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Quo Vadis Philatelic Literature Competitions?

A White Paper for Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges

by Michael D. Dixon, PhD, FRPSL

Editor's Note: This paper was prepared by the Chairman of the Sub-Committee established by the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ) to review philatelic literature competitions. In addition to the chairman, the Sub-Committee included Janet Klug, Ann Triggle, Ron Lesher and Charles Verge. It was presented to the CANEJ during STAMPSHOW in Providence, R.I. and to members of WU30 at the Writers' Breakfast.

INTRODUCTION

Discussion on the future of philatelic literature competitions within the USA has been continuing for the past several years. The topic seems to have picked up impetus shortly after Pacific 97. More recently, CANEJ has been drawn into a consideration of the subject following an offer by a philatelic publisher to provide a Grand Award for the Literature Competition at the APS annual STAMPSHOW.

Following this gesture, some exchanges between CANEJ members indicated a diversity of opinion as to whether or not it was appropriate to (a) have a Grand Award, and (b) if so, to accept the physical representation of that award from a philatelic publisher. In the event, this discussion became somewhat academic as the APS accepted the award and announced it to the society's membership before CANEJ membership discussions had reached a conclusion.

Nevertheless, the foreshortened discussion was not entirely fruitless insofar as it revealed a need to review the present "rules of engagement" for philatelic literature competitions. In particular, the need for a review stems from the observations and comments that there are significant disparities between the way in which entrants in the several different literature classes are evaluated and the general belief that it would be impossible to give such a Grand Award, for example, to a journal since a book or monograph would invariably receive a higher "score" in the judging process, i.e., the playing field is not level.

For the purpose of conducting a review, and hopefully providing suggestions as to how the real or perceived disparities may be dissipated, the Chairman of CANEJ established a sub-committee to look at the question; the author of this discussion paper was coerced into leading that subcommittee.

AREAS OF DISSATISFACTION

A review of the relatively recent published literature, and exchanges of opinion between the CANEJ membership, on the topic of philatelic literature judging at APS competitive events shows that there are two facets to the discontentment. These are:

> *Competitive philatelic literature entries do not receive the same recognition, and thus comparable awards (viz., medal levels), as do philatelic entries (traditional, postal history, etc.), and*
>
> *Within the philatelic literature competition, the rules of judging favor entries in some classes over those in others, e.g., books and monographs over journals and newsletters.*

SYNOPSIS OF CANEJ MEMBER COMMENTS

A review of the exchanges of e-mail on the topic of judging philatelic literature has revealed the following main subjects have been commented upon by one or more of the CANEJ team:

- Purpose of Philatelic Literature competitions and/or exhibitions
- Rôle of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP)
- WSP shows versus annual APS STAMPSHOW
- Logistics
- Judging Criteria and Methodology
- Awards (medal levels and "special" awards)
- The critique
- Display and sale at the show

PURPOSE OF PHILATELIC LITERATURE COMPETITIONS AND/OR EXHIBITIONS

Having read all the earlier comments, I believe that we need to define the purpose of philatelic literature competitions. Having accomplished that, I believe the rest will "fall out"—somewhat like awarding the Grand and Reserve Grand at a regular show after the medal levels have been decided and before the other "special awards" have been assigned.

Several of the CANEJ correspondents indicated that they believed the purpose of the philatelic literature competition was to (a) boost the egos of the authors;[1] (b) promote sales; (c)

➤➤*continued on page 4*

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The Quill

Joe Foley

The principal theme of this issue is the "white paper" presented by Dr. Michael Dixon at the Writers' Breakfast in Providence. It is reproduced in its entirety. On page 7 is the announcement of the subcommittee that will be carrying this work forward. Chaired by WU30 past president Alan Warren, this group has a rather formidable task. Input is requested and in order that all may be aware of what the current situation is, that portion of the APS *Manual of Philatelic Judging* dealing with literature is reprinted on pages 8 - 12.

In the "Letters" section on page 15, the Secretary of the Royal Philatelic Society London clarifies the distinction of Fellowship in that organization. We prematurely "shut down" the "Editors' In-Box" in the last issue, overlooking the contribution by Barry Newton, editor of *First Days*. Barry's article is on page 3.

Looking ahead to the next and future issues, we should have some helpful advice for writers and editors as well as some "food for thought." One continuing problem for many of us concerns quality of illustrations (and I definitely include myself in this category). I've asked some writers and editors, who seem to be doing it right, for some advice we can publish. The first response from Harlan Stone is in hand and will be in the next issue. "Computer Corner" will be back and we have some commitments from editor/publishers on a mini-series about what they are looking for (and *not* looking for). It will carry the title "From the Top of the Pile to the Circular File." A discussion between John Kevin Doyle and George Krieger on the impact of Internet on society journals should give us something to think about.

Let me share something of a personal experience. Editing two stamp journals and keeping abreast of the comments on philatelic literature competitions (and voicing a few of my own), I decided to apply to apprentice judge literature. I've been a national philatelic judge since 1973 and have had international credentials since 1986 – but it was back to the books, literally and figuratively – boxes of them. It may not be customary for an apprentice to comment on the process, but that's just what I want to do.

I was impressed. All of the judges put a great deal of effort into reading and assessing the books, catalogs, Websites, CDs and periodicals we received. This was a time consuming process. If anything, for a large literature exhibition such as this, it may take more than philatelic judging. Basically, everything was read and notes made before we arrived at the show. A full day was spent in discussion and the better part of a second day in preparing critique sheets. The efforts of the authors and editors were treated with respect. □

Writers Breakfast at Stampshow in Providence

by Alan Warren

Approximately 80 people turned out for the Writers Breakfast held at the Westin Hotel in Providence, R.I. on Sunday, August 27th. President Dane Claussen introduced the WU30 officers and council members and read the Secretary/Treasurer's Report sent in by George Griffenhagen.

Following distribution of some of the popular door prizes, Michael Dixon spoke about the need to review the criteria for literature judging at WSP shows. His specific recommendation appears elsewhere in this issue of the *PC*. Two philatelic writers were elected to the Writers Hall of Fame—Randy Neil, and the late Charless Hahn. Their tributes appear elsewhere in this issue of the *PC*.

Pat Walters, chief literature judge at the show, introduced his fellow jurors and Dane announced the literature awards. Following more door prizes and general announcements, the meeting adjourned until the next Writers Breakfast at the NORDIA/ARIPEX/APS Winter Meeting in Tucson, January 19-21, 2001.

Randy Neil and Charless Hahn Named to Writers' Hall of Fame

Randy L. Neil

In 1956 during the FIPEX show in New York, a young stamp collector walked up to a dealer's booth and asked about a stamp. The dealer quickly responded with "Beat it!" Instead of sulking, this prescient young writer fired off a letter to *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, which editor Harry Weiss printed under the headline "A Junior Views Stamp Collecting." Thus Randy Neil's letter initiated a column of that name, which he wrote periodically over the next several years. In one of those columns he announced the formation of the American Junior Philatelic Society. That same year, 1957, he also began a juniors column in *FIRST DAYS*, journal of the American First Day Cover Society.

Since then Randy has not put his pen, typewriter, or keyboard down, but has continued to author articles and columns in the *American Philatelist*, *Linn's Stamp News*, *Stamp Collector*, the *Congress Book*, and *Stamps* magazine among others. As a gold medal and grand award exhibitor, he has championed exhibitors by founding the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors, and serving as its first president. For ten years he wrote a column on "Exhibits and Exhibitions" for the *AP*. After promoting exhibiting with word and action he authored the popular *New Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook*, which has seen two editions. He also co-authored, with Jack Rosenthal, *The Trans-Mississippi Issue of 1898*, the first significant work on that issue. In 1992 he co-founded and published the new journal *U.S. Stamps and Postal History*.

Randy Neil has served the American Philatelic Society as a director and officer for many years. He has been widely recognized with a long list of awards and honors, culminating this weekend in the Luff Award for Outstanding Service to the Society. It is thus fitting that we induct Randy Neil into the Writers Hall of Fame.

Charless Hahn

Charless Hahn inherited several traits from his father who was also a stamp collector, author and editor. When the family lost its fortune in the 1929 stock market crash, father and son started a stamp mixture business called "C. Hahn for Stamps." The young dealer took advertising space in *Linn's* in the early 1930s, a relationship that continued for over sixty years. For 45 years Hahn wrote the weekly stamp column for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The Chicago based writer was active in the Collectors Club of Chicago, serving as its first publications committee chairman and also president.

Hahn's vocation was editing and publishing as well. He worked for Canterbury press and then founded his own publishing firm in 1958. His fluency in Spanish enabled him to publish Latin American trade journals for two pharmaceutical firms and, later, two international beverage publications. At the same time he continued his philatelic writing including the annual stamp article that appeared in the yearbook of the *World Book Encyclopedia* from 1955 to 1997. He co-authored *British Pictorial Envelopes of the 19th Century*, published by the Collectors Club of Chicago in 1981.

His award winning collecting specialties included many aspects of Great Britain philately such as postmarks, Mulreadies, and the locals of Scotland. As a consequence of the last mentioned area he developed a liking for single-malt Scotch whiskies. Hahn was a debonair figure on the Chicago scene, recognized by his circular mustaches and ponytail. He served on the governing board of Ameripex where he was in charge of press relations. With such outstanding writing and editing accomplishments, Charless Hahn belongs indeed in the company of others in the Writers Hall of Fame. □

SPELL CHECKER

This little ditty was received from Patrick J. Ryan, Sr., editor of *The Revealer*, journal of the Éire Philatelic Association.

Eye halve a spelling checker
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marks four my revenue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word
And weight four it two say
Whether eye am wrong oar write
It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid
It nose bee fore two long
And eye can put the error rite
Its rare lea ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it
I am shore your pleased two no
Its letter perfect awl the weigh
My checker tolled me sew. □

➤➤**Quo Vadis . . .** *(continued from page 1)*
provide another vehicle for "pot collectors;" (d) reward scholarship and (e) somewhat related to (b), publicize specialist societies through "advertizing" the society's organ.

With our present set-up, to a greater or lesser extent, I think each of (a) through (e) are relevant.

I did not read in those comments and observations what I had considered to be the prime purpose: to enhance philately in general by bringing to the notice of the collecting public information resources relevant to all aspects of the hobby. Yes, I know, there are some publications that are more along the lines of entertainment publications (Pat Herst's "Jottings" for example), but these are relatively few and far between and could still be considered as disseminating information.

If we accept that the principle purpose is to share and spread knowledge, we should then decide whether it is appropriate to hold *competitions*, or merely provide a venue where philatelic literature works may be *exhibited*. Certainly, an exhibition would cater for (a), (b) and (e), and—to some measure—(d) if acceptance for exhibiting required some pre-approval. Purpose (c) can only be satisfied with a competition; to a lesser extent (a) and (d) veer in that direction.

Omitted from my list of purposes expressed earlier by CANEJ contributors, but mentioned by several, is the thought that many authors perceive the vermeil received at national philatelic literature competitions as the key leading to participation in FIP show.[2] That, i.e., the perception, may be so—and for the very same reasons as given above, an author may wish to participate at FIP shows.

RÔLE OF FIP

In the *General Regulations of the FIP for Exhibitions (GREX)*[3] FIP has provided a framework for exhibitions:

> *Article 1 Exhibition Objectives*
>
> *The F.I.P. sees in philatelic exhibitions a suitable opportunity to further its aims, as set out in Article 5 of its Statutes:*
>
> - *to promote every aspect of philately world wide,*
> - *expand and develop friendly relations and close co-operation between philatelists the world over, and thus to make a contribution to the consolidation of peace and to better understanding among all people,*
> - *to demonstrate the state of development of philately in all of its various fields,*
> - *to promote international exchange of the results of philatelic research,*
> - *to awaken the interest of philatelists in international competitions, and*
> - *to demonstrate to the general public, in particular to the* [sic] *youth, the cultural and the educational values of philately and its attractiveness as a hobby.*

If we substitute "USA" for "world" and "national" for "international," we could arrive at a statement that is applicable to exhibiting in this country—at the more general level, rather than just for philatelic literature.

If we then look at the clause "to demonstrate the state of development of philately in all of its various fields," at "to promote [inter]national exchange of the results of philatelic research," and at "to demonstrate to the general public, in particular to the [*sic*] youth, the cultural and the educational values of philately and its attractiveness as a hobby," I think we can see the foundations of a mission statement for APS sponsored philatelic literature exhibitions/competitions.

COMPETITIVE PHILATELIC LITERATURE VERSUS COMPETITIVE PHILATELIC EXHIBITS

Joseph Monteiro[4] and by Bob Rawlings[5] have each analyzed and compared the distribution of medal levels for literature and stamp[6] exhibits. From the perspective of a statistician, their methodologies and, thus, some of the conclusions they reached are found to be somewhat questionable. Nevertheless, one valid observation, and one with which most students of the subject will have noted from the empirical evidence, is that literature entries consistently garner fewer gold and vermeil awards than do stamp exhibits. These authors have shown that the distribution of medals to literature exhibits follows a bell curve that centers upon the silver medal. The center shifts to a higher level (strong silver/weak vermeil) for books and monographs, and lower (weak silver/silver bronze) for journals and newsletters.

In contrast, the asymmetrical distribution for stamp exhibits is highly skewed toward vermeil and gold.

These authors (and others who have entered the foray) conclude that literature exhibits are not treated as fairly by the judges, and are regarded almost as "second class" entities.

Your author will probably be defrocked, excommunicated and/or have his judging accreditation revoked for the heretical comment that follows: My thesis is that the awards for literature exhibits are correctly distributed and what is wrong is that philatelic judges are too generous with the medals awarded to stamp exhibits.

I have been placed on record[7] with the opinion that APS stamp judges give far too many high awards and that one would expect a bell curve distribution centered upon the middle level medal (silver). Discussion with judges in other countries, especially in the United Kingdom (and my experience as a judge in that country), shows that awards at their national shows follow that pattern. A review of other "scores" for personal accomplishments, e.g., of students taking academic examinations, shows that typically results follow a symmetrical bell-shaped distribution centered around a mid-level result: the typical normal distribution. What I believe is wrong is *not* the judging of literature, but the judging of stamp exhibits. Thus, the comment that literature exhibits "are not treated as *fairly* as stamp exhibits" should more correctly be stated as "are not treated as *generously* as stamp exhibits."

Why could it be that the distribution of literature exhibit awards in North America more closely resembles that to be expected statistically, and more closely emulate results elsewhere than do the awards for stamp exhibits?[8] I would suggest that the answer lies in the fact that the criteria for

judging literature exhibits, here and overseas, are based on those of FIP, whereas the APS rules for stamp judging have evolved over time and are "home grown." Moreover, it is highly significant that the doyen of philatelic literature judging in the USA, Charlie Peterson, is the President of the FIP Commission for Literature and the principal author of both the FIP rules and the APS rules. This should not be a surprise to anyone taking the time to read and compare the FIP GREX and the APS rules[9] and note the similarity of wording.

Setting aside the observed disparity between the awards achieved for different literature classes, I conclude that in general the literature exhibits are awarded the correct and appropriate medal and that the concept of somehow changing the judging to be more "generous" and uniform with that of stamp exhibits would be a retrograde activity.

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Is the playing field level? If not, should it be? The answer to both of those questions is: "Yes and No." This apparent conundrum derives from a consideration of the judging criteria for literature exhibits.

If we accept that the criteria are correct and, moreover, systematically and uniformly applied to all literature exhibit classes, I conclude that the playing field is not level. Whether it should be is a matter for the entire CANEJ as it will involve a rejigging, or at least revised definitions of the judging criteria.

Allow me to briefly state the criteria:

- Originality, Significance, Depth of Research ([equating to] Philatelic Aspect)
- Treatment of Contents (Authorship)
- Technical Matters (Editorial Aspect)
- Presentation (Publishing Aspect)

For each criterion there is, of course, a set of parameters which are evaluated for that criterion. For example, the parameters for Presentation are: printing, paper, binding, distracting features, and ease of use.

While at the national level, because of the American resistance to assigning points, APS judges tend to assign these qualitatively (in keeping with the general APS philosophy of judging), they nevertheless—subconsciously or otherwise—use comparable quantitative ratings to FIP:

- Originality, Significance, Depth of Research: 40%
- Treatment of Contents: 40%
- Technical Matters: 15%
- Presentation: 5%

The APS *Manual of Philatelic Judging*[9] discussion on the application of the criteria makes it clear that the first of these, Originality, Significance, Depth of Research, is by far and away the most important. It seems to me that this is where the disparity seems to lie. And it is very aligned to the nature, or purpose, of the literature item being judged. Books and journals and newsletters serve different purposes. They are targeted toward different readerships.

Consider as an example the parameters of "original research" and "lasting value (long term utility)." Peter Smith's excellent work on the philately of Egypt represents the result of a lifetime of study with page after page recording the author's original research and scholarship; it should become the seminal reference work for students of Egypt philately for generations to come. Naturally, it scored very high in this criterion when it was judged. Now, contrast that with a society publication, such as the GBCC *Chronicle*. Much of that journal reports items of news to the membership, catalog updates and revisions, details of new issues, reprints of articles previously published elsewhere, and so on, and so forth. There is comparatively little original research. That proportion of the journal reporting on membership matters, and other news is transient with very little, if any, long term utility. Here's an analogy: The stock market report in yesterday's *Wall Street Journal* is useless to me; yesterday's newspaper is recyclable trash. Yet the same criteria and parameters are used in evaluating *Egypt* and *Chronicle*.

Bob Rawlins has very eloquently discussed this aspect of philatelic literature judging;[11] I commend to your most serious perusal his articles and see no reason to reiterate his argument for why there needs to be a change: a different set of parameters within the criterion for the different classes of literature. I endorse his conclusions and recommend CANEJ pursues a revision of the criterion.

DIFFERENT CRITERIA AND PARAMETERS FOR DIFFERENT CLASSES

From the foregoing, it should be clear that I am an advocate for different sets of judging parameters, if not criteria, for the different classes of philatelic literature exhibits. I liken this to the same way in which, for stamp exhibits, we have different judging perspectives for traditional, thematic and revenue exhibits. The different way in which we evaluate those disparate classes should be no different than having differences in the way we evaluate a monograph, a journal or a newsletter.

BEST IN CLASS

This recommendation brings me back to the opening issue: that is, whether there should be a Grand Award for the annual APS STAMPSHOW philatelic literature competition.

With the present set of judging criteria and rules, I am of the opinion that there should not be a single award, but that a series of "Best in Class" awards would be more appropriate. I expressed this opinion in the open CANEJ exchanges when this question first arose as the result of the donation of a literature Grand Award, no matter what motives the donor may have. The more I have looked into the matter, the more resolute I have become. In an opinion expressed by Barbara Mueller[12] she suggests that APS should consider such a system. In that same issue of *Philatelic Communicator*, Ronnie Spafford wrote: "I believe the judging of [philatelic] books must be separated from the judging of periodicals" and, in addressing the different purposes of books and periodicals, that "the rules for rules for judging should reflect these different criteria."

Interestingly, the CANEJ sub-committee charged with the

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task of defining "Philatelically Acceptable Material," has recommended that consideration should be given to "philatelic divisions" within competitive philatelic events—while retaining an overall Grand Award. This is not dissimilar to the recommendation herein for separate classes within Literature competitive events.

A POTENTIAL PROBLEM

In the event that CANEJ accepts the recommendation for a "Best in Class" approach, a problem we will encounter is that we will be asking shows to increase their awards budget fairly significantly if we *mandate* significantly more awards. Most of these shows are already on a very tight budget, and the club members who run the show sometimes think giving awards to exhibits is already a huge waste of funds. If shows can only offer one award, it is likely to be an overall grand.

NON-PRINT MEDIA

In acknowledging that we are firmly into the Digital Age, the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging* [10] states: "*...it is safe to predict that from this point forward electronic publications will be accepted at several major literature venues each year* . . . ," and in reference to the judging of such material: "*Fortunately, the basic judging criteria remain the same* . . . " In Clintonesque fashion I must ask for a definition of "basic."

Just as I advocate different criteria for monographs and, for example, philatelic newsletters, I believe there should be separate criteria for electronic publications. Non-print media have their own unique characteristics that should be considered when judging: hyperlinking of text to other text and text to illustrations, portability to different platforms, resource usage, etc. A reference work published on a CD-ROM can be quite different to the same information remaining resident on a Website. Should the same criteria be used to judge, say, the printed Michel catalog as the electronic version? Should those versions be in the same literature judging class? Should the excellent CD-ROM on Japanese forgeries be judged in the same class, and with the same criteria, as the Michel catalog? Should the Aerogramme Society's Website be judged with the same criteria as the GBCC *Chronicle*? Can we really compare hyperlinking in electronic texts to Tables of Content and Subject Indexes in traditional media?

SHOULD WE BOTHER?

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that portion of the philatelic community that sees no virtue in changing the system. We should also note that while not all totally agree with him, Michael Laurence, in the same issue of the *Philatelic Communicator* in which Mueller and Spafford provided comment,[12] wrote: "What's to be done? How about admitting that competitive exhibiting of literature is a bad idea? It doesn't need to be modified. It needs to be abandoned. Launch it out into the Gulf Stream. Bid it good riddance." An extreme view, but one that should be considered.

RECOMMENDATION FOR NEXT STEPS

Using this White Paper as a starting point for discussion, CANEJ, either as an entire committee, or through a further sub-committee, should examine more thoroughly the potential impact, and implementation thereafter, of a revised set of rules for judging competitive philatelic literature on the basis of a "Best in Class" approach, viz., different criteria and judging parameters for different categories of publication. As an adjunct to that effort, methodologies for judging entries in non-print media should be established.

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1. I shall use the term "author" as the creator of a philatelic literature work, but we will recognize that the work may be entered into competition or exhibition by an editor or publisher, co-author, etc.
2. Of course, there are exceptions to this: FIP will accept recently published works which have not had the opportunity of being entered into national shows. Thus, attainment of a vermeil medal is not usually a barrier to FIP participation. (See GREX 9.3, and Rule 3 of GREV Supplementary Rules for the Philatelic Literature Class in FIP Exhibitions.)
3. Available at the FIP Website: **http://www.f-i-p.ch/**
4. "Literature vs. Stamp Exhibiting at the Major National Exhibitions in North America," *The Philatelic Communicator*, 12, 32 (1), 1998.
5. "Philatelic Literature Exhibits—Time to Change the Ground Rules," *The Philatelic Communicator*, 6, 31(4), 1997; 3, 32(2), 1998.
6. "Stamp" is used here to include all philatelic classes: traditional, postal history, thematic, revenue, etc.
7. Michael D. Dixon, "World Series of Philately Events: An Analysis of Open Competition Awards 1988-92," *American Philatelist*, 1119, 108(4), 1994.
8. It is noted that some of the studies previously referred to include international exhibitions, including some in Europe.
9. *Manual of Philatelic Judging*, 4th. Edn., APS, State College, 1999.
10. *Op cit.*
11. *Op cit.*
12. "Is there a Better Way?," *Philatelic Communicator*, 6, 32(3), 1998. □

WU 30 CRITIQUE SERVICE

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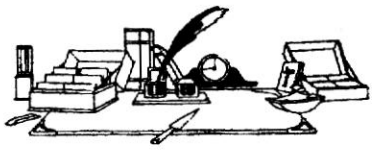
All submissions & correspondence should be sent to Charles J. Peterson, Box 5559, Laurel, MD 20726, phone 301-776-9822, e-mail: **cjp7777@aol.com**. □

President's Message



by
Dr. Dane S. Claussen

At this writing, I have been back from STAMPSHOW 2000 for a couple of weeks. I'm pleased to report that our usual Sunday morning Breakfast was very well-attended and went quite well (with the exception, attendees will note, of the hotel wait staff).

Our two new inductees into the Writers Unit Hall of Fame were and Randy L. Neil and the late Charless Hahn. I want to thank immediate past president Alan Warren for chairing the Hall of Fame Committee for the past year. Alan was drafted by me for the position and did an excellent job as always.

Dr. Michael D. Dixon was our excellent guest speaker, giving us a thoughtful and thorough summary of current discussions about possibly revising philatelic literature exhibitions (see extensive coverage elsewhere in this issue). His humor, as always, also was highly appreciated, particularly that early in the morning.

At the suggestion of one of our members, I will continue to try to invite distinguished, interesting speakers to address us at our breakfasts, and I surely will appreciate suggestions from any members for guest speakers.

One new development of interest to us at STAMPSHOW 2000 was that Scott Publishing Co., starting this year, is giving a Grand Award in the literature competition – and announcing its winner only – at the Saturday evening banquet. Apparently each year's winner will receive, as this year, a beautiful large sculpture of an eagle. Thank you to Scott.

As usual, at the WU Breakfast we were able to announce all of the STAMPSHOW literature awards and present many of them; give out dozens of door prizes; hear a couple of announcements; and still finish, early for us I think, at about 9:45 a.m.

Next year, I will again try to move the Breakfast along so that members easily can get to the STAMPSHOW literature critique or the show's opening at 10:00 a.m. I also plan to continue giving members the opportunity at Breakfasts to make announcements, give suggestions, ask questions of the officers and so on, especially since we do not have an annual business meeting per se.

Finally, I want to thank all of those who brought door prizes for the Breakfast, everybody who attended the Breakfast, and all of the STAMPSHOW literature judges and exhibitors, for all of us together made our time at STAMPSHOW the special time that it always is. I hope to see you at the combined NORDIA 2001, ARIPEX, and APS AmeriStamp Expo in Tucson, Jan. 19-21. In the meantime, please let me know your suggestions and other thoughts about the Writers Unit. □

Committee Appointed to Review Literature Judging

by Alan Warren

Elsewhere in this issue of the *PC* are comments by Michael Dixon, which he presented to the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ) of the APS. In order to review the judging of literature as conducted in the U.S. and as described in the *Manual of Philatelic Judging* (4th ed.), a committee has been appointed consisting of Kenneth Trettin, Patricia Stilwell Walker, Barth Healey, and chaired by myself. Their mission is to take a look at possible changes to literature judging which would result in more equitable treatment of literature classes such as handbooks vs. periodicals vs. catalogs, etc.

Many thoughts on this subject have been aired in recent years in the pages of the *Philatelic Communicator*. Anyone having suggestions is invited to send their comments to Alan Warren, Box 39, Exton, PA 19341-0039 or e-mail them to **alanwar@att.net**. Janet Klug, who chairs the CANEJ, has also asked to be kept in the loop on suggestions. Her address is Box 250, Pleasant Plain, OH 45162, e-mail: **tongajan@aol.com**.

The APS judging manual will be revised and reprinted in 2001. The editor of the new edition is David Herendeen, vice-president-west of the Writers Unit. □

DYER AND WALSH RECEIVE PRATT AWARD

The Collectors Club of Chicago recently announced that this years Pratt Award winners are Norris R. Dyer of Petaluma, California and John M. Walsh, of St. John's Canada.

Each co-winner wrote outstanding Newfoundland articles in 1999 and 2000 copies of *BNA Topics*, the publication of the British North America Philatelic Society.

The Pratt Award consists of $1,000 cash and is named after the late Newfoundland collector, researcher and author, Robert H. Pratt. □

> The rules seem to be these: if you have written a successful novel, everyone invites you to write short stories. If you have written some good short stories, everyone wants you to write a novel. But nobody wants anything until you have already proved yourself by being published somewhere else.
>
> *James Michener*

Editor's Note: Inasmuch as WU30 members are invited to comment on philatelic literature competitions, it was considered worthwhile to publish that portion of the Manual of Philatelic Judging *dealing with the subject. Therefore, with the permission of the American Philatelic Society, Chapter 11 "Judging Philatelic Literature Exhibits" follows. This material remains under the copyright of the American Philatelic Society, Inc.*

Chapter 11
Judging Philatelic Literature Exhibits

The general concepts of judging philatelic literature remain essentially unchanged from those in the previous editions of this manual; however, there is one highly significant innovation that warrants emphasis: Effective with APS STAMPSHOW 97 in Milwaukee, the APS has officially recognized electronic publications as eligible for competition in philatelic literature exhibitions.

This change recognizes that computer-generated literature has matured to the point where it warrants equal consideration with its print-media counterparts, and that it constitutes a widely used philatelic asset. Further, the basic equipment requirements for the use of these products are relatively inexpensive, commonly available, and easily accommodated within the framework of an exhibition.

This by no means signifies that all literature venues will automatically be opened to electronic, multi-media, or audio-visual entries of all types. Non-print media publications have been authorized in principle as a class, but not mandated; the parameters of individual show regulations will continue to govern for specific exhibitions.

Nevertheless, it's safe to predict that from this point forward electronic publications will be accepted at several major literature venues each year, and in a surprisingly short time may well come to form a regular part of all such events. This is too large, and too important, an aspect of philately to be given second-class treatment.

This means, of course, that literature judges are going to have to understand this new class, both in terms of its similarities and comparability to the print media and in recognition of those aspects unique to electronic publications. Fortunately, the basic judging criteria remain the same; their application to the unique features of the new class is no more difficult than that already faced in applying the criteria to such diverse classes as handbooks, periodicals, catalogues, and articles.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

While most principles in judging philatelic literature are identical to those for other philatelic classes, the nature of the material does create certain differences.

In the first place, the significance and importance of a piece of literature cannot be seen from the outside. "You can't tell a book by its cover" is an essential truth in literature judging. The items must be judged by their contents, and obviously the judges must have some familiarity with those contents before the start of the exhibition. While the two or three days available for judging will allow time for review and some reading, they do not offer enough time for each judge to read each entry thoroughly.

Second, literature by its nature is designed with others in mind, to communicate information and ideas. In many cases, a literature exhibit represents a lifetime of research and effort that will serve philately for years to come. For this reason, the judging of philatelic literature must be looked at primarily as a means of recognizing, encouraging, and promoting such efforts, and only secondarily as a competition for various levels of awards. A logical result of this philosophy is the restriction on the length of time literature is eligible for competition:

1. Handbooks, monographs, specialized catalogues, and similar works, whether in print or other media: must have been published within the five years preceding the exhibition (e.g., for eligibility in 1999, have a publication date of 1994 or later) and must be the most current edition as of date of application.
2. Periodicals: must be the most recent complete year or volume published within the two-year period preceding the date of application.
3. Non-specialized catalogues and auction catalogues: must have been published within the two years preceding the application.
4. Columns and articles, including on-line postings: must consist of at least IO submissions that were published within the two years preceding the application.
5. Electronic media publications and programs not otherwise covered: must have been published within the two years preceding the application.

PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The people selected to be literature judges must be specifically qualified (certified) in that specialty. They should be expected to know the major philatelic periodicals of the country, to have a good acquaintance with the smaller specialty group journals, to be familiar with the basic handbooks and reference studies published in and/ or used in the United States, and to have a particular depth of knowledge in the literature of one or more specialty fields, both in hard-copy form and in the electronic world.

At the international level, the required breadth of knowledge is of course much greater. There, both from the practical standpoint of the diverse origins of the material, as well as from the need to communicate with fellow judges, the literature judge must be able to handle one or more major languages in addition to English.

Subject knowledge should be current, and not restricted to "younger days." The judge should have a good on-going philatelic library or ready access to one. After all, one would not put much confidence in a stamp judge who did not collect stamps, had not kept track of research in the field, or had limited the acquisition of knowledge to an occasional browse through a stamp show. All judges, literature judges not excluded, must actively pursue knowledge of the material being judged.

But not even the best of literature judges can be expected to know all the works that might appear at a given show, particularly if newspaper columns or periodical articles or Web site postings are among the items. The FIP international regulations and the APS national rules therefore specify that the show committee must send the list of literature entries to the judges three months before the show starts. (This deadline may slip sometimes in practice, but judges can count on at least one and one-half months advance notice.)

At U.S. national shows, the organizing committee will make arrangements to send the literature judges copies of columns and articles, since those items may be localized and not readily available to everyone. In many cases, the other entries may be available as well, or can be borrowed on an individual basis from the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL). Site addresses will be provided for on-line electronic publications. This allows the judges time to refresh their memory, look up unfamiliar items, do some homework on technical matters, and do some preliminary comparative ranking.

At the show, the first item of business should be a quick review of all the literature items -just as fellow judges in other fields make an initial tour around the floor - to get a feel for the gold level, the solid silvers, and the certificates of participation. The real work then comes in comparing the remaining items against those standards, in deciding all the "in-betweeners" (e.g., is a silver-plus the same as a vermeil-minus, and are there any cases where that "plus" may call for felicitations?), and, where appropriate, selecting a "best in class."

Felicitations are not be awarded as an easy way out of a judging decision. They should be reserved for a specific quality in the entry that deserves recognition: writing style, a novel presentation, a difficult job that needed doing and once done becomes the basic reference, a breakthrough in a particular area of research, a maiden effort that evokes encouragement for the new author. If a specific answer to the question, "felicitations for what?," cannot be given, then felicitations should not be awarded.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The FIP special regulations for judging literature provide for a rating scheme that parallels the general philatelic scoring criteria:

1. Treatment of Contents, 40% of total possible evaluation
2. Originality, Significance, and Depth of Research, 40%
3. Technical Matters, 15%
4. Presentation, 5%

Whether this is called a "point system," a "relative guide," or some other term, in actual practice it has proved a helpful way to analyze, compare, and critique literature exhibits.

The most important criteria are the first two. Together, they make up 80% of the total possible evaluation.

For literature, it is easiest to begin the evaluation process with the *second* criterion: Originality, Significance, Depth of Research. This deals with *content,* and represents the philatelic portion of the judging effort.

What is this work about? How important is it to an understanding of its subject matter? Is it significant to a large population, or is it very limited? (And here the judges must be careful just as they must be in judging other classes. A comprehensive, detailed study of a small subject may very well have more significance than a general overview of a large area.) How much new information is there? What does this contribute to the body of knowledge already existing? Is it only a summary of what is readily available, or does it uncover previously unpublished facts, put information in a new light, bring data from many scattered sources into a handy reference work? Judges are not expecting an author to invent new facts; they *are* looking for something that distinguishes the work from what has gone before.

From this discussion, it should be clear that this aspect of the evaluation is a *comparative* one. It must relate to what already exists. The yardstick is the extent to which the work under consideration goes beyond what is currently at hand (and of course it places responsibility on the judges to know what already exists!).

The other major judging criterion is Treatment. This evaluates the quality of *authorship.* Given the subject, and the facts and conclusions within the body of the work, how well has the author handled it? Does the work begin with an introduction or thesis statement? Are the chapters appropriately divided? Are points made logically and convincingly? Is the writing clear and understandable? Does the work support the best interests of philately? For electronic publications, are they user-friendly? Are graphics useful, and well-integrated into the overall work? Is there effective use of hyperlinks?

Technical Matters deal with those considerations common to all scholarly writing: sourcing, pagination, maps, bibliography, index, etc. It is 15% of the total possible evaluation because these matters aren't *critical* for the immediate use of the publication, but they are definitely important. Does the work include publication data (name of publisher, where and when published)? If an electronic-media entry, is the version number and/or the latest revision date readily found? If an on-line document, are the links current? Are the sources

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listed, allowing the reader to go back to the original references for further study? Are the pages numbered? Not all works require an index, and not all need maps, but are they present in those publications that should have them? And are they well done? Is the work at least reasonably free from typographical errors? These are essential considerations that fall under the head of *editing*.

Finally, 5% of the evaluation is given to Presentation, which equates to *publishing*. This includes those aspects of the publication that affect the reader's ability to use the entry. It doesn't mean leather bindings and deluxe editions - it does mean that the binding should be firm enough that the book doesn't fall apart the second time it's used, and that the sleeve or jewel case for the diskette or CD-ROM disc should have a reasonable life span. If there are illustrations, they should be clear, and they should be located somewhere near the place in the text where they are discussed. Whatever form of printing is used, it should be clear and legible.

There is no reason why a small society journal should be penalized because it was turned out on a mimeograph machine, but there is no valid excuse for plugged letters, smeared or uninked lines, undecipherable drawings, or paper so thin you
can read both sides of the page at the same time. These detractors aren't dictated by economic factors, they result from carelessness, poor planning, and a "that's good enough" attitude. And that's why they will cost points in competition.

To summarize this approach to judging, we are dealing with four different features of literature: philatelic content, authorship, editing, and publishing. The first two will make or break the work, the latter two enhance or detract (which is not to downgrade the importance of a good editor, publication committee, and/or publisher often those participants have a substantial impact on the content and style, through their interaction with the author).

THE JUDGING PROCESS

Literature entries are best judged comparatively, by grouping and discussing related items. In a comparative examination of the works in the show, entries concerning U.S. postal history, for example, would be lined up in a high-low spectrum. A work like David Baker's magnificent two-volume study of the *Postal History of Indiana* would be at the top end of the scale, with perhaps a re-hash article on "Collecting U.S. Postmarks" on the bottom, and a fairly clear range of articles, catalogues, monographs, and handbooks somewhere in between.

The judges also will have to form their own clear idea of the baseline for a given award at that level of show. The best literature entry at one show may not in fact be deserving of gold. Conversely, another exhibition may have six gold and no bronze awards. Entries have to be weighed against what the judges know to be possible and extant in the specific field, as well as against the other comparable exhibits.

Periodicals are entered by year or volume. This means there may be a number of copies, all of which may look alike on the outside. The entry probably will be *last year's* volume, not the current one which is freshest in the judges' minds. Therefore,judgesmustlookatthecompleteset,bothtobesurethat thejuryisreallythinking about the volume in competition (which may be better or worse than this year's edition), and to avoid gaining a false impression of the total content from looking at only one or two numbers that possibly are not representative.

A point also should be made about articles and columns. "Significance" has to be evaluated in terms of the role of that piece of literature in the overall philatelic program. A continuing column in a mass-circulation nonphilatelic paper, for example, can serve an important function in educating and encouraging the general public. It may not be the weightiest piece of original research, but it certainly can score points for its contribution to the growth of philately and the promulgation of sound collecting practices.

Judges must be flexible and tolerant of technical problems. Often, there will be a literature entry missing during the first hours of judging, or an unscheduled item may come in after the preliminary list was prepared, Those items should be evaluated, subject to the organizing committee's decision concerning the entry's compliance with entry requirements.

Judges have the authority to transfer an entry from one section to another if it has been improperly categorized. This point may be critical if special awards are to be designated for best in class. The general trend is to use section breakdowns only for convenience in judging and in presentation to the public. Thus, it makes no difference to judges whether a book is called a handbook, a catalogue, or a special study: It will take its place in the spectrum based on its overall merits.

If the judges determine that an entry does not meet the basic eligibility requirements the item will not be given a competitive award and the organizing committee will be advised of that fact. It will be up to the organizing committee to provide proper acknowledgment of the entry, or to return the entry (and the fee, where warranted) with an appropriate explanation.
Those entries transferred to non-competitive status should receive an appropriate *hors concours* award and equivalent diploma. Care must be taken to make sure these non-competitive awards also are included in theawards list.

Finally, it must be recognized that few literature exhibitors will be at the show and able to benefit from the judges'oral critique. As a result, almost all literature venues provide for a written judges' critique, using a somewhat standardized form.[*see page 12 – Ed.*] This provides important feedback to the exhibitors which can help them with their next volume or edition of their publication or with a subsequent work. The judges need to keep the critique sheet in mind throughout their individual and collective evaluations, so that their continents can be as complete, specific, and practical as possible. The chief judge may prepare the final critique sheets based on team input (with an apprentice

serving as note-taker during the judging deliberations), or may assign that duty to one of the other judges. The organizing committee will send the applicable critique sheet to each literature exhibitor. Copies may be made and a complete set provided to each of the literature judges.

SOME SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Following are answers to several questions that have arisen at previous exhibitions:

1. Anthologies, such as the Congress Book, are most appropriately judged in the handbooks, monographs, and special studies class, even though they appear "periodically" on an annual basis and carry an ISBN.

2. In general, stamp albums do not qualify as "philatelic literature," and are not eligible for admission. They are more properly defined as "philatelic accessories." However, there have been albums with substantial explanatory material in the introduction and on the pages, and such albums could be eligible.

3. Compilations of auction results, price trends, etc., are eligible.

4. Single-copy documents that have not been published or made available to the public do not meet the basic criteria for eligibility, and are to be considered as manuscripts or drafts. Conversely, print-on-demand products that are offered for distribution are eligible.

5. Reprint editions qualify as "new" publications only if there has been significant revision of the contents.

6. A single article taken from a larger publication is not eligible for entry in competition unless it has been prepared as a separate entity or offprint and is available separately for distribution, in which case it will qualify under the handbooks and special studies class. However, a serial article or a collection of columns or articles may be eligible even if not published separately, under the articles class. (One practical reason for this distinction is to preclude submission of one or more articles from a journal at the same time the journal itself is entered in competition in the periodicals category.) This is applicable to international competition, but need not be followed absolutely in national competition.

7. Translations are eligible for competition. Note, however, that some national shows may require that a major portion of the text be written in English.

8. If a member of the literature jury is the author, editor, a principal contributor, or has had any other relationship with a given entry that had a significant impact on its content, that entry should be placed out of competition. A judge's membership or official position in an organization - to include presidency - is not a disqualifying factor per se. Most literature judges are members of numerous philatelic societies, and may be officers in several at any given time.

With the above general guidelines, application of common sense, and a positive feeling for philatelic literature, judging will prove no real problem. Whenever uncertainty may arise, it undoubtedly can be dispelled by going back and re-reading the second of the two "general principles" cited at the beginning of this discussion.

The recommended form is reproduced on page 12 - Ed. □

The Washington Post

The "magazine" section of the March 31, 2000 edition of The Washington Post with a color montage of stamps on the cover, caught my neighbor's eye. She brought me the paper. Right in the middle of the montage, in billboard size fonts, was:

POST

MODERN

Collecting the Stamps of 2000

A great attention getter! The story was the "centerfold" with more color photos. The author, Hank Burchard is noted as a Washington Post Staff Writer. It's a well written piece nicely aimed at a general audience. Noted are forthcoming issues, a listing of area shows (bourses) and highlighting the forthcoming NAPEX.

We don't know if the NAPEX committee "stimulated" this article, but if they did, our hats are off to them. With the demise of so many of those stamp columns in the lay press, it's a delight to see a piece like this. □

➤➤ **Reviews** *(continued from page 14)*

unusual in show catalogs, which is why the textual material, occasional containing major faults, is hardly ever worth reviewing. This is one of the positive exceptions, and such deserving sections should be reprinted more often. That is surely one of the cheapest ways of making philatelic literature available, because the major costs of printing have already been absorbed by the show itself. The externalities of this little book - proofing, paper, quality of illustrative matter, printing, binding - are tops, as is to be expected from show catalogs. (It would be useful if some European philatelic printers finally learned that seriffed letters are much easier to read than sans-serif; it costs no more to use them.)

The book is highly recommended to postal historians - a feast for the eyes! Contact publisher regarding availability.

Ernst M. Cohn □

Great writers are always evil influences; second-rate writers are not wicked enough to become great

—George Bernard Shaw

Title of Entry:
Author/Editor:
Class:

APS STAMPSHOW 98 Philatelic Literature Exhibition Critique

Award: ☐ Certificate ☐ Bronze ☐ Silver-Bronze ☐ Silver ☐ Vermeil ☐ Gold

\+ = strength - = weakness ✓ = satisfactory n/a

Originality, Significance, Depth of Research (Philatelic Aspect)

original research
lasting value (long term or utility)
depth and scope
no glaring errors
references
useful to specialist & all philately (large or small group, local or international)
definitive work
contribution to growth of philately
improvements
acknowledgments/credits
bibliography
services to readers (e.g. auctions, ads, exhibit critique service, single source of books, tip-ins, q&a, reference bibliography, our topic in other journals)

Treatment of Contents (Authorship)

best for means available
appeal to specialist and novice
editing and proofing
balance
illustrations
flow
variety of philatelic content
format
print or type
tables

Technical Matters (Editorial Aspect)

title page/masthead
volume and numbers, date
pagination/footing and heading
ISBN/ISSN, copyright info
list of illustrations
publication statement, dues
editor and sponsor info
table of contents
bibliography
credits
index/cross indexing
explanation of arrangementinnovations
list of names and addresses/email of officers
treatment of ads

Presentation (Publishing Aspect)

printing
paper
distracting features
binding
ease of use

Comments: _____

_____

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_____

Jury:

Editors' In - Box

by Barry Newton

As with any job, editing is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration. I have fifty or more editorial pages to fill eight times per year. Society business plus regular, ongoing columns contributed by experienced authors on different aspects of FDC collecting help to fill about half of each issue. Ongoing society business includes contact names and addresses for research projects in the works, a trading column, news from AFDCS chapters, convention preview information, fund raising, membership recruiting and whatever other kinds of society projects are in the works.

Ongoing columns for *FIRST DAYS* include "The Question Box" (written by Alan Warren since 1955), a First Day Ceremony Program column, First Cachets, book reviews, news on exhibiting, etc. Reports on first day activities and small bibliographies of new FDC cachetmakers are either published as submitted or rewritten by me for publication from letters sent on the subject. On these last two, I encourage participation from any society member, telling them not to worry about being great writers. When submitted, I use their information (often sent in a letter), do some rewriting if necessary and send them a proof before publication.

For the other half of the publication-the articles, I have found that if an article needs a few tables or an introduction with some basic definitions to make it more accessible to the beginner, it is better for me to make slight changes to manuscripts submitted. Sending an article back for revision usually does not work very well. I have found, more often than not, tables and basic definitions added to the proof of the article are welcomed by authors. I am not suggesting extensive rewriting. If I include a letter with the proof that explains the reasons I believe the changes improve the article, I find that authors often feel they have been helped rather than criticized.

Many ideas have been experimented with to get authors going. I have tried putting together some teams of authors to work on a project. Preliminary research has been published in the hopes that it will encourage an author to follow up with more information. I have written telling a potential author how an article could be organized and where additional information could be obtained. I point out why their work is of value to the magazine. Authors are encouraged to let me know about anything they are working on and are told that if there is any way I can help them, I will be glad to do so. All of these ideas have worked sometimes and failed others.

The common wisdom says editors can only publish what is submitted. However, if you have the time and patience, more features can appear for the magazine. I try to maximize the material submitted by improving articles that are submitted with tables and basic definitions. I try to encourage collectors to share a part of their hobby that they really like and I offer rewrite services to get this information in to print. COROS editor Augustine Serafini said that after thirteen years, "the challenges of the job have not diminished. They have increased."After editing *FIRST DAYS* for ten years, I would have to agree. Philately faces stiff competition for leisure time these days. A philatelic editor is on the front line of this battle, making their publication appealing, accessible and informative with whatever strategies they can use to get that job done. □

Literature Exhibition Calendar

Coordinators of Literature Exhibitions are encouraged to submit full information, including a prospectus, for these listings. Please contact the editor well in advance of the closing date for entries.

October 6-8, 2000
SESCAL, Wyndham Hotel at LAX, 6225 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. Entries closed July 10, 2000. Information from Larry Parks, P.O. Box 1116, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358, e-mail **lcpphil@aol.com**.

November 17-9, 2000
CHICAGOPEX, Donald E. Stevens Convention Center (formerly the Rosemont Exposition Center), 5555 North River Road, Rosemont, Ill., 5 minutes from Chicago's O'Hare, Airport. Entries close Oct. 1, 2000. As noted in the 1st Qtr *Philatelic Communicator* (p.14) there are two new literature categories this year: "Major Articles" and "Auction Catalogs." For information and prospectus contact Eliot Landau, 515 Odgen Avenue, Suite 101, Downers Grove Il 60515, e-mail: **land1942@aol.com**

November 17-9, 2000
GLASGOW 2000, Includes the second Association of British Philatelic Societies' International Literature Competition, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Entry fee not available, information from Roy Erskine, 22 Ochlochy Park, Dunblane, PK15 0DU, Scotland, or Margaret Morris, 81 Ellon Way, Paisley, PA3 4BW, Scotland, e-mail: **mmorris671@aol.com**

March 9-11, 2001
COLOPEX, Columbus, Ohio, Greater Columbus Convention Center. Includes electronic media. $25 entry fee and entries close Feb. 21, 2001. Information & prospectus from: Harold E. Wilson, 4092 Virginia Circle East, Whitehall, OH 43213, phone (614) 237-3672, e-mail: **ruwilson@ix.netcom.com**

May 4-6, 2001
OKPEX, Oklahoma City, Information from: Joe Crosby, Phone: 405-749-0939 e-mail: **joecrosby@home.com**

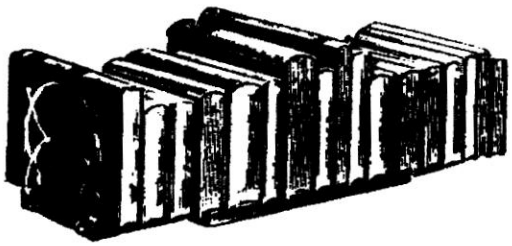
August 23-6, 2001 A.P.S. STAMPSHOW, Chicago, Ill. For information contact Ken Martin, APS, Box 8000, State College, PA 16803, phone 814 237-3803, fax 814 237-6128, e-mail: **kpmartin@stamps.org**

2002
Chester 2002, Literature will be judged to the same standard as Glasgow 2000. Entry fee £15. Information from Michael Birks, 36 Trevor Road, Flixton, Manchester M41 5QH, England, e-mail: **mpbirks@36trevor.freeserve.co.uk** □

SMITH GARNERS CABEEN AWARD

The Collectors Club of Chicago has announced that Dr. Peter A. S. Smith has received the Cabeen Award for his outstanding *Egypt: Stamps and Postal History, A Philatelic Treatise.* One of the most distinguished philatelic literature awards in the world, the Cabeen Award is a one-ounce solid gold medal.

Smith's work has earned acclaim and awards, including international large gold medals, both here and abroad. The 874 page book published by James Bendon will be a standard work for years to come. □



REVIEWS

NOTE: Material for review may be sent to the editor at the address noted on the inside front cover. Reviews are also welcomed from others. Reviews from those having an interest in the item such as publishers, distributors, etc., must include a copy of the publication with the review [which, on request, we will return]. *Philatelic Communicator* reviews should be concise and stress those aspects that are helpful examples (positive or negative) for other authors, editors and publishers.

***The "Officials" of Tibet* by Armand E. Singer. Geoffrey Flack, Vancouver, 1999, 40 pages, 8½ x 11", comb bound, illustrated, $35 U.S. by surface mail anywhere from Geoffrey Flack, Box 65987 Station F, Vancouver, British Columbia V5N 5L4, Canada.**

This book is an expanded and revised version of a 2-part article that originally appeared in two of the 1999 issues of the *Collectors Club Philatelist*, published by the Collectors Club of New York. This version includes many color illustrations, which enhance the original. The so-called officials of Tibet appeared around 1950 and have been the subject of many articles, which have all been carefully reviewed by Singer, one of the world's leading specialists on the stamps and postal history of Tibet. He has also reviewed many covers bearing these stamps, often in combination with other issues, which are in the collections of his own, of other collectors, as well as sold at auction.

In addition to the five officials recognized in the major catalogs, there are two others included in this review—the 1 Trangka with three copies known, and the 5 Shokang with about half a dozen copies reported. The stamps are described in terms of size (the largest measures 2½ inches square!), color, and value. Singles as well as full sheets are illustrated along with many examples of usage on cover. A number of the latter were the inspiration of a Nepalese trader in Tibet during the 1950s—Pratek Man Tuladhar.

In fact most examples of these stamps on cover, whether alone or in combination, have a distinctly philatelic flavor and commercial uses are not readily seen. The rates are frequently overpaid as a result of use of these stamps. At times they were supposedly added to inbound letters arriving at Gyantse, for forwarding to Lhasa. The author reaches his conclusions on these "officials" after a review of the literature and examination of over 200 covers. Collectors of Tibet will no doubt want a few examples for their collections but must understand the non-commercial aura that surrounds these stamps. There are still unanswered questions concerning the issues, and the complete story of why they were issued and the purpose for which they were intended may never be fully explained.

The text and color illustrations are of excellent quality. The book joins many other monographs of Tibet that have been produced by publisher Geoffrey Flack, all of which are important resources for collectors. This is a good example of a limited run specialty publication done largely in color. Recommended for the libraries of those who collect the Himalayan area.

Alan Warren

***Katalog Der Deutschen Luftpost*, Teil 13: Erstflüge 1991-1999 - ohne Deutsche Lufthansa (*Catalog of German Airmail*, Volume 13: First Flights 1991-1999 without Lufthansa), by Erich Haberer. Wiegand & Haberer, Luftpostliteratur, Renningen, Germany, 2000, 64 pages, A5 size, soft cover, $10.00 plus $3.00 shipping, from Aerophil, 12 Chemin des Tuilots, CH-1293 Bellevue (GE), Switzerland. Email: kaerophil@cs.com. Fax +41 22 7742472.**

This 13th in the series of German Airmail Catalogs, gives chronological listings of all first & special flights, both domestic and foreign to and from Germany by airlines except West German Lufthansa Airlines. The listings give the date, main cities where the flight(s) operated and the legs over which covers were flown. Each leg where covers are known to have been carried is priced separately, in German marks. Few details of the flights are given, but all cachets & special postmarks are shown, as well as some actual first flight covers. The text is in German but is easy to follow.

Ken Sanford

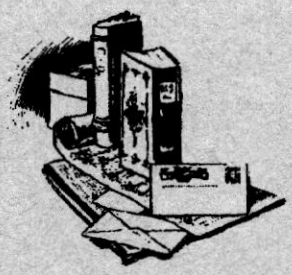
***Le Symposium dhistoire Postale Luxembourg 98*, Anon., SOLUPHIL, B.P. 2675, L-1026, Luxembourg. 80 pp. (numbered 37-116), 5¾ x 8¼", hardbound, profusely illustrated (mostly in color), tables, lists, maps, 15 summaries of 14 authors' presentations in English, French, or German,. Excerpted from JUVALUX 98 exhibition catalog.**

A committee of the International Postal History Fellowship (IPHF), Luxembourg Post & Telegraph, and SOLUPHIL S.A. organized this symposium in collaboration with JUVALUX 98, the Académie Européenne d'Etudes Philatéliques et Postales, and the Académie de Philatélie de Lorraine. It was chaired by James Van der Linden on 19-21 June and covered European and USA postal history up to 1910 (listing on page 39). At the same time, most of the presenters and two additional exhibitors showed in a "salon du symposium," with a separate section on Luxembourg postal history (details on page 103), all colored illustrations of covers here.

Authors' names, well known to postal historians, and titles of their presentations, each in the author's language of choice, are listed after a trilingual introduction. Among highlights are two presentations about insufficiently franked mail, the former sent between France and abroad, the latter between Germany and USA. One of the most detailed abstracts, on steamship mails USA-France, includes three pages of clearly reproduced postal markings. The greatest attraction of the booklet are the many color illustrations of truly rare covers, with and without stamps, some uniquely documenting exceptional means of transportation.

Truly useful philatelic reviews and original research are

➤➤ *continued on page 11*



LETTERS

From David Gurney, FRPSL, Honorary Secretary, The Royal Philatelic Society London: Thank you for your letter of July 12th with interesting enclosures relevant to the use of philatelic honors.

I can confirm to you that the award of a Fellowship to members of this Society is strictly at the discretion of Council.

Council will take into account a number of factors such as services to the Society, services to philately generally and additionally the time of membership in which a member may have contributed by way of published article or display to the benefit of the Society.

The award of a Fellowship is not an honour that our members take lightly.

From Jerome C. Jarnick: Ken Trettin opened a big bag of worms with his commentary on the use of non-philatelic titles and honors in philatelic publications. I have to agree with you. As an editor, I would not change the authors byline. If he chooses to use a title or honor, I'd retain it in the byline. But, I as a collector for sixty years, I have always wondered what qualifications "M.D." or "Ph.D." conveyed to the subject of stamps of the Old German States. Frankly the titles don't impress me.

The other point Ken raises, adding the organization's acronym to an author's by-line is also something I question. I'd not do it. With an organizational journal, I believe that it should be assumed that the author is a member. If there is a reason for publishing an article by a nonmember, I think an editor's note to that effect is more appropriate.

From John M. Hotchner: Regarding the discussion of the use of personal (philatelic or non-philatelic)titles with author names in philatelic publications (Trettin, Foley; page 5 of 2nd quarter, 2000 issue), I am firmly with editor Foley's opinion.

As a philatelic publication editor I have always practiced the rule that a person's name is one of his or her most cherished possessions. If a contributor believes that a title or an honor or an appointment is part of their name, then who am I to take it away from them in the name of consistency. It may offend my sense of orderliness to have inconsistent usage, but if it makes the authors happy, I will honor their personal preference.

Eliminating a title may be a small thing, but of small things are decisions made about whether to do another article for my magazine. Why needlessly offend?

(editor, *The Philatelic Exhibitor & U.S. Stamp News*)

From Niles Schuh: The articles about the use of titles and honors was interesting. I have often wondered why some philatelic authors (and indeed some advertisers) use Dr. with their names. Does this give them some kind of legitimacy that others don't have?

As a retired engineer, I used to use P.E. after my name if signing some business document. Professional Engineers who are registered with the State can sign design drawings, for example. But I wouldn't think of using P.E. or B.S.E.E. except in a business related context. We sometimes wished to use something to distinguish us from train drivers, but usually didn't. I have no objection to Doctors using Dr. or PhD, after all they did spend more time earning their degrees. It just doesn't make me consider their philatelic writing any more legitimate.

From Ken Sanford: In the 2nd quarter issue of TPC, on page 15 Barth Healey asks " . . . do you really need the http:// in front of every Web address?".

The answer is emphatically . . . YES. Not all Internet URLs start with "www." For example, the URL for my Website is: **http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Ken_Sanford/.**

If it were listed as simply: **ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Ken_Sanford/**, some people will automatically assume you need to put "www" in front of it, which would be incorrect. That is why it is important to always include the "http://" as part of a web site URL.

From Gary N. McLean: In the May, 2000, issue of *Korean Philately*, I wrote in the Editorial:

> Speaking of postal history, I wonder what thoughts readers have on an ethical issue. In this issue of the journal, there are a couple of postal history items that include messages—one from a prisoner of war and another from a postcard sent right after the war. What are the ethical considerations in publishing the contents of such material? There is no question for me that no ethical boundary is being crossed when the people involved have been long dead. However, with both of these items, it is quite possible that the writers are still alive. There's nothing terribly personal in the prisoner of war letter, a necessary condition for such letters being approved and delivered. However, the postcard may, in fact, be seen as much more controversial. What advice would you give me? While I have left off names in the translation, certainly anyone who can read Korean will be able to read the names without difficulty, as the original documents have been reproduced. Let me know what you think!

One of our members responded with a useful reference to Les Winick's Insider column in *Linn's Stamp News*, October 4, 1999, p. 28, regarding copyright law and the publication of the contents of a postal cover. I am wondering how other editors deal with this question, or whether *TPC* has published anything regarding this question in the past.

(editor, *Korean Philately*)

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The books I haven't written are better than the books other people have.

—Cyril Connolly

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

Owing to a mis-communication by your editor and a need to get the copy to our printer before being away we do not have our secretary-treasurer's customary report in this issue.

Our apologies to George and our members.

Membership Dues are noted on page 2 (inside front cover). Payment must be made in U.S. funds by a check imprinted with a U.S. bank transit number, or by postal money order, payable to "APS Writers Unit #30." Some overseas members prefer to send U.S. bank notes by registered mail. Other methods of payment are not acceptable due to high bank exchange charges.

Keep Your Mailing Address Current. Please notify us of address changes to assure that you receive each issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* - without delay. This will also save WU#30 more than one dollar because the USPS charges fifty cents when they have to send us an address correction, and we still have to pay the postage for re-shipping the issue to the member.

George Griffenhagen
WU30 Secretary-Treasurer
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180 □

DOCUMENT RETENTION

Drafts and manuscripts will usually be retained for approximately ninety days after the issue in which the article, etc., appears is published. Correspondence will normally be discarded after approximately six months. □

Those who write ill, and they who ne'er durst write,
Turn critics out of mere revenge and spite.

—John Dryden