

## **Council on Postal Collectors**

**Meeting Tuesday December 20, 2016 2pm EST**

**Attendees:** Mick Zais (APS), Mark Reasoner (ASDA), Dale Smith (ATA), Dick Kostka (NSDA), Trish Kaufmann (APS), Mary-Anne Penner (USPS), Melanie Rogers (observer), Scott English, Ken Martin, Kathleen Edwards (note-taking), Michael Baadke (Linn's Stamp News)

**Zais:** Every few years, major philatelic organizations have attempted to get together to benefit our organizations. Hope to sustain the initiative and accomplish our goals.

**Overview of past efforts:** *Council of Philatelic Organizations*, to create a conduit that is not organization specific to promote the hobby. No funding except for the USPS, APS covered startup costs. Weekly philatelic column with limited impact.

*Shaping the Future of Philately Commission* - Focused on finding a national spokesperson, celebrity to speak highly of the hobby, traveling exhibits as teaching tool, stamps in the classroom, Arthur Morowitz looked at the revenue issues of the hobby. Organization tried different things, not a lot of impact.

Council of Philatelists aimed and supported the mission of the Postal Museum. Unrealistic to ask USPS to finance things. We can contribute positively instead of asking money. Objective to get the hobby to stand together.

**Previous Mission statement** - *The underlying philosophy of this Commission is that the world would be better if more people collected stamps. The benefits are real. Collectors know much more about history, geography, languages and different cultures. Collectors are more curious, disciplined, have superior organizational skills, and lower stress than non-collectors.*

*Therefore, our mission shall be the development of a unified course to promote the benefits of stamp collecting to people of all ages.*

**Should this mission statement go in a different direction? Thoughts?**

-Too long, 1 or 2 sentence, edit or start from scratch

-Add "development and implementation"

-Identify the issues that we are facing, challenges to get it into people's mind

-Analyze and find out what we are dealing with before we decide on action. Find out before you write a mission statement.

## **Brainstorming:**

A lot of ideas pitched to us, are like ones that were pitched 20 years ago. Don't re-invent the wheel and be realistic on going forward. Shoot bigger but going for the stars can be dangerous.

-Changing role of the internet and the impact on collecting, auctions, ebay, etc. Publications have changed to online publications

-Disappearance of daily mail, and daily mail without stamps. Exposure to stamps is drastically reduced. Rarely get personal mail, just ads, bill, catalogs. Collecting is not in our faces anymore.

-The less stamps are used; the less people are thinking of collecting.

-The point of all this is that we need to take a step back a generation or so. Explain stamps and uses to young generation, never had to do that before. Previous generations knew what stamps were for.

-USPS doesn't promote stamps as much, they heavily promote online services. No effort by postal service to promote stamps.

-USPS issues too many stamps to attract collectors and other people (like kids with Star Wars and super heroes). They issue catalogs and posters with new issues. USPS is dealing with similar issues as collectors. Competing demands of productivity.

-Getting people aware/focused on collecting. In the past, there was a spokesman/character and articles in the newspaper regularly. Common everyday interest stories to get people to say, "hey I could do that."

Newspapers aren't the best way to get information out. Blog? Social Media is an effective means of delivering information. Use technological tools to promote the hobby.

- The ASDA contracted with publicity firm 3 years ago to promote hobby. The effort failed. Effort was underfunded and firm did not know anything about philately. Used as graphic design firm for shows instead. We need to learn from mistakes.

-National ad campaign is expensive, one time pop and hope you get a good investment.

-We need to put together a sound business plan, schedule, etc. Collectors will come up with the money because they see the problems we do. Don't limit ourselves because we can't afford it right now, but be realistic.

-Look and examine the issues, it will help direct the progress and make it effective.

**Goals of the Council:** 1 yr goals? 5 yr goals?

-Bring new collector, growth and excitement

-Easier to go to show (no intimidation), appear in schools,

-Reach collectors who are not part of organizations - get them interested in shows and groups

-Bring internet collectors into mainstream, convert “closet collectors” into members of philatelic organizations

-Cross pollinate with other collectors (toy, civil war, trains, etc), American Topical Association can play a role with this

-Articles and writing can get people interested, have those go to other collector publications. Create a formula to try to attract collectors. A group of writers can come up with a message, the target audience and then the method to get it out there. Put them in non-philatelic publications that we are part of.

*Idea: Only remnant of a ghost town is a stampless cover. Ghost towns for a particular area. Historical societies, state museum, etc.*

**Why should they join APS, local chapter collectors are joining just not APS; Collectors who buy and sell stamps but don't join APS, why? What's the reason people join APS??**

Identify existing collector community and bring them into the mainstream. ***Objective to get more collectors in general or more collectors to be part of organized philately?*** Hard to measure first goal. Getting more people into the organization is a measurable goal. Both go hand in hand though. Target has to be broader than existing collectors, to people who don't know about the hobby.

How to create new collector - many had a family member connection, support. Parents/grandparents bring kids to shows.

Shouldn't only focus on young people. Can't wait for the youngest generations to become collectors. Focus on retirement age people, finding hobby after retiring. Focus on 30-50 yr olds who are open to joining organizations. Focus on women collectors, how do they come into the hobby? There are usually less women than men collectors. Now there is an active Women Exhibitor group, how did that happen?

There was a previous ASDA group to bring internet collectors in to the mainstream- no result from that group. We need people who are dedicated and motivated to get positive results with this council.

## **Six groups for target audience:**

- Local collectors
- Internet collectors
- Children- Stamps Teach program
- 30-50 age
- Retirees
- Topical interests related (ie, history, trains, animals, etc)

Less focus on the youth because we have some programs in place currently that are going well.

## **Business side:**

Dealers will follow the collectors. They are entrepreneurs who love the hobby. Focus should be on creating new collectors - not new dealers. Many dealers are second career people who are going into their hobby as a side business. The dealer committee will deal with dealer issues and growing that area. There can be communication between the two. Dealers are moving to the internet because they can do more business, less hassle to set up and move inventory at shows. However, shows are a good income stream.

## **Branding:**

Naming of the group, broadening the brand, inclusive

Important step in changing the role of the hobby. Change the names of the shows (-Pex) the public doesn't know what that means.

Change the image of stamp collecting. Can't make all the changes all at once. Over time our efforts can grow. The name changing of the shows will not affect the other goals we are working on. Words are powerful and can allow people to understand what the hobby is about.

## **Sub Committees**

Two working groups to work the two tracks of our goals. Two volunteers to lead each one.

1. Existing collectors and technology 2. Writing and focusing on other hobby collecting campaign.

1. Need someone with technology experience, social media experience and "younger generation."  
Melanie volunteered to partner with someone
2. Trish Kaufmann and Dale Smith

## **Other members?**

American Topical Association, Smithsonian National Postal Museum, American Stamp Dealer Association, auction houses, Amos Media, etc.

Worthwhile to bring other organizations into the process. They have similar goals. Dependent on collectors and may want to participate on the committee. Dealer associations represent auction houses and are members of the APS. Make sure they know we are not excluding them in the process. We will recruit for the committees, but should continue to consider this issue.

## **Frequency of meetings:**

Meet 4 times a year. Maybe meet 2 times a year if the committees are meeting and active. Meet in Richmond at show. Conference calls are easiest when not at shows. Keeps enthusiasm going, not too much time between meetings. Check in April. Work on identifying optimal times to meet.

## **Assignments:**

1. Identify members to serve on the 2 committees that were created from our 2 main goals – English/Zais
2. Extend an invitation to Amos Media - English
3. Information on the 6 target audiences - Zais

Hope to see some satisfaction in a year or two. Merry Christmas!