

# New Members Questions and Answers

Reprinted from *The Perfins Bulletin*

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## New Members Q & A

### How is the value of U.S. perfin determined?

Perfin patterns are rated on a scarcity scale from A to F. An A rate is given to patterns where there are ten or less copies known to exist. The B+ rate is given to patterns where there are 11-20 copies known. The B rate has 21-40 copies known; C+, 41-80 copies known and C rated perfins are often found in collections of 2400+ different patterns. The D+ rating is considered above average in rarity and D patterns are considered average in rarity, in that they are found in collections of 1200-2400 different patterns. The E rate is considered to be common and the F rate is found in practically all collections.

There is no reference catalog assigning a \$ value to each of the 6400 + U.S. perfin patterns. However, for the practical purpose of trading duplicates with other collectors, an unpublished value scale has developed; F=10¢, E=15¢, D=25¢, D+ = 50¢, C=\$2, C+=\$4, B=\$8, B+=\$16 and A=\$30. Based on this generally accepted value scale, collectors are comfortable trading two C's for a C+, two C+'s for a B, two Bs for a B+ or two B+s for an A. These values are not cast in stone; nor would all collectors completely agree to these relative values, but over the last decade most reasonable collectors have generally embraced such a scale, because if they are selling their duplicates, rather than trading them, the above values appear to be "in play."

The above discussion does not apply to Schermack Coil Punches listed in the Catalog of U. S. Perfins. These stamps have a higher rarity factor for perfin

collectors as well as a considerable interest from other collectors of U.S. postage stamps. Many regular stamp dealers offer them at unusually high prices. These private coils have only four different ratings, and generally speaking, their value is about double that of similarly rated other U. S. postage stamp perfin patterns; B=\$15, B+=\$30, A=\$60 and A+=\$100-\$120. You will note that such a value scale also accommodates trading duplicates; two Bs for one B+, two B+s for an A etc.

One would be remiss if a mention of "prices realized at auction" did not get included in a discussion of values of perfin patterns. The reader has probably noted unusually high prices are frequently realized at auction. Two or more bidders with deep pockets in competition, produce a different result than two collectors, trying to negotiate a reasonable exchange. Therefore, new members are cautioned to not consider auction prices realized as the standard accepted value of perfin prices, but rather, should refer to what collectors are using as fair value exchange rates.

*If readers of this column have questions that relate to collecting U. S. Perfins, please mail them to Jerry Hejduk, PO Box 490450, Leesburg FL 34749-0450 or email them to flprepers@comcast.net or to the Editor at his address listed on page 2.. Similarly, considered opinions that differ from the answers/viewpoints presented in this column are always welcome at the same addresses.*

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## New Members Q & A

**When asking a question about perfins, I am often told to be sure to check the A & C pages. What are they, and why are they important?**

Over the years, the Perfins Club has published four issues of the *Catalog of United States Perfins*; in 1958, 1966, 1979 and 1998. The issuance in 1998, like its predecessor in 1979, was designed to be both a catalog and an album. New members are encouraged to obtain a copy of the latest (1998) edition to aid in the identification and collection of U.S. perfins, as it is the most comprehensive reference book on the subject.

In 2002, the Perfins Club published Additions and Corrections #1 as an addendum to the 1998 Catalog. It is 22 pages in length addressing:

- A. Corrections of the printed material in the Catalog;
- B. Changed pattern ratings;
- C. Additional information and new identifications;
- D. Extended periods of usage;
- E. New patterns.

It is clear from viewing this publication that the U. S. perfin body of knowledge does not become stagnant even when a comprehensive catalog is published. The 20+ pages in this document are testimony to the amount of new and updated information that presents itself in a period of four years.

In 2006, the Perfins Club published Additions and Corrections #2 (to the 1998 Catalog) following a format similar to as that which was presented in A & C #1. The later publication has a comparable amount of valuable additional and new information for the collectors of U. S. perfins.

Probably the most readily usable information for new collectors is the Corrected Ratings; reflecting

the change in the value (rarity) of the individual perfin patterns. There were forty-three (43) such changes in A & C #1 and twenty-eight (28) in A & C #2. If you are buying or trading U. S. perfins, it is important to know the rarity rating of the perfin pattern under discussion.

Many collectors transfer this updated pattern rating information to the Album Pages of the 1998 Catalog; below the picture of the pattern. They strike a penciled line through the old rating and, to the left of the old rating, they "pencil in" the new rating. Then just to the right of the old rating (outside the box), they pencil in either '02 or '06 reflecting the year of publication of the A & C pages in which they found the correction. It is important to remember that we are referring to a 1998 Catalog, because that is the publication for which these Additions and Corrections are made.

Copies of A & C #1 and A & C #2 may be obtained from the Perfins Club Publication Sales Manger, David Lightle. The Perfin Club member cost for A&C #1 is \$5 and A&C #2 is \$6.50, postage paid. Such an investment will show you firsthand how valuable update information can be. See page 22 for David's contact information. A complete listing of Perfin Club literature is also available on the club web site, [www.perfins.org](http://www.perfins.org).

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## New Members Q & A

### How do most members mount their perfins?

In recent memory, the membership has not been polled to determine how most members collect/mount their perfins. It is safe to say that many use the catalog/album to various degrees. Inherent in the hobby is that there is no best/worst, right/wrong or good/bad way to collect and/or mount stamps. The answer as to why collectors mount stamps the way they do is to learn why they decided to collect perfins, and, as they accumulated them, how they decided to display them so that they might review their degree of success toward their collecting objective and possibly share it with others.

The members who use the catalog/album to mount their stamps are split into two basic groups: 1) stamp face up, or 2) face down. The face down "mounters" want to clearly show the perfin pattern, hopefully well centered in the stamp with no holes missing and the stamps are often found mounted in clear Showgard type mounts. The face up "mounters" usually have a tangential interest in particular stamp issues such as the 1902-08 series, Two Cent reds, Apple Greens, Black Hardings, etc. and take pride in displaying them. In addition, the crossover collectors of perforated precancels find it of much more interest to show the precancel on the face side, rather than the perfin punch from the back.

The collectors who do not mount the stamp in the catalog/album often indicate that they want to use the catalog as a reference to check future acquisitions. If there is a stamp covering the

referenced pattern, whether by hinge or in a mount, it is not easy to place a different stamp over the reference pattern. Some collectors use Vario or Hagner type pages to display perfins. Others use clear stock pages so that stamps can be seen from the front or back and frequently will put plain black paper pages between the stock sheets in order to make the perfin pattern clearly visible from either viewing position.

Please remember, as has been stated previously in this column, if one is going to use a catalog/album to mount their stamps, new members are encouraged to obtain a copy of the latest edition (1998) along with Additions and Corrections Pages Nos. 1 and 2. That combination of publications will provide the most comprehensive references for collecting and mounting perfins.

To further delineate the numerous stamp mounting possibilities, Perfins Club members with more collecting experience are encouraged to provide a description of different/interesting methods of mounting perfins with an explanation of how and why they devised such a method.

*If readers of this column have questions, suggestions or alternative answers to previous questions, please mail them to Jerry Hejduk, PO Box 490450, Leesburg FL 34749-0450 or email them to [flprepers@comcast.net](mailto:flprepers@comcast.net).*

## New Members Q & A

### What is known about perforators and their use?

The earliest known means for protecting the owners of postage stamps from their use by unauthorized persons was printed surcharges on the face of the stamps. Such activity was permitted in the 1860's in England as well as in a number of smaller countries. The obvious difficulty was the confusion of the imprint with the cancellation.

Later it was proposed to print on the underside of the stamp before the gum was applied. That method was used for only a short time because in 1868 an Englishman, Joseph Sloper, invented the machine for perforating initials (Perfins) and obtained the endorsement of the British Post Office. In addition to referring prospective users to Sloper, the British Post Office agreed to refuse to recognize Perfins offered by other than the authorized user.

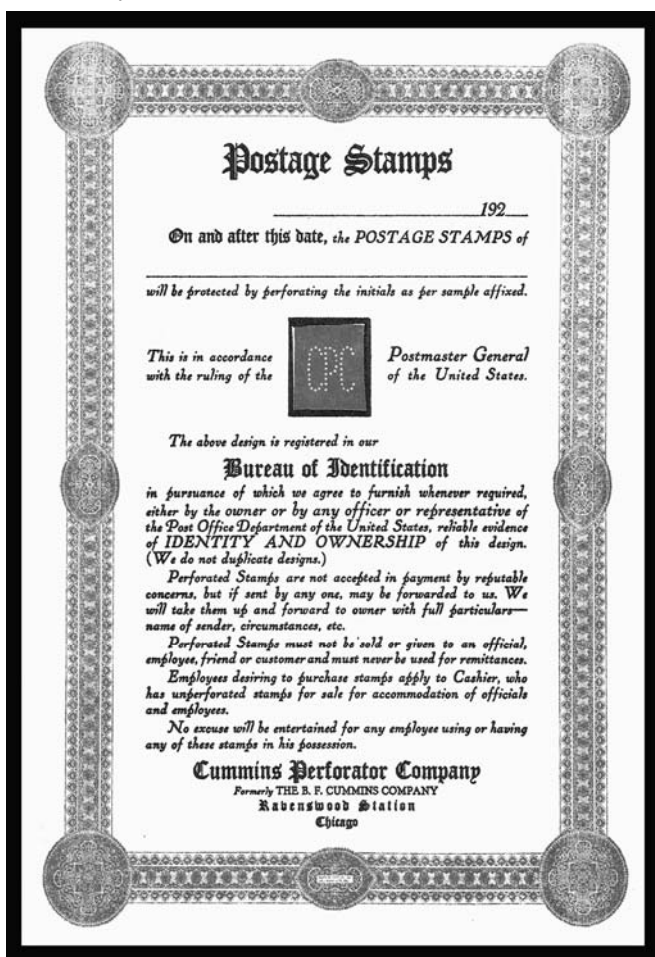


Figure 1: Cummins "Bureau of Identification" registration certificate.  
(Note offer to forward mint perfins to owner)

In the U.S., official authorization for the use of Perfins was not given until 1908. There were only two stipulations, which still exist today: 1) the punches or perforations shall not exceed one thirty-second of an inch in diameter and 2) the whole space occupied by the identifying device shall not exceed one-half inch square. Stamps of earlier periods are known with holes, but it is not possible to know whether they were perforated during the period when they were current. No copy of a U.S. Perfin on a cover postmarked before 1908 has been reported. Because the 1902 series was still widely used as late as 1910, it is not unusual to find perfins on that issue.

Although the Sloper patent had expired by 1908 and the idea was free to be used, only two U.S. companies, the American Perforator Company and the Cummins Perforator Company, both of Chicago, are known to have made machines. Because Cummins operated a redemption bureau for channeling mint perfins back to their proper owners, it was apparent that they had their own indexing system. (See Figure 1.) It is not known whether there was an exchange of information to avoid duplication.

Stephan Grabowski, in his October 2002 article in *The Perfins Bulletin* [56:117-118], noted that Cummins perforator machines were made in four principal models over the years. Model 50 was a single-die machine, which could almost fit in the palm of your hand. It resembled the embossing seal device used by notary publics in the early days. The single-die model was discontinued about 1930. [Editor's note: An image of a Model 50 could not be located in time for this issue of the *Bulletin*. It will be included in a future issue when available.]


Model 52 was a popular five-die hand operated machine discontinued in 1939. Model 53 was a popular ten-die hand operated machine last sold in 1956; and Model 56 was a ten-die electrically operated machine discontinued after 1942. (See Figures 2, 3, and 4 on pages 76 and 77.) A fifth model, a 5 by 3 arrangement of 15 dies was used in recent years by the States of Illinois, Iowa and New Jersey. Similar information is not known about the American Perforator machines.

# New Members Q & A

## What is known about perforators and their use? (cont.)

**Cummins No. 52 Postage Stamp Perforator**  
SAFEGUARDS THE POSTAGE STAMP ACCOUNT

Marks stamps at the rate of  
from 300 to 500 per minute

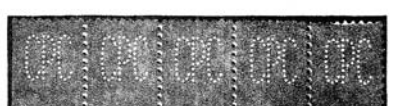


**Capacity Per Stroke**  
3 or less initials on each stamp,  
(20 stamps each stroke, Row of 4,  
four sheets thick.)  
4 initials on each stamp,  
(15 stamps each stroke, Row of 3,  
three sheets thick.)  
5 initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke, Row of 2,  
two sheets thick.)  
6 initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke, Row of 1,  
two sheets thick.)

**SPECIFICATIONS**  
Maximum height.....10 3/4"  
Maximum width incl. table.....8"  
Length of base.....12 1/2"  
Width of base.....9"  
Length of handle from  
center of pivot.....10 1/4"  
Size of table.....4 1/2 x 4 1/2"  
Net weight.....23 lbs.  
Shipping weight.....30 lbs.  
Size of shipping box.....7 1/2 x 9 1/2 x 18 1/2"  
Finished in Black Enamel and Nickel.

The Perforations made by this machine conform to the requirements of the Post Office Department, i. e.,  
Holes not over 1-32 inch in diameter. Total space not over 1/4 in. square.

The stamps are perforated in half sheets lengthwise. They lie flat on a plate flush with the die and are  
pushed forward by the operator one row at a time. A marginal guide properly locates the perforation on  
each stamp. The handle is raised by a spring and its stroke is short and quick—suitable for rapid work.



**CUMMINS PERFORATOR CO.**  
4740 RAVENSWOOD AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Figure 2: Cummins ad for its Model 52 Perforator

It should be noted that a certain few dies are arranged so that the letters normally read diagonally across the stamp, but most read horizontally when they are properly fed into the machine. It is obvious that the handiest way to put stamps through the small, five-die machine is to fold the sheet lengthwise in the middle. The result is that half of the punches will read face up and the other half face down with the center two columns facing each other.

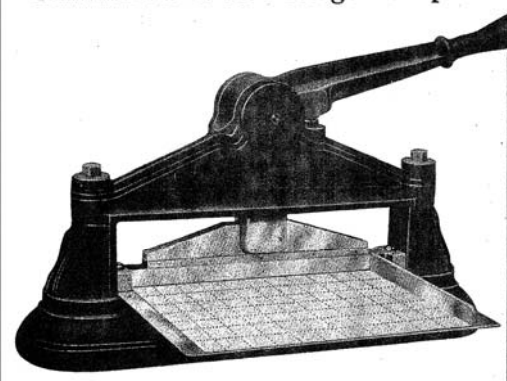
On the large machines, they will all face in one direction according to the taste of the operator, but the guide is so arranged that it is easier to feed the stamps so that the Perfin design reads forward with the face of the stamp up. Operation of the machines was frequently delegated to the lowest paid office employee or other inexperienced help so it is not surprising if the quality of Perfins is not held to the high standards expected of government stamp printers.

Recent further investigation of the production of commercial perforators in both the U. S. and U. K. has confirmed that the last of the companies producing such machines, the Cummins Perforator Company and the Chainstream Ltd. are no longer in business. Such information further supports the current interest in these machines as collectables.

In the last few years, several club members have acquired these used machines for \$250 to \$500 depending on the model, condition of the heads and whether it was a direct sale or purchased at auction.

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**Cummins No. 53 Postage Stamp Perforator**



**Specifications:**  
Weight, net ....33 lbs.  
" boxed...48 lbs.  
Base.....5 x 17 1/4 in.  
Height.....9 in.  
Length of handle 14 1/2 in.  
from Center of Pivot  
Finished in Black Enamel  
and Nickel

**Capacity Per Stroke**  
3 or less initials on each stamp,  
(20 stamps each stroke, Row of 10,  
four sheets thick.)  
4 initials on each stamp,  
(15 stamps each stroke, Row of 8,  
three sheets thick.)  
5 initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke, Row of 6,  
two sheets thick.)  
6 initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke, Row of 4,  
two sheets thick.)

The Perforations made by this machine conform to the requirements  
of the Post Office Department, i. e., Holes not over 1-32 inch in di-  
ameter. Total space not over 1/4 in. square.

**CUMMINS PERFORATOR CO.**  
4740 Ravenswood Avenue  
CHICAGO, ILL.

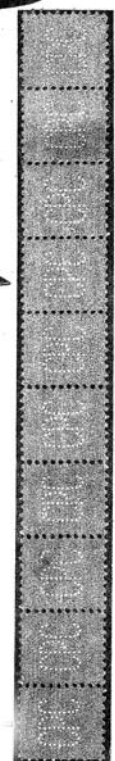


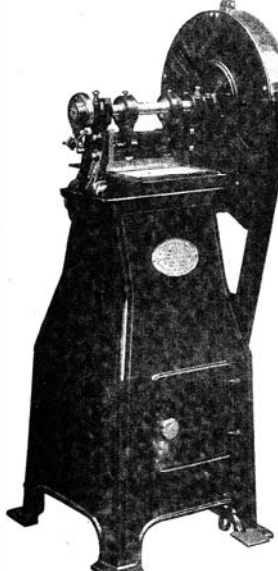
Figure 3: Cummins ad for its Model 53 Perforator

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## New Members Q & A

What is known about perforators and their use? (cont.)

**Cummins No. 56**  
**Postage Stamp Perforator** (Motor Operated)



The Perforations made by this machine conform to the requirements of the Post Office Department, i. e., Holes not over 1/32 inch in diameter. Total space not over 1/2 in. square.

Perforating has been found to be the only effective method of preventing the stealing of stamps.

Other methods of marking for identification by owner are forbidden as amounting to cancellation.

The stamps are perforated without being separated from the sheet. They lie flat on a plate flush with the die and are pushed forward by the operator one row at a time. An adjustable marginal guide properly locates the perforation on each stamp.

**CAPACITY PER STROKE**

3 or less initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke. Row of 10,  
three sheets thick.)

4 initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke. Row of 10,  
three sheets thick.)

5 initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke. Row of 10,  
two sheets thick.)

6 initials on each stamp,  
(10 stamps each stroke. Row of 10,  
two sheets thick.)

**SPECIFICATIONS**

Weight net 500 lbs., boxed 645 lbs.  
Base 21" x 21".  
Height to top of feed table 37".  
Height to top of fly wheel guard 54".

**CUMMINS PERFORATOR CO.**

4740 Ravenswood Avenue Chicago, Illinois

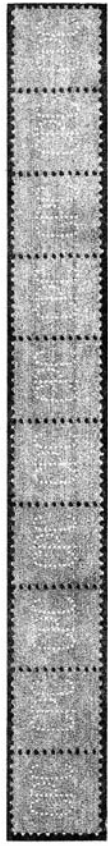


Figure 4: Cummins ad for its Model 56 Perforator

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## New Members Q & A

### Which side of the stamp has more important information for the collector of perfins?

There seems to be reasonable agreement that to a general perfin collector, the pattern of the punch is the largest single factor in determining the value of a U.S. perfined postage stamp; and that the pattern is usually best identified from the back of the stamp. However, to the specialty collector the face of the stamp is also of significant importance. In particular, the issue collector identifies her/his prey by searching through stamps that are face up.

One should note that in auction listings of perfined stamps, the pattern, pattern rating and the issue (usually by Scott catalog number) define individual stamps. The issue collector of "Apple Greens" scans the auction listings for Scott No. 513, the "Black Harding" collector for Scott Nos. 610, 611 and 612 and the "Kans. and Nebr. Overprint" collector for Scott Nos. 657-679.

Novice collectors of perfined stamps should understand that catalog values or rarity ratings for perfined stamps are for a particular issuing authority and a specific class of stamps. For example, a rating shown for a pattern in the *Catalog*

*of United States Perfins* is not applicable to U. S. Revenue Stamps that might be found with that same pattern. Similarly, if one is a collector of Canadian Postage stamps and is considering purchasing a collection, checking the face of each stamp is important. On rare occasions, Canadian stamps were punched with a U.S. pattern and consequently could have a high value rating in the Canadian Catalog, but in the U. S. Postage Catalog it could have a low value rating.

To reiterate, Revenue stamps do not belong in a U. S. postage stamp collection and stamps from other countries do not belong in a single country collection other than their own. The only way a collector can make that determination is to inspect BOTH sides of the stamp.

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## New Members Q & A

### Where can I find information about personal perfins and how is their value determined?

By way of background, the latest *Catalog of United States Perfins* (1998) lists security punches for both commercial and personal patterns. At the time the catalog was published, there were 6351 different commercial patterns recorded. In contrast, there were only 65 non-commercial patterns identified.

In that edition of the catalog, reference was made to personal punches as “so-called vanity punches. They were not made for commercial purposes but for personal use by collectors.” As we might suspect, over the years there have been several inquiries as to why personal perfins have no ratings.

Two years ago, in an effort to shed some light on the subject of personal perfins, Bob Szymanski (LM#145) undertook a “Census of Unrated Perfins”. His survey request was published in the September 2007 issue of *The Perfins Bulletin* (61:186-188). The results of the survey were published in the February 2008 issue of *The Perfins Bulletin* (62:21-22).

With regard to the value of personal perfins, the accepted standard rate of exchange has been fifty cents for those patterns readily available. In a recent auction, four patterns that were identified as “hard-to-find” (fewer than 10 copies known) in Szymanski’s survey, ranged in hammer price from \$29 to \$93.

Because of the recent increased interest in identifying and collecting personal perfins, a checklist of U.S. Personal Perfin Punches has been updated to include all new and deleted patterns through August 2009. Copies are available from Personal Punch Checklist, PO Box 490450, Leesburg FL 34749-0450.

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## New Members Q & A

### Is there any interest in collecting coil stamps with perfin?

The general answer to your question is yes, but the prevalence of the interest is difficult to determine. Perfin collectors who include a synoptic collection (one of every U.S. stamp issued) among their interests are always on the lookout for U.S. coils with perfin as they are some of the more difficult spaces to fill in their album.

The 1939 Rotary Coil Stamps of the '38 Presidential Series that are perforated 10 vertically seem to be in ample supply with perfin patterns, as opposed to those perforated 10 horizontally in the same series; probably because a strip of five would be a better "fit" in the typical five head machine. In particular, pattern **I119I** is often found in coil stamps. Coincidentally, this is the only pattern of the six listed for the City of Chicago that has a vertical oversized pattern, perhaps designed to be used on vertical coil stamps.

The oldest and most rare coil stamp that I have seen is a Scott #354, 4-cent orange brown Washington Head with a **B3** perfin pattern. I am sure that there are other synoptic perfin collectors who can identify different scarce issue holdings.

Personal perfin patterns are often found in coil stamps, perhaps because most personal perforators are single head machines and can easily accommodate punching a strip of coil stamps, both horizontally and vertically perforated.

We know that there are general stamp collectors who have an interest in U. S. coils of all kinds, from normal pairs to line pairs to gap pairs, and could well include precancels and perfin. That would be somewhat similar to Railroaders who collect railroad memorabilia from model trains to postage stamps with railroad perfin.

As has been said many times before in this column, there are no rules for collecting. Whatever a collector finds of some interest becomes a collectable, and the degree of that interest will probably determine the breadth of the collection.

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## New Members Q & A

### Can all U. S. perfin patterns be found on definitives or are some found only on air mail, commemoratives, parcel post or special delivery stamps?

Maybe yes, but probably not—it depends on how the collector defines “definitive”. That evasive answer should not present a problem; every collector decides what is to be collected and how it is to be displayed/mounted without knowing the total universe of possible collectables.

Some collectors of U. S. perfins consider definitives to be those stamps that are regular issues of the Postal Service (USPS), possibly including the first six airmail stamps. Others, who mount their stamps face down, are sometimes guided by the size and shape of the stamp and some collect only “vertical” definitives. The confounding issue with mounting face down by shape and size is that from 1927-32 there were several commemoratives that were the same shape and size as definitives. Finally, there are some one-of-a-kind “A” rated patterns that have been found only on commemoratives. When more of the same pattern are found, they may be on definitives.

Again, the answer to “Can all U. S. perfin patterns be found on definitives,” lies, to a large extent on one’s

definition of what constitutes a definitive stamp. For purposes of this exercise, it has been suggested (by Bob Schwerdt) that we refer to the definition found in the 1966 Edition of R. J. Sutton’s *Stamp Collectors Encyclopedia*: “Definitive—a stamp intended for normal everyday use usually put on sale for an indefinite period as distinct from a provisional, commemorative or charity stamp.”

Using Sutton’s definition all that is left for the collector to decide is whether, for the purpose of the collection under consideration, airmail stamps are definitives or provisionals and proceed with the search. In a lifetime of collecting, the likelihood of one finding 90% of what is known to exist is remote at best. Nevertheless, is it not the “hunt” that keeps collectors motivated?

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## New Members Q & A

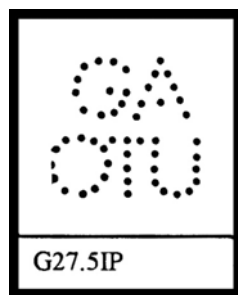
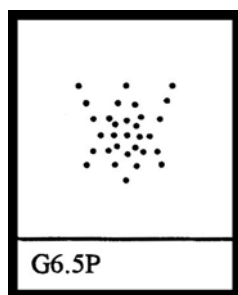
### Members are continually encouraged to write articles for *The Perfins Bulletin*. How and where do new members start on that path?

Whenever you are presented with a philatelic problem/question and then research it and come up with an answer, you may ask yourself if other perfin collectors might have the same question. If so, would they be interested in learning about the answer you have postulated? It has been the author's experience that there are very few coincidences in life. Most outcomes/results happen for a reason and, in most cases, they can be attributed to little known efforts or applications.

In collecting perfins, the presence of a corner card, postmark and the issue/denomination of the postage stamp enhances the definition of the perfin pattern. Sometimes this additional information provides previously unknown answers to the question at hand and occasionally it presents new questions to be answered.

To those of you that like puzzles, and the search for information to solve them, we on the *Bulletin* Editorial Staff would like to offer you an opportunity to start down the "path" referenced in the title of this article.

On page 131 of the November/December 2009 issue of the *Perfins Bulletin* [63:131], reference is made to "the recent increased interest in the identification and collection of personal perfins." An updated checklist of U. S. Personal Perfin Punches was offered to members who had an interest in the topic.



If one is both a collector of U. S. perfins and a reader of current fiction, a review of the personal perfin images on page G-28, Appendix G of the *Catalog of United States Perfins* will likely give them pause

regarding patterns **G6.5P** and **G27.5IP** shown near the bottom of the previous column. Both are attributed to John Cunningham, Washington, DC.

At the time the previously mentioned *Bulletin* article appeared, Dan Brown (author of *The DaVinci Code*) published his third novel, *The Lost Symbol*. Both of these perfin patterns can be found in this latest novel. However, they are not presented as perfin patterns, but rather as a symbol and a saying of the Masonic Lodge. Furthermore, one of the central characters of the novel is Warren Bellamy, the Architect of the United States Capitol Building. Is it possible that John Cunningham, owner of the personal punches in question, is/was among other things an architect? Is this a coincidence?

The conundrum: Who is/was John Cunningham? The available club records do not show that he was ever a member of The Perfins Club. Do any of you members remember him or have any information about him? What is the significance of these two personal punches? Are they personal to Cunningham or are they a message from the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons?

To help answer this question and present each of you with a challenge, the *Bulletin* Editorial Staff is offering a special prize/reward of \$45 in "Perfins Club Bucks" to the Club member who presents a reasonable explanation of the above puzzle/riddle in the form of a draft article for publication in the *Bulletin*. These Perfins Club Bucks may be used to pay your annual dues, or purchase auction lots, stamps, covers and/or publications that are sold by The Perfins Club.

*If new members have questions they would like to have answered, or other members have suggestions or alternative answers to this or previous questions, please forward them to Jerry Hejduk, PO Box 490450, Leesburg, FL 34749-0450 or [flprepers@comcast.net](mailto:flprepers@comcast.net).*

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## New Members Q & A

### There seems to be a lot of "hype" about attending the annual Convention. How would a new member benefit from attending?

It is probably safe to say that the one thing new Perfins Club members lack in common is experience in the hobby. At the Annual Convention, there will be significant opportunities to meet and interact with club members with a wide diversity of experiences accumulated over many years. There are no limits or rules on what and how to collect, and exposure to the totality of experiences enumerated over a week of conversations can be overwhelming but greatly satisfying.

Those senior members articulating their experience and knowledge usually bring with them hundreds, if not thousands, of duplicate/extra perfins. These personal holdings, along with what the stamp dealers in attendance have to offer, make the Annual Convention the single best event to be able to "pick-up" particular perfin patterns for purchase. Such an opportunity presents a great advantage over buying mixtures which are usually found to be filled with many, many duplicates of E & F patterns.

It is understood that traveling a good distance from your home to spend the better part of a week in a hotel (whether or not you consider it your vacation) can be an expensive venture. Regardless if your basic motivation for going to the meeting is to enhance your knowledge or to increase your holdings of perfins, you need to have a plan. Such a plan could involve a list of the patterns you have, or if you are an advanced collector, a list of what you

do not have.

The *Catalog of United States Perfins* has 6400+ perfin patterns listed, and my guess is that new members will find it easier to account for the patterns they have collected than to build a want list of the patterns they need. Traveling with a bulky perfins album can be difficult, particularly if you are not taking your car to the meeting. If the number of stamps in your new perfin collection is not particularly large, you might consider purchasing the "Checklist of United States Perfins," available from the Perfin Club Catalog Sales Department for \$3.00. It is 23 pages in length and will be an adequate record of what patterns you do, and do not have.

So, if you are looking for more perfin knowledge, or more stamps, or both, there is no better venue to find them than at the Perfins Club Annual Convention. Detailed information about this year's meeting in Burlington, Vermont, can be found on the front page, internal pages 100 and 111 and the back page in this issue of the *Bulletin*. We look forward to seeing you there.

*If new members have questions they would like to have answered, or other members have suggestions or alternative answers to this or previous questions, please forward them to Jerry Hejduk, PO Box 490450, Leesburg FL 34749-0450, U.S.A, or [flprepers@comcast.net](mailto:flprepers@comcast.net).*

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## New Members Q & A

### What is a synoptic perfins collection and how does one start such an activity?

A complete U. S. synoptic collection will have a perfined stamp for every issue or denomination. Different from a general U. S. perfin collection where the goal is to collect every perfin pattern regardless of the stamp that embodies it, the goal of the synoptic collection is to collect every stamp issued with a perfin in it regardless of the perfin pattern.

All that is needed to start such a collection is a comprehensive U. S. Postage Stamp Album. There are many such albums available; however, over the years, it has been found that a Scott album is most accommodating. Remembering that in this activity you are not collecting perfin patterns per se, but rather stamp issues and denominations with perfins, such a search is best accommodated by knowing the Scott number of the stamp being sought.

When visiting a regular stamp dealer who does not normally deal in perfins, you might find one or more regular issue U. S. stamps with perfins. They will most often be identified by Scott number. Such identification is most helpful to the perfin collector who does not have the ability and/or interest to check for watermarks, perforations, printing methods on such issues as the Washington/Franklins, Special Delivery stamps, etc.

Having a Scott album makes it easy to build a "Synoptic Want List" by Scott number to take to stamp shows that do not feature perfins and precancels. Remember, attending such stamp shows

requires adjusting your mindset in regard to stamp pricing. You are not buying based on an inexpensive perfin pattern, but rather U. S. used stamps that are priced by Scott catalog number. Even though in some collectors' minds perfins are considered "damaged stamps" because there are holes punched in them, the dealer will probably consider them "space fillers" at some percentage of the Scott catalog value for used stamps. The trick is to see how low a percentage the dealer will take for the "hard to find" stamp that happens to have a perfin. The more difficult to find issues will usually demand a higher percentage of the catalog price. For example, an issue such as the first six airmails probably will not go much below 50% of the Scott used catalog price.

Remember, stamps in synoptic collections are usually mounted "face up" so what is found on the face of the stamp will more than likely determine the value of the stamp rather than what is, or is not, found on the back of the stamp. Having a synoptic collection gives you something to do at stamp shows where large quantities of perfins are not available. Give it a try! Most who do, find the "reverse value" concept challenging.

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## New Members Q & A

### As a perfin collector, I have accumulated a large number of revenue stamps. What do I need to know to start a collection?

Don Woodworth, a member of the American Revenue Association (ARA), wrote "The Perfin Collector's Introduction for Revenue Stamps (An Introduction for Non-Revenue Collectors)." Or, stated differently, an introduction to back-of-the-book United States Revenue stamps for collectors of front-of-the-book postage stamps. What follows is the essence of his message.

Many dealers, when asked for back-of-the-book material, will produce airmail, postage due and official stamps. When a revenue collector (Revenuer) asks for back-of-the-book material, they are really seeking material that is much farther back. They are looking for the revenue stamps in the 30 listed categories (R through RZ) in Scott's *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* or even farther back and beyond those listed by Scott, such as Tax Paid material that is found in places like the Springer's handbooks or the Springfield list. A handy way to think about this subject in general is that revenue stamps were used to pay a tax or fee and were not valid for postage.

Perfins are found in the following Scott-listed Revenue Categories:

- Documentary (R) - from 1872 onward. Punched cancels exist on earlier issues.
- Proprietary (RB) - from 1875 onward.
- Future delivery (RC) - all issues.
- Stock Transfer (RD) - all issues.
- Wine (RE) - all issues.
- Beer (REA) - from 1902 until end of use.
- Playing Card (RF) - only a very few examples reported.
- Silver Tax (RG) - only a very few examples reported.
- Narcotic (RJA) - on purple strip stamps.

Most revenue collectors concentrate on federally issued stamps beginning with the First Revenue Issue of 1862. Revenue stamps existed long before then as embossed stamps used during the late colonial/early federal periods. Those stamps tend to be scarce and, pre-dating the perfin period, would not likely be of interest to perfin collectors.

Punched cancels, but not perfins, are found in the First Issue revenue stamps of 1862 onward. Perfins, as familiar to collectors of this genre, do not really begin to appear until the Documentary Issue of 1902 and the Proprietary issue of 1875. Perfins run riot in the Documentary and Stock Transfer issue of the World War I - World War II period.

We have mentioned both Scott-listed Revenues and non-Scott-listed Tax Paid Revenues. Most revenues bear a monetary value and were used to show payment of a tax. Nearly all Scott-listed revenues fall into this category.

When Revenuers talk about Tax Paid stamps, they are talking about stamps also issued by the government which show the quantity of the taxed item but not the amount of the tax. There are also stamps for an item that might normally be taxed but is legally exempt for some special reason, or to indicate payment of a fee. There is a fine line between tax and fee; the best rule of thumb perhaps being that a tax is a tax, but a fee indicates that some sort of service may have been received in return for payment. Licenses or permits tend to fall in the latter category.

One other item perfin collectors might encounter in the broad area of revenues is Lock Seals. They had no monetary value and did not identify something as being tax exempt, but did warn that the commodity they protected (alcohol) required the proper tax to ultimately be paid. Seals have a diamond-shaped area outlined by perforations to show where a key was to be inserted through the paper to the lock beneath. While definitely not perfins, these diamond-shaped punches exist for those who like holes in their stamps!

This concludes a very brief introduction to revenues and their perfin connection. If you would like to read the complete text of Mr. Woodworth's article, it may be found in the introduction to Art Mongan's (LM#3443) 2007 *A Handbook of Perforated or Punched Initials, Numbers and/or Designs in United States Revenues and Fiscal Documents*. For those desiring more information about revenue stamps, you can find it in two excellent references:

- A website maintained by Eric Jackson, former President of the ARA, at [www.ericjackson.com](http://www.ericjackson.com) under a button titled "Intro to Revenues" then the heading "Leshner on Revenues" by Ron Leshner, also a former ARA president.
- A book by Richard Friedberg, titled "Introduction to United States Revenue Stamps", ISBN 0-940403-63 (hardbound) and 00-940403-62-5 (paper).

*If new members have questions they would like to have answered, or other members have suggestions or alternative answers to this or previous questions, please forward them to Jerry Hejduk, PO Box 490450, Leesburg, FL 34749-0450 or [flprepers@comcast.net](mailto:flprepers@comcast.net).*

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## New Members Q & A

### If, and when, I decide to expand my perfin collection beyond U. S. stamps, what will I need to know and do to start collecting perfins from other countries?

Perfin Club members Bob Schwerdt (#505L) and Doug Turner (LM#2549) provided the basic information for this introductory article. As you will see, such basic information frequently gives rise to more questions on the topic. What follows is the essence of their input.

When the question of how to start collecting worldwide perfins was posed to Schwerdt and Turner, their agreed-upon initial answer was to accumulate, accumulate and accumulate some more! They suggest thinking beyond acquiring perfins in one area of specialization from auctions, bourses, dealers, fellow collectors, local stamp shops and swaps primarily because dealers and other collectors usually do not separate perfins by country. They further suggest that one should amass everything that comes their way that is not too expensive, as the interests of novice collectors may change over time as they learn more about the many options available.

Country catalogs are somewhat difficult to find, so be receptive to accumulating them as well. Note that the Perfins Club Publication Sales Manager listed a number of country catalogs for sale on pages 153 - 155 of the November/December 2010 *Bulletin*. [64:153-155]. Also, remember that the Club Library has several country catalogs to "lend" to members for their personal use.

It is probably wise to avoid the large, expensive catalogs at first, such as Great Britain and Germany (12,000 to 25,000 perfin patterns!). You may become discouraged when you discover you have so few examples to mount. Unless you have translation abilities, be sure to buy catalogs that provide English translations of important data. Study the country catalogs, ask questions of mentors, and/or place want ads in the *Bulletin* (members receive one free ad a year).

As you accumulate stamps from other countries, you eventually will need to decide on a plan of action toward specialization. You will face the same questions and decisions as previously with your U.S. collection. Will it be basic perfin patterns, a

synoptic or issue collection or topical perfins? And, of course, which countries? More specifically, will it be postal stamps only or will it include revenues, officials and/or SPECIMEN punches? Will it be a few small countries, or will it be segments of large countries, such as POKO, a particular monarch, names, geometrics, or topicals from many countries?

Mounting and displaying stamps becomes your next consideration. Depending on what was decided above on "what" you are going to collect, you now have to come to a decision on how to display/mount the stamps. If you are collecting basic patterns, then "face down" will work, if you remember that it is not wise to put hinges on the face of the stamp. If synoptic, or issue collecting, is the route you are taking, then "face up" makes more sense. The author's preference is "face up" on a good quality, acid free collecting system such as "G & K Starsheets."

Remember that eventually, the displayed stamps will be in some kind of order, so don't crowd them at the outset. Leave space for future finds; otherwise you will be forever moving stamps to accommodate new additions.

You will need to dedicate some space in your "stamp room" for new acquisitions of albums, catalogs, articles, shelving and cabinets in a temperature-controlled environment. Remember not to pile albums on top of one another.

Remember that personal advice, counseling and mentoring for all aspects of perfin collecting is abundantly available at the annual convention. So, bring all of your unanswered questions to the gathering in Madison, WI, this coming August and ask the experts.

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## New Members Q & A

The Perfins Club has at least two awards named after individuals; Hallock Card and Floyd Walker. Who were they and what were their contributions to The Perfins Club?

### Hallock Card Award

Hallock Card, a printer by trade who lived in Otselic, NY, was not the first one to collect perfins. However, he was the first to realize that the fun of collecting perfins could be greatly enhanced if there were enough collectors - all interested in perfins - who could form a group, club or society. Thoughts led to actions. Alone and unaided, he started sending out circulars in the mail to see if he could arouse interest and secure enough people that were interested in perfins to form a club.

Hallock's efforts did not go unrewarded, and soon - in 1943 - The Perfins Club was founded. He worked hard over the formation of the Club and his work was of a permanent nature. All those who now receive *The Perfins Bulletin* are members of the Club he founded.

Things went well with the Club; it flourished and grew, but unhappily, things did not go well for Hallock. His health failed, a serious auto accident took its toll and later his eyesight degenerated. In 1956, he closed his albums for the last time. Nevertheless, the foundations he laid for The Perfins Club endured, and in 1967, it was decided to perpetuate his memory by presenting an annual Award to a member who has performed outstanding service in the field of perfins or for The Perfins Club.

The first Hallock Card Award was made in late 1967 to Mr. Karl F. Lougee for his work as editor of the "new" illustrated catalog and his many years of service as Catalog Chairman for The Perfins Club. The complete list of Award recipients is:

1967 Karl F. Lougee  
1968 David C. Stump  
1969 Leonard H. Paul  
1970 Dorothy L. Savage  
1971 James P. Harris  
1972 Lloyd R. Murray  
1973 Richard L. Mewhinney  
1974 Vojtetch Maxa  
1975 Ivan Ley  
1976 Floyd A. Walker  
1977 Robert J. Woolley  
1978 No Award  
1979 Joseph J. & Dorothy Balough  
1980 John A. Gooding  
1981 Robert J. Schwerdt

1982 John L. Needham  
1983 Rudolph J. Roy  
1984 No Award  
1985 Jon Johnson & Gary Tomasson  
1986 Paul A. Mistretta  
1987 Harry L. Rickard  
1988 Ralph W. Smith  
1989 Helen Q. Ratzer  
1990 Kurt J. Ottenheimer  
1991 John F. Lyding  
1992 Richard L. Mewhinney  
1993 No Award  
1994 John Nussbickel  
1995 No Award  
1996 Robert J. Schwerdt  
1997 Roy Gault  
1998 John Randall  
1999 No Award  
2000 No Award  
2001 No Award  
2002 Ed Linn  
2003 Rudolph J. Roy  
2004 Chuck Spaulding & Bob Szymanski  
2005 No Award  
2006 No Award  
2007 No Award  
2008 Art Mongan  
2009 Joe Laura  
2010 Jerry Hejduk

Time is approaching when a decision will be made for the member who will receive the 2011 Hallock Card Award. This is not a "popularity contest." It is a "Service Award" for someone who has really done things for the Club and worked for its benefit, or for outstanding service in the field of perfins. Last year's recipient is the Chair of the Committee that will select the member for the Award this year.

Members are asked to nominate in writing - in 25 words (more or less) - one or more of their member colleagues who they think are deserving of the Award this year. Who has done the most for the Club? Who should receive this outstanding recognition for services rendered? Why do you think it is deserved? In order that this process not be a "contest," but remains a wise decision, the committee will not base their decision on the number of times a member is mentioned but rather on the contents of the brief notes you submit.

Nominations for the 2011 Hallock Card Award

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## New Members Q & A

### Hallock Card and Floyd Walker Awards (cont.)

should be sent to Jerry Hejduk, P.O. Box 490450, Leesburg, FL 34749-0450, USA or to [flprepers@comcast.net](mailto:flprepers@comcast.net) by May 15, 2011. The winner will be announced at the convention in Madison, WI this August.

#### Floyd Walker Award

In the October 2002 issue of *The Perfins Bulletin*, the President of The Perfins Club proposed a new award. The name of the award is the Floyd Walker Award in honor of Floyd Walker who was Editor of *The Perfins Bulletin* three different times - 1971 thru 1974, 1980 thru 1983 and 1988 thru 2001. Floyd also penned the first glossary of perfins terminology.

This Award, given annually to a member of The Perfins Club, recognizes contributions to *The Perfins Bulletin* of an original article or series of articles or a group of unrelated articles. Criteria includes the general interest of the article(s), scholarly research or time spent on the article(s), and the presentation of new perfin information for the betterment of U.S. and worldwide perfins collecting.

The inaugural Floyd Walker Award was to have been presented by Myra Walker, but she was not able to attend the award ceremony. However, she graciously penned the following note that was read by the President at the ceremony.

Nothing could have pleased me more than the establishment of the Floyd Walker Award for outstanding contributions to *The Perfins Bulletin*.

Floyd Walker loved writing. He wrote on many levels, having made a living by the pen as well as writing recreationally. Teachers praised his writings early on, and journalism served him well in high school, in the military, and later in college.

Floyd loved philately too...He started collecting stamps when he was a kid and I have often acknowledged that this pastime contributed greatly to his being the most interesting human being I ever knew. I was somewhat amazed over thirty years ago when he began collecting perfins. Those were somewhat lean years but he assured me that collecting the HOLES in stamps didn't cost much. What wonderful doors were opened for him, and in fact, for the entire family.

Floyd enjoyed editing *The Perfins Bulletin*. He

liked writing for it. He loved writing letters and e-mails to the various members of The Perfins Club – and then finally getting to meet many of you in person. I think this award in his name is appropriate, though I admit to being a bit biased...

This award is all about recognizing a richly informed mind and a talent that has been most generously shared through the official communications of The Perfins Club. But this first award is also about sentiment, dedication to a leisurely pursuit, love of research, commitment to knowledge and dedication to sharing, and the gentle spirit of a gentle man who has touched us all far beyond the words written and spoken...

The inaugural winner of the Floyd Walker Award was Bob Schwerdt. The complete list of the Award recipients is:

- 2003 Bob Schwerdt
- 2004 Bob Szymanski
- 2005 Dick Scheper
- 2006 No Award
- 2007 Paul Mistretta
- 2008 Pat Callis
- 2009 Conrad Trembly
- 2010 Steve Endicott

Now is the time for club members to nominate whomever you feel best exemplifies the Floyd Walker Award profile described above. The only caveat is that the award is for authors published in the 2010 volume of *The Perfins Bulletin* [Volume 64, Numbers 1-6]. Review last year's *Bulletins* and nominate the person you feel has written the best article(s), or those that stimulated your thinking most, or maybe those which just put some fun back into perfin collecting.

Nominations for the 2010 Floyd Walker Award should be sent to Ken Masters, Editor *The Perfins Bulletin*, 7907 North Main Street, Kansas City, MO 64118-1449, USA or to [KRMasters@aol.com](mailto:KRMasters@aol.com) by May 15, 2011. The winner of the 2010 Award will be announced at the Convention in Madison, WI this August.

*If new members have questions they would like to have answered, or other members have suggestions or alternative answers to this or previous questions, please forward them to Jerry Hejduk, PO Box 490450, Leesburg, FL 34749-0450 to [flprepers@comcast.net](mailto:flprepers@comcast.net).*

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## New Members Q & A

As a new member, I have questions about specific perfin patterns, from both the United States and other countries.

Are there Perfins Club members who are more experienced than I who might be contacted for assistance?

Realizing that perfin related questions of a general nature should be directed to the editor of this column, narrow focused questions on a specific topic should probably be directed to one of the Perfins Club mentors identified in the January/February 2010 *Bulletin* [64:10] by topic area, and reprinted here:

- **United States:** Steve Endicott, PO Box 2434, San Anselmo, CA 94979-2434; [perfins@gmail.com](mailto:perfins@gmail.com)
- **Other than US:** Bob Schwerdt, 9 Memory Lane, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603-5231
- **Canada/Newfoundland:** Barry Senior, 4 Whiteway Place, Clarendville, NL A5A 2B5 CANADA; [barry.senior@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:barry.senior@nf.sympatico.ca)
- **Worldwide:** Bob Szymanski, 10 Clarridge Circle, Milford, MA 01757-1371; [perfinman@comcast.net](mailto:perfinman@comcast.net)

The Perfins Club Mentoring Program is a free

service for members, and requests for assistance should be specific. Except for Bob Schwerdt, initial contact can be via email. However, courtesy on the part of member-requestor for assistance requires that members send the mentor a self addressed postage paid envelope for the return of any items previously sent as evidence to support their request.

These senior members may well consult with other club members or philatelists who are subject matter experts on the item(s) in question. Remember, in your initial contact; be focused and succinct with your question(s), as those are the kinds of inquiries that require a minimal amount of time for a response. Try it, get an answer to your question and move on with your collecting.

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## New Members Q & A

I understand that the answer to "How do you collect perfins?" is "Any way you want to"; but can you provide a little insight into some of the ways club members collect them?

There being few, if any, rules about what and how to collect perfins, we asked Bob Szymanski (LM#145) to share his experience over the last decade as to what Perfins Club members have been collecting. What follows is an overview of his observations.

- **Collect the whole world:** 1) One perfin from every stamp issuing entity; 2) One perfin on each stamp of any stamp issuing entity; 3) One of each stamp from each country; 4) One of each pattern and issue from each country; and 5) One of each pattern, issue, and position of the perfin from each country. Or, collect a defined part of the world using each of the above categories.
- **Commercial perfins, official perfins or both:** one continent; one country; all countries; one province, state or territory; one location controlled by one country; one location controlled by more than one country; or one location controlled by one or more countries and independent.
- **Commercial perfins:** one city, one company, one product, or one name.
- **Topical:** one type of user (railroads), one stamp (apple green), one series of stamps (Washington Bicentennials), one denomination, one person (Lincoln), one gender; one ethnic group, one

color, one date; or one group of anything (animals, butterflies, Boy Scouts, etc.).

- **Calendar Collection:** Specific date, location, or other variable including, but not limited to, your birth date and anniversary thereof.
- **Revenue Stamps, Personal Punches, Overprints, Commemoratives, Illegal perfins, Coils, Booklet Panes, Plate # Singles, Pairs, Strips** (3 or more stamps), **Blocks** (4 or more stamps), or **Plate # Blocks** are all possibilities.

The presentation above is not meant to be an all-inclusive list but rather a good sample of what is possible to collect.

In addition, most collectors have found it helpful to build a checklist similar to the one for Apple Greens (Scott #513) found on page 89 of this issue of the *Bulletin*. Such a checklist is invaluable on those many occasions in your stamp room, or away at a stamp show, when you quickly want to know what you have, or don't have, in your special collection.

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## New Members Q & A

### What is/are the purpose(s) of the Perfins Club website?

This is a very timely question, as members of The Perfins Club Board of Directors are currently in protracted discussions about the pending revision/update of the website. Initial discussions have confirmed that the Perfins Club Website has two main purposes:

1. To provide information to non-members who might be, or become, interested in joining the Club, and
2. To provide information to current members who are interested in advancing their knowledge by researching the history of perfins and their distribution.

With regard to purpose #1 above, it would be helpful if you as a new member would share your experience(s) of viewing the website.

- What information did you find helpful as a non-member or as a new member?
- Conversely, what questions did you hope to

have answered, for which there was no information or guidance?

Those of you that have yet to check out the website, you are cordially invited to “key” [www.perfins.org](http://www.perfins.org) into your browser, review what you find, and then send me your comments.

It has become abundantly clear that an increasing number of all kinds of potential stamp collectors are “surfing” the web for information about special philatelic interests. Your help by sharing your observations about increasing the value of the information presented on the website would be very much appreciated. To that end, please use the email or snail mail address below. I look forward to receiving your observations and suggestions.

Jerry Hejduk  
P.O. Box 490450  
Leesburg, FL 34749-0450  
[flprepers@comcast.net](mailto:flprepers@comcast.net)

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## New Members Q & A

### Three years of questions and the answer to "Who Was John Cunningham?"

This is the 18<sup>th</sup> and final article of this series of articles that started with the January/February 2009 issue of *The Perfins Bulletin*. Judging from readers' comments, the article most informative to new members (and some old ones as well) was the first in the series: "How is the Value of U. S. Perfins Determined?" [63:3]. There were several specific references to the paragraph relating to "prices realized at auction."

The only unanswered question from the series was the one that the author asked the readership to research and then respond to in the form of a draft article for publication in the *Bulletin*: "Who is/was John Cunningham?" Mr. Cunningham is listed in the 1998 *Catalog of United States Perfins* as the owner of personal punches **G6.5P** and **G27.5IP**.

A further search of the Perfins Club membership records revealed that John Cunningham was member #2438. November 1989 correspondence between Mr. Cunningham and recently deceased Club member Ken Aws (LM#864) documents that John donated both of his personal perforators to the

Brazos Valley Masonic Library & Museum in College Station, TX.

Peter Normand, curator of the Museum, verified that the **G27.5IP** personal perfin pattern (GA/OUT) stands for the "Grand (or Great) Architect (or Artificer) of the Universe," titles under which Freemasons refer to Deity. The library also houses the John M. Cunningham Masonic Book Collection of over 400 volumes.

John Cunningham was a Texas Mason who spent his life in government service and was a resident of the U. S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, when the author visited the Brazos Valley Masonic Library and Museum in the spring of 2011, the perforators could not be located.

*As was mentioned in the introductory paragraph above, this article will be the last in the current series. All 18 of the articles are to be posted to the Perfins Club website [www.perfins.org](http://www.perfins.org) before the end of the calendar year for reference by future "new members."*