

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This edition of our journal marks the start of my second year as editor. I have found that I greatly enjoy the job and hope that I have been able to make each issue a useful and entertaining publication for our members.

In June, the ATA held its annual National Topical Stamp Show (NTSS) in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The Biology Unit also held its annual meeting at this show and we had the largest attendance in several years. I very much enjoyed meeting everyone there. You will find a report on the activities at the NTSS beginning on page 132.

The annual Secretary-Treasurer report appears on page 131. Last year we had a net loss of members. This was primarily due to tidying up our roll, since we had been maintaining memberships for several individuals who had stopped paying dues over a period of time with the hope that they would resume. We did gain some new members at the NTSS and I would like to challenge each of you to recruit others. When you combine all the various plant and animal subjects, biological topics are by far the most popular collecting field and provide the greatest amount of philatelic material. Certainly you know friends or other members of your local club who are involved with these topics. Tell them about the Biology Unit and encourage them to join.

Mainly as a result of our reduced membership, our finances experienced a loss last year. No doubt our expenses will continue to increase as well. Many of you probably do not know that, as a 503(c) non-profit organization, your donation to the Biology Unit is tax-deductible. Last year we only received \$172 in donations. I encourage each of you to consider adding a donation to your dues renewal, or send a separate donation payable to the Biology Unit of the ATA to our Secretary-Treasurer, Chris Dahle.

Our journal also offers free ads for unit members. If you have some material for sale or trade, please send me a short paragraph with details and I will include it in future editions.

As I write this, I am at the APS StampShow in Sacramento, California. We entered *Biophilately* in the Literature exhibit competition this year. I am proud to inform you that the judges awarded our journal a **Silver-Bronze** medal. The judges singled out our "New Birds" column for special kudos, so congratulations to Chuck Braun for his outstanding efforts. The feedback session offered many useful suggestions for improvement and the most important one was to increase the number of articles. While I have found that I quite enjoy writing an article for each issue, I am sure that readers would like to see articles from other authors. So I am going to start twisting some arms. I am looking for stories, letters, and other input of interest to our readers. I challenge each of you to send me a few paragraphs on any subject. It could be about a page in your collection, an experience with some aspect of your topic, or a report on a local exhibition (stamp or otherwise). Do not be concerned about format, spelling, grammar, or even the subject matter. Taking care of that stuff is my job as editor. All I need is your idea put to paper, so to speak.

In the current edition, we have several of our regular checklists for new issues. We are still looking for an editor for Herpetology. If you collect this topic and have a listing of recent issues, but are not interested in providing input for every edition, I would be pleased to include it on a one-time or part-time basis for the benefit of others.

Jack Congrove

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