

THE Philatelic Exhibitor

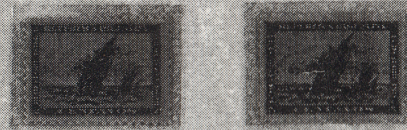
VOLUME 17

NUMBER ONE

JANUARY, 2003

ARGENTINA

On October 12, 1892, Argentina honored the 400th anniversary of the 'Discovery of America' by issuing *America's First Commemoratives*:



The World's First Columbians

Depicting Columbus's first American landfall, 200,000 stamps of each of these two values were purchasable—and valid for postage—on just that one anniversary day!

Post offices were mobbed by patrons clamoring for this pioneering issue, sold out by early afternoon. Rampant speculation, lasting throughout 1893, sent the set's prices sky-high—until its dramatic crash.

Here now is the story of this unprecedented emission, largely ignored by generations of philatelists.

UNADOPTED ESSAY — ARTIST'S PEN-INK-AND-WASH DRAWING. 1



By Antonio Bosco, staff artist of Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, Buenos Aires. His later watercolor, based on a penciled sketch by noted marine artist Eduardo de Martino, became the adopted model for the issue. [12/02]

Replacing A Cherished Title Page
See Page 11

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHILATELIC EXHIBITORS

Founded 1986

embarrassing comment, "Don't bother to come up because the award isn't here!"

On the other hand, it seems unreasonable that every specialty group should send its awards to all national shows, especially when there is a good chance that a qualifying exhibit in the specialty area of the Neanderthal and Cos-Magnon Philatelic Society will not be present. The bottom

line is there must be better communication between show awards chairmen and specialty society awards chairmen.

The latest edition (fifth) of the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging* offers a good starting point in Chapter 26 on special awards criteria. But it is not complete, it lacks the society contact information, and a list such as this gets out of date quickly.

Whoever takes on this thorny task needs to be responsible with good follow-up skills, and be detail oriented. He/She/They will provide a wonderful service to exhibitors, judges, show committees, specialty societies, and the hobby as a whole. Anyone want to step up to the plate?

FIP Internet Competition 2002

by Francis Kiddle RDP, FRPSL, Chairman of the FIP Literature Commission

We have just completed the fourth year of judging Internet Sites under the auspices of FIP. It is fascinating looking at the changes both in judging and in the status of the "exhibits." In 1999, we would never have thought that we would be judging a site with 450 pages devoted to a specific theme/subject.

Looking back, if there is one thing that the annual competition has shown us, it is the amount of philatelic material that is available for everybody on the web. The number of exhibits that we have judged is a small fraction of those that are devoted to philately on the web. However, we believe we have seen in competition some of the finest websites that exist.

After judging sites for four years, we find that they tend to fall into four categories.

First there are the "gateway" sites; those devoted to acting as the portal to other sites. For example, Year One "Best Site" was Joe Luft's Resource site that attempts to provide a link to every philatelic website on the worldwide web. Subsequently, there is Stamp2.com that adds much more information to the "browser/surfer." Also in this class are sites such as www.postalrates.info and <http://fly.to/philatelic> who in turn, supply an easy route into postal administration websites, which in turn provide so much information, particularly on modern postal rates.

Secondly, there are the generic subject sites. A prime example of these is SOSSI (Scouting on Stamps Society International — www.sossi.org) that links collectors of Scouting or Guiding themes with the story of Scouting Philately — a high quality site that won Year Two of the competition.

Year Three and Four have led us to new sites that are evolving steadily, those that provide so much information for specific subjects. Year Three was won by "Post Office in Paradise" — www.hawaiianstamp.com a site that provided information on every aspect of Hawaiian

philately. Year Four, this year, sees a new innovation, a site dedicated to a theme rather than a country — the superb engravings produced by Czeslaw Slania — www.slaniastamps.school.dk We would recommend the quality of the illustrations.

The final category of site is the Society Site. At this stage in its development, most sites are aimed at recruiting new members and at providing information on events and services for its members. Little is provided in terms of reference information such as philatelic references, aids to identifying forgeries, hints on how to develop a good collection, etc. There are some excellent sites such as that of the American Philatelic Society (www.stamps.org) and UK Philately (www.ukphilately.org.uk). However, they are still stereotyped and need to be developed such that they are the sites on the prime list of "Favorites" for all Internet users. Please do not get me wrong. At recruiting new members and providing a lot of factual information, many are excellent, but at educating both the junior collector and the novice senior, all have a long way to go. FAQ's are not the answer, instead there should be dedicated tutorials based on real seminar experience.

What also has changed? Sites nowadays tend to be planned in their layout much in the way of a good handbook. There is a front/home page (title page) and a list of contents (website plan). Chapters (sub-pages leading to detailed pages) provide an outline of the subject, split into sections. One advantage of a website compared with the printed book is that you can "post" on the web the story/subject as it develops or is written. Changes, through either increased research or positive comments, can be updated as they happen; a major advantage compared with the printed word, which tends to be "permanent" if for no other reason than cost. Graphics have improved enormously, although there is a two tier standard depending on the bandwidth of the terrestrial communications link with our computer, that can cause many problems and frustrations.

Perhaps a major problem can be the changes in URL of the links published; websites tend to be transitory and dependent on the vagaries of the commercial servers.

A question that is asked is why enter the FIP Internet Competition? Firstly, each site is graded from Certificate, Two stars, Three stars, Top five percent, and Best of Show. These awards can be placed on your site as indication of the "quantifiable" value of your site, judged by Accredited Literature judges. Secondly, your site name and URL are published throughout the world (and through cyber-space) and hopefully interest an attentive audience to visit and explore your website. Thirdly, and perhaps the most important, each webmaster receives a short critique from the judges. These critiques try to zoom into the areas where the website can be improved. They are written by experts in the field of websites and are designed to aid future developments rather than being simply critical of what has been done. To hire such expertise would cost far more than the modest \$US25 charge to enter the competition.

What are the difficulties met with in evaluating websites compared with other philatelic literature? The prime problem is that of establishing the size and scope of the website. Handling a book is simple — we know that it is so many pages long with a quantifiable number of illustrations. But a website? Depending on the webmaster's design it can be an easy task to establish scope, but believe me, many websites are very much like a maze — it takes a genius to understand the webmaster's intentions and establish the totality of the proffered information. How often are you, the browser, put off by seeing ant-like figures digging up a road, linked to the legend "site under construction?" The biggest turnoff for any judge, or viewer, is the time taken to download a page. In judging a book, it only takes a small part of a second to turn a page. However, the time taken to move onto the next page of a website depends on the complexity of the new page.

Looking towards more positive features, one of the main differences between the written text and a website is the ability to be able to search the site using word descriptors. This mode of operation is unique to electronic media and is the key factor why most of us use the Internet. A second major factor is that the website can provide excellent illustrations that can be downloaded in both hardcopy and in electronic format, and as such can be adapted for size, definition and color. Obviously, these can be downloaded onto our own album or research pages. However, there is a major disadvantage. The website and its images are transi-

tory compared with hardcopy/printed material. What you read today may not be available tomorrow. Thus, it is incumbent on all webmasters to adhere to a few simple rules. Each page should be dated, and, preferably, identified as being a temporary or permanent page, perhaps through the use of a numeric code. There should be a map of the site to assist the visitor. The webmaster's email address should be given to permit feedback. Finally, remember that your audience is worldwide.

Returning to the FIP Annual Internet Competition, year on year we see very significant improvements in many of the

entries. Good sites initially were the prerogative of the United States, but now are planned and compiled anywhere in the world. The websites contain important information and, through the Internet, are available to all philatelists. However, judging them under FIP literature rules is difficult and very time consuming. It is a task willingly undertaken by a small number of judges, and each year we find new ideas and continued development of the unique features of the Internet. We look forward to the 2003 competition (see www.f-i-p.ch), the results of that will be presented at Bangkok 2003.

Starting Beginners With One-Frame Exhibits

by Fran Adams

In a recent e-mail exchange, I was asked how experienced exhibitors might assist beginning exhibitors. The single frame format was of course the first thing that came to mind, but the 'how' remained a question and that's the subject of this article.

There's more to making this 'how' happen than just defining the vehicle (single frame format). Most of us have had more experienced exhibitors tell us what our first steps should be and of course they've provided criticism. This is natural and as it should be during the learning phase, so long as the sensitive new exhibitor doesn't get 'turned off' if the criticism is too harsh. What else can we do to encourage new exhibitors?

I personally love workshops. A group of exhibitors, both new and old, get together. We each show some stuff, describe our problems as we see them, get multiple opinions and usually even agree as to what might make the exhibit better. It's this interaction that provides the fuel for the fire, the feeling that others share your problem, your pain. It helps you to realize and even implement the most important changes to improve the exhibit.

Having said that, I'd like to take this a step further. Example: a couple of interested new exhibitors are located in the same area or belong to the same club. The opportunity for face-to-face interchange of ideas is immediate and also key, especially when dealing with inexperienced exhibitors. These novices can relate directly to a hands-on demonstration and discussion. The workshop is also a social learning experience for all.

So, a couple of points in making this work: #1 — single frame exhibiting for new exhibitors is the best way to go since it's

not overwhelming. Requirement #2 is a couple of experienced exhibitors as critics (typically the easiest of our needs to satisfy). #3 is guidance in the form of a neutral arbiter. This is a guide to help summarize the many opinions and define a path for the novice to follow in building their exhibit pages. They'll make their own judgments later on, but need a definite path to get over that first frame hump.

We might even take this a little further using a modified approach — working in a group where each participant shares — a communal effort if you will. We define an area that everyone feels is interesting and desires to take part in as everyone is going to build an exhibit on the same subject. I'd like to suggest a thematic here as they're very flexible from the execution point of view, but any subject of mutual agreement will work. The participants end up with somewhat similar exhibits, but that's not bad — it's the experience we're after. The entire exhibit building process is easier when sharing the theme and research efforts.

A couple of ground rules are of course necessary. Money. There should be an agreed upon limit of how much anyone can spend per item (and/or in total if this helps). That makes the whole thing less taxing as they work together and can't spend a fortune even if they wanted to. A time limit is also a good idea. Whatever the local show timetable is might be used so the frames can be shown together there. One last meeting should be scheduled a month before the local show to ensure everyone is on schedule and help those who aren't.

Everyone also starts with a checklist of the stamps for the area chosen. Including other philatelic elements is a good thing,

but the unavailability of ready-made lists or catalogs can be a drawback for these items depending on the theme chosen. For research, a first assignment might be going to the local library or bookstore and finding a couple children's books on the subject to share with the other participants. It's amazing how the index to a child's book resembles the outline of a thematic exhibit. Everyone must also share information on any out of the ordinary material found (like revenues) so everyone has information input.

Once our new exhibitors complete these assignments, the difference in the exhibits depends on how each person looks at the subject and how the material is organized. If all the basic points are covered in each exhibit, that's good and sharing information will promote that. It will be in the flow and detail where each participant learns to differentiate him or herself from the others.

If it's part of a club effort, the club can even sponsor a couple of 'special' awards if a small budget is available. Go for a local show first (as preparation) and then a national show in the vicinity. That allows the exhibitor to attend in person, get jury feedback and a walk to the podium to receive the award — a great motivator.

A joint exhibit owned by everyone in the group is not a good idea as someone is bound to end up with the short end of the stick when the effort is finished, having little or nothing material-wise to show for their effort. The idea is to give everyone an opportunity to create and have that creation available as a physical memory of the experience.

I hope the concept of this exercise will stimulate a small group of new exhibitors to new levels of unforeseen success.