

Stamp Collecting Merit Badge – Instructor’s Manual (V1, 2018)

The PowerPoint presentation “PEM Stamp Collecting Merit Badge.PPT (dated August 2018) and related materials are an outgrowth of the Stamp Collecting Merit Badge (“SCMB”) offered at the 2013 and 2017 Jamborees at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. There are some further comments in the “speaker’s notes” area for many of the slides of this presentation.

There are many other resources on the SOSSI web site (SOSSI.org > Members > US Merit Badge Counselors) as well as the American Philatelic Society web site (see below).

The purpose of this instructor’s manual is to make it easy for any registered stamp collecting merit badge counselor to offer the SCMB.

Thanks to the Jamboree Booth Members who provided input and the members of the SOSSI “virtual” Chapter No. 41, a group of counselors who hold occasional meetings via internet or telephone conference call to exchange ideas, resources, best practices and experiences. Contact Pete Metzloff at pmetzloff@gmail.com to be added to our list. You do not need to be a member of SOSSI to join Chapter 41.

The basic process for conducting a successful SCMB session usually includes the following:

- Marketing
- Gathering of supplies
- Meeting room logistics
- Conducting the presentation
- Completion & Follow up

MARKETING

This may be the most difficult step, or there may be nothing to it at all. You may be contacted by a particular troop that wants to offer the badge, either to the entire troop during a portion of a regular Troop meeting, or as extra meetings over the course of several sessions. In that case, there may be little marketing required, except perhaps with a few props during a regular troop meeting if participation is going to be voluntary. It can be a great troop event during the winter months when cold weather makes outdoor activities more difficult.

You can market using the same approach by offering your sessions to individual troops at a monthly roundtable meeting by enlisting the support of other adult leaders present.

Some districts and councils offer camporees or merit badge midway type events once a year or so. You can contact your district executive to have further dialog about participating in such events. Remember, however, that completion of the SCMB takes three to four hours.

If you are a member of any local stamp clubs that have annual shows (or will be hosting or volunteering at a larger APS show), contact the club's show coordinator to ask about holding a session. The club will usually offer meeting space, perhaps in their "youth area" where some of the materials are likely to already be present.

Whatever the forum for your session, the marketing phase can easily take a couple of months. There are some sample marketing flyers on the SOSSI website resources area to take a look at.

GATHERING SUPPLIES

Here is a supplies checklist:

- Stamps
- Hinges
- Colored pencils, markers, sharpies (for designing the cachet requirement 7A)
- Glue sticks, if that is how scouts are going to mount their collection
- stock cards for initial selection (before mounting, or enough for all if that is how scouts will do it)
- Scissors
- Pens/pencils
- Scott or Mystic Catalogs (or the USPS app)
- Some stamp magazines or books for the research requirement 7C
- Blank envelopes
- Blue cards
- Electronics (PC, screen, cables, whatever) for the power point
- Pocket folders, with requirements worksheet and about six "album" pages

- Stamp tongs
- Perforation gauges
- Mounts
- Sample of a real (or a “historical”) album from an experienced collector
- Magnifying glass

- At least one copy of the merit badge book itself

Here are some issues to consider. There are no wrong or right answers, only the general BSA requirement that counselors are not to add or remove from the basic requirements of the badge.

- A. The “thrill of the hunt” – At the Jamboree, the stamps available to form the starter collection (requirement 8) are not sorted in any way. Some counselors provide packets already sorted by common topic, but arguably, that takes some of the fun out of it, even if it would speed up the process.

- B. Mounting – at the Jamboree, scouts are given a couple of stock sheets to hold their selected stamps temporarily. After verifying that the required number of different stamps (i.e., 75 different stamps for a topical collection, by far the most common alternative selected), the scout then uses a glue stick to mount his collection on several sheets of plain white paper. Using a glue stick is a practical expedient, given the outside/tent environment at the Jamboree. We explain that this is not the preferred method of mounting for a more permanent collection. Some counselors have the scouts use hinges, which takes much more time, since the scouts are not familiar with using tongs and hinges. Other counselors simply let the scouts keep the stock sheets as their method to “mount and show” their collection.

MEETING ROOM LOGISTICS

You will definitely want to be well aware of the physical meeting room’s characteristics. An open tent in a field without electricity will involve big constraints to be overcome. Use of the power point will require electricity, unless you first create paper printouts to make a flip chart notebook (as was the case for the Jamboree, as outdoor sunlight made projection devices too washed out to be seen).

For an indoor venue, be sure to arrive early enough to set up and test out your electronic and projection equipment. At a stamp show, you will want to alert the registration desk or have some temporary signs to help scouts find your location. See the sample “information for participants and parents” for typical information you may need to provide before the first session.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

These comments are assuming the format is for a Troop level presentation, carried out over three separate sessions (perhaps with a fourth as needed for make-up work). This breaks the material up and allows for scout to work at home if necessary. It is important to balance “lecture mode” presentation with plenty of “hands on” time.

Session 1 – 60 minutes

Introductions, attendance sheet (possibly complete the blue cards or equivalent). Take 30 to 40 minutes to do requirement 1 and 2 (through slide 39 in the power point presentation). Use the rest of the time to let the scouts look at stamps and begin to (tentatively) find stamps for their topical collection and place them in a stock sheet for now. Depending upon the format of the session, consider a “homework assignment” of soaking off some older stamps (pre-self-adhesive material is best) from envelopes or cut squares to bring in to the next meeting, or doing the stamp design/cachet.

Session 2 – 120 minutes if possible

Do requirement 3, including the Challenge – through slide 96 of the presentation. Use the rest of any available time for scouts to work on their collection, perhaps the design/cachet and the “research” presentation (requirement 7). Possibly have separate tables or work stations.

After this session, scouts should have selected a fair number of the stamps to their stock cards. Depending upon the format of the session, they may be able to do the mounting at home with stamp hinges (or glue stick) and bring the completed album sheets back to a final meeting.

Session 3 – 60 minutes

Finish up the remaining requirements. This usually involves review and approval of completion of all requirements on an individual basis. Assist with any uncompleted items, then issue the signed blue card (I like to record on the counselor’s portion the topic actually selected). Show any “fun” videos from the internet if desired or time permits. Stress the “where do I go from here” and demonstrate some of the many web based resources, such as APS or SOSSI.

Consider scheduling a fourth session as needed as a make-up to avoid incompletes or partials.

COMPLETION & FOLLOW UP

You might consider giving each participant a chance to show the rest of the group their finished collection or make some comments about what they found to be of particular interest while you finish up their blue cards. If the venue was separate from a regular Troop meeting, you could attend a subsequent meeting to make a blue card or badge presentation.

SOSSI has an initiative that can be a further positive reinforcement. Although a collection of scouts on stamps as the topic is fairly rare given the dearth of material available (due I suspect to the popularity of scouting), any scout earning the SCMB can register with SOSSI to receive a free internet version of the club's Journal for the period of time from when the blue card is processed through at least one additional full year. There is a form for this purpose. Under BSA youth protection guidelines, any email communication with a scout must also copy the parent when sent. The registration form can be obtained from the website or by contacting the SOSSI Secretary.

Appendix:

Here are some fun videos available from YouTube or other internet sources:



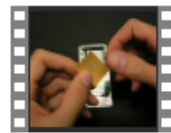
J01 Stamps - An American Journey



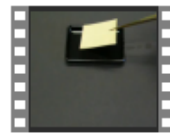
J02 The Inverted Jenny



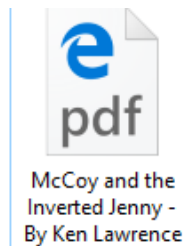
J03 FDR - Stamp Collector In Chief



J04 Perferation Guide



J05 Watermarks



McCoy and the Inverted Jenny - By Ken Lawrence



Exploring Stamps

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Stamp Collecting is still the most popular hobby in the world. Learn about the world through sorting postage stamps. The current series takes just one postage stamp per episode and in a short few min

Resources Available from the American Philatelic Society


<https://stamps.org/Scout-Merit-Badge>

stamps.org/Scout-Merit-Badge

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- Translations
- Young Collector
- Stamp Thefts
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- Book Publishing
- Advertise

Scout Stamp Collecting Merit Badge

Workshop Available to Help Scout Leaders

The APS offers two workshops annually which are held in conjunction with our APS Winter Show each January/February and StampShow each August. Registration is required, see links to the right of the page.




[Interested in Advertising?](#)
[See full list of Web Advertisers](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Scouts on Stamps Society International](#)
- [Request Supplies](#)


The American Philatelic Society has prepared information and activities for each requirement of the Stamp Collecting Merit Badge for Boy Scouts. This information will assist counselors as they offer a workshop for Boy Scouts AND it will allow Boy Scouts to prepare work to show a counselor as he works to meet all the requirements.



[Badge Requirements](#)

Below is the Workshop Outline and all activity and discussion sheets that go with it. The outline has highlighted areas that correspond with the attachments below.

- [Workshop Outline](#)
- [1a Prework Continents](#)
- [1b US Postal History Timeline](#)
- [2a Ways to Collect](#)
- [2b Topical Collection Worksheet](#)
- [3 Scavenger Hunt Worksheet](#)
- [4a How to Read a Catalogue](#)
- [4b Factors that Affect Prices](#)
- [4b Condition of Stamps](#)
- [4b Scott Catalogue Activity Sheet](#)
- [5 Stamp collecting Tools](#)
- [5b Soaking Stamps](#)
- [5d Hinge or Mount your stamps?](#)
- [6a Stamp Storage](#)
- [6b Preserving Stamps](#)
- [7a Design Stamp](#)

 If you have any questions, contact [Janet Houser](#) or call her at 814 933-3803 ext. 238.