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**Blade Area**

Article published March 02, 2009  
**LITTLE PIECES OF HISTORY ON DISPLAY**

**400 stamp collectors attend annual exhibition in Toledo**

By **KIRK BAIRD**  
 BLADE STAFF WRITER

Stamp collecting is like owning a little piece of history. Literally.

There are stamps to commemorate presidents and wars, pop culture figures, and important events.

Expansive knowledge of stamps can be financially rewarding: Cliff Campbell could have become very rich on Who Wants to be a Millionaire? had he been a contestant on one particular show.

The million-dollar question was about a rare air-mail stamp. Not surprisingly, Mr. Campbell, who has been collecting stamps for a half-century, knew the answer.

"I told my wife, 'A, final answer,'" the 76-year-old Perrysburg resident said. "You can learn a lot about history" by collecting.

Mr. Campbell is one of 100 or so members of The Stamp Collectors Club of Toledo. The club, which has been around in some form for decades, held its 85th Annual Exhibition and Bourse Saturday and yesterday at Holland Gardens. About 400 stamp collectors, hobbyists, and even those looking to buy postage to mail a letter attended the event.

Their ages span decades, but Mr. Campbell acknowledged that stamp collectors tend to be older, and their numbers are dwindling.

"It's not as popular as it used to be," he said. "But then again, nothing is."

Perhaps that's why Mr. Campbell has such a big grin when he sees the enthusiasm of young stamp collectors, such as 11-year-old Emma Jechura.

Emma was drawn to the hobby because of her older brother. She also found the stamps to be pretty.

After digging around in a large plastic bin nearly overflowing with donated stamps - mostly used - in the kids' section at the expo, Emma filled a sack full of stamps to begin her collection.

That was two years ago, and she's been hooked on the hobby since.



Laura Wilder, left, of Whitehouse and Emma Jechura of Maumee pause to examine an interesting stamp during the Stamp Collectors Club of Toledo's annual exhibition. (THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT)

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Terry Stevens, left, of Jackson, Mich., looks at the stamp collection of Perrysburg's Cliff Campbell, who attended the weekend exhibition at Holland Gardens with his wife, Marcia Campbell. (THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT)

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Emma has earned four Girl Scout patches through collecting and hopes to receive the stamp-collecting badge soon.

"It's a lot of work," the sixth grader at Gateway Middle School said. "But it's just so fun. Every year I come here to pick up a lot of stamps."

A lifelong passion for stamp collecting often develops early in life, stamp collectors say.

James Bauman, 74, has been collecting stamps since he was 10. It was just after World War II, he said, and his father started receiving post cards from cousins in Germany.

"I just liked the stamps," Mr. Bauman said. "That's what got me started."

Sometimes, though, collectors are drawn to the hobby for other reasons.

Stamps were a part of Mr. Campbell's 50-year job as a postal carrier in Maumee. Even though he retired more than two decades ago, his fondness for stamps hasn't waned.

Given the decreasing number of letters mailed each year - during 2008, U.S. Postal Service deliveries dropped 4.5 percent from the previous year - could there be a time when stamp collectors are a thing of the past as well?

"Let's hope it's not during my lifetime," Mr. Campbell said. "But I don't believe it'll ever die out."

Contact Kirk Baird at [kbaird@theblade.com](mailto:kbaird@theblade.com) or 419-724-6734.

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