

Circuit Program Anniversary

Our computer program for the sales circuit operation is six years old this month. In August 2000, we had placed the inventory on a database program, setting up the easy and efficient transition of that information to our present program in August 2002. After working with this system for six years, you might wonder: "How did we ever manage without computerization for the first 115 years of the APS Sales Exchange/Division's existence?" You guessed it; everything was done with cards, cards, and more cards.

We know there are members out there who have not used the sales circuits to buy material since before August 2002. We have had several of them return to the circuits recently and they are happy with the changes we've made. Along with the preprinted report sheets, there are mailing labels supplied for forwarding the circuit to the next member, and a note section for letting us know about any problems members find in the circuit books and also any ideas or suggestions for how we can improve our service. Members who call us for information usually get an answer during the phone call, rather than waiting for us to research the answer and call them back. Sellers also can get a printout of how their books are progressing in sales.

Since the beginning of the APS sales program, all types of collectors have benefitted from using our services. It does not matter whether you are a beginner, intermediate, advanced, or expert collector; there is something for all in our inventory of \$8.5 million.

BEGINNERS — If you are just starting to collect stamps or are beginning a new interest area, this is one of the best venues for obtaining items for your collection. Imagine receiving a box of sales books containing 500 to 1,500 stamps in a category for which you have a nearly empty stamp album. Talk about having fun!

INTERMEDIATE — Among the 500–1,500 stamps you receive in a circuit, there are plenty to choose from for

filling holes in your collection.

ADVANCED — Yes, there are hard-to-find items to be discovered in the sales books. We have many advanced collectors who are selling stamps through us and they are high-quality items. Call us for our suggestions on how you might use the circuits for finding material for your collection.

EXPERTS — You can help us with identifying problems of authenticity and identification of items in the sales books, while at the same time finding the items that have eluded you for years. Many of these items are inexpensive, too. Our experts, or examiners, in the Sales Division, have been finding these items in sales books for years.

Those who stereotype the sales books as "not advanced enough" for them are missing the chance to buy items that are being offered by other advanced collectors. Evidence of what members are finding to buy can be seen each time we process a returning circuit. Many of them sell for \$200–\$800, tidy sums for a six-person circuit.

If it has been a while since you bought from the circuits or if you have never used this service, contact us for specific information about your collecting interests and visit www.stamps.org/Services/ser_buyingselling.htm.

Circuits at STAMPSHOW

Don't forget to visit the APS booth at STAMPSHOW in Hartford, Connecticut, August 14–17 to browse through the sales circuit books we will have with us at a side table. A wide variety of categories will be represented. Check last month's column for specifics on how to have fun looking through these special circuits.

Show Special

There also will be a special sale of blank sales books at STAMPSHOW. For every ten blank sales books purchased, you will receive an additional five books of the same type. Stop by the APS Booth,

say hello to our Sales Division representative, buy some blank books, and browse through the circuit books.

How I Got into Stamp Collecting

It is appropriate that we have Shaun Malloy's entry into stamp collecting to share with you this month. Shaun lives in New England and this year's STAMPSHOW is almost in his backyard.

I suspect that my story is a stereotype of most philatelists my age. I grew up in a small town in northern New Hampshire known for its long, harsh winters. I was given a *Modern Postage Stamp Album of the World* for Christmas 1945. It had a red hardbound cover and started with Abyssinia and ended with Zambia. Collecting the WORLD seemed a daunting challenge, but the long, dark winters certainly gave me time and incentive to start collecting.

Included with the stamp album was a booklet from H.E. Harris & Co., Boston, Massachusetts, where you could order stamps on approval that would be sent right to your home! This was a perfect set up for me. Most of my weekly allowance and paper route money went to the Harris company! I knew that President Roosevelt was a stamp collector and I was fascinated at being able to travel the World through my collection.

This fascination of the World beyond northern New Hampshire inspired me to pursue a career in later life that would allow me to do just thattravel the World! On the last page of that old red stamp album I had written, "In Dec. 1946 I, Shaun Malloy, have 1,346 stamps in this book. I am 11 years old. I worked hard on my collection this year. It is my first year."

'5 For 10' Categories (Needs)

We need U.S. items, **except** U.S. First Day Covers, U.S. Mint post-1950, U.S. Used post-1950 and U.S. Plate Blocks post-1950. You can earn coupons for free blank books and mounts for every 10 completed books containing material from a set list of categories. (*Each group of 10 or more qualifying books must be received at the same time and be worth at least \$50 per book. The coupons are issued when the qualifying books are reviewed soon after arriving.*) Each book must be designed to fit one of the categories, exclusively. Details are sent with blank sales book orders. You may also visit www.stamps.org and click Sales Division and How to Sell. [NOTE: Single-country books usually have better sales.] Below are categories that are in very short supply at this time:

U.S. Fancy Cancels

U.S. Plate Number Singles
U.S. Precancels
All European Colonial stamps
Bermuda
German States
Global Covers (postally used)
Hong Kong
Jamaica
Japan pre-1950
Vatican City

Postage on Packages

With the increases in postage, circuit members should consider using postage stamps for forwarding circuits to the next members. It is a real present to receive used, higher-denomination stamps on packages, particularly when U.S. stamps and covers are the contents of the circuits being sent on. And, the recipients appreciate it. As always, you should ask the postal clerk for at least a \$0 meter-stamp to indicate that the package was mailed through a clerk.