



Internet Philatelic Dealers Association Inc ©

Established 23rd February 2002



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NEWSLETTER JULY 2014

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EDITORS COLUMN

Welcome to the July edition of the Newsletter.

Hello everyone. Another month flown by. I use the word flown this time because it seems I have been doing little else but flying this past month. The highlight was my Seoul - Narita - Seoul - Hong Kong inaugurals with Asiana on their new A380.

Three inaugurals in one day, Tiring but very enjoyable. Any of you interested in aerophilately will perhaps like the cover I show and perhaps the picture. Lovely crew I might add! And I don't look so bad!!



That has just about been the extent of my philatelic activities this past month. Perhaps I can even go as far as to suggest you mention me to any of your clients who collect aerophilatelic items.

Stamps of the Month



I have also flown Hong Kong - Sydney - Hong Kong and the aerophilatelic interest there was that I was able to pick up some of my stock in Sydney which, when time permits, I will be listing in my Bidstart Store.

July should be a quiet month, dream on I think, but in August I am planning another trip to Seoul for the PhilaKorea Stamp Show. If by chance any Members are going please let me know and perhaps we can meet up.

As for IPDA activities I think we have a few significant items of news.



The world's most legendary postage stamp, the unique 1856 British Guiana 1¢ Magenta, was auctioned June 17 at Sotheby's in New York for a record \$9.48 million, including buyers fees.

First, let me congratulate Allan Oliver on his appointment as our new Chairman. As I have heard through various channels this is a very welcome appointment.

Second, let me congratulate Ken Sanford, one of our Directors, for his persistence and commitment to getting a response from the US Department of Treasury on their position regarding the sale of philatelic items from "sanctioned" countries.

The IPDA may be quiet at times but behind the scenes we have people like Ken working very hard, and doing good work I might add, for the IPDA and you our Members. On pages 2 and 3 of this Newsletter you can read more on this.

Let me also thank Steve Hill once again for a another very useful article about selling stamps.

That seems to be my space filled :-)) Have a great July, and don't forget to write to me with ideas and articles. Best wishes.. Michael michaelatipda@gmail.com



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US SANCTIONED STAMPS

As readers will know that have been a few pieces in past Newsletters about the challenges some members have had as a result of selling stamps from countries that are US sanctioned countries. Our Director Ken Sanford has been pursuing this topic on our behalf and he sent me the following for all our information.

Ken advises that he had a reply from the U.S. Department of the Treasury about the trading of philatelic material from sanctioned countries, such as Sudan. It clarifies that philatelic material that is already located in the U.S. and cancelled stamps (and therefore covers with cancelled stamps) are not subject to the prohibitions in the regulations.

Ken is writing to eBay, asking them, in view of this clarification, that they should lift their restriction on selling philatelic items from the sanctioned countries that are not subject to the U.S. Treasury regulations. The following is the letter.



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

Case No. SU-2013-305166-1

Kendall C. Sanford
613 Championship Drive
Oxford, CT 06478-3128

Dear Mr. Sanford:

This is in response to your request dated October 1, 2013 (the "Application"), requesting clarification as to whether the Sudanese Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R. Part 538 ("SSR") prohibit trading in philatelic material (stamps and envelopes) from Sudan from the 1930s. You also request guidance as to whether the various U.S. sanctions administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") in connection with a range of countries (*e.g.*, Iran, Cuba, Syria, North Korea, Burma, Ivory Coast, Congo, etc.) prohibit trade in all philatelic material, regardless of when it was produced, or only material produced after the effective date of the applicable sanctions. Because the Application indicates that your activities involve philatelic material from Sudan, and because the prohibitions of other sanctions programs vary greatly depending on the U.S. foreign policy and national security goals underlying such sanctions, this letter addresses only the specific prohibitions that are set forth in the SSR.

Except for certain exemptions and general authorizations, the SSR prohibit the exportation or reexportation, directly or indirectly, to Sudan of any goods, technology (including technical data and software) or services from the United States or by a U.S. person, wherever located, or requiring the issuance of a license by a federal agency. The prohibition on the exportation of services contained in Section 538.205 of the SSR applies to services performed on behalf of the Government of Sudan or where the benefit of such services is otherwise received in Sudan. In addition, Section 538.201(a) of the SSR prohibits dealings by U.S. persons in property or property interests of the Government of Sudan. Therefore, to the extent the philatelic material is property of the Government of Sudan, or the Government of Sudan otherwise has an interest in the material, it would be "blocked" property, and a U.S. person would be prohibited from transferring, exporting or otherwise dealing in the items. *See* SSR § 538.201(a).



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US SANCTIONED STAMPS ... CONT'D

Section 538.204 of the SSR prohibits the importation into the United States, directly or indirectly, of any goods or services of Sudanese origin, other than information or informational materials. The term *goods of Sudanese origin* includes goods produced, manufactured, grown, extracted or processed within Sudan, as well as goods that have entered into Sudanese commerce. SSR, § 538.312. As such, the importation from Sudan or a third country of any philatelic material that meets the definition of *Sudanese origin* (e.g., stamps that entered into Sudanese commerce at any time in the past), regardless of when such material was produced, would be a prohibited activity and would require authorization from OFAC. However, there would be no prohibition against dealing in any material that is already located in the United States and that is not "blocked" pursuant to section 538.201(a), as explained above.

The prohibitions contained in the SSR do not apply to the importation from any country and the exportation to any country of *information and informational materials*, whether commercial or otherwise, regardless of format or medium of transmission. SSR, § 538.212(c). The term *information and informational materials* includes publications, films, posters, phonograph records, photographs, microfilms, microfiche, tapes, compact disks, CD ROMS, artworks, and news wire feeds. Please note that cancelled stamps would be considered *information or informational materials* and therefore not subject to the prohibitions contained in the SSR.

Please also note that compliance with the SSR does not excuse a U.S. person from the need to comply with other provisions of 31 C.F.R. chapter V, and with other applicable provisions of law. Such requirements include the Export Administration Regulations, 15 C.F.R. parts 730 *et seq.*, administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, 22 C.F.R. parts 120 *et seq.*, administered by the U.S. Department of State.

If you have any further questions, including about other sanctions regulations administered by OFAC, please feel free to visit our website at www.treasury.gov/ofac, call our office at 202-622-2480, or submit another written request providing as much detail as possible about the activities and material at issue.

Sincerely,

June 16, 2014

Andrea Gacki
Assistant Director for Licensing
Office of Foreign Assets Control

Date

THE ART & BEAUTY OF STAMP COLLECTING

I came across this: If you have not seen (and heard it) please have a look and enjoy.
<http://clevelandohiousa.tripod.com/stampcollecting/>



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AMAZON SELLING COINS..... AND STAMPS

Editors Note: A recent article came to my attention. As shown below. The question posed to me was would Amazon be opening a Stamp Store? My research has found that Amazon already has stamps for sale. See image at bottom of page. I do not think it is through a formalised Stamp Store, such as the Coins Store, but maybe this is something we will see in the future. I welcome more informed comments on this topic and especially if anyone has experience in this arena.

Source: EcommerceBytes.

Collectors can now turn to Amazon.com to buy collectible coins with the launch of a new collectibles store. Featured on the Amazon Collectible Coins Store homepage are coins ranging from an 1882 Morgan dollar listed for \$105 to an 1893 Barber half dollar listed for \$8.9 thousand (with free shipping). The most expensive coin listed, according to Amazon, is the 1907 No Mint Mark Saint Gaudens Ultra High Relief Pattern for \$3.7 million.

The new store joins Amazon's other "Collectibles & Fine Art" categories: Sports Collectibles (launched in 2012); and Entertainment Collectibles and Fine Art (both launched last year). Amazon also sells wine to customers in certain states through its Wine Store.

Amazon spokesperson Erik Fairleigh told EcommerceBytes the new Collectible Coins Store was inspired by customer demand, explaining that "coins" has been a top keyword search by customers. The new store is kicking off by featuring rare coins from the Saddle Ridge Hoard, recently found by a California family, in what Fairleigh said was an exclusive deal.

"In 2013, Marketplace sellers sold more than a billion units worldwide on Amazon," Fairleigh said. "The launch of the Collectible Coins store is the latest category introduced specifically for sellers."

"Amazon continues to invest in the growth of selling on Amazon as Marketplace Sellers represent approximately 40 percent of the total units sold on Amazon," he added.

The new store launched with only 75 or so dealers. As with Amazon's other collectibles categories, including Books, Sports & Entertainment and Wine, Amazon is requiring sellers to apply before being able to sell. "We have not set limits and welcome all interested sellers to apply and contact us for more details," Fairleigh told EcommerceBytes. "We evaluate all potential sellers on a case by case basis. At launch, we are working with primarily professional coin dealers."

www.amazon.com/400-Canada-All-Different-Stamp/dp/B00E9IC4LC/ref=sr_1_17/189-3184356-2544226?s=miscellaneous&ie=UTF8&qid=1403594630&sr=1-17

amazon Try Prime Your Amazon.com Today's Deals Gift Cards Sell Help

fire PHONE JUST ANNOUNCED Learn more

Shop by Department Search All Go Hello, Sign in Your Account Try Prime Cart Wish List

400 Canada All Different Stamp
by modlowarvai
Be the first to review this item

Available from these sellers.

- Collectible Stamps

1 used from \$16.80

Buy used: \$16.80
+ \$6.00 shipping
Used: Good | Details
Sold by modlowarvai

Add to Cart

or

Sign in to turn on 1-Click ordering.

Add to Wish List

I did some more reading, well once you start it is hard to stop. I found one coin on Amazon for sale for US \$3.75 Million. Are these people for real? And I found so many threads discussing the topic of selling coins on Amazon and eBay - not one positive comment from some 50 comments I read.. All saying how neither could be trusted and how much fraud there now is - people buying, receiving or claiming not to receive, or sending back as not advertised quality. I wonder how serious a problem this is in the philatelic arena? Or is it? Write to me with your experiences.



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AUCTION SELLING CLOSING TIMES

Editors Note: I receive an email from one of our members with the request that I write a piece on the good times of the day/night to list items on say eBay and Bidstart? Interesting idea and one I am very grateful for receiving. The following starts to address this I thought about drafting a table showing country by listing time / closing time but not sure I can do better than my readers in executing that, and anyway I am not sure of the seasonal time difference changes around the globe so please forgive me for missing that part of the question.

While I suspect there is no one simple answer to this I will try to give some guidelines and thoughts based on my readings and ideas.

The answer will perhaps depend on which country you want to attract buyers from, and the closing time in that country; even the audience you expect to view your items, eg retired buyers, professionals who work 9 to 5, mothers at home who collect stamps, and even the overall eBay visitor statistics by day of week.

Here are some ideas, copied from material I have found on the internet with credit to whoever wrote them - I cannot find definitive sources for the authors.

Using peak visitor statistics to eBay for example, and perhaps Bidstart, I do not know of their data, if available, visitor views run in daily and weekly cycles following the same pattern seen around most of the World Wide Web. In general, traffic flows according to the following two simple rules:

- 1) Daily peak visitors are between 8:00pm and 10:00pm. To maximize bidding for daily peak time, list your auction during this window so that it will close during this window and gain the largest possible daily audience.
- 2) Weekly peak visitors are on Sunday evening. To match your listing to the weekly peak in order to maximize bidding, list your items so that your auction will close on a Sunday evening between 8:00pm and 10:00pm

Of course you can only do this for a group of countries, say US east coast or west coast, in those time periods. If you are targeting Europe you need to work out the time difference to where you are. Asia or Australia will of course have different time zones.

Experts agree that a seven day auction is best. The primary reason for the longer auction is to attract more attention and viewers to what you are selling. Typically, Sunday is considered the best day to end an auction followed closes by Saturday and then Friday.

So, when possible, end your auction on Sunday. Monday & Saturday are your second choices, followed by Friday and aim at ending your auction at 9 pm (+/- 1 hour)

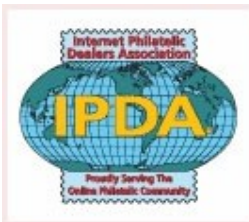
Another piece I read stated the following, which I think is worth repeating, and although reference is to eBay the views apply to any auction site I would think.

When you put an item up for sale on eBay you want not just everyone in the world to see it but everyone in the world to bid on it so that the \$1.00 item sells for a million dollars!!!! Unfortunately, that's not going to happen but there are things that you can do to increase your chances of the listed item getting more views, which can lead to more bids, which can lead to a higher sales price.

Firstly, before you put your item up on an auction site, have a look around and see how many other sellers are selling the same thing as you. In fact, if you are selling on eBay also look at other sites and compare. The more people selling the same item, the less yours will go for, so you may want to consider waiting until there are not so many of those items up for sale.

While you are looking at the auctions, take note of the starting prices, how many bids they have, did they sell, and the ending price, If you don't want to wait, start of with a lower starting bid. This may encourage more people to bid on yours. And, if you can get a bidding war going you could end up with a better sales price.

I hope you found this useful, and, as always, I welcome feedback, and personal experiences. And, as a closing thought. Why not make it very clear you are an IPDA Member!!!



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SELLING STAMPS PART II BY STEVE HILL

Editors Note: This is the second in a series of articles from Member Steve Hill from [Steve Hill Stamps](#). Thanks Steve. If other Members have advice or experiences please write to me so we can share and learn from each other.

Selling stamps at a distance is a risky business. Why? because anything you do has a risk attached to it, and selling stamps is no exception. Internet boards are rife with stories of dishonest buyers and sellers, but in reality it is a lot safer than some other areas. The greatest risk in reality for small value lots that I have seen is ourselves and the capacity for errors.

With any task there is a risk of errors. I've had several issues over the years (Wrong photos, lost packages, stamps with a hole in the middle, lots switched between customers, full sets with missing stamps etc) - I think I've made every error in the book at times but still keep surprising myself! I have however managed to maintain close to 100% positive feedback by keeping the customer in mind.

One word of caution, I'm not a seller of high value lots, and the risks described below will be different for some. For any seller I'd suggest a review of your risks is a good starting point. We all sell differently, so not all of these will be the same. Your pricing should allow for losses due to errors and fraud, and your number of transactions should be high enough that any one loss has a negligible affect on your overall profit.

Preventing errors

Before we get on to how to deal with issues, try not to let them happen at all! Ensure you check your lots and sendings systematically to minimise errors. Checking is expensive (it takes time) so consider whether any check is needed, and whether it can be incorporated in to your existing process. If a check is never finding any issues, it may be able to be dropped or reduced.

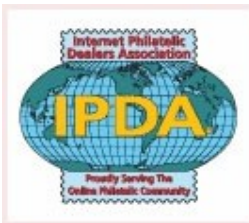
A rule of thumb is that the later an error is discovered, the more expensive it is to put right. If you discover a damaged stamp while sorting you haven't really lost that much. If you've sold that stamp as undamaged however, and is returned you've lost postage, listing fees, your time etc.

The first point of failure is in the lot itself. Is your lot worth selling? I check the lot as I assemble it, and also on the scans. If it's damaged, make sure it's still worth listing, and that damage is added to the description. If it's not worth listing, bin it (or junk box) and move on, selling bad product is a quick way to bad feedback.

Listing collectables is hard because in the main you are selling a one of kind item. We don't have the luxury of creating one listing for 300 units of stock, it's one listing per item in the main. It's also the second main point of failure. The less you have to change to create the listing the less can go wrong, so using templates and/or copying existing listings minimises issues, but can also cause problems (copying the MH listing to list a used set, and miss half the 'Mint Hinged' tags - been there!)

I also check the listing once it is complete. This is an additional check I make a couple of hours after creating the listing. It takes a bit of time as it's an additional check, but catches a whole host of issues which I don't catch with an immediate check after listing. If I worked with anyone else this would be the check I would get someone else to do it as that would be more effective.

The listing is then left until it sells, or until a review of unsold items. I don't do this often enough, but where an item has not sold, it's often wise to check it after a while, there is a far greater chance of issues, and people normally won't let you know (would you?).



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SELLING STAMPS PART II BY STEVE HILL

After a sale is the third point of failure, are you sending the correct stamps? I've found that using stock numbers (The A1234 on the end of my descriptions) helps to minimise these and other picking errors. The reason is that it is a unrelated term to double check the order. The stock number can also help you organise your sale stock so can actually make packing orders quicker (e.g. A1234 - Stockbook A, page 12, item 34) or by date to enable discounting (e.g. A1234 - A(2012) -12(December) - lot 34), or by any other combination, I would keep them as small as possible though.

Once it's in the hands of the post office, it's out of your hands, but mitigation against losses here can be considered (Tracked packages, Third party insurance etc) if it is economic.

Dealing with Complaints

Before you even get your first complaint, I'd try and have a plan ready first. This needs to be legally compliant with any consumer regulation in your country, and also the marketplace and payments provider's rules. Hopefully this section will give you pointers in this direction but is not meant as a fully compliant plan.

The most important advice is to put yourself in the customers position, and look at the evidence (as per the list below). You then have to come to a decision about whether the claim is valid and how to take it forward.

- The listing and original photos - for items not described correctly or for undisclosed damage
- Previous orders from the customer - search Paypal using their email to identify any transactions or refunds.
- The customer's location - especially for Items Not received
- The customers feedback - Check feedback received and feedback left for similar issues encountered.
- The length of time since the customer should have received the item
- Tracking data (if available)
- The item price (for cheap items refund and forget is often the best way forward)

If something looks wrong about the claim, ensure that the customer opens a formal case so that the site knows about it. Some shady buyers will actually avoid doing this to remain under the radar, and those that don't and open too many cases will be barred. I'd also add them to your blocked buyer list so you have no future dealings. I'd be civil in all cases, and unless you can prove malpractice to eBays/ Paypals standards (a tough thing to do), give up and move on knowing you've blocked them so they won't cause any further issues.

If the claim looks valid however, I'd always go with a sincere apology and generous (but not extravagant) compensation for the error, or offer a full refund on return (with you covering postage). e.g. stamp was sold for £5 MNH, but was in fact mounted making it worth £3.50, A partial refund of £2.50, or full refund (including return postage) was offered. Your partial refund was greater than the strict value of loss, but you are still up as the customer hasn't returned the item.

Very often if you deal with a customer fairly you will not receive negative or neutral feedback, in fact they can become repeat customers as they trust your judgment (making a mistake on their second order would probably be pushing it though!). Negative or Neutral feedback is likely to have a far worse effect on your business than any refund will do (another reason not to deal harshly with issues)

If the first contact the customer makes is via the feedback system, I'd add them to my blocked list immediately, then try and resolve the issue as if it was an email. If it can be resolved amicably I'd then asked for the customer to review the feedback.

Finally, after you've closed the complaint it is a good idea to review what happened. How did the issue occur? Should your checks have caught the issue? Is it worth having additional checks? By reviewing where things go

