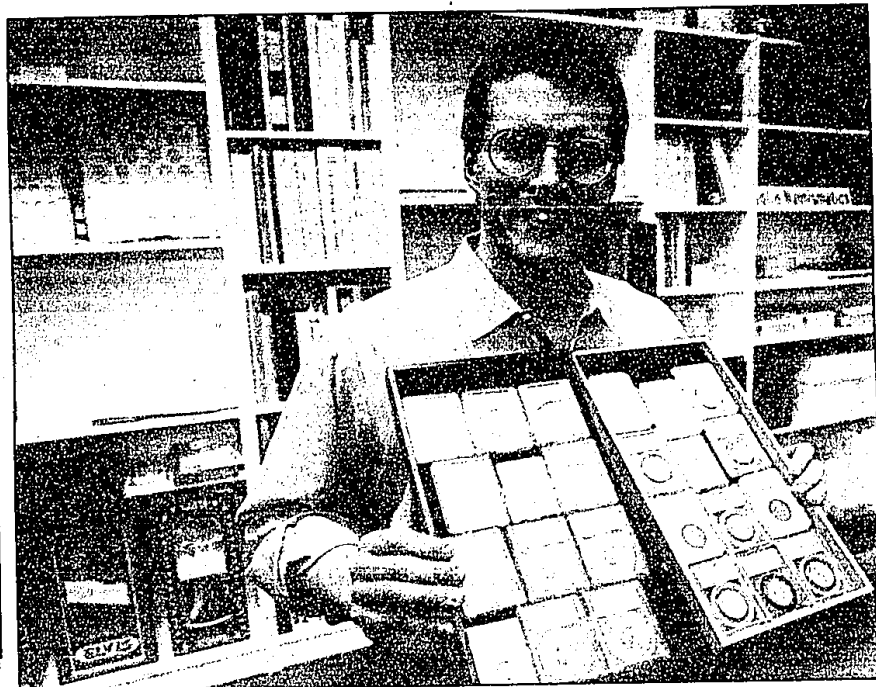


Stamps, coins teach lessons of past, value of scarcity

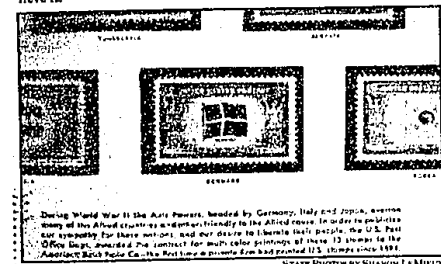
Stamps and coins offer some insights of history, culture and the value of scarcity.

- The first stamp was English with a likeness of Queen Victoria. It was first produced in 1840. Nowhere on the stamp, or any other English stamp, does it say "England." That is the only country that has that practice, perhaps not surprisingly.
- The first U.S. stamps, produced in 1847, bore the likenesses of our first postmaster general, Ben Franklin, and our first president, George Washington. The 5-cent Franklin carried mail weighing a half ounce or less east of the Mississippi. The 10-cent Washington carried the same mail west of the river or mail the weighed an ounce east of the river.
- In these days, 5 cents was real money. And to look at a one-cent stamp of the day, which resembles a dubloon bigger than a quarter and thicker than three, you can believe it.

- In addition to the Denver and Philadelphia mints, coins are also minted in — believe it or not — West Point, N.Y.
- The San Francisco mint still produces coins, but only proof coins. These coins are made with a more lustrous finish and are double-stamped for more definition. They are sold to collectors in sets.
- The most valuable stamp is from Guyana, last sold for close to \$1 million in the 1980s.
- There have been several mistakes in stamp printing, including one of the most famous, the "inverted Jenny" airmail produced in 1918. The 24-cent blue and red stamp was printed coinciding with the beginning of regular airmail service between Washington, Philadelphia and New York. The plane on the stamp was printed upside down on one sheet of 100 of the stamps. One of the stamps fetches at least \$125,000. A block of four has sold for \$1.1 million.



Coins are his realm: Coin dealer Peter Nolin shares store space with stamp dealer Karl Schaefer.



Only a few U.S. postage stamps have carried foreign flags like these in in Karl Schaefer's shop. Another rarity: A private firm printed the U.S. stamps.

Stamps from page 1A

in the space the two merchants share.

"It's one of the most relaxing things you can do," said Schaefer of stamp collecting. "I've spent evenings with a stamp collection and then looked up to realize it was 1 a.m."

Nolin, who moved his coin business from West Bloomfield, find many of the same qualities in coin collecting.

"It's an escape, but it's a healthy one," Nolin said.

Schaefer, who once sold coins as well, at one time had stamp shops in Birmingham and Sterling Heights in addition to Farmington Hills (at the Mid-Eleven

shopping center). He decided three was too much company.

"That was not a good way to enjoy retirement," said the retired insurance executive.

And so now Schaefer enjoys his year-round hobby in his small business. With regular customers and new ones, Schaefer lives in Oak Park, and Nolin, 36, an Ann Arbor resident, like the trade in Farmington.

"Parents bring in their children," said Schaefer, who started collecting with friends at age 10. "Now, some of the most popular stamps feature Disney characters."

If movies, comics and Disney

World aren't enough, Caribbean island nations and other small countries known for their stamps have cashed in on Disney's popularity.

And along with issues honoring space exploration, entertainment figures, wildlife and sports, these countries, like Barbados, produce beautiful stamps of every description. In fact, one country, Granada, along with its smaller island possessions — the Grenadines — has produced more stamps than the United States.

The proliferation of stamps, in all their shapes and varieties, since the 1970s, when most countries abandoned conventional en-

graved stamps and went to other ways to reproduce a rainbow of colors and subjects, has changed the hobby. Schaefer says he used to have one thick catalog of all the stamps of the world. There are now six.

"You can trace the complete history of a nation and its monetary system through its stamps,"

he said. "Most of a country's leaders and its most important events are commemorated on stamps."

Nolin said although coins can have added value because of gold or other metal content, for the most part, they are like stamps, "as valuable as other collectors are willing to value them." He

added that investors are often prone to coin collecting.

Like baseball cards, old magazines or any other collectible, stamp and coin values are determined by their collectors.

"You have to look at it first as a hobby," Schaefer said. "If your collection appreciates, so much the better."

FARMINGTON FOCUS

Any nice vistas?

Think spring, says the Farmington Hills Beautification Committee, and think good landscaping.

Committee members are starting to judge attractive and well-landscaped landscapes for the annual awards presentation in the fall.

Judges are always impressed with the use of color, variety and imagination in the landscapes they judge, but the emphasis is on overall property maintenance.

For more information about the judging, call Marie Donigan at 473-9543.

Meet the candidates

Linda Enberg and Jennifer Levin, the only candidates for the one open seat on the Farmington Board of Education in the June 12 school election, are expected to participate in a candidate forum 7-8 p.m. Wednesday, May 3, in the council chambers of the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

Moderator of the program — sponsored by the Farmington Area Republican Club — will be Diane Whitney, past president of the club. The forum will be broadcast live on MetroVision's Channel 12. Those who attend the forum will be able to present questions to the candidates.

An architectural tour

Lee Peck, author of "Farmington: A Pictorial History," will narrate slides of Farmington houses which he gathered as he was writing his book at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 3, at the downtown branch of the Farmington Community Library, 23500 Liberty.

An autograph signing will follow and copies of his book will be available for purchase. Call the library at 474-7770 for reservations.

For mature drivers

A refresher course in driving — "55 Alive/Mature Driving Class" — will be offered 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Thursday, May 4, at the Farmington Hills Senior Center on 11 Mile Road between Inkster and Middlebelt.

The course will cover defensive driving, accident prevention and current traffic laws. Fee is \$5. Call 473-1830 to register.

They're breaking ground

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Hospice of Southeastern Michigan facility at the southwest corner of 11 Mile and Middlebelt roads will be at 3:30 p.m. Friday, May 5.

An open house reception will be held at the nearby Nardin Park United Methodist Church, 29887 W. 11 Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

A Walk cropping up

People in the world are starving... but folks in the Farmington area and West Bloomfield are trying to do something about it.

The 10th-annual Crop Walk Against Hunger will bring together members of about 20 area churches for the fund-raising event on Sunday, May 7.

The walk will begin and end at the First United Methodist Church, 33112 Grand River, Farmington. It will take place rain or shine.

Registration begins at 1:15 p.m. with the walk starting at 2 p.m. The 10-kilometer route winds through the streets of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Representatives of churches or individuals who wish to walk can contact Judy Houser (661-6139) or Cheryl Carter (477-1153).

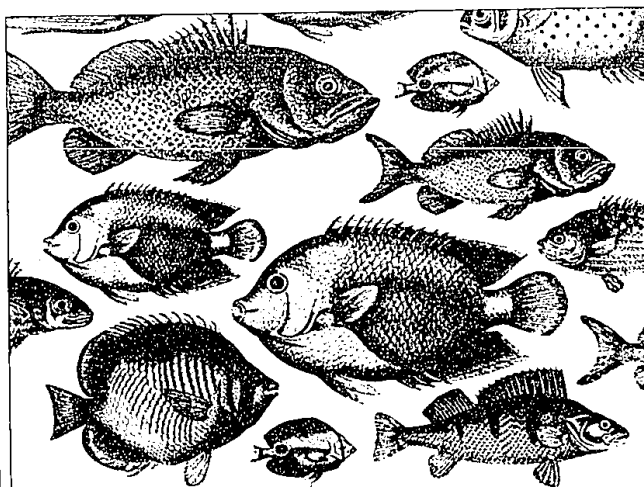
Last year, \$27,347.30 was raised through the Crop Walk.

Memory Lane

From the April 28, 1955 edition of the Farmington Enterprise:

- A house-to-house canvass in the Clarenceville School District was to be held to raise money for a lighted athletic field at the high school. It was estimated that the lights, new bleachers and an improved track would cost \$37,000.
- Farmington police Sgt. Gordon Misenar resigned to join the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.
- Alan and Terry Kerby, 8 and 6 years old, respectively, appeared on the Dave Garaway television show with their pet burro, Pedro. Their parents are Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Kerby of St. Francis Street.
- Short item: "It takes 100 pounds of milk to make 12.5 pounds of whole dry milk."

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335, faxed to 477-9722, or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address is: packy@online.com.



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