

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from Ontario, where winter has arrived with quite a snowfall today, with shovelling a necessity! Before I joined the Biology Unit in 1974 and the ATA in 1976, I had not really thought much about thematic collecting as a branch of the wider field of Philately. I was a member of a couple of local stamp clubs and most of the members collected either by country, or by some aspect of postal history. But at a show in Toronto one year, there was quite a good thematic exhibit, so I found the owner and talked to him. He said that he had been an ATA member for some time, but that he did not know of any other members. It occurred to me at the time that there must be other collectors interested in thematics (or topicals as they were more usually called at the time), but I had great difficulty finding any!

Then, in 1979, I talked my wife into flying out to Spokane for the ATA show and we had a wonderful time! As my wife observed; "I never knew it could be such fun spending the weekend with a bunch of stamp collectors!" From then on, it became the rule that our annual holiday would consist in driving to wherever the ATA show was and getting to know America and some of the wonderful scenery that we encountered along the way. In 1983, we made our first visit to Texas, as the show was in San Antonio and we saw the Alamo and the place where the famous "Hanging Judge" operated.

The show was to be in Reno in 1985 and we decided that we would fly to San Francisco, rent a car to do some sightseeing up and down the coast and then drive to Reno for the show. We had never been in a gambling establishment before (it was the bottom floor of the hotel) and were amazed to see people pouring money into slot machines. After the show, we drove round Lake Tahoe, through Yosemite National Park and then back up the coast highway to S.F. before returning home. We both agreed that it was the most interesting trip we had done and we had many more to come. Along the way, we found that Americans were friendly, generous, and often interested in meeting Canadians! The years have passed and Father Time has caught up with us so that travelling the way we selected is no longer possible. But, hey!! The memories and our pictures are still here to remind us!

Until next time...

Alan J. Hanks