

The Importance of Essays and Proofs to collecting and Philately

This year marks the 44th year of my involvement with collecting, studying, writing about and dealing in United States essays and proofs. To mark the occasion I am re-releasing Dr. Clarence Brazer's 1935 paper for the American Philatelic Congress book titled: *The Various Kinds of United States Essays and Proofs*. It is illustrated in full color (See page 3). 81 years after it was first published it still offers the best insight and understanding into this fascinating aspect of our hobby.

Unlike our European counterparts, American collectors do not fully appreciate the importance of essays and proofs. They are the genesis of all stamps. Before a stamp can be produced a design must be approved and in many cases it is an evolutionary process involving several attempts. Once a design has been approved a die must be engraved, proved, and approved again. From there a plate must be laid out, proved, and stand for a final approval. Only then are stamps printed. It is the understanding, study, and collecting examples of these processes that can lead to fulfilling philatelic experience.

Essays and proof belong in any serious collection for they help to tell the story of how the material that follows was developed. They can form the foundation and beginning of any stamp collection. Expand your collecting horizons with essays and proofs.

The Upcoming APS Election

In the eighteen years that I have been writing this column there have been five APS elections. In each of these elections the number of ballots cast has been underwhelming. It is my hope that this will change this year since there is competition from the top to the bottom of the ballot. My dilemma is that so many of the people running are longtime friends or clients and in most cases they are opposing one another. This puts me in a difficult spot. However, I am going to focus on just two because they have both meant so much to me over the years. Friendship aside they are both extraordinarily well qualified and they have earned the opportunity to be elected to positions of leadership.

Eighteen months ago or more I encouraged **Ken Nilsen-tuen** to run for president and he initially decided against it. However, as he thought more about it, he came to the right conclusion and tossed his hat into the ring. I first met Ken at Garfield-Perry's March Party in Cleveland more years ago than I care to remember. *He possesses four qualities that make him the only person that I believe can lead our Society to new heights.* First, he is a consummate philat-

elist with many years of experience working in organized philately. Second, he has firsthand knowledge of the challenges the hobby and the American Philatelic Society face moving forward. Third, he has the ability to think outside the box which will bode well when addressing the challenges. Finally, he is a thoughtful but strong leader. He has my vote for president.

My vote for the board of vice presidents goes to the slate headed by **Patricia (Trish) Kaufmann**. Next to the late Bill Weiss, Trish is one of my closest friends in the hobby. She brings over 40 years of collecting and professional experience in the hobby to the table. In her early years she edited *The Confederate Philatelist* (17 years!) and has morphed into one of the most accomplished researchers and writers in the hobby publishing hundreds of articles—and one of its most respected leaders, as well. On the business side Trish is considered the foremost dealer in Confederate stamps and covers with an impeccable reputation for honesty. She has served on the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum Council of Philatelists, is a past president of the Confederate Stamp Alliance and excelled at any number of leadership rolls. *Her thinking about the future of the hobby is visionary and she has extraordinary skills when it comes to thinking outside the box*, which has been one of the hallmarks of our relationship.

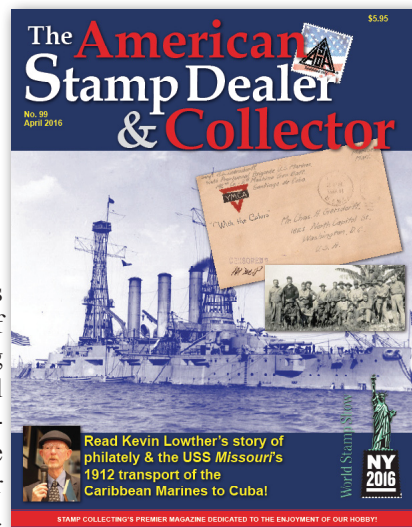
All this aside, you must exercise your responsibility and take the time to mark and mail in your ballot.

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