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The Philatelic Communicator

Writers Unit No. 30
of the
American Philatelic Society

ISSN 0147-3646

Second Quarter, 1988 — Volume 21, Number 2, Whole Number 80.

The Editor's Wish List for 1988 — An Update

On the front page of the last issue (first quarter 88) I asked Joe Frye to print my vision for *The PC*; also, on page 10, in the article "Marketing Philatelic Literature to Non-Philatelic Audiences", I asked a member in the New York City metro area to check out the newsstand in the Pan Am building near the entrance to Grand Central Station for a report on what philatelic magazines were stocked, including those of foreign origin.

Evidently we have the world's most unresponsive readership or my requests and vision are too unattainable for anyone to offer help or even reply. What is wrong here? How can I or anyone else improve *The PC* alone? This is supposed to be a cooperative venture, a medium for self-help, a means to improve philatelic communication. Yet within our own organization we are not communicating. I kid you not. If the membership does not start to help the Unit's officers and editor, there won't be a Unit for much longer.

Can it be that the members think we have no useful purpose? If so, I have many purposes for my abilities meager though they may be. Why should I waste my time editing, why should Joe Frye take time from his busy business to produce this publication, why should George Griffenhagen take such meticulous care of the records and finances in spite of his international professional obligations, why should Bob de Violini drum up new members, why should John Hotchner bother to let us in on his "20 Secrets", if no one cares?

The above represents my personal view of the situation. Perhaps the others mentioned have different views. If so, they are more than welcome to air them here. Somehow we have to get off dead center. If I am not giving the members what they want in an affiliate journal, let them come forward with another candidate for editor. I'll be delighted to relinquish the job.

Barbara R. Mueller

Barbara invited me to add whatever I wished to her remarks above in this issue, but I feel she has stated the case quite clearly. Just in case, I have run her 'Update' in maximum-size boldface (as opposed to the half-size lightface in last issue). *Joe F. Frye*

Quarterly journal of the Writers Unit No. 30 of the American Philatelic Society, 2501 Drexel St., Vienna, VA 22180. The Philatelic Communicator is produced and mailed as a paid service for Writers Unit 30 by Midland Co., Box 22308, Memphis, TN 38122-0308.

Membership in Writers Unit No. 30 is open to anyone interested in philatelic communication, subject to approval of application submitted to the Secretary-Treasurer at address below on form available from him for addressed, stamped no. 10 envelope, and payment of dues as noted.

Membership in the American Philatelic Society, while encouraged, is not required as a condition of joining or maintaining membership in Writers Unit 30.

Dues are payable in advance, on a calendar year basis, in U.S. funds, payable net in U.S. dollars through a U.S. bank or the U.S. Postal Service, and include all issues of this journal for such calendar year. Refund, pro-rata, of payment to the Writers Unit No. 30 of dues tendered shall constitute final and satisfactory settlement of any dispute which may arise involving membership and/or dues payments.

Advertising for this journal will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and details should be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer for his handling.

All matters involving Writers Unit 30 business EXCEPT editorial matter for this publication must be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer.

Editorial matter should be sent to the Editor.

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- U.S. Zip code addresses \$ 10.00
Canada or Mexico addresses . . \$ 12.50
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Dues are payable in advance, on or before Dec. 31 of the applicable calendar year, and membership terminates March 31 of any year for which dues unpaid.

More on the Nature of Reviews

What constitutes a proper philatelic book review has been the subject of much discussion in our journal. For a non-philatelic view, refer to the noted book reviewer Doris Grumbach, who prefaced her first column in the excellent monthly Small Press, July/August 1985 issue, with these observations:

“A review column is, of necessity, always idiosyncratic. It reflects the private choices and tastes of the reviewer, made to seem as objective as possible by the display of comparisons, the use of literary history, the application of established critical criteria. In this column . . . I will try to notice what qualifies under those terms, within the limits of the space allotted to me, noting a) superior content; b) good design, although form, as the structuralists have taught us, is content . . . cost is never a criterion; and c) daring and experimental publishing that requires special attention to be noticed at all.”

To Copyright or Not to Copyright?

We note the June issue of Writer’s Digest features “Your Guide to Copyright” as its cover story. Written by Jay Stuller, it contains good general guidance (including the address and phone number for the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress) on the subject and makes several interesting points about the necessity (or non-necessity) of copyrighting an article or book.

Another pertinent article for us in the same issue is by Writer’s Digest contributing editor Art Spikol. Titled “How Many Misspelled Words Can You Find in This Article?”, with a subtitle of “None, If I Did My Job Right”, Spikol takes on those who are careless about their spelling in what they print or submit for print, and the impression such carelessness makes on the reader.

This issue was on the newsstands as this is written, but may not be when you read this. Back issues are available at \$2.50 per copy, postpaid, from Writer’s Digest, 1507 Dana Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45207. It’s well worth that small price (as is a subscription at only \$18.00). R. de Violini

Our editor reports that the copy sent for makeup of this issue exhausts her supply of material for publication. Please do make every effort to prepare and submit any item(s)//manuscripts you may be able to send.

Twenty Secrets of High Productivity

by John M. Hotchner

It is no secret that I'm involved in philately up to my chin. Sometimes I step into a hole and briefly feel in danger of drowning. But 95% of the time, philately is for me a rumpled suit in which I feel very comfortable, if not always attractive to the critics.

In visiting shows, corresponding, working in organizations, a theme thrown at me repeatedly is: "I don't understand how you do so much." That is an implied question and one that is difficult to answer in the ten to fifteen seconds that human beings allot to one another before the "Why doesn't the egomaniac cut it short!" tape automatically comes on in the brain of the listener.

I usually say that I enjoy the work and so long as it's fun, I'll continue.

That satisfies convention, but really speaks to the "why" rather than the "how", which is what was asked.

I'm going to use this forum to answer "how", because I believe that "how" is a very important question.

Almost all of us would like to be more productive toward achieving a happy mix of self-satisfaction, fortune and/or fame.

Here are my "secrets", broken down into "thought processes" and "work habits and milieu." In the first category:

1. **Define your objective.** When I'm aiming at an end I understand and believe in, I have more energy than I would have predicted.
2. **Force yourself to do what you need to do even if it's uncomfortable.** I cannot afford to fall behind, so I often answer letters, work ahead on a deadline, etc., when it might be more a) "fun": to go to a movie, b) comfortable to take a snooze, or c) easy to find some other consumer of time than to do the difficult, unpleasant or boring task at hand.
3. **Learn to say "no".** I can't do everything I'd like to do, let alone what other people would like me to do. So I ask two questions: a) Is this important to me? b) Am I the only one qualified to do it? The answers to both can be "yes" and I'll still not accept if the time drain doesn't fit the benefits.
4. **Listen to your emotions.** Much of what I write comes from a realization that some event pleases or angers me, or piques my curiosity. Not only does this give me constantly fresh material to explore but I believe that the resulting emotional content of my

writing makes it more provocative and entertaining than the dry recitation of facts I might otherwise produce.

5. **Pick your battles carefully.** Not every war is worth fighting. I waste little time or energy fighting things or people I can't change.

6. **Set reasonable deadlines.** I allow myself a great deal of freedom by giving myself more time than I think I'll need before someone expects something from me. I'm rarely in the position of having to forego progress on projects B through G because I have to "crash" on project A. To do so wastes energy and fouls up my flow.

7. **Read and listen.** Most of us spend our time constructing rebuttals instead of drinking in the information that comes our way. 90% of the creativity I get compliments on is no more than hearing and adapting old thoughts to new sets of circumstances.

8. **Be satisfied with imperfection.** A third rewrite may be important on your draft last will and testament. If I get to a third revision of something I wrote, I am wasting precious time on improvements that are marginal or unimportant. So I am predisposed to 'close it out and move on.'

9. **Assure regeneration time.** If I work too hard on one project or subject area, my brain eventually turns to fuzballs. I need a range of subjects, each of which tends to help me gain perspective on others. I sleep less than the average person, but when I need extra, I don't begrudge myself the time. Sometimes the circuits just need time to cool!

10. **Believe in your abilities.** As well-worn as this thought is, it is full of wisdom: Refuse to answer any question with a sentence beginning "I can't . . ." You may not want to; you may not believe you have the time; you may be frightened that you will embarrass yourself. I have felt all these things, but I know that I can do anything I set my mind to.

Let's turn to work habits and milieu:

1. **Match the type of work you have to do to the best possible time for it.** It takes me two to three times longer to write an article when I'm tired or distracted than when I'm fresh. I can do light reading in a car or in a lunch line. Going over an APS circuit or making up a club exchange book is perfect busy work for late night TV watching.

2. **Don't waste your 24 hours.** Every minute is precious to me. I respect those minutes because they quickly become quarter and half hours. I've trained

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myself to look for opportunities to make time for the things that are important to me.

3. **Organize your work and make it portable.** My letter writing is in one folder. My pending reading is in another. Each article I'm working on has its own folder containing needed background information. One or more of those folders and a tablet and pen go everywhere I go. It is amazing how much I can do while waiting for a subway, a doctor, a car pool, etc.

4. **Segment your project.** The simplest of projects can look overwhelming if you think of it as one big time package. I try to see projects as a series of small steps, and focus on what I need to do to complete the next one. And I enjoy the completion of each step.

5. **Maintain contact with your audience.** I spend a fair amount of time corresponding with other collectors, readers and writers. It is time consuming but the raw material of their letters is thought provoking, often useful in constructing columns, and helpful in answering unknowns. In addition it is a means through which I learn about my own attitudes and beliefs as I react to opinions and criticisms.

6. **Open a folder for each column concept and let it "mature."** In other words, few worthwhile thoughts spring fully developed from my brain. If I write down the germ, I find that I'll "see" material to expand on it in conversations, reading, and even in dreams!

7. **Farm out busy work.** I employ my children to do time-consuming work that I don't need to do — opening cartoon and *Stamp Fun* mail, filing, collating press releases, etc. Neighborhood kids, too, would like to earn easy money and be introduced to the world of philately in this way.

8. **Build a reference "library".** For me, this includes books and a substantial clipping file. I am happy to spend the time required to keep the file organized and updated. It pays dividends when I can find something I need quickly.

9. **To the degree possible, handle each piece of paper no more than twice.** I try to keep current on all correspondence and reading of resource material. This avoids the need to root through stacks of material to reprioritize.

10. **If you write a regular column, cross-index your work.** Why waste half an hour coming up with a perfectly comprehensible explanation for the cause of a variety when I can spend ten minutes to lift it from prior work and adapt it to the facts of the present problem.

All of us are capable of doing more than we do. Why don't we do more? Perhaps for me it was lack of initiative, or lack of discipline, or just a difficulty in climbing over the first mental block toward pursuing my dreams.

Once I began, I found that life, and writing, is a series of problems to be solved, not a bottomless pit into which I was condemned to fall.

The twenty tenets above have helped me develop the discipline that is built on conscious choice and principled habits. I hope that they can serve as a resource for you as you set and pursue your own goals.

J.M.H.

On Choosing the Write Word

by Bob de Violini

A column by Jack Smith in the *Los Angeles Times* edition of April 11, 1988, was based on inadvertent use of homonymns instead of the correct word (in news stories and feature articles by various staff writers of that paper) as noted by several of his readers. One reader provided the following observation.

"Writing for publication is such a civilized profession that those who practice it owe it to their readers to take extraordinary care of the most important tool of their trade, language." (I would change just one word of this sentence and make it read activity rather than profession, for most of us are not paid professional writers, but people who write to spread information and knowledge about our hobby.)

Whichever noun is used, this guidance applies to everyone who prepares anything for print, whether the person is a learned scholar, a well-practiced professional writer, or a willing volunteer who edits a local club newsletter. The levels of education or experience may vary, but the end result is the putting of words onto paper for someone else to read and understand.

The wrong word or spelling make it more difficult for the reader to determine what it is you mean to be saying. Too many such errors call the reliability of what is written into question. And don't quote the old filler item, "spelling and grammatical errors are scattered at the whim of the editor so that there will be something for everyone", or words to that effect. That shows a total disregard for the language and an attempt to make light of something that is not very amusing.

If there are words you consistently have trouble with, make a list of them, with the correct spelling or usage

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examples. Refer to that list as you prepare an article, and make corrections as you go along. Also make additions to the list as you find new troublesome areas.

Make it easy on the reeder; proofread what you right and see that you get it write before it gets into print. Then have sum won else proof it, and question you about any word that doesn't look quite write in the contest in witch it is used. That will help assure that it is oll korrekt. OK?

B. de V.

A Proposal to Enhance Literature Visibility at Stamp Shows

To continue to help the growth of interest in philatelic literature, I ask you all to encourage shows (of any size) that you have any connection with to begin at least a literature table for the display of philatelic publications (other than the give-away copies of the weekly press). This would not be a competitive exhibit, but rather a display to show what is available to collectors beyond the three weeklies, and the Scott, Brookman, and Harris catalogs.

This table would display currently available publications — society journals, handbooks, specialized catalogs, etc. It should also have at least a flyer that lists the addresses to write for information, if not order forms, for visitors to use.

Consideration should be given to means of avoiding confusion among visitors as to which items are being given away (such as free copies of the weeklies, back issues of periodicals, or outdated catalogs), and what items are part of the special literature exhibit.

Initially, some of the material may need to come from club members' own libraries, but as this grows from year to year, authors, editors, publishers, and other sources can be contacted to see if they would participate in an exhibit that would give greater exposure of their work among the collectors at the show. A fee (perhaps \$5.00 per item) could be charged to help take care of the club's expenses.

Those who provide material for this display would be asked (but not required) to donate the display copy of their publication to the sponsoring club's library, or specify a library for such a donation. He or she would get a certificate and letter of thanks, show program, set of cachets, or other "thank-you" items as may be appropriate. Some feedback as to how the item was

received by the show attendees would also be good to provide.

With time, and refinement of procedure, this means of enhancing literature awareness could be adopted by many shows across the country.

Your suggestions and ideas on this subject will be welcome.

Bob de Violini

Writers Hall of Fame Inductees Extend Their Thanks *by Bob de Violini*

Unfortunately, neither Felix Ganz nor Allen Kerr was able to be at the Writers Unit Breakfast when their induction into the Writers Hall of Fame was announced. Felix was at the exhibition, but had to leave Saturday evening; Allen was laid low with a case of bronchitis.

I was able to contact Felix Saturday before he left, and privately presented him with his plaque and a copy of the citation. Allen's plaque and citation were mailed to him following the show. Responses have been received from both new Hall of Fame members.

Felix indicated that he was completely surprised and delighted by receipt of the citation and plaque. His letter said, "As a result of this honor bestowed on me, I have been fired up to author three short philatelic observations for three different papers in three different countries (France, Germany, and the U.S.)."

He continues, "There lingers the question, of course, whether or not I was worthy of and entitled to this most flattering award for which I thank you (and whoever else had a hand in making it happen) most cordially and happily. But I shall not argue the merits or demerits, and instead accept it with glee! I have found a very good place to hang the plaque in our stamp room."

Allen Kerr's letter advises of the negative effects of the bronchitis, and noted that although he thinks the worst is over, his diet "... seems to be restricted to an enormous variety and color of pills."

To the Writers Unit, he said, "Thank you and the organization for which you speak for the honor bestowed on me by induction into the Hall of Fame of our Society. It is truly appreciated, a capstone of my philatelic career; the plaque will be mounted for all to see. . . . My thanks to you and all who had a part in the selection process for this signal honor."

We are pleased to be able to honor these two outstanding practitioners of the writing craft.

B. de V.

President's Message

We had a nice, though small, turnout at Reno for the Writers Unit Breakfast in April. In contrast to some past breakfasts, the food was excellent, with western omelettes cooked to order for each attendee; the result was no cold eggs. There were 27 people who were able to join us that morning.

Hall of Fame nominees Felix Ganz and Allen Kerr were inducted into the Writers Hall of Fame, and although neither was able to be present, both were welcomed by a hearty round of applause following reading of their citations. These citations are reprinted below, following this message, and their responses to receipt of the awards appears in this issue, page 21, column two.

Other commitments kept most of the WU board members elsewhere in the country; only George Martin, Bill Welch, Tom Current, and I were able to be there, so we did not have a quorum for the conduct of any WU business during the show. In a letter to the board in March, I made a proposal for the encouragement of philatelic literature displays in philatelic exhibitions. [Page 21, col. 1, this issue, slightly revised from original proposal. Ed.] It must have agreed with the WU officers and council, for I had no negative response from any of them on this point (or any other kind of response, for that matter.)

Titled "A Proposal to Enhance Literature Visibility at Stamp Shows", a copy is provided for all our members on page 21 of this issue. It is something that can be started on a small scale, and gradually be expanded and modified over a few years as experience and the local situation indicate.

I would like to hear your thoughts on this, and if any shows have started something along this line already. Interest in developing such a display was indicated at Reno by someone from one of the major western shows that does not already have a literature section.

Don't forget that the annual APS meeting will take place in Detroit on August 25-28, and that the Writers Unit Breakfast will be held on the morning of the 28th. Tickets are \$13.50 each, and are available through the pre-registration form that appeared on the mailing cover of the April issue of *The American Philatelist*, and following issues.

Help Steve Rod fill the room (see his item in the last issue of the *PC*, page 5, col. 2), and get your ticket early. He has *plans*. We also need material for door

prizes — selected items of older philatelic publications and recent ephemera that you'd like to have others add to their libraries. Send your useful literature contributions to Barbara Mueller, and she will prepare them for the door prize drawings.

Your help is also needed in seeing that another issue of the *PC* can be printed before STaMpsHOW. Barbara has exhausted her In Basket in preparing this issue, and she cannot be expected to fill all the pages of each issue with material she has to write from scratch.

If you want to insure that you get four issues of *The Philatelic Communicator* each year, we must have input from YOU. So please, put pen to paper, or get your typewriter out, or run the electrons through your word processor, and get something concerning writing, editing, or literature to Barbara Mueller ASAP.

The publication — and thus the organization — can only be successful if there is participation from all of you, not just one or two people. Please help to make the Writers Unit and its journal something that is of value to all the members. *R. de Violini*

1988 Writers Unit Hall of Fame Honorees

Both 1988 nominees for the Writers Unit Hall of Fame have strong and varied professional backgrounds that enhance their avocational activities; both have written, edited, and/or published so many philatelic articles, studies, and monographs that time does not allow us to mention them all.

Dr. Felix Ganz

The first nominee, Dr. Felix Ganz of Chiago, is indelibly associated with Swiss philately. He received his basic music education at Basel and completed it at Northwestern University. Presently he is professor of piano, music literature, and pedagogy at Chicago Musical College and served as dean of the College for a decade. He has given lecture recitals and masterclasses in this country as well as in Europe and Korea.

Well known in Chicago philatelic circles for his active participation in Chicagopex, Ameripex, and the Chicago Philatelic Society, he has been honored with the Newbury Award. He collects and writes on Switzerland and allied areas, world postal history and stationery. Since 1979 he has served as associate editor of *Tell*, journal of the American Helvetia Philatelic Society, contributes reports regularly to the publications of the United Postal Stationery Society, and writes "Brief aus Chicago" for *Berner Briefmarken Zeitung*. Co-author of *The Perfins*

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of Switzerland, he also translates articles to and from English, German, and French. In the recently released cumulative index of the journals and newsletters of the American Swiss philatelic organizations 1938-1985, the work of Dr. Felix Ganz fills six pages. Finally, he also serves the hobby as an APS accredited judge in the philatelic and literature classes and is a member of the APS Expertizing Committee.

Therefore, Writers Unit 30 of the American Philatelic Society is honored to induct Dr. Felix Ganz into its Hall of Fame.

Allen D. Kerr

Our second nominee finds his philatelic challenges in Asia. Allen D. Kerr of Austin, TX has been a career army officer, a State Department linguist, and a professor at Catholic University in Washington, DC, where he compiled the first complete dictionary of the Lao language. A stamp collector since the age of six, he has concentrated on Far Eastern countries, where he has traveled and studied extensively.

These specialties have led him to write over a thousand philatelic articles for the general press as well as such specialty journals as the *China Clipper*. As first president of the Society of Indo-China Philatelists, he wrote at least one article for every issue of the first ten years of its journal. His four-part handbook, *The Local Overprinted Stamps of Manchuria 1945-47*, is the standard reference. One of his theses for his masters degree from Johns Hopkins University was published in the 1959 American Philatelic Congress Book as "The Development of the Postal System of the Chinese People's Republic, 1927-1949". The section on the postal issues of the People's Republic of China in the Scott catalogues is his work, also.

Active in local and state philatelic activities, Mr. Kerr received the Distinguished Philatelic Texan Award in 1987. As an exhibitor he has won numerous awards on subjects from the postal history of Tibet to orchids on stamps. The latter reflects his other avocational interest, and he has had some fifty articles published in the American Orchid Society *Bulletin*.

Therefore, Writers Unit 30 of the American Philatelic Society is pleased to add to Allen D. Kerr's plaudits induction into its Hall of Fame.

Robert de Violini

COPY IS NEEDED FOR NEXT AND SUBSEQUENT ISSUES!
Follow Bob de Violini's suggestion — produce & forward some!

"Getting Down to Close-up Photography"

by Jim Felton

(The following practical discussion of philatelic photography appeared first in *Beaver Chatter*, the newsletter of the Prairie Beaver Chapter of the British North American Philatelic Society and the Texas Philatelic Association. It was reprinted in *The Texas Philatelist*, November/December 1987, and is repeated here courtesy of Janet King Fohn, editor of TTP.)

Sooner or later every collector needs a photograph of some especially nice stamp or cancel. The small size of the subject means getting close, but most cameras won't focus at a distance less than two feet. At that distance you can hardly tell if the stamp is in focus or not, because it is so small. Recently,



Print from my first roll of Ilford XP1 film.

I learned of some inexpensive ways around this dilemma which will bring close-up photography within your grasp.

The first issue: getting closer to the subject and being in focus. There are many alternatives, some of which can be very expensive. There is a \$20 solution — close-up lenses that screw onto your normal lens, just like filters. These lenses allow you to focus closer than you could before adding them, so that you are dealing with focal lengths of inches rather than feet.

The close-up lenses come in different diameters and you must use the size matching your lens. Look at the front of your camera lens for the numbers next to the symbol "Ø" representing diameter; not to be confused with the focal length of the lens. A typical diameter is 49 mm. I have seen the Hoya brand of close-up lenses available as a set of three, sold in such stores as K-Mart and J. C. Penney, as well as in photo stores.

Now you're closer, within inches of the stamp. Next, you'll find you need to keep the camera still so that you don't blur the picture due to camera motion. The answer is a tripod. If you don't have one, you might consider a mini-tripod to set on a tabletop, pointing the camera downward. There are some nice tripods available for less than \$20. I have the Slik model 500G. You will

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find it necessary to make a platform to bring the stamp closer to your camera (and lens) to bring everything in focus. A stack of paperback books will do. You will probably want a cable release for the shutter to eliminate vibration which occurs when you press the shutter release with your finger. These are readily available for a few dollars.

Lighting is a major concern, regardless of the exact method of picture taking. In close-up photography, the camera and lens themselves can shade the subject. Many suggest using two or more light sources placed around the setup to give even lighting. I have found that an ordinary desk lamp can supply enough light. My camera has a through-the-lens (TTL) light meter, so I can get the correct exposure setting. Modern high-speed film and fast lenses make things easy.

Film: We do still have to have the medium for capturing the images we want. Taking good color pictures has never been easier. There are a number of fast (that is, short exposure) films on the market, some as fast as the most rapid black and white film available. There is a photo development business on every corner, it seems, and today it is a matter of hours and minutes instead of days to get film developed and prints made. In color! Prints! Slides and black and white actually take longer than color.

If you are shooting color film, it has been manufactured to be used in daylight. Unless you are exposing the film in daylight, you are then using artificial light, either tungsten or fluorescent. That light is different from sunlight and you will need to compensate. To use daylight film indoors, you need the right filter. Use a blue filter, known as 80 A with tungsten light; a filter FL-D with fluorescent light. I found a Hoya blue 80 A filter selling for \$5-7 in the same places where I saw the close-up lenses. An alternative to filters is to use a film especially made for the type of light source you are using. You won't need the filters for black and white film except to bring out certain features of the stamp, which is outside the scope of this article.

There are several speeds of film on the market from Kodak, but getting black and white film processed today may involve lining up custom processing and spending a few extra dollars. Wouldn't it be nice to have pictures done as easily in black and white as in color? It is possible (I'm not thinking of Polaroid, either). The Ilford XP 1 black and white film has a speed of 400

ASA and is formulated for C 41 processing, the same as the color print films on the market. The price is about 10 cents per frame for the film. When I asked for this film at my local photo shop, the clerk just reached on the shelf behind him for it; nothing unusual at all.

Taking this film to the 50- or 60- minute places for processing can be an experience. I was told it would be the next day because "we don't have a channel set up for Ilford film right now." It seems that without proper printing filters, what is supposed to be black may turn out green, purple, or some other shade. The finished prints I got had a hint of a sepia tone to them. I had a greater problem with the cropping of the negatives for printing.

The subject of composition might well be considered here. Please do not typically print full frame photos — they print on a paper with proportions different from the original negative. Something around the edges gets left off, or is cropped. You will want to center the subject so as to prevent this loss of image due to cropping. As you look through the view finder of your camera, you will lose more of what is at the extreme left and right.

Jim Felton

COPO Philatelic Writers Competition Results, 1987

The 1987 COPO Philatelic Writers Competition Grand Award winner is Jeff Stage of Liverpool, NY. Gordon Morison, Assistant Postmaster General, will present the Lidman Plaque Grand Award to Mr. Stage during ceremonies at the NAPEX show, May 29-31, 1988. The Lidman Award symbolizes the best entry submitted by writers in the lay press. The Council of Philatelic Organizations will continue to sponsor this annual national competition to encourage the writing of philatelic columns and articles on philately in the non-philatelic press in the United States.

Jeff Stage contributes a weekly column in the *Stars Magazine* supplement of the *Syracuse Herald American* in New York.

Certificates of Award have been mailed to the following philatelic writers: Jeff Stage, *Syracuse Herald American*, Syracuse, NY; Kenneth Scutt, *Flutist Quarterly*, Sarasota, FL; Edward J. Davis, Jr., *Providence Journal Bulletin*, Tiverton, RI; Kenneth S. Rothschild, *Gallaudet Encyclopedia of Deaf People and Deafness*, Sloatsburg, NY; David A. Kent, *Hartford Courant*, New Britain, CT; Larry Duhe, *The Sunday Courier*, Evansville, IN; Charles Teed, *The Daily Sentinel*, Grand Junction, CO; Joseph Zollman, *South Shore Record*, Long Beach, NY; Bill McCallister, *The Washington Post*, Washington, DC; Jerome D. Krause, *The Evening News*, Sault Ste. Marie, MI; Don B. Howard, *Purrrr! The Newsletter for Cat Lovers*, Fort Myers, FL; Peter C. Kutschera, *Times Herald-Record*, Middletown, NY; Nicholas Shesstople, *Stars & Stripes*, European Edition; Robert L. Wendt, *Clemmons Courier*, Clemmons, NC; Stephen G. Esrati, *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland, OH.

Forms, rules, judging criteria are ready for 1988 competition. Lay press writers invited to request these from: COPO, Box COPO State College, PA 16803-8340.

Legendary Philatelic Printer Retires

(Reprinted from *France & Colonies Philatelist*, Oct. 1987, courtesy R. G. Stone, Editor.)

Harlan Miller Says Farewell

It is sad for me to report that genial printer-man, Harlan Miller of Lawrence, KS, has had to give up doing the *Philatelist* after this year, almost 25 years since he began with it. He has kept on for some time in face of increasing difficulties — not only his age and decreasing energy but his old obsolete linotype equipment is breaking down and parts and expert repair men are hard to find. It has been amazing to us what he can get out of that old “junk”. Since we began in 1964, working with Harlan has been most agreeable. He has been a stamp collector since school days and for a long time has printed numerous other philatelic journals. With that background Harlan was always understanding of our problems and accommodating. We have had some tricky and large extra jobs which he handled with aplomb, sandwiched in between his regular work. Only someone with his easy-going personality and good humor could put up with us. His old shop is loaded with dusty accumulations of old type, his collection of dime novels, old books, barbed wire, and other “collectibles”, all “antiques” of course. We cannot overlook the help of his wife, Frances, who not only maintained the address plates and the mail-out, but assisted in other jobs around the shop. Harlan was not, (he says) an assiduous student but he has read a lot and seen quantities of stuff in “print”; with his experience and natural intelligence he has often caught errors in our copy. We could always leave a lot of details in make-up to his judgment and not worry about how it would come out.

We wish the Millers continuing happiness in their travels and with their children.

R. G. Stone

If you can find an empty meter spot in front of 821 Vermont Street you can visit cherub Miller's Print Shop. The window displays an expected assortment of memo pads and printing samples. But there is also a selection of stamps, 25 different U.S. commems for \$1, that invite philatelists inside.

The friendly proprietor will come up front, wiping ink on a rag, and inquire how he may be of assistance. A little conversation may elicit that in addition to print work in Lawrence, for years he has printed a good many philatelic journals as attested by the many

plaques and awards on the walls. Reminiscing on the Depression days, Harlan might even admit that he did some work for barter and still has the swap material in inventory. The story of M.P.S. precancels will entertain you.

It's been a pleasure to know Harlan as our printer, a friend in philately, and the proprietor of the curiosity shop on Vermont.

John Lievsay

FINALE FROM THE MILLER PRINT SHOP

After considerable “soul searching” I have decided it is time for me to quit printing the *France and Colonies Philatelist*. At the age of 73 and with 60 years in the printing trade, I need to slow up a little more. I can no longer guarantee that I could print another volume, so now is a good time to stop with the end of this one.

And with equipment, some older than I (I know the linotype dates to 1912!) I can not guarantee it will be usable for any great length of time.

Years ago, when letterpress printers were plentiful, and equipment parts (as well as those who could install them), I had no doubts that any magazine we printed (and there were a lot) would be out when scheduled.

I have always been proud of the fact I always got our magazines out on time. I can no longer be sure to do that.

Few printers now know anything about letterpress. We have the only letterpress shop in Lawrence. Seminars in Kansas City have sent groups to our shop; we were on a short segment of news over a Topeka TV station — quote “he has a museum”! Experts who could repair linotypes are, for the most part, deceased or retired. Equipment might (and has been) “down” for a week or more at a time — certainly not conducive for publishing with its deadlines.

So, after some 23 years, I must, with my wife Frances (who has been a most helpful assistant on the *Philatelist* and many others) say goodbye, wishing the best for the *Philatelist*, the Society, and the many friends I have made in connection with it.

Harlan W. Miller

Short and Simple — One Word Can Substitute for a Wordy Phrase

Instead of “In the event of . . .”, try: “if”;

“It is our opinion . . .”, “we feel”;

“In view of the Fact . . .”, “as”.

by Barbara R. Mueller

The Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook, by Randy L. Neil. \$27.00 softbound, \$43.00 hard cover, postpaid, from The Traditions Press, 10660 Barkley, Overland Park, KS 66212.

By now many members will have seen Randy Neil's long-promised and highly-touted *The Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook*, published under the co-auspices of the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors and the Collectors Club of Kansas City. In this reviewer's opinion, it was worth the wait and worthy of the tout. Here, however, it is not our purpose to analyze and critique the contents; for me personally it is sufficient to say I wish I were ten years younger and twenty years more ambitious so I could start some new displays of my own under Randy's tutelage. Here our purpose is to analyze the format, style, and typography for ideas worth emulating in the philatelic publishing community . . . Randy has shown us not only how to create exhibits but books as well.

I have before me the softbound edition of the 8½ x 11 volume of 222 pages with its colorful cover illustrating the exhibitors' tools and ribbon awards lying on an attractive antique desk. Class on the cover, class inside. The very legible, serif typeface is called Astro, according to Randy. The paper is 80 pound Warrenflo. The book was produced by Mainline Printing Co. of Topeka, KS, the printers of *The Philatelic Exhibitor* magazine and a major subcontractor for Hallmark.

Because Mike Laurence, in his otherwise laudatory *Linn's* review, lamented the "inconsistency" of the quality of the illustrations, I asked Randy about this point. He replied, "I used the exhibit pages of over 30 collectors . . . with wide differences in exhibit page stock used, typewriter ribbons employed, etc. It was impossible to get all the exhibit pages to reproduce as clearly as, say, the beautiful work of Ken Trettin on page 171. I am hesitant to enter the book into literature competitions since most judges will not take this vital fact into consideration. I took nearly all the photos myself, so I know the problems up close." (Come on, Randy, we all know the literature judges are more competent than that! Go ahead and enter; let the world know that there are some good-looking philatelic books.)

The book pages are arranged in the contemporary mode which dictates that an entire page area need not be filled with text and pics, that white space is just as

important visually. Instead, the text, set in 2 columns, 20 picas wide each, occupies only about the lower 42 picas or 7 inches of the 11 inch page. The upper portion is either blank (except for the book title on the verso and a running chapter head on the recto pages) or carries an illustration caption. This is set at the left or right as required at the top of the blank portion of the page, in a delicate italic face with ragged right margins, about 9 picas maximum width.

Thus there is a space of about 12 picas between caption and text block in most cases, unless the illustration occupies a whole page, in which case the caption appears at the top of a facing page.

The illustrations are noteworthy, not just for the how-to-do-it kind and the album-page-example kind, but for the people involvement. This is a people book and so you find candid scenes at stamp shows, anonymous visitors and well-known personages, too. Also noteworthy is the generous use of subheads in the text to assist the user in locating precise areas of interest; the comprehensive index is another aid in location. The writing style is very readable, both for sheer pleasure and for instruction. In summary, potential philatelic publishers would do well to study this work carefully.

(Because I am under the pressure of other deadlines, I have not had time to do a thorough reviewing job of several new publications, including *Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1987* — looks good as usual or even better — and Ken Wood's *Post Dates 1987*, also of intriguing appearance. In addition, Dick Salz of the Canal Zone Study Group has submitted a package of the publications of that organization, including the monumental *Canal Zone Stamps* and Lawson Entwistle's *The Postal Markings of the Canal Zone* plus two supplements. All will be discussed in the next issue.)

B.R.M.

A Model Critique Sheet Used at COLOPEX '88

The following is the layout of the critique sheet used in the Colopex '88 literature competition. In the form of a computer printout, it includes at the top the name of the entry and the person who entered it. Additional comments are written in on the back of the sheet, which is sent to the individual exhibitors. The categories for judging are useful for anyone casting a critical eye at a piece of literature, be it his own or someone else's.

GENERAL AIDS TO USER

Table of Contents	Indexes
Lists of illustrations, tables, symbols, abbreviations.	
Explanation of arrangement/methodology	
Innovations	Check lists

SCHOLARLY ATTRIBUTES

Acknowledgements	References
Bibliography	Original research.

PRESENTATION:

Binding	Paper (opaqueness)	Editing
Title page	Format (handy, wasted space, crowded)	Tables (adequate)
Print (clean, clear, legible)	Illustrations (clear, adequate size)	

Literature Exhibition Awards at COLOPEX '88

Category A – Handbooks & Special Studies

- GRAND AWARD** – *American Philatelic Congress Book*, Barbara R. Mueller, Editor.
- RESERVE GRAND AWARD** – *Chu Kwang Tower Issues*, Donald R. Alexander, author.
- American Philatelic Congress Book*, Barbara R. Mueller, editor. Gold
- Canada, The Admiral Flaws*, H. Reiche, publisher. Bronze
- Catalog of Olympic Labels 1894 - 1985*, Robert J. DuBois, author. Silver
- Chu Kwang Tower Issues of Taiwan*, Donald R. Alexander, author. Vermeil
- Congress Books Index*, Kathleen Wolsiffer, compiler. Silver
- Guides/Tips Handbook for Production of Show/Bourse Programs*, C. M. Burnett, author. Silver-Bronze
- Hoster Machine Cancels: Background to the First Effective Rapid-Cancelling Machine in Germany 1885-1887*, Jerry H. Miller, author. Bronze.
- Michel Deutschland-Spezial Katalog: An English Translation of the Plebescite Section*, Dr. J. D. Neefus, author. Silver-Bronze
- Munich Exchange Control Office 1918-1923*, R. Pizer, author. Silver-Bronze.
- Norwegian Exile Mail 1940-1945*, George B. Koplowitz, publisher. Vermeil
- Olympex '88*, Dale Spiers, editor. Silver
- A Study of Haiti's 20 Centime Lithographed Stamp of 1895 and Plating Guide*, P. C. Jeannapoulos, author. Vermeil
- Watermarks in Postage Stamp Paper*, L. E. Repeta, author. Vermeil

Category B – Philatelic Periodicals

- GRAND AWARD** – *Postal History Journal*, Ernst M. Cohn, Editor.
- RESERVE GRAND AWARD** – *The Posthorn*, Scandinavian Collectors Club, publisher.
- Calgary STAMPede*, Dale Spiers, editor. Silver
- Chesstamp Review*, Russ Ott, editor. Silver-Bronze
- The China Clipper*, Donald R. Alexander, editor. Vermeil
- Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin*, Regis Hoffman, editor. Silver

The Columbian, Dr. Jason H. Manchester, editor, Vermeil

The Heliograph, Western Postal History Museum, publisher, Silver

Ice Cap News, Russ Ott, editor. Vermeil

Inflation Study Group Bulletin, Diana Manchester, editor, Silver

Mexicana, Carl LeMar John, publisher, Vermeil

The Obliterator, Nicholas Shestople, editor, Silver-Bronze

The Petro-Philatelist, Thomas C. Hughes, editor, Vermeil

Philatelia Chimica et Physica, C. S. Kettler, editor, Silver

Philippine Philatelic News, R. F. Yacano, editor, Silver-Bronze

Philatelically Yours, Phill Mendel, editor, Bronze

Postal History Journal, Ernst M. Cohn, editor, Gold

The Posthorn, Scandinavian Collectors Club, publishers, Gold

The Runner Post, A. MacGregor, editor, Silver

Scalpel & Tongs, Ranes C. Chakravorty, M.D., editor, Silver-Bronze,

Ukrainian Philatelist, Ingert Kuzych, editor, Bronze

Category C – Columns & Articles

- GRAND AWARD** – *U. S. Notes (Linn's Stamp News)*, John M. Hotchner, author.
- RESERVE GRAND AWARD** – *The World of Stamps (Providence Journal-Bulletin)*, Edward J. Davis, Jr.
- The Question Box (First Days)*, Alan Warren, Silver
- Transfers and Reentries (The Posthorn)*, Alan Warren, Silver-Bronze
- U.S. Notes (Linn's Stamp News)*, John M. Hotchner, Vermeil
- A view from the Tin (Tin Canner)*, Larry Benson, Bronze
- The World of Stamps (Providence Journal-Bulletin)*, Edward J. Davis, Jr. Vermeil

Word Order and Word Misuse

by Herman Herst, Jr.

It matters a great deal in writing how one arranges the word order. The very same words in a sentence may have different meanings entirely, according to the order in which they appear.

Take this sentence: "John only thinks of food."

This sentence tells us that John does not do anything about food except think of it. He does not eat it, he does not show any interest in food except to think about it.

Now try this sentence: "John thinks only of food." Here, John may eat food, admire food, look for food, while he is thinking of it.

The word "frequently" has a proper place in a sentence. "John frequently thought of divorcing Irene" is entirely different from "John thought of divorcing Irene frequently."

"Bad" and "badly" are often misused. The only way one can feel "badly" is to grope in the dark and not be too successful at it. When one feels rotten, he feels bad.

Today careless folk think that "lay" and "lie" are synonymous. If you put a stamp down, let it "lie" there. It cannot "lay" there.

One very common error is the misuse of the word "hopefully", which has become one of the most frequently used words in the language. When it is used, make sure that the thing that is full of hope is equal to the act. "Hopefully the sun will come up tomorrow" may sound right to the untrained ear, but it assumes that the sun is full of hope. In most instances only a human is full of hope; perhaps a dog may be hopeful about its meal, but until the dog communicates the fact to us, we will never know.

Philatelically, a word that seems to be losing its accepted meaning and taking on a new one is the word "mint". "The stamp is mint, lightly hinged." This is an impossibility. Mint (taken from our sister hobby of coins) means that the item is just as it emerged from the mint — and no stamp came from the "mint" with a hinge on it.

But mint does not mean that the stamp has gum. Using the same definition — exactly as it came from the "mint" — a stamp, such as the Byrd or Chicago souvenir sheets were issued without gum, as were the Farleys. Call them mint, but do not look for original gum.

A postcard (privately issued without a government issued stamp on it) is not the same as a postal card

(issued with printed 'stamp' as part of the design, by a government postal service, normally requiring no additional postage to be mailed).

In *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice remarked that when she used a word, it meant exactly what she wanted it to mean, ". . . no more, no less." That is fine in fiction, which "Alice" is, but in philately, which some people regard as a science, words ought to mean what they actually mean. Too bad they do not.

We all know that it is best to avoid ultra-superlatives in our writings. To say that this is absolutely the best or that that is the rarest should be avoided. Qualify the superlative by downgrading it a trifle lest some nit-picker come up to prove that something else is rarer or more valuable. I did a story on a CSA postal official named Alexander Dimitry, an outstanding dueler (duels man?) of New Orleans who had never lost a duel. I dropped it down a bit and wrote that he had almost never lost a duel but then I figured that if he only lost one duel he would not have been an outstanding dueler. So I had to leave it in the superlative — he won every time he dueled. H.H., Jr.

The IASP Explorer Increases Format — Adds "Hot Line" Feature

(Bill York, the innovative editor of the *Journal of the International Association of Space Philatelists*, has increased the size of the publication to an 8½ x 11 newsletter of 12 pages. It is professionally printed and illustrated in a very readable style. Those interested may contact Bill at P.O. Box 302, Yonkers, NY 10710.

A new service of IASP is a "hot line" telephone which members can dial to hear a recorded message giving up-to-the-minute news in the field. Bill sent us a transcript of the Feb. 2, 1988, report, which gives the flavor of the message. Note, too, the membership-building monthly raffle feature. Other groups may wish to try a similar promotional effort:)

"Hello! You have reached the IASP Space Hotline sponsored by the International Association of Space Philatelists of Yonkers, NY. This is report no. 88-1 dated Feb. 2nd.

* A space cancel featuring the Space Shuttle will be used on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of US space exploration at CEMPEX in Michigan on Feb. 20-21st. Send stamped envelopes for the cancel to: Postmaster, CEMPEX Station, Lansing, MI 48924-9998. The IASP now has 11 covers in its space cancel series. Write for information."

[Seven more then-current and newsworthy paragraphs, each with "a bullet" to draw attention to them, follow the one quoted above in the 8½ x 14 mimeo (photocopy?) transcript here seen.

This remarkable and innovative effort on York's and his society's behalf was covered in *The Philatelic Communicator*, Vol 20, No. 1, Whole No. 75, in our first quarter 1987 issue, and the coverage gives more details as to how the "Hotline" operates and how to gain access to it.

If you missed the vol. 20, whole no. 75 coverage and wish to have a copy, send a franked addressed envelope to Joe Frye.]

PAPF Provides Initial Funding for Alvaro Bonilla Lara Award

A phoenix, the mythical bird that burns itself on a funeral pyre and arises from its own ashes in the freshness of youth, has appeared in the philatelic world. It will provide the initial funding for the recently-announced Alvaro Bonilla Lara Award of the Federacion Interamericana de Filatelia (FIAF). The philatelic phoenix is the Pan American Philatelic Federation, born in early 1955 and dying in early 1958 after publishing 26 issues of the *Pan American Philatelist*, a journal of Latin American philately.

After its demise (because of inability to find a replacement editor for its publication), the PAPF refunded 1958 dues to more than 400 members but wound up with a small treasury surplus which has been retained over the intervening twenty years and has grown modestly. In announcing the gift of the treasury surplus to fund the Alvaro Bonilla Lara Award, the only surviving PAPF officers, President F. Burton Sellers and Treasurer Henry O. Feldman, cited Dr. Lara's outstanding career as a collector, international judge, and author. They also noted that Dr. Lara had been the country representative of Chile to the PAPF during its lifetime and how suitable was this recognition of his service to the PAPF.

Established in early 1986 by the FIAF, the Lara Award was created to promote literature on Latin American philately. The award will comprise a medal and diploma and will be awarded annually to an outstanding study or book on some aspect of Latin American collecting. Under the coordination of the FIAF Vice-President, nominations will be accepted from FIAF member federations of literature published during the preceding two years. The selection of the winner will be made by vote of FIAF delegates at their annual assembly.

In acknowledging the gift, Dr. Roberto Rosende, FIAF President, thanked the PAPF for their recognition and generosity and invited any other groups or individuals interested in promoting Latin American Philatelic literature to add to the fund. Further details on administration of the award will be announced shortly by the FIAF. Messrs. Sellers and Feldman expressed relief that their twenty year custody of the fund had ended and the phoenix once again had ascended his pyre. They were pleased that such an appropriate repository had been found for the PAPF funds.

For further information, contact:

F. Burton Sellers,
12637 Rampart Drive,
Sun City West, AZ 85375.

COPO "Project Newspaper" Reaches 7.9 Million Readers

Stephen Edwards Associates (SEA) has announced that the newspaper column written by Les Winick for weekly and monthly newspapers under the sponsorship of the Council of Philatelic Organizations (COPO) has reached a 7.9 million circulation.

Many of the 486 papers print the column on a space-available basis and do not run it in every issue, but recent mail indicates a trend by more and more

papers to run the column, "Stamping Around", on a regular schedule.

SEA was able to verify the newspaper names through reader response to a free offer of a stamp collecting package consisting of four booklets on various aspects of the hobby. More than 2,000 readers have written for these booklets and informed SEA of the name of the paper in which they read the offer. The names were then checked against the latest circulation reports for the individual newspapers. Stephen Neulander, president of SEA, said that during the week of March 7, 1988, reader response showed that 13 new newspapers were now running the column. These will be checked for their circulation and added to the total when the work is completed.

In addition to the high percentage of response coming from children, or adults writing for children, many letters are from women and from retired persons wanting to know how to start or get back into the hobby of collecting stamps.

* * *

Larry McInnes on Free Stamp Columns

"Marketing Philatelic Literature to Non-Philatelic Audiences", (PC, No. 79) was not only timely, but especially interesting for me. So was John Hotchner's "The Confessions of a Philatelic Writer."

Les Winick's COPO column is now published in over 400 publications in the U.S., I believe. As it becomes more accepted, as no doubt it will, I hope that it does not meet the fate of a similar column I did in Canada.

In 1983, I was approached by Canada Post Corp. to write a column that would be provided, camera-ready, free of charge, to all members of the Canadian Community Newspapers Association, about 500 weekly papers in Canada.

At first there was a tremendously negative reaction, not to the column, which received good reviews, but to Canada Post paying to provide it. The usual reaction was, "If you want us to publish it, buy the space."

The resistance didn't last. More and more papers picked up the column, including several daily newspapers that got "special permission."

I believe the column was published in some 200 Canadian papers. Certainly my mail (much of it similar to what John Hotchner receives) indicates so.

Alas, the great paymaster, Canada Post, has fallen on worse times than it usually falls on, on a continuing basis. In 1987, there was yet another expensive postal

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strike that cost the corporation millions trying to break the union involved, which it didn't; it took government legislation to end it.

1988 is the year the corporation is to break even or face privatization. It won't. The deficit, while miniscule compared to a few years ago, remains a deficit, and the cost of the strike makes it more so.

My contract has not been renewed. There will no longer be a free column available, and some 200 Canadian papers who saw some merit in it will no longer receive it.

The sad part is, not my loss of income, but that soon no one will care. In the small towns, where stamp collecting was suddenly something of interest, it will soon be forgotten.

I scraped my pennies together to buy Harry Lindquist's *Stamps* in my hometown of Charlottetown, P.E.I., during the early 1940s, an isolated city of 10,000. Today in Montreal, with a population of 3.5 million, you won't find a copy on any newsstand anywhere.

Sic transit gloria.

I hope the COPO column goes on — and up.

L.M.

Editorial Advice from a Specialty Journal Editor

Ken Wood's "Commentary" column in the Jan. 10, 1987, edition of *Stamp Collector* included a response to his previous comments that many club and society journal editors have great difficulty in obtaining publishable material from members. Mike Street, editor of *BNA Topics*, journal of the British North American Philatelic Society, came up with these observations:

"First and foremost, an editor must be visible. It is obvious that personal contact makes it easier to find contributors. What is not so obvious is that personal contact can mean the difference between relative success and constant struggle.

"Authors need reassurance. First-time authors are notoriously skittish. Quiet words, face to face, can often make the difference in convincing them that you mean business and, more important, that you care.

"If the powers that be in your group or society want the editor to be a gnome, i.e., simply to stay out of sight and produce, take your talents elsewhere. Willing editors are not easy to come by.

"The second thing is to make it clear that editing is your job. Many people will tell you that they don't know how to write, and it may be painfully true. An

article may arrive with half the words misspelled, all the grammar mangled, and the same thoughts repeated two or three times. Is the basic information solid, and worth passing on to your readers? Yes? Then, as time-consuming as fixing it up may be, the mess is your problem, not the author's.

"Most writers will see and appreciate the improvement that your efforts bring. You can point out some of the problems — after the item is in print — but be tactful. A condescending or rude approach could cause the author to clam up for good, or, worse, turn up on the pages of another publication.

"The editor's third step ties the author to the reader. Are there enough illustrations? If not, get them. Once this is done, don't just dump the material on the printer. Think about the layout, particularly the placement of illustrations with respect to corresponding text. A picture may well be worth a thousand words, but not if the reader has trouble finding it.

"The last point is just as essential as the other three. Editors must find their reward in their work, in knowing that they have done their best. If you are expecting regular words of praise for the product, or for your efforts, find another line of work. The better you get at it the more you must be prepared to find people taking potshots at you. This sort of thing can hurt, and knowing that it is part of human nature may not always help.

"Does all this work? When I took over *Topics*, the material that my predecessor gave me was enough to fill only three-quarters of an issue. I scrounged enough to fill my first one. The second was noticeably thin. Three weeks later I went to my first BNAPS convention, and articles have not been a problem since. I know this will sound like bragging, but right now there is enough material on hand to fill the next four issues.

"All I can say is that it works for me."

Mike Street

That Old Bugaboo "Research"

The purists among us decry application of the term "research" to the study and compilation of existing literature on our subject as opposed to original investigation. But research is one of those terms like "unique" which the public insistently reshapes to its own perceived needs. A recent Associated Press report published in Wisconsin offers an alternative to and perspective on "research".

According to this report, the term is a hot topic in
(Continued on page 31.)

the state Legislature, and a college administrator says it might be better appreciated if it were called "scholarly activity". At least research should be defined in broader terms, said University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Chancellor Larry Schnack.

The entire matter has become a political football because a legislator wants professors to spend less time on "research" and more in the classroom. However, depending on a faculty member's field of study, Schnack says that scholarly activity can be anything from preparing income tax returns to staging an opera and helping with an archaeological dig. "While every faculty member may not be involved in a major research project, every faculty member must be involved in scholarly activity", Schnack said.

"Research . . . looking at that world, it's really education", added Marvin Lang, a chemistry professor. "The overall process of research is gathering information and making decisions. And is that not the educational process?"

So, how about using the term "scholarly activity" for what philatelic writers and exhibitors do, for the writing of a paper for the American Philatelic Congress books, for the delineation of the theme in a thematic exhibit?

Comments invited.

Barbara R. Mueller

"A" Historian or "An" Historian?

Historic or Historical?

The subject of history bulks large in philately. The words *history*, *historic*, *historical*, and *historian* are in constant use in our literature. We are sometimes perplexed about the proper article to use before them. Apropos of this matter was a recent Associated Press feature by Mike Feinselber, news editor of the AP's Washington Bureau.

In it he pointed out President Reagan's inconsistency in the use of the articles "a" and "an" before the word *historic*. The Public Papers of the Presidents shows that since taking office, Reagan has used "an historic" at least 158 times and "a historic" at least 12.

Asked to account for this usage, Robert McArtor, chairman of the Style Board of the Government printing Office, said, "Reagan's giving away his age. When I went to school, we said 'an historic' too." McArtor

heads the seven-member board that publishes the GPO Style Manual which tells the government how to spell, abbreviate, punctuate, and italicize when there's a legitimate choice.

"It's Rule 5.176," said McArtor, reciting it: "The indefinite article 'a' is used before a consonant and an aspirated 'h'. 'An' is used before a silent 'h' and all vowels except 'u', pronounced as in 'visual', and 'o', pronounced as in 'one'."

Another expert, Charles Suhor, deputy executive director of the National Council of Teachers of English in Urbana, IL, calls it a usage rule. "Traditional, conventional — and now archaic, I'd call it — usage says 'an historic' but contemporary usage is 'a historic'. A purist would probably say 'an historic' but it tends to sound pretentious in common usage today."

Aspiration refers to pronouncing a word with the initial release of breath associated with our letter "h". An aspirated word is one that is pronounced with an initial sound of "h". As Michael Gartner says, when you say "Hello, Harry" you have aspirated twice. If you say, "ello, 'arry", you have not aspirated.

To summarize: The article "a" is used before all words beginning with consonants except those that start with an unpronounced (unaspirated) "h". The article "an" is used before all words beginning with an unaspirated "h" and all words beginning with a vowel unless that vowel has the sound of a "y" or "w" (a unit, a one).

Gartner says that people who say "an historic" are half-aspirated grammarians! In passing, he also notes the difference between historic and historical:

Historic refers to something that is important in history; historical refers to something that is merely concerned with history.

And now we wait to hear from our Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Miami, Duane Koenig!

Barbara R. Mueller

WU 30 President Earns Arizona Phoenix Award

The American Philatelist, May 1988 issue, brings the welcome news that our president, Bob de Violini, has received the prestigious Phoenix Award of the Arizona State Philatelic Hall of Fame for 1987. The award recognizes outstanding services to philately by a non-resident collector.

Congratulations, Bob! Joe F. Frye

TO:

Secretary-Treasurer's Report
— as of May 15, 1988

Welcome

We welcome the following new members who have joined WU 30 since our last report:

- 1483 **Herbert S. Herman**, 3740 N.W. 116 Terrace, Sunrise, FL 33323. Author *Death's Railroad: A Philatelic History*; *Thai Philately* contributor. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
- 1484 **Mrs. M. Arlene Futrell**, R.D. 1, Box 65, Stokes, NC 27884. Editor *The Circuit*, journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
- 1485 **Richard H. Salz**, 60 - 27th. Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94543. Editor *Council Courier*, Council of Northern California Philatelic Societies. Sponsor: Robert de Violini.
- 1487 **Thomas F. Clarke**, Box 290-145, Davie, FL 33329. Authoring major work on Philadelphia cancellations 1720 to date. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.

Reinstated

The following members have reinstated their memberships:

- 1429 Douglas H. Henkle, of Oshkosh, WI.
1471 Fred D. Reynolds, of APO, NY.
0228 Daniel C. Warren, of Gloucester, VA.

Resignations

The following members have resigned their membership in the Writers Unit:

- 1376 C. Nieuwland, of Rotterdam, Netherlands.
0565 John H. Willard, of Denver, CO.

Closed Albums

Condolences are extended to the families of:

- 1435 David T. Beals III, of Shawnee Mission, KS.
0111 Bruce G. Corrigan, of Sacramento, CA.
1347 Boris Margau, of Toronto, Canada.
0427 Perham C. Nahl, of Walnut Creek, CA.

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In the last issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* we listed 28 members who were dropped for non-payment of dues. At least three of them are deceased and so we list those above. We also thank the WU members who advised us of their recent passing.

Back Issues

Back issues of *The Philatelic Communicator*, (formerly known as the *News Bulletin*) are still available at \$2.50 per issue postpaid or \$10.00 per year. If interested in obtaining any or all of these back issues, send your check payable to "APS Writers Unit 30" to me at address below. Years available: 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987.

Help Us Keep Your Mailing Address Current

We urge you to send address changes — as soon as they are known, with effective date — to the Secretary-Treasurer at address below. This saves Unit funds and assures continuous delivery of your issues of this journal.

* * *

George B. Griffenhagen, Secretary-Treasurer
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180

Look Again at the Front Page of This Issue

I urge you to consider well the words of our lady editor on the front page of this issue. *Joe F. Frye*
