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US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had this to say about stamp collecting: "So many compensations reward the stamp collector that it is difficult to decide which is the greatest benefit to accrue from his avocation. After all, the sheer delight which it affords justifies our interest and brings great returns to our effort."

In our Covid days, stamp collecting and postal history have played a crucial role in therapeutically helping to keep our sanity and good disposition in place. Just think about the soothing news of Guiana's legendary 1c magenta being sold for a sum bordering \$10Million and then crossing the Atlantic to find a new home at Stanley Gibbons. The extensive collection of Ethiopian postal history sold by Corinphila had virtually no unsold lots with sold lots reaching unbelievable levels. Large auctions of Italian stamps and postal history in Vienna, Milan, San Marino, Reggio Emilia, and Genoa, as well as a large portion of the Provera Collection of Italian States offered by Corinphila were sold to eager buyers from both hemispheres; the same can be said of the David Feldman auctions in Geneva, the same applies to other famous auction houses like Cavendish, Siegel, and, last but not least, Bolaffi,

Indeed the adrenaline and the high prices were generated by great rarities or items in top-notch conditions, but an auction by Il Ponte in Milan featuring rare items and old time collections of every country on earth (ranging from 150 to 10,000 euros) saw internet buyers fighting to the bitter end to secure what they wanted. A similar situation was witnessed at AP and Ferrario auctions in Milan. Indeed Covid has not been able to impair the stamp market, and one wonders what philately will be in a few years' time when the pandemic will hopefully be forgotten.

Speaking of prices, we must realize that the priceless item of all is our hobby which has shielded us from depression and other complications, replacing them with hours and days of healthy activities at our desk. As Harry Lindquist put it: "There is something peculiarly soothing to the mind and calming to the nerves in stamp collecting. No matter how inescapable may be the trouble that is weighing him down, the collector will find temporary forgetfulness in his stamp albums."

GM