

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Charles J. G. Verge



I would like to start off by apologizing to Clyde Jennings and to the Western Postal History Foundation. Nowhere in the two articles that we previously ran on the 1999 Youth Champion of Champions did we mention the generous support of Mr. Jennings and the Foundation for this youth endeavor. Each youth exhibitor receives the Fran Jennings Memorial Award for their participation in the event.

One of the major services the AAPE offers is an exhibit critique service. In the last few AAPE seminars I have led or attended at national shows, I have noted that many members still do not know or have to be reminded of this service. At the same time, many happy customers of the service are coming forward with stories about how their exhibits have received better awards at shows after using the service. I encourage you to use it. All it costs is making a photocopy of your exhibit and postage. Contact Harry Meier (P.O. Box 369, Palmyra, VA 22963, USA) for more information.

There are other methods that you can use to improve your exhibit. Hand it over to a friend or a family member for a good proof-read. You will be interested in seeing the number of typos these independent eyes can find. Another trick is to critically look at your exhibit when it is in the frames at an exhibition. Instead of spend-

ing all your time at the dealers booths or at seminars spend a few hours at your frames. After all it is the only time you can really see your exhibit the way others see it (unless you have your own frames at home). Bring a colleague or two from your collecting area to your frames and ask them to give some comments. One of the most important things to look for when the exhibit is in the frame is how balanced it is. Does one section overwhelm the others? Are all your meters or covers bunched in your thematic exhibit? Does your text or its font size overtake the philatelic items? These are just some of the items to look for in your review. The first time you do an honest and thorough review of your exhibit, I think you will find many small things to change that will improve your exhibit. Try it.

There are some controversial issues in our hobby and one of them is the number of frames that an exhibit is allowed in competition. The international world has set very rigid rules. It is either five or eight frames depending on your medal level. You get eight if your exhibit has received a large vermeil medal or higher at a previous world or continental exhibition. In the United States there is a maximum of 10 frames for a multi-frame exhibit. In Canada there is no limit. In the April 2000 TPE, Fran Adams, in a letter to the

Editor, suggests a different approach to the number of frames an exhibit could have. The suggestions are in support of a proposal by John Dunn to reduce the amount of space reserved for exhibits at a show (Nov.-Dec. issue, *US Stamp News*). Mr. Adams suggests that exhibits would compete against each other according to size. Please read Fran Adams' letter and I would appreciate your comments on the subject.

If The Stamp Show 2000 (London, England — May 22-28) and WIPA 2000 (Vienna, Austria — May 30-June 4) are any indication the Open/Social Philately Class is doing very well at the international level. Why is its North American equivalent, the Display Class, floundering? One-frame exhibits are a great success in North America but have gone nowhere internationally. Why is that? Exhibiting is changing drastically, exhibitors are stretching the limits to unknown levels but exhibitions and judging may not have kept pace. I believe it is time that we have a good discussion about all aspects of exhibiting in North America. I think it is time that all responsible bodies put together a team of individuals to come up with an in-depth look at and recommendations for exhibiting in the future. What do you think?

Communication and Comprehension by Francis Adams

If I experience frustration dealing with a jury, it's generally attributable to a comprehension problem — mine — not the jury's. This is partly due to the competitive exhibiting critique system. The critique is not designed for immediate two way communication — nor should it be as we'd never get finished. Nor does the jury have time to discuss any exhibit in detail, everyone in the room needs feedback.

It's the exhibitor's job to build an exhibit within published guidelines, according to our view of the subject and to make clear the intent of what we're showing. Judges interpret how well exhibitors comply with those same guidelines. It's the jury's job to point out unclear intent, according to their view of the subject, and their responsibility to suggest possible improvements.

Now the rub. Have you listened to comments during a critique and some are clear and some are nebulous at best? The foggy

bits are usually my brain filtering jury feedback and not being able to deal with it immediately. What I'm hearing may simply not fit my current mindset and/or view of my exhibit.

Jury members discussed aspects of the exhibit among themselves to reach a consensus. Not hearing that discussion, I often need a more detailed clarification of some comments. Time to review the impact of those comments is also key as some comments are important and others are less so. That's why I make notes and chew on things in a less active setting than at the critique.

Occasionally, two different jurors may even be saying the same thing, but for some reason, it doesn't register until I hear it a specific way. There are certain jurors who speak my language, so to speak, and I get the picture much quicker when listening to them. That doesn't mean other jurors aren't

just as knowledgeable or experienced, it simply means I'm more attuned to some.

A review at the frames and speaking with more than one judge works for me; the material is on display and the judges are commenting specifically. I need only invest my time and listen well to garner the most information with the least effort. Once I find a judge communicating on my wavelength, I listen even more carefully. They don't say what I want to hear, but that's why I'm listening.

So, gentlemen and ladies of the jury, please continue to have patience with those of us with furrowed brows. Try explaining what you mean with different words or, call over another judge who might provide a different perspective. With work, critiques result in improved exhibits, proving perhaps that we are listening after all! Thank you to all the judges having extended this effort in the past, it's appreciated.