

## APS SUMMER SEMINAR

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During the last week of June, I attended the Summer Seminar on Philately hosted by the American Philatelic Society (APS) at the American Philatelic Center (APC) in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. This year the APS celebrated the 40th anniversary of this annual event.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the program, the Summer Seminar is an educational experience that is sort of like a mini-college term. It offers several two-day and four-day courses taught by philatelic experts. You can sign up for one four-day course, or for either one or two two-day courses. The cost depends on the courses you select and includes added general sessions and electives offered each day.



Philatelic Research Seminar by Daniel Piazza, Assistant Curator, National Postal Museum

A general session from 8:00 to 8:45 AM begins each day followed by the morning session of your selected course. Lunch, which is included in your enrollment fee, lasts from 11:30 AM to 12:45 PM. The afternoon session of your selected course ends at 3:00 PM, and one-hour elective courses start at 3:30 PM. At least four elective classes are offered to choose from and they are different classes each day.

This year the Summer Seminar had record 105 students enrolled for the various courses. This was the first time that the enrollment exceeded 100. I am not sure who the youngest attendee was. There were two Youth Scholarship winners attending the seminar and Ameen Zafiruddin, who was in one of my classes, is 17 years old. For sure the oldest student was Wallace Craig from California who celebrated his 92nd birthday during the event. It was his first time at the Summer Seminar, which shows you that it is never too late to learn something new.

Dr. Cathy Brachbill, APS Education Director, oversees and organizes the Seminar. Ross Jones, Education Program Coordinator, coordinates all the events. Their goal is to ensure that the students have great learning opportunities and enjoy their time in Bellefonte. From my point of view, they achieved this goal.

One of the bonus effects of the Seminar is the chance to meet, converse, and socialize with other dedicated philatelists. I saw several good friends and acquaintances there and made several new friends as well.

Another benefit of the location is the chance to visit the APS offices and the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL). Chief Membership Officer, Ken Martin, conducted a guided tour of the APS facility including all the areas that are normally off-limits to the public. The APC owns the restored Match Factory building and occupies about 55,000 of the total 100,000 square feet of space. The other footage is rented to local businesses and the rent received covers most of the facility expenses.

It is an impressive facility and I was most impressed in the warehouse area where donated philatelic material is stored and sorted. This very large area is overseen by volunteers Leonard and Darleen Bloom, who were also handling sales in the Stamp and Cover Shop. There is so much material there, that I think it would take a company of soldiers many months to sort it all. The sales area was offering terrific bargains on collections, individual stamps and covers, and other material just so they could clear it out. I purchased several items at steep discounts.

Librarian Scott Tiffney, led tours of the APRL. It is the largest philatelic library in the United States and has one of the world's largest and most accessible collections of philatelic literature. Its nearly four miles of shelving contain more than 23,000 book titles and 5,700 journal titles. They are working to increase their digital collections. The

library is open to the public and APS members can borrow books directly by mail. There were also many excess volumes on sale at the Stamp and Cover Shop at super bargain prices.

While I was there, I spent some time scanning about three dozen back issues of publications that were missing from digital archives I am assembling. There is no cost for this when you do it in person.

On Monday after classes, a bus load of us visitors went on a guided walking tour of the Penn State University campus that included dinner in the campus cafeteria. It has been 50 years since I graduated from college and the cafeteria certainly has changed since then. The food was good and there was a huge variety, from entrees to short order items, and it was “all-you-can-eat.” When I was 19 years old, I could eat A LOT. Not so much anymore.

On Wednesday evening, the APS held its Distinguished Philatelist Banquet in Sundman Hall preceded by a reception offering cocktails provided by Big Spring Spirits distillery, conveniently an APC tenant business located literally next door. The honoree this year was Wayne Youngblood. Youngblood is a well-known philatelic author and editor, who has also served on the APS Board of Directors and as an expert for American Philatelic Expertizing. He is the editor of the ATA journal *Topical Time*. In addition, he was teaching one of the four-day classes on “Stamp Technology,” and has taught at the Summer Seminar for 28 years.

If you are wondering, I took two of the two-day classes. The first was “Collecting and Exhibiting Picture Postcards” taught by Phil Stager and Bill Schultz. This class dealt more with the aspects of exhibiting these cards than with their identification and production. However, the instructors provided many useful tips on treating these cards. The class also provided example exhibits and discussions with experienced exhibitors.

The second course I took was “Facets of Highly Successful Exhibits” taught by Bill Schultz. This class also had several philatelic judges and advanced exhibitors as students. The discussions generated among the class members were both interesting and informative. I found the advice I received to be highly useful to help in improving my exhibit assembly and production.

I plan to attend the seminar again next year and strongly recommend it to others interested in learning more about the many aspects of our hobby.



Brisk Sales at the Stamp and Cover Shop