



The Philatelic Communicator

Newsletter of the American Philatelic Society Writers Unit #30 • Spring 2023 • N° 220

What's the matter with international philatelic literature competitions?

No, you're not imagining things: literature entries really do score worse, on average, at big international shows compared to exhibits of stamps and postal history. And among the various literature classes, anything that's not a specialized monograph has little to no chance of winning a Gold or Large Gold medal. Thanks to Ari Muhonen, we have the data to prove it.

In this issue, Muhonen—a former secretary of the literature commission at the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie who has done a lot of research on literature class exhibitions at F.I.P. shows—lays out a roadmap for how to improve the situation, based in part on the model set by the United States with the A.P.S. *Manual of Philatelic Literature Judging and Exhibiting*.

We look forward to continuing this debate, and working to improve the situation. *Article on page 11*

Stamps, meet screens

#philately



Sperati on YouTube / Graham Beck interviews Devlan Kruck about a recently unearthed trove of works by the famous stamp forger, Jean de Sperati. The online video has garnered some 20,000 views since it was posted in Dec. 2022.

Three writers share their how-to's for digital philately

Being a philatelic writer in the 2020s means learning to write not just for traditional audiences, in the pages of

monographs and printed journals, but for new audiences, online.

The first hurdle to overcome in making this transition is simply believing you can do it. For starters, **TPC** reached out to three who excel at it, and asked them to share what they do and how they do it. *Read more on page 4*

2023 Hall of Famers: Ronald Leshner, Hal Vogel and Helen Zirkle

The committee has met and spoken: in this issue, you will meet this year's three inductees into the Philatelic Writers' Hall of Fame.

Two of them are alive and well, and their names will be familiar to many in the hobby, at least in North America: Ronald Leshner, 80, of Easton, Md., is one of our leading experts on revenue philately and a prolific writer of articles on the subject. Hal Vogel, also 80, of Willingboro, N.J. is regard-

ed as one of our foremost voices on polar philately. Detailed descriptions of their contributions to the hobby, written and otherwise, appear inside.

The third person honored this year is Helen Kingsbury Zirkle (1898-1976), one of the great philatelic writers and editors of the past whose achievements, for whatever reason, have not previously been recognized at a level the committee felt they deserved to be. Zirkle's biography and

claims to fame are once again being brought to the world's attention here.

The Hall of Fame nominating committee is chaired by Cheryl Ganz, and includes Alan Warren and Marjory Sente. It made its recommendations to the A.P.S. Writers Unit #30 Council in the spring and they were unanimously accepted at a meeting in mid-May.

To nominate someone for future consideration, write to: cherylganz@yahoo.com *Article on page 6*



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The Executive Committee was reconstituted at the last election. Volunteers are sought for the following positions: Historian, Publicist, Special events, AIJP liaison. Please reach out to the President if interested in helping with any of these roles.

Philately enters the metaverse

Like many of our members, I belong to more philatelic organizations than I probably ought to, given my limited attention span and free time. Many of them send me the periodical that is their pride and joy, which

Matthew Healey I dutifully browse through (and love discovering nuggets of philatelic wisdom within!) But while some of the philatelic societies I belong to (like WU30) email their publications in digital format, few—if any—attempt to really engage me in the digital realm.

As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century's second quarter, this is becoming a problem for our hobby. My own digital skills are pretty average. And yet, most of what I read these days, philatelic or otherwise, I read online. And I don't think I'm the exception: look around—the media we consume nowadays is becoming exclusively digital. The online world is not just for tech nerds anymore.

As someone whose former job involved producing a dead-trees publication on a daily basis, this causes me some mixed feelings. I love print, and yet I am acutely aware of all the drawbacks of printed periodicals: the skyrocketing costs, the carbon footprint, the inconvenience, the lack of search-and-retrieval, the challenges of geographical distribution, not to mention the inky grey fingerprints

everywhere. While I adore a well-designed newspaper or magazine spread as much as the next design-school-alumnus-cum-media-junkie, I have also found the drift into digital consumption effortless.

This is simply the way the world is today. To wring our hands over it is as futile as the protestations of the ancient Greeks over the invention of writing.

We've already begun the discussion about how WU30 can advance our hobby by helping writers become more digitally savvy and by broadening our definition of "writer" to include "content creator." For this issue, I interview three who have successfully taken the plunge.

One is focused on clubs and societies. Another is a next-generation stamp dealer. A third makes a living promoting philately to new audiences. All three represent the future of our hobby.

This fall, we'll follow up with a series of how-to's geared to each of the digital platforms that can be used to promote our hobby. They will offer readers a step-by-step guide to the rocket science of social media.

Just kidding—it's not really rocket science. It isn't even balloons-and-rubber-bands science. It's easy, and most of us already have the necessary skills and equipment. We just need to shift our mindset and start doing it: accept that the future of collecting our beloved paper artifacts lies in the world of pixels.

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Your public face is digital. Keep it fresh!

Is your website up to date? By “your,” I mean your organization, your business, your publication, your personal site, if you have one. I’m also talking about your Facebook page or group.

Lloyd A. de Vries

I’m not talking about the technical stuff, either, but the content.

Not a week goes by that I don’t go to a philatelic website and find it woefully outdated: The shows a dealer plans to attend in 2016, last year’s schedule for OUTDATEDPEX, the latest stamp issues from Czechoslovakia, and so on. And, yes, before you say it, our WU30 website needs to be updated, too.

Back in late 1996, I was getting paid a stipend to run the Stamps, Coins & Postal Forum for the Delphi online service, when the company declared all its forums had to get sites on the World Wide Web. Up to that point, we had been strictly text. I balked; I didn’t see the need for graphics and the rest, because we were doing just fine without them. (So much for “philatelic internet visionary,” huh?) Delphi was about to fire me. A friend, the Arts & Crafts forum manager, arranged for her husband to create and maintain The Virtual Stamp Club’s website. He didn’t collect stamps and never had. He continued in that behind-the-scenes role for more than 26 years.

Of course, I was absolutely wrong about the usefulness and need for the World Wide Web. Today, in the third decade of the 21st century, we expect every company and organization to have a website, and the information on it to be accurate and up to date. The links should work, too, and the photographs and images should load.

It doesn’t matter if your site has the latest Java or Mocha Latte programming language. Is the information there? Is it current? Are the spellings and grammar correct? If their is stupid mistakes, it

don’t matter how many bells & wissels you have. (My Microsoft Word spell-check just had a nervous breakdown!)

Ask a friend or relative, preferably a non-philatelist, to take a quick look at your site. An uninvolved person is more likely to spot errors.

Gone, But Apparently Not Forgotten

I am still hearing from people wondering when and where the WU30 Breakfast is during Great American Stamp Show, and others who want it reinstated.



There is no breakfast. This year.

However, I’m willing to revisit the decision. Keep in

mind that the lowest-cost breakfast, which includes beverages, fruits and pastries, starts at \$25 — plus about 41% in service fees, taxes, gratuities and offerings to some deity. That works out to \$35.25 each.

Meanwhile, a reminder about the no-food WU30 membership meeting at 11 a.m. Sunday, August 13, at Great American Stamp Show, convention center meeting room 11. (No food? Does that make it a “strictly-from-hunger” meeting?)

We expect both of our (living) new Hall of Fame members to attend and perhaps speak for a few minutes.

We also will have a booth, or, more accurately, part of a booth on the show floor. Stop by, meet us and maybe volunteer to staff it for an hour or two. (Contact Alan Barasch for the latter.)

Humor In Columns

First, it may interest you that for a time, I was the pun and bad joke specialist

for ABC’s “Good Morning America” newscasts. The apogee of that sub-career was when one anchor said as the others on-camera groaned, “I didn’t write that!” and another said, “There’s one more line in the teleprompter but it’s so awful I won’t read it.” Yes!

So I have credentials. My aptly named B.S. degree is inscribed “Magna Cum Fortuna,” too.

John Hotchner writes in this issue (page 7) about appropriate ways to use humor in philatelic writing. In my President’s columns, here and for the American First Day Cover Society, I use humor (including bad jokes) because I want people to read those articles. If I write about how to cut-and-paste in Photoshop or how to identify the cachets of Joseph E. Martin, I assume the people who read it are doing so because they are interested in the subject, no matter how turgid the prose (sic). But President’s messages are to let the members know what the society is doing and exhort them to do something. Nobody picks up *TPC* or *First Days* and says, “I feel like being exhorted today.” As the joke punchline goes, “First you have to get their attention.”

Pet Peeve Word for This Issue: “Melty”

I first heard it in a fast-food chain’s radio ads a few years ago. Now it is appearing in other chains’ commercials.

All right, so the Merriam-Webster online dictionary has a definition for it and says it was first heard in 1899. I don’t care. It certainly wasn’t in common usage until recently. What does it say, other than that the cheese melts easily. So does wax. Does it taste good? Is it actually made from dairy ingredients? From edible ingredients?

I’ve got to end this column now. There are some kids to chase off my lawn.

The digital writer: taking philately to social media

The best way to learn something is by doing—or, at least, by watching others doing. Here, we take a peek into the digital lives of three practitioners of philatelic social media: who they are, what they do and how they do it, what they see as their biggest hurdles and advice for those who want to jump in.



Melanie Rogers

BACKSTORY Rogers, who grew up in Virginia, began getting involved with Chicago-area philatelic organizations about 10 years ago and saw an opportunity to help them by combining her communication skills and her love of stamps. She has an M.S. in business journalism from Northwestern University and her “day job” is software manager for a document management system.

WHAT I DO I do the social media for several Chicago-area philatelic organizations. I promote Chicagopex on social media, mostly posting to Facebook and Twitter. I also post on behalf of the Collectors Club of Chicago on Facebook and Instagram, and I serve as liaison between that club’s members and its webmaster. For the North Shore Philatelic Society, which only has five members, I’m the only one on social media, so the Facebook page is a way to connect with the community and potentially grow the club. I’ll post philatelic events, press mentions, promoting the A.P.S. And I’ll answer questions from the public.

HOW I DO IT I like Twitter because of the immediacy of it, though it doesn’t work for all organizations. For the Collectors Club of Chicago, we’re mostly publicizing books. Instagram and Facebook are different, they can be more appropriate for certain groups or messages.

I’m not trying to educate people about philately so much as boosting visibility and letting people know what’s going on. I represent the people who can’t be at the show. Maybe they went in the past and wish they could be there. I’m sharing news, keeping people connected.

Nobody has to approve the items I post—that would only slow things down. Once every three months somebody might send me something that needs to be shared, but generally I post everything on my own initiative.

I try to keep the tone of my posts matter-of-fact. I guess that comes from my journalism-school background. A ‘personality’ is hard to sustain and it might turn some people off.

MY BIGGEST HURDLES For Chicagopex, I used to try and post every day, but it was hard to sustain. Now I just do it

“I like Twitter because of the immediacy of it.”

when there’s a show coming up, or a holiday, or some stamp news. I will post multiple times a day during the actual show.

It would be hard for me to find a replacement because people don’t volunteer.

ADVICE FOR BEGINNERS Being a self starter is a great quality for a social media manager. Just create an account and you’re off and running. Social media is accessible regardless of any technical ability!



John Simper

BACKSTORY Simper, who is British, has collected stamps since he was a boy. He owns and runs a U.K.-based stamp business called Philatelovely, which he started in 2020 while recovering from cancer treatments. The business model is subscription-based, and Simper supports and grows it through extensive social-media postings. These range from simply sharing a daily image of a stamp he likes to starting a conversation with his audience based on a theme or idea—audience participation is a key part of many of Simper’s online posts.

WHAT I DO I was so happy when I discovered that there was such a strong online philatelic presence. This gave me the drive to start my own online page. I started with Twitter, and I’m now on all social media, including TikTok. I wanted to further my reach and make philately my hobby and my living, so thought about how to do this. I had the idea to start a monthly subscription box service, where members would pay a monthly fee and receive a pack of stamps, covers, and souvenir sheets, etc. It was my brother that suggested Patreon as a method to do this, and I’m happy to say three years on, it’s going from strength to strength. I have got members from over 30 different countries worldwide, a truly international community.

HOW I DO IT Using social media is vital. For both the business side of it, and for

philately in general. My business is all online, so I need my social media to promote Philatelovely.

As soon as I make a post, or upload a YouTube video, it's instantly available to everyone across the world. If I run a sale on my Etsy store, it's immediately available to everyone, and if I want to promote my monthly membership packs, again I can do it in an instant. Social media has made philately stronger in my view. It's made the hobby even more accessible to such a wide audience, and importantly for me, it's opened it up to people that might not have taken part in traditional philatelic activities.

MY BIGGEST HURDLES The major hurdle I face is time! I never seem to have enough. Jokes aside, I'm always thinking of ways of improving Philatelovely, and it's something I ask my followers and members about all the time. Their input combined with mine is imperative to the survival of my business. I also really

"It's made the hobby even more accessible to such a wide audience."

want to be more organised with my YouTube channel and put more effort into that. I do daily short videos, but I think there is a gap in the market for medium length stamp videos.

ADVICE FOR BEGINNERS Just do it. You can literally have the world in the palm of your hand, ready to hear your message. There's nothing to lose, try it and if it works, great, if it doesn't, you can adapt, and find out what does work.

I am fully aware that philately is moving forwards, we are all moving forwards, and in turn I think things will change in the future. This is something that the more traditional stamp business has to embrace, for better or worse.



Graham Beck

BACKSTORY *Born in South Africa and now living in New Jersey, Beck rediscovered his childhood stamp collection in 2016 and immediately wanted to find out more about the stamps he had. Disappointed at the lack of content about philately on YouTube, he decided to fill the void himself. His channel, Exploring Stamps, now has over 31,000 subscribers, and many of his videos, which he researches, writes, shoots, edits and produces himself, have racked up tens of thousands of views. His "day job" is project manager at a New Jersey-based pharmaceutical firm.*

WHAT I DO The first time I pulled a stamp out of a box and Googled it on my phone, I was amazed how few keywords it took—instantly I was reading up about Marianne and her Phrygian cap. I thought, there must be a lot of people doing web content about this! Then I went to YouTube and didn't find anything. I got very disappointed and discouraged. There were simply no content creators to speak of in the world of philately. So I realized there was an opportunity to have these experiences and share them.

HOW I DO IT I had to learn by doing—learn about the hobby, about video editing, building a community. Post it, react to the feedback. It was a heavy lift at the beginning: I didn't know much about philately either, so I had to do a lot of ground-up research. But my research improved dramatically. The key was to know the people, know who can help.

Before I start shooting a video, I have to write the script. It's a rigorous process that starts with lots of research. In fact, that's the longest piece of the process, it can take weeks. I really get absorbed in the research a lot of the time.

I did an episode on picture postcards of Atlantic City. I'm obsessed with Atlantic City. For my research, I binge-watched all of *Boardwalk Empire*, then I taught myself how to skateboard and skateboarded through the whole city, visiting all of the places in the Monopoly game.

When the script is done I'll read it to my family and make changes to it, then the last step is to shoot and edit it. From

"The biggest barrier to entry is simply thinking, I'm not good enough."

idea to posting can take anywhere from 3 weeks to my record, 323 days!

MY BIGGEST HURDLES I think the biggest hurdle for anyone, the biggest barrier to entry is simply thinking, 'I'm not good enough,' or 'I need to do this before I can do that.' I meet lots of people who tell me something like that.

ADVICE FOR BEGINNERS If you can point to something and say, 'watch this,' then you can tap into a huge new audience.

And you'd be amazed how much you can do on your own now. Don't get hung up on your mistakes. I've seen a few people get discouraged and it's a shame. Take all feedback in stride, and move on to the next thing.

Also, don't stress out about the tech. It's so easy to use nowadays, and you can always find a how-to on YouTube.

Imitate and innovate. I don't mean copy other people, but gain inspiration from other niches and apply it to philately. There's so much to be inspired by—leverage ideas!

Three new inductees to writers' hall of fame for 2023

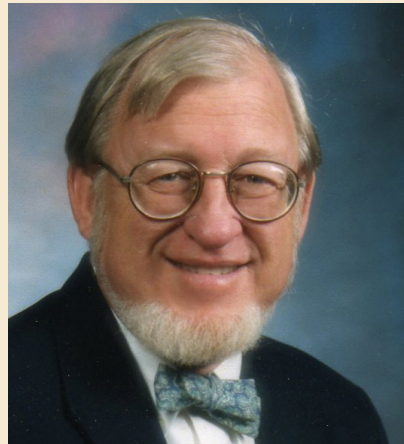
Ronald Lesher

Familiar to many as one of the foremost experts on United States revenue stamps, Ronald Lesher has written prolifically for many journals on the entire range of U.S. revenues. Articles have appeared in *American Philatelist*, *American Revenuer*, *Collectors Club Philatelist*, *American Stamp Collector & Dealer*, *Philatelic Exhibitor*, *Baltimore Philatelist*, *Western Stamp Collector*, and the *State Revenue Newsletter*, which he also edited. He has also written under pseudonyms: Ben Czech, Roscoe Irwin, and Al Capone. Lesher has authored two booklets, *A Guide to U.S. Revenues*, and *T. Kensett & Co. and the Tax on Canned Goods*. He edited the F.I.P. Revenue Commission newsletter. For WU30, Lesher has organized breakfasts and other events. He taught the A.P.S. course "Collecting United States Revenues." As assistant curator for the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum, he wrote text for revenue exhibits, an interactive display and website.

A resident of Easton, Md., Lesher is a retired math and physics teacher in public schools and at Washington College. Several of his A.P.S. Stamp Chats can be watched on YouTube, including "The Historical Context of Taxation: Financing the New Country," at: youtube.com/live/TTtgUKzfDVA

Hal Vogel

The leading polar-philately scholar writing today has to be Hal Vogel. In addition to many articles and a column (since 1974) for *Ice Cap News*, his publications include *Essence of Polar Philately* (2008), *From Palm Trees to Antarctic Ice* (co-author, 2002), *Postal History of the International Trans Antarctic Expedition 1989-90* (1992), *Franz-Josef Land IPY Flight* (1986), *Third Byrd Expedition Visits Pitcairn Island 1939* (1986), *Ten On Ice: The MacGregor Arctic Expedition 1937-1938* (1977), and



Ronald Lesher



Hal Vogel



Helen K. Zirkle (1898-1976)

Few Came Back: The Men and Mail of the Greely Arctic Expedition 1881-84. He co-authored with Serge Kahn the bilingual *Ahead of the Pack: Postal History Sampling of Heroic Age Polar*

Expeditions (2015). Vogel also compiled, wrote and edited the 500-page Vol. 2 of the 7th Edition of the *American Air Mail Catalogue*, and an illustrated and priced catalogue, *Polar Aerophilately* (2016).

A resident of Willingboro, N.J., Vogel is a retired Army Special Operations Forces and Intelligence officer, a former advertising executive, and an emeritus professor at Rowan University. He began collecting polar philately in the 1950s, when he was able to communicate personally with some of the surviving pre-World War II explorers. He holds a doctorate in polar studies from Antioch University. His 2022 Maynard Sundman lecture at the National Postal Museum can be viewed at: youtu.be/wt-v2mo5MZg

Helen Kingsbury Zirkle

Zirkle may be less familiar to readers today, having closed her album nearly half a century ago, but her recognition, though belated, is no less merited.

Zirkle authored and co-authored articles for *American Philatelist*, the *American Philatelic Congress Book*, *Japanese Philately* and other Asian philatelic journals as well as a column, "Our Philatelic Ladies," in *Linn's Weekly Stamp News*.

Her books included *The Postage Stamps and Commemorative Cancellations of Manchoukuo/Manchukoku, Manchou Tikuo, Manchukuo* (1964).

She wrote the section on philately in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and was listed in *Who's Who* as a philatelist.

Born into an academic family in California in 1898, Helen grew up in Japan after her father became a missionary there, following the death of Helen's mother in 1906. She received B.A. and M.A. degrees at Bryn Mawr in 1920-21, and embarked on an academic career of her own. At the same time, Zirkle grew serious in her pursuit of philately, with a focus on the Far East, taking leadership roles in a number of organizations.

Using humor in philatelic writing

We don't see much of the Rodney Dangerfield approach in philatelic writing. To the extent that articles about stamps are dry recitations of facts, maybe that's a good thing. Barbed humor would be out of place in our sedate hobby. But philatelic writers do well to keep in mind that tasteful humor is almost always an attractive feature that helps to pull readers into your work.

Humor need not be of the sledgehammer variety. Speeches often start with a joke, and an article may also—if the joke relates directly to a major point you want to make. But subtlety counts, and there are myriad ways to make the reader smile, if not guffaw. Let's look at a few; keeping in mind that analyzing humor often leaves the “funny” aspect gasping for survival by the side of the road.

References you use can give you an opportunity—who did not smile, or grimace, at Rodney Dangerfield's name in the first sentence above? Like his humor or not, he was a funny guy who could both take it and dish it out.

His barbed wit cut many a famous ego down to size, but one of his secrets, from which we can learn, is that he was often self-deprecating. His humor had a blunt-force-trauma feel to it, but we can be much less confrontational. For example, instead of “I grew up too poor to own a perforation gauge, so it was not until I was in my 30s that I paid attention to that aspect of stamp classification,” sneak up on your reader with, “It wasn't until my 30s, when I had been a collector for over 15 years, that I started paying attention to different perforation sizes. Why was that? There was no perforation gauge in the starter kit my parents got for me, and it never occurred to me to pay attention to what Indonesian collectors call ‘bergigi,’ which translates to ‘teeth.’”

The words you choose to use can

also lend an element of farcicality to your word flow. Consider this sentence: “Collectors of U.S. stamps were gobsmacked when the USPS issued in 2013 their \$2 Jenny take-off on the 24¢ invert error of 1918.” The word “gobsmacked” is both hard to ignore and a bit jarring. As a reader you are not expecting it, and before you know it you're smiling.

More subtle is the use of “take-off” with regard to a stamp with an airplane on it. Some would skip right over it. Others would get the joke.



© USPS

Using quotations is another method to bring a smile. In an article I did on youth in philately, this quotation from lawyer/politician Frank A. Clark (1860-1936) seemed totally on point, accurate, and worth a wry smile: “Every adult needs a child to teach. It's the way adults learn.” It's not going to leave 'em rolling in the aisles, but amusing in its way.

Even writing about a given stamp might give you an opportunity (given access to Google) to come up with something that will make an article more attractive. Take stamps showing what one of my grandsons christened “the Pencil” on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Sen. Roscoe Conkling had this to say on the floor of the Senate in 1876: “Mr. President, the mammoth chimney called the Washington Monument is a meaningless and unsightly thing; its foundations are insecure; and we have buried a hundred thousand dollars in the ground. Assuming that we succeed

in founding or establishing the foot of the monument so that it will not give way, it will still remain as I have described it.”

Conkling was no laugh-a-minute kinda guy, and he certainly didn't intend to provoke smiles, but in light of the how well the Pencil has survived nearly 150 years later, his contemporary thoughts on its construction are ironic if not downright funny. And the quote would add not only humor but some context to an article on Washington Monument stamps.

But, I hear you say, as a former editor of mine did years ago, “Stamp collectors are a serious bunch. Most don't have a functioning sense of humor when it comes to their hobby.”

Had I heeded his advice when I pitched the idea of running a monthly cartoon caption contest in my weekly *Linn's* column, one of the more important draws of that column would never have seen the light of day. Instead, I bet on the stamp collectors I knew who did have a normal sense of humor, and I'm still betting on them 37 years later!

There are many more ways to appeal to the public sense of humor; but in some ways the road has become more rocky. I was recently required to remove the word “midget” from a column in one of the eight publications for which I was writing; lest it offend someone vertically challenged; or a devotee of political correctness who appointed him- or herself as the protector of their feelings. In another, I referred to the “WuFlu” and was required to take it out because it might give aid and comfort to anti-Asian prejudice. Sigh!

But navigating around those shoals is worth the effort. Your readers will appreciate any humor you can include in your work. It humanizes you, makes the product more entertaining (which most if not all readers will enjoy) and will build a cohort of readers who will actively follow your work.

Bill McAllister, philately's eyes and ears in Washington, 81

William H. McAllister, a *Washington Post* national reporter, died May 1 in Fairfax County, Va., from pneumonia and complications from Covid-19. He was 81.

He joined the *Post* in 1975, covering Virginia, before moving to the paper's national staff. He soon carved out a niche covering the United States Postal Service, Veterans' Affairs and labor issues, and had a column about stamps and coins in the *Post's* "Weekend" section.

He became the Washington correspondent for *Linn's Stamp News* in 1996, often breaking stories of interest and importance to stamp collectors. He retired from the *Post* in 1999 but never retired from *Linn's*, submitting his last story in late January, a "Washington Postal Scene" column which ran in the Feb. 13 issue.

William H. "Buddy" McAllister's death was first announced in a posting on his Facebook page by his four sons. He was born Nov. 6, 1941, in Durham, N.C., and raised in Pittsboro, N.C.

According to the post by his sons,

"it was in Pittsboro where he discovered his lifelong fascination with the Postal Service, often visiting the local Post Office to observe the sorting of the daily mail." He received bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of North Carolina.

He also served in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a Public Affairs Officer for 26 years, rising to the rank of captain.

"He was a mentor to young writers in the craft of reporting and writing," his sons wrote, to which I can attest. Bill would often email me to pay special attention to a story of his in *Linn's* or the *Post*, so that I could cite it on The Virtual Stamp Club.

He was introduced to both stamp collecting and journalism by his aunt



Courtesy the McAllister family

Margaret, who gave him a Mekeel's beginner album and (separately) a toy printing press, on which he published a neighborhood newspaper at a penny a copy.

As the longtime Washington correspondent for *Linn's*, he covered not only philatelic subjects but also the Postal Service in general, including congressional action on funding and postal rates, as well as the development of the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum.

His tenacity in hounding public officials for comment—despite their reluctance—earned him the respect of those officials and much of philately.

According to *Linn's*, he began specializing in first-day ceremony programs after covering the 1987 event for the Girl Scouts stamp. He was a member of the American Philatelic Society and a former member of the American First Day Cover Society.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Polly; four sons and seven grandchildren.

—Lloyd A. de Vries

Peter Mosiondz, whose writing guided many a stamp dealer, 76

Peter Mosiondz, Jr., author and part-time stamp dealer, died April 14 at age 76.

In 2021, he was elected to the Philatelic Writers' Hall of Fame. He wrote over 1,000 articles for journals including *Stamps*, *Mekeel's*, *Canadian Stamp News*, *Global Stamp News*, *American Stamp Dealer & Collector*, and a regular column in *Stamp Wholesaler*.

Mosiondz also authored two books: *Successful Stamp Dealing* (1996), and *Stamps and Stories* (2009). His byline also appeared on some 200 articles in coin and model railroad publications.

Growing up in Philadelphia, he frequented the stamp department of Gim-



bel's there, as well as other storefront dealers in the city. He knew many of the legends of the hobby including Herman "Pat" Herst, Herbert Bloch, Calvet Hahn, Ernest Kehr, Lou Robbins, John Boker and others.

In 1967 he was serving as a medic in Vietnam when he stepped on a land mine, requiring extensive surgery on

both legs. He was honored with the Purple Heart.

Mosiondz held several jobs with the post office and also worked as a part-time dealer, initially in U.S. stamps. He and a partner opened a store in a mall near Philadelphia, called the Stamp Shack, selling both stamps and supplies. His 1996 book, which was filled with down-to-earth advice and practical tips, grew out of that experience. After the owner of the mall closed it down, Mosiondz became a part-time dealer again, working from home.

Mosiondz was a 50-plus-year member of the American Philatelic Society.

—Alan Warren

Janet Klug, prolific writer and first woman to lead A.P.S., 72

Janet R. Klug, whose philatelic writing, exhibiting and judging made the hobby more accessible to thousands of collectors and who became the first woman to serve as president of the American Philatelic Society, passed away June 16 at age 72.

She also served on the U.S. Postal Service's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee and the Smithsonian National Postal Museum's Council of Philatelists. She was a 2010 inductee into the WU30 Hall of Fame and won the St. Louis Stamp Expo's Elizabeth C. Pope Award for Lifetime Contributions to Philately in 2011.

The A.P.S., which Klug presided over from 2003 to 2007, gave her its Luff Award for Outstanding Service in 2014.

"Janet Klug was one of the most remarkable philatelists this country has ever produced," said Peter P. McCann, another past A.P.S. president. "I first met her in the 1980s. She had a wonderful collection of Tonga that she turned into a Grand Award-winning exhibit and was the basis of her perennial email handle, 'TongaJan.'"

Klug's exhibit on Tongan Tin Can

Mail was a crowd favorite at shows. She demonstrated how one could build a fascinating human-interest

story from postal history, and that an exhibit could legitimately include physical objects—in this case, actual tin cans—that had not traditionally been seen as belonging in a philatelic exhibit. Other subjects she explored in her exhibiting and writing included the Australian occupation of Japan after World War II and Ohio river and canal towns.

Cheryl Ganz, a close friend of Klug's, noted, "As a collector, exhibitor, judge, author, and leader, Janet excelled at everything—always with a smile and song. Guys at stamp shows so frequently called Janet and me by each other's name, that we have affectionately called



each other 'Sis' for decades."

It was for her writing that Klug was perhaps most widely known in the hobby. She authored the *Smithsonian Guide to Stamp Collecting* (2008) and *100 Greatest American Stamps* (2007, with Donald Sundman). She wrote for many years on wide-ranging beginner subjects in *Linn's Stamp News*, her easy-going, straightforward style making her subjects accessible and enjoyable to all.

Ken Trettin reminisced on Facebook, "I remember the last stamp show she judged. It was either in Cleveland or Columbus. I was surprised that I was asked to be the chief judge and not her. But she told me privately that she had asked not to be the chief and that this would be her last time judging." Klug's battle with her degenerative illness was apparent at one of her last public appearances, at the N.P.M. in Oct. 2019.

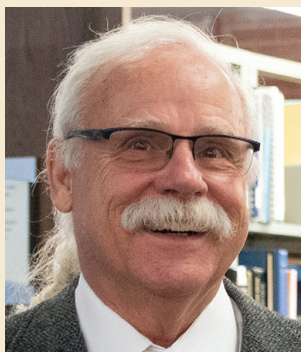
"Despite all her accomplishments, she always had time to talk with any collector and became fast friends," said Scott English, the A.P.S. executive director. "She represented the best we have to offer."

Ken Grant, cinderella expert and major figure at A.P.R.L., 75

Kenneth B. Grant, whose tireless enthusiasm and good humor propelled him to influential positions at the American Philatelic Research Library and A.P.S., died Mar. 31 in Baraboo, Wisc. He was 75.

After serving in the Illinois National Guard and earning a Ph.D. in English literature at Marquette University, Grant embarked on a career as a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin.

In 1999, he was elected in to the board of the A.P.R.L. and served there and at the A.P.S. continuously until 2022, including a six-year stint as president of the A.P.R.L. In 2020, he received the Luff Award for his service, which



included spearheading the society's move to the Match Factory in Bellefonte, Pa.

Grant edited several journals including *Across the Fence Post*, the journal of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs, *Badger Postal History* (Wisc.) and *The Cinderella Philatelist*. He wrote dozens of articles for the *American Philatelist* and others. He was

inducted into the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame in 2014 and invited to sign the Maurice Williams Roll of Notable Cinderella Philatelists in 2018.

Kristin Patterson, who served with Grant at the A.P.S. and A.P.R.L., wrote on Facebook, "I met him in 2007 at the A.P.S. Winter Show in Anaheim, Calif. where I was exhibiting my Samuel Hastings, Wisconsin State Treasurer exhibit. He came running up to me after the Awards Banquet (my first and only fan) and wanted to know if I would write an article for *Badger Postal History*, which he was editing. I ended up writing five articles. He was passionate about philately and always had a smile on his face."

Letters

wu30editor@gmail.com

Recognition received

Hello, I thought the A.P.S. Writers Unit #30 might be interested to know that an article written by one of its members (me!) was recently recognized as being the best article published in *Forerunners*, the journal of the Philatelic Society of Greater Southern Africa, in 2022. The article was titled “Post-Independence Industrial Development of Botswana as Illustrated through Meter Marks: Large Companies.”

The email announcing the award was accompanied by the following text:

[The article] was selected for its original research on a subject that is little looked at yet is historically important as to its social and economic impact on Southern Africa. It is also an excellent source for thematic collectors to acquire various elements for their collection and exhibits. Articles like yours that expound on the areas of sparse collecting populations make *Forerunners* the interesting and well reviewed publication that it is. Bringing these subjects to the forefront are of importance for the area of the world we collect and love.

A link to the article can be found on my website at tiny.one/BotswanaMeters2

Subsequently, the article was also noted as an “Article of Distinction” in the American Philatelic Society’s April 18, 2023, newsletter. A link to the page noting this honour can be found at stamps.org/collect/clubs/articles-of-distinction.

Cheers,
Gordon Smith

P.S. Writing this article (and others) was a great pleasure and getting this recognition is “icing on the cake” that certainly motivates me to continue.

Crawford shortlist announced

The Royal Philatelic Society, London has released the shortlist of seven candidates for the 2023 Crawford Medal.

The winner will be announced on June 28 at the conclusion of the two-day Crawford Festival, a free symposium held at the R.P.S.L. headquarters at 15 Abchurch Lane in London.

The seven are:

- *Portuguese India: Postal History and the First Issues from the “Natives” to 1900*, by Luis and Eduardo Barreiros
- *Postal stationery of Denmark: The Bi-Coloured Issue 1871-1905, Vols. 1 & 2*, by Lars Engelbrecht
- *Stamp Taxes in Nevada, Vols I-IV*, by Michael Mahler
- *Postal Routes to the Dutch Possessions in West Africa, West Indies and Suriname, 1652 to 1919: A Guide to Dutch Maritime Mail*, by Sven Pählman

- *The British South Africa Company King George V Admiral Stamps*, by David Spivack and Stephen Reah-Johnson
- *Rhodesian Philately to 1924: the British South Africa Company Period*, by Brian Trotter, Colin Hoffman and Patrick Flanagan
- *The Inks of De La Rue & Co. and Their Introduction of Synthetic and Aniline Ingredients c.1850-1910*, by Peter Young.

The Crawford Medal was first awarded in 1920. It is named for James Ludovic Lindsay, 26th Earl of Crawford, a passionate collector who bequeathed his monumental philatelic library to the nation. Nominations for the prize are open to all worldwide.

Further details are at: rpsl.org.uk/language/en-US/Home/Library/Events/Crawford-Festival

Boldface Names

The Berliner Philatelisten-Klub has honored **Cheryl Ganz** with its Lindenberg Medal for conspicuous service to philately for her research and contributions to philatelic literature. The award, German philately’s most prestigious, honors Carl Lindenberg, the first leader

of the club, which was founded in 1888.

.....

At its annual general meeting on June 12, the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada elected WU30 member and TPC contributor **Gregg Redner** as its new president. The R.P.S.C. also publishes the *Canadian Philatelist*.

Secretary-Treasurer’s Quarterly Report

Since the Winter 2023 issue, we have signed up two new members and lost four who passed away. Also, your Secretary-Treasurer has added an additional hat as Webmaster.

There were small expenses to pay Todd Ronnei for a partial year hosting the website and Alan establishing the site. Only the site name moved from one owner to another, because we used the same service.

We have \$8,758.58 in the bank as of May 18, 2023.

Closed Albums

1963 Lyman Caswell
2068 Rodney Henderson
1329 William McAllister
1372 Kenneth Grant

New Members

2075 Lawrence Haber
2076 Charles Epting

Respectfully,
Alan Barasch
Secretary-Treasurer

How can we fix international literature competitions?

Ari Muhonen gave a talk at the F.I.P. Literature Commission meeting at IBRA, the recent international show in Essen, Germany. *A report on the IBRA results appears on p. 12.*

Muhonen says he tried to persuade his audience that it is necessary to improve the regulations and training of jurors, in order to improve the quality of the literature results.

“My main concern ... is that the literature class regulations, known as SREV, date back to 1985,” he wrote in an email afterwards. Muhonen said the only real change in four decades has been to add a mention of digital media.

“This is not nearly enough,” he continued. “I think we should make a total revision of the regulations and then train the jurors to respect all kinds of literature, not just monographs about classic philately and postal history.

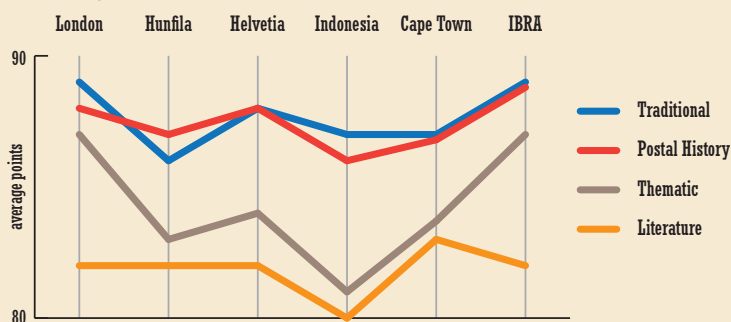
“Catalogues tend to get Large Vermeils and periodicals Vermeils or Large Silvers. That is not encouraging, if you tried your best when writing or editing the publication.”

Muhonen pointed to the A.P.S. *Manual of Philatelic Literature Judging and Exhibiting* as an example for the F.I.P. to follow.

“I know that in the U.S. you have a very good manual for literature judging. Therefore, you may not suffer from the same problems as the F.I.P. shows.”

Among the problems Muhonen point-

Average results at six F.I.P. shows in 2022-23



Literature, indicated by the orange line in this graph, consistently fared worse than other philatelic categories at F.I.P. shows over the past year.

ed out are perennial challenges such as lack of time for jurors to adequately review submissions.

“The jurors have only a few minutes to judge each entry. That is not enough, if jurors want to follow the regulations and check all the details they should. In many cases the result is good enough, but on the other hand I have seen a lot of variation in the results for the same entry in different F.I.P. exhibitions. So, we should improve the quality of judging.”

Another problem cited by Muhonen is the lack of feedback given to exhibitors in the literature class, who only get a breakdown of their points (if that) and a medal.

“If that is all the exhibitors get, it is no wonder that they are not really keen on sending in their entries,” Muhonen mused.

“In order to get more literature entries, we should give the exhibitors

something that is worth sending their publications and digital media in [for]. Maybe we could advertise the publications, I mean give as much information about them in the catalogue or the website of the show as possible. We should be able to say where the publications can be purchased. And of course we should give them fair judgement and feedback, if they are interested to know how to improve their writing.”

Further recommendations from Muhonen include the separation of native-digital products from digital versions of print products, the addition of a “usability” judging category and the inclusion of literature on picture postcards.

An article detailing Muhonen’s points can be found online at fepanews.com/fepa-news/fepa-news-no-42-january-2023/#page/51

—Matthew Healey

Classifieds

Writers Unit 30 members and non-members alike may place classified ads at no charge by emailing the editor at: wu30editor@gmail.com

The Stuart Rossiter Trust supports research and publication

relating to the history of communication through postal systems of the world. Can we help you with publishing your Postal History book or monograph? Contact the trust by email to: srtcrr@gmail.com

Picture Postcard Annual (UK) available now at £9.95. The 2023 edition features dealer and auction house listing, club

contact details, early posting dates and auction records. Also a diary of postcard fairs and auctions for the year, and lots of feature articles. Visit: postcardcollecting.co.uk/books

Volunteers needed at GASS (Great American Stamp Show) beginning Aug. 8, for all areas but especially exhibit mounting and dismount-

ing. Details and signup: stamps.org/great-american-stamp-show/volunteer – or call (814) 933-3803 Ext. 209.

12th Annual Volunteer Work Week happens at the American Stamp Center in Bellefonte, PA July 17-21, 2023. Give back to the hobby, meet new friends and have fun: stamps.org/learn/volunteer-work-week

IBRA results hint at strengths and challenges

One of the largest philatelic shows of this year, the Internationale Briefmarken-Ausstellung (IBRA) took place May 25-28 in Essen, Germany. As befits a major international exhibition, it



included over 250 literature exhibits broken down into six categories:

a) monographs, specialized catalogs and research studies; b) promotional and documentation literature; c) general catalogs; d) periodicals; e) articles; and f) an experimental class of digital media, including web sites and software. The first category, which had by far the most entries, boasted seven Large Gold and 34 Gold winners, but across the other five categories, there were no Large Golds and only eight Golds in total. Two of the categories awarded nothing higher than a Vermeil or Large Vermeil.

This suggests that the specialist book is still the medium of choice for most philatelic writers and publishers, as well as judges. It also hints at where organizers of philatelic literature exhibitions, as well as the editors of philatelic journals, can likely find the most fertile ground for future development.

Ari Muhonen, who helped run the literature booth at IBRA, said the result was good in terms of number of entries (a typical number for an international show is around 100; London 2022 garnered an exceptional 300) and the number of Gold awards handed out. But he was quick to point out some issues that need to be addressed, and he criticized the regulations for literature exhibits as outdated, particularly for digital media.

“In my opinion, one reason why there are mainly monographs in literature class is that jurors tend to favor them. IBRA showed once again how difficult it

is to judge literature.”

Muhonen shared detailed insights which are the subject of a separate article on page 11.

The Large Gold winners in the Literature category at IBRA were as follows (all titles here translated into English):

- Patrick Choy, *China's Silver Yuan Stamps (96 pts.)*
- Jürgen Herbst, *Handbook of Saxony Postage Stamps and their Cancellations (96)*
- Pedro Vaz Pereira, *The Portuguese Post Office 1853-1900—500 Years of the Mails in Portugal (96)*
- Giovanni Balimann, *Franking Types, Postal Imprint Types and Frankings through the Example of Swiss Post Stamps and Regulations (2 Vols.) (95)*

- Corinphila Auktionen AG, *The Cantonal stamps of Switzerland: Real-Fake-Falsified*, by Richard Schäfer (*Reuter-skiöld No. II*) (95)
- Jürgen Naab, *Frankings of 1852-1867 Letter Mail of Thurn and Taxis (3 Vols.) (95)*
- Richard Schäfer, *The First Federal Postage Stamps of Switzerland: Letter Mail 1.10.1850-30.9.1854 (95)*



The complete *Palmares* for all exhibits at IBRA can be found at ibra2023.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/PALMARES-V2_20230528-1.pdf

Chicagopex: call for entries

The longest running philatelic literature exhibition in the Western Hemisphere, Chicagopex will mark its 56th year this fall. The exhibition is an “open” show and accepts “all forms of literature, both printed and digital, of all types,” with the only restriction being that it has to be in English, must be recent and may not have won a Gold medal at a previous Chicagopex, according to Ken Trettin, who is serving as chairman of the literature exhibition. Literature may be related to the collection

and study of postage stamps and stationery, postal history, revenue stamps and stamped paper, cinderella stamps and associated specialized fields. Entries will be judged according to the 2021 edition of the A.P.S. *Manual of Philatelic Literature Judging and Exhibiting*. The fee is \$25 per competitive entry and **the deadline to enter is Sept. 1**. More information and the full prospectus and application can be found at chicagopex.org. Trettin may be contacted at chicagopexliterature@gmail.com

Calendar of philatelic literature exhibitions, 2023

Aug. 10-13: Great American Stamp Show, Cleveland, Ohio. *The entry deadline has now passed.*

Nov. 17-19: Chicagopex, Chicago, Ill. *Deadline for entries is Sept. 1; early submission of literature entries is encouraged. Prospectus: chicagopex.org/pdf-documents/2023-lit-prospectus.pdf*

Application: chicagopex.org/pdf-documents/2023-lit-application.pdf

Nov. 25-26: New Zealand National Philatelic Literature Exhibition, Christchurch, New Zealand. *Info: cps.gen.nz/page/442611*