

# Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers

## Stamp show moments to be treasured.

The life of a stamp dealer often includes participation in stamp shows. Most dealers carry U.S. and worldwide stamps or postal history that will appeal to just about any collector who stops by his booth. Not me! Since the mid 1980s, we were taking only China and Asia, so, either we had a wonderful show, offering material which blew away the competition or a sliding scale downward, depending on who attended. We carry a unique product.

Determining which shows to rent a booth at depends on the number of customers we have in a 150 miles radius. That's about as far as a collector will probably drive for a stamp show. Our company does extensive advertising as well.

These days, when our company does the New York City ASDA National Show, the crowds are so large we rent three booths. But our company has built a following over the years, hence the demand.

In March 1989, we did a show in the suburbs of Chicago. I was about to get married so couldn't go out with my friends after show hours whooping it up. Reading in the hotel room Friday night passed the time, but for Saturday evening, I had an appetite for different fare.

I remembered the legendary China collector, Richard Canman, had lived in Chicago. A long life, great fortune and keen eye gave him the opportunity to build a fabulous collection. Nineteen albums sold outright during his lifetime; the balance was sold by public auction after his passing on December 15, 1988, by Harmers of New York.

Having nothing to do that evening, I picked up the phone book and saw a listing for the Canman residence. I explained to Mrs Canman that I'd like to come over to make a condolence call. She said all



Michael Rogers thrives on a major stamp show bourse—like here at NAPEX in 2012.



the stamps had been sold. I assured her it surely wasn't a business call.

I took a cab to Lake Shore Drive. The Canmans had joined two fine apartments together for one extensive dwelling. First thing she did was swat down my pockets, looking for checks. A lively gal in her late eighties with a sharp mind and a sharper tongue, Mrs Canman was not short of sharing her opinion.

I enjoyed her company immensely. She told me stories of Richard hunting down stamps in Asia, how they met and courted, and of life in Chicago long ago. Two hours flew by. Then she paused to retrieve three items which had been returned by the auction house as not genuine.

I was of the opinion that the China \$5 Red Revenue (above) and Taiwan 1893 receipt stamp (above right) were genuine but I wasn't sure about the China large dragon / Austrian postage combination card. She was incredulous: "What, you think you know more than the auction house?" My thinking was sometimes auction buyers returned material because they had "buyer's remorse" and the auction house didn't send the items out for certification, but the \$5 Red Revenue was

a very good stamp and the Taiwan receipt stamp immensely valuable.

She pondered my words and offered them as a gift. Generous as she was, I didn't want to take it.

I cannot tell you why, but it just didn't feel right. From our conversation, I knew Richard had passed due to cancer, so I said that when I returned home and calculated the value of the three items, I'd send a check to the American Cancer Society. She beamed.

Then she asked me to the rear of the apartment. She had prepared Richard's philatelic library for donation or sale on a large pallet. They were mine, if I wanted them. Did I! I love literature, especially difficult to obtain books and manuscripts in hand-tooled binders.

First thing that went through my mind was "Impossible getting these home!" Then I got to action. I called a taxi service for a stretch cab. The apartment house had plenty of cardboard boxes on hand plus someone to assist. We ended staying over in town a day longer to facilitate handling by DHL. The extra expense of accommodating hundreds of treasured books was worth it. ☒