

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

One of the difficulties associated with bringing together the last issue of a year is the fact that many people choose to take vacations or trips around the Christmas and New Year breaks. This year of course, the disaster centered around Indonesia cast a blight over the holidays for many people, particularly those visiting the devastated areas, some of whom lost their lives. One strange report from an aerial survey of the coast of Sri Lanka noted that very few animals appeared to have been overtaken by the tsunami which hit the coast. It has been noted many times before that the animals seem to have a sixth sense which operates when natural disasters are about to occur.

As usual, we spent our Christmas with our family in Toronto, so did not have to travel very far. Unfortunately, Barbara and I were both hit with bad winter colds right after Christmas. Possibly mine jumped on me after shovelling the driveway with freezing rain coming down - not something I would recommend to anyone.

A questionnaire for thematic collectors and exhibitors was recently circulated by Ann Triggler of CANEJ (the APS Committee for the Accreditation of National Exhibitions & Judges) and the results were very interesting. I was surprised to find out that 26% of the respondents had more than five thematic collections or exhibits! I have a problem keeping up with one, although I must admit that I have produced various exhibits from the single collections of insects! Some 43% of the respondents said they found it more difficult than expected to develop a logical thematic exhibit but several said it became easier after preparing more pages or exhibits. The survey was partly intended to try and discover why the number of thematic exhibits at APS and other shows seemed to be decreasing. Of course, one might observe that since the number of stamp collectors is falling, it should be likely that exhibits will decrease as well!

The annual NTSS show will be held once again in Milwaukee in 2005 - the birthplace of the A.T.A. Show Chairman Bob Mather and his committees have been busy and a report will be found in this issue. I am hoping that more Biology Unit members will turn up for the show, as it would be nice to have a good discussion with a larger number of participants.

There are some of our subjects missing from this number of the journal and I have a sneaking suspicion that there are fewer "topical" stamps coming out. At least that appears to apply for the insects, as I have not added a great number of stamps to the collection over the past few months - keeps the finances in better shape!

Until next time.

Alan J. Hanks

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