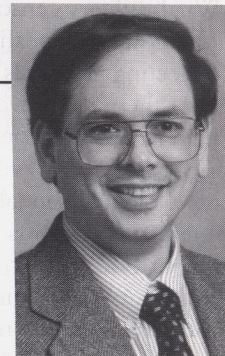


# The Year's Best



As always, our September column is a retrospective of the best of the websites we've covered since last October, and if there's a column you should tear out and stick under your keyboard, this is the one.

We're fortunate that our favorite sites weren't on the dot-com map and that the business shake-out hasn't affected stamp collectors on the Web. As fellow collectors, we're lucky to benefit from the knowledgeable philatelists who enjoy learning as much as they love teaching and are willing to share their information online. It's these independent webmasters who are spreading stamps around the worldwide web.

## Post Office in Paradise

If there were Academy Awards for stamp collecting websites, "Post Office in Paradise" would win seven Oscars and the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award.

"Post Office in Paradise" covers Hawaiian stamps, postal cards and stationery, foreign mails and covers, locals and inter-island mail, postal markings, and news and notes. And it covers these topics in depth.

"Post Office in Paradise" was set up by Fred Gregory, who acts as host to online guests and collaborators. He's been collecting for more than forty-five years and delving into Hawaiian issues for nearly twenty-five. He's a member of numerous clubs — the Royal Philatelic Society, CCNY, U.S. Classics, Hawaiian Philatelic Society, U.S. Possessions Society, and the APS among them.

Design credits go to Andy Wang and Marketing Dynamics Associates, and if you collect Hawaiian stamps, you may want to sign up for the site's e-mail notification service and be alerted to

spurious Hawaiian issues appearing on the eBay boards.

Post Office in Paradise  
<http://www.hawaiianstamps.com/>

## Encyclopedia

Sometimes auction catalogues are more important to collectors than many standard catalogues. They even wind up for sale on eBay's stamp publications category.

The Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries conducts notable auctions and has a very useful section on their website called the "Encyclopedia of Stamps." It contains a wide range of authoritative material on classic U.S. stamps.

Some of the philatelic research you can read and educate yourself about are: the Brattleboro, Vermont Postmaster's Provisional; the Z Grill, 1-cent Blue, Z Grill Census (Scott 85A); and the Confederate States.

Siegel also has census information on many of these classic issues, and you can plug in Scott numbers and get auction listings of past and present stamps for sale, along with scans and write-ups. There's a wealth of information here for the U.S. and better foreign collector.

Encyclopedia of Stamps  
<http://www.siegelauctions.com/enc/enc.htm>

## PNC3

The Plate Number Coil Collectors Club website contains more than an application, bylaws, and list of officers. Although you'll find club-related information, such as club auctions, club chat, and a guest book, there's also a wealth of PNC information to be found.

If you need to know about plate number coils, this is the site to see first.

Not only does its supply of online data keep members current with new PNCs, but it allows non-PNC3 civilians a chance to delve right into this area of stamp collecting.

The site carries information on new plate numbers and varieties, and there's a master list and checklist, all of which are well designed and executed. Although reference reading material is essential, the day-to-day quest of a collector is to acquire new stamps, and two of the most helpful things to be found on this site are the URLs leading to the PNC lots for sale at the APS StampStore and on eBay.

Needless to say, getting the casual stamp-collecting visitors hooked on PNCs is a great way to recruit new members. New members bring new ideas, new stamps, and new sources into the community, and everyone benefits.

Add to this a glossary and tidbits like how to get a precancel permit and other reference material, and you have a site that serves PNC collectors and the club, while teaching the rest of us about this specialty.

Plate Number Coil Collectors Club  
(PNC3)  
<http://www.pnc3.org>

## Princely States

The "Princely States Report" is an online journal of Indian States philately and history. It's commercial-free and the brainchild of Ron Rice, a website and software user interface designer, whose passion is the stamps of India and her states.

"Princely States Report" publishes new articles and material each quarter, like a traditional magazine, and all previous articles can be found in an archive section. A few features are "Rajasthan