

INCREASING THE INTEREST IN THE STAMP
COLLECTING MERIT BADGE

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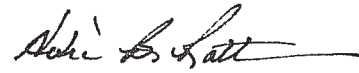
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Hulic Ratterree, Advisor

Increasing The Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

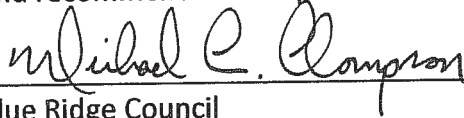
To the Doctoral Candidate Review Board

I am submitting herewith a Dissertation written by Robert White, entitled "Increasing the Interest in the Stamp Collecting Merit Badge". I have examined the final copy of this report for format and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Commissioner Science.



Hulec Ratterree

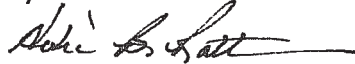
We have read this Dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Blue Ridge Council



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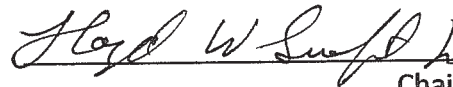


Palmetto Council



Sequoyah Council

Accepted for the Piedmont-Appalachian College of
Commissioner Science



Chairman,
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First I would like to thank Mr. Hulic Ratterree for his support and encouragement while he served as my advisor during the dissertation process. I consider him to be a friend as well as a mentor.

I want to offer my thanks to the review board for taking the time to review my dissertation.

I also thank my daughter-in-law Joie who took the time during her busy schedule to give me some helpful advice about writing the paper.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my wife Chris for the time she spent going over my paper and coming up with good ideas time and time again. She has also supported me through the many nights and weekends spent working on scouting events, the dreadful re-charter process and of course this dissertation.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

INTRODUCTION

As a scout leader and merit badge counselor, I have observed that there is a need to encourage more scouts to become interested in stamp collecting and to complete the merit badge.

By obtaining input from scouts and leaders, we may be able to adapt the presentations and badge requirements to spark their interest to discover scouting's history and their heritage.

As stamps and scouting are both in themselves international, the scout will be participating with scouters all over the world. This could be the start to a wonderful life long adventure while broadening the scout's mind at the same time.

My interest in this is to help scouts learn what scouting and stamp collecting can teach them and how they can develop that interest to learn about history, science, geography and other educational pursuits. On a higher level, stamp collecting can teach leadership, good character and other scouting principles as many stamps commemorate great leaders and role models.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	1
1	GOALS	4
2	RESEARCH	5
3	CONCLUSION	14
4	APPENDICES	15

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to determine more successful ways of encouraging scouts to earn the Stamp Collecting Merit Badge. Current statistics point to a downward trend in the number of boys earning the merit badge each year.

For example, of all the scouts in the Palmetto Council that are at least First Class or above less than two percent will earn the badge. A survey requesting thoughts and opinions was sent to each scoutmaster. They were asked to fill out the forms with input from the scouts in their troop and return them to me.

The results came back ranging from no interest to a lack of knowledge of what is actually required. In addition, there are questions about the difficulty of starting a collection, one of the main requirements to earning the badge.

Several methods and ideas were researched to determine how to use stamp collecting to become more involved in scouting and to have fun doing it. The research also revealed that scouts that help teach the merit badge gain experience and confidence as an instructor and increased interest in philately.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

GOALS

My goal is to find new ways to stimulate the scout's interest to earn the stamp collecting merit badge. Most scouts concentrate on earning the twenty two required merit badges for the rank of Eagle Scout. During their remaining time before reaching the age of 18, they are able to take only a few remaining elective merit badges

Stamp collecting usually requires a financial and time investment to build a collection. Most scouts and leaders believe that stamps are a dying art because of the internet and consider it to be a waste of time without a learning opportunity. The financial burden must be greatly reduced and an emphasis should be placed on learning about the fifty years of scouts on stamps as well as historical events around the world.

My belief is if the stamp clubs in North and South Carolina were approached for help to solve the resource problem, more scouts would be interested. . This has been accomplished successfully on a larger scale at the National Jamboree.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

Research

In my search for information and data, I used the following resources:

the internet, Stamp Collecting Merit Badge pamphlet, Scouts on Stamps Society (SOSSI), international publications, questionnaires and teaching techniques published for the jamboree. During my research I realized the traditional way of teaching the merit badge class locally no longer has the positive impact that we are striving to achieve. The traditional instruction method typically consists of having or developing the scouts own stamp collections, reading the whole pamphlet and memorizing terms and conditions before they came to the class.

SOSSI proved to be a valuable source of information. This international organization is dedicated to providing information about any scout related stamp issued around the world. They specialize in the collecting, study, and enjoyment of stamps and other postal items celebrating the Boy Scout and Girl Scout (Guide) movements. Although this organization's web site is dedicated to the study of scout stamps, it does provide many useful tools toward completing the merit badge.

Scouts have the opportunity to learn about the great moments in scouting all over the world. Through this organization, scouts can join the other 800+ collectors. With their parent's permission they can contact members around the world, many of which are youth to swap stamps and other philatelic related materials. Scouts also may have the opportunity to assist a counselor in teaching the badge. This organization sends a team to every National Jamboree to teach the merit badge. During the 2010 Jamboree three youth were on staff and taught classes. I believe this was a positive experience for both parties.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

In today's environment stamp collecting counselors are competing against many outside interests and activities which scouts find more interesting or easier to achieve. Also, many scouts do not have the means or desire to start a stamp collection, which is one of the requirements of the badge.

When I worked staff at the 2010 National Jamboree, we taught the merit badge to over 270 scouts. 245 of the scouts completed all the requirements and earned the badge. I made the following observations regarding the success of the course during my time there:

- Stamps and materials to make temporary albums were provided to all students.
- Grab bags containing stamps and collectables were given to each scout that signed up.
- Tests were given immediately after two class participation exercises.
- Each requirement was staffed by one or more counselors. No counselor taught more than two requirements.
- The scouts could spread the requirements over several days. This allowed them to work on other merit badges at the same time.
- The Palmetto Council did not have any scouts that participated in the badge. This may have been because they were at the far end of the Jamboree and did not have easy access to the counselors.

Locally only four merit badges were awarded to scouts in the Palmetto Council during 2009 and none were awarded in 2010.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

Merit badge colleges are held in almost every council offering at least ten different merit badges. It is usually a one day class lasting about six hours or a three hour class where more than one class can be taken during the day. The problem is unless a scout has been working on the requirements prior to class he will most likely not have a collection of any type and will receive a partial completion for the badge. This happens far too often and due to the lack of available counselors or interested collectors who can guide the scout, the badge is never finished. Below are the requirements and the degree of difficulty for completion.

Merit Badge Requirements

1) Do the following

1. Discuss how to better understand people, places, institutions, history and geography as a result of stamp collection.
2. Briefly discuss the history, growth and development of the United States Postal System and tell how it differs from other postal systems around the world.

This requirement usually takes about twenty minutes and is easily accomplished in this type of class.

2) Describe topical stamp collecting. Describe three other types of stamp collections.

This may be the most important requirement because this is where the scout creates an interest to build a collection. If the scout can find a topic that he is really interested in, that is where the desire to learn about the subject and build a collection will come into play. If his interest lay in sports such as football or soccer he will find plenty of stamps worldwide dedicated to the sport

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

and individual stars. While reading the stories about the individual stamps he will gain a better understanding of the subject. Some scouts may want to build their collections based on scouting around the world. Being exposed to International Scouting will help to give them an understanding of the different cultures and the way that those scouting units are organized.

Cachets are an excellent way to build a collection based on your chosen topic without the need to have a stamp that is based on the topic. It is simply a picture on an envelope that tells a story.

My belief is that counselors do not spend enough time on this requirement to help the scout to find the right one. He could start out wanting to collect stamps about trains, airplanes, or motor cycles only to find that it may be somewhat limiting. By expanding his collection to all forms of transportation his knowledge and interest about the topic will grow just as transportation itself will change in the future.

3) Show an example of each of the following.

1. Perforated and imperforate stamps
2. Mint and used stamps
3. Sheet, booklet and coil stamps
4. Numbers on plate block, booklet, coil or marginal markings
5. Overprint or surcharge
6. Metered mail
7. Definitive, commemorative, semi postal and airmail stamps
8. Cancellation and postmark
9. First day cover

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

10. Postal stationary (aerogramme, stamped envelopes and post cards)

For most scouts, this requirement will take several months to complete and will require another financial investment. Imperforate stamps, airmail stamps and traditional plate blocks are no longer available from the post office and must be purchased from a stamp dealer. It is best handled by the counselor who can provide examples of each one and go over them with the scout.

4) Do the following

1. Demonstrate the use of a standard catalog for several different stamps. Explain why catalog value can vary from purchase price.
2. Explain the term condition as used to describe a stamp. Show examples that illustrate the different factors that affect a stamp's value.

There are two versions of Postage Stamp Standard catalogues (Scott and US Post Office). New copies can cost from \$75 to \$150 for a single volume and several hundred dollars for a complete set. This information is not in the merit badge book. Scouts who want to purchase a catalogue should look on the internet for one that is several years old. These are usually under \$20.00 for a single volume.

It usually takes a while to become familiar enough with a catalogue to find various printings of a stamp. Both parts of requirement #4 can be better explained in a class room environment where the counselor has all of the examples and tools at his disposal.

5) Demonstrate the use of at least three of the following stamp collectors tools

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

1. Stamp tongs
2. Water and tray
3. Magnifiers
4. Hinges and stamp mounts
5. Perforation gauge
6. Glassine envelopes and cover sleeves
7. Water fluid

Although these can easily be purchased from a hobby shop or even some department stores, learning how to use them safely can be difficult. The counselor should take the time to demonstrate how to use them and allow each student to practice. Improper usage could damage their stamps.

6) Do the following:

1. Show a stamp album and how to mount stamps with or without hinges. Show as least one page that displays several stamps.
2. Discuss at least three ways you can help to preserve stamps, covers and albums

This can be a classroom activity and should last no more than twenty minutes.

7) Do at least two of the following.

1. Design a stamp, cancellation or cachet.
2. Visit a post office or stamp show and explain what you saw and learned.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

3. Write a review of an interesting article from a stamp newspaper, magazine, book or web site.
4. Research and report on a famous stamp related personality or the history behind a particular stamp.
5. Describe the steps taken to produce a stamp. Include methods of printing, types of paper, perforation styles and how they gummed.
6. Prepare a display using clippings, drawings etc; tell a story about the stamps and how they relate.

Options 1 and 5 can be completed in the same day in the classroom environment. Choosing the other steps will require the scout to report back to the counselor at a later date. This would guarantee that the scout leaves with a partial completion.

- 8) Mount and show in a purchased or homemade album one of the following:
 1. A collection of 250 or more different stamps from 15 different countries.
 2. A collection of stamps from fifty different countries mounted on a map to show the location of each
 3. A collection of 100 or more stamps from one country
 4. A collection of 75 or more different stamps on a single topic
 5. A collection of postal items discovered in your mail. Include at least five different types listed in requirement 3.

Requirement 8 can only be done at home unless the scout already has a collection. He should leave the class with recommendations from the counselor on how to proceed.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

While continuing my research I was able to meet with several SOSSI members and members of the Columbia SC Stamp Club to get their input on solving the problem of decreased interest in stamp collecting. Most of them felt that a one on one approach is effective but would take several meetings unless the scout was totally prepared going into it. This very seldom happens because most scouts fall into three categories.

1. They have started a collection or have inherited one and have not read the material.
2. They have skimmed over the merit badge book but have not studied it and do not have a stamp collection.
3. They have not read the material and do not have a collection.

They also believe that the Merit Badge College approach which usually has a very tight time limit ends up with the scout receiving a partial completion at least fifty percent of the time. Each class is usually manned by a counselor and one untrained helper to cover eight stations.

The general feeling among the experts is to obtain at least 5 or 6 stamp collectors and ask for donations of used stamps and a room big enough to contain eight work stations. Determine the maximum number of scouts you can handle and market the class to troops in a particular district. The key here is that they will be able to complete the badge in one day, although most counselors would encourage the scout to read the book ahead of time.

The scouting stamp that was issued at the National Jamboree Post Office in 2010 created a huge interest among the scouting community. Almost every scout tried to get at least some of the various cachets with the new scout stamp attached that were circulating around the jamboree. Since that time some councils have been creating their own cachets and stamping them with

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

information commemorating the event with BSA and UPS approval. These are also becoming a collector's item and are a great way to get the scouts interested in stamp collecting.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

Conclusion

Based on the feedback from the scouts, leaders, counselors and other stamp collectors, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. More scouts will be interested if their financial investment is low. Donations of used stamps from other collectors and stamp clubs will help make that possible.
2. Multiple counselors should be on-site during the merit badge session to insure that the scout will have a good opportunity to complete the requirements for the merit badge in one day.
3. Scouts must be aware of the learning opportunities they can achieve from attending the merit badge session or they will not be interested.
4. A list of available registered stamp collecting counselors should be compiled and sent to the scout masters.

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

APPENDICES

TITLE	PAGE
Appendix 1: Survey Letter	16
Appendix 2: Survey and Results	17-18
Appendix 3: Letter to SOSSI	19-20
Appendix 4: Example Cachets For Local Events	21
Appendix 5: Example of Cachets designed by scouts	22-24

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

Robert J White
4708 Westwind Dr.
Rock Hill SC 29732

Dear Troop Leader

As we all know there is a push for scouts to complete the required merit badges for the rank of eagle. Because of that and other outside activities, little time is left to take one of the 70-plus elective merit badges. As a Stamp Collecting Merit Counselor, I am concerned that fewer boys are taking the merit badge each year.

As a Candidate for the Doctor of Commissioner of Science, part of the requirements for the Doctorate is to research and study ways that we can increase the number of scouts taking the merit badge.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the survey that I have prepared. Please take a few minutes, discuss the questions with your scouts, fill out the form and return it to me via email.

Yours in Scouting

Robert J White
Doctorate Candidate
Piedmont-Appalachian
College of Commissioner
Science, B.S.A.

STAMP COLLECTING MERIT BADGE SURVEY

Scoutmasters

Please print this out, discuss it with your scouts, fill in the information on the form and send it to me as soon as time permits.

1. How many boys have taken the Stamp Collecting Merit badge _____? How many have not _____?

2. Of the boys that have not taken what were the reasons?

- 1. Not a required merit badge
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

3. Of the boys that did take the merit badge what did they like about it?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

4. What changes would you suggest be made to the presentation/requirements to attract more scouts?

RESULTS OF SURVEY

I sent out 41 survey sheets to Scout masters in the Palmetto Council. In return I received 5 survey sheets back with the comments of:

1. Scouts have no interest in the subject
2. Scouts do not think there is a learning opportunity to be achieved
3. Cost prohibited
4. No knowledge of registered counselors

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

Randall S. Frank
Po Box 7638
Newport Beach, CA 92858

Dear Randall

I have completed a study on the Stamp Collecting Merit Badge for my Doctorate of Commissioner Science to see what could be done to encourage scouts to earn it.

While on staff teaching the badge at the 2010 National jamboree I observed successful techniques that may be used in our local districts. This information along with suggestions from scouts and other collectors has led me to the following conclusions:

1. A one-on-one approach is effective but would take several meetings unless the scout was totally prepared beforehand.
2. Most scouts have not read the material and either doesn't have a collection or have inherited one and know nothing about it.
3. More scouts would be interested if their financial investment were lower. Donations of used stamps from other collectors and stamp clubs would help make that possible.
4. Multiple counselors should be on-site during the merit badge session to insure that the scout will have a good opportunity to complete the requirements for the merit badge in one day.
5. Scouts must be made aware of learning opportunities they can achieve from attending the merit badge session or they will not be interested.
6. Council offices should be contacted for a list of registered Stamp Collecting Merit Badge Counselors that are within a two state area of the unit. Careful attention should be maintained to verify with each council that a Merit Badge Counselor is currently approved to work with Scouts (for youth protection purposes).

Increasing the Interest in The Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

I would be interested to know how this compares with SOSSI members who have taught the merit badge in other states. Any recommendations that you can pass on to me would be greatly appreciated.

Yours in Scouting

Robert J White
Doctorate Candidate
Piedmont-Appalachian
College of Commissioner
Science, B.S.A

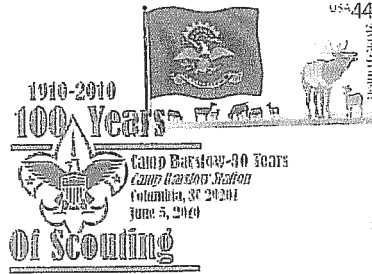
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JUNE 5, 2010

USA 44

Cachet Sponsored by Indian Waters Council
BSA & SOSSI — Palmetto Chapter



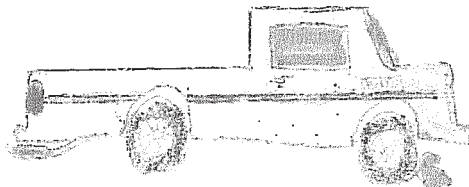
SPECIAL SCOUT DAY: SCOUTING EXPOSITION
OCTOBER 16, 2010, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA



Cachet Sponsored by Indian Waters Council
and Palmetto Chapter of SOSSI

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The Best



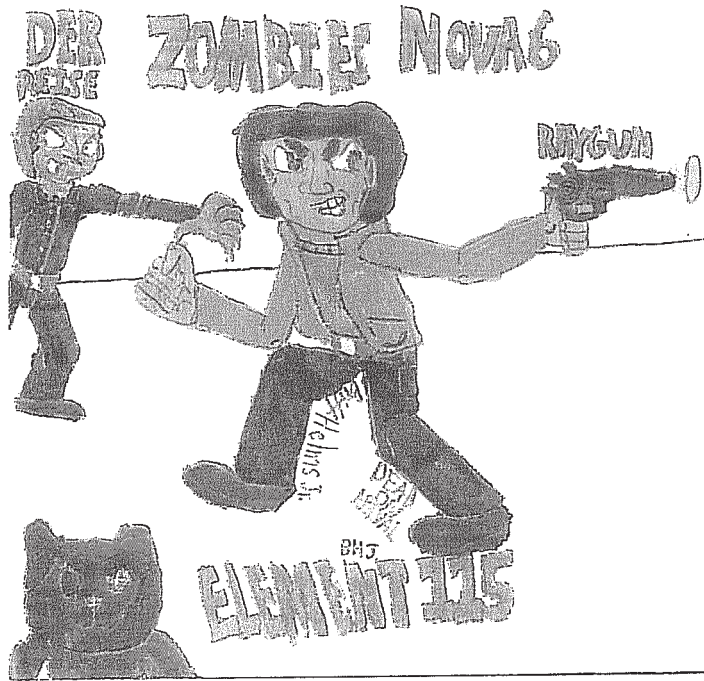
Build Ford Trucks

CLL



Fort Mill SC

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Fort Mill, SC

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