

Federation to meet at World Stamp Expo

The next Federation meeting will be at 2 p.m., Saturday, July 15, during World Stamp Expo 2000 at the Anaheim Convention Center.

World Stamp Expo will have some 340 frames of open competition plus 57 frames in the court of honor, will run from July 7 to July 13 and will have six first-day ceremonies:

July 7: Achievements in Exploration

July 8: Landing on the Moon

July 9: Escaping the Gravity of Earth

July 10: Probing the Vastness of Space

July 11: Exploring the Solar System

July 13: Stampin' the Future Youth Stamps

The show will also have 62 meetings of various organizations, postal administrations from the United States and elsewhere; many rare stamps; a 3-D Space Discovery Theater; and artifacts on loan from NASA.

With all this going on, we are looking forward to an interesting time for all.

Special hotel rates are available. More information about World Stamp Expo is available from World Stamp Expo 2000, P.O. Box 44403, Washington, D.C. 20026-4403, or on the World Wide Web at <<http://www.stampsonline.com>>.

Opinion: A matter of liability

(When the Ventura County Philatelic Society asked Mekeel's & Stamps Magazine for sample copies to distribute at VENPEX in March, we had no way of knowing that it would contain an article that should be of interest to every organization that sponsors or may sponsor a stamp show. The article is the Editor's Album column in the March 17, 2000, issue by John L. Leszak and is reprinted with permission. Mekeel's & Stamps Magazine may be reached at (800) 635-3351 or by mail at P.O. Box 5050, White Plains, N.Y. 10602. – Editor)

Each year tens of thousands of stamp clubs conduct their shows and millions of people visit the shows. Volunteer efforts often unite to conduct some very spectacular and worthwhile shows. On paper, it

seems like such a wonderful experience, especially if everything goes according to plan and without incident. But what happens when something drastic occurs at a show? Most stamp clubs are neither prepared nor capable of handling unpleasant incidents.

Since stamp clubs are often merely a friendly gathering of philatelic friends, they seldom take the effort to explore their possible liabilities if something goes wrong at their shows. I've spoken to many clubs on this subject, and they all seem to pass on the topic of liability at stamp shows.

Many experience a sense of denial, others glibly remark that they'll worry about liability when something goes wrong. I've noted that most clubs possess a naïve belief that their shows will run smoothly and

(Continued on page 2)

About us

The Philatelic Review is published quarterly by The Federated Philatelic Clubs of Southern California.

The SESCAL Web site, which also includes information about the Federation and a list of member clubs, is at <www.sescal.org>

News about Federation or club events and other articles should be sent to the editor, John Weigle, at P.O. Box 6536, Ventura, CA 93006-6536, or, by e-mail, to <jweigle@vcnet.com>

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SESCAL 2000 will be Oct. 6-8 at Wyndham Los Angeles Airport Hotel, 6225 W. Century Blvd., Los Angeles

More about liability

(Continued from page 1)

without incident. One fellow told me that his club had been running shows for over 50 years without a single problem. When he asked me my opinion, I told him that his odds of an incident of liability were greater now than 50 years ago.

Just what sort of liability might a stamp club experience? Off the top of my head, I come up with theft, personal injury and damaged stamps.

Many stamp clubs insert a clause in their dealer contracts that absolve them from theft of material. I like to call it the "We want your bourse fee, but we don't care if you get ripped off clause." Despite this clause, I've heard of dealers who pursued claims of liability against stamp clubs for losses that occurred because the clubs provided less than adequate overnight security. Many stamp clubs view overnight security as a burdensome additional expense. They try to make up for it with quasi-security forces. Rather than pay for security, many clubs will have members sleep overnight in the show area.

My favorite recollection of lax security occurred when a particular stamp club voted to allot \$50 for overnight security. Several security agencies were contacted and the club soon learned that \$50 wouldn't buy them very much. Thus, it was decided that the 15-year-old son of one of the club's directors would sleep on a couch inside the bourse room. I took all my valuable inventory home that night...

Perhaps the greatest potential for liability against stamp clubs occurs with personal injury. Chances are, if someone trips and falls during a stamp show, the owner of the premises would be liable. However, what if a person falls into an exhibit frame and sustains an injury? Who pays for the stitches from the cut inflicted by a homemade bourse frame?

What about the frames themselves? Not long ago, a prominent club with great philatelic knowledge, but traditionally known as ultra-frugal, sustained the loss of half their exhibit frames in a minor traffic accident. Since they had no insurance, they had no recourse but to eat the loss of their frames. Even after this loss, they continue to sidestep the issue of liability insurance.

The worst scenario of liability for stamp clubs occurs when volunteers load and unload dealers at a show. Most clubs put together a ragtag assortment of "helpers" who are often pressed into service at the last minute to assist dealers with the cumbersome task of hauling material to and from a bourse table. While many stamp clubs have marvelous intentions, they seldom take into consideration the liability issue of providing assistance to dealers. For instance, what happens if one of the helpers drops a box and the philatelic contents pour out in a muddy puddle. Who pays for the loss?

Here's another scenario: One of the helpers sustains a serious back injury while unloading a dealer's inventory. Who's liable for the injury? The dealer, the individual, or the stamp club which provided the individual to the dealer? This is a question that one of our readers with a legal background might want to handle.

Years ago, I recall a show that was held in a hall that was only accessible by climbing three flights of stairs. It was a grueling setup and breakdown, but the club always had members on hand to assist dealers. One year, the regular helpers were not available and the dirty deed fell upon the president of the club who was a three pack a day smoker. He unloaded about four dealers before he went into a cold clammy sweat and de-

(Continued on page 3)

More about liability

(Continued from page 2)

cided to stop. That left the remaining dealers in a bind. They had to haul all their material in and up the congested narrow stairs. The next year, many boycotted the show and shortly thereafter, the show folded.

Many show promoters assure dealers that people will be on hand to assist with loading and unloading. But I've never witnessed any "professional" movers (who were bonded, licensed and insured). Too often these helpers are college students, boy scouts or club members who are lured into helping with the promise that the dealers will give them a very big tip for their assistance.

Most stamp clubs take a naïve approach to the handling of exhibits. I've watched club members load frames on tables with a perilous cup of coffee nearby. But what happens if an exhibit is lost or stolen? Who pays for the loss? This is another factor that most clubs choose to ignore and sweep under the carpet.

About 20 years ago, I watched a busy crew of volunteers prepare frames and insert exhibits for a show. They had what appeared to be an efficient operation. One club member carried in the frames. Another club member took a bottle of Windex and spritzed each frame while another club member walked behind and wiped each frame clean with a wad of paper towels. Then, another club member inserted the exhibit into a frame, and finally, the frame was carried away to be assembled in the exhibit area.

All went well with this procedure, until the person with the Windex worked himself into a cleaning frenzy. He was working so fast that he failed to realize that he had just sprayed Windex over a lovely exhibit

of Banknotes on cover that didn't have glass over it. A mad scramble ensued to dab the covers in the exhibit with paper towels. The covers appeared to be spared, but the exhibit pages sustained a slight warp. The exhibitor was never informed of the incident, and as a consolation to take his mind off any suspicion, the club arranged to have his exhibit win several awards. After seeing that shoddy operation, I decided never to exhibit. It just isn't worth the risk of subjecting one's material to the blind enthusiasm of ultra-enthusiastic volunteers.

So who's responsible if a stamp club incurs an incident of liability? Over the years, I've been told that a club's officers could be held liable, followed by the general membership. An insurance person once told me that he'd look for a club member with a beefy liability rider on an insurance policy. But who would want to suffer through the ramifications of legalities, when any club could and should take out an annual liability policy? With all the possibilities of things going wrong at a show, it's a wonder that anyone would want to get involved.

Perhaps it's the reason why more people don't get involved with putting on club functions; they'd rather let the ultra-enthusiasts assume the liability. What's your opinion on the liability of stamp clubs? Do you take risks, or does your club carry insurance? Has your club ever experienced an incident of liability? Who assumed the responsibility? Sound advice in this matter, in the form of a Letter to the Editor from attorneys and those in the insurance industry would truly be appreciated.

Minutes of the Jan. 22, 2000, meeting of The Federated Philatelic Clubs of Southern California

CALL TO ORDER: President Bill Estes called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. at SANDICAL. There were 16 members in attendance, representing 11 clubs and philatelic organizations. The attendees included five past presidents of the Federation. Ray Clary, as the outgoing president, thanked all those who had made his tenure so pleasurable, and indicated that he hoped to continue to support the Federation through the SESCAL committee.

The first order of business was the election of officers previously nominated:

President	Bill Estes
Vice President/ President Elect	Pete Baillet
Vice President	no nominee

(Continued on page 4)

More about Minutes

(Continued from page 3)

Secretary	Carolyn Clary
Treasurer	Waltraud Helms

After a call for further nominations from the floor received none, the above officers, with the exception of the vice president, were elected by acclamation.

Mr. Estes welcomed everyone to the last Federation meeting of the millennium in San Diego. He then thanked SANDICAL for providing the venue for the meeting and introduced the officers of the Federation (Carolyn Clary, secretary, was excused; minutes taken by Ray Clary). Bill then asked those present to introduce themselves and give their club affiliation. Visitor Miles Manchester, from VPE, Virginia, introduced himself and discussed his collecting interests.

Mr. Estes asked Ray Clary to convey the Federation's solicitations to Carolyn Clary who underwent quadruple heart by-pass surgery on Jan. 14.

REPORTS: The minutes of the previous meeting, as published in the Philatelic Review, were approved with minor corrections.

Waltraud Helms presented the treasurer's report:

Balance as of Sept. 30, 1999	\$ 256.09
Income	\$ 0.00
Donation for Youth Computers	\$ 500.00

Expenses	<u>\$ 83.99-</u>
Distinguished Service Award	\$ 83.99

Ending Balance as of Dec. 31, 1999 \$ 672.10

NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting, the treasurer's report for the Permanent Exhibition Account for 1999 was presented as below:

Balance as of Jan. 1, 1999	\$6,582.98
Income	
1999 Mega Show	\$3,000.00
1999 Interest	<u>\$ 117.02</u>
	\$3,117.02 +
Expenses	
12 month's Frame storage fees	\$2,736.00 -
(Fee @ 228.00/month)	
Balance as of Dec. 31, 1999	\$6,964.00

Wallace Craig gave the SESCAL Report as follows:

1. SESCAL is now on the World Wide Web. The 2000 prospectus can be accessed there.
2. SESCAL 2000 will feature the Air Mail Society, the China Society, and the Postal Stationery Society.
3. SESCAL 1999 was very successful.
4. There will be a SESCAL 2000 cancellation.
5. There was a discussion revolving around attempting to get a first day ceremony at SESCAL, since the month of October is National Stamp Collecting Month for the U.S. Postal Service.
6. Wallace noted that he is awaiting final accounting information to complete the financial report on SESCAL '99.

(Continued on page 5)

More about Minutes

(Continued from page 4)

OLD BUSINESS:

Bill Estes noted that we have not yet found a Federation vice president candidate. Steve Tucker of the Ventura County stamp club was suggested as a possibility. Any other suggestions would be gratefully appreciated.

Bill Estes thanked Louise Christen for her diligent and outstanding efforts in publishing the Federation Reporter. The Federation needs to have a replacement editor. If you know someone who may be interested, please contact Bill after the meeting.

APS Charter: We must send in our annual report to APS. Ray Clary indicated that Bob de Violini was appointed to serve as Chapter Representative for the Federation. A certificate for 50 years membership in APS was presented at SESCAL '99, thanks largely to Bob's efforts in getting our membership reinstated. Ray has just received the annual APS membership application, which he will forward to Bob de Violini.

NEW BUSINESS:

Larry Parks noted that Herb Riker, past president of the Los Angeles Philatelic Society, had passed away. Herb was noted for his extensive and fascinating collection of informative cachets. He made them himself, and was responsible for creating many very collectible covers. Herb will be missed by all who knew him.

Waltraud Helms announced that Federation dues are due from member clubs. New dues are \$10 per year. Ray Clary paid dues for Orange County Philatelic Society.

A motion to hold a special Federation meeting at VENPEX to show our support for the Ventura County club was discussed and passed unanimously. (A special meeting was needed as by-laws support only one meeting per quarter.)

The World Stamp Expo 2000 show being held in Anaheim, July 7-16, will provide a booth for the Federation to use. A general discussion was held about staffing this booth and also promoting Federation clubs at the same time. We expect to provide frames for World Expo 2000. The discussion about World Stamp Expo 2000 evolved to a discussion of the Federation history archives and what we could do to showcase the Federation. Who has the archives? (Winand Hess, who was appointed Federation historian some years ago.) Winand discussed the archives and how he had in the past created one- and two-frame exhibits of the archival material to show Federation history. It was agreed that we should try to create a two-frame exhibit of this material for the World Stamp Expo 2000 show, and for SESCAL 2000. Winand agreed to continue to serve as the Federation historian and was re-appointed by Bill Estes.

A request was made by Dick Willing to update the Federation club roster with current contact names, addresses, meeting times, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses. This will be done and presented to the members at the special Federation Meeting at VENPEX 2000.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Bill Estes asked that members support VENPEX, March 18-19, at the Ventura County Fair Grounds; WESTPEX, April 28-30; and ORCOPEX, Aug. 4-6.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Federation will be in conjunction with World Stamp Expo 2000 at the Anaheim Convention Center, with times and dates to be provided by Bill Estes.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,
Ray Clary, acting secretary**

SESCAL Corner

By Wallace Craig
Chairman

The plans for the last SESCAL in this millennium are well on their way. We have three organizations meeting with us this year. They are the American Air Mail Society, United Postal Stationery Society and the China Stamp Society. As a stampaholic, I can say I belong to all three. We are proud and happy to see these outstanding organizations sharing their time with us.

As is always the case we need as much help as possible in putting up the show. All those who come down on Thursday, Oct. 5, will have their parking paid. The takedown on Sunday, Oct. 8 will start at 4 p.m. sharp. It is a Jewish holiday and every courtesy possible will be made to allow them

to get to Temple on time.

I am looking forward to seeing you all at SESCAL's last show of the millennium. The first show of the millennium will be in 2001.

FPCSC Philatelic Review
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TO: