

Turning 30 Looking Back, The Road Ahead

On May 15th, 1990 I retired from my job in the “real world” and followed my desire to develop my avocation, philately. There was a seed that I planted in my mind when I was 12 years old and started selling as well as buying stamps. Someday I would become a full-time professional philatelist. However, logical and rational thinking lead me to other entrepreneurial pursuits in the world of advertising, printing and direct mail. That seed spouted in 1977 and the die was cast.

In February '77, I flew to New York City to attend the Robert A. Siegel sale of Tom Morris, Sr. collection of essays and proofs. There I met Bob Siegel, Jack Molesworth, Falk Finkelburg, John Wright (then working for Paramount), and the late Irving Koslow of Stampazine. At the time I was still collecting essays and proofs of the 1861 issue. I observed that most of the lots sold to dealers and thus there was a spread between auction and retail. Just to confirm this notion, I received an approval shipment from Jack Molesworth not seven days after the sale with items from the sale marked up between 50 and 150 percent.

There was a second seminal moment in 1977 as well. In March I attended the American Stamp Dealers Association show in New York City. This time I spent time with both Richard Taylor and Phil Bansner assisting at their booths. Now the seed had a stluk with young branches.

There was a point in time at the show where I noticed three older white-haired gentlemen standing together in the center of the show talking. I remember one was Arthur Falk, another Ken Wenger, and I forget the name of the third. All very successful in the business. For a moment I wondered, what would it be like for me 40 years from now. Well, that day has arrived, and I am still in business and it has been a great run.

What has made this business so special for me, has been the opportunity and ability to grow and change. I started out as a show dealer, doing over 40 shows a year, and only about 10 percent of my business came from the mail. That started to change when I took to the Internet in 1996. This year I will do just four shows, and next year it will be two. This is not a comment on the direction of shows, it is all about how I choose to spend my time in the fourth quarter of life.



I have come to grips with the fact that I am nearing retirement, well make that semi-retirement. It is impossible to completely give up this business. So, in order to keep the proper balance of family, travel, and business I am reinventing how I approach this business once again.

This newsletter will continue to be produced as I strongly believe in a foundation of print communication. The bi-weekly email updates will continue, twice a month, most months. Staying in touch will you by phone when the need or a piece becomes available. Finally, advising and handling the sale of your philatelic properties. As we all age this is becoming a larger part of my business (See page 20). Unlike General Douglas MacArthur, I do not intend “to just fade away”. At 70 everything will be more measured. I also intend to spend time on my Hilton Head/Port royal postal history collection and start a blog to share the knowledge that I have developed on essays and proofs during my lifetime.

No worries, no matter where I am at, you can be rest assured, you will always receive 100% continued impeccably service and advice.