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The *American Philatelist* and the *Philatelic Literature Review* in Search of An Editor

by Charles J. Peterson

Most of you have heard about the recent loss of Peter Martin as editor of both the *American Philatelist* (the monthly journal of the American Philatelic Society) and the *Philatelic Literature Review* (the quarterly journal of the American Philatelic Research Library). You probably have also encountered various versions of the actual events and their background, speculation on what might happen next, and some creative spins on what dire effects this will have on the two organizations. At the risk of spoiling a good story, here's a recapitulation of the situation.

We'll start with the news. In March 2001, Peter Martin was appointed to fill a newly established position as APS Director of Development—essentially a promotional and fund-raising job, and one with the tacit expectation that the additional funds received would as a minimum pay the incumbent's salary.

In June 2001, Bill Welch retired as editor of the *American Philatelist* and the *Philatelic Literature Review*. Given Martin's considerable experience in philatelic writing and editing, it seemed natural for the APS and APRL to take advantage of his availability and name him interim editor of the two journals. His main responsibility and salaried function continued to be that of Director of Development. In November 2001, when it subsequently became apparent that the fund-raising office was not economically justifiable, the position was terminated, together with Martin's part-time duties as interim editor. (This history can be reviewed in APS press releases of the time, still available on the society's web site at <http://www.stamps.org>, the November 2nd one is reproduced in full on page nine.)

The cost of the *American Philatelist* has been a concern to the APS for several years; in some circumstances the cost of the journal has been higher than the subscription price. Editor and staff expense, printing costs, mailing fees, all have been carefully examined to keep the costs down. (See for example the minutes of the August 2001 APS Board meeting, available on the APS web site.) One of the suggestions raised involves contracting out of some of the pre-publication functions now done in house at State College, which seemed to me to be a reasonable idea worth further study. As I told Rob Haessler prior to his article in *Linn's*, should such a step be taken it would involve mechanical functions only; the APS would decidedly **not** give up policy, editorial and content control. (Since most of our slick-paper philatelic journals are published by commercial printers—generally non-philatelic ones—I don't have a problem with the concept. In fact, the *Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*, which I edit, is published and distributed by Standard Printers, a general commercial establishment in Canton, Ohio.) For some reason, this emphatic assurance apparently didn't get

through to *Linn's* Editorial Director, Michael Laurence.

In the meantime, Barbara Boal continues to manage the *American Philatelist*. Managing Editor since August 1990, and increasingly responsible for the journal toward the end of Bill Welch's tenure, she now serves as interim editor. The journal faces no immediate content or production difficulties, with a good supply of articles on hand.

The situation with the *Philatelic Literature Review* is somewhat different. Until 1984, the *PLR* had always been edited on an expenses-only basis (the last such volunteer editor was myself, from 1968-1983). Through 1980 it was produced by one of the last, great hot-type philatelic printers, Harlan Miller of Lawrence, Kansas. When he retired, the *PLR* went to offset (and became the first philatelic journal with a racing stripe on the cover), with production control through the APS. I continued as editor for several more years, but finally resigned in 1983. Dick Sine became the first State College-based *PLR* editor, and the first to put the editorships of the *PLR* and the *AP* under one hat. It was a reasonable solution at the time, although I feel that it may have worked to the detriment of the *PLR* over the long run.

Peter Martin worked up the 4th Quarter 2001 *PLR* prior to November, and Barbara Boal—the current interim editor—has seen it through to publication; it should be out by the time this article appears. The 1st Quarter 2002 issue is in the planning stages. Unfortunately, unlike the case with the *AP*, there's no stockpile of articles for later issues.

As a final note: I'd like to go back to dedicated editorship of the *Philatelic Literature Review*. The journal was at its best when it enjoyed the primary focus of its editor on a continuing basis. To do that, we need to seek out someone with strong literature, library and/or bibliographic interests—which probably applies to the entire WU membership. Anyone out there who is interested in being considered for the editorship, or has a nominee, please write, e-mail (cjp7777@aol.com) or call (301 776-9822). (I enjoyed my stint as editor, and I'd love to go back to those thrilling days of yesteryear, but I've got too many other demands on my attention. However, I do promise to provide help, encouragement, planning guidance, suggestions, identification and cajoling of potential authors, as well as occasional writing, to whomever does become *PLR* editor.)

Editor's Note: Charles J. Peterson is currently president of the Board of Trustees of the American Philatelic Research Library. In addition to having served as editor of the *PLR*, he has a long list of services to philately including former president of WU30 where he continues to provide a critique service and he is a respected authority on philatelic literature on an international level. □

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The Quill Joe Foley

There is quite a mix in this issue. On the one hand *Linn's* has shared their Writers Guidelines and on the other they have been taken to task on their recent treatment of the APS. Council Member Lloyd de Vries provides a change of pace. Radio is not a medium we give as much thought to as we might and Lloyd provides some useful insight. The beginning of an ongoing feature "Editors' FAQ" by Larry Goldberg is on page 8.

DO YOU REALLY WANT A GOLD MEDAL?

What a silly question—of course you do! But . . . I wonder? Let's step away from philately and consider literature in general. You enjoy reading a good book on vacation or on a long plane trip. You can take James Joyce's *Ulysses* or Tom Clancy's latest thriller. I'm a "loyal Irish-American" and Joyce is certainly in the gold medal category, but if I want a "good read," guess what . . . ?

Back to stamps. Collecting statistics are down just about across the board. If you are editing a journal - newsletter, call it what you may, and your membership numbers are doing better than the "big boys," you've got a winner—no second thoughts needed! You may be entering competitions and getting a silver. If your members are happy, just accept the silver with whatever good grace you can summon and continue your good, indeed very good, work.

By the way, I've started *Ulysses* three times. One of these days, I'll finish it. Clancy? — I've read some of his until the wee hours of the morning, and then some.

WRITERS BREAKFAST

There will be a Writers Breakfast at the APS Winter Meeting, Ameristamp Expo, Riverside, California. It will be Sunday morning, 8:30 a.m., February 10, 2002 at the Mission Inn, one of the official convention hotels, one block from the Convention Center where the show will be held. Cost is \$17.50/person until Jan. 15, \$20 after. Contact Ken Martin at APS headquarters, Box 8000, State College, PA 16803, for tickets. Menu is: fresh orange juice, scrambled eggs, link sausage, breakfast potatoes, assorted Danish, muffins and croissants, coffee, decaffeinated coffee and specialty teas.

The customary drawing for rare and valuable philatelic literature will be featured. Speaker and topic are yet to be announced.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Response to the questionnaire that was in the last issue was somewhat underwhelming. This may mean either complete contentment or abject apathy. Probably somewhere in-between. There is continued interest in help on illustrations and there were some adverse comments regarding some of the less civil exchanges we have had in these pages. My thanks to those that took the trouble to respond. □