

The Philatelic Communicator

Journal of the American Philatelic Society Writers Unit #30



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Fourth Quarter 2018 Issue 202

The Danger of Writing in a Rut

John M. Hotchner



John Hotchner

the writer of joy. Or put another way, “Failure to stop to smell the roses.”

I was reminded of this by an email from friend Brian Saxe who recently sent a wonderful email with this thought” “I haven’t been able to write properly for some time. The editor of the Burma newsletter asked if I would update a brief article I wrote in 1979.

The more you write, the easier it gets. There is a certain discipline to the process, and once internalized, the writer is able to go to the well endlessly. But as with any good thing, there can be a not so good side. In this case it can be that concentrating on the discipline robs

The only problem I had was keeping it down to a page or two! I knocked off the first page in about ten minutes, *and it feels better than you can imagine.* (emphasis added) Already I am lining up a list of subjects for further articles.”

Ah, but I can imagine! And I’ll bet most of you reading this can also. The simple joy of creation..... the moment of translating a complex thought into words that others will read and understand.....the pride in completing a task.....even the process of exercising a God-given talent. All of this and more can be savored – or lost as the discipline becomes repetitive.

The more you write, the easier it gets to take it all for granted. Let us never make that mistake again! Thanks, Brian! ♦

Sarasota “Articles Only” Show

Bill DiPaolo



Bill DiPaolo,

limited to give the judges time to evaluate the whole process along with a new literature exhibit evaluation form being tested. This effort was begun only ninety

The entry deadline for the “Articles Only” literature competition to be held February 1-3 in Sarasota has passed, and, happily, I can report that we are fully subscribed with 32 entries. A substantial number of very fine submissions were turned away because of space limitations. Entries were also

days ago. The level of response and interest from the collecting community in this short period demonstrates a desire among philatelic authors for this kind of event. The publications represented are diverse and include entries from club newsletters, non-philatelic publications and a wide range of specialty journals, both large and small. The beneficial sponsorship of WU30 has done a service to our hobby. WU30’s help getting this started is very much appreciated. We have a real opportunity now to recognize the contributions the authors of these shorter pieces make to the knowledge base of our hobby. ♦



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David Crotty From the Editor

The Editor's Nightmare

So sometimes you editors have too much story to put into the journal. Sometime too little. This quarter, for example, my *Meter Stamp Society Quarterly Bulletin* has two papers that arrived since the last issue that are respectively 6 and 8 pages. That is after I have really filled up all of the 16 pages we allow ourselves for the Winter 4th Quarter issue. These papers are from regular contributors who I don't want to irritate. Nice topics and stories too. I think I have placated everyone by allowing that our next quarterly issue, Spring, will come out in January.

There is some extra hazard to this. I could fill up this Spring issue in January and not have anything for Summer coming up in May or so.

All that being said, I started this 4Q issue of *TPC* with about three pages of stories, that was before Lloyd kicked in.

The editor for the European *The Philatelic Journalist*. Wolfgang Maassen, is a writing demon. He provided about 16 of the 45 pages in the October issue. Five of those pages were a discussion about the problems authors have with the Literature judging at the European literature exhibitions. His rendition of the issues does not include the fact that if you dig up the *Palmares* for the most recent Prague 2018 you will find 10 pages (in very fine print) of literature exhibits.

While some of that discussion does not apply directly to the US shows and APS rules, we do have some interest in what our neighbors in the world are doing. So I had the room and I entered all of Wolfgang's text. I find it interesting. Hope you do too.

Dave



Lloyd de Vries *President's Message*

Elsewhere in this issue, writing about handling publicity, I opined, “the media are changing constantly.” That is true also for scholarly works and news articles in philately. *The Philatelic Communicator* now comes to you as a digital file; a paper copy costs extra. We are as likely to learn about philatelic news — major auction results, leader resignations, stamp programs, whatever — from the Internet in some form as from a printed publication; more likely, in fact.

Nearly all of us submit our articles and manuscripts to publishers in a digital form. I doubt any philatelic publication is given directly to a printer in hard copy. Nearly all publishers have some knowledge of pro-

grams and programming such as HTML, InDesign, or PhotoShop. A decade or two ago, most of us had never heard those terms, much less knew how to use them or what they did.

As stamp and cover collectors, we embrace the past. Yet as philatelic writers, we must keep up with the present and keep an eye on the future.

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Speaking of the past, it is probably not too early to think about nominees for the APS Writers Unit #30 Hall of Fame. Traditionally, we try to select two living honorees and two who have passed away. The selection committee members are not the only ones who can suggest future recipients. You'll find a list of those who have already been honored on our website, at www.wu30.org/hall_of_fame.html. Sometime this spring, we will announce the selection committee members and invite your nominations.

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A Few Random Publication Topics Selected by Alan Warren



Philatelic Literature at Exhibitions: A Critical Examination

Wolfgang Maassen

Editor's Note: Wolfgang Maassen is the editor for The Philatelic Journalist, the bilingual journal for the European Association Internationale des Journalistes Philatéliques. Wolfgang puts out an impressive 45 page quarterly. He also has rather pointed observations to make about journalistic activities, mostly as they happen in Europe. This discussion was presented as part of the review of the major philatelic show Prague 2018 held August 15-18. That show had 1500 frames of philatelic exhibits and 10 pages of Philatelic Literature Palmars. I think it behooves us to pay attention to our neighbors. They do things differently but they are very good at it. This discussion goes through some points on their rules and how literature is judged.

For almost 40 years, the author of this article has been exhibiting at international and national exhibitions. He has seen a great deal and has often wondered how negligent, careless and at times loveless philatelic literature was treated at such events. And this not only in terms of their presentation, be it on the event itself or in their presentation in the event's catalogue. The way a substantial number of jurors deliver their work also makes it difficult to have unlimited faith in their competence and experience.

Now, critical thoughts on such topics are not new. And the responsible associations or the organizers of the exhibitions are fully aware of them. In the past, they have reacted to such criticism by developing regulations, guidelines and recommendations that were designed to help the organizers to avoid mistakes and prevent shortcomings that could put exhibitors at a disadvantage. But all this cannot hide the fact that paper always will be patient and that even strict, clearly defined rules are not always respected or complied with.

Already this allegation may be felt by some as a tough statement.

But it is a statement that can be proved, as has recently been done by this author in *The Philatelic Journalist* issue No. 156 (July 2018), in his article "Unter die 'Räuber' gefallen? Ein 'Trauerspiel' für Literatur Aussteller" ("In the Hands of Robbers? A Tragedy for Literature Exhibitors"). Because in this article, the examples of the FIP exhibitions ISRAEL 2018 and PRAGA 2018 show the contradiction between the existing regulations and reality. One can only draw the conclusion that for this contradiction not only the event organizers are to blame, but first and foremost the authorities that have granted their patronages (especially the FIP). Apparently do not pay attention to compliance with existing regulations. The FIP appoints a coordinator for every exhibition it gives its patronage: a member of the Board whose job it is - or at least should be - to ensure compliance with the existing regulations. But all too often this obligation only exists on paper; the reality looks different. Not just in individual cases, but even more in general.

Thus it seems appropriate to make up a list of existing and well known grievances and plead for an immediate secondment, The AIJP sees itself as a lawyer for its authors and publicists, whom they



Prague 2018 Exhibit Hall filled with impressive exhibits

want to provide a public podium, so that their voices can be heard, Conceivably, as the author has hinted before, the result could be a list of “anti-author and anti-collector exhibitions” (like the one the FIP maintains for harmful stamp issues). Such a list of negative AIJP ratings could then be presented to future events that violate the existing rules to the limit. In order to make this process more transparent, and also to find out the reasons and justifications (i.e. criteria) for such assessments, the most important matters are listed below.

Regulations for Philatelic Literature

As ‘Guidelines’ are destined the “Special Regulations for the Evaluation of Philatelic Literature Exhibits at F.I.P. Exhibitions”, along with the “Supplementary Rules for the Philatelic Literature Class in F.I.P. Exhibitions”. It is the merit of the F.I.P. to have set the standards that are binding for its national members, including the events they organize. In this respect, it should be welcomed if philatelic literature in general would be represented with its own exhibition class at philatelic events. But that cannot hide the fact that what has been put to paper and how things are implemented in the real world often diverge considerably. Below will give you examples of these divagations.

-Subgroups of the Philatelic Literature Class

In the “Special Regulations” of the FIP the following remarks can be found:
“Philatelic literature will be subdivided as follows:

1. Handbooks and Special Studies

- a. Handbooks
- b. Monographs
- c. Specialized research articles
- d. Bibliographies and similar special works
- e. Exhibition catalogues
- f. Specialized catalogues that - besides philatelic issues of one or more countries - treat varieties, cancellations or other specialized aspects.
- g. Transcripts of philatelic lectures presented to the public (including radio, television, film and slide show scripts).
- h. Similar special works,

2. General Catalogues

Worldwide, regional and single area catalogues whose depth of coverage do not qualify them as specialized catalogues.

3. Philatelic Periodicals

In other words: no period of five years for the first category and no period of two years for the other, but instead of that one year less in both cases. The regulations allow this approach, but does it make any sense? Why such tight time limits, especially when it regards monographs or handbooks? Wouldn't it be better to describe these time limits differently, for instance with the remark ‘if still available’? This would be in the interest of the publicist, because he of course wants to promote his publications, no matter how old they are. Otherwise, any time limit remains arbitrary.

-Number of philatelic literary exhibits

The “Supplementary Rules” state:

“Rule 5:

Two copies of each literature exhibit should be provided by the exhibitor: one copy for judging and the other for a reading room as per Article 6.8 of GREX. After the exhibition these copies shall be sent by the Exhibition Management to a library designated by the member federation hosting the exhibition, **unless the exhibitor specifically asks for the return of these copies.**” (emphasis added by the author)

This is one of the rules that is not met by most FIR exhibitions, but others also fail to do so.

Although it is clear that the exhibitor must have the opportunity to have his submitted exhibits sent back to him, this facility is hardly ever offered. Precisely at this point the FIP coordinators cannot be spared the accusation that they either do not know their own regulations or do not press for their observance.

In addition, the provision that two copies of a literary exhibit must be submitted is questionable. The indirect reasoning that the jury must have at least one exhibit available for evaluation is not sustainable, because the jury could also review them in a public reading room (which they do with stamps exhibits too). Since the jury usually starts with its work before the exhibition opens, this would be absolutely no problem. A reading room for the issued philatelic literature is compulsory (even if not every exhibition applies to this rule).

That at the same time exhibitors are required to send in their exhibits two or even three months in advance, in order to enable the jurors to do their work before the exhibition begins, is rather odd. Why then should there be a second copy available at all?

The remark that two copies of each exhibit will be donated to libraries that will be selected by the organization management means a clear interference with the self determination and ownership rights of an exhibitor. After all, exhibits containing stamp collections or other philatelic material are not withheld; they will go back to their rightful owners. Literature exhibitors have the same rights. So you must decide for yourself to whom your exhibit will go after the exhibition: to yourself, to the exhibition management or to one or more libraries of your choice.

-The special literature registration form

About the special literature registration form the “Supplementary Rules” state the following:

“Rule 4:

A separate form will be used for entries in the literature class. In addition to the other information needed by the Exhibition Management, this form should also include the publication date, publisher, number of pages, frequency of publication (for periodicals) and means of ordering the publication (address, price).”

There is no doubt that this rule makes sense, but only if it is used consistently and further processed. But that is hardly the case. In exhibition catalogues usually only the author (read: the exhibitor) and title of his exhibit are mentioned. And that’s all. Even in the literature reading room (if such a facility exists) you will not find these data in the exhibited works! What purpose does it serve then?

An exhibition is not meant for jurors, but for visitors. In this case for those interested in philatelic literature. When they have a look at the exhibited books and get interested in one or more of the titles, they without doubt will want to know what their selling price is and where they can eventually buy them. Exactly for this purpose a special literature registration form should be designated, but only if it’s available for the visitors. The form should at least be available on the exhibition’s website and in the exhibition’s reading room.

Exhibitions should feel obliged to do as described above. Otherwise literature exhibits only serve the exhibition itself and not the visitors, let alone the exhibitors, who have paid for the inclusion, presentation and promotion of their exhibits,

-Submission period of literature exhibits

As a rule, international and national exhibitions demand an early submission of the exhibits. They are often expected to arrive two to three months before the exhibition begins. It’s a rule that sounds rather nonsensical, considering that the jurors begin their work mostly only one or two days before the exhibition opens its doors, i.e. from the moment that the respective national commissioners (or the exhibitors themselves) could have submitted their literature exhibits along with the ‘normal’ exhibits (containing stamps, covers and other philatelic material).

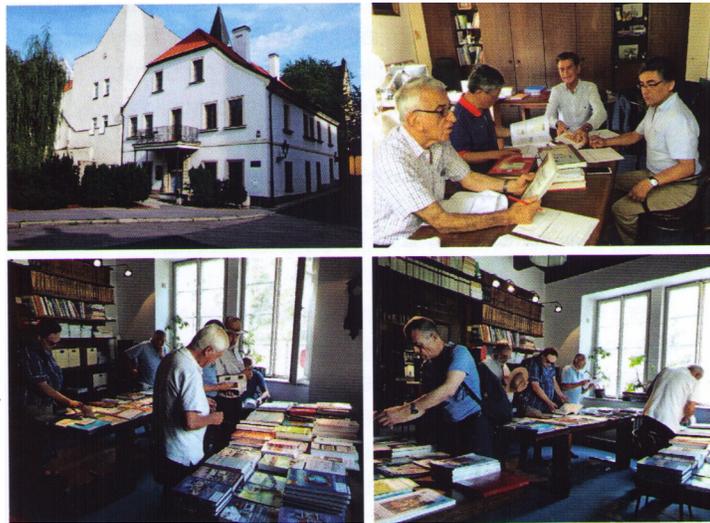
One gets however the impression that neither the FIP nor the exhibition organizers are interested in this matter, and one wonders what the possible reasons are for this display of disinterest. The assigned national commissioners usually are interested in a high numbers of participants (the organizers anyway) because the exhibitors have paid for their participation. The preshipment rule of 2 to 3 months could therefore give the impression that exhibitions are happy to collect the participation

fees, but not so keen on providing the necessary performance. This kind of disinterest can for instance be proven by looking at the example of the German Association of Stamp Collectors (BDPh). The author of this article has spoken to several of the BDPh's commissioners, and they have told him in no unclear terms that it's their habit to charge the normal commission fee (currently 30 euros per exhibit) for judging literature exhibits (and that in our age of pdf files that hardly need any significant work). The Commissioner's fee is simply designed to finance travel and subsistence expenses. With which right literature exhibitors are charged additional costs one may well ask here.

A preshipment rule of two to three months before the event should apply only in a few cases: for instance when a period of such length is absolutely necessary for a fair and proper assessment of an exhibit.

-Exhibit fees

Also on the point of the exhibition fees, the "Supplementary Rules" provide information:



Postal Museum and the Literature Room during Prague 2018
Photos: Jose Ramon Moreno, FEPA

“Rule 6:

The same applies to the price of one frame in the general competition class of the same exhibition.”

Now one can - if he or she wishes - have long and extensive discussions about the amount of the exhibit fees. For national exhibitions, rates between 20 and 30 euros are usually the rule, at international events the fee is often double or more and sometimes the fees are even triple the normal rate. This seems to be unjustified: for the evaluation of philatelic literature it does hardly matter whether it concerns a national or an international exhibition. It may be undisputed that an international exhibition has higher costs than some national ones. But in the past the author has repeatedly argued that the efforts that have to be made for the accompaniment of a literature exhibit - both in terms of assigning exhibition space and the deployment of personnel - are considerably smaller than the efforts that are necessary for the proper accompaniment of exhibits containing stamps, covers and other material.

Even more remarkable is the fact that international exhibitions (for example PRAGA 2018) do not adhere to the instructions that can be found in the Supplementary Rules. Because in Prague for a frame showing stamps etc. 70 euros was charged, whilst for every single literature exhibit 75 euros had to be paid! A clear violation of the FIP regulations; one may ask one-self how this can be justified and also may wonder how serious the FIP takes its role as supervisor in these cases.

Totally unacceptable is the behavior of those exhibition organizers that dictate that literature exhibitors may have to pay custom duties for their exhibits, as was the case with ISRAEL 2018, whose IREX stated in section 10.9: “If the declared value is above US \$ 75 the organizing Committee must pay a VAT of approximately 20% (including postage). In this case the commissioner of the exhibitor will pay the same.”

So literature exhibitors are urged to send in their own exhibits at their own expense - of course twofold - and then asked to leave their exhibits as a “gift” to the organizers, i.e. not asking to send them back, and on top of this pass eventual custom fees from the organizer to the exhibitor! Again, this is not sustainable and unlawful according to the FIP regulations as they are at the moment. It would also be completely unnecessary if the organizer would comply with the applicable rule that each exhibitor has the right to import and return his exhibit, similar to the way stamp exhibits are treated.

A FEPA proposal (see FEPA News, June 2018, p. 10) reads: “As in some countries VAT must be paid for items with a value over 50 Euro, we advise exhibitors to add pro forma invoice in amount lower than 50 Euro to every example of literature.”

Now I am not sure if it is correct to speak of VAT (=Value Added Tax) or rather 'Einfuhrumsatzsteuer' ("import sales tax"). But that is less of a concern. Personally, I think the recommendation of the FEPA to define the value of a book or other literature exhibit much lower than its actual value could be very problematic, as this is a violation of existing law. The country in question is thus deprived of the tax it is entitled to. To put it harshly: this is a fraudulent offense which, if discovered, could lead to a punishment.

All this would be completely unnecessary if the exhibitor, as he or she is entitled to, would receive his or her precious exhibits back, just as is the case with 'normal' exhibits (containing stamps, covers and other material). In that case it would concern a matter of tax irrelevant import and export, at least when import and export would be clarified in advance by showing the the appropriate customs documents.

-Medals and other literature awards

Even medals and other awards for literature exhibits are mentioned in the "Supplementary Rules":

"Rule 9:

Medals in the literature class will bear the word 'Literature' either abbreviated or in full. Literature entries are also eligible for special awards (Article 8.6, GREX)."

That may sound really fine, were it not that your author hardly ever had the experience of receiving a medal or an award with the inscribed addition 'literature'. Exhibition organizers - local as well as international - mostly use uniform medals and awards that they hand out for all kinds of exhibits. Since a number of years the organizers of most exhibitions don't even bother to have the names of the awardees engraved in the medals that they hand out, apparently for cost reasons. "Special awards" are also a relatively unknown concept. At least they are very rare.

One may well wonder why literature exhibits are not given a chance to win the Grand Prix Award of an exhibition. It can be deduced why this is so when you look at the points that the jurors give to 'normal', respectively 'literature' exhibits. It is clear that even when a literature exhibit manages to collect a top rating - let's say 95 or even 96 points - this will be not enough to enter the pot containing the names of the Grand Prix nominees. It seems certain that none of the jurors could explain convincingly why he awarded a certain literature exhibit only 96 points and not 98 points. But the reason is obvious: because it is undesirable that a literature exhibit may ever receive a Grand Prix at an International Exhibition.

Once again, this proves why literature exhibits and stamp exhibits are treated so unequally: for "political reasons". People may differ as far as the allocation of juror points is concerned, but not about the requirement that exhibits should have the same chance at an exhibition, simply because there is not such a thing as a "first class" or "second class" exhibitor.

Presentation of literature exhibits

Earlier in this article the author argued that the presentation of literature exhibits at exhibitions is very important. Not only for the visitors, but also for the respective exhibitors. Let's repeat the two main points once again.

-Presentation in the catalogue

In a time where financial resources are scarce, publishing a printed exhibition catalogue is becoming an ever growing obstacle for many an organizer. Exhibitors and visitors alike have the almost indisputable right to know the details of the exhibits, especially where and from whom (in the case of literature exhibits) they can obtain them and at what price.

Organizers usually limit themselves to publish a short list of the exhibits, which, however, does not help much. Even digitally, additional data (see the information in the special literature registration form) are not provided. The author finds this unacceptable since at least the latter (providing digital data) would be an easy thing to do.

There are certainly other solutions that could make the production of a printed exhibition catalogue still possible. One could - like the organizers of STOCKHOLMIA 2019 managed to do - attract a powerful main sponsor, or one could try to refinance the cost of the exhibition catalogue by placing advertisements in it.

The international exhibition LONDON 2015 (and presumably also LONDON 2020) has sought the as-

sistance of the AIJP. The AIJP not only realizes the reading room - thanks to the support of individual sponsors - but is also responsible for the production of a special literature catalogue that serves as an extensive annex of the main catalogue. Many things are still feasible, as long as one does not treat the exhibitors as a “milk cows” that need to be milked extensively.

-Presentation in the reading room

On many national exhibitions, the author of this article has searched for a separate reading room - a reading corner would already be fine - but failed to find it. There is an obligation to offer such a facility, because every exhibit has to be visible to the visitors. It's really a shame when - as happened in Heidelberg 2016 - literature exhibits are stowed away behind the windows of the caretakers lodge. Such a 'solution' is no use to anyone.

Some of the exhibitions have been instrumental in creating perfectly suited, generously and comfortably furnished reading rooms with writing desks and shelves. But when we talk about reading rooms we don't always have to think in terms of de-luxe class models like those. The NOTOS exhibition in Athens showed some years ago that it is perfectly possible to go for a more simple and still quite functional setting: by using a set of IKEA shelves and setting up a number of small bistro tables. There was no supervision and still nothing was stolen during NOTOS. The latter was also the case at BRASILIANA 2013 in Rio de Janeiro; nothing disappeared there either.

The demand for reading rooms can be sometimes enormous. At LONDON 2015, more than one thousand visitors were counted in the few days that the exhibition lasted! This is something that organizers of philatelic events should take into account. It is clear that the presence of an adequately furnished, attractive reading room may inspire a significant number of people to pay the event a visit.

Individual problem areas

The mostly critical thoughts mentioned so far are not the only one's that go through ones mind when thinking about the organization and realization of exhibitions. There still are a few that deserve further consideration.

-Literature jurors

For cost reasons, national and international exhibitions often lack the presence of experienced and competent jurors, people who are specialized in philatelic literature. As a rule, the organisers seem to prefer to resort to jurors who are competent in two or three competition classes (such as Postal History, Thematic Philately or Traditional Philately), but also claim additional skills in the field of judging philatelic literature.

Some of them may not be regarded as special literature connoisseurs (they are just trying to increase their chances of employment) and they often have only adequate expertise as far as their own collection areas are concerned. You could compare this with an international “Animal Show” that tries to persuade jurors that are specialised in judging dogs or cats to take a shot at rating butterflies at well.

Now this comparison may limp a bit, but it is not wholly off the mark. In his years as a literature juror this author has experienced that a number of his so-called colleagues - often 'top notch' in their own fields, like (Traditional Philately or Postal History) were able to describe the look and feel of a book and to grasp its general logic thanks to its table of contents. Otherwise, however, they clearly lacked expertise on such important fields as relevance, level of research and presentation. Their ratings were almost all the time based on “formal” criteria.

A number of individual international jurors can be specially overwhelmed when they are unfamiliar with the language of an exhibited work. If at an exhibition in Asia only jurors are used that as their “secondary qualification” have mentioned the evaluation of literature, but apart from their own Asian language only speak English, how could these jurors be suited to make a proper evaluation of a literature exhibit written in German or in any other language? It is obvious that the resulting reviews were made rather by looking at the name of the author of the exhibit, instead of having being created by means of an attentive and understanding study of the work in question.

Here again, a “rethink” is required. The author of this article is well aware that especially those jurors who at a given exhibition already have to judge many stamp exhibits, hardly will find the time to have a close and detailed look at the literature exhibits

They are expected to evaluate, let alone that they are able to understand the scope and importance of these exhibits. Even if a juror is provided three months in advance with a list that mentions the titles of the literature exhibits, he can hardly pre-prepare himself thoroughly. Especially not if he lives in a country where one does not have access to a well-equipped philatelic library, a place where he could borrow the titles that he wants to study more thoroughly.

Philatelic literature is usually written in the native language of the author of the exhibit. This means that the problem of understanding the scope, importance and relevance of the exhibits can't be solved. Because just like we are barely to read or understand the Asian languages, the jurors coming from these countries will have their problems when they try to evaluate literature exhibits that are written in other languages than English, like Bulgarian, Russian, Greek or even German. A juror could of course ask one of his colleagues for help, but would this colleague be able to understand philatelic literature? And would he have ample time to study literature exhibits in detail?

We have here a problem that even this author does not know how to solve in a satisfying way. A normative rule that only philatelic literature written in English may participate in a literature exhibition - as usual in American exhibitions - does not solve this problem. On the contrary: it excludes others who also have the right to publish their books in their home language.

-Homepage, journalism and the public sphere

More and more, organizers opt for the creation of a solid homepage (website) for their event, but in doing so they often neglect the written and unwritten rules of classic journalism. Attempts trying to attract visitors exclusively via the Internet hardly ever succeed; therefore more is needed. For example, continuous (!) press activities, the deliverance of constant exhibition news, maintaining an image service, but also intensive editorial activities.

Of course, the output of classic 'ink to paper' activities and the advantages that the digital media have to offer can (and should) complement one another. It is important to realise that their contents should be produced in a professional fashion. Just like there is only a select number of people that can write bestsellers, not everyone who can write will be able to do this in a professional way and using an entertaining style.

The author of this article - who in the past actively helped to organize several international and national exhibitions - has in that capacity acquired a useful experience: he has found out that disappointing visitor numbers often have nothing to do with the quality of the exhibition or its exhibits, but rather with the fact that potential visitors weren't aware of the upcoming event, due to a lack of promotion. Successful marketing- which also includes Public Relations and Press Support - requires sophisticated structures, competent journalists and the right channels to disseminate these messages.

In this field, the AIJP can offer help, if the organizer wishes so and the AIJP is prepared to lend the event its patronage. This will cost money of course, but far less than you would expect for the services provided. For the organizer this means that he will have to create certain conditions. It would require the creation of a special literature reading room, that eventually also can act as a press centre. It's a requirement that easily could be met. Free entry for journalists should also be possible, although many organizers seem unwilling to create such a facility. This is difficult to understand; it's a kind of misplaced economy that in the end only harms the event itself.

Looking at the future, only a few positive developments are to be expected. It is completely unclear on what moment the FIP - especially the Commission for Philatelic Literature of the FIP - will finally adapt its regulations in such a way that they meet today's developments and requirements. Even the FEPA lags a bit behind, because it seems more interested in regulations than in the number of visitors an exhibition may attract.

However, a lot is also feasible, as I have substantiated in the text of this article. As already said, an exhibition is not for jurors, even less for associations, but primarily and exclusively for the visitor. Only when one understands and applies this marketing concept, one will know how to set the required positive accents.

Translation: Aad Knikman ◆

Reviews

Print & Electronic

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www.wu30.org Journal page.



Airmail Scandal by Lee Downer. 420 unnumbered pages, 6 x 9 inches, card covers, perfect bound, self-published, Deland, FL, 2018. \$14.95 from Amazon.

This historic novel is based on many actual events in the early 1930s that led to President Franklin Roosevelt cancelling the private contracts between the airlines and the U. S. government, and had the Army Air Corps step in to carry the mail for a brief time. Under PMG Walter Folger Brown during the previous administration the major airlines arranged to divide up the various routes, often squeezing out the smaller carriers. Eventually a lot of graft settled in creating an impossible situation.

Author Lee Downer added a new wrinkle on which to hang his novel, namely the oppression brought on by a criminal syndicate, the "Detroit Mob," to control a small airline, forcing it to hire more employees than needed and also to arrange shipments of drugs. The resulting storylines enable several plots to run simultaneously.

Mysterious crashes and explosions caused one airline to be taken over by the mobsters. Death threats, murders, intrigues, sex, and even stamp and cover collecting are thrown into the mix to yield a delightful read, much of it based on historic fact. An employee of the aggrieved airline learned of some details of the mob

interference and went into hiding. His girlfriend was killed by a bomb, inciting him to revenge. He found one of the two culprits and killed him.

The government established a committee to look into reports of rigged bidding of contracts and fraudulent payments. In the meantime the criminal element continued its efforts at sabotage and oppression while searching for the former employee before he could advise the authorities.

Under Franklin Roosevelt's administration and with PMG Farley and others in government, the decision was made to cancel all airline contracts until new rules could be developed. During this period the Army Air Corps, with little preparation of training for night flying and poor weather navigation, was assigned the delivery of air mail.

Author Downer has solid knowledge of the aircraft in use at the time and the circumstances surrounding the contracts and appointment of the Army Air Corps to carry out the deliveries. Some insights from his knowledge include references to Major General Benjamin Foulois, chief of the Air Corps; Claire Chennault, the military aviator; Henry H. "Hap" Arnold; and other major players in aviation history.

Philately comes into focus with mention of Milton Mauck cachets, and the many airmail covers with autographs that were popular at the time. February 19, 1934 was the first day of Army air delivery and many collectors

had special envelopes on planes that day. The devious threads in the storylines come to favorable conclusions. The credibility of the narrative is reinforced by Major General Lee Downer's experience and knowledge.

Alan Warren

LEE DOWNER



Airmail Scandal

The Air Corps Delivers

Publicity

Lloyd de Vries

As a writer, you may be called upon to handle the publicity for a philatelic organization. Writing a press release is similar to, but not the same as, writing articles. It is closer to writing a news story than a feature article.

There is one overriding principle in writing a press release: Make it as easy as possible for the publication to use it. You are asking a favor. Chances are your release is filling unused space around the paid ads and feature articles, and is one of the last things added to the issue. If an editor has a choice between an easy-to-use release and one that needs rewriting or extensive editing, he or she is likely to take the path of least resistance.

Your grammar and spelling should be correct. Don't make the editor fix it for you. Chances are, he or she won't. Even if you're "self-publishing" on a website, I think many readers can still tell the difference between a well-written item and one that isn't, even if they can't do it themselves, and will skip something that is bad.

Take a moment to look at the intended publication, or each intended publication. Try to match the style as closely as possible. You can also ask, individually, what the editors want. (For the American First Day Cover's Americover shows, I write a 300-word "story" for one print publication, a 900-word version for another — as requested.)

Like a news story, your press release should cover the 5 W's and How: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. Also include how to reach you (for the editors) and how to get more information on the subject (for the readers).

Also like a news story, the important information should be as close to the beginning as possible. Editors usually cut from the bottom upward. Keep the release as short as possible and to the point. Again, you are seeking the leftover space in a publication.

Either submit the press release as the text of an e-mail (the preferred method now) or as an attachment in Microsoft Word's .doc or .docx format. On the other hand, when putting a press release on an Inter-

net message board, text copied from Word may not format properly. Re-save the file as .txt (plain text) and open it using Notepad (Windows) or Text Editor (Macintosh).

Have a good subject line in your e-mail. In writing to philatelic publications, I start with "PR:" In writing to general publications, I start with "Story Idea" or "National Stamp Collecting Show Coming to Bongo-land Area."

I had one stamp society publicity chair sending me press releases for publication in The Virtual Stamp Club as .pdf files. When I requested a different format so that I could reformat the text more easily and possibly copy-edit it, he said that was why he used .pdf files: He didn't want anyone editing his press releases. So I don't; I just don't use them.

That is important, too: Publications are not required to run your press releases. If yours is not used, do not complain. If your deathless prose was cut, do not complain. Either may just result in your next emissions ending up in the bottom of the (virtual) stack.

When submitting a press release to a print publication, see if it has a "managing editor." That is usually the person who decides what stories will run. If it is a large publication, such as a major market daily newspaper, look for the "features" or "living" editor.

Don't forget the weekly and specialty newspapers. For the traveling show Americover, I use the Newslink website. It's a defunct site, no longer maintained but the state pages are still accessible. Go to www.newslink.org/statnews.html However, the links no longer work, so do a web search for the publication. For Canada and other countries, use the main address, newslink.org. It may take awhile to load. To save you some time, the link for Canada is www.newslink.org/nonusn.html (If you know of a replacement for Newslink, please let me know!)

Each state page may contain specialty newspapers, but, as I mentioned, the site is outdated and may be missing current publications. I myself try to "hit" Jewish and African-American publications for show

publicity. However, for Americover 2018 in Atlanta, Newslink did not mention the *Atlanta Jewish Times*. I found it with a web search for “Atlanta Jewish newspaper.”

In writing for non-philatelic media, don’t use jargon. Avoid words like “philatelic,” “bourse” and “cachet” when possible, and explain them when you can’t. As an example, “the American Philatelic Society, the biggest stamp collecting organization in the U.S.”

Most newspapers now have web calendars of local events. I have seen no evidence that anyone actually uses these, but I still try to place listings in the local daily newspapers and close community papers. I have also paid SpinGo, which claims to represent many of these calendars. I am still evaluating how well it does.

Facebook will promote events, too. It does not seem as easy to use, and doesn’t have very exact settings. For instance, for Americover 2018, I was able to specify a single city or state, or a single ZIP code, but not a range of ZIPs. Again, I am still evaluating the results, but I wasn’t impressed. Scott Marks of Southeastern Stamp Expo, held annually in the same venue, says he specifies Facebook members over age 40, but I didn’t want to use Facebook to reach that age group: I was hoping for Millennials.

The Internet is the biggest change in publicity since I began “drum beating” in high school. However, that is where you will find new people and younger people.

Message boards are often do-it-yourself. On the one hand, you have more control over when and how your publicity appears. On the other, you have to do more work.

Every message board is different, from the software to the “community” (the people and the tone). Read the rules, the introductory material, and read some of the past messages. Obey the rules.

When publicizing an event, don’t forget television. Begin your e-mail with a short story pitch that emphasizes the “good visuals” that may result (such as

“a rare chance to see the famous upside-down airplane stamp in Bongoland” [the station’s area]).

But also don’t forget the “visuals” for print and Internet press releases. Go for something germane to your subject, of course, but also try to offer something interesting: Kids looking at stamps, the design of a colorful recent issue that will be featured at the show, and so on. People staring at a camera generally are not going to grab attention, unless the press release is about a top honor for that person. Even so, an action-shot would be better, such as “John Smith reaching the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, after acquiring Tanzanian stamps for his collection.”

Print publications want 300 DPI-resolution images. However, you only need 72 DPI for the Internet, and the lower resolution may result in a smaller file size, allowing your image to load more quickly.

After spending much of my career in radio, it hurts to say this: I don’t know that I would bother with radio any more, unless the market has an all-news or a news/talk station that really does local news. Public radio stations may have a news feature or magazine show. Again, try to find the e-mail address of the managing editor or assignment editor. Radio stations may also mention local events in an on-air calendar feature; look for a link to “add your event” on the website.

Chances are, your job as publicity person for an event seems to end several days before the event, but it doesn’t: If a reporter or photographer shows up, you should be available to escort him or her around the event. I always leave my phone number at the registration desk so I can be contacted. (At one Americover, I all but interviewed myself for a local television station.) I also include my “local contact number” (my cell phone) in all local publicity.

As I mentioned, the media are changing constantly, so placing publicity is evolving, too. I still have more to learn about the Internet and its possibilities. I haven’t yet used SnapChat, Instagram, YouTube and others. I’ll let you know what I find out. Your tips would be appreciated, too.

—30—

CHICAGOPEX 2018 Literature Palmares

November 17, 2018

John Kevin Doyle Grand Award

Scott Trepel United States Stamp Treasures: The William H. Gross Collection

Reserve Grand

Deane R. Briggs, M.D. Florida Postal History During the Civil War

Best Postal History

Arthur A. Groten, M.D., Bermuda: Crossroads of the Atlantic -- A postal history
FRPSL and David R.
Pitts, FRPSL

LITERATURE EXHIBITS

Large Gold

Deane R. Briggs, M.D. Florida Postal History During the Civil War
Bruce H. Mosher Catalog of Private Express Covers, Labels and Stamps
Scott Trepel United States Stamp Treasures: The William H. Gross Collection
Seija-Riitta Laakso, The Posthorn
Editor
Peter Martin La Posta: The Journal of American Postal History

Gold

Alfred F. Kugel 1914—The First War Year to 1918—The Fifth War Year
Arthur A. Groten, M.D., Bermuda: Crossroads of the Atlantic -- A postal history
FRPSL and David R.
Pitts, FRPSL
Peter Martin, Editor Aspects of American Postal History
The Global Philatelic Edition D'Or 53, U.S. Civil War Era Fiscal History Panorama: The Michael
Network (Heinrich Mahler Collection
Kohler, H. R. Harmer
and John Bull
Auction Houses)
Patricia A. Kaufmann www.trishkaufmann.com
Albert Starkweather, First Days
Editor
Western Cover Society Western Express
Vickie Canfield Peters, Airpost Journal
Editor

Palmares continued on Page 13

Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris	Postal History Journal
Robert Conley, Editor	State Revenue News
Larry Lyons	The Penny Post
Michael Mahler	The American Revenuer

Large Vermeil

Edward Grabowski	Philately and International Mail Order Fraud: The success of the New York Institute of Science in Hungary
Raymond H. Murphy	Irish Official Mail 1922-1983
Rick Barrett	Buffalo Cinderellas
Darius Liutikas	Scouting in the Baltic Countries: A history in philately
Collectors Club of Chicago	CollectorsClubChicago.org
Donald A. Chafetz	The Isreal Philatelist
Keith Hart, editor; Ludvik Z. Svoboda, assistant editor	The Czechoslovak Specialist
Richard D. Jones, Editor	Universal Ship Cancellation Society Log
Gary Wayne Loew	Mastering Postal History

Vermeil

Steven Friedenthal and Peter Schubert	Czechoslovakia Machine Advertising Cancels: The First Republic Period
David Brookler	A Taxonomy of Star Cancellations
Stamp Show Here Today	Stamp Show Here Today
Cemil Betanov	Website of the Errors, Freaks & Oddities Collectors' Club

Large Silver

Michael Mahler	U.S. First issue Stamps that Almost were (and Almost Weren't!)
Richard E. Drews	U. S. Issues of 1861-68

Silver

David Brookler	Star Cancel Website
Norval Rasmussen	France and Colonies Philatelist

CHICAGOPEX 2018 Literature Jury Members:

Pat Walker, Jury Chairwoman	University Park, FL
Bill DiPaolo, Judge	FL
Ken Trettin, Judge	Iowa

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Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Secretary Report 2018 Q3 About Writers Unit #30

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

Membership Dues

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

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

Payment must be made in U.S. funds by a check imprinted with a U.S. bank transit number, or by postal money order payable to "APS Writers Unit #30." Some overseas members prefer to send U.S. bank notes. We will soon have PayPal available but not yet.

Updating Your Mailing Address

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

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

Materials for Review

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

Expert Help for Writers and Editors

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

2018 Literature and Web Exhibits

- APS CAC Newsletter Competition, January 15, 2019 entrance deadline. www.stamps.org/cac/
- APS CAC Website Competition, Summer 2018 <https://stamps.org/Club-Benefits> (under Chapter Contests)
- APS StampShow August 1-4, 2019, Omaha, NE www.stamps.org
- CHICAGOPEX November 2019, Itasca, IL, www.chicagopex.com/