



The Westfield Philatelist

Newsletter of the Westfield Stamp Club
 American Philatelic Society Chapter #540
 American Topical Association Chapter #113

Volume 2 Number 1 September/October 2008

Westfield Stamp Club Member Buys United States Post Office

As reported by Ed Grabowski, roving reporter for *The Westfield Philatelist*, a United States Post Office was purchased on August 15, 2008, in Hartford Connecticut, by **Steven J. Rod**, member of the Westfield Stamp Club. Unnamed sources state that it was moved to New Jersey, and has been dedicated as the Newark Division Post Office Substation with Mr. Rod assuming the duties of Assistant Postmaster. One of the local paparazzi supplied the exclusive photographs seen here.



Steven J. Rod at his post office.



Steven J. Rod and Barbara R. Mueller



"Yes, Barbara I really did buy it!" said Steve

Upcoming Programs

September 25 "Struck on Stamps"

Wade E. Saadi is President of the United States Philatelic Classics Society, a society devoted to the study of the postal issues and postal history of United States up to the first issue printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing—the 1894 series that begins with Scott catalogue number 246. His presentation will look at some early cancellations on the classic stamps of the United States.

October 23 Michael Baadke, editor of Linn's Stamp News will be speaking about Linn's and answering questions.

Members in the News

At the American Philatelic Society StampShow that was held in Hartford, Connecticut this past August, **President Nick Lombardi's** exhibit "The 1903 Two Cent Washington Shield Issue" and **Jack Denys' "Bayeux Tapestry"** exhibit were entered in the World Series of Philately Competition 2008, but unfortunately neither won the competition. Nick's exhibit was eligible having won the Grand Award at Sescal 2007 while Jack's exhibit won the Grand Award at the National Topical Stamp Show 2008.

Don't forget that the Chapter Activities Committee newsletters are available to all members of an APS chapter. Just contact the APS headquarters at cacnews@stamps.org with your email address.

In the open competition at the APS show, **Roger Brody's** exhibit "Prominent Americans Series – United States Production and Usage" won a Gold and Medal of Excellence. Similar awards were won by **Edward Grabowski** for "Postal History of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: Use in the French Pacific Ocean Colonies". **Robert Odenweller** won a Gold for "New Zealand 1855–1872".

In June **Jack Denys** became President of the American Topical Association



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The Westfield Stamp Club

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Meetings are held at 8:00 PM on the fourth Thursday of the month except for November (third Thursday) and July and August (summer recess). The club meets in the Community Room of the Westfield Town Hall located in the center of Westfield at 425 East Broad Street.

Dues are \$8.00 per membership year which runs from September 1 to August 31.

The club newsletter will be published every two months from September to June.

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Images are scanned on a Heidelberg Linoscan flatbed scanner. The newsletter is composed using Adobe InDesign and Photoshop on a Macintosh computer and printed on a Xerox Phaser color printer.

The Sunflower - An American Giant

A 42-cent definitive stamp was issued at the American Philatelic Society StampShow in Hartford, Connecticut on August 15, 2008. It shows a single sunflower and was issued as a pressure-sensitive adhesive in a double-sided, convertible booklet of 20 stamps. The stamp was printed by the offset process by Ashton Potter USA Ltd in Williamsville, New York, on non-phosphored paper. Derry Noyes designed the stamp based on a photograph taken by Eddie Hironaka in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Also issued on the same date was a 42-cent letter sheet with the same design.



But as seen below sunflowers have been featured before on the postage stamps of the United States. Sunflowers are true natives of the Americas, with most of the 70 known species of *Helianthus*, their generic name, found in North America, mainly in the Midwest and West. The king of the genus, *Helianthus annuus*, the common sunflower, is a plant that can grow to ten feet, blooms from July through September and is usually found in prairies and roadsides.

While the written record of pre-Columbian North and South America is scanty, we do know that natives in Mexico and Peru used sunflowers in ceremonies honoring the sun god. Spanish explorers found representations of sunflowers, often in pure gold, embellishing many of the Aztec and Inca temples. Today, the sunflower is the national flower of Peru.

In North America the common sunflower played an important role in the life of the Plains Indians who, through careful selection over the centuries, produced plants with larger and larger seeds making harvesting for food and oil production easier. But their utilization of this plant did not end there. The stalks were used as a source of fiber, the leaves became fodder and a yellow dye could be obtained from the yellow rays of the flowers. Trade among the Native American nations spread the plant across the continent by the time the European explorers arrived in the New World. The European settlers quickly learned the benefits of this extraordinary plant and a myriad of other uses have since been found for its constituents.

Sunflower seeds have a high food value as they contain several vitamins as well as calcium, phosphorus and other minerals. With the seeds of some species containing 21% fat and 16% albumen, they are used to feed and fatten chickens, hogs and dairy cattle. The pith of the sunflower stalk is one of the lightest natural substances known, far lighter than cork, and has been used in life preservers. Burning the stalks yields potash for use as a fertilizer. Pressing the seeds yields a vegetable oil used not only in food production, but as a fuel, lubricant and in making soap and candles. And let us not forget the use of sunflower seed in backyard bird feeders—some 500,000 tons a year.

In 1903 the Kansas Legislature, recognizing the importance of the common sunflower, adopted it as Kansas' state flower. The Republican candidate for President in 1936 was a Kansan, Alfred M. Landon who used sunflower-shaped campaign buttons. The Democrats pointed out during the campaign that sunflowers die in November. Franklin D. Roosevelt won the election in one of the most lopsided contests in presidential elections carrying every state but Maine and Vermont.

The sunflower is one of, if not, the only major crop plants to have originated in the United States. It is fitting that it is commemorated on our postage stamps.



1961 (Scott 1183).
Centenary of Kansas
Statehood



2002 (Scott 3711).
Greetings from
America



2006 (Scott 4010).
Crops of America



1982 (Scott 1968).
States Birds and
Flowers



1992 (Scott 2666).
American Wild-
flowers