

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Somehow the calendar has flipped to the end of another year. It is hard to imagine where the time went. But, when I look back at all the activities and accomplishments, I suppose I should not be surprised.

This year we did not see many changes in the organization and activities of the Biology Unit. The Unit helped to sponsor the American Topical Association booth at the joint ATA-American Philatelic Society stamp show in Omaha, Nebraska, in August. This joint show was another very successful event for both organizations.

After two straight years of combined ATA-APS shows, the American First Day Cover Society will be joining the party next year for a triple joint show in Hartford, Connecticut. This major event is so significant that it has merited a brand new name: **The Great American Stamp Show.**



I strongly encourage every Unit member to come to this show next year. The ATA is making lots of plans to welcome you and the Biology Unit will be represented there as well. You will seldom find so many and varied dealers in one location and the exhibits are some of the best and most interesting that you will see anywhere. On top of all that, there will be a full schedule of philatelic activities, seminars, society meetings, social events, and other fun happenings to keep you entertained.

Recently, I read an article about Botox. The term is a registered trademark and an abbreviation for “botulinum toxin,” a neurotoxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. It is a very powerful poison. Just one gram of the toxin is enough to kill more than one million people. Two kilograms could kill the entire human population of the Earth. Despite this, it is used as a cosmetic treatment and to treat some medical disorders.

This article made me think about how we use euphemisms. People who have little concern about using “Botox” might think again when they realize they are being injected with a deadly “toxin.” It reminded me also of a piece of equipment we find in every modern passenger vehicle called an “air bag.” There is absolutely no “air” in an air bag. It is physically impossible to inflate such a device rapidly enough in the split second of a collision using air.

Instead, the inflation is accomplished by means of a controlled chemical explosion. I am pretty sure that the automotive industry rightfully concluded that consumers would be rather leery of buying a vehicle equipped with an “explosion bag.” Thus, the euphemism “air bag” entered our lexicon.

This issue marks the final column for our Invertebrate Zoology Associate Editor Ian Hunter. Ian was the Invertebrate editor between 1998 and 2004, and then came back to fill the job in 2007, when Roy Rings retired. Ian has given up collecting and is in the process of selling his collection. We wish him all the best and offer our sincere gratitude for his help and contributions to the Unit over this long period.

Now the Invertebrate Editor position is open and we are seeking someone to fill it. Please contact the Editor if you are interested. Otherwise, I will be twisting some arms very soon.

Jack R. Congrove

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