

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from Ontario, where our Magnolia is just about to come in to bloom! It was a pretty mild winter and now it seems the folks in Fort McMurray are suffering the effects of a hot, dry spring. I cannot imagine the feeling to see a conflagration bearing down on one's residence!

I must correct an error in my last message in that I omitted one more gold medal winner in Toronto. Titled, "The Lepidoptera" by my good friend Vince Lucas, it won the Gold!!

In past messages, I have been talking about the development of "thematic" exhibiting within the ATA over the years and it was a very great pleasure to see that our own Vice-President, Larry Davidson, had won the Grand Award at TOPEX! Well done Larry! I seem to remember being on the jury at a local show here in Ontario when the first version of Larry's exhibit, "The Beaver," appeared. He has worked very hard over a number of years to get the exhibit to that final plateau.

When my wife and I found out that the 1989 TOPEX was once again in Spokane, we were really pleased, as it had been the site of our first major trip to an ATA show and we were looking forward to meeting friends we had made on that prior visit. The big difference this time was that we were going to drive out there, rather than flying and a bit more organisation was required.

We had driven down the east coast with our children on a number of occasions, so I knew what a comfortable distance to aim at for each day was. I selected Interstate 90 as the best route and we could access it by way of Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario, across Michigan and Minnesota, picking up I-94 at Fargo, site of the famous (maybe infamous) film to meet I-90 at Billings, Montana.

I-94 across North Dakota was one very long stretch of interstate such as we had never seen before, but it took us to the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, which was very colourful and gave us our first encounter with buffalo! I had suggested to Barbara that we might take the time to visit the Yellowstone National Park and since we had time in hand she thought it was a good idea. As we left the motel in Billings, a sign on the wall stated that "the pass is open," so we asked what that meant and were told that it referred to Beartooth Pass, elevation 10,947 feet.

I had commented to Barbara that we had not seen any mountains, but it was a very cloudy day. Just before we passed through Red Lodge, the clouds rolled away and the mountains looked awfully high. The road up to the pass had many hairpin turns and driving was exciting until we reached the top of the pass with high snow banks all around us, which seemed strange at that time of year. We paid to go into the park and enjoyed all the attractions, which were spectacular, finishing up at the Best Western Hotel in West Yellowstone. The rest of our journey was uneventful except for the terrific scenery along the way. We were greeted in Spokane by the folks we had met in 1979.

I was an apprentice judge and there were 37 exhibits plus five juniors. Mary Ann Owens had a new exhibit titled "Brolliology," which was very interesting and awarded a Gold medal. Other Gold winners were Rufino Pernes with "The Search for the Sea Route to India," Carl Spitzer with "Buzz," and Vince Lucas with "Coffee," which also took the Grand. There were several Vermeil winners and it seemed to me that the exhibits were at a higher level than I had seen before.

All in all, it was a great trip and left Barbara and I waiting eagerly for the next TOPEX!

Until next time...

*Alan J. Hawks*

