

A New Year, a New Collection?

by John F. Dunn

With the coming of a new year, people look for ideas on how they can refresh or improve their lives. For some stamp collectors it means starting a new primary or secondary collection idea for themselves or a family member.

With that in mind, one possibility is a Topical collection. For flexibility and personalization you can find all sorts of themes on stamps, and you can expand or limit the scope of any topic based on your interests and budget.

To provide an example of scope, I turned to the website of the Inter-Governmental Philatelic Corporation of New York, www.igpc.com. IGPC represents client nations from around the world, including participating in the selection of themes, designing of issues, and distribution of those issues. As such it is a leader in the development of topical themes.

Following are examples of collection ideas I found from among the scores of issues recently posted on the site.

My favorite was this sheetlet of four stamps issued by the Caribbean nation of Nevis honoring four Nevisians who had reached their 100th birthdays.



As best I can tell, a 2016 set of 20 from Barbados is the only previous Centenarian issue, so you can still get in on the ground floor with this theme. In 2012 the United Nations estimated that there were 316,600 living centenarians worldwide, so there is plenty of room for growth with this theme, particularly if you include earlier issues for the accomplishments of famous people who eventually reached their 100th birthday...Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, being one example.

This reminds me of a collector who used to obtain the autographs of famous people on unstamped envelopes, people who might some day be honored on a United States stamp, keeping in mind that such stamps are almost always issued years after they had passed away, one year for deceased Presidents, five years or more for all others. Applying that plan, if you were fortunate enough to get the autograph of a famous person, and they were fortunate enough to live to 100, and then fortunate to have a stamp issued for them after they passed away, such an autographed cover with their stamp on it, cancelled perhaps on its first day of issue would be a prized centerpiece for a Centenarian on Stamps Collection.

Of course, you will have to be fortunate enough to outlast the honoree; the collector who used to collect such covers is no longer with us, no doubt leaving behind some

incomplete covers....

A very different "ground floor" theme is Crypto Currency and related themes, keeping in mind that there are differing views on whether various "Cryptos" are currencies, stores of assets, or a new form of collectible.

One philatelic example of recent vintage is this souvenir sheet from Tuvalu picturing a Ripple crypto token and explaining what it is. In this case, use of the name Ripple is meant to designate a technology that is making waves, and not somehow related to the budget priced wine.



Here again, there will be room for expansion. One such example will be the One Cent Magenta British Guiana, the world's most valuable stamp. Recently purchased by Stanley Gibbons of London, collectors can purchase a piece of the Guiana through StanGib, and can use crypto

currency to do so. To add some extra spice to the display, you can obtain a topical issue picturing that stamp, such as this Guyana souvenir sheet that was issued after the stamp previously sold at auction, in 2014, keeping in mind that individualized, custom-made pages are an example of the flexibility offered by topicals.

There are any number of other possibilities. For example, a youngster might be inspired by this Armadillo issue, complete with a close up photo and a description of his eating habits.

For additional collection ideas, I refer you to the Inter-Governmental website, www.igpc.com, where you can search by country or topic.

