

Going to Our Stamp Show 2016

by John Walter

With our annual Greater Reno Stamp & Cover Show returning to the National Bowling Stadium on **July 23-24**, I thought it would be a good idea to write about attending our stamp show. First of all, the stamp show will be on the first floor in the International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame. There is free parking in the bowling stadium garage, just mention you are attending the stamp show.

It's a great opportunity to meet both collectors and non-collectors. We expect to have many walk-ins since the show is at street level and bowling will be taking place both in the main area and also on the first floor across the lobby from our show. Everyone who visits will have a story to tell.

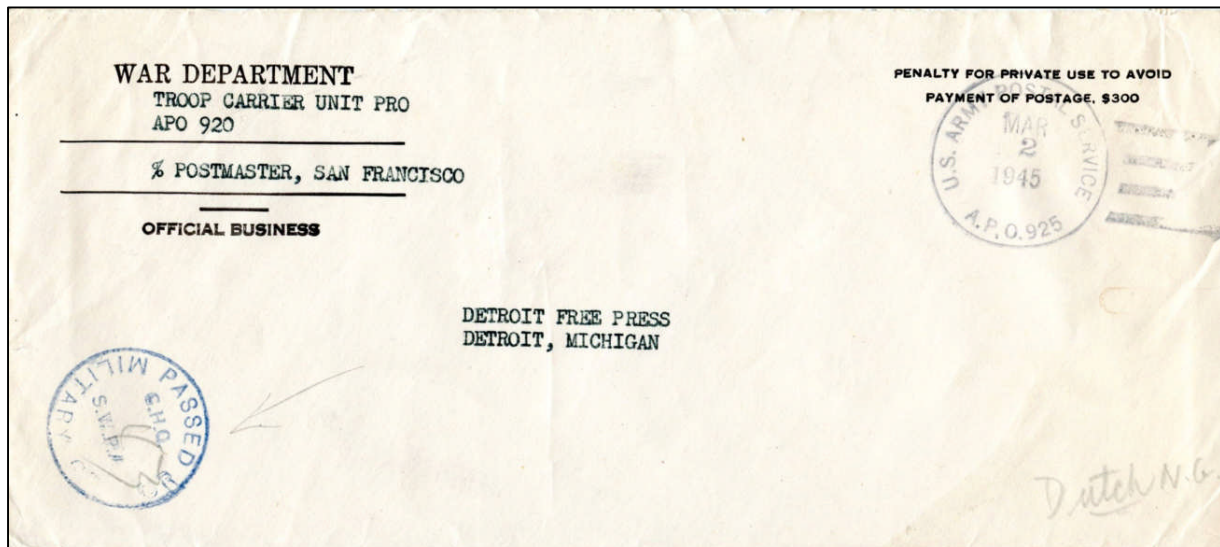


Before the show even begins, visit <http://www.renostamp.org> and click on the show page. There is a diagram of the dealer table placements and a list of the dealers with emails. If you are looking for specific material, please contact the dealers to ask if they will bring the material. I have done this in the past when visiting shows in CA and had some nice "stuff" to look at. I did not always buy the material, but thanked the dealer for bringing it for review.

Some stamp show tips: Create a want list. Pack a pair of tongs. Set your budget and stick to it.

You want to avoid buyer's remorse. Be prepared to convey to the dealer your collecting standards, i.e., mint, o.g., used, F-VF, VF, superb, graded, etc. Let the dealer know what kind of material you are looking for. If he doesn't have it in stock, he might be able to watch for it and contact you if the right item comes in. Bring your check book and some cash, since not all dealers accept credit cards. Don't forget to wear your club name tag. The dealers do notice and you can always ask for discounts as a club member.

Can't come up with any new interests?



Look what I found above at a previous show. This WWII cover was sent from APO 920 - Biak Island, Dutch New Guinea on March 2, 1945. It's not the usual cover one sees from a soldier/sailor to someone back home. This is an "Official Business" War Department cover to the Detroit Free Press. Did it contain a press release about the unit?

Short history: The base was built in July 1944 for bombers and Air-Sea Rescue squadrons for the newly created 13th Air Force. It is almost due south of Guam (where I lived for 2 years) and across the strait from

Japanese Pulau. There are stories on the Internet of almost daily bombings on and around the base in 1944-45. Missions were flown in support of troops further out in the Pacific and north to the Philippines. Great history from one cheap cover.

You're probably thinking "I'll never find something like that." Well think again. Spending only a few minutes at a dealer table can be very rewarding.

I collect used stationery to foreign destinations and came across this cover on the right. Several things caught my eye: the indicia (die 85-unlisted in Scott), postmark (circular with parallel wavy lines & number — typical international cancel for that time), and the address. The address is strange since it was sent to "Librarian" with the name of the book - "Natural History" in German, and then the city which I had a problem with. I love when there is a receiving cancel on the back of a cover. In this case it was "Halle (Saale)" in Wurttemberg with a receiving postmark of Feb. 12, 1898.



Finding stuff for your collection is a lot more difficult if you have a narrow focus. If you are collecting only one thing you might have a lot of trouble finding what you need in the condition you require at a price that you are willing to pay. I have had this experience when asking for U.S. aerogrammes, used, to an overseas address/destination.

If you have several interests, the odds are much better that you will always find something for your collections. Also think about new philatelic interests.

As we assemble our membership directory, it lists our collecting interests. There are many times I see interesting items I know fellow members are collecting, and purchase them myself to give as gifts or give a heads-up to the individual about the item.

So offer to keep an eye out for what others are seeking, and perhaps they can reciprocate. It happens sometimes that two collectors will stumble upon a "eureka!" item for each other. Everyone wins, and you might have a new friend for life.

Dealers on the stamp show circuit see more material than you could ever hope to see, and they will look for items for you if they know what you want.

Be willing to work with a dealer. When asked what you collect or what you would like to see, the least helpful response you can make is to say you are "just looking." That does not allow the dealer to help you, and it is far more likely that you will end up feeling that there was nothing to buy at the show. You didn't give the dealer a chance to show his merchandise. Many times an item you are seeking is not at the front table but hidden in boxes behind the dealer.

Here is a trick that often brings happy surprises. If you have run out of things to look for at a stamp show, ask a few dealers if they have anything new on hand that they might show you.

Dealers buy and sell among one another at shows, and they buy from customers, so they often have new items on hand that haven't been formally added to their stock. You might be the first person to see these items if you specifically inquire, and you never know what gems could turn up. I have done this many times and had the first look at items and purchased a few over the years.

Collectors always want to buy things at the lowest prices possible. But remember, dealers are paying the costs of producing the stamp show through their booth fees. Dealers also have overhead that includes travel to and from the show, food and lodging, acquisition of material, insurance, taxes, labor, supplies and all of the risks associated with operating a business.

That said, it does not mean that you shouldn't negotiate. If you are purchasing an inexpensive item, it makes no sense to bargain for a lower price, but if you are spending significant amounts of money, it does no harm to ask the dealer for his or her "best price."

But, while it doesn't hurt to ask the question, don't insult the dealer if he can't or is unwilling to negotiate a downward price.

He knows what he paid for the item and how much he has to make to stay in business. In this case, if the asking price is more than you want to pay, the appropriate response from you is simply "no, thanks." Don't feel forced into buying something you don't really want or can't afford.

For most collectors, time spent visiting the various dealer booths is the highlight of any stamp show. Dealers, too, enjoy their time spent with fellow enthusiasts. If there were ever a perfect win-win situation, it might be found where stamp collectors gather with stamp dealers.

Often the problem at a stamp show is seeing too many things to buy, rather than too few. But having shows to attend is surely one of the best parts of our hobby.

Please make some time to visit the exhibits. If you are thinking of exhibiting, this is the time to educate yourself and see what fellow philatelists have accomplished in telling a story about something that has a special interest to them. The exhibit judge will be critiquing the exhibits Saturday afternoon, about 3 p.m. The exact time will be in the show program. This is an excellent time to "follow along" and hear the comments at each exhibit frame.

All club members are encouraged to make a few "My Favorite Thing" pages for exhibit in the show frames. This is another activity that is both educational and fun.

One last thought for everyone to consider is the **Awards Banquet on July 23**. Last year we had a great catered meal at the bowling stadium. This year the awards dinner will be one block from the show in Harrah's. The menu and cost is on page 8. Looks like we will have two choices of entree - stuffed chicken or salmon. There needs to be a minimum of 25 attendees for the best pricing.



Visitors at our 2015 stamp show