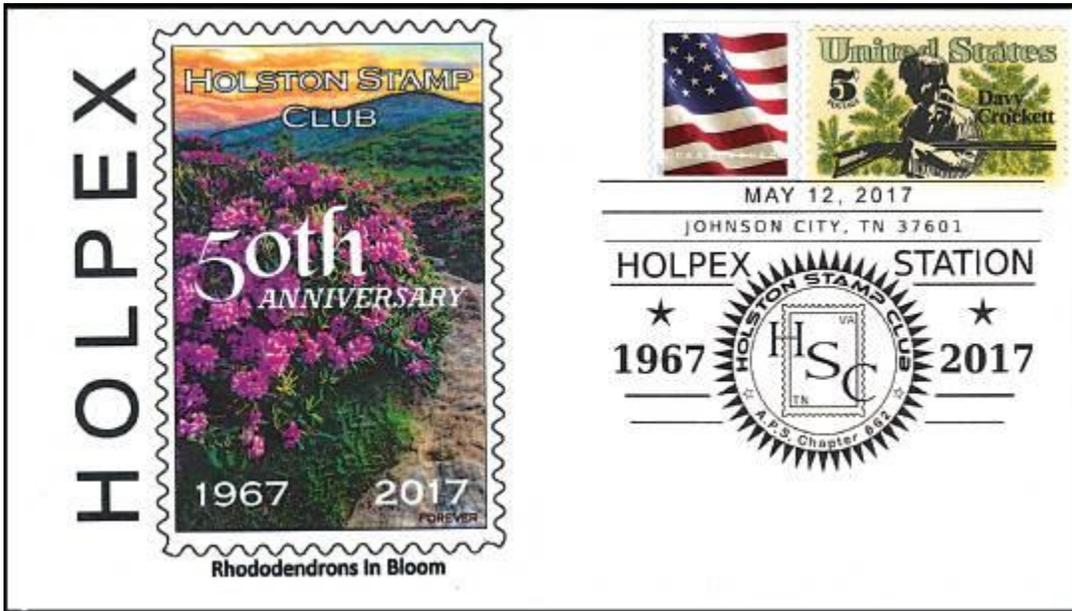


# Holston Stamp Club delivers 50th anniversary show

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A specially designed cachet cover for the Holston Stamp Club's 50th anniversary features a 1967 Davy Crockett 5-cent stamp and a 2017 American Flag forever stamp in the upper right corner. A larger Rhododendrons in Bloom stamp boasts the Holston Stamp Club's 50 years, and a custom cancellation notes the date of the show and the club's name.



Over the past 50 years, members of the Holston Stamp Club have gotten in more than a few good licks.

Founded in 1967, the Tri-Cities club will celebrate its gold anniversary in style, with a specially designed envelope, called a cachet cover, available at its annual stamp show.

"There are a million different ways to collect stamps," club president Steve Schmidt said Thursday. "Everybody develops their own niche."

Schmidt's niche is a set of stamps from the United Kingdom called the Machin series.

Though simplistic in design — all the stamps feature a profile of Queen Elizabeth II, a colored background and a currency denomination — since the Machin design was introduced in 1967 there have been thousands of variations, making the series perfect for collectors.

Because of the sheer number of slightly different stamps in the series, Schmidt said he'll likely never complete the set, although he said unlocking that achievement would be "neat."

Completionism isn't really the goal of most collectors, he said, instead, the hobby is more about the thrill of the hunt and learning about the cultures issuing the postage.

"I started when I was 7 or 8 years old, and it's interesting and quite educational," he said. "If you collect more than just stamps from the U.S., you can learn about other countries and their culture and people, if you pay any attention to what's on their stamps."

Because of his 60 years collecting, Schmidt said he can tear through more obscure clues in crossword puzzles that not many people would know off the tops of their heads.

"I guess that's one of the side-effects of collecting," he said.

Part of the festivities at the stamp club's annual show on May 12 and 13 will include a custom designed chachet cover to mark the occasion, available for \$3 or two for \$5.

The mock envelope features a 1967 Davy Crockett 5-cent stamp and a 2017 American Flag forever stamp in the upper right corner. A larger Rhododendrons in Bloom stamp boast the Holston Stamp Club's 50 years, and a custom cancellation notes the date of the show and the club's name.

A cancellation is an ink stamp used by the U.S. Postal Service to mark that the postage stamp has been used, preventing it from being used again without paying for postage.

Most cancellations name the post office location where the stamps were mailed, the date and lines to cover the stamp, but they can mark special events or occurrences.

Because of the potential for variation, some stamp collectors also prize obscure cancellations.

With the half-century milestone approaching, the Holston Stamp Club asked and received permission from the post office to create the special cancellation.

It will be used on the envelopes on the days of the show next month, then the post office will keep the rubber stamp and eventually destroy it.

The show, running from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days at the Best Western in Johnson City, 2406 N. Roan St., will feature exhibits created by some of the club's members.

There likely won't be any extremely rare stamps in the oversized picture frames on display, but there will be some interesting designs put together by members, he said.

A handful of stamp dealers will also be on hand to sell to hungry collectors, and the collectors usually trade among one another as well.

Admission to the show is free, and the stamp club is offering a membership deal to any prospects. New members will receive a waiver from the \$15 membership fee to finish out the year for free.

The club currently has about 40 members, but all are welcome.

"The number has been higher and it's been lower," Schmidt said. "We're doing quite well, but we'd like to have 50 or 60 members, if possible. We're always looking for more people to join."

The club meets at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month at Northeast State Community College, 2425 Highway 75, Blountville. On months with five Thursdays, the club meets on the fifth for members to buy and sell from their own collections.