

## NTSS 2015 REPORT

**Jack R. Congrove, BU1424**

The American Topical Association held its 66th annual National Topical Stamp Show at the Monarch Hotel and Conference Center on 31 July through 2 August 2015, in Clackamas, Oregon, a suburb of Portland. The NTSS is the largest topical stamp show in the world.

This year the show featured 17 dealers and 116 frames of competitive exhibits. Originally, the show planned to have 134 competitive frames, but two exhibits were forced to drop out too late to obtain replacements.

As a World Series of Philately national level show, the winner of the Grand Award is invited to compete for the Champion of Champions Award with the grand award winners of the other thirty WSP exhibitions at the annual American Philatelic Society Stamp Show. Because the total quantity of competitive frames was below the minimum 125, NTSS was granted a one-time waiver by the Chairman of the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ) to enable the Grand Award winner to compete.

The show offered many other events including tours and a first day of issue ceremony for the “Fanciful Flowers” postal card. Yours truly was asked to speak briefly at the first day ceremony about collecting flowers on stamps. But as I do not collect flowers, instead I spoke about the different viewpoints on collecting identifiable species versus stylized depictions on stamps.



First Day Souvenir Presentation to Jack Congrove from Ron Schaefer  
Portland District US Postal Service

This year, NTSS instituted a trial “Free Style” non-competitive exhibit category to allow displays that ordinarily would not fit into one of the standard competitive divisions.

This category attracted five frames from four exhibitors. Two of these exhibitors were from our own Biology Unit: Susan B. Jones and Victor Eichler.

Susan Jones’s exhibit, “Chocolate Dinosaurs and Meaty Mammals,” introduced the viewer to paleoadvertising—the use of dinosaurs and other prehistoric images to sell everything from chocolate to motor oil.

Vic Eichler’s exhibit, “Frogs: Their Contributions to Human Cultures,” highlighted the many ways humans have benefited from contributions of frogs in arts, sciences, humanities, religion, and civic life.

Personally, I like having this type of exhibiting opportunity. Most collectors start by collecting the material they like without concern for making it into an exhibit. These displays enable such collectors to show us what they collect and to arrange it as they like. Perhaps the experience will encourage them to move into competitive exhibiting.



Fanciful Flowers Postal Card

The Thursday tour offered a chance to explore part of Portland. Among the sights was a tour of the Pittock Mansion and Powell’s City of Books.

I noted that several people (including me) added to their libraries during their visit to this huge store that occupies an entire city block.



ATA Tour Group at Pittock Mansion

There were 11 competitive exhibits that featured a biological theme:

Beatrice Vogel*	“Spiders”
Susan B. Jones*	“Searching for African <i>Coelacanth</i> s”
Larry Davidson*	“Beavers: Nature’s Engineers”
Jean C. Stout*	“A Celebration of the Cockroach!”
Jean C. Stout*	“A Penguin Christmas”
Greg Herbert*	“The Butterfly Effect”
Roger van Laere*	“Atlantic Puffin: Clown of the Ocean”
Jane King Fohn	“Hillcountry Honkytonkin Rita Labrador Retriever”
Michael Birrer	“Early U.S. Malaria Treatments: Making the Remedy-Philately Connection”
Anne Harris	“Horace and Betty Get Married”
George DeKornfeld	“Making Whitetail Venison Sausage”

I do not think it is a coincidence that more than half of these exhibitors are current or former members of the Biology Unit (\*). Because there were so many biology exhibits this year, the Unit Board decided to present three Biology Unit Awards instead of only one.

**1st Prize:** A hand-blown glass toucan made by artists at the Orient and Flume Studio in Chico, California. This award was won by Larry Davidson for his exhibit on beavers.

**2nd Prize:** This hand-blown glass bird was made in the Tacoma Museum of Glass hot shop in 2013 by two visiting artists from Finland’s Iitala Glassworks. Greg Herbert won it for his butterfly exhibit.

**3rd Prize:** This hand-blown glass ornament was made by artists at the Glass Eye Studio in Seattle. Appropriately, it contains ash from the 1980 Mount St. Helens eruption. Roger van Laere won this award for his exhibit on puffins.

By the way, Roger also got the unofficial prize for having traveled farthest to attend the show. He came all the way from Antwerp, Belgium.

Unit member exhibitors did extremely well at the show receiving a total of five Gold, one Vermeil, three Silver, and one Silver-Bronze medals.

Jean Stout won the Most Popular Exhibit award for “A Celebration of the Cockroach!” and Larry Davidson won the Grand Award for “Beavers: Nature’s Engineers.” He will get to compete for the Champion award at the APS Stamp Show next year back in Portland, Oregon.

The Biology Unit manned its own booth at the show in order to recruit new Unit members. The Board devised a promotional offer enabling new members to receive the remaining two editions of the journal for 2015 and all of 2016 for the cost of a one-year membership.

In addition, new members received a free copy of the latest edition of *Biophilately* along with *The Mother of All Indexes*, which contains an index of all articles from Volumes 1–62 as well as a history of the Unit. So, in effect new members got one and three-quarters year of the journal for their dues.

As a result, we were able to recruit six new members and get a renewal and reinstatement as well.

On Saturday evening, the Biology Unit was the sponsor of the Awards Banquet. At this dinner, it is a tradition to introduce the recipient of the Distinguished Topical Philatelist award. This is the highest award given by the ATA. It had been awarded to 118 persons previously and this year none other than our own Donald Wright was the recipient. Another feather in the cap of the Biology Unit.



Biology Unit First Prize



Biology Unit Second Prize



Biology Unit Third Prize



Larry Davidson with his Grand Award-winning exhibit



ATA President Jack Denys presents 2015 DTP Award to Donald P. Wright, Jr.

The Biology Unit held its annual meeting at the show on Saturday. There was a good turn-out of 17 attendees. See the report on page 141.

There was some difficulty with the tour to Mount St. Helens on Monday. The group toured the Visitor's Center at Silver Lake and then had a picnic lunch at the Forest Learning Center where they also got to see display explaining the salvage and recover efforts after the 1980 eruption.

However, on the way to the Johnston Ridge Observatory, the highlight of the tour, our bus suffered a mechanical breakdown and the tour was forced to forego the remainder of the trip and return to the hotel in a replacement bus. This was very disappointing since we had enjoyed the tour up to that point, but these things happen and thankfully no one was hurt and we were only slightly behind our return time for those who had other appointments.

As a benefit of the being the featured study unit, we were able to present a one-frame promotional display exhibit among the other non-competitive exhibits.

On the following pages you will find scans of the exhibits pages from the Biology Unit exhibit shown at NTSS. Thanks to Don Wright, Chris Dahle, Ian Hunter, Paul Mistretta, and Michael Kogan for their help in preparing the pages and providing exhibit material.

Next year, there will be no NTSS. Instead the ATA and the Biology Unit will meet at the international stamp show in New York City (NY-2016) scheduled for 28 May through 4 June at the Javits Center. The ATA meeting will be held at 1:00 PM on Friday, 3 June. Make your plans now to attend.