

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

[Ed. Note: President Ryan's column was not received by publication time, so this is an extract of the vignette she provided for the upcoming ATA handbook *Topical Adventures*.]

Organized in May 1951, by seven likeminded men, the Biology Study Unit was the second study unit to affiliate with the American Topical Association (ATA). Homer L. Jones was the first member (BU1) and the first unit president. By the following summer, the Unit had grown to 76 members.

The Biology Unit is the largest group dedicated to the international cooperative study of biological postal issues and related materials. We are proud of these international ties, which foster greater knowledge. At present, the unit boasts membership in thirteen countries. Each member brings their individual expertise to the organization. The Biology Unit strives to further education and awareness of the living world around us all. Many of the more than 100 members are professionals in their biological field of philately. The study unit meets annually at the ATA national show.

The Biology Unit has, over the years, contributed to the advancement and growth of the ATA. The unit was the first to offer awards for unit related exhibitions at the ATA shows. They also were the first to produce handbooks for the ATA. Since 1952, when the ATA instituted the Distinguished Topical Philatelist Award to recognize service to topical philately in general and to the ATA in particular, 120 individuals have received this honor. Thirty of these awardees (one-quarter) have been members of the Biology Study Unit. The Biology Study Unit also boasts the largest membership to become ATA elected board members. This support will continue into the future.



Laurie