

STAMP SHOW 2012

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The American Philatelic Society held its four-day Stamp Show 2012 in Sacramento, California, during 16–19 August. I observed large crowds each day, including the weekdays, so I am sure the show was a commercial success. From my point of view as a collector and exhibitor, it was a fabulous four days.

Stamp Show is the largest national show in the United States. It hosted five first-day ceremonies, provided more than 150 dealers catering to every conceivable area of philately, served as the venue for two large philatelic auctions, accommodated meetings for a variety of societies and clubs, and displayed more than 800 frames of philatelic exhibits with entries in every exhibit division. You would need all four days to satisfy your philatelic cravings and my friends and I wished it had lasted at least one additional day in order to do so.

The American Topical Association maintained a prominent booth. Executive Director Vera Felts told me on Sunday that the ATA had signed up at least 14 new members at the show. I spoke with two who have interests in biology topics, so I hope that our unit can gain them as members also.

I noticed that the “Stamps in Your Attic” booth was extremely popular. This APS service provided free evaluations of philatelic material and also limited assistance in identifying uncertain items. It appeared that APS did a superb job in publicizing this because the waiting line for it was out the door each day. I believe they even had to supplement the usual team with additional evaluators.



ATA Booth Display



The Biology Unit entered our *Biophilately* journal in the Philatelic Literature exhibits at Stamp Show and received a Silver-Bronze award shown here. Since the jury only made three Gold awards in the Periodical division and since our publication is more of a checklist than a standard journal, I think we acquitted ourselves very well. One other reason we entered the exhibition was to gain some publicity for the Biology Unit. I attended the jury feedback session and received many useful suggestions for improving our publication, some of which you will find already incorporated in this issue.

Speaking of exhibits, Stamp Show not only has an open competitive exhibition, but is also the venue for the annual World Series of Philately. In the WSP, the grand award winners from each of 31 national level shows held throughout the country during the year compete for the “Champion of Champions” prize. This is the highest national level exhibiting honor available. Disappointingly, this year none of these exhibits related to a biology theme. The winner was a ten-frame exhibit by Gordon Eubanks titled, *First Federally Issued Postage Stamps*.

In contrast to the WSP, the open competition provided several exhibits with biology themes. Three of these were in the Display division. Anne Harris received a Gold award for her nine-frame exhibit, *The Horse in America During Its Golden Age*. One of her exhibit pages actually showed a video of a horse-drawn mail wagon from the early 20th Century making a delivery to a rural mailbox. This video is a digital reproduction of a nickelodeon type film set to run in a continuous loop and powered by batteries. This was a very innovative approach to the use of collateral material.



Video Display

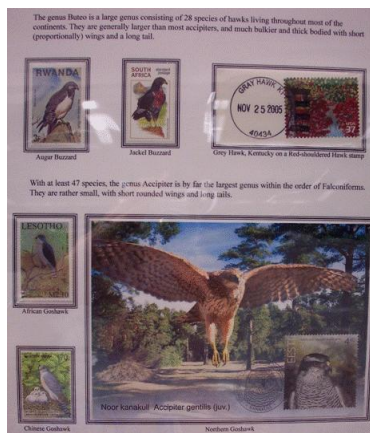
(See *Stamp Show 2012*, page 198)

STAMP SHOW 2012 (from page 190)

Use of this and other types of electronic media is going to require revision of exhibition rules and application of imagination for modern display exhibits. The *Manual of Philatelic Judging, Sixth Edition* declares that "...collateral elements shown should be originals rather than copies or reproductions." This video by necessity is a reproduction, but clearly an applicable element. Also, what constitutes the "original" of any electronic item?



Beavers Exhibit Page



Birds of Prey Exhibit Page



Mammals were well represented in the Display division. Larry Davidson won a Gold award for a six-frame exhibit, *Beavers: Nature's Engineers*. This exhibit contained actual examples of beaver fur, felt used for beaver hats, and a prehistoric beaver tooth.

George Kramer won a Vermeil award for his six-frame exhibit, *For the Love of the Dog*.

The Thematic division contained one exhibit on a biology topic, this time dealing with birds. This ten-frame exhibit titled, *Falconiform (Birds of Prey)*, won a Vermeil award for Timothy A. Hodge. Tim is the recipient of a 2011-12 APS Youth Fellowship sponsored by the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors.

Surprisingly, even the Postal division, not typically noted for containing items related to biology topics, showed two interesting exhibits containing such elements. The first, a five-frame exhibit titled, *U.S. Special Handling 1925-1959: The Stamps and the Service*, by Robert G. Rufe, received a Gold award. Now I am sure you are asking what the heck could this subject possibly have to do with biological topics?

The answer lies in the purpose of the special handling service. I vividly recall as a kid on a farm when my grandmother received a large box delivered personally by our RFD mailman containing dozens of live baby chickens. Use of the Special Delivery stamps ensured that these packages received first class service though they were sent as fourth class mail.

This exhibit showed such usages with labels for not only baby chicks, but also live bees, plants, and even alligators! I am not sure I would accept delivery.

I am also unsure if mythical animals count as a biology topic, but a five-frame Postal exhibit titled, *The Pegasus Air Mail Stamps of Uruguay - 1929-1943*, by Jorge Gaj, received a Vermeil award.

I hope you can tell from this article that the annual APS Stamp Show has a lot to interest any stamp collector. I enjoyed my visit immensely.

Stamp Show 2013 is scheduled for 8-11 August 2013, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Make plans to attend. I can guarantee you will not be disappointed.



Beware Live Alligators!