



Sno-King Stamp Club Philatelic News

Everett, 2nd Wednesday, 7:30 PM – 9 PM
Snohomish County PUD
2320 California Street

Edmonds, 3rd Friday, 7 PM – 9 PM
South County Senior Center
220 South Railroad Avenue

Volume 25

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Number 2

Online at: <http://sno-kingstampclub.freehostia.com/> copies of these newsletters available there, too!

Everett Meeting Wednesday, February 13th, 7:30 PM

- **Philatelic Bazaar** - featuring albums & stockbooks which stamps members offer for sale.
- Perhaps you have purchased collections or accumulations which you stripped for your collection... what to do with the remainders? **Bring your albums or stockbooks** to our February meeting. (Make sure that your pricing scheme is clear.)
see page 2

Most meetings also include **show-and-tell**, along with time to **buy and sell** stamps

[**Edmonds** meetings are on hold until further notice to sort out some
how / where / when details]

2019 Club Officers

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Everett 2019 meeting dates at the PUD: 2/13, (Our Club Show - Sunday March 3rd), 3/13, 4/10, 5/8, 6/12, 7/10, (August BBQ), 9/11, 10/9, 11/13, (Dec Dinner)

President's Column

Our **February** meeting will be a philatelic bazaar featuring albums and stockbooks containing stamps members offer for sale. Perhaps, you have purchased collections or accumulations which you stripped for your collection. Now, you ponder what to do with the remainders. For starters, bring the albums or stockbooks to our February meeting. Make sure that your pricing scheme is clear.

You can bring other stamps for sale, even if they are organized in display cards or some other method. Again, make sure that your prices are clearly evident. Hopefully, these are not the same stamps you have brought to past meetings.

I am in the final stages of sorting through three boxes of albums I purchased in August. These boxes contained more than 30 albums consisting of country collections which cover a time span ranging from 19th Century to the early 21st Century. Attractive collectible material remains, even after I extracted what I need for my worldwide collection.

This accumulation is strongest in Benelux, Mediterranean nations, former French African nations, Middle East, Thailand and colonial issues of the Portuguese, Italian and Spanish empires. There is little British empire, few from the Americas and no Scandinavia or Germany. I am bringing a stock book, bought separately, of British isles.

I am pricing my material at no more than 25 percent of catalog value.

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I find myself reeling with frustration when I use my handheld magnifier to distinguish, let's say, Athens prints from Belgian prints of 19th Century Greek stamps. Or sometimes, with the Chinese junk stamps issued early in the 20th Century. Often, the stamp I am viewing does not match any illustration in the Scott catalog. Now, there is technology for overcoming these difficulties. This technology will be a program at a future meeting.

Kurt Lange, our new treasurer, has offered to demonstrate this technology, known as a Monoprice digital microscope egg. It plugs into a computer so that the magnified image appears on your computer screen. This product will magnify your image 41 times on any computer screen at least 17 inches wide. You focused the handheld egg-shaped device on your stamp, and your computer screen will feature the image in sharp detail.

This should assist in identifying stamps where differences lie in exquisite details, especially when a cancellation obscures a critical element of the design. Sometimes, a stamp's home on an album page depends on the number of dots in the frame. These dots are hard to count with a standard magnifier. The Monoprice egg makes this identification easier.

Walmart was offering this device for about \$32. As this issue went to press, Walmart's online marketplace was out of stock. You may want to observe Kurt's demonstration before deciding to buy this product. We will schedule this program for **a future month** when we have no Dealer Night or any other event. In the meantime, set aside stamps that have you in a quandary. [editor's note: see page 7]

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This will be the last newsletter before the club's annual stamp show, scheduled for **Sunday, March 3**, at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, at **12810 35th Avenue SE, in Everett**. We will need club members to spend that Sunday at the show site to cover the registration table and the club sales table. We will need strong backs to clean the hall once the show closes. The church will charge us extra, if it has to do the cleaning. Show hours are 10 AM - 4 PM (but club member hours for help setting up and taking down the show are roughly 8 AM - 5 PM, if you can assist).

Club members current on their dues are welcome to market philatelic items at the club sales table. The club will collect a 10% fee of all member sales. In addition, the club will offer for sale stamps it has acquired, mostly through donation.

This will be our third year at Beautiful Savior. Last year's show had the best turnout of any recent show.

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Those of you who buy through eBay might be chagrined to learn that you now have to pay Washington state sales tax when you purchase stamps from eBay sellers. As of January 1, eBay required dealers who sell through its site to charge sales tax for any transactions involving customers who live in states which impose a sales tax. This is a welcome development for dealers required charge sales tax and who must compete with vendors who don't.

This isn't eBay's doing. Instead, you can vent at Anthony Kennedy, who probably won't care because he is now a retired U.S. Supreme Court justice. Justice Kennedy wrote the majority opinion in last summer's decision which gave Washington and other states the opportunity to write rules governing the collection of sales tax on internet transactions. The case is South Dakota v. Wayfair. South Dakota's legislature passed emergency legislation taxing internet purchases as a means to provide a new revenue source for a financially strapped state government. South Dakota then filed suit seeking a declaration that Wayfair and other e-commerce retailers are obligated to pay sales tax to the state. The South Dakota Supreme Court ruled in Wayfair's favor. South Dakota's appeals culminated with the Supreme Court's five-to-four vote upholding South Dakota's power to impose this tax.

This empowered the Washington State Department of Revenue to develop guidelines for implementing an internet sales tax in this state. The Revenue Department acted on existing sales tax laws, as our legislature did not meet between last June, when the decision was published, and the effective date of the internet tax.

In its decision, the nine justices grappled with two questions. One was the application of the U.S. Constitution's "commerce clause." The other was under what circumstances should the Supreme Court reverse its prior rulings.

Wayfair decision reversed two earlier Supreme Court decisions, the most recent handed down in 1992, which exempted internet transactions from state sales taxes. In those earlier decisions, the Supreme Court ruled that merchants do not have to pay sales tax if they lack a "physical presence" in the buyer's state of residence. In Wayfair, the Supreme Court decided that emerging marketplace realities warranted reversal of the "physical presence" rule. Online retailers must now collect and pay sales tax even if they lack a brick-and-mortar presence in a state.

As Justice Kennedy noted, the two prior decisions were issued before an explosion of internet commerce hampered the ability of state governments to carry out their essential functions. Normally, the Supreme Court gives pronounced deference to its prior decisions. There is a legal term for this. It is "stare decisis" (pronounced starry) decisis." This is intended to impart continuity and predictability to the law of the land and not make it subject to the political passions of the moment.

Justice Kennedy carefully crafted the court's rationale for disregarding, in this instance, the principle of stare decisis. He cited the dramatic changes in the retail marketplace over the quarter century since the most recent precedent. As a result, the "commerce clause" had a far different and constitutionally significant impact lacking in 1992. The prior rulings, he wrote, distorted the marketplace and created a tax shelter. Responding to contentions that it was Congress' role to correct this matter, Justice Kennedy insisted it was the court's mission to dismantle a tax shelter of its own creation.

He also stated the earlier decision was "flawed" in its interpretation of the "commerce clause." The Constitution forbids states to interfere with interstate commerce. State taxes have a necessary impact on interstate commerce. As Justice Kennedy pointed out, courts have permitted exercise of a state's taxing power as long as a state does not discriminate against or "unduly burden" interstate commerce.

Chief Justice John Roberts authored the dissent. He conceded the 1992 decision was "wrongly decided." Nonetheless, he would stick to the principle of "stare decisis" and invalidate South Dakota's sales tax. He fretted about the burden on internet retailers having to cope with a crazy quilt of sales tax rates and exemptions. In Washington, cities can levy sales taxes, which are piggybacked on the state tax. As a result, Seattle's rate might differ from that of its municipal neighbors. Justice Roberts cited an Illinois retail display with two candy bars side by side. One, made with flour, was exempt from the Illinois tax. The other was taxable.

What is interesting is how the justices lined up on this ruling. Usually, a five-to-four vote will have a recognizable ideological split, with four liberals on one side and four conservatives on the other. While Justice Kennedy sat on the court, he was a swing vote, such that litigating parties directed their legal analyses at his perceived reading of the law. Justice Roberts, a conservative, was joined by three liberal justices. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a liberal celebrated as the Notorious RBG, joined Justice Kennedy and three conservative justices.

The Wayfair decision may provide an augur as to how the Supreme Court might rule once it takes up the divisive issue of abortion. With recent Supreme Court appointments, opponents of abortion believe they now have their best opportunity to reverse Roe v. Wade. Anyone attempting to predict the outcome should read Justice Roberts' dissent.

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In our last issue, I wrote about the popularity of "grading" stamps, mostly US issues. Recently, the current issue of "100J," a newsletter devoted to grading, arrived in my in-box. As I wrote in January, 100J is the highest possible grading. This publication is a must for any collector who uses grading as a tool for expanding his holding of classic US stamps. Its three dozen pages are replete with tables depicting the grading history of select issues.

The publication does point out a serious risk for collectors who pay extra money for "population tops" or a "unique population top." A population top is the highest grading for any issue whose copies have been

submitted for grading. When you have only one stamp with the highest grade, you have a unique population top.

Let's imagine that you gather up all the mint US sheets you bought during the 1950s. Let's further imagine you sold them for an enormous profit. And you invest this windfall in a unique population top which graded at 98. You have the only 98 and there are no 99s or 100s.

However, some sharp-eyed collector finds a 99 in some dealer's pick book. You no longer have a unique population top. Your prize acquisition will lose some of its value. Even if the pick book yields another 98, you might lose value because although you have a population top, it is no longer a unique population top.

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In the event the foregoing item induces you to chide me for willful ignorance, I can assure you that I am aware that cashing in piles of mint sheets is more likely to result in an enormous loss. Recently, I read of a collector who decided to sell his mint sheets to pay for his daughter's wedding. He calculated the catalog value at \$30,000, unaware that dealers use face value, not catalog value, as the benchmark to which they apply their percentage. He was predictably outraged when a dealer offered him only \$800.

He probably had to dramatically scale back the wedding. Instead of hiring Bruce Springsteen, he had to settle for a Pike Place Market busker who, with open guitar case, entertains passersby.

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Thanks to member Alex Hamling for providing a clipping about a stamp issued to commemorate D-Day but which depicted an amphibious landing in the South Pacific. I was amused by the paragraph which stated that the British "claim" to have issued the world's first postage stamp. This is more than a claim. It is historical fact accepted by philatelists worldwide. Pore through all 14 volumes of the current Scott catalog and try to find an issue date prior to May 1, 1840.

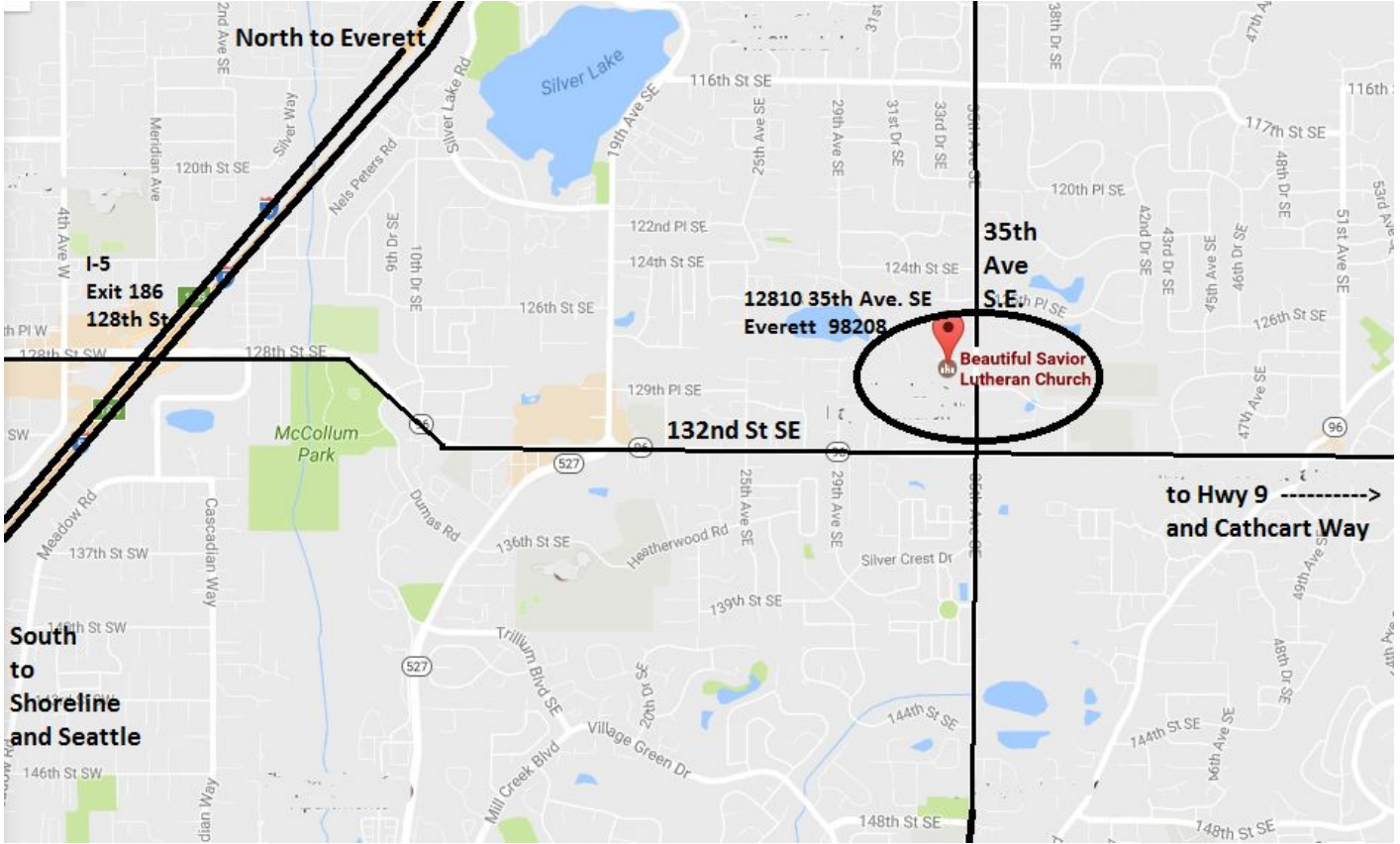
Dues are now due for 2019

or any other previous year you may still owe

Please pay treasurer Kurt Lange either at an upcoming meeting,
at the upcoming show in March,
or mail directly to me at my home address - 11409 28th Dr S.E., Everett, WA 98208

Just \$10 per year! - Thanks!

Here's a **map** to our stamp show (Sunday, **March 3rd**) - same location as the last few years
See you there in just a few weeks! Put it on your calendar!



This is an early warning for you with some information for you to just think about for now.

See Steve's mention on page 2 regarding the microscope connected to a computer to aid in high magnification.

At some point in the future we will have an "Identification Night" program that will have a few different facets to it:

Bring with you:

- stamps that you just can't identify - possibly you need to figure out the country of issue or you know that but can't find the catalog number
- stamps that you have an idea what they may be but need assistance in determining something more specific about them - such as using the high magnification mentioned earlier by Steve - to determine an exact catalog number where "the devil is in the details".
- stamps that you know aren't listed in Scott catalogs - but hopefully are listed elsewhere
- (to go with the previous item) your Scott catalogs and also others that are not Scott catalogs that may assist others in identifying something unique that isn't a typical postage stamp (example, I'll try to bring Springer catalogs, State Revenue catalogs, etc.)
- non-stamps ephemera that you're simply trying to figure out what it is or how it was used
- any other I.D. aids that you possess that you think could be helpful to others.

We'll most likely work out a system for certain members to bring Scott catalog for countries A-B, C-F, G-I, etc to avoid duplication of too many repeat and unnecessary books at the meeting.

So, start to set your items aside now - maybe we'll schedule some meeting **this spring or summer** when this will all come together and if it's a big hit we might just make it happen once a year.

Maybe you'll I.D. some of your unknown stamps and maybe you'll be the hero who helps others members to finally I.D. their unknown items!

