

# The Philatelic Communicator

## Journal of the American Philatelic Society Writers Unit #30



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www.wu30.org

Fourth Quarter 2019 Issue 206

### American Philatelic Society Announces Video Sponsorship Investment in “Exploring Stamps” YouTube channel begins content initiative From the APS

Editor’s Note: This APS announcement occurred in July, but we are never too late in showing work like this.

Bellefonte, PA, July 17, 2019, Today the American Philatelic Society, the largest, non-profit organization for stamp collectors in the world, announced its sponsorship of *Exploring Stamps*, a YouTube channel produced and hosted by [Graham Beck](#).

Since December 2016, Beck has taken his love of stamp collecting and made it come to life, garnering more than 580,000 video views and 6,700 subscribers to the Exploring Stamps channel.

“We have been working aggressively to recruit and educate the modern stamp collector,” said Scott English, Executive Director of the APS, “Partnering with Exploring Stamps is another innovative tool to help collectors connect and grow in the hobby.”

“Partnering with the APS is an exciting new milestone for Exploring Stamps and its viewers,” said Beck. “This support, endorsement and encouragement will further grow the channel and help to reach an even wider audience. It is an honor to work with the APS and I look forward to seeing where this opportunity takes us.”

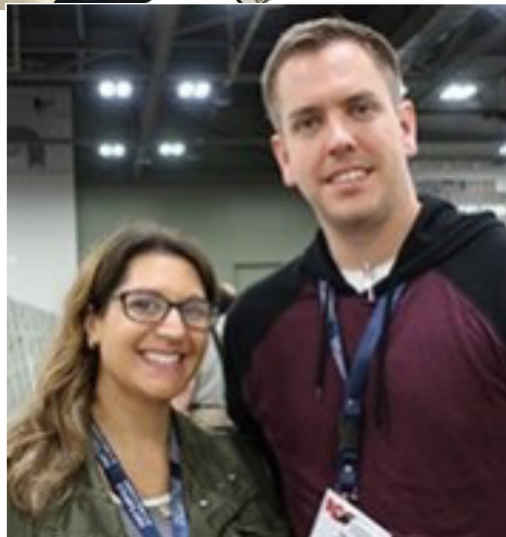
Recently, APS announced the hiring of Thomas Loebig as its new Chief Content Officer. Loebig, an experienced digital media and television executive, is tasked with enhancing all of the society’s content offerings in digital media, video, social media and print.

*Exploring Stamps* visually explains stamp collecting in an easy to understand manner, said Loebig. “We love Graham’s passion. Our sponsorship shows how we will evolve the APS content to delight our current members, attract new members

and promote stamp collecting as a hobby for everyone.”

Graham Beck has been the host and producer of the *Exploring Stamps YouTube channel* since 2016. The online video channel is dedicated to the promotion of philately through short entertaining videos. Since the channel’s launch, Graham has attracted over half a million views and gained a global following of almost 7000 subscribers. Graham’s interest in philately started as a child growing up in South Africa where he enjoyed collecting new issues with friends.

After rediscovering the hobby as an adult, he began producing videos to share his passion with others while demonstrating what stamp collecting has to offer. From *Apollo missions to Icelandic Volcanos*, the channel has covered a number of fasci-



**Graham and Laura Beck produce the Exploring Stamps YouTube Channel**



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## David Crotty From the Editor

### Facts

In this era of Alternate Facts, Fake News, and Russian Facebook Intervention, a dedicated fact checker probably goes home at night tired and weary. We hope that philately does not suffer from these ills quite as much as others.

It just happens, just at the right moment, that Tim Pennington of *Products Finishing* (PF) Magazine wrote an editorial, on this very subject, that I had to reproduce for our members: philatelic writers, editors and publishers (see page 4). The *PF* journal was way ahead of its time forming an online discussion group where metal finishers could ask questions and solve problems. We have that for meter stamps and aerophilately on Groups.io. But nothing like that for the Writer's Unit as yet.

The metal finishing industry that I served until retirement needs close communication. This fact is made more clear when you find that Boeing has just been fined \$3.9 million because some poorly treated wing parts that failed strength tests got installed in Boeing 737 aircraft when they should have been scrapped.

### AP Editors

The *American Philatelist* (AP) has seen a swinging door for editors of late. Ken Lawrence asked to provide a Letter to the Editor for our journal. We may or may not agree with him but we should allow him to express his opinion as a group dedicated to philatelic editors, writers, and publishers. We are open to others who may wish to be provided space in *TPC* for this or other topics. .

*Dave*



## Lloyd de Vries *President's Message*

This is a rough time to be a journalist, although we are spared the worst of it here in philately. Covering news is not held in high esteem now, and news people are called “scum of the earth” and worse. Meanwhile, thanks to the Internet, anyone can set up a blog or website or YouTube channel, and claim to be delivering “news.”

By unspoken agreement, most philatelists try not to discuss outside-world politics at stamp collecting functions. It doesn't always work. I'm hearing more political discussions at shows than previously.

None of this is entirely new. Politics has intruded into philately before, and fairly often. Governments issue stamps to advance the views of the incumbency. Some collectors refuse to buy them. First day cover cachetmakers produce pejorative designs to advance a political viewpoint and, again, some collectors refuse to buy them.

Two examples, from more than ten years ago: A postal clerk in suburban Boston told me he would not sell the Eid stamp, because of 9/11. And it is widely believed that the United Nations General Assembly's order to the U.N. Postal Administration in the 1970s to issue Palestinian Rights stamps killed the collect-



The first EID stamp was issued in 2001. Several slight variation issues have come out since then.

ing of U.N. stamps.

Here's something to watch for this year: The U.S. Earth Day stamp April 18<sup>th</sup>. It will be interesting to see if the Trump administration Environmental Protection Agency participates in the first-day ceremony (which is safely distant from Washington, in Denver), and how many cachets will have political commentaries.

Of course, those of you who only write about older stamps and covers never get into arguments with fellow writers or controversies, right?

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### **You Tube** continued from Page 1

nating topics related to philately, often involving travel and special video effects. Graham is based in New Jersey with his wife Laura who eagerly takes part behind the scenes with her nifty camera work.

Readers can access the 72 videos by entering the words *Exploring Stamps YouTube Channel* into their browser URL box.

Comments like this from people like Randy Moore make it much more likely that most of us will spend a lot of time viewing these videos.

*Exploring Stamps* is like eating popcorn—viewing one of Graham Beck's videos makes you want to view another and then another and then, well you get my point! Check out the Apollo 15 video that would qualify as a masterful mini-documentary or perhaps you might enjoy how The Becks' creativity spring to life overlooked Arizona Statehood Stamps via their amazing talents—causing the viewer to want to A. OWN these stamps and B. Travel to Sedona, Arizona. The Antarctic Territories Video uncovers a wealth of information regarding the frozen Continent utilizing a

Philatelic backdrop. In each video, Graham Beck shines and draws the viewer into the intimate and exciting (he makes it so) world of Stamp Collecting (“Exploring”) and his seventy-two (72) beautifully crafted videos cover the global importance of Stamps (China, Romania, the British Virgin Islands, Aruba, Mexico, et. al.) attest to his Philatelic range... Graham Beck's Philatelic enthusiasm is contagious and may be regarded as THE “Mister Rogers of Philately!” He represents the badly needed “booster-shot” for attracting younger Stamp collectors. The APS has recently recognized Graham Beck and his Philatelic talents by promoting his videos on their web-site. Why not promote these videos to a wider audience (enter them in “Shorty” YouTube Contest, other short-film contest venues, distribute to school libraries, etc.)? “The medium is the message” and Graham Beck's “message” via his videos is strong and Philatelically powerful! Randy Moore, SR. LM USPCS, APS. ♦

# Calling Balls and Strikes

Tim Pennington  
*Product Finishing Magazine*



TIM PENNINGTON / EDITOR  
tim.pennington@PFonline.com

I was in my second or third week at my first gig at a major daily newspaper, and was feeling fairly proud of myself about hitting the big time when the voice boomed over the newsroom like Foghorn Leghorn (look him up, kids).

“Pennington!” bellowed the managing editor, a stodgy guy in his mid-60s who was chomping

on a bitter cigar clinched between his teeth. “Get your arse over here!”

It was the closest I’ve ever come to a near-death experience. I slowly made my way across the newsroom to his corner office, past my new coworkers who were smirking and chuckling at the same time. I picked up my pace when I got closer and saw the red in his eyes:

In his hand was that morning’s newspaper, turned to my article on a zoning issue in a small suburb of the city. For the next 10 minutes, he berated me about an error in the spelling of one person’s name in the story. More importantly, he felt the story overall had a bias against the town and wanted to set me straight that slanted news had no place in modern journalism, not in the 1980s, by golly. He ranted on about calling “balls and strikes” as he put it, meaning don’t take a side in an argument and just call it like I see it. And he parted with one bit of wisdom that has never left me about fact checking and the news media:

“If your mother says she loves you,” he shouted, “get it confirmed!”

And there it was, the nexus which summed up all my years of journalism school and working in small weekly papers and on to the major dailies — get your facts straight and call balls and strikes.

Sadly, as we head into 2020 with the current political and social climate in distress, the journalism industry in which I have spent my last 30+ years seems to have fallen all over itself to neglect those two basic principles which have guided us for 244 or more years. Pick up any newspaper these days or, heaven forbid, watch anything

related to news on television and what you won’t find is unbiased reporting, and nothing at all that smells like fact-checking.

It doesn’t matter whether you are red or blue or any shade in between, it happens to both sides and it is the world in which we now live. Most of what we are told as a nation by the news media is not always the truth, or it has a deliberate slant to fit the need of the audience to which it serves. Fox News and CNN do it, as do major networks and the large daily newspapers. You can smell the bias before the third paragraph, you can pretty much guess how the story will turn out, and the people editing these articles seem to have no sense of fairness and asking a reporter to “stick with the facts.”

**You can blame the internet, but the finger should be pointed at all of us who allowed this to happen. We got Lazy.**

We can blame most of this on the internet, which obliterated newspapers in the late 1990s. *The Washington Post* reports that circulation of daily papers in the U.S. fell from 60 million in 1994 to 35 million in 2018, and ad revenues dropped from \$65 billion to \$19 billion in the same time period. As the number of newspaper jobs fell 40% in the same time period, many seasoned and talented people left the industry and, over time, were replaced by those who never grew up watching their parents get their news from the morning or afternoon paper. It seemed overnight that a new brand of journalism developed that encouraged speed over fact-checking, promoted bias over integrity, and gave a voice to many who are clearly not skilled enough to report the world’s major issues in a fair, impartial way.

You can blame the internet, but the finger should be pointed at all of us who allowed this to happen. We got lazy. We didn’t demand more. We didn’t challenge. We threw up our hands and said, “Whaddaya gonna do about it?” and walked away. We got what we deserved.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution says that “Congress shall make no law respecting



*Products Finishing* Magazine Logo.

an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press “ That’s about as perfect a statement as you want to read these days. What it says is that the government cannot interfere in the news and information that is disseminated to the public. However, it says nothing about what citizens can do about these freedoms we have given the press. With freedom comes much responsibility to act in the best interest of all, which includes demanding that what we are told and what is reported on is fair and impartial. All media outlets have owners, and those owners have share-holders, and when we stop propping up those outlets which treat their responsibility

to adhere to the basic tenets of journalism with disdain, then we can let them know about it.

**Editor’s Note:** Your editor, Dave, spent most of his career in the Metal Finishing industry. Perhaps the most prestigious surviving publication for that industry is “*Products Finishing*.” It has changed a lot over the years. But this month’s edition has an editorial by it’s editor that fits the bill for about everything that is not so good in our great American landscape.

The one thing I might adjust in Tim’s analysis is that from where I stand Fox News tries to tell the reds in the US what they want to hear, and MSNBC tries to tell the blues what they want to hear. CNN tries to be in the middle and thus gets beat up equally by everyone. ♦

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## Canada to Host 2022 International Single-Frame and Literature Exhibition:

CAPEX 22, a four-day exhibition is being planned for mid-June 2022 in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The specific location and dates are not settled, pending final selection of a venue. CAPEX 22 will be a two-class exhibition: Four hundred single-frame exhibits and philatelic literature, including periodicals, books, and catalogues in both print and electronic forms. CAPEX 22 has the approval of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC) which is the Canadian member of the worldwide *Federation Internationale de Philatili e (FIP)* and the *Federation Inter-Americana de Filatelia (FIAF)*, the continental organization for the Americas. CAPEX 22 has received the patronage of FIAF and will apply for recognition status with FIP.

A sixty-five booth bourse is planned, with both Canadian and international dealers participating. Canadian and international societies will likewise be invited to participate, hold society meetings, and offer seminars and presentations. CAPEX 22 connections are being established within geographic regions and with Canadian and international societies. Past-President Eldon Godfrey has been appointed as the BNAPS liaison.

CAPEX 22 would not be possible without the support of many exhibitors, members of the philatelic trade, and Canadian/North American philatelic clubs, societies, and associations. I would like to thank BNAPS for its support of the CAPEX 22 Guarantee Fund which, as in previous CAPEX exhibitions, provides the seed money needed to organize the exhibition.

*BNA Topics*, Volume 76, Number 4, October—December 2019

# Lawrence Block News

Ron Breznay

Lawrence Block is a prolific crime-fiction writer who has penned over a hundred novels and many short stories, beginning in the 1950s. He is particularly known for his series about recovering alcoholic private investigator Matthew Scudder and the gentleman burglar Bernie Rhodenbarr. He has won many awards for this fiction, including two Edgar awards in the Best Short Story category for two Keller stories.

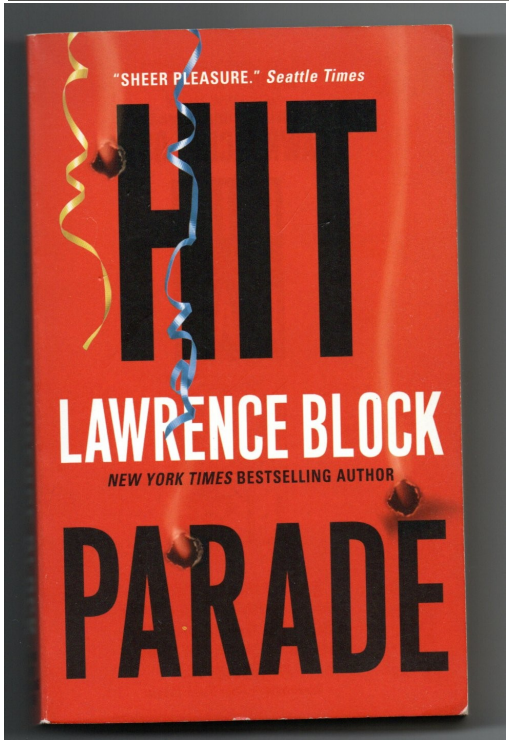
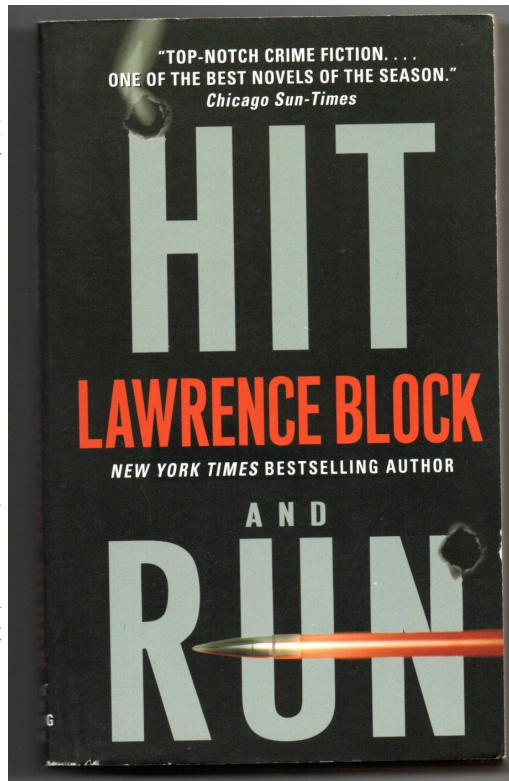
Block started collecting stamps when he was a child, then he sold his collection when his first marriage ended. He took up the hobby again in the mid-1990s, when he collected worldwide, except for United States, from 1840 to 1940. Later, he narrowed his focus to the British Empire and Europe and its colonies.

In his December 2019 newsletter, Block made two announcements of note to stamp collectors.

The first bit of news was about his philatelic column, "Generally Speaking," which appeared monthly in *Linn's Stamp News* from 2009 to 2012.

Block had collected 25 of these columns into an e-book (published in 2011), adding *A Philatelic Patchwork* as a subtitle. After Block wrote eight more columns, "I found my enthusiasm for a columnist's life had somehow vanished, so that was the end of that."

He had been thinking about publishing an expanded edition of *Generally Speaking*, adding the eight additional columns, and writing an introduction, and this time he would offer it as both e-book and a paperback. The project remained on the back burner, until putting together *Hunting Buffalo with Bent Nails* freed up space on



Two of Lawrence Block's Books.

that back burner. The new edition will have all 33 columns, and it will also have some pertinent philatelic extracts from the five Jack Keller novels. Block said that "there'll be a paperback and an ebook, and a hardcover is not out of the question."

Keller is a hitman who also collects stamps. (Don't they all?) The novels and stories detail the contracts he carries out, with an occasional philatelic side trip. Keller, like Block, collects stamps of the "golden era" of philately (1840 to 1940). The Keller novels are *Hit Man* (1998), *Hit List* (2000), *Hit Parade* (2006), *Hit and Run* (2008), and *Hit Me* (2013). There are also a novella, *Keller's Fedora* (2016), and five Keller short stories in the collection *Enough Rope* (2002).

Block noted in his newsletter that he still needs a title for the book, and he said, "It's also going to need a cover, and the one on the current e-book is too lame to show here. My Goddess of Production and Design will help me come up with something irresistible."

The second bit of news is on the sad side. Block said that after quitting the *Linn's* column, "I still collected with a passion, albeit with less discretionary income than my philatelic hitman Keller brings to the pursuit, but eventually that too faded with the years. When it did, I realized it was time to let my stamps light up the lives of other collectors, and I arranged for the sale of my holdings."

This is another loss to the hobby. But we have his new collection of columns to look forward to, and perhaps there will be more Keller fiction in the future. ♦

# Stamp Club Newsletters that Sizzle

## Paul Petersen

Encouraging writers for stamp club newsletters is a skill. As the editors of stamp club newsletters are aware, most of the writing is done by the editor. This is in addition to what articles can episodically be wheedled, cajoled, threatened, bribed, bullied, and otherwise extorted from the club members.

What follows are a few of the ideas I have used to solicit input from the membership. Some solicitations were more successful than others. A stamp club newsletter is a more cohesive publication when there are contributions from others in the society. Members learn about what the others are collecting and studying. Those who write for the newsletters gain a sense of ownership.

As noted in this publication over time, we are forewarned that some club members have limited experience or interest in writing, and others may have never used the computer and word processor. Being asked to write an article can be a bit intimidating. As editors, we must offer encouragement to assist with the writing, reviewing many drafts if necessary or perhaps re-writing the article entirely. We must also be open to handwritten manuscript submissions.

The stamp club newsletter is not the stuff of high-end philatelic literature, instead it is that vehicle to communicating information about the club happenings and its members. While short articles about a stamp or cover are most appropriate, lengthy copy regarding topics such as the plating of North Borneo #2 are better left to the more specialized philatelic publications.

Communicating about personal experiences is often a safe way to enter the writing stream, and the newsletter is the ideal for this. Further, I am seeing some of this in the larger society journals. "How I got started in Stamp Collecting." The importance of articles such as this is that readers may see some similarities between the writer's experience and potential stamp collectors whom they are encouraging to pursue the hobby in greater depth.

Direct Solicitation: You would be surprised what you can get when you ask for it. This axiom was passed down in our family, and it applies here. Use the personal appeal. At the club meeting a member shows you a cover with interesting markings and transit history. He seems to have a good handle on

the related postal history. "Would you be willing to send me a scan and short description of this cover for the newsletter?" "I'll help you if needed, and there is no hurry. The deadline is the 25th of every month." There are a variety of permutations of this such as an illustrated synopsis of one of your member's recent exhibit.

We have a club member who has attended the NTSS of the ATA for many years, and after solicitation, she always writes a narrative of her experience. Our club is a chapter of the ATA, so this is most appropriate. There is another member who lives in France for 4-6 months of the year. He writes for a variety of journals in both French and English, and for our newsletter he always sends me interesting reports of some of his philatelic experiences across the pond. Further, short copy of his articles are also of interest to the membership.

Composite articles: These are single articles in the newsletter resulting from input of several club members. I bring up the topics at the meeting and then follow through in the newsletters with what I am looking for. I provide the deadlines. When the responses are in hand, I weave the short contributions together into a larger one and add scans of some of the items where applicable. Some topics are straight forward, others are pro and con.



**Philatelic Society of Lancaster County**

The James Buchanan Chapter (#173) of the American Philatelic Society  
American Topical Assn. Chapter #118  
Member, NY Federation of Stamp Clubs

2020 Dues are due. \$10-See B. Buchanan

Doors open at 6:30 pm, Wednesday, 8 January 2020  
Auction lot inspection at 6:30 pm, Meeting/Auction at 7:00 pm;  
Hal Klein, Host

**The Veranda Chronicles**

It is with great satisfaction that the Officers and I accept your vote of confidence to lead the Philatelic Society of Lancaster County for another year. We will continue to strive to deliver great programming with lectures, auctions and bi-weekly Stamp Show & Exhibition. I am putting a call out to our dedicated membership to consider joining the leadership team, you will not be disappointed - please see myself or Paul if willing to serve.

On December 15, many of our members and guests were treated to the last **Some Sunday Stamp Show of 2019** at the Farm & Home Center in Lancaster. Kevin Kellison and Florida did not disappoint. I know I spent at least 3 hours searching through a large box of 250+ covers containing the U.S. 8 Cent Stamp, 1851-57 Issue - nothing like picking up some last minute Holiday gifts! Kevin's 2020 schedule is on our website and on Pg. 2 of this newsletter.

At the event, I also was fortunate to spend a number of minutes with stamp and postal history collectors new to the area - whom I, of course, invited to our next meeting as well as luncheon in April. I do hope to see more new faces around the club, so we continue to enhance and diversify our Society.

On December 15, the Society held its **Holiday Dinner** at the Garden Call at Woodmont Villa. Forty-nine members and guests were in attendance and it was an evening to remember. Paul will cover this in more detail in this issue, and I have posted photos from the dinner on our website. This was one of my favorite events of this past year and I am already looking forward to next year's. [bit.ly/VerandaChronicles](http://bit.ly/VerandaChronicles)

**NOTICE: New meeting room for auction!** The Auction will be held on the ground floor of our regular building. It is in the High Conference Room. When you enter make your first bid at security and then your first right. This larger room has more table space, which assures us greater surface to display and inspect the lots prior to the auction proper.

**First Auction of New Decade-Don't Miss It**

It is a new decade in a new year. Finally, please attach your sales information very accurately to the lots you are entering into the auction. This will help avoid any misidentification with other seller's lots.

**Bidding Rules:** Minimum bids are \$10 per lot. The minimum bidding increment is 50¢. Only day-longing PSAC members may participate in the auction.

**Auction participants are limited to seven (7) lots.** You may also donate items to the auction, as donations are welcome, a necessary source of funds for operating a viable club, especially the subsidy for the December Dinner.

PSLC meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month (except August) at the Crossing Meeting Room, 1st Floor, East of Oregon Road, Litz, PA 17543  
2020 Dues are due \$10.00 a year. For club information call Paul Petersen at 717-295-5640  
#philatelic-LCS-Stamp.org

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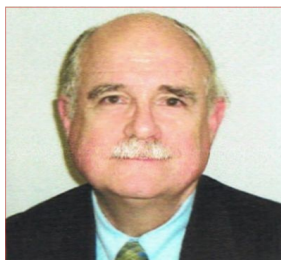
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**Save the Date**  
Lancaster, PA 2-25-21 April,  
Farm & Home Center, 1383  
Academy Road, Lancaster

PSLC Newsletter

# When the unexpected happens

John M. Hotchner



There I was on a day trip in New York City, walking to Penn Station about 7:15pm last November 6, when I stepped off a curb the wrong way, and found myself sprawled in the middle of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, at 34<sup>th</sup> Street. If there was a miracle, it was that several of my fellow pedestrians got me up and onto my one good foot (as I clearly could not do it myself) and moved me to the other side of the Avenue. They even found a chair and located a policeman, who called an ambulance.

The short version of what happened next is: ER – X-rays (broken left hip) – More ambulance to Lenox Hill Hospital – Operation to repair the damage – Five more days in the hospital – Home to Virginia by ambulance on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

Why talk about this in these pages? Well, my first thought after calling my wife from the ER was, “I’m going to miss my first *Linn’s* deadline in 42 years!”

The fixings for my next expertizing column were in my over-the-shoulder bag; my project for the train ride home. Obviously that didn’t happen. And three weeks later, it still has not been written.

Nor, I realized, was I going to be able to produce much else for weeks if not months. Sitting in front of a computer would not be in the cards. Nor could I go digging high and low in my storage areas for illustrative material for columns.

After the operation, I contacted Jay Bigalke at *Linn’s* who could not have been more understanding. He agreed to fill in the gap with some of the Christ-

mas material I had sent early (in October) at Denise McCarty’s request. With enough “in the bank” at *Linn’s* for columns into January, 2020, *Linn’s* was no longer an immediate worry.

But I had firm upcoming due dates for *American Stamp Dealer & Collector*, the Kelleher quarterly, and *U.S. Stamp News*, and imminent dates for *The Philatelic Exhibitor*, *LaPosta*, *The AMG Courier*, and the *EFOCC Collector*.

Having never broken a hip before, I had only a dim idea of what recovery would be like and how long it would take, but hints from my body were not encouraging. A fair number of questions to various medical personnel drew answers that mostly began with “It depends.....”

This is being written on Thanksgiving Day, exactly three weeks post-op, and the answers are coming into focus. At my rate of progress I should be good as new, thanks to titanium rods, in about three to four months. I am already able to sit at the computer for half hour increments before the pressure of that position is too distracting to be able to concentrate on stringing words together. Getting at stored subject boxes to find the right illustrations is going to be a problem for a while. My mobility for the foreseeable future will depend upon a walker; to be followed by a cane for a couple of months.

So, what to do when life happens? First is to get a grip on certain realities. The first priority is to get well. Everything else is secondary. In this case, getting well does not just happen. My physical and occupational therapists, both of whom I will swear are cum laude graduates of the Lubyanka Prison and

Unexpected continued on Page 9

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## The fascinating background to the Baghdad overprints

The events surrounding the Mesopotamia Campaign at the start of the First World War, and the subsequent issue of overprinted stamps, was told to the members of The Royal Philatelic Society London on 23 May by Freddy Khalastchy FRPSL.

The fascinating story was told by a range of material, not only of the issued stamps, much on cover, but also supplementary photographs and documentation. Stamps of Turkey, available in quantities of at least 60, were released in 1917 overprinted ‘Baghdad’ and ‘in British Occupation’ plus the value of ¼, ½, 1 or 2 annas.

As the stamps overprinted were of different sizes and formats, the overprinting had to be undertaken on a small hand-press, in four or sometimes five operations.

Following the display, Freddy was presented with the Society’s 150th Anniversary medal by President Patrick Maselis RDP, FRPS,RPS





College of Physical Therapy and Torture, occupy about a quarter of my waking time with a challenging series of exercises, “walks”, stair climbing, and more.

This is not discretionary activity. Getting back to some semblance of normal depends on it directly. There isn't a lot of time left for creative activity. I had to make peace with the fact that much of my pre-accident activities would not be doable for months. So, I entertained myself by making lists of what I was committed to doing, what I hoped to do, and what could probably be accomplished. The result was that three of my editors received the news within a few days that I could not produce for an impending issue, and they were most gracious

Others, representing December 1 deadlines were told I couldn't guarantee submissions but would try to make them. And I will. A key in being able to do that is that my method is to get everything I will need for an upcoming drafting project in a single page protractor before I sit down at the keyboard. Where I had not done that, I could not hope to do an article.

Then there were certain practical considerations: How to write. Finding time to write. The first was solved because I am an iPad user. Without it I would have been dead in the water. Where I could not sit in a chair, I found after a few days I could sit up in bed, though posture was not a strong point. The iPad was a key, as it allowed me to rough out articles for later completion, once I could access reference material to fill in gaps, and to know what illustrations would need to be found.

I found that I had a lot of time on my hands in the wee hours of the morning. I have never been able to

sleep lying flat on my back, yet that remains the only position available. So, “can't sleep” time has become drafting time, using the iPad.

The iPad combined with some reasonable pre-planning became key tools. So was an attitude adjustment. It is incredibly easy to slip into a “Why did this happen to me?” frame of mind. There is no answer, so there is little to be gained from trying to figure it out. By act of will, I've put it aside in favor of concentrating to the extent possible on doing what I'm able to do. It isn't as much as I'd like to do, but I accept the fact that getting back to my normal productivity will require time.

When that happens, one of my editors suggested a longer-term strategy: Always be one article ahead. That way, if life happens, you always have 30-90 days to recover before the next deadline. Not a bad idea!

So, that's my story. A certain amount of “Oh, woe is me!” can't be avoided. But everything is an opportunity to learn; and every situation an opportunity to meet new people. The whole experience has been a reaffirmation of the essential goodness of people; friends who came to the hospital, another who came to New York with my wife to support her, doctors, nurses and other medical staff too numerous to count, my therapists, many long time friends and even strangers who have written to wish me well, my understanding editors, my supportive and attentive family.

Maybe that's what I am to learn. There are an awful lot of terrific people who touch our lives who should never be taken for granted! ♦

## **Queen Elizabeth celebrates with collectors as RPSL dedicates its London headquarters**

At 11 a.m. GMT on November 26, 2019, Queen Elizabeth II arrived at 15 Abchurch Lane in London to officially open the new headquarters of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

The visit was also in celebration of the society's 150th anniversary.

The queen last visited the society's premises in 1969 to mark the groups 100th anniversary

Queen Elizabeth is the granddaughter of the famous royal philatelist and former RPSL president King George V. She honors his legacy through her ownership of his stamp collection, known today as the Royal Philatelic Collection, and her efforts over the years to display parts of the collection at events in the United Kingdom and around the world. ♦



Queen Elizabeth and former RPSL President Christopher G. Harmon View a Stamp Album at he new headquarters.

# Reviews

## Print & Electronic

Reviews in *TPC* are indexed at  
www.wu30.org Journal page.



***Further Insights into U.S. Postal History, 1794-2019*** by Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz. 8 ¾ by 11 ¼ inches, 236 pages, hardbound, American Philatelic Society, Bellefonte, Pa., 2019. ISBN 978-0-933580-84-8, \$60 (\$50 to APS members) plus shipping, American Philatelic Society, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte PA 16823-1367.

The author continues to explore and research key areas of the postal history of the United States. This latest work focuses on five major subjects plus some miscellaneous topics.

The First area is a history of the dead letter office (DLO) and how undeliverable mail is handled. Although discussed in his earlier *Insights into U.S. Postal History, 1855-2016*, the author now expands on the treatment of such mail based on further literature that he has uncovered. He describes markings such as “Returned to Writer,” “Unclaimed,” and “Not Called For,” and also illustrates printed envelopes used to carry DLO mail.

The second chapter discusses military-related mail from 1861 to 2019. He begins with Civil War items and goes on to review “soldier’s mail” and the circumstances of when mail was free or required postage during WWI and II as well as during later conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada (1983), Panama (1989-90), and other military operations up to the present.

The third subject explored by the author is the topic

of customs duties, clearance, and fees beginning in 1873. He includes extensive use of the marking “Supposed Liable to Customs Duty.” A variety of “duty-free” and similar markings and labels is shown. He navigates the changes over the years that govern the examination of mailed items and the associated markings with respect to Duty Collection and Duty Free materials. A myriad of handstamp markings and labels are illustrated and identified with specific cities.

Nearly one hundred pages are devoted to the fourth topic, namely uses of postage due stamps in the United States from when they were introduced in 1879 up until 2019. After discussing first class letter mail that was short paid, the author goes on to drop mail, advertising matter, registered and special delivery mail, postcards, second-, third-, and fourth-class mail postage due, and international short paid or unpaid mail. Postage due forms, invoices and markings are explained, and short paid domestic and international air mail from 1927 to 2019 is dealt with in its own chapter.

A brief concluding section covers late-received items not covered in the appropriate chapters. Topics include a Civil War “Soldier’s Letter” handstamp, registered tags on domestic and international parcels, and the pressure-sensitive “U” package label that

speeded up handling of merchandise.

A bibliography and detailed subject index complete this thorough treatise. Tony Wawrukiewicz not only continues to educate collectors on the byways of our country’s postal history. He also reveals his sources of government publications used in his research, and in some cases has made them available online to collectors who want to explore on their own. These tools include the *U.S. Postal Bulletins*, the *U.S. Postal Laws and Regulations*, and the *U.S. Postal Guides*.

*Alan Warren*

***Hibernian: Handbook and Catalogue of the Postage Stamps of Ireland 2020***, Roy Hamilton-Bowen and Lee Wolverton

The 2020 edition of the Hibernian stamp catalogue was formally released at STAMPA 2019, the Irish National Stamp Show and Exhibition held annually in October in Dublin, Ireland. The book won a well deserved Gold Medal at the show. The book is hardbound and is the 14th edition, and was first published

in 1972.

The scholarly work by Roy Hamilton-Bowen and Lee Wolverton is evident throughout the 327 pages. The authors have added 55 pages to this catalogue since the 2014 edition. The book is divided into two principal sections. The first section is a detailed list of all the stamps issued in Ireland from 1922 to July 2019 with a guide to current values of Irish stamps. The second is a specialized section showing great research into all aspects of the stamps of Ireland.

I found the first part of the book very helpful, particularly the definitive section on “Stamps on a Roll” or SOAR (page 32). The authors list the 5 different dispensing machines which finally explains the variations in the printing of these stamps. The definitive section also gives a comprehensive introduction to the British Stamps overprinted for use in Ireland. Included are the various proof stamps as well as a list of printing errors. Part Two of the catalogue goes into even more detail on the low value overprints. We now have a correlation between the Irish Overprint Plates and the basic Great Britain plates and controls. This endeavor is almost 100 years overdue and is a great addition to Irish and Great Britain Philately. The study was in collaboration with Stanley Gibbons and it has been a long-time dream of Roy to clear up much of the previous misleading information.

Beginning on page 40 and continuing to page 162 we find a very detailed list of the Irish Commemorative stamps including the printer, printing method and paper used. Included is a list of the commemorative presentation packs and year books and miniature sheets. Section Two lists the plate numbers, varieties and errors. The commemorative section is followed by the Irish Air-mail stamps and Postage Dues stamps issued in Ireland. Printing varieties and errors are well documented for both the airmails and postage due stamps.

The first section provides a very detailed study of the Irish Booklet stamps both definitive and commemoratives. The authors greatly expanded on earlier research by Cyril Dulin and others. We now have a most readable reference guide to this aspect of Irish Philately.

The first section concludes with an extensive review of the Railway Letter Stamps in Ireland). The 10 pages are organized alphabetically by railway and lists routes and stations, rates and the stamps used to pay for the letters carried by the various railways as well as the different printings of the stamps. This section is the most Comprehensive study of this topic to date and will be a major asset to students of both Irish and British railway philately.

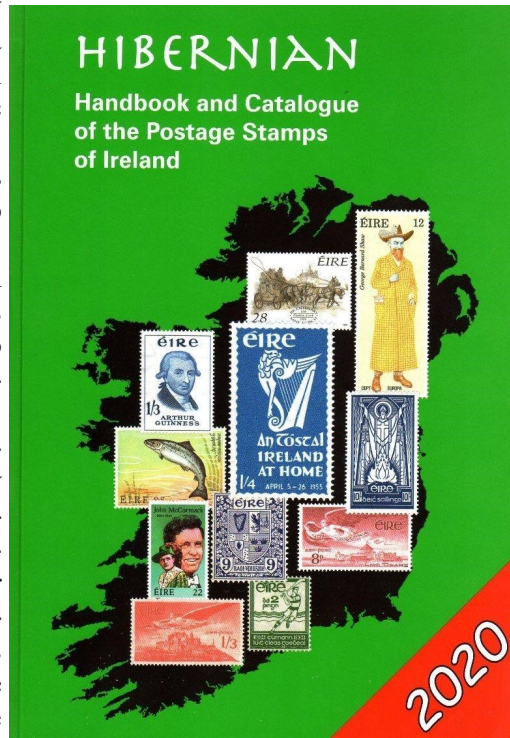
The Specialized Section is where all students of Philately will be directed for the most up to date information on the various designers and printers as

well as the varieties found on Irish stamps and labels. Beginning with Forerunners, Political and Propaganda labels through to Philatelic Exhibit Souvenirs, the Specialized section is over 100 pages long. This section has expanded information on the Low Value and the High Value Overprint varieties and errors and Irish definitive gums, papers and plate numbers as well as varieties and errors.

The chapter on Coil stamps (stamps produced in rolls) is of particular interest to me. Several important questions have been addressed including confirmation of the production and use of 3d SE watermark paste up coils. These coils were used in the late 1930s by a few businesses (Guinness, Players-Wills, etc.) for heavy bulk mailings. The authors have also added 5 pages on the modern Coil Reminder Labels, not previously catalogued or discussed in their 2014 addition.

I have known Roy for over 40 years and Lee for more than 10 years. Their detailed knowledge of Irish Philately is well known and admired. Their devotion to our hobby has culminated in the 2020 Hibernian which is unrivaled in scope and detail and I doubt will ever be duplicated or surpassed.

*Robert Benninghoff*



**Jean Benninghoff Trophy**

# CHICAGOPEX 2019 Literature Palmares

November 23, 2018

## John Kevin Doyle Grand Award

Yamil H. Kouri, Jr      Under Three Flags: The Postal History of the Spanish-Cuban American War  
(1895–1898)

## Reserve Grand

Kenneth Trettin      The Congress Book 2019

## Best Postal History

Yamil H. Kouri, Jr      Under Three Flags: The Postal History of the Spanish-Cuban American War  
(1895–1898)

## LITERATURE EXHIBITS

### Large Gold

Jan Hofmeyr      The Neglected Details of Charles Steel's Patent for Grilled Stamps  
Jan Hofmeyr      What the Brazer-Finkelburg Archive tells us about the Loewenberg Essays:  
1863–66

Bill DiPaolo      Puerto Rico During the Spanish-American War, 1898-1900  
Yamil H. Kouri, Jr      Under Three Flags: The Postal History of the Spanish-Cuban American  
War (1895–1898)

Kenneth Trettin      The Congress Book 2019  
Joseph Geyfman      Specialized Catalog "Local Stamps (Provisionals) Russia, Ukraine,  
Belorussia, USSR 1918–1922,, 1931"

Bob Hohertz      United States Two-Cent Revenue Stamped Paper — The Civil War  
Designs

Niall Murphy      Moldoviastampss.org — The website of the International Moldovan  
Philatelic Society

### Gold

Joel I. Cohen      Commemorating N I Vavilov  
Deane R. Briggs, M.D.,      Florida Postal History 1763–1861  
Frances Ferguson,  
and Thomas M. Lera

Louis Fiset      Japanese Canadians in World War II  
Bob Hohertz      Private Die Proprietary Stamps — (The "Match and Medicine" stamps)  
Bob Hohertz      Prexie Covers — Solo Uses  
David Reitsema, Editor      El Quetzal  
Albert W. Startweather,      First Days  
Editor  
Michael D. Roberts      Mexicana

Robert Conley                      State Revenue News  
Ukrainian Philatelic &        Ukrainian Philatelist  
    Numismatic Society

### **Large Vermeil**

Victor Manta                      www.pwmo.org  
Michael Kogan                    www.paleophilatelie.eu — web site about representation of Paleontology in  
    Philately  
Seija-Riita Laakso,              The Posthorn  
    Editor  
Diane DeBlois & Robert        Postal History Journal  
    Dalton Harris

### **Vermeil**

Jan Hofmeyr                      www.philatelicessays.org  
Steven Friedenthal              Czechoslovakia Machine Advertising Cancels: The First Republic Period  
Melanie Rogers                  German Colonies Collectors Group Website

### **Large Silver**

Edward Bergen                    Walt Disney's First Superstar: Mickey Mouse  
Oliver Wyrski                      Vorläufer: Journal of the German Colonies Collectors Group  
Gary Wayne Loew                Mastering Postal History

### **Silver**

Joel I. Cohen                      Rachel Carson and the Great American Series

### **Silver Bronze**

Thomas Pratuch                  Tools of the Trade  
Emery Earl Troops                A tale of two exhibits and three countries  
Joel I. Cohen                      The Jackie Robinson Story in Stamps: A philatelic centenary celebration

### **Bronze**

Maulik Hansraj Thakkar        Handbook of India's 1951 Gandhi Postcards

### **Certificate of Participation**

Lik Lim                              1998 SVI Commonwealth Games: Part 1 & Part 2

### **CHICAGOPEX 2019 Literature Jury Members:**

Pat Walters, Jury Chairman	Arvada, CO
James Graue, Judge	Vallyford, WA
Alan Warren, Judge	Exton, PA



## SARASOTA NATIONAL STAMP EXPO with WRITERS UNIT 30

### Second Annual Literature Exhibition of Philatelic Articles

February 7-9, 2020

Sarasota Municipal Auditorium  
801 N. Tamiami Trail  
Sarasota, Florida 34236

## PROSPECTUS

### About the Exhibition

This is an exhibition of printed and electronically delivered articles related to the collection and study of postage stamps and stationery, postal history, revenue stamps and stamped paper, cinderella stamps and associated specialized fields. This is the second year of a literature exhibition of this type and will be conducted and judged according to the APS Manual of Literature Judging and Exhibiting, April 2017. The manual is available free online at <https://stamps.org/Portals/0/LitJudgingManual.pdf>.

### Accepted Literature

- Entries for this exhibition are confined to articles with philatelic subject matter only that **do not exceed 8,000 words**.
- Articles from philatelic and non-philatelic media are accepted including those appearing in club newsletters, show programs and on line.
- Multi-part articles are permitted as long as total length does not exceed 8,000 words.
- Literature must be primarily in English. Literature in other languages cannot be fairly judged and so must be declined. Bilingual (English and another language) literature is accepted.
- Date of publication must be no earlier than February 1, 2016.
- Authors are limited to two entries.

The Literature Exhibits Committee of the Sarasota National Stamp Expo will decide whether an exhibit is accepted or rejected; no reason need be given for a rejection. Decisions of the Literature Exhibits Committee are final. The Jury may disqualify an exhibit in accordance with the judging manual. All rules apply to all entries.

### How to Enter

Entries may be made by individuals, societies, or commercial businesses. This may be authors, editors, publishers, sponsoring organizations, or webmasters. A separate application is required for each title entered. The entry fee is \$30 per competitive entry payable by check in US funds drawn on a US bank, payable to Sarasota National Stamp Expo. Exhibitors outside the U.S. may pay via PayPal (contact the exhibit chairman by email.). The entry fee is waived for non-competitive entries. The exhibitor's signature on the Application constitutes acceptance of the rules stated in this Prospectus.

Entries must be received by December 8, 2019, including the completed and signed application, the entry fee, and a PDF file of the original article. Prospective exhibitors will be notified of acceptance as soon as possible. If an extension is required, please contact the Exhibit Chairman by email.

Applications and check should be mailed to:

**Bill DiPaolo**  
Literature Exhibit Chairman  
7110 Marston Court  
University Park, FL 34201

## What to Send

- Entry form and \$30 fee. (Separate form and fee for each entry)
- Electronic copy (PDF preferred) of the original article on memory stick/card or files may be emailed directly to [billdip1@gmail.com](mailto:billdip1@gmail.com)
- Authors and/or editors should submit a brief synopsis with the article (as is done with philatelic exhibits), stating the purpose and intent of the entry, to assist the jury in evaluating the entry. This is your opportunity to speak to the jury. Do not send other “supporting documents” such as critique sheets from previous shows as they will not be forwarded to the jury.

**ENTRIES SUBMITTED ON MEMORY STICK OR CARD WILL BE RETURNED.**

## Judging and Awards

A panel of APS accredited judges will act as jury. Evaluations will be made according to the latest APS Manual of Literature Judging and Exhibiting of the APS Committee on the Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges. This may be found on the APS website (<https://stamps.org/Portals/0/LitJudgingManual.pdf>). Because of the specialized nature of this exhibit, a different literature evaluation form will be used. A copy of this form is available on request from the Exhibit Chairman. The decisions of the jury shall be final. The Literature Grand Award, Reserve Grand and an unlimited number of awards in eight levels will be available to the jury. Other awards may be sponsored by philatelic organizations.

Special awards will be announced at the Awards Banquet. The awards and Palmares may be presented to the exhibitor at the show, or will be mailed to the exhibitor after the show. Only one award is provided per entry regardless of the number of authors, editors, etc.

No jury feedback session will be held during the show. A written evaluation will be mailed to the exhibitor after the show.

## “Articles Only” Literature Exhibit at Sarasota Show

Inaugurated in 2019, the second annual “Articles Only” Literature exhibit will be held February 7-9, 2020 at the Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition in Sarasota, FL. The event is cosponsored with Writers Unit 30, the society for philatelic authors. The format for this show is different from the literature events currently held at CHICAGOPEX and StampShow. The Sarasota exhibit will be open only to articles of less than 8,000 words. The “articles only” show is intended to recognize the hundreds of authors of philatelic journal articles who each year contribute to the hobby with new information for collectors, exhibitors and researchers. Based on the response to last year’s show, the number of entries that can be accepted has been significantly expanded.

This year’s show will introduce another first. All submissions will be electronic and posted when accepted on the show’s web site. They will be available immediately to all including the judging panel. This year’s jury includes Alan Warren as Chief Judge, Nancy Clark, and Hal Vogel.

According to Liz Hisey, Chairperson of the Sarasota show, “At one point, single frame philatelic exhibits had difficulty gaining the attention they deserved until becoming a separate category in exhibit competitions. The same can be said for shorter articles, many of which provide outstanding research for us, yet are lost among larger philatelic works. We want to set them apart and recognize the authors.”

“Hopefully, this focus on shorter pieces will encourage a broader spectrum of our hobby to share their knowledge through publication. You don’t have to author a book to substantially add to the philatelic knowledge base. This exhibit puts the spotlight on these important contributors to our hobby,” says David Crotty, Writers Unit 30 Vice President and editor of its journal. “Encouraging philatelic authors is an important part of the Writers Unit 30 mission.”

Journal editors and authors are encouraged to submit entries for the show no later than December 1, 2019. A complete prospectus and entry form are available on the show’s web site – <https://www.sarasotastampclub.com/literature-entry-form>

**Editor’s Note:** This Prospectus and the Exhibit Application form are also available for download from the home page of our APS Writers Unit 30 website. Look for the Sarasota item.

## Letter: *The American Philatelist* in Crisis

By Ken Lawrence

For the first time in history *The American Philatelist* — the flagship publication of our country's most intellectually inclined collecting hobby and the most important benefit of APS membership — has no staff person with significant philatelic knowledge.

What's worse, the man currently responsible for producing the *AP* (and *Philatelic Literature Review*) — Chief Content Officer Thomas Loebig — does not regard this as a cause for concern. It's true that his editorial staff includes three talented women whom I admire and count as my friends — Helen Bruno, Doris Wilson, and Susanna Mills — but their superior skills are social and technical, not deeply philatelic.

I write these words with great sadness, after having devoted considerable on-site and on-line effort, ever since he started on the job last June, to help Thomas get established and to uphold the quality of our journal. When the editorial situation started to sour, I struggled with him (and with Scott English) to put things right, but with only partial success.

To date these problems have not been aired in public. But as Hans Christian Andersen taught us, when the emperor's new clothes are invisible, instead of remaining silent or collectively averting our eyes, someone needs to stand and shout, "But he isn't wearing anything at all!" Regrettably we have no youngster among us to sound the alarm, so WU30 members who are prepared to listen must hear it from me, an imperfect elderly observer with aging eyesight.

### Roots of *The American Philatelist's* troubles

Our journal has been imperiled ever since the elected APS leadership forced Barbara Boal into retirement. Barb had earned her status as a member of Bill Welch's editorial staff. Bill was an elite collector, exhibitor, and scholar, but also a lifelong journalist who had retired as executive editor of the local newspaper, the *Centre Daily Times*.

Bill was the best editor the *AP* ever had. That was not just my opinion; Charles J. Peterson, WU30 president and my mentor when I was the editor of this quarterly journal, also thought so. In light of the many hobby luminaries who preceded him, some might dispute our judgment, but under Bill's management the *AP* became the first philatelic journal to earn a gold medal at a world philatelic exhibition under FIP patronage. (*The London Philatelist* had earned an FIP gold medal at a literature-only exhibition.) Barb did not follow directly after Bill, but probably should have.

The APS president who bears responsibility for pushing out Barb, Steve Reinhard, told me at the time that he hoped to recruit Wayne Youngblood to be her successor. That was a pipe dream. He was lucky that *Linn's* senior editor Jay Bigalke, ably supported by veteran journalist and hobbyist Jeff Stage, took the job. Jay and Jeff held those positions when Scott English became executive director.

Jay never relocated to the Bellefonte area, which limited his interaction with the staff. Nevertheless, both Jay and Jeff were and are sophisticated philatelically, and both are personally familiar with the social and organizational aspects of the hobby. Together they produced a product that merited continued admiration, but eventually Jay returned to *Linn's* and Jeff did not stay.

Since their departure, the entrance to the *AP* office has resembled a turnstile for editors — the mostly able but often absent Martin Kent Miller, the experienced but grossly negligent Mark Kellner, and now the philatelically vacuous chief content officer Thomas Loebig — while their respective levels of philatelic knowledge and ability have resembled steps on a descending escalator.

It is fair to say that when Mark Kellner failed, only heroic efforts by Fred Baumann and Doris Wilson kept the *AP* afloat, on schedule, at the level of quality members reasonably expect. After decades of service as a senior editor at *Linn's* and *Stamp Collector*, Fred had served as Barb Boal's understudy until he was laid off during a period of financial austerity. After Jeff departed, I had urged Martin to rehire Fred as his editorial assistant, which he did. Fred's service to some of us who write for the *AP*, and to readers, continued through the January 2020 issue.

Shortly before Thanksgiving, Fred learned from Thomas's November 13 e-mail notice to the APS staff that his job was being eliminated:

"Today, I'm pleased to announce the promotion of Susanna Mills to Content Manager. In this newly created role, Susanna will take on day to day operational responsibility for all of our content platforms. An important part of her role will be to work with me on the editorial direction of *The American Philatelist*, the crown jewel of the American Philatelic Society's content since 1886. The *AP* is a valued information source of our members; we will seek ways to use it as a tool to expand our member base.

Susanna's current position and duties will wrap into another newly created position, Content Marketing Specialist. We will seek a person who has multi-platform experience with writing, photography, video and marketing. The position will be posted soon on stamps.org.

With this reorganization, Fred Baumann's position is being eliminated and his employment will end at the end of November. Fred has graciously agreed to help with the transition. We appreciate his contributions to our content. As an APS member, I'm sure we will see Fred often as he continues his philatelic interests."

To date *AP* readers have not been notified of Fred's dismissal. To me Thomas has hotly argued that Susanna has not replaced Fred, but others have been told that she has taken Fred's place.

Susanna has been my neighbor since she was in ele-

Letter continued on page 17



**Letter** continued from page 16

mentary school. She is smart, talented, and a fast learner. In contrast to Fred, who can be and often is gruff and temperamental, she seems to be perpetually sunny and upbeat. But the ability to interact harmoniously with writers and to impart clarity and style to our manuscripts is just a fraction of the job a philatelic editor needs to perform well.

Six days later, when I read the December issue on-line, I learned that Thomas had failed to honor his commitment to publish my article that had been welcomed in July, and that he had prevented Fred from editing it. Those virtually simultaneous jolts provoked me to intervene.

### **My support and my grievance**

Compared to the (usually low) compensation that freelance writers are paid by commercial magazines, the honorarium that the *AP* pays upon publication is a pittance. For that reason, few professional authors have an incentive to become frequent contributors to our journal. In 1986 Bill Welch persuaded me to become a columnist after established stamp writers who were members of the APS board of directors had refused to accept those terms.

During my years of service as a member-at-large, secretary, and vice president on the APS board of directors between 1991 and 2004, I was unable to win support for a higher budget to pay writers. Today, when the magazine lacks an editor who is qualified to evaluate authors' philatelic abilities or to recognize the competence and originality of submissions, I would not propose to expand the *AP*'s discretionary budget.

Knowing better than anyone else how this problem impairs the *AP* editor's chances of securing consistently first-rate original submissions, I have offered some of my own to each new editor. Readers have found my byline in recent issues produced under Barb, Jay, Martin, Mark, and Thomas. My article on first day covers of 1913 U.S. Parcel Post stamps was on deck when Thomas came aboard in June, and appeared in the August issue.

Thomas's initial attempts to edit my Parcel Post article were inconsistent with established style (regardless of one's preferred style manual) so I protested. Thomas, Fred, Doris, and I met and amicably resolved those problems.

By coincidence, at about the same time I had spotted on eBay a scarce cover that enhanced the most path-breaking chapter of Kathleen Wunderly's book *Bellefonte and the Early Air Mail 1918-1927*. The second edition, which Martin Kent Miller had botched in production, was nearly sold out, but Kitty and I (I wrote the chapter on stamps and postal rates) had submitted corrections, which Doris and Thomas were supposed to enter before sending it back to press.

(The corrections have not yet been sent to press, even though Thomas had assured Kitty he had done so, so the second printing is as shabby as the first, but that is her story to tell if she chooses.)

Although I could have written an article about my

eBay discovery at that time, I proposed instead to postpone publication until December, which would coincide with the 101st anniversary of the inaugural Bellefonte flights and would present an opportunity to promote sales of Kitty's book as a holiday season stocking stuffer. On this we agreed, obviously subject to editorial acceptance.

When Fred notified me in October that the staff was ready to work on the December issue, I sent my manuscript and illustrations to Thomas. He did not reply to my e-mail, but when I went by his office he acknowledged that he had received them. After that I heard nothing from Thomas.

After waiting for a suitable time with no response from Thomas, I asked Fred to send me a status report. Fred replied that Thomas had blocked his access to my article so he could not determine whether it had been included in the December issue.

When the December *AP* appeared on-line without my article, with Thomas still having failed to respond to my e-mails, I complained to Scott English. (Earlier, when Martin was editor and did not acknowledge one of my submissions, Scott had told me he has a zero-tolerance policy. APS and APRL staff members must respond promptly to all inquiries from members.) Finally, prodded by Scott, Thomas replied:

"I'll accept responsibility for the misfire on your article. All of this started as I was new to the position. When the article headed my way, the proposal to drive book sales escaped my radar."

In truth he did not accept responsibility. He had not bothered to read the article, which clearly stated that aspect of its purpose. Worse than that, this sorry episode served as a case study in incompetence. Had Thomas created for himself and his staff a schedule of each coming month's anticipated content, he would not have "misfired" and Fred would have been able to check the schedule for me. Creating and posting a schedule is the most elementary duty of every editor.

At Scott's urging, I had a lunch meeting with Thomas (Scott joined us late), but Thomas conceded nothing. It was unstated but obvious that Scott had instructed him to publish my article in February, but both I and my readers would have been better served if he had simply rejected it when I submitted it, so that I could have published it elsewhere in time to serve its promotional purpose.

### **Why Thomas Loebig's plan is deficient**

The worst aspect of professional ignorance is that the person who lacks knowledge and experience doesn't know what s/he doesn't know. Blend that with cocksure self-regard and you have a recipe for a wreck. Unfortunately we have experienced this toxic combination previously in philatelic publishing, which ought to serve as a lesson not to be repeated.

In 1931, Al and Arlene Van Dahl began publishing *Western Stamp Collector* newspaper, first as a supplement to the *Mill City Logue* community paper in Mill City, Oregon. The twice-weekly *Western Stamp Collector* became so successful that

**Letter** continued On page 18

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the Van Dahl's folded the *Logue*, moved to Albany, and devoted the rest of their working lives to stamp hobby publications.

In the 1970s, after a period of ownership by Jackson Newspapers, also the publisher of *Stamp Wholesaler* magazine, Capital Cities Publications (which became Capital Cities/ABC) acquired Van Dahl Publications, dropped *Western* from the newspaper title, and changed the frequency of *Stamp Collector* to weekly. (Jim Magruder, then the publisher of *Stamp Collector*, hired me as a columnist in the early 1980s, my first job writing for hobbyists.)

In 1995 the Walt Disney Company acquired Capital Cities/ABC; soon afterward Disney sold Van Dahl Publications to Krause Publications of Iola, Wisconsin. Krause was the publisher of *Numismatic News* and the principal reference books for coin and currency collectors, along with other hobby literature. Becoming the owner of *Stamp Collector*, which was *Linn's* leading competitor, and *Stamp Wholesaler*, published for the trade, thrust Krause into the philatelic community for the first time.

With a large staff of experienced hobby writers and editors, Krause management expected to make a favorable impression on newly acquired subscribers who collected stamps. Instead, Krause's 1996 philatelic debut was a thoroughly predictable calamity. Staffed by writers and editors who lacked fluency in the philatelic vocabulary, readers encountered references to "uncirculated stamps" and similar gibberish.

Krause's in-house writers misunderstood and sometimes misrepresented important features of stamps such as paper types and production errors. Because they had no grasp of philatelic subtlety and complexity, the content quickly degenerated to the most elementary level, with emphasis on topical philately. Lacking philatelic analytical ability, the editors ceded market news reports to stamp firms' self-promoting news releases and announcements.

Faced with unanticipated shame and embarrassment, Krause recruited Wayne Youngblood to be editor and publisher of *Stamp Collector*, and Wayne recruited Fred Baumann as senior editor. Both men were poached from Amos Press, where Wayne had been the editor of *Scott Stamp Monthly* (where I was a columnist) and Fred had been a senior editor at *Linn's*.

Wayne and Fred restored the competence and credibility of *Stamp Collector* and *Stamp Wholesaler* for the next eight years. Krause expanded by acquiring the Minkus line of albums and publications, including the Minkus stamp catalog.

After Krause's founder retired in 2004, his successors sold off the company's valuable properties and pocketed the proceeds. Amos Press purchased Krause's stamp hobby businesses and closed the publications that had competed against *Linn's* and the Scott catalog.

Today *The American Philatelist* is following a ruinous course similar to Krause's stewardship of *Stamp Collec-*

*tor* in 1996. Echoing the emperor's pretensions in Anderson's fable, Thomas's January editorial styles his fabric-free garments as the latest fashion. He announced the formation of a new **Content Review Committee** [his bold emphasis]:

"The purpose is to enhance the value of APS content and understanding of philatelic knowledge for APS members and potential members of the organization.

Any member may express interest, as long as they have demonstrated philatelic knowledge (general or specialized). In addition, a willingness to volunteer your time on an as-needed basis to the editorial staff.

How will the committee be involved? We will ask you to help evaluate articles for philatelic relevance and make recommendations on accepting those ideas for publication. When articles are submitted, members of the committee will be asked to review philatelic claims for accuracy."

Thus Thomas attempts to divest himself of the journal editor's responsibilities, and to transfer moral if not legal liability for accuracy and scholarly value to a team of unpaid volunteers who owe no formal duty to the corporate entity they serve.

What editorial work will remain for himself and his staff? This was his answer:

"The editors work with writers on context, length and layout to bring the magazine to our members each month."

Not only is Thomas as naked as the fabulist's emperor; here he has embraced Big Brother's "**Ignorance is strength**" party slogan from George Orwell's *1984*. The tasks he reserves for himself and his staff are less intellectually arduous and less philatelically responsible than the ones performed by the editors of small APS affiliates' newsletters.

#### **Duties of *The American Philatelist's* editorial staff**

Our editor's principal responsibility is to plan appropriately timed and balanced content for each issue, and to solicit articles that reflect those plans from authors known to be qualified. Those duties cannot be farmed out to casual volunteers who are not obliged by employment to meet accepted standards of excellence and who are not subject to compulsory managerial supervision.

True, our editor also must manage drafts submitted by members generally, and must be able to determine whether they meet the AP's standards and needs. No editorial staff can be expert in everything. But being expert in nothing philatelic is a recipe for disappointment, at best, and has the potential for catastrophe.

Those points scarcely begin to describe the challenges that a qualified editor must meet. He or she must know the hobby's lexicon, American edition, by heart: essay, die proof, plate proof, reprint, reissue, special printing, line perforation, stroke perforation, soft paper, hard pa-

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per, wet printing, dry printing, single-line watermark, double-line watermark, block tagging, overall tagging, tagging-omitted, relief printing, recess printing, lithography, and hundreds of other terms that need to be consistently applied as American philately prescribes.

Even experts in specialized fields often get their terms wrong and mis-apply the right ones. Among the examples I have corrected for my clients and fellow writers are distinctions between postmarks, cancels, endorsements, auxiliary marks, censor marks, and cachets.

In this country postcard, post card, and postal card each has a specific meaning different from the others, and different from the same terms as they are used by collectors in the United Kingdom. Another term that has different meanings on opposite shores is error; an American freak is a British and Irish error. One could fill a manual with such details.

Our editorial staff must be familiar with ongoing controversies and the latest discoveries. They must know and become personally acquainted with collectors who are the leading researchers, scholars, owners, and exhibitors of important philatelic properties. They must be familiar with the hobby's legendary treasures: the One-Cent Magenta, the One-Cent Z Grill, the Alexandria Blue Boy, the Treskilling Yellow, the Black Honduras, the Orangeburg Coil, the Vin Fiz Flyer, George Linn's Black Harding first day cover cachets, and all the rest worldwide.

Our staff needs to be aware that APS Writers Unit 30 is where stamp hobby writers congregate to share our needs, accomplishments, and lessons, and that *The Philatelic Communicator* is the periodical where we keep one another abreast of events that matter to our profession. There is no alternative universe of philatelic scribes and editors; they must meet us here.

Our staff must be able to recognize plagiarism, obsolete assumptions, previously published material, and claims that need to be verified independently. They need to know whom not to trust. They need to know where to obtain illustrations that authors have omitted, or ones that would enhance or improve the authors' own but have not supplied.

They need to know whom to ask for research assistance and images for reproduction at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, the Historical Research Center at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the British Library, the Royal Philatelic Collection, the Swedish Postal Museum, the Royal Irish Academy, and dozens of other official repositories of philatelic treasures and archives, and how much time they must expect to lapse before they will receive the requested documents and pictures.

Until now our editorial staff has managed these tasks routinely. Thomas seems oblivious to them, and unconcerned about the series of events that have diminished our monthly journal's quality and prestige over the past several years. He bears personal blame only for the most recent of them, but I am skeptical that he has the ability

to reverse the course and to restore *The American Philatelist* to its former glory.

### Looking optimistically to the future

Article 2 of the APS bylaws states that *The American Philatelist* "shall be the official journal of the Society and shall be published by the Editor under the supervision of the Executive Director." Today the masthead lists no one with the title of editor, an ironically candid but unintended confession that the position is currently vacant.

To the best of my admittedly defective recollection, Bill Welch was the last editor brought on after a proper search that began with a prominent notice in *The American Philatelist* and an invitation for qualified members to apply for the job. At that time the APS bylaws designated the editor as equal in authority to the executive director, and directed half of the budget to the journal.

Recruitment of our recent turnstile editors has been more akin to hiring unskilled help, posting job notices on the stamps.org website and trusting that someone will read them and apply. To make the most of a dismal situation, I would stipulate that Thomas Loebig is qualified to provide the digital services assigned to the chief content officer and probably should keep that job.

Meanwhile, I recommend that the APS immediately publish notice that philatelically qualified experienced editors are invited to apply for the position of *AP* editor. Considering the high educational level and strong professional achievements of our membership, and the intellectual and cultural attractions of Centre County, Pennsylvania, to attract the right recruits, I have no doubt that we can recruit a properly qualified person for the job, and can restore the dignity and pride that our journal must have.

Meanwhile the *AP* must hobble along, kept credible by a dedicated team of regular contributors whom Thomas inherited from predecessors who knew and groomed their talents, and the steady flow of mostly unsolicited manuscripts of mixed quality and originality. I have personally pledged to send in one more major article for publication in 2020.

Let us all hope that my fears are overblown, and that the *AP* will emerge from its nadir with its wounds healed. Meanwhile, I have no infallibility complex. I welcome points of view that oppose or contradict mine. Let's hear next from writers who think Thomas Loebig has the qualifications we need for the *AP* to thrive, and from Thomas himself. Thank you all for taking time to consider my cry: "But he isn't wearing anything at all!"

**Editor's Note:** We offered Thomas Loebig the publication of a Guest Editorial and he seemed to agree on a three week lead time so we held up distribution of *TPC*. He has yet to provide that editorial. We look to receive his Guest Editorial for future *TPC* editions.

Also, the opinions stated in this Letter may not be held by the Writer's Unit 30, its Officers, and Directors.

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### Secretary Report 2019 Q3 About Writers Unit #30

The purpose of the Writers Unit #30 of the American Philatelic Society is to encourage and assist philatelic communications, knowledge, and comradeship. Membership is open to anyone interested in philatelic communications.

#### Membership Dues

Please note that start of year 2018 *TPC* is distributed by email. Those who have paid for 2018 and beyond by the old rates will be given a credit for the future. The membership dues for each calendar year are:

- Web Delivery email full color..... \$15.00
- USPS delivery B/W photocopy..... \$20.00

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. We will soon have PayPal available but not yet.

#### Updating Your Mailing Address

Please notify us of USPS and email address changes to assure that you receive without delay each issue of *The Philatelic Communicator*.

**Alan Barasch, Secretary Treasurer**  
P O Box 411571  
Saint Louis, MO 63141-3571  
WU30@MOPHIL.ORG

### Materials for Review

Material for review may be sent to the editor. Reviews of materials are welcomed from members and non-members. Reviews should be concise and stress those aspects that are helpful examples (positive or negative) for other authors, editors and publishers. Review requests from those having an interest in the item, such as publishers and distributors, must include a copy of the publication.

### Expert Help for Writers and Editors

Dr. Dane S. Claussen, Writers Unit #30 past president, offers free critiques of periodicals, books and manuscripts. Submit the four most recent issues, including postage equivalent to four times the first class mailing fee. Any unused amount will be returned. Critiques can be expected in about 30 days. Inquire before sending books and manuscripts, providing a brief description. Return time will vary depending on length and other commitments. Include an SASE. Send to Dr. Dane S. Claussen's Email: danes.claussen@gmail.com.

### Chapter and Website Feedback Service

Beginning in January 2019 critiques of club newsletters or websites will be available to any chapter at no cost. On request an experienced collector will review and provide written feedback on strengths and weaknesses to help your chapter better serve its members. The feedback service will replace the previous Chapter Newsletter and Website competitions. For more details contact Ken Martin, via email or phone.

### 2020-2022 Literature Exhibits

- Sarasota Article Only Literature Exhibit**  
Feb. 7-9, 2020. [www.wu30.org](http://www.wu30.org).
- APS Great American Stamp Show** August 20-23, 2020,  
Hartford, CT [www.stamps.org](http://www.stamps.org).
- CHICAGOPEX** November, 2020, Itasca, IL,  
[www.chicagopex.com](http://www.chicagopex.com).
- CAPEX 2022**. Toronto Canada June 2022.