelic Specialist Society.

You will find the 59 year tradition of 280+ frames of international exhibits, a team of renowned judges, 75 dealers from around the world, meetings and seminars on every facet of philately, plus the world famous sights of San Francisco.

The show is again being held at the  
San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront Hotel.

Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy one of the largest  
Philatelic events anywhere, just up the road from San Jose.

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## Club Blog & Website

### Blog Updates

No Activity

### Website Updates

Minutes of the 03/06/19 club meeting uploaded  
Napredak Show Photos uploaded to "Past Events" page  
March 2019 Newsletter uploaded.

## Remember the dates!

- Apr 3 San Jose Stamp Club Meeting
- Apr 12-14 Santa Clara Stamp, Collectables & Coin show
- Apr 17 San Jose Stamp Club Meeting
- Apr 26-28 WESTPEX
- Apr 27-28 Vintage Paper Show (San Francisco)

## President's Message

People outside of philately regularly ask me why I attend & lead meetings of stamp collectors since they perceive that stamp collecting is a solitary activity. This leads to the conversation we've all had about working and socializing with people who share the same interests.

We now open our meetings with 15 minutes of socialization time and I think this is a BIG success. It is a really fun way to open a meeting. It is very easy in our society to not make many friends with people that we do shared activities with. Therefore, it is a wonderful thing to have this activity to look forward to that we meet friends and enjoy their company.

The SJSC has a strong tradition of doing social activities together with our friends in the Postcard Club. The

summer picnic and Christmas party are highlights of club activities.

An argument could be made that the reason to join a club is to strengthen your knowledge of the philately. Personally, I feel my collecting is much better as a result of my participation. Even when the program is about something other than what I collect, there is often something I can apply to my own collecting. When I see collections that I've been asked to give guidance on what to do, it is obvious when the person worked alone. Those collections are often in disarray and unfocused. I often ask about the collector's history and I've never seen a disorganized collection owned by someone who was a member of stamp club.

We have two tremendous opportunities to network with our philatelic colleagues this month. First, we are very fortunate to have a philatelic library in area. The Western Philatelic Library is having an Open House and live auction on Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup>. Let's make a strong showing and keep this valuable asset viable. The big event on the philatelic calendar of the year is WESTPEX. There are so many ways to benefit from this show starting with the On-the-Road Course "Competitive Thematic Exhibiting in North America". This program is on Thursday April 25<sup>th</sup> and only costs \$45 for APS members. Check their website for a long list of society meetings and activities over the 3 days. We should all make an effort to attend is the APS Town Hall Meeting hosted by APS Executive Director (and SJSC member) Scott English.

I have not forgotten the time when I didn't know anybody in the philatelic community and found WESTPEX to be intimidating and unwelcoming to those who are not insiders. Now that I'm well established, I look forward to seeing people there. It is also the reason that Filatelic Fiesta makes extra effort to be welcoming to everyone. I encourage SJSC members to be ambassadors of hospitality to anyone you see who might need help or have a question.

Continuing to be a stamp collector comes down to having fun. Participating in a club, contributing to the club's activities and being ambassadors for philately will be a positive in many ways.

Brian

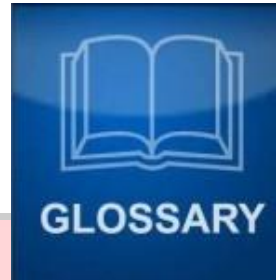
## STAMP GRADING AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Grading of stamps (and other philatelic materials such as covers) is the application of a number rating that is assigned based on the condition of the item being graded. Think of a report card in school. The scale ranges to a maximum grade of 100, though ratings at and above 95 are typically extremely rare and stamps that earn those high grades are extremely costly. These might be the types of stamps one reads about in the newspaper: "An 1892 XYZ stamp sells at auction for \$7 bazillion!" The grade numbering system is universal since 1987 and is employed by all reputable graders, so that a grade of 90 is always going to be Extremely Fine (XF) and so on. Often, the grading process can reveal that a stamp has significant value depending on factors including the market for that specific stamp (who is interested in owning it) and how many are graded in a similar fashion (how many available in the same quality). The value of a stamp or cover is based on not only its rarity, but also its condition. Grading can also reveal that a stamp is significantly flawed or even damaged, altered, forged or counterfeited, which is an unfortunate finding, but one which the owner or a potential buyer needs to know.



The grading process provides identification, examines condition and quality, and certifies authenticity of a philatelic item based on its review by a team of philatelic experts. The numerical grade value relies heavily on the centering of the stamp.

Deductions are factored in, depending on severity, for a number of different types of faults. The importance of grading should not be overlooked when it comes time to assess the quality of your collection or to sell your stamps. Grading isn't rocket science. There are plenty of consistent standards, a wealth of references, resources and literature since the United States has been producing postage stamps for nearly 170 years. But the importance of grading cannot be overemphasized. You need it to fully understand what you purchased and now own. You need it before you ever even think about selling a stamp. You need it to be completed by a body of experts who have learned all that can be known about a broad variety of stamps and, preferably, with extensive experience grading American-issue stamps.



### TERMS YOU MAY SEE ON YOUR GRADING CERTIFICATE

**Centering** – The position of the design on a postage stamp. On perfectly centered stamps, the design is exactly in the middle (there is equal spacing on all four sides between the perforation and design).

**Commemorative stamps** – Stamps issued for a limited period of time, in a larger format than most stamps. Commemoratives usually honor persons, organizations, events or causes on significant anniversaries.

**Condition** – Considers questions such as: Is the stamp cancelled? Is it hinged? Does it have any flaws? How well it is centered?



*George Washington stamp on cover*

**Cover** – An envelope or package with an address, typically with postage stamps that have been cancelled. In the days before envelopes were common, writers folded another piece of paper around their letter (or even simply folded the letter over to form a blank surface). A stamp may be referred to as being "on cover". Grading for a stamp on cover should reflect the findings both about the stamp(s) and the cover.

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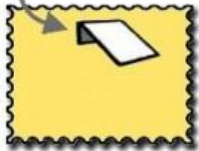
## Grading continued...

**Definitive stamps** – The “workhorses”. Used on most mail, generally these are smaller stamps printed in huge quantities, often in a single color ink, that are available for an indefinite period of time which may be many years.

**Denomination** – The amount of postage which the stamp pays.

**Gum** – Adhesive that is used to attach a stamp to an envelope.

Short Side of Hinge  
on Stamp



**Hinge** – Stamp hinges, or mounts, are small, folded, transparent, rectangular pieces of paper coated with a mild gum. They are used by stamp collectors to affix postage stamps onto the pages of a stamp album and have been used for more than 100 years.

**Imperfectorate** – A stamp designed and sold without perforations or separating holes.

## Perforations all around



**Perforations** – Holes punched between stamps to make it easier for an individual to separate two or more stamps. Collectors use a perforation gauge to measure the perforations helping them to identify their stamp.

**Mint** – Mint means never used, still having full gum, never hinged. It is not a measure of your stamp's quality or value in that “mint” is not about condition other than whether used or not.

**Removed cancel** – Stamps altered in an attempt to present a used stamp as mint. Some cancellation inks used in past eras are fairly easy to remove, though examiners can typically find evidence of removal.

**Reperforation** – An easy way to “improve” a stamp's appearance or make it better than it was originally. This is done by either altering or creating perforations on the edge(s) of a stamp. This is often done to create the illusion of better centering.

Expert

An expert's some  
experience through  
extensive knowledge  
called in for advice

**WHAT THE  
EXPERTS LOOK  
FOR AND WHAT  
THEY WILL  
REVEAL ON  
YOUR GRADING  
CERTIFICATE**

- Correct identification of your item, including the proper Scott Catalogue number(s);
- Whether your item is used, mint or on cover;
- Condition of your item (centering is foremost, true color as intended by the U.S. Post Office Department counts highly, conformity to the known standards for the specific stamp is very important) including mention of faults such as:

Trimming of any kind - Tone spots - Creases

Paper thins – Reperforating - Added perforations

Added margins – Rebacking - Paper inclusion

Repainting Tears - Residue of any kind on stamp face

Removed cancels - Gum wrinkles

Various perforation irregularities



Faults are generally unintentional collector-caused issues from improper handling over time, but sometimes faults will divulge that someone has purposely tried to alter a stamp's appearance.

If your stamp is mint its gum will be examined to see if it has retained its original gum or whether it has been regummed or had its gum redistributed.

If your stamp is used, it can be graded but several different standards are applied. Miniature Artworks USA sells significantly fewer used stamps than mint stamps, and typically only upon request.

## *Building the great collection: Some thoughts from someone who has helped this happen.*

*By James E. Lee*

Great collections are built over time. It can take as long as 20 years to reach a level of completeness that lets the collector take it to the next level: competitive exhibition. As a collector travels along this path there will be several opportunities to acquire rare or unique pieces for the collection.

These opportunities must be taken very seriously since they may not repeat themselves during the life span of the collection. It should also be understood that these opportunities will most likely require a strong financial commitment as well. Remember the goal is acquisition, not second place.

I intend to illustrate in this piece how to best go about acquiring these items for your collection. The first thing you need to do is define the scope of your collection. This will be your blueprint containing a list of the pieces needed to complete the collection. This step can be accomplished by studying auction catalogs to determine the population of material for your collection.

When I collected postal history of the U.S. One-Cent 1861 issue I put together a list of over 250 covers I wanted to acquire. I studied every postal history auction I could find since the 1940s Knapp sales. In 20 years I was able to acquire all but 13 covers.

As a collection is being built the opportunity to acquire key pieces will emerge via private treaty or auction. On occasion you may find a key piece at a show.

There are two important strategies to employ when acquiring via private treaty. Develop a relationship with a dealer who is knowledgeable in the area that you are pursuing. An extra set of eyes in the marketplace is a must. As an example, a show dealer will see more material in a week that you will see in a year. Make sure he has a way to communicate with you from the show floor.

Next, develop a relationship with an auction agent. An agent will constantly scan upcoming auctions for you and represent you at the sale. Believe me it is to your advantage to use an agent at auction and not place your

bids on the book. You may also want to use an agent when negotiating the purchase of key pieces privately.

The relationship you build with a dealer and an agent is critical to your success. Just the savings in time will be worth their profit or fee. This person also serves as an important sounding board as your collection develops. As the relationship grows you may want to give your dealer/agent some latitude when it comes to purchasing for you at auction.

What follows is the most important part of this piece. While a collection should not be viewed as an investment vehicle, it will serve as a parking place for a lot of money over the years. Therefore, you want to position your collection to bring a maximum return when you sell. In many cases this will mean getting your original investment back.

If your collection is formed over, say, a period of 20 years you may even make money. The key to positioning is to make sure you acquire the vital pieces in your area as they come to the market. Having the means does not insure that you will wind up with the pieces. However, using an agent increases your chances. Collectors tend to undervalue key items. An agent provides guidance on value and also on what competition you might encounter at auction. This proved to be the case for one of my clients at the "Lake Shore" sale several years ago.

Without revealing the client or the item I will give you the scenario. The essay was one of the most important keys to his collection. He had been the under bidder on this item once before. During our conversation before the sale he valued the item for half what I valued it at. Once I built a case for the value that I had placed on it he agreed with me. Then I told him where I thought his competition would come from for the piece. From previous sales I knew how this other collector valued material and how he would bid.

Therefore, I added a factor of 25% to the top bid. Once my client understood all of the elements of the competition he agreed to my bid. His final instructions were: "don't come back without it". I purchased the lot for him at about \$1,000 under the top bid. This turned out to be over twice what he had originally thought the item was worth. However, he had the key piece for his collection. The alternative would have been second place. When this collection is exhibited I am sure with the proper write up it will be gold.

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## *The Uniquely Colorful Stamps of the British Empire*

*by Steve Swain*

On some level, the essential appeal of stamp collecting is simply visual. Collectors love to spend hours staring at their stamps, immersed in the sheer pleasure of the multitude of topics, designs and shapes. Add to this mix creative and unique color combinations, tints and shades, and the visual equation is complete.

Such are the stamps issued for the British Empire (British commonwealth, territories, colonies, protectorates, etc.) in the first half of the 1900s: Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Malta, Leeward Islands, Malaya, St. Helena and more. The stamps were beautifully designed and engraved, not to mention the selection of quite distinctive blends of color for the paper on which the stamps were printed and the inks used for the stamp's images. It has even been said that many of the brilliantly colored issues for these territories pushed the envelope (no pun intended) on color choices and combinations, some possibly just a bit too colorful and bright!

An issue that perfectly illustrates the bright and vivid colors used for British territories' stamps is the King George VI stamps of the Leeward Islands.



The British Leeward Islands - situated where the northeastern Caribbean Sea meets the western Atlantic Ocean – include Antigua, Dominica, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Christopher (St. Kitts) and the Virgin Islands.

These territories used postage stamps inscribed "LEeward ISLANDS" between 1890 and July, 1956, often concurrently with stamps inscribed with the colony's name.

For the 5 shillings issue, there were four printings during the years of production: 1938, 1943, 1944 and 1951. The 1938 issue, shown here, is definitely the most brilliantly colored of the set.



The stamps were printed on bright yellow paper in sheets of 120 which comprised 2 panes of 6 x 10. Highlighting the colors used on stamp was a center strip that divided the two frames, as the example here shows.

**Continued on next page**



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## Colorful Stamps continued...

Equally vibrant Leeward Islands stamps are the 1940s' purple, deep purple, reddish purple and violet King George VI £1 issues, seen below. Combine those ink colors - and their inevitable shades - with the carmine, red-scarlet, brick red and salmon colored paper that was used in the printing process and the varieties of this brilliant issue are almost endless. In fact, literature on this issue provides almost comical guidance on identifying the various varieties:



*"The KGVI Leeward Islands £1 issues are one of the more complex KGVI stamps to properly identify. If your stamp is Salmon, look at the center color. It will be a Brownish Purple shade. If the color seems to have a reddish tone, it is probably from the 6/44 printing. If you do not see a hint of the reddish color to the brownish-purple, then it is probably from the 12/43 printing.....", and so on and so on.*

(Citation: Bob Dickgiesser & (Eric Yendall's "King George VI Large Key Type Stamps of Bermuda, Leeward Islands, Nyasaland".)

Bermuda – the British overseas territory in the North Atlantic Ocean, located off the east coast of the United States - can also boast of many creative and intriguing paper and ink color combinations. From left to right below, the first stamp is from the 1937 issue and is described as “green and deep lake on pale emerald.” The next stamp echoes the color combination used with the Leeward Islands King George VI £1 issue, “deep purple on red-scarlet.” The two 5 shillings issues, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> stamps below, have rather “common” color combinations of “green and red on yellow”, but are certainly solid examples of brilliant and colorful British territory issues.

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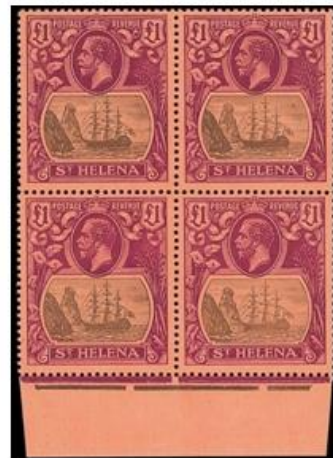
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## Colorful Stamps continued...



As mentioned, the appeal of the colorful stamps issued by the various British territories is as much a factor of the colors of the paper used in the printing as the inks selected to print the stamp images. The blocks and pairs of stamps below highlight the green, bluish-purple, purple, reddish-orange and yellow papers used in the printing process.



Some of the territory stamps have almost an iridescent, phosphorus look about them as with these issues from the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, St. Kitts and British Honduras.

Continued on the next page



# San Jose Stamp Club

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## Colorful Stamps continued...



What gives these stamps that iridescent effect? They were printed on “chalky” paper, i.e., a type of paper coated with a chalky solution for security purposes. The postmark cannot be removed without damaging the surface of the stamp.

Chalky paper produces a more brilliant color impression. And, that brilliance is certainly apparent on stamps printed in “singly fugitive” inks that afford a protection against the removal of postmarks. But the brilliant look of the stamp is even more pronounced on stamps printed with “doubly fugitive” inks which afford an extra precaution against the removal of writing ink used for pen cancellations.

There are many more wonderful examples of the unique coloring effects and combinations used with stamps of the British territories such as the ones below.



Again, on some level the appeal of stamp collecting is simply visual. Collecting the bright and distinctively colorful stamps of the British territories is a delightful collecting theme.

## Pyongyang, Propaganda, and Postage Stamps

By Mark Sommer



The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has used postage stamps as billboards to trumpet its socialist ideals, governmental successes, heroes, political leaders, future plans and, most especially, its victimization by outside forces. The DPRK's government understands the power of its stamp program to sway the opinions of its own people and those of the outside world.

### Historical Contexts of DPRK's Postage Stamps

On December 27, 1972, a new constitution was introduced to reflect considerable changes in DPRK society, state, and policy—including attention to the completeness of transition to socialism and whether proletarian dictatorship and class struggle were still necessary. Compared to most “Marxist” states, DPRK's new constitution is unique in its integration of nationalism, socialism and “Juche”—the force behind the drive to economic independence. The 1948 constitution was influenced by the 1936 Soviet constitution, whereas the 1972 document had a number of purely DPRK concepts. The Cabinet drafted “the State plan for the development of the national economy,” covering all fields of socio-economic concern. Its specific mention of communication and education is noticeably apparent in the DPRK's postage stamp program.

Early DPRK stamps are generally scarce, as international mail rarely left the nation. Little useful, philatelic information has ever been available from DPRK, so there is considerable variation in the listings of various stamp catalogues. However, the Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalog (Amos Advantage Publications) is the most widely used in the U.S.

Various controls have been imposed by U.S. law, further constricting available items of DPRK origin as a result of the 1950-53 war. Such laws prohibit sales of stamps produced after the embargo was initiated and the buying and selling of stamp collections (although the prohibition was not strictly enforced).

DPRK stamps were poorly made in the first decade of their production. Early issues were produced without the usual adhesive. Most exist in a variety of color shades. Those issued under Soviet occupation (1946-48) are scarce, commanding high prices when becoming available to collectors.

Throughout 1955 to 1957, the DPRK seemingly created “reprints” for sale. Actually, they were imitations of most 1956-56 issues. Nevertheless, in many cases they may have served real postal needs. However, most were created for and sold to overseas collectors in exchange for hard currency. They were more finely printed than the originals, and were normally printed on higher quality, white wove paper. They often differ from the originals in size and design. Specific, distinguishing characteristics are difficult to detect, even by philatelic experts.

By reviewing DPRK stamps via topic rather than chronological sequence, we gain a better view of the inner workings of DPRK propaganda as both an internal and external tool. Important political topics covered in the stamps include the military, devoted peasants, the unification of the peninsula, and the important 6 Year Program.

### Challenging the Facts of Internal Propaganda

A press release from the Korean Stamp Corporation for “education in class consciousness” issued on June 5,

Continued on next page



## *Propaganda continued...*

2001 (#4145), is particularly notable for its poor English and revelatory in its internal indoctrination.

The release claims that 35,383 noncombatants (19,149 men and 16,234 women) were massacred by U.S. troops in the Sinchon county of North Korea between October 17th and December 7th, 1950.

It further exclaims that U.S. soldiers: “herded civilians into air raid shelters, doused them with gasoline and set them on fire while throwing hand grenades at them, throwing the bodies into reservoir and drowned them... besides, they ran over innocent people to death by tank, cutting of abdomen of pregnant women, nailed and sawed their heads to death [sic].”

The stamp design shows Kim Il Sung exhorting Koreans and defying Americans with a raised, clenched fist against a backdrop of Korean civilians fleeing and resisting “genocide.” The stamp teaches the masses to hate and fear the “U.S. imperialist aggressors who are wolves in human form.” In addition to the atrocities specified, it also claims: “the indiscriminate use of germ and chemical warfare by U.S. forces, scientific experimentation on Korean human guinea pigs and mass executions of North Korean prisoners of war by flame throwers.”

Stamps with false or offensive information violate the Universal Postal Union Code. Yet, a 1973 conference recognized the problem of imposing sanctions due to lack of unanimous agreement on what constitutes offensive material. Even so, the DPRK clearly and blatantly violated these rules before and after joining the UPU in 1974.

There were also stamp issues containing spiteful images against other nations, including anti-Japanese and anti-Republic of Korea stamps. As a matter of course, all these stamp issues supported the North’s Songun, or military first policy.

## **Issues on International Cooperation**

By far the most expansive stamp issues are in honor of cooperative efforts with the DPRK international allies. In line with serving the purposes of internal propaganda,

these relationship-oriented issues are likely to be the most promoted. For example, DPRK assisted Zimbabwe in 1984, having created a memorial in the newly formed African country for “Heroes’ Day.” A similar memorial featured on DPRK stamps was subsequently designed by a team of North Korean artists and sculptors (Zimbabwe #477-480).

The Cuba/DPRK issue of 2010, portraying Fidel Castro in a display of unity with the late Kim Il Sung, is one of several “joint” issues produced by Cuba (#5147). In light of reports that the nations were exchanging sugar, repair weaponry and more, the issue further enhances the perception of cooperation between the two hard-liner Communist states.

There are some issues with common themes between the DPRK and Soviet bloc nations. In 1980 both regimes issued stamps alluding to musical composer, Robert Stolz (#2011-12). This was probably coincidental as both regimes saw a subset of collectors interested in music and Stolz’s generally obscure musical piece, “The Philatelists Waltz.” Coincidental or not, overlapping themes appearing in stamps of the DPRK and other regimes are perhaps subtly indicative of strategic ties.

## **Juche is Juche-But Money is Money**

North Korean stamp issues created for money-making purposes, as opposed to genuine postal needs, abound. Issues depicting the British royal family, ( #2104-8, #2116-20, #2175-80, #2205-09, #2718), are some examples among others. It was probably impossible to buy these stamps in North Korea. They went straight from the printers in Paris and other cities to stamp shops of the Western world.

Other issues that serve propaganda and generate income include those which tie into the “Sayings of Mao” (#5131-33, #5137-38). Clearly these issues mirrored the DPRK’s alliance with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and even added to the PRC’s very popular and valuable 1960-70 “Cultural Revolution” issues at the Beijing 2012 International Stamp and Coin Exhibition.

**Continued on next page**



## Propaganda continued...

It is apparent that the DPRK wants to “cash-in” on the PRC’s desirable issues (many bring record prices at auctions worldwide) by implying that its stamps will also garner high collector demand.

Issued in April 2013, a souvenir sheet of stamps, which are larger than standard stamps and therefore popular collectors’ items, clearly exemplifies an instance of plagiarism for the sake of monetary gain; the DPRK’s “Year of the Monkey” (1986) souvenir issue (Scott #5170) is discernibly a copy of that issued by the PRC (Scott #1586). The DPRK issue is valued at \$.45 (U.S.), while the PRC issue is listed at \$1750 unused and \$550 used. Whatever the reason for the PRC’s high valuation, it is clear that the DPRK wants to have its stamps likewise valued.

### After the Death of Kim Il Sung (1994)

April 15th “Birthday” issues were produced even after the death of Kim Il Sung (#3442-44, #3534-35, 3620-24, #3643-48, 3658-62, #3700-08, #3846-47). After a 1995-1999 break, the same “Birthday” issues reemerged (#4366-67).

A most unusual issue was #4281-85, commemorating the automobiles used by Kim, which could be interpreted as both a reverence for Kim’s worldly possessions and an attempt to create a popular topical automobile series for stamp collectors.

### The Most Bizarre and Macabre DPRK Issues

As one might expect, the DPRK has introduced a few exceptionally unique stamp issues. The list below is just a small selection of those:

1. “Conquerors of the Universe” Series (#1949-53): North Korean spacemen landing on a distant planet, greeted by monster/dinosaur/dragon-like aliens that they subsequently conquer.
2. “Ahn Jung-Geun” (#4396): Issued September 21, 2004, the issue honors Ahn Jung-Geun, who assassinated Japanese Prime Minister Ito Hirobumi after the signing of the Eulsa Treaty which annexed Korea to Japan. A hero in both

the ROK and DPRK, Ahn was posthumously awarded the ROK Order of Merit medal for National Foundation in 1962, among other South Korean honors. He was also honored by the PRC in 2006.

3. “The Weapon” (#4397): Issued September 21, 2004, this issue takes weaponry to a haunting level by honoring the weapon used. Virtually all countries issue stamps commemorating fallen leaders of world renown, but only the DPRK, Cuba and Iran publicize and venerate assassins and their weapons on their stamps.

Discussion on how the above issues may be categorized is possible. “Ahn Jung Geun” and “The Weapon” might be categorized as internal propaganda or anti-Japanese. “Unification of the peninsula” is yet another viable theme. It is also possible that categorizations are not mutually exclusive, and these issues could qualify as all three.

### USS Pueblo: Error in Design

An “error in design” is an error in the original design conception, made before it reaches the printer. Not caused by faults in printing, it typically affects all stamps of an issue. The most egregious error in design from North Korea occurred in a particularly propagandistic, 2008 issue.

The USS PUEBLO was captured on January 23, 1968. The crew was released on December 23, 1968. In a stamp issue portraying the event, The DPRK clearly depicts the vessel as being an “Armed Spy” ship, the ship crew being paraded as prisoners in the upper left-hand corner (Scott #4759).

The error committed was misidentifying the ship on the stamps GER2 rather than identifying it correctly as AGER 2. Also worth noting, the dates 6/25-7/27 which appear on the cachet envelope refer to the dates of the U.S. involvement in the Korean War, as if to say the “War” is still going on.

**Continued on next page**

## Propaganda continued...

### Non-Issued Stamps

The Scott catalog notes, in eight separate areas, several non-issued stamps with very high catalog values (not always the “true” market value, but an overall pricing guide). These issues are noted coming after:

- # 725 (1966 Issue)
- # 804 (1967 Issue)
- # 906 (1969 Issue)
- # 975 (1971 Issue)
- # 1022 (1971 Issue)
- # 1045 (1972 Issue)
- # 1095 (1972 Issue)
- # 1781 (1979 Issue)

No pictures are illustrated and no reasons are given to explain why these stamps were either non-issued or withdrawn—politically, economically or otherwise.

### DPRK’S Forging of U.S. Postage Stamps

Forgeries and counterfeits have been with philately virtually from the beginning of stamp production.

A few articles have appeared in collector publications over the years trying to figure out what North Korea hoped to accomplish by what can only be described as its own poor attempt of “covert philatelic propaganda.” The purpose may not have been entirely propagandistic, but simply an attempt to disrupt opponents’ mail systems.

In his article, “U.S. Stamp Forgeries By North Korea,” Ken Lawrence casts doubt on the effectiveness of DPRK forgeries, claiming “...I also think that the use of counterfeit postage and publications was a political act designed to impress (rather than persuade) the recipients.”

Howard K. Petschel gives a more precise and detailed explanation of the DPRK’s forging of U.S. stamps. According to Petschel, the Koreans had been counterfeiting since the 1950s, both currency and stamps. In recent years, what he calls “super bills” began to show up, produced on a Swiss-made intaglio

printing press “installed in a high-security building called ‘Printing House 62’ in Psyongsong, a city outside Pyongyang.”

Petschel says this was confirmed when “in 1977, Hwang Jang Yop, a former secretary in the North Korean Workers Party and Kim Duk Hong, the head of the government trading company, defected.” The defector Yop provided “information that on Changgwang Street in Pyongyang there is a barricaded compound that is the home of ‘Office 39.’” According to Yop, “this facility, besides legitimate enterprises, is to obtain hard revenue for the regime by overseeing counterfeit drug manufacturing, sales of missile technology, counterfeit cigarettes, and counterfeit currency.” They also produced stamps.

Later, the U.S. Congressional Research Service identified the DPRK as the source of at least \$45 million in counterfeit currency, stating that the operation is “directly tied to criminal organizations in Japan, Taiwan, China and Vietnam,” indicating that the purpose is not only to generate propaganda but also for obtaining hard currency.

According to Petschel, by 1965 “a peculiar U.S. postal counterfeit revealed itself” in the guise of an ordinary U.S. stamp. “The 1/2-cent Benjamin Franklin stamp of the Liberty Series, issued October 20, 1955, was found in counterfeit form, with counterfeit cancelations, on propaganda mail from NK.”

The study of DPRK postage stamps remains important because governments can re-write history books, but they cannot un-issue stamps. The postage stamp stands forever as witness to governments’ accomplishments and failures. The DPRK understands this. Just as it glorifies its art, sculpture, and posters in its museums, the DPRK is putting the same emphasis on its postage stamps, as evidenced by opening and commemorating a postal issue in the Korean Stamp Museum (#5094-5109).

Comprehending North Korea requires a willingness to step outside the traditional norms of understanding strategies, such as IMINT (Imagery Intelligence), SIGINT (Signal Intelligence) and the ever-problematic HUMINT (Human Intelligence). Perhaps a new term should be added: STAMPINT (“Stamp” Intelligence) or PHILATELINT (Philatelic Intelligence).



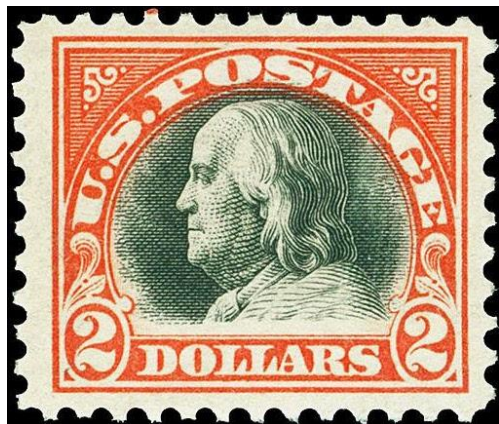
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