

Good Afternoon,

I would like to start this brief letter by telling you that I admire your work much more then could ever be put into words. I have always dreamed of being in the spotlight at some point in my life, but I guess that not everyone has "the look" or the talent to do so. As much as I dream of being in a movie or on TV, or maybe in the music industry, I have realized my chance will never come to do so. Realizing all of this, I have taken up a hobby, getting me as close to my heros as I will ever get.

I collect autographed 8x10 photographs, all personalized TO CHRIS. My collection ranges from musicians to poloticians, to actors and actressess. There are so many celebrities who are taking the time to respond to me and make my collection that much better. I wish I had people writing me fan mail, it would be such an honor for me, but because I have no fans to write to me, I am doing the writing to all of the people I am a fan of.

At this time, I would like to ask you if you would be kind enough to send me an autographed 8x10 photo of yourself made out TO CHRIS. It would be a tremendous thrill for me to recieve one from you and it would be an addition to make my collection 100% better. I am trying to reach so many people out there but, I am not able to reach everyone. If you have anyway of helping me get any other autographs it would be greatly appreciated.

Thank You

Best Wishes To You and Yours Always

Chris

Chris Stevens
15 Elm Street
Cooperstown, NY 13326

Sign here, please

Cooperstown teen finds excitement autograph seeking

By MARK ROBARGE
Staff Writer

Every day, Chris Stevens approaches his mailbox with the excitement of a child racing towards the family Christmas tree the morning after Santa makes his annual trip.

Each day as he collects his mail, the 19-year-old clerk at Cooperstown Sports & News wonders which celebrity will be sharing best wishes with him. One day, it could be Frank Sinatra or Billy Joel.

The next day, perhaps Jimmy Carter or Jesse Jackson. The following day, maybe Dean Smith or John Wooden. The day after, possibly Ronald McDonald or Barney.

These best wishes come in the form of the autographed pictures Stevens has been collecting for a little more than a year, a collection that already numbers more than 325 — each personally addressed "To Chris" and with messages ranging from Jackson's "Keep the Peace" to the slogan "God is great" included with an autographed photo of Academy award-winning actor Joe Pesci.

The photos come from sports stars, politicians, popular entertainers and even a few fictional characters.

"I try for the more popular celebrities, as well as the ones I like," he said.

Stevens has been a sports card collector for much of his young life, but found a new excitement when he began the art of autograph hunting.

"There's something different from a normal hobby," he said. "There's more work involved and there's more suspense waiting for them to arrive because everyone's different."

He culls celebrity addresses from different lists he orders from ads in collector's magazines, mailing each of his targets a brief



Crier photo by Mark Robarge

Chris Stevens of Cooperstown shows off some of the 325 autographs he has collected. He said he has received responses from more than 80 percent of those he has asked for autographs.

form letter praising their work and asking for an autographed photo.

He sends out requests in bundles that sometimes are as large as 50 letters at a time and receives responses to about 85 percent of his requests, though not all are the autographs he desires.

"Something comes back from just about everybody, whether it's fan club information, a fake autograph or a letter that says they don't sign," he explained.

And while he doubts he will

ever receive autographs from Steven Spielberg or Michael Jackson — two people who don't sign, he said — he has been pleasantly surprised by the positive responses of former President Carter and such superstars as Eddie Murphy and Sinatra, who was the first response he ever received.

Some celebrities even go beyond the simple autographed 8x10 though. Stevens received a Christmas card from former Vice President Dan Quayle and his

family, motivational literature from legendary UCLA basketball coach John Wooden and tickets from talk show hosts Sally Jesse Raphael, Jerry Springer and Regis Philbin and Cathy Lee Gifford.

In the burgeoning collection, Stevens also shows off photos of Robert Shapiro, a member of O.J. Simpson's defense team, Barney, the purple dinosaur of children's television fame, and Wendy, the "Snapple Lady" from the beverage company's commercials. Among the host of major and minor celebrities though, Stevens said he has no favorites.

"No one sticks out," he said. "Each one is different because everyone writes something different of their own."

And most of the photos are in pristine condition, amazing since all are delivered via the U.S. Postal Service.

"I'm lucky to get them all in good shape," Stevens said.

"My mailman (Jim Huntington) knows me and he knows what I collect."

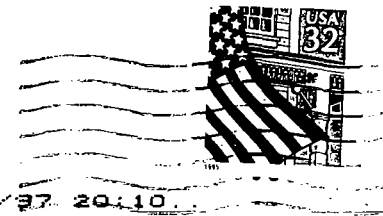
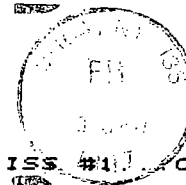
The collection may also spell big bucks. Sinatra's autograph is listed in collector's guides at a value of \$600 and the average celebrity autograph lists for around \$50 — more for politicians. But Stevens said he is not in it for the money.

"I don't have any intention of selling them," he said. "I'd like to get them on display somewhere."

Stevens is also spreading the excitement to friends and co-workers while building his own collection.

Ray Olyer, who manages Cooperstown Sports & News, just received his first batch of autographs Tuesday, including British entertainer Robbie Coltrane.

"I can't wait for the mailman to come now," Olyer said.



UTICA NY 135 ISS #117 01/09/97 20:10

Maggie Williams
The White House
Washington DC
20500



Just send one of
my business cards

Dear Mr. Williams, 4/20/97

It is a great honor for me to be writing to you. You are truly one of the most fascinating political figures of the 20th century. Your job is certainly one of the most exciting jobs in the entire U.S. Government. During my Senior Year in college, I had the honor of interning at the White House. It was a wonderful experience! I recently graduated Summa Cum Laude.

I have a favor to ask of you. Will you please send me your personalized autograph? I'll treasure it forever!

Thank you! I hope to hear from you soon!

Sincerely,

John E. Schlimm II
479 Brussels St.
St. Marys, PA 15857

John E. Schlimm #
479 Brussels St.
St. Mary, PA 15857



Ms. Maggie Williams
Chief of Staff
Office of the First Lady
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C.

March 31, 1997

Chris Stevens
1911 West Olive Avenue
Burbank, CA 91506

Dear Chris:

Thank you so much for your thoughtful letter. Your supportive words meant a lot to me.

It was very kind of you to write as you did and I am grateful. Please accept my thanks and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Williams
Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to you today to express my intrest in your profession, as well as writing

today to tell you that your work has had a great impact on my life, as well as the lives

of so many other people in the world. I am always impressed to see how people in the spotlight

handle themselves, and having the spotlight on them so much I am amazed as to how many of them

make awful mistakes. To every bad situation there is an exception, and thus you shine through.

It would be a great honor for me if you would be so kind as to send me an autographed 8X10

photograph of yourself made out TO CHRIS

Such a picture would be a great addition to my wall as well as act as a reminder that there

are still GOOD people out there. I would be most thankful if you would be so kind as to send me

one. I thank you for your time, and wish to thank you for acting as such a great role model, as

well as thank you in advance for sending me a personalized picture of yourself.

Best Wishes To You and Yours

Sincerely,
~~Chris Stevens~~
~~15 Elm Street~~
~~Cooperstown, NY 13326~~

Chris Stevens
1911 W OLIVE AVE
BURBANK, CA
91506

Form
letter acknowledging
| thanks for
encouragement
|
| No picture of
| mem |

Maggie Williams
% The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

