



The Young Collector

By Joseph Perrone

SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST AN ALBUM

Once young collectors become avidly involved in this hobby, it is important for a more experienced philatelist to introduce them to a deeper study of the stamps they have acquired.

This will bring their enjoyment and appreciation to a new and more advanced level. For instance, obtaining examples of stamps from a certain country often leads to a passion for a favoured issue, which is precisely the goal. Merely finding favorite stamps to place in albums - possibly to forget about them later - will not satisfy newly aroused curiosity.



Areas that are important for a new collector to consider are: different dies used to print the stamp, colour shades, perforations, and dates of issue. It's good to have a list. One of my first interests was to learn more about the Canadian definitive or Medallion issue of 1932, which featured a portrait of George V. I was especially intrigued by the slight differences between the dies of the three-cent, which was printed in deep red. My study led me to look for other subtleties, which I found listed in several catalogues given to me by a friend who wanted to encourage my inquisitiveness.



By the way, I think it is necessary for every kid to own a recent catalogue of stamps from their favourite country,

as well as a good magnifying glass, which they will love to use. An effort should be made to teach young enthusiasts how to differentiate between two different dies of the same stamp. Often the differences between them are subtle and a magnifier is needed to clearly detect the difference. They should also be encouraged to separate different shades or perforations of the same stamp because this can be tied into many different topics and studies, including history.



An excellent example to demonstrate why the shades of different stamps can be so fascinating is the Canada number 106, the King George V two-cent carmine, introduced in 1911 as part of the Admiral issue.



Something that interested me greatly about this stamp, in particular, was the fact that, before World War I, all of the ink used to produce it was imported from Germany, including its rare first pink shade. When war broke out in 1914, the American Bank Note company - which printed Canadian stamps - naturally decided to stop buying ink from Germany, and thereby stop putting money into German pockets. Instead, the company used Canadian-produced inks, which resulted in numerous shades of this stamp.

A folio with the different dies and shades of the same stamp can become a fun challenge, resulting in outstand-

ing pages for a collection, which can be visually striking, if well presented.

Slowly building this kind of knowledge is necessary for a deeper enjoyment of philately. Over time, with growing know-how, youthful hobbyists may be introduced to more complex issues, and will eventually understand captivating topics such as the 1870 - 1897 Small Queen issue of Canada. Studying the details and differences among the issues should draw more enthusiasm from a relatively inexperienced young collector than simply padding the pages of an album with an example of each stamp.

Something that I have done recently is to zero in on a certain theme to better appreciate the issue as a whole. For example, I have looked into the retouched upper right corners of both of the five-cent Admirals, the seven-cent yellow ochre, 10-cent plum, and 20-cent Admiral to examine the specific plate correction used on those stamps. I personally found it fun to draw a large-scale version of the retouch on the five-cent, to illustrate this variety. My current objective is to seek earlier dates of usage for each retouched example, which will further increase my knowledge.



A study of early dates of issue is a fun topic, and you might even be the one to discover the earliest-known usage of a particular stamp variety. Sleuthing can also yield valuable information for other collectors, and provides lots of enjoyment.

My younger brother, James, and I spend lots of time together examining engraved stamps with a magnifying glass, hoping to find peculiarities, especially re-entries and engravers' slips. This is a great topic for research. All that is needed is some basic knowledge about re-entries, a magnifier, and engraved stamps.



For young collectors, I would highly recommend investigating www.re-entries.com, which is owned and operated by Ralph E. Trimble, FRPSC. On the page labelled 'terms,' a collector will learn a great deal about re-entries. Re-entries add a bit of spice to the average collection. Although some are scarce, they offer a level of expertise to any collection. Unlike a freak stamp, with a missing colour or a pre-printing fold, which are undeniably eye-catching, re-entries and constant plate varieties have a much more interesting history, especially if you have a full sheet. They make wonderful learning opportunities, as well as superlative showpieces in a collection.

Young collectors rarely see an example of an astonishing error or oddity. I found that examples created an unparalleled excitement for me. I recently saw part of Hans Reiche's original collection of re-entries. Many of the late Admiral Authors stamps were illustrated in catalogues as examples, but the catalogues do not do justice to the actual number of Admiral re-entries. The one-cent green Admiral, number 104, exists with at least 30 different major re-entries – but only one is listed currently. All of these should be listed in catalogues, which would serve to increase interest among collectors.

Often when I go to a club meeting, somebody will have some type of major stamp error for show and tell. Usually it is a listed variety, such as the 'man on the mast' on the 1929 50-cent Bluenose definitive, but sometimes the example has a major colour shift or a dramatic misperforation. These have inspired me to repeatedly search through my piles of stamp junk, which has resulted in my finding a notable error or other element of interest. Keep in mind, not all varieties are worth large sums, but they definitely interest me and add out-of-the-ordinary material to my collection.

For example, I bought an 1888-1897 five-cent Small Queen with an odd cancellation. The 'JA 5, 49' is especially strange, since Canadian postage stamps were first issued in 1851.



Unfortunately, the city's name was lost when someone removed the stamp from the envelope, so we will never know where the postmark was applied unless we find its match. It is highly likely that, as the postal clerk was placing metal date slugs in the cancellation hammer, a four was accidentally inserted instead of an eight or nine, for either 1889 or 1899. The many different varieties, errors, and oddities of philately can provide many enjoyable hours of researching and examining your collection. ☒