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Danny Spungen

Fascinated by coins, stamps and sportscards, one man responds to the question “Why collectibles?” by asking “Why not?”

DANNY SPUNGEN’S PASSPORT is loaded with personal information—favorite foods and movies; photos of family pets; business philosophy; and even the genesis of his coin- and stamp-collecting hobby.

The 3x5-inch, blue booklet is not a government-issued passport, but rather a small publication that holds his business card. The colorful passport connects a name to a face and provides a glimpse into the people behind PEER Bearing Company, his family’s ball-bearing firm that’s grown over three generations to more than 2,000 employees.

“I’m a collector of many things—living and non-living. The living things include my friends, family and animals of all kinds,” says the Long Grove, Illinois, resident, who has collected rocks, minerals, coins, stamps, pre-1961 sportscards and more. “We may not realize it, but I think we all have a passion for something we enjoy accumulating and sharing with those around us.”

This collect-it-all-and-include-loved-ones presentation extends to Spungen’s latest venture: *WhyNotCollectibles.com*, a website he’s creating with his 15-year-old son, Jonathan. When it officially launches on November 1, it will include articles, mintage figures and his opinions about the collectibles market.

The site also will feature stories about Spungen’s hobby interests, such as U.S. key-date coins and Chinese gold and silver Panda coins, and details about the Spungen Family Foundation. “The Foundation has purchased a rare Holocaust collection told through stamps, postcards and old envelopes. The entire collection will be exhibited on the website and at various institutions,” Spungen says. “I’ve got some great dreams for not only the website, but for all my collectibles.”

Spungen tells the story of his introduction to collectibles in his passport: As a 12-year-old watching *Scooby-Doo* with his brother, Glenn, he casually stretched his arms and yawned. He heard a snap in his neck. He ended up in the hospital for eight days and in a neck brace for the rest of the summer. To help him pass the time, his father, Laurence, gave him a box of stamps from his Uncle Kenneth. A collector was born. From 1977-82, Spungen sold stamps and coins for Minkus Publishing in Marshall Field’s department stores. In 1983 he joined PEER, where he currently is its vice president of sales and marketing.

Spungen never gave up on his hobbies or sharing them with others. On this new site, he plans to discuss some of his favorite coins and collectibles.

If he could meet any numismatist living or deceased, Spungen would pick Theodore Roosevelt simply because of the Saint-Gaudens’ 1907 high-relief \$20 gold piece. “I love his involvement in this

coin. I would ask him why he was so stubborn in wanting such a difficult-to-make, but beautiful piece when it cost so much money and time,” Spungen says.

His experience with a vast array of collectibles gives Spungen a unique perspective. His advice to hobby newcomers: “Try not to conquer the world! Focus on a few series just to keep yourself from getting bored when pickings are slim and searches aren’t successful,” he says. “Try to save your money for the best grades, and don’t get caught up in chasing every dream coin—they will surface again in the market.”

Collecting has given Spungen a passport to countless fulfilling experiences. Now he wants others to join him on his journey. —RyAnne Scott



PHOTO: DANNY SPUNGEN