

## Finding Mrs. Right – A Philatelic Love Story

I began dating Tammy in January of 1998. From the start, she appeared to be the woman of my dreams. However, in order to be sure, I had a list of conditions, a series of tests she needed to pass: Would she respect me as a philatelist? Would she indulge my participation in the hobby? And most important, could I trust her with my stamps?

Tammy passed the first test easily. I told her that I collected stamps, and she didn't run away screaming. She actually appeared interested as I talked about the obscure history of vended postal insurance booklets.

The second test occurred a few weeks later when we went on a sight-seeing trip. I told her that we needed to stop at every post office on the way to check for varieties of MDI vending machine booklets. She politely accepted these little diversions, and I used the opportunity to explain that the 35 booklets I purchased were not a waste of money, but an investment.

As we grew closer together, Tammy became aware that I would be a good provider, a never ending source of stamps for Christmas cards, and hopefully soon, wedding invitations. But, she still needed to pass the final test.

I can vividly remember that crucial day. Tammy was at my apartment helping me prepare material for a philatelic research paper. I would give her a stamp or booklet and she would mount it and photocopy it. While standing at the dining room table, searching through a 3-ring binder of stock sheets, I came upon one of my prized items – a rare 20 to 40 cent revaluation of the original version of the 20-cent postal insurance booklet.

I experienced a touch of melancholy as I remembered my decision a few months earlier to explode the booklet, undoubtedly decimating its value, but exposing the revalued stamp for everyone to see. That emotion was suddenly replaced with trepidation as I realized that I was about to let Tammy touch it. Thoughts raced through my mind – Did she understand its value? Would she be gentle? Were her hands clean?

I realized that this was the defining moment of our relationship, so I carefully handed her the booklet with a tender caution, "Be careful, it's the only one known to exist." The look in her eyes acknowledged the trust I had just placed in her, and she caringly responded, "I think you should handle it yourself." Tammy had passed the final test. Soon after, I proposed to her, and she accepted.

Over the years Tammy has cheered me on when I won the Gold, consoled me when I lost another eBay auction, and shared intimate moments applying combinations of 5, 8, 13 and 15 cent stamps to our Christmas cards. She has listened a thousand times to me explain that these stamps aren't a waste of money, but an investment. I believe that she is truly happy with her philatelic husband, for how many women can say that they spent a 4-day vacation at Milcopex!

Alan Moll  
PO Box 177  
Atwater, MN 56209