



The Philatelic Communicator

Writers Unit No. 30

of the

American Philatelic Society

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President's Message

This is the first issue of the new year, and the first issue of *The Philatelic Communicator* under a new editor, Ken Lawrence.

I want to thank Barbara Mueller for the time that she served as editor of what was the *Writers Unit News Bulletin* and became *The Philatelic Communicator* in 1987. Her hard work and efforts in getting these quarterly issues out for the past eight years are greatly appreciated. Our deepest thanks to you, and, for all you have done, Barbara, "This Bud's for you."

Ken Lawrence comes to this task with excellent credentials, and has an extensive background as an editor for several commercial newspapers and magazines. By profession, he is a free-lance writer, and he is good enough at his craft to make a living from it — and that is more than most of us who write for philately can claim.

In some of his writing for the philatelic press, Ken has assumed the role of the investigative reporter, and in that mode, he has stirred up controversy from time to time. This has caused some people to worry about the course the *PC* might take under Ken's editorship.

They seem to be afraid that our journal will develop a political orientation (and perhaps one not to their liking) rather than continue as a friendly medium for the exchange of information and ideas to help all of us in our philatelic writing.

My view is that Ken has taken on this volunteer job as an experienced editor and writer, and not as an investigative reporter. The quality of his output as editor should not be pre-judged based on what you may or may not have read of his columns.

Thus, I ask that the WU membership not pass judgment without first seeing how our journal evolves under his guidance. Let's all give Ken the opportunity to let us see the kind of good work I know he capable of.

Before you is the first issue of the *PC* that Ken has put together. He invites all of you to submit articles for publication. Let's keep his IN basket full. *R de Violini*

Don't miss the information in this issue, page 11, on the Writers Breakfasts and Literature Competitions coming in 1989. Come, participate, enjoy!

Letter From the Editor

Judging by Bob deViolini's president's message, you might get the idea that I've received more anticipatory brickbats than any other volunteer editor in history. (The record for paid editors in the big leagues is held by Robert A. Gottlieb, who succeeded William Shawn as editor of *The New Yorker*.)

Nevertheless, it is gratifying to report that my mailbox overflowed with letters of support and encouragement from Writers Unit members and, most important of all, more material for publication than I can fit into this issue.

I'm sincerely grateful to everyone who has written, including my critics. Keep the letters and articles coming! I want to give special thanks to Diana Manchester, one of my favorite philatelic writer-editors, who has kept the prose flowing even during her recent illness.

Up to a point, controversy can be beneficial, as long as it is accompanied by a dignified tone and a respectful spirit.

Dr. Robert M. Spaulding, president of the International Society of Japanese Philately, Inc., and editor of its superb bimonthly magazine, *Japanese Philately*, wrote, "I have removed *The Philatelic Communicator* from our mailing list. (Ken Lawrence's) use of the 'news' pages of *Linn's* for leftist political propaganda proves (Continued on page 3.)."

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The Philatelic Communicator

Quarterly journal of the Writers Unit No. 30 of the American Philatelic Society, 2501 Drexel St., Vienna, VA 22180, *The Philatelic Communicator* is produced and mailed as a paid service for Writers Unit 30 by Joe F. Frye, Box 22308, Memphis, TN 38122-0308, with assistance of other individuals/firms.

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

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

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

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

Editorial matter must be sent to the Editor.

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

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Editorial

A Pullet Surprise for Humor

Despite the debacle of Steven J. Rod's April Fool column in Stamp Collector last year, I'm still a partisan of humor in philately and philatelic writing. (Plate number coil dealers were not amused at Steve's tongue-in-cheek statement that PNCs in strips of six had replaced strips of five as the standard format.)

I always enjoyed "Centers of Interest" by Clyde Jennings. (You can look them up in old issues of The American Philatelist.) I think John Hotchner's contests converting U.S. stamps into cartoons are wonderful.

These days one of my favorite philatelic writers is L. D. Mayo Jr. — not the Dann Mayo who sends out the apologies for the lateness of the Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin, but the fellow who composes the self-deprecating patter in his War Covers auction catalogs.

Not long ago Dr. Robert Rabinowitz published a racy little stamp gossip newsletter in which he awarded me a "Putziler" prize, a bit of barbed wit unfortunately lost on those who didn't grow up with Yiddish-speaking parents or grandparents. But for those in the know it was a superb pun, almost matching the line from that famous, nameless student who wrote, "In 1957, Eugene O'Neill won a Pullet Surprise."

From this perspective there's redeeming virtue in Joseph J. Puleo Jr.'s otherwise scurrilous "monthly" publication, The Stamper. True, it isn't a paper you'd want to fall into the hands of innocent youths, but no magazine is for everybody.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and if you think of The Stamper as a parody of Linn's, you'll see what I mean. Puleo not only mimics Linn's most successful features and copies their titles, he even plagiarizes Linn's phrases and retreads its former writers.

If Michael Laurence ever fires John Hotchner, there will be a job offer waiting for him in Boynton Beach, Florida.

Joe Puleo is definitely a miracle worker. It wasn't too long ago that Greg Manning was canceling his advertising in publications that accepted Puleo's. Now Greg is the star of Joe's show, with a long article, a fawning interview, and a full-page ad.

That's entertainment!

In the pages of Linn's, Stamp Collector, and Stamps, the controversy over the 1989 Scott catalog seemed pretty serious and divisive. The Stamper turned it into a joke. (For a different view, see the review by Terry Hines on page 7 in this issue.)

So, with all due respect to those whose sense of dignity is offended by frivolity, I say let's lighten up. Ken

he cannot be trusted not to politicize the *PC*. The only question is how quickly and how blatantly. As soon as he does, I will end my membership in the Writers Unit."

I wrote to Bob Spaulding twice, asking him to reconsider his decision, and to submit an article for us detailing his criticism of my writing. It seems to me perfectly valid in a writers' publication to discuss what some think shouldn't be published as well as what should, and that someone who feels as passionately and writes as well as Bob does could provide us with a useful think-piece on the subject. Unfortunately, he hasn't responded.

Diana Manchester sent this comment: "This is supposed to be a **HOBBY** and we're supposed to be having **FUN!** I believe that any negativity is coming from the observers of the hobby versus the workers. Anyone who has worked for philately wouldn't criticize you before they have even seen what you'll produce.

"I would, however, object to having any political or religious isms shoved down my throat in an evangelistic way in a hobby publication. I do not in any way object to being provided with information on any subject — as long as it is being provided in a way so that I can make my own choices to accept or reject.

"MY pet peeve is everyone assuming that I am a Christian, and assuming that I subscribe to all Christian beliefs, etc. I don't think that has a place in a hobby. I find it offensive. You can quote me."

Diana's criteria seem excellent to me, including in a way she didn't necessarily intend. I'd like to see the writing in all philatelic publications mainly written by those of us who are in it for fun. When business interests take precedence, as happened during the controversy over the Scott catalog, or in the recent bout of mudslinging among U.S. plate number coil dealers, mean-spirited writing becomes the standard, including, I regret to say, some replies in kind from my own pen.

Regarding my reputation as a reporter, I learned only this year that I had received a front-page commendation in the November 1983 *News Bulletin* (this publication's former name), complimenting me on a series I wrote that year for *Stamp Collector*. Barbara Mueller wrote, "The entire project is a textbook lesson in journalistic fairness enhanced by *SC*'s usual attractive, open layout and graphics." I happen to know not everybody agreed with that judgment, but the majority of comments I received were favorable, and that has also been true of my recent work for *Linn's*.

Bob de Violini correctly says that you shouldn't expect to see investigative reports in the *PC*. This is the place to examine the dos and don'ts, and to explore the questions of ethics, fairness, and conflict of interest

that confront every writer, particularly those whose published conclusions may affect others. I'm no crusader for my personal brand of journalism, because as a consumer of philatelic literature I regard variety as the single most appealing quality in any good periodical. But one point is worth making here. Some writers and editors believe that soft, upbeat features are immune to these concerns. Not so. Puff pieces on unworthy people or products may arouse less controversy than vigorous muckraking, but they do a disservice to readers.

As long as I am editor of this quarterly, these pages will be open to the entire spectrum of opinion reflected in our hobby, provided the content is presented in a constructive tone. To qualify for publication, opinion pieces must be as pertinent to our mission — the pursuit of excellence in philatelic writing, editing, and publishing — as how-to articles, reviews, reports on new word-processing systems and graphic arts products, accolades to meritorious writers, darts to offenders, and announcements. The two articles in this issue on philatelic literature competitions are fine examples.

With all due respect to our stalwart Chairman, Joe Frye, the debate over gun control really doesn't belong in the *PC*. (I'm not an absolutist on this point. If an organization of gun collectors were to approach other hobbyists to ask our consideration for their plight, we should consider it.) But a thoughtful article on how to stimulate stamp collecting by placing articles on federal and state Duck stamps in the two National Rifle Association monthly magazines certainly would be welcome here. At present I have no articles on philatelic writing for the lay press. I need some.

Here's a tougher issue: Over the years I've noticed that fewer than half of the philatelic writers, editors, and publishers who become aware of mistakes in what they've published ever bother to issue corrections. That bothers me, both as a writer and as a stamp collector. What do you think?

Philatelic writers have a wide range of interests and concerns, but the one I hope we all share is our obligation to preserve and foster the fellowship of stamp collecting.

Ken Lawrence

The next issue of the *PC* will include a "how to" manual for society journal editors.

Be sure you read the coverage on upcoming Writers Breakfasts and Philatelic Literature events of 1989.

The Debate Over Literature Competitions

Should national and international stamp shows continue to include competitive literature exhibits?

In the August 15, 1987, *Stamp Collector*, Ernst M. Cohn explored some of the perplexing ambiguities of literature judging, but it was Michael Laurence's column, "Literature shouldn't be judged like stamps", in the August 31, 1987, *Linn's*, amplified further in the October 12, 1987, issue, that really stirred things up. Writers with other views presented arguments in *Linn's* and *Stamps*, but the debate lapsed without comment from the people affected most, the writers who submit their articles, columns, and specialist publications.

Here we resume the discussion with two strong statements in favor of literature competitions. Your editor eagerly awaits further opinions on this subject.

* * *

Literature Exhibitions are Still Evolving

by Diana Manchester

I still cringe over Mike Laurence's August 31, 1987, editorial lambasting literature exhibitions. It was quite obvious from almost all of his statements that he was shooting off his pen without knowing what he was talking about. He has obviously never read any literature exhibition prospectus/entry form. He has never bothered to read the section in the APS Judge's Manual on judging philatelic literature. He has never spoken to anyone who has either staged a literature exhibition or judged one. He was lambasting the idea of a literature exhibition, not the reality.

In my opinion, the literature exhibition is still an evolving art (?) form. Even though CHICAGOPEX and STaMpsHOW have had them for eons, it is the newcomers on the block, primarily SESCAL and COLOPEX, who are making the inroads that make this forum a valid one for the participants and show attendees. Formerly, the literature was judged, medaled, and forgotten. Many times it was not on display. (The format of display at Detroit was worthless . . . I want to be able to touch the stuff — how else do I know if I want to order it?) The literature should be displayed to the public where it can be handled and read. An ordering information handout should be prepared for the public.

There should be a critique. Unfortunately, few literature exhibition entrants attend the shows, so there should also be a written critique form prepared. If you are a journal/book/article author, etc., a literature critique is a rewarding experience even if your efforts are not entered. Others can employ the critiques given to others in their own publications.

Mike made the comment that literature shouldn't be

judged like stamps in a few hours. He implied that the literature was being pitted against one another. For the five medal levels, neither stamps nor literature are judged that way. An exhibit is judged on its own merits, independent of the rest of the entrants.

In addition, the literature exhibition judges earn their honoraria much more than the philatelic judges. At the show, they always spend at least two days judging (Thursday and Friday). At STaMpsHOW, they spent a good deal of Saturday also. This in addition to the time they spent at home reading the items they had access to through their own subscriptions, friends, libraries. The average judge spends scores of hours preparing for a literature exhibition. (They receive an advance list.) One of the unwritten qualifications of being a literature judge is that you subscribe to a bunch of stuff that you don't collect just because you are a curious, avid philatelic literature buff. These judges are very familiar with what they are judging, and care about what they are doing. Their critiques show that.

Which brings me to the point of this "note":

In the four years that I have been exhibiting my journal, *The Inflation Study Group Bulletin*, I have received many constructive critiques. I have employed the suggestions given to me, and have gone from Bronze to a Silver in the competitions. The medal, however, has not been the goal. The increase in usability, scholarship, and technical aspects of my journal has been the reward for incorporating the judges' suggestions into my work. To some, more experienced, philatelists, the suggestions have perhaps been obvious. They weren't to me. It is obvious to me that many journals I subscribe to would benefit by a few literature critiques. D.M.

* * *

Literature Competitions — A "Yes" Vote

by John M. Hotchner

Literature competitions as an adjunct to stamp shows are under attack. I agree with some of the criticisms, but I am concerned that we not throw out the good that they can do because the process and even the results are sometimes less than perfect.

There is a healthy movement to Pulitzer Prize-type competitions (Chicago Philatelic Society; Collectors Club of Kansas City) which can be a positive force for excellence in philatelic literature. In these, authors do not apply for awards as they do by entering literature competitions. Instead, excellence is sought out by a small selection committee and recognized in some unique way.

The result should be that the authors and editors of all lesser works will study and learn from the winners. Some will.

(Continued on page 5.)

I submit that this process does not and can never fully substitute for the well done literature competition. By "well done" I mean that

1. A balanced panel of competent judges is chosen.
2. The judges are provided a month ahead of time with *at least* the titles of the material they are being asked to judge.
3. The judges seek out reviews and opinions of experts in the field in order to assure that their own informed impressions of the work as literature and its presentation are tempered by an appreciation of the value of its content.
4. The judges spend adequate time at the show reviewing the literature and discussing the merits and problem areas of each entry among themselves.
5. The judges prepare a short paragraph of written comments for each entry, unless they *know* that a person representing the entry will attend the critique that the show committee has provided.
6. At the critique, the judges go beyond comments on individual entries to apply their experience to all questions that come up about production and available resources.
7. That the lessons learned about the process *and* about the shape and direction of philatelic literature be shared in some fashion with a larger audience of writers and editors through the medium of *The Philatelic Communicator*.

More about the latter in a moment, but first, let me observe that this process can benefit a great many people:

- the entrants
- the judges
- critique attendees
- potential consumers of the work judged
- and the philatelic literature community.

In short, a great deal of bread is cast upon the waters, and the resulting ripples can be achieved in no other way.

No. I do not pretend that all the decisions will be "right". There is risk to the exhibitor in putting forth his or her work. It may not be properly appreciated. That's life. There is a risk in saying "Good Morning." No one gets to predict outcomes 100 percent of the time.

Exhibitors are well advised to take their lumps gracefully. Life is difficult to bear at times. There is no reason, other than bad manners, why the exhibitor should be ill-behaved.

Despite its inherent faults, public literature judging can be a very worthwhile activity for all concerned.

Now to come back to my numbered paragraph 7. I would like to see each WSP show that has a literature competition (SESCAL, COLOPEX, FLOREX, STaMPSHOW and CHICAGOPEX) designate one of the literature judges to write a report on the literature competition for *The Philatelic Communicator*.

This is not one of the odious tasks that is to be shifted off to the apprentice. I'm talking about a competent review of the process and results by a qualified and experienced judge. Perhaps the chairman of the literature jury should be that person; or a volunteer agreeable to the chairman.

Having just finished judging the 29 books, handbooks and periodicals that made up the SESCAL '88 literature competition, I'm doing a report appearing elsewhere in this issue in hope of encouraging similar efforts by others. It is not intended to be the perfect model of such a report, but I am hopeful that it will be a useful starting point for others and that it will be of sufficient interest to inspire the person responsible for literature judging at the shows mentioned above to arrange for it to be an expected task from its future literature juries.

J.M.H.

* * *

Footnote from the Editor

I am skeptical about literature competitions myself, particularly since I've seen the exact same entry take a silver at one show and a bust at another.

An especially tasteless abuse of a literature award, I thought, occurred when a philatelic columnist for a number of general-circulation newspapers devoted an entire column to an international literature competition that had awarded his series a large silver medal. He allotted more space to his own product than to those that won golds and vermeils.

However, in the constructive spirit I'm trying to encourage, let me direct this comment and query to the organizers of literature competitions:

I write a column on modern covers called "Tomorrow's Postal History." It appears irregularly in *Linn's* without my title, usually in Michael Laurence's "Editor's Choice" space when he's preoccupied with other matters.

Occasionally it's treated as front-page news. At times *Linn's* calls attention to some of these columns as part of a series (on modern U.S. Officials; on foreign Framas; and so forth), but other times they stand alone.

Once in a while *Linn's* rejects a submission on the grounds that I've trod on some other regular writer's turf; in those instances I've placed the columns with the competition. (A variant that has also happened, but rarely, is for *Linn's* to place my work as a guest column (Continued on page 6.)

Footnote . . . (Continued from page 5.)

in a specialized writer's regular space.)

Conversely, when Mike has asked for columns on certain modern usages, I've steered him to writers more knowledgeable than myself.

These are the realities of life for what I regard as my most interesting and challenging subject matter, and I'd wager there are other philatelic writers who work in a similar way. I do want the benefit of organized, professional criticism, and I'm not one to spit at complimentary recognition, especially since awards can be useful when it comes to bargaining about one's financial worth.

But there's really no way to get either for this type of writing from existing literature competitions or special awards as they are currently organized. My question is, should this type of writing be accorded less opportunity for honor than the type that fits the neat categories of a prospectus?

Watching the Weeklies

by Robert A. Greenwald

This issue inaugurates a new column for *The Philatelic Communicator* which will be devoted to forthright review of the three major weekly newspapers which serve our hobby: *Linn's Stamp News*, *Stamp Collector (SC)*, and *Stamps* magazine. The idea for this column originated with our new editor, Ken Lawrence, and I am pleased to be able to accept responsibility for its production.

I have been a member of the Writers Unit for several years, was a monthly columnist for one of the aforementioned publications for three years, and was the editor of the newsletter of a specialized society for five years. More important, I have subscribed to all three of the weeklies for many years and have long been making mental notes about both their strengths and failings, most of which I hope to put to paper in the months to come.

I think it is safe to assume that every member of the Writers Unit gets at least one of the three, and many probably get two or perhaps the entire trio. It is also safe to assume that most of us don't have the time to read them as carefully as we would like, but that we would nevertheless agree that the weekly philatelic press is the lifeblood of our hobby.

Each of the three has a separate character, and although one can certainly readily pursue serious philately taking only one of them, there are nuances to be gained from each separately, and that is one of the themes to be explored in the columns to come. Other topics which I plan to pursue include production

quality, timeliness, the ratio of news and commentary to advertisements, text accuracy, quality of columnists, and originality of content. Readers of this column are invited to send in suggestions for additional topics as well (see address below). For starters, however, I would like to explore the general nature of the editorial content of each of the three.

I have at hand a sample set of the three publications: ten issues of *SC* between Oct. 8, 1988, and Dec. 10; nine issues of *Stamps* from Oct. 22 to Dec. 17, and eleven of *Linn's* from Oct. 10 through Dec. 19. I have catalogued the editorials appearing within this sample; what follows is an analysis of how the three major weeklies attempt (or don't attempt) to influence the opinions of their readers.

The editorials in *Stamps* are all written by the editor, Al Starkweather, and generally appear on the fourth page of each issue. Maintaining a constant flow of interesting ideas week after week singlehandedly, albeit sufficient to fill only about a third of a page, is an awesome burden. One is therefore not surprised to find that many of the topics covered are rather mundane and uninspiring; it can certainly be said that none of the topics covered in my small sample was the least bit controversial or even thought-provoking.

Most of the topics can best be categorized as designed to enhance the reader's enjoyment of his hobby. The nine editorials during the sample period dealt with a stamp club presentation, the subjects and rates of some recent issues, computers in stamps, stamp investment (2), and a broad area which I will call "the joy of philately" (to be abbreviated JP) which deals with showing off one's collection, learning while collecting, new ways to collect, filling time usefully, etc. There were four in this category. In my opinion, this column can better be classified as commentary than as editorial insofar as the editor generally neither takes a stand nor attempts to influence the opinions or actions of the readers.

In *SC*, the editorial column is shared between James Magruder II, who appears on the masthead as Editor and Publisher but who signs his column as Publisher, and Kyle Jansson, who is listed as Executive Editor and signs the column as Editor. In my sample of ten, they each wrote five. Jansson produced two full length columns, one reviewing articles from the 1988 *Congress Book* encouraging youth philately and the other encouraging support of philatelic libraries; his other three columns were eclectic commentaries on three or four sub-topics, almost all based on JP themes.

Magruder wrote a fascinating and enlightening piece about Japanese New Year's cards, an offbeat idea about honoring an average citizen on a stamp, an analysis of

(Continued on page 7.)

the circulation figures of the three weeklies, and two JP pieces, one of which was mostly a long quote from another source. Magruder produces the most substantive material of any of the four writers reviewed herein.

Linn's is, of course, the leading weekly in the philatelic field, whether you measure readership, page count, advertisement volume, etc. With access to more than three times the readership of either competitor, one would think that *Linn's* degree of influence would be on a par with other parameters of its leadership. *Linn's* certainly wants to be the leader when it comes to breaking newsworthy stories such as the CIA inverts. However, as far as I can tell, *Linn's* hardly even makes an attempt to be the leader when it comes to editorial opinion.

There are two forums for opinion in *Linn's*: the page 3 column by the editor, Michael Laurence, and the page 4 editorial, entitled "Our Opinion", which appears (unsigned) at the bottom left of the Letters to the Editor. Not every issue contains both features. There were only four instances of "Our Opinion" in my sample set, three of which occurred when Laurence guested out his column to either Ken Lawrence (twice) or to George Amick (once).

I do not know if it is a standing policy at *Linn's* to have an editorial whenever Laurence's column is guest-written. Only one of the four editorials, all of which are no more than two or three paragraphs, tried to influence the readers — a call to support certain legislation concerning stamps and trade embargo. The other three instances were kudos for various actions of others and/or JP material.

Laurence's column usually provides quite a bit of philatelic meat. He has written extensively on postal rates, especially on those involving fractional rate coils; he often illustrates interesting covers; and he comments on readership surveys, the state of the philatelic press; and other topics in the realm of "general philately". There's no question that his is one of the most interesting regular features in the three weeklies, rivalling Magruder. But editorial it is not!

Comments on this subject and suggestions for future topics concerning the three philatelic weeklies are welcome to P.O. Box 401, Wheatley Heights, NY 11798. Until next quarter, keep on reading!

R.A.G.

Hall of Fame Inductees at Cleveland Breakfast

1989 Inductees into the Writers Hall of Fame will be announced at the Sunday, March 12, 1989, Writers Breakfast at the APS Spring Meeting, Cleveland, OH.

The Philatelic Lunatic Fringe

by Terence Hines

Ever since Michael Laurence took over as Editor of *Linn's Stamp News* several years ago, the hard-hitting investigative reporting that has been featured in *Linn's* has made enemies. *Linn's* has revealed various scams perpetrated upon collectors by both foreign postal administrations and by stamp dealers. This has not made *Linn's* popular in certain circles.

The recent decision by Scott Publishing Co. to bring its catalog prices in line with reality, as opposed to inflated dealer fantasies, has also generated animosity against *Linn's* and its parent company, Amos Press, which also owns Scott. Now this animosity has found expression in a particularly disgusting new publication, *The Stamper Monthly Magazine*. This prime example of journalistic trash is dedicated to one end — smearing Mike Laurence, *Linn's*, Amos Press, and Scott Publishing Co.

In the October 1988 issue, for example, one finds a piece titled "Amos Press . . . The Last Blitzkrieg" by one Rose Marie Cataldo, the publication's "Senior Editor". In this article Cataldo charges that Amos Press in general, and Scott in particular, are using "Nazi propaganda techniques to try to maintain the totalitarian control of the American stamp market." Further, "Amos Press has continued to tow the Nazi line" and "Amos Press is once again resorting to the ultimate Nazi doctrine: 'The one means that wins the easiest victory over reason: terror and force'." The article is accompanied by numerous direct quotes from Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Anyone even mildly familiar with the true nature of Nazi terror and the horror of the Holocaust can only be astounded at this sort of repugnant nonsense.

Who is behind *The Stamper*? Hard to say. The editor is Joseph J. Puleo, Jr., who obviously has an ax to grind against *Linn's* and Amos Press. In its March 21, 1988, issue (on page 3) a *Linn's* article revealed that Puleo had been expelled from the APS and that in 1979 he had been convicted of conspiracy to commit grand theft and forgery in a fraudulent check operation in California. He served 39 days in jail and was on probation for four years. That this convicted felon is the best that the anti-*Linn's* forces can come up with to lead their crusade speaks volumes about the nature of those behind the crusade.

And who, ultimately, is behind it? I can not say, but it is obviously someone with large amounts of money to spend in an attempt to silence reporting that reveals the nature of consumer fraud going on in some areas of philately, especially the area of mass marketing of low-quality, but high catalog value, stamps to non-collectors.

A Report on the SESCAL '88 Literature Competition

by John M. Hotchner

The Process

SESCAL provided a list of the titles of the 29 entries a month before the show. Since there were several substance areas on which I needed help, I requested comments from friends who are experienced in those areas and familiar with the totality of the literature for that area. Their comments were extremely helpful; in one case highlighting for the jury a charge of plagiarism, which eventually led to an entry being withdrawn from competition. Had the entry not been withdrawn, the jury would have been faced with a thorny problem. Perhaps this is an issue that could stand independent discussion.

The jury was broadly based with wide experience and had done its homework. Several jury members had judged current entries in the recent past, or prior incarnations of current entries. SESCAL had the entries on display and had the judges' copies of them available on Thursday night as the show was being set up. Those judges who came in Thursday night were able to get a running start on some of the entries with which they were not personally familiar prior to the formal proceedings on Friday.

The jury deliberations were uneventful. The apprentice was asked his opinion and medal level first as is customary and I would like to note that this is a significantly more onerous burden for a literature apprentice than for an open show apprentice. There is no one to share the burden because there is only one literature apprentice, and the range of substance is wider than in the stamp exhibit. There is less reliance on the exhibit as a story. Instead, the literature apprentice (and regular jurors) must focus on a very wide range of accuracy in substance, adequacy of coverage, technical presentation, weight as a contribution to the hobby and service value to its readers. This is no easy task.

Once the apprentice had spoken, the rest of us voted; taking turns being first. If one of us had a unique contribution to make as background, or there were significant differences in the recommended medal levels, discussion took place. This is one of the ways in which the judges learned from the experience.

SESCAL 88 LITERATURE EXHIBITION	
Boes, Lars	AFA Specialized Catalog 1981-2, Bicolored Issues of 1870-1905
Award _____	
The following information is provided for guidance only; no correspondence can be entered into concerning these comments.	
[space for information here]	

Sample of SESCAL form noted above.

After the medals were awarded, we went back over the entries to determine who would take the lead on each entry in the critique. We also dictated critique comments to the apprentice, who wrote out the critique sheets. The comments were not blather. They were positive or negative where warranted and each one gave specific recommendations for improvement. A sample of the form is shown at bottom of first column this page. Despite the admonition about "No correspondence . . ." I would encourage recipients of literature critiques to inquire further if they wish to do so. My sense is that most, if not all, judges would be happy to answer a genteel letter asking specific questions posed in a non-threatening manner. Of course, a stamped return envelope would be a nice courtesy too.

The critique on Sunday morning took place at 9 a.m. instead of the scheduled 10 a.m.; my fault because of my having scheduled a 10:50 flight before I knew when the critique was to be.

Despite the early hour, representatives of approximately one-third of the entries were in attendance as well as some interested bystanders. I began by introducing the jury and citing some of their major credits. Unlike stamp judging where the judges' specific experience is not an immediate concern to the exhibitors, I feel that writers and editors must be given some background on the experience of those who are judging their work so as to be assured that the comments are informed, practical and arrived at on a colleague-to-colleague level.

Our critique was of the most desirable sort — less tense than the stamp portion because literature entrants don't seem to get as exercised about medal levels as stamp and cover exhibitors, and because after 25 minutes of evaluating entries, it became a colleague-to-colleague question and answer session, and sharing of experiences on production methods, editing techniques, evaluation criteria, and writing style.

Evaluation Results

Medal levels will follow this article in this issue, so I will stick to general comments in this section.

Let's begin by noting that SESCAL does not accept newspaper or journal columns. Nevertheless, the question of relative merit between books and periodicals was discussed. There is a theory in literature judging that holds that a book is inherently worth more than a monthly journal. Baloney!

There are books which are worth more than specific periodicals. But the fact that an entry has a hard cover does not give it a leg up on a gold any more than paper or cardboard covers doom an entry to a bronze.

(Continued on page 9.)

The important issues in evaluating the entries can be summarized as the accumulated worth of the work. A classy society journal characterized by balance that serves the needs of its readers, is well presented, easy to use, has substantial content of long term reference value, is accurate and appropriately illustrated should be given a gold medal.

A book full of inaccuracies but beautiful photographs, that is manifestly incomplete, that has significant presentation faults, etc. should be given a bronze — or zip.

Another old saw is that only work that has significant original research and complex statistical or other "scholarly" content can attain gold medals. I agree that those sorts of efforts should be favorably considered, but would also argue that original reflections of experience, new inquiries into practice, and discussions of precepts should also receive credit as original and important work worthy of major league recognition.

The SESCOAL Committee provided evaluation criteria to help guide the judges. For books and handbooks, they were:

1. Does it provide a service for the intended audience?
2. Long-term usefulness to the field.
3. References / Bibliography.
4. Original research, or if compilation of others' work, does it include updating and corrections where needed, and proper acknowledgements?
5. Illustrations — quality, pertinence.
6. Data tables — usefulness, legibility.
7. Usable table of contents.
8. Usable index.
9. Printing - paper quality, print legibility, binding, etc.
10. Year published, copyright statement, etc.

For periodicals, the criteria were:

Technical —

1. Proper masthead listing — officers, editor, etc.
2. Issue date, volume and issue numbers.
3. Frequency of issue.
4. Dues statement.
5. Running header or footer.
6. Consistent page numbering.
7. Layout and presentation.
8. Legibility of fonts & heads.
9. Illustration quality.
10. Overall reproduction quality.

Content —

1. Membership information.
2. Research articles.
- 2a; Bibliographies/references.

3. Inputs from members.
4. Something for beginners in this collecting field.
5. Overall usefulness to members.
6. Ease of use; Table of contents.
7. Annual (or other) index.

Note please that these are expanded listings of the criteria I set forth earlier. They are specific areas in which to give helpful feedback.

A number of the critique areas (positive and negative) that were common to several entries are presented here in random order in hope that they will be useful to producers of philatelic literature in the future:

- Bibliographies with scholarly works are a must.
- With catalogs or listings of existing material, some sort of pricing guide or system for indicating relative scarcity is desirable.
- A clear editorial statement of shortcomings of the work is never out of place when presenting a work that will serve as the standard reference. This little bit of honesty leaves a very good impression about the care the author has lavished on the work and the utility of the effort to serious investigators.
- One error of fact is not a medal level. Many errors of fact combined with conflicting information and missing coverage will slide an entry down to the bottom rung.
- The level of challenge does count. A difficult task well done is going to get a higher medal than an easy task well done.
- Unlike stamp exhibit judges, literature judges must keep in mind that they are giving a medal which is not only recognition, but a recommendation. A gold medal may say, "This is something that belongs in your library." A silver says, "You ought to check this out; it may be something you need." A bronze says "Purchase and use with care."
- Translations should contain a statement of the translator's difficulties encountered in doing the work and a section on literature that has appeared since the original work was done.
- Tables of Contents and an Index make any work or succession of works more useful.
- Consistency invites use. Print style and intensity; uniformity of format, consistency in illustration quality, method of identifying content sections, etc. — are among the considerations.
- A glossary is often useful if dealing with an esoteric area.
- Informed supposition is allowable if identified as such. Opinion or editorializing that is not identified as such is dangerous.

(Continued on page 10.)

A Report on SESCAL 88 (Continued from page 9.)

- Periodicals, since they depend upon volunteer authors, often have a problem with balance (between club business and substance; and among eras). It is the editor who must get the material to assure balance, and in doing so, there is no substitute for asking people to contribute on a one-to-one basis. Be relentless in following up.
- A running header or footer including the name of the journal (not an abbreviation), the face date and page number is critical. Most periodicals are torn up for reference files. Later users should be able to tell where they came from.
- The front cover of periodicals is an opportunity. Don't waste it with a list of officers or some other dry item. Put something there that will grab the reader by the belt and pull him inside - the table of contents, a photo or other artwork, the first couple of paragraphs of a featured work, etc.
- The periodical's name, its face date, its sponsoring organization, and its dues (or journal cost), and the editor's name and address or phone number are desirable components at the top of the cover.
- Sometimes what is there is laudable. All that is needed to upgrade is more of the same.
- A topical/thematic journal should cover the entire range of philatelic material and should be careful to avoid becoming a journal about the theme rather than a journal about philately.
- Sources of materials in periodicals must be identified in some manner.

Enough for this report. If you'd like to see this sort of thing done for other shows, drop the editor a note. He'll be more inclined to make space available and may even actively encourage more submissions.

J.M.H.

SESCAL 88 LITERATURE AWARDS

Handbooks and Special Studies

GOLD AWARD - David G. Phillips, Hubert C. Skinner, James S. Leonardo - *American Stampless Cover Catalog, Vol. II.*

VERMEIL AWARDS - Clyde R. Maxwell - *Nicaragua to 1940 - A Philatelic Handbook.*

Paul A. Nelson, Peter Poulsen, editors - *Catalog of Scandinavian Revenue Stamps, Vol. 2: Denmark.*

Peter W. W. Powell - *Confederate States of America, Markings and Postal History of Richmond, Virginia.*

Jonathan W. Rose, Richard M. Searing - *The 1869 Issue on Cover: A Census and Analysis.*

SILVER AWARDS - Donald L. Alexander - *Chu Kwang Tower Issues of Taiwan.*

Lars Boes - *AFA Specialized Catalog (1981-2), Bicolored Issues of 1870-1905.*

SILVER-BRONZE AWARDS - Dale Speirs - *OLYMPLEX 88 Exhibition Catalog.*

Charles L. Towle, John L. Kay - *Waterway Railway Post Offices of the United States.*

BRONZE AWARDS - Joseph Agris, M.D. - *The Transportation Coils and Other Plate Number Coil Issues.*

Edward J. Davis, Jr. - *How to Start Your Own Local Post.*

Periodicals

VERMEIL AWARD-Best Scandinavian Literature - Gene Lesney, *The Posthorn.*

VERMEIL AWARDS - Donald R. Alexander - *The China Clipper.*

John Dunn - *Philatelic Foundation Bulletin.*

Edward M. Nissen - *Mexicana.*

Russell E. Ott - *Ice Cap News.*

Jonathan W. Rose - *1869 Times.*

Charles L. Towle - *The Heliograph.*

SILVER AWARDS - Diane DeBlois, R. D. Harris - P.S. - *A Quarterly Journal of Postal History.*

Thomas C. Hughes - *The Petro-Philatelist.*

C. S. Kettler - *Philatelia Chimica et Physica.*

Paul A. Nelson - *Luren.*

Fred J. Stanio - *Windmill Whispers.*

SILVER-BRONZE AWARDS - Jane King Fohn - *The Texas Philatelist.*

Dr. Frank J. Novak - *The Informer.*

Piet Steen - *Latin American Post.*

Michael Strother - *SOSSI Journal.*

* * *

SESCAL 88 Literature Jury:

John Hotchner (Chairman)

Robert de Violini

James Jefferson

and Winand Hess (Apprentice).

CHICAGOPEX 88 Literature Awards

At CHICAGOPEX 88, a printed flyer was available next to the three literature frames, giving ordering information on each of the entries and on Writers Unit membership. Felix Ganz writes, "We were quite amazed at how many times the little 'take one' boxes had to be refilled during the three-day show." After the judges' critique, second copies of the literature entries were available to be examined at the host table.

Chicago Philatelic Society leaders are proud that the judging critique form used at STAmPSHOW 88 was copied from the CHICAGOPEX 87 form, setting a new standard.

Applications for the CHICAGOPEX 89 Literature Exhibition may be obtained from The Chicago Philatelic Society, CHICAGOPEX 89 Literature, P.O. Box A3953, Chicago, IL 60690-3953.

BRONZE - Handbooks: "Olympex 88", Olympic Arts Festival, publ.; Dale Speirs, ed. "Guides & Tips Handbook for Production of Show/Bourse Programs", Stamp Fun Co., publ.; Carl M. Burnett, ed. "Description & Handbook of a Computerized Bibliography of Revenue Articles in the Philatelic Serials Literature", R. F. Riley, ed.-publ. PERIODICALS: "Yule Log", Kathy Ward, editor.

SILVER-BRONZE - Handbooks: "American Aid and the Marshall Plan in the Reconstruction of Europe", Europa Study Unit, publ.; Wm. C. Norby, author.

(Continued on page 11.)

CHICAGOPEX 88 Awards (Continued from page 10.)

(Silver-Bronze, Handbooks, continued) "Postal History of Carroll County, IL", IL Postal History Soc., Publ., Curt J. Gronner, author. "Later 20th Century 'False Representation' Hand-stamps", publ. & author, James H. Patterson. "The Irish S.P. 1. Censor Labels", author & publ. Charles J. G. Verge. "New Jersey on U.S. Philately", author-publ. Mary Ann Owens. "New York on U.S. Philately", author-publ. Mary Ann Owens. "The Transportation Coils and Other Plate Number Coil Issues", Eclectic Publishing, publ.; Joseph Agris, author. PERIODICALS: "The Informer", Dr. F. J. Novak, editor. "Philatelia Chimica et Physica", C. S. Kettler, editor. "Europa News Bulletin", W. C. Norby, editor. "Meter Stamp Society Bulletin", Richard Stambaugh, editor.

SILVER – Handbooks: "Decimal Machins Album Guide", G. B. Correspondence Club, publ., R. H. Muller, author. "Tell", S. S. Weston, editor. "Chess Stamps Review", Russ Ott, editor. "The EFO Collector", Howard Gates, editor. "Inflation Study Group Bulletin", Diana Manchester, editor. "NCPHS Newsletter", Darrell Ertzberger, editor. "The COROS Chronicle", Rev. A. E. Serafini, editor.

VERMEIL – Handbooks: "Printed Franks on Government Stamped Envelopes", United Postal Stationery Society, publ.; Dr. A. P. Haller, author. "Chu Kwang Tower Issues of Taiwan", China Stamp Society, publ.; D. R. Alexander, author. Periodicals: "The China Clipper", D. R. Alexander, editor. "Long Island Postal Historian", J. F. Rodriguez, editor. "Mexicana", E. M. Nissen, editor. "The Philatelic Foundation Bulletin", J. F. Dunn, editor. "Ice Cap News", Russ Ott, editor.

GOLD – Handbooks: "American Stampless Cover Catalog, Vol. II", D. G. Phillips Publ. Co., publ.; D. G. Phillips, J. S. Leonardo, H. C. Skinner (et al.), editors. "The Congress Book 1987", American Philatelic Congress, publ.; Barbara R. Mueller, editor.

CHICAGOPEX 1988 Literature Special Awards to Authors and Editors: (Handbook) "Decimal Machins Album Guide", author R. H. Muller, for extensive and meticulous research. "Long Island Postal Historian", editor J. Fred Rodriguez, for excellence in presentation and in-depth study of the subject.

STaMpsHOW 89 Literature Prospectus and entry forms now available from STaMpsHOW 89, APS, P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803. Deadline for entries is May 1, 1989.

Reservations for attending the Writers Breakfast (\$10 per person) on Sunday, March 12, 1989, at the APS Spring Meeting, in conjunction with the Garfield-Perry March Party in Cleveland, OH, should be made with WU 30 Secretary-Treasurer, George Griffenhagen, 2501 Drexel St., Vienna, VA 22180. Time is short. Speed imperative. His telephone number (residence) is:
(703) 560 – 2413

IF YOU ARE ONE OF THE 46 WHO
HAVE NOT PAID 1989 WU 30 DUES
YOU'LL SOON GET A NOTICE. SEE
SEC.—TREAS. REPORT THIS ISSUE!

(Secretary-Treasurer's Report –(Continued from page 12.)

Delinquent Members

46 have not paid 1989 dues. Second notice is being sent to each, and this first quarter 1989 issue of the journal is the last they will be sent unless dues are paid promptly. If you receive such a notice you are respectfully urged to respond promptly.

Banking of Foreign Checks

Our bank will not accept checks drawn on banks outside the USA for less than \$50 U.S. and there is a \$10 U.S. collection fee charged on each such check by our bank. You are cautioned that all future payments must either be drawn on a U.S. bank (with check showing the 'magnetic' numbers at bottom, mandatory for all U.S. bank-interchange checks); or in the form of a U.S. Postal Money order (or International Order payable net at a U.S. Post Office), or a travelers' check (payable net at par in U.S. funds at a U.S. bank). Thank you for your cooperation.

Back Issues of the Unit Journal

1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988 issues of the Unit journal – in both its names – are available at \$2.50 per single copy OR \$10 per calendar year, postpaid. Check payable "APS Writers Unit 30" in amount applicable should accompany order to the Secretary-Treasurer, at address at end of this report.

Help Us Keep Your Address Correct

Some members still forget the Unit when they change their address! Please make sure you advise me as soon as the new address is definitely known, and don't forget the "extra four" Zip numbers if you can definitely ascertain them.

George Griffenhagen, Secretary-Treasurer, WU 30
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180

Hall of Fame Inductees to be Announced at Breakfast

The APS Writers Unit 30 will announce the 1989 inductees into the Writers Hall of Fame at the Sunday, March 12, 1989, Writers Breakfast at the APS Spring Meeting, to be held in conjunction with the Garfield-Perry March Party in Cleveland, Ohio.

The breakfast begins at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, March 12, 1989, in the Rockefeller Room of the Holiday Inn Lakeside, 1111 Lakeside Ave., Cleveland, OH.

Reservations for the breakfast (\$10 per person) should be made with Unit Secretary-Treasurer, George Griffenhagen [see box bottom of column at left, this page] or on Friday March 10 at the show in Cleveland.

* * *

Your attention is also called to the second boxed announcement at left, concerning the APS' annual Literature event, deadline for receipt of entries is May 1, 1989, so prompt action is essential.

* * *

Please also notice two major changes in the general information, column one, inside front cover (page 2) this issue – this issue is the first under the new editor, Ken Lawrence, and the address has been changed for John Nugent (Vice-President East). Joe F. Frye

The Philatelic Communicator
2501 Drexel Street
Vienna, VA 22180 - 6906
Address Correction Requested

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
at Memphis, TN
PERMIT 957

TO: Col. James T. DeVoss
9 Nittany View Circ
State College PA 16801-2458

Secretary-Treasurer's Report (As of Feb. 14, 1989.)

Welcome

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

- 1505 David E. Martinek, c/o Dun & Arkley, P.O. Box 1266, Eureka, CA 95502. Sponsor: Michael Laurence.
- 1506 Rev. Augustine Serafini 2808 Oakwood Lane, Oshkosh, WI 54904. Editor: *COROS Chronicle* (collectors of religion on stamps). Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.
- 1507 Lawrence D. Rosenblum, 1016 East El Camino Real No. 107, Sunnyvale, CA 94087. Columnist: *Interleaf* (Booklet Collectors Club). Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
- 1508 Karl E. Henson, 1455 Cable Ranch Road No. 723, San Antonio, TX 78245. Editor: *Tell Index* (America Helvetia Philatelic Society). Sponsor: Dale R. Eggen.
- 1509 Patrick J. Ryan, Sr., 1232 Cibolo Trail, Universal City, TX 78148. Editor: *The Revealer* (Eire Philatelic Association). Sponsor: Jane King Fohn.
- 1510 John Alan Hicks, 11 Warren Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Author: *United States Internal Revenue Tax Paid Stamps Printed on Tin-Foil and Paper Tobacco Wrappers*. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
- 1511 Robert D. Rawlins, P.O. Box 981, Healdsburg, CA 95448. Editor: *Log and Naval Cover Cachet Makers Catalog* (Universal Ship Cancellation Society). Sponsor: David A. Kent.
- 1512 Terence Hines, P.O. Box 629, Chappaqua, NY 10514-0629. Editor: *State Revenue Newsletter* (State Revenue Society); *Modern Postal History Journal* (Modern Postal History Society). Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.
- 1513 Robert L. Malch, P.O. Box 607117, Orlando, FL 32860-7117. Editor: *Official Journal of UPU Collectors*. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
- 1514 Stephen Arthur Church, 1313 Xenia, Suite 602, Denver, CO 80220. Free-lance writer: *The Wholesaler, Stamps, and The Stamper*. Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
- 1515 Glenn A. Estus, P.O. Box 451, Westport, NY 12993-0451. Columnist: *Journal of Sports Philately*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.
- 1516 Robert E. Kitson, 322 Hampton Road, Wilmington, DE 19803. Free-lance writer: *The United States Specialist* (BIA) and *The Interleaf* (Booklet Collectors Club). Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.

- 1517 A. S. Cibulskas, 28 Westwood Road, Stamford, CT 06902. Columnist: *Plate Number* (Esрати.); free-lance writer: *EFO Collector*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.
- 1518 Roy A. Baker, 8440 Overbrook, Wichita, KS 67208. Describes himself as "an aspiring writer". Sponsor: George Griffenhagen.
- 1519 William Rowcroft, Jr., 121-10 Linden Blvd., South Ozone Park, NY 11420. Editor: *Jack Knight Air Log*; author: *Local Post Catalog*. Sponsor: Robert de Violini.
- 1520 Richard Stambaugh, 12 Rutgers Drive, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724. Editor: *Meter Stamp Society Bulletin*; author: *U.S. First Class Permit Stamp Catalog*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.
- 1521 Stephen G. Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120-0130. Editor: *The Plate Number* and *The Plate Number Coil Catalog*. Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.
- 1522 John Francis Dunn, P.O. Box 5050, White Plains, NY 10602. Editor-publisher: *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, *Philatelic Foundation Bulletin*; *BNA Stamp Catalog* of H.E. Harris Co. Sponsor: Robert de Violini.
- 1523 Thomas E. Maeder, 1604 Bardale Ave., San Pedro, CA 90731. Editor: *Coil Line* (Plate Number Coil Collectors' Club). Sponsor: Ken Lawrence.
- 1524 Joan M. Klimchak, 4488 Merrick St., Dearborn Heights, MI 48125. Regular writer: *Yule Log* (Christmas Philatelic Club). Sponsor: Jane King Fohn.

Reinstated

- 1074 Dr. John M. Buckner, 2839 N.W. 21st Ave., Gainesville, FL 32605.
- 1426 Madhukar Jhingan, Post Box 515, Republic of Nauru, Central Pacific Ocean.

RESIGNATIONS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 0498 Alexander, Thomas J. | 1436 Millman, Daniel R. |
| 0536 Blau, Fred F. | 1332 Musiondz, Peter |
| 0519 Christian, C. W. (Bert) | 1045 Podolsky, Sherwin D. |
| 0377 Dougan, Charles W. | 0815 Spaulding, Robert M. |
| 0922 Fisher, Robert A. | 1438 Sultner, G. Henry |
| 1422 Gerstenberger, Alvin | 1313 Woodside, Mary E. |
| 0878 Marshall, Thomas W., Jr. | |

Contributions

Thanks to the following for contributions over and above membership dues:

- 0859 Kilgas, Carl A. 0113 Peterson, Charles J.
0943 Lockard, William Thomas 1014 Spafford, Ronald N.
1480 Page, William Alexander

(Continued on page 11.)