



Dummy News and Views

the Newsletter of the United States Stamp Society - Dummy Stamps Study Group

Issue Number 56

Summer 2019



Welcome to the Dummy Stamps Study Group's Fifty-sixth Newsletter

This newsletter is produced quarterly by the United States Stamp Society's - Dummy Stamps Study Group for your information and pleasure. We hope that the information included in this newsletter will be informative, useful and encourage your enjoyment of collecting dummy/test stamps. Our goal is to keep you up-to-date with the latest information available to our group. Questions, comments and articles proposed for publication should be directed to Terry R. Scott, Chairman of the United States Stamp Society's Dummy Stamps Study Group at terryrscott@comcast.net

New Test Coil Discovery - Scott TD125a

by Terry R. Scott and Michael O. Perry

After the annual WESTPEX Stamp Show in San Francisco in April 2018, we were alerted to the discovery of a previously unlisted United States test coil.

The item in question was similar to Scott TD125, the dull gum coil with a wide gray black single line framed rectangle design. The new test coil has the same appearance as TD125, but the new discovery had shiny gum. The Editors of the *2019 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* assigned the catalogue number Scott TD125a to this new coil. While TD124 (with a blue rectangle design) was printed from a gravure cylinder, TD125 and TD125a may have been printed from an offset plate.

However, something besides the gum sets TD125a apart from Scott TD125; every 24th stamp on the discovery roll of 100 TD125a coil stamps has a crudely etched "VI" inside the rectangle. It is impossible to know if the etched Roman Numeral is intended to be a "IV" or a "VI" since whoever numbered the 18 rows on the printing plate might have etched the Roman Numerals in normal reading orientation on the plate which would result in "reversed" numbers on the printed test coils. Without examples from any of the other 17 rows of coil stamps printed from the 432-subject plate, it is not possible to determine if the discovery coil roll was from row number 4 (IV) or 6 (VI).

Roman Numerals on four of the eighteen coil rows could be mistaken for a different number depending if the etched number on the printing plate was "reversed" or "normal" (rows IV, VI, IX

and XI would look VI, IV, XI and IX). Five of the eighteen rows would have Roman Numerals that would read the same whether "normal" or "reversed" (I, II, III, V and X). However, if TD125a coils from rows VII, VIII, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII or XVIII are found, they would contain a "mirror image" Roman Numeral (IIV, IIIV, IIX, IIIX, VIX, VX, IVX, IIVX or IIIVX) if the etched number wasn't reversed on the printing plate.

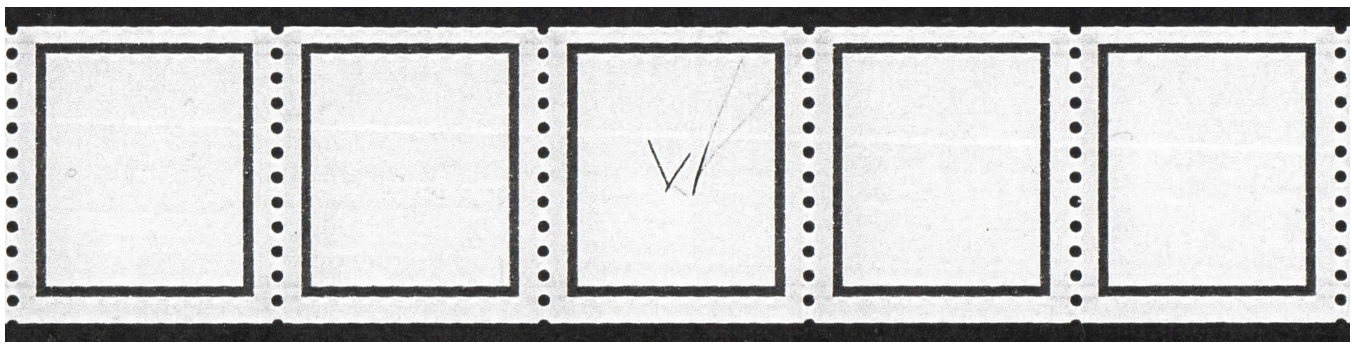
After examples of the newly discovered TD125a were obtained, we wrote a letter to Hallie Brooker, Lead Curator at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's Historical Resource Center, seeking possible answers to what the intent of the etched number was, and whether it was a "IV" or a "VI". Her answer was, "Unfortunately, HRC has nothing on file regarding the gray rectangle Roman Numeral."

If you have any additional information about this new discovery, please contact me. The new TD125a coil is illustrated on the following page.

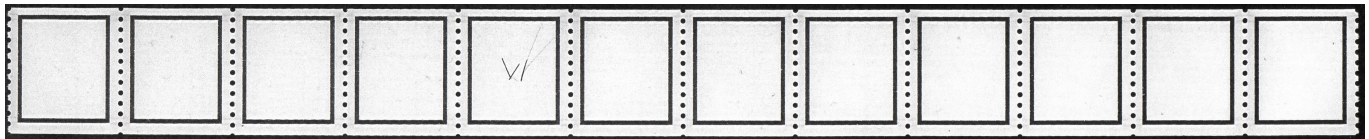
In this issue:

New Test Coil Discovery - Scott TD125a	1
Recent Auctions of Interest	5
Proposed Future DSSG Projects	7
Request For Articles For The United States Specialist	7
The Other Projects	8

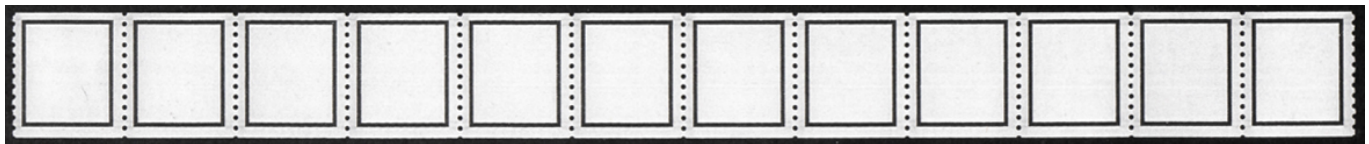
please turn to page 2 ➤



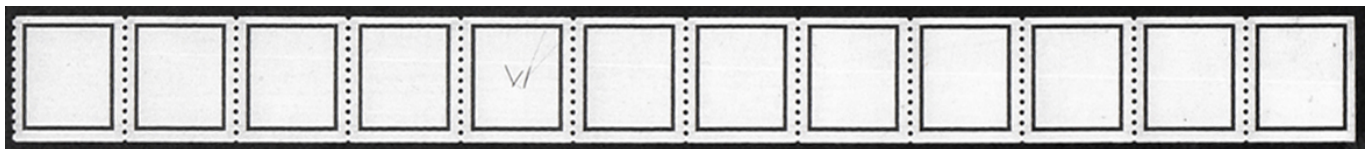
Scott TD125a cropped strip of 5 showing the etched “VI” that occurs every 24 stamps.
From the original TD125a roll of 100 this cropped strip of 5 stamps are from a strip of 12 stamps #65 to #76.



From the original TD125a roll of 100 this strip of 12 stamps are stamps #77 to #88.



From the original TD125a roll of 100 this strip of 12 stamps are stamps #89 to #100.

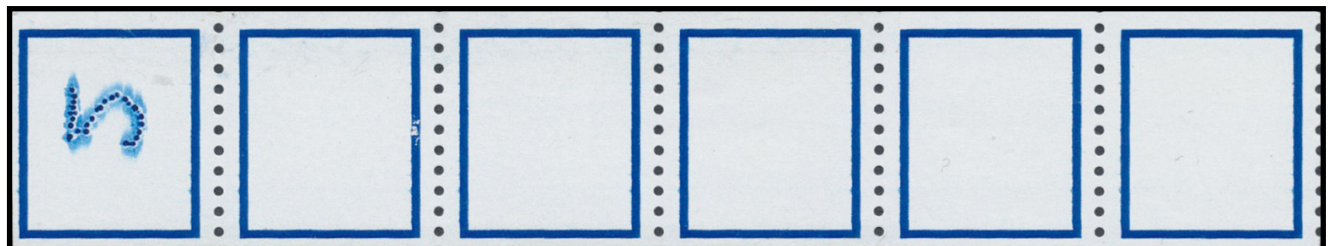


The right end is a straight edge that was the cut off end of the roll.

The above three strips of 12 from the original roll of 100 of Scott TD125a confirm that the etched “VI” that occurs every 24 stamps is identical.

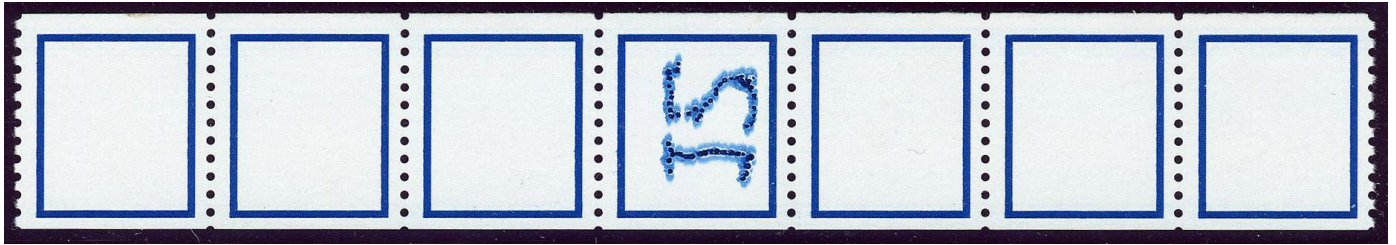
It appears that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing decided to add some sort of numbering system, whether it be the Roman Numerals or Arabic Numbers, every 24 stamps for use in evaluating their new coiling machine. Earlier coils did not have these numbers.

We want to take this opportunity to supplement the information contained in listings in the *2020 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* by illustrating several of the plain rectangle design test stamps and illustrating some of the various listed stamps that have numbers printed in the center of some stamp. These are listed in the Scott Catalogue but not illustrated.

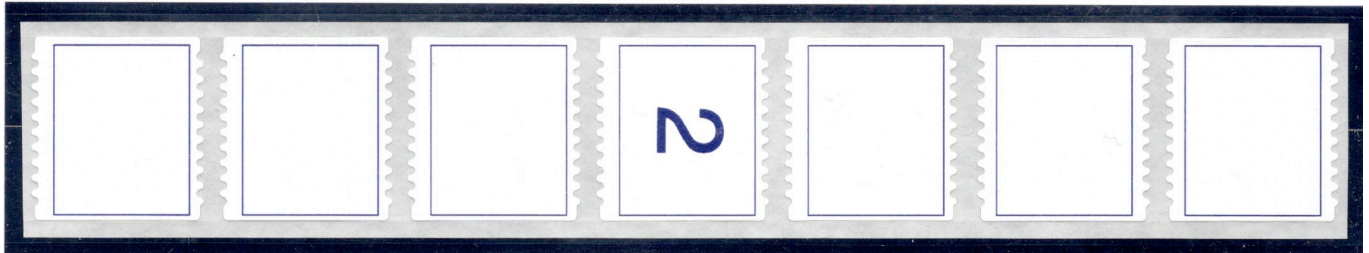


Scott TD124 left end of roll strip of 6 showing the reverse punched dots “2” that occurs every 24 stamps.

please turn to page 3 ➤



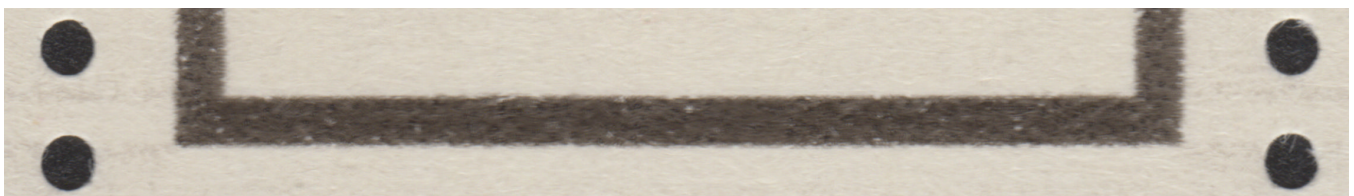
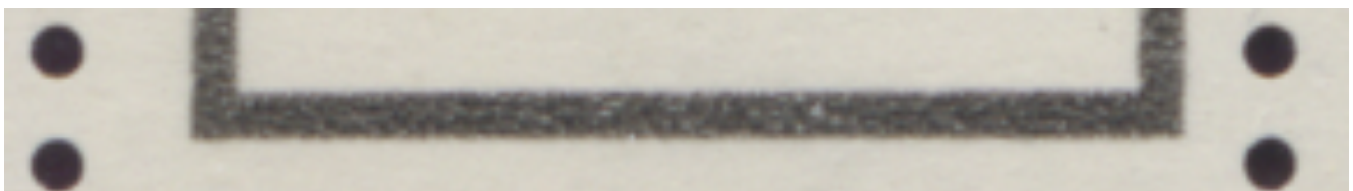
Scott TD124 strip of 7 showing the reverse punched dots “12” that occurs every 24 stamps.



Scott TD130 strip of 7 showing the number “2” that occurs every 21 stamps.



Scott TD130 strip of 4 showing the number “3” that occurs every 21 stamps.



Above is illustrated the bottom frame line on three of the test stamps with rectangle frame lines. The top is TD124, the middle one is TD125 and the bottom one is TD125a. These enlarged illustrations are to show that it appears that the TD124 stamps were printed from a different plate than the TD125 and TD125a stamps. It is probable that the TD125 and TD125a were from the same plate with the Roman numerals added to the TD125 plate. The only known roll of TD125 coil stamps has no numbers on any of the stamps, whereas, the TD125a stamps have the Roman numerals every 24 stamps.

please turn to page 4 ➤

All three of these test coils were likely produced for use on the new Goebel coil packaging machine.

It was soon recognized that it was impossible to know where any defectively packaged coil rolls were coming from once the web was slit into 18 rows and processed into coil rolls of 100 stamps and the finished coils were dumped into the hopper at the end of the machine so they could be packed into boxes.

When the BEP initially created the printing plates for TD124 and TD125 for use in evaluating their new coiling machine, there were no numbers inside the stamp designs.

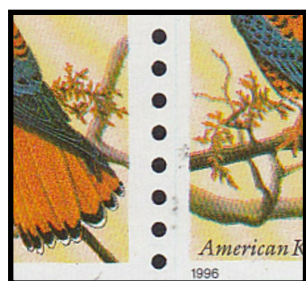
That is why the BEP would have added the crude hand entered row numbers to TD124 and TD125a - so the workers could identify where each finished 100 stamp coil roll came from after the web was slit and the individual plastic wrapped 100-stamp coil rolls were dumped into the hopper at the delivery end of the new Goebel coiling machine. It seems most likely that these coils were made to test the coil packaging machine rather than a new printing press, so using offset printing plates would have been much cheaper than making a gravure cylinder. However, it is possible the BEP was testing a new printing press too.

Since the blue TD124 test coil was printed from a chrome plated steel gravure cylinder, someone used a punch to add the numbers to each row after it was made. TD125 was probably printed from a thin aluminum offset plate, so they couldn't add the row numbers with a punch since that would damage the plate, making it unusable on the offset printing press. Instead, they scratched the Roman Numerals onto one stamp in each row.

At this time, the black coils with the Roman Numerals are only known with shiny gum (TD125a), but it is possible that they once existed with dull gum too. TD125 coils with dull gum are unknown with the Roman Numerals.

The owner of the TD125 coil roll made a careful inspection of his coil to see if there was any trace of an offset plate seam line between any of the stamps... none was found. This might indicate TD125 was printed from a gravure cylinder, like TD124. However, the lack of a seam line doesn't eliminate the possibility that TD125 was printed from an offset plate since the seam lines usually can't be seen.

Examples of offset plate seam lines are shown on a few different offset printed coils below so the reader has some indication as for what to look for. □



Scott 3044
American
Kestrel 1¢ Coil



Scott 2281
Honeybee 25¢
Coil



Scott 4858
Hummingbird
34c Coil



Scott 2281 Honeybee 25¢ Coil

please turn to page 5 ➤

Recent Auctions of Interest to Dummy Stamp Collectors

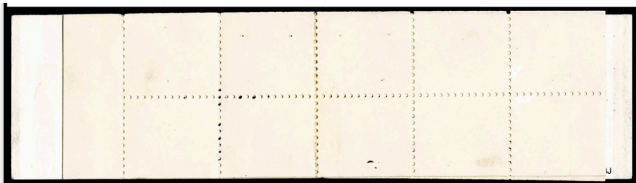
by Terry R. Scott

On June 26, 2019 Vance Auctions Ltd. held sale #338 that contained the following test stamps. There is no Buyer's premium for this sale.



Lot 5025 * TD92a, self-adhesive TEST booklet
Pane of 18, VF, NH. Photo. Cat. \$250.00. Not sold.

On July 23-25, 2019 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. held Sale #1206 that contained the following test stamps. There is a Buyer's premium of 18% for this sale.



Lot 654 * 25c Jack London, Booklet Pane of Six
(*Editor's note: Pane of ten*), All Colors Omitted (2182 var). Two panes in a complete booklet, the booklet was improperly handled (probably prior to discovery) with covers showing crease and wear, staple holes thru covers also affect two stamps in each pane, top pane with a few light marks, bottom

pane with top four stamps stuck to back cover, bottom stamps show offset of back cover, Fine appearance, a rare and unusual error, the only such example we have seen, unlisted in Scott and Datz. Photo. (*Editor's note: This booklet will be listed as TDB35C in the 2020 Scott Specialized Catalogue in the Test Stamps Section.*) Est. \$500.00 - \$750.00. Realized \$500.00.

On August 7, 2019 Sam Houston Philatelics held Sale #3066 that contained the following test stamps. There is a Buyer's premium of 15% for this sale.

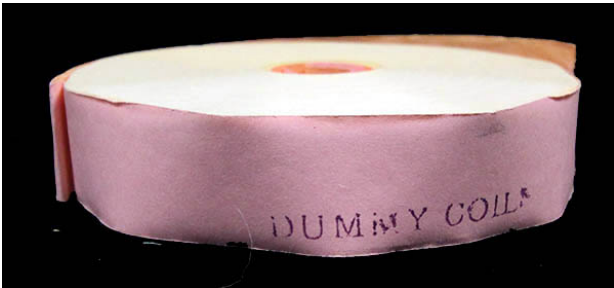
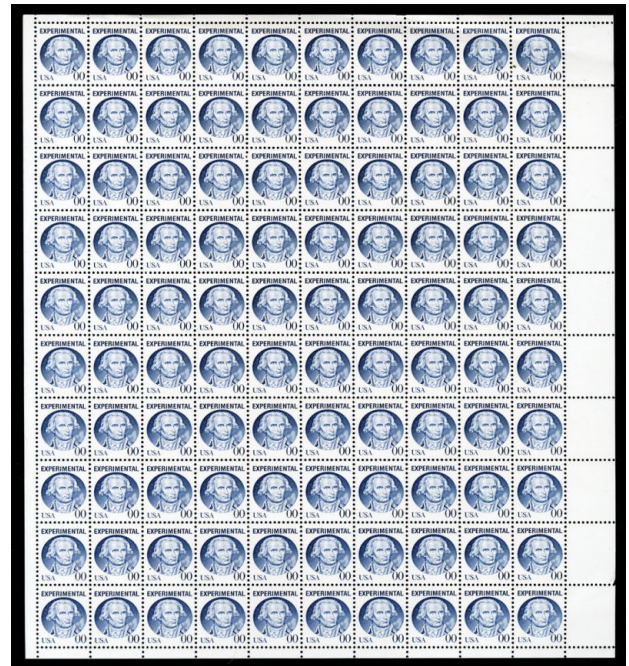
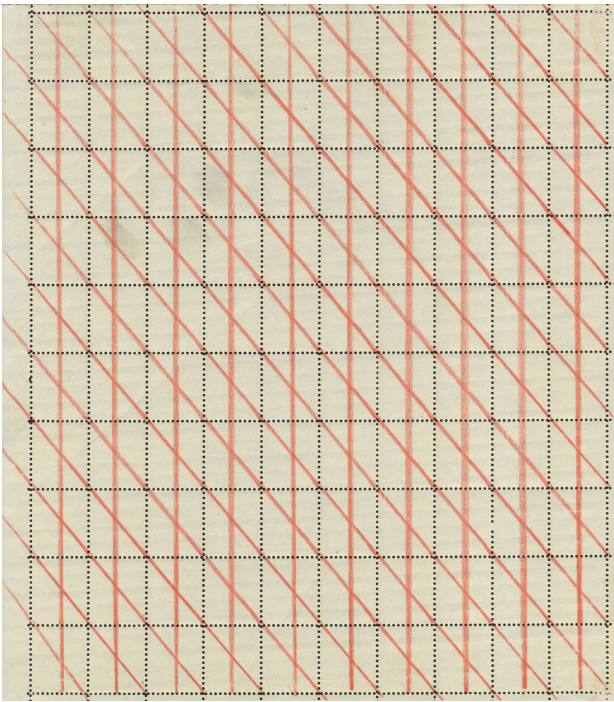


Lot 303 ** TD107e, 1962-88 Black Coil Test Stamps, Roll of 3,000 unopened, centering appears VF-XF, untagged, NH. Photo. Cat. \$3,000.00. Not sold.

On September 15, 2019 Michael Rogers Online, a Division of Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions, LLC held Sale #5065 that contained the following test stamps. There is a Buyer's premium of 20% for this sale.

Lot 10245 **田 TD84A Test Stamp, 1920's-50's, B.E.P. blank design, gum breaker ridges 5mm to 6.5mm apart (Scott TD84A), full pane of 100, Red defacement markings running N-S & NW-SE., o.g., mostly never hinged (offset on gum); UR & LR thins & small selvage missing., Very Fine. Scott \$1,250.00. Not sold. [See photo on Page 6.](#)

please turn to page 6 ➤



Lot 10246 ** TD122a Test Stamp, 1990's, B.E.P. blank design, blank, uncoated paper, shiny gum (Scott TD122a), Complete coil roll of 3,000 w/ leader and trailer strips., o.g., never hinged, Very Fine. Scott \$30,000.00. Realized \$250.00.



On September 17-18, 2019 Cherrystone Auctions held Sale #0919 that contained the following test stamps. There is a Buyer's premium of 15% for this sale.

Lot 66 ** TD130F 1993 Test Stamp, unissued design (George Clinton) in blue gray inscribed "Experimental USA 00", sheet of 100, n.h., v.f., Photo. Cat. \$15,000.00 Est. \$3,000.00. Realized \$3,500.00. [See photo at the top of the right side column on this page.](#)



please turn to page 7 ➤

Lot 67 P TD130F-E1, TD130F-E2 and TD130F-P1 1993 Test Stamp, unissued design (George Clinton), three large die proofs, two with center only in black, the other in blue gray inscribed "Experimental USA 00", v.f. Photo. Est. \$750.00. Realized \$1,000.00. (Editor's note: The catalogue numbers shown here are correct, just the description of them all being proofs is incorrect.

There are two essays and one proof. The 2020 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers incorrectly has these numbered as TD130C items. This will be corrected in the 2021 Scott Specialized Catalogue to TD130F items.) [See photo on Page 6.](#)

.....

Proposed Future DSSG Projects

Dummy Booklet Guide

You may have noticed a change in the title of the project that Mike Perry and I have been working on. At the WESTPEX 2019 stamp show in San Francisco, California Mike and I met several times to discuss and to show both Roger Brody and Nick Lombardi the latest draft of a project that was previously known as the updating of *Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets*.

After several discussions, Roger decided that it would be in the best interest of the *United States Stamp Society* to make this project an actual published book. In making it a book, it was also decided that the title would be changed to *Dummy Booklet Guide*. Needless to say that Mike and I were very pleased at this decision and are working to make it the best possible publication on this interesting subject of dummy stamp books.

The last update by Earl McAfee, Dummy Booklets Study Group Chairman, was in 1998.

Since then there have been many new discoveries. Many of them have been written up in articles in *The United States Specialist*. Now the time has come to document and illustrate them in a new *Dummy Booklet Guide*.

I ask all of you to join Mike Perry and myself in this project as we are not able to do it all, nor would you want us to do it all. It is a Dummy Stamps Study Group project and all members have a chance, and are greatly encouraged, to provide their input. Any information on new items or any items not listed in the previous 1998 edition of *Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets* would be appreciated. While we believe we have most everything necessary to complete this book to include currently known dummy booklets, we may be missing important information that you can provide. This publication will be in full color. □

Requests for Articles for The United States Specialist

Martin Kent Miller, the new Editor of *The United States Specialist*, is always looking for articles of interest for inclusion in our society's monthly publication. The type of articles Martin needs most are the shorter ones, one or two-page articles. If you are considering writing an article for *The United States Specialist*, please contact him for instructions. If the article is regarding dummy stamps, I would appreciate knowing

about it also. Many members of the DSSG have written articles on dummy stamps and other stamps for this publication. It is rewarding and other USSS members benefit greatly from the information that is published in *The United States Specialist*.

Martin can be reached by e-mail at: editor@usstamps.org □

please turn to page 8 ➤

The Other Projects

There are several other projects currently being worked on by various members of the DSSG. They are as follows:

- Compiling a complete and comprehensive list of dummy test stamp roll sizes, box and roll labels. There are many different styles of labels sometimes found on the same test stamps. This is especially true of Bureau of Engraving and Printing products
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive record of auction appearances and prices realized for test stamps
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive listing of references for test stamps
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive list of plate numbers printed on test stamps and the frequency in which they appear. Also the frequency of joint lines and/or back counting numbers on test coils when they appear. □

This issue and all past issues of the Dummy Stamps Study Group Newsletter - Dummy News and Views may be found at:

<http://www.usstamps.org/dssg.html>