

NATIONAL TOPICAL STAMP SHOW 2017

Jack R. Congrove, BU1424

The American Topical Association (ATA) held its the 67th annual National Topical Stamp Show (NTSS) at the Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport Hotel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 23–25 June 2017. Notice that the Biology Unit has been around for 66 of those 67 years.

Show chairman John Hamman did a superb job of organizing and supervising the operation of the event. Attendance was so high that the organizers ran out of show programs and had to obtain additional name tags and registration forms when they expended the original quantity that had been prepared.

One of the activities at NTSS is the annual meeting of the ATA Board of Directors. This meeting takes place on Wednesday evening and Thursday morning before the show begins on Friday. This year, two long-time board members, Larry Davidson and Bob Lamb, departed the Board. Igor Grigorian and Kim Kellerman joined the Board to take their places and were sworn in at the ATA general meeting.



ATA Board Meeting. L to R: Rob Henak, Dick Roman, Bob Lamb, Wayne Youngblood, Kim Kellerman, Vera Felts, Jeffrey Hayward, Igor Grigorian, Beth Collins, Laurie Ryan, Amanda Morgenstern, Dale Smith, Jack André Denys, Larry Davidson, Dawn Hamman, and Chris Dahle. (not pictured Dennis Dengel and Jack Congrove, who took the photo)

The Biology Unit is more than well represented on the ATA Board of Directors. At the meeting on Saturday morning, I asked all the Board members who are also members of the Biology Unit to raise their hands. Ten of the 18 members present responded. This demonstration was revealing to everyone how much our Unit members contribute to our parent organization and to philately in general.



The ATA Table was busy most of the time. Ambassadors signed up eight new ATA members.

The show had only 16 dealers. Four dealers dropped out shortly before the show for various reasons. With the high attendance, it appeared that most of the dealers were doing good business.

The show offered a variety of presentations and other events including study unit meetings, a large youth and beginner area, a silent auction, and “What’s in Your Attic?” free stamp evaluations. In addition to others, there were six featured program speakers.

Barry Stagg, chair of the British Thematic Association, described the activities of his organization and showed highlights of his award winning exhibit on parachuting. The BTA publishes a neat quarterly magazine, *Themescene*. Annual dues for US members are \$35. See their website at www.britishthematic.org.uk for more details.

Edwin Andrews, a distinguished philatelic judge, gave a presentation on “How to Build a Topical Exhibit.” This is a new exhibit category that is sure to be a hit with topical collectors. He illustrated his talk with his topical exhibit on Hats and explained the differences between Topical, Thematic, and Display exhibits.

Jack André Denys, immediate past-President of the ATA, spoke about the legacy of Mary Ann Owens, former member of the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee and an early advocate for thematic exhibiting. On Saturday afternoon, the ATA held a special ceremony honoring her memory. The celebration was sponsored by Stamp Smith owned by Dale and Andrea Smith of Kansas City, Missouri. The event featured ice cream and cake and Owens’s younger brother was on hand to tell stories about his sister and her collecting activities.

Norma Nielson from Calgary, Alberta, gave a seminar on “Using Genealogy Resources for Philatelic Research.” This presentation offered many useful ideas for enhancing information about your collection and exhibits.

Dale Smith, the current President of the ATA, presented a class on “How to Remove Self-Adhesive Stamps from Paper.” He demonstrated several different techniques. Personally, I prefer to leave the non-soakable stamps on a closely trimmed piece. There are some solvents that will remove the adhesive, but no one knows the long-term effects these chemicals will have on the stamps.

Your author presented a two-hour class on “How to Prepare Your Own Album Pages on a Computer.” As expected, this class was quite popular and filled up the largest meeting room with more than 30 attendees. Based on the response, the ATA is considering offering this class again as a special seminar at NTSS 2018.

At the ATA annual general meeting on Friday, President Dale Smith and APS Executive Director, Scott English jointly announced plans for a combined APS-ATA philatelic exhibition to be held next year in Columbus, Ohio. The NTSS will partner with APS StampShow for one of the largest shows ever held in the nation (see page 94).

Also at the annual meeting, Scott English presented national level recognition awards to three ATA members. See the story on page 95.

This year the ATA presented its highest award, the Distinguished Topical Philatelist award, to another member of the Biology Unit, Vera Felts. Vera is also the Executive Director of the ATA. Since its inception, the ATA has awarded the DTP to 120 persons. Thirty of these have been members of the Biology Unit.

The show had 165 frames of competitive exhibits. NTSS showcases thematic type exhibits. The jury was an international mix of judges from the US, Canada, and Mexico including Edwin Andrews (chair), our own Christopher Dahle, Thomas Fortunato, Alejandro Grossman, Elizabeth Hisey, and Norma Nielson (apprentice).

Phillip J. Stager won Large Gold and the Biology Unit First Award and Multi-frame Grand Award for “The Wonderful World of Bamboo.” Bill Dipaolo received a Large Gold and the Reserve Grand Award for “The Gentleman From Pennsylvania.”

Biology Unit members displayed several exhibits with both biological and non-biological themes. Fran Adams received a Large Gold and the Mary Ann Owens One-Frame Grand Award for “The United Nations and Palestine: 1947–1951.” Jack R. Congrove won Large Gold for “Alexander Hamilton: Soldier, Financier, Statesman, Founder.”



Distinguished Topical Philatelist Vera Felts with her daughter Dr. Nicole Petty at the ATA Award Dinner

Dawn Hamman received a Large Gold for “The Jewel City—Postcards of the Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, 1915,” and another Large Gold and the Biology Unit Second Award for “Backyard Chickens.”

Susan B. Jones took a Large Gold along with the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE) Headings & Plan Award and the Biology Unit Third Award for “Gombessa: The African Coelacanth *Latimeria chalumnae*,” and Vermeil for “The Making of Illuminated Manuscripts.”

Jean C. Stout received a Gold and the Americana Unit Award for “Honoring ‘Old Glory.’”

One unusual exhibit was “Feathers & Fur on Stamps & Hooks,” by Robert T. Burney. This exhibit was awarded a Silver medal and the ATA Chapter Five Incentive Award. Each page contained stamps depicting various fishing flies along with actual examples of the lures shown on the stamps. One must be very careful while handling and storing this exhibit.

The ATA offers sponsorship opportunities to help support the NTSS. The NTSS Presenting Sponsor was Rasdale Stamps. The Biology Unit sponsored the jury meeting room with a donation of \$350.

Unit members were very active in their support of the NTSS sponsorships. Dale and Andrea Smith sponsored the Mary Ann Owens tribute. Laurie J. Ryan sponsored the exhibit frames. Dawn and John Hamman sponsored the Mary Ann Owens One Frame Grand award.

Jeff and Adriana Hayward sponsored the Thursday tour and the Study Unit Officers Breakfast on Sunday. Jack Congrove and Larry Davidson sponsored the Monday tour.

On Thursday before the show, a tour of historic Cedarburg, about 30 miles north of Milwaukee, offered visits to local art venues.

The photo at right shows Curator Alexandra Piano of the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Fiber Arts describing a quilt by artist Jayne Bentley Gaskins, one of the amazing award winning quilts on display. This piece is three-dimensional. The face extends about four inches from the surface. All of the colors are made by threads.

On Monday following the show, the ATA offered a tour of New Glarus. This village was settled by Swiss immigrants in 1845.

Highlights included a tour of the Golden Fleece Museum containing a one-of-a-(every)-kind collection assembled by Edwin Barlow. If you can think of a collectible, Barlow had an example.



Biology Unit Awards
Glass paperweights showing an otter, a fawn, and a polar bear



“Memories,” by Jayne Bentley Gaskins

Also on this tour was an historical village displaying some original buildings and other buildings containing artifacts from the early history of New Glarus showing examples of rural and small town life.



New Glarus Tour Group

Another stop on this tour was lunch at the New Glarus Hotel, built in 1853, where the group was entertained by a fondue making demonstration and an exhibition of yodeling and alpen horn playing.



ATA Board of Directors

L to R: Jack André Denys, Dick Roman, Laurie J. Ryan, Igor Grigorian, Amanda Morgenstern, Dale E. Smith, Dawn Hamman, Jack R. Congrove, Beth C. Collins, Jeffrey Hayward.
(not present Christophe E. Dahle, Kim Kellerman, Dennis Dengel)

NTSS 2018 will be held in Columbus, Ohio, in a combined show with the APS, as mentioned above. The ATA expects this show to be an exceptional event. Certainly there will be more dealers than the NTSS has had in most of its previous shows and there are sure to be many notable presentations including first day of issue ceremonies.

The ATA will be looking for volunteers to help out at this show. I am sure there will be some goodies to entice people to help out. This will be a great opportunity to see terrific exhibits, visit dealers you do not often encounter, and meet other collectors. Make your plans to be at the Greater Columbus Convention Center on 9–12 August 2018.