

The PHILATELIC REVIEW

The Federated Philatelic Clubs of Southern California
And Federation Reporter

December 2000

Federation to meet at SANDICAL

The next Federation meeting will be at 2 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 27, at SANDICAL Stamp Expo 2001 at Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd., Del Mar.

The show, sponsored by the San Diego Philatelic Council, runs Friday-Sunday, Jan. 26-28.

SESCAL 2001: Same hotel, new name

By Wallace Craig

On Dec. 1, Jim Bowman and I went to the old Wyndham Hotel for a meeting with the new owners. In that meeting it was discovered the new hotel name will be Radisson.

Discussions transpired concerning SESCAL's use of the facility. We were informed the hotel will be opened for use on May 1, 2001.

There will be a complete remodeling of the rooms and a complete change of the lobby. The old dining room will be

changed into meeting rooms or some other use. The formal dining room never did well. We are sure those who used it can never remember its being fully utilized. One can see work being accomplished.

There will also be a new parking structure and swimming pool. From all we saw and the discussions we had, it seems to be a good move.

SESCAL 2001 has its dates accepted. A second meeting will be held shortly after the facility opens

Why one collector came back

By Bill Kaiser

(The last issue included an expanded version of a column I wrote for the Ventura County Star and the Ventura County Philatelic Society Newsletter. I received a thoughtful response from a man who had dropped out of collecting and then returned to the hobby. His experience might include some clues on how we could attract all those former collectors we know are out there. — John Weigle, editor)

My mother-in-law recently gave me a copy of your column titled "Getting former collectors back in the habit." Seeing that I am one of these "former collectors," I wanted to share with you my story.

My best guess is that in the early '60s my Aunt Emma introduced me to stamp collecting. Initially, I collected anything that was old, colorful or interesting. Soon I specialized in mint U.S. and U.S. plate blocks. Based on the last album updates, I must have stopped collecting in 1968, although my mother continued to pick up a plate block now and then through the mid-70s.

Since then, I've moved 8-10 times, and only on those occasions did I ever see or even think about my stamps — that is, until I received a copy of the USPS "USA Philatelic" a year or so ago. In looking through the publication, I discovered that a minor interest in stamps still lurked somewhere within me. I bought a couple of the souvenir sheets from Pacific '97, and my interest began to grow only very slightly. With further issues, I picked up a few more sheets when something seemed of interest to me.

Then, my wife asked me what my most valuable stamp was. I had no idea, so I took out my collection (which now includes several albums I inherited from Aunt Emma). In trying to identify that "most valuable" stamp, I had only a 30-plus-year-old catalog from a stamp company called "Brooks." (*I'm guessing this might be an old Brookman catalog — JSW*) That being only slightly dated, I tried looking at e-Bay. The bottom line is that I was somewhat disappointed that the value of my collection had not grown to tens of thousands of dollars. But what was quite exciting was finding a

(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

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More about recruiting

(Continued from page 1)

source for stamps at prices that seemed very reasonable. My interest continued to grow as I saw all of the stamps that are readily available and relatively affordable (at least some of them).

All of this took place just prior to the World Stamp Expo 2000, which I attended on three different days. I think it was at that time that my wife began using the word addicted when referring to my newfound interest in stamps. I'm still specializing in mint U.S. singles, and I'm pretty much current from 1925 to date with commemoratives, missing only four or five airmails. I've yet to begin putting stamps into the definitive albums (I've acquired the White Ace albums for these three areas).

That being said, I'd like to attempt to address the question you posed in your article: What drew me back to stamp collecting?

As mentioned in my story, the first thing that caught my eye was the "USA Philatelic." The current issues are just as interesting today as they were 30 years ago. I can now afford many of the stamps that 30 years ago were way beyond my reach. Stamps can now be purchased through e-Bay at a price, and in most cases, well below catalog and dealer prices.

The e-Bay bidding experience makes stamp collecting a much more exciting experience. At some point in my life I'll be retired from the day-to-day workforce. The idea of supplementing my income by trading stamps is very appealing.

Being so recently re-born, I'm not sure I have any great suggestions as to how to approach either new or returning collectors. I do think that the USPS is putting only a small effort into supporting stamp collecting. It produces some fantastic products, including the yearbooks, souvenir sheets, posters, framed matted covers, FDCs and a number of other products. One of the weaknesses I see is its marketing approach. An excellent example (actually, a poor example) was the World Stamp Expo 2000 in Anaheim. I live 15 minutes from the convention center, and if I hadn't seen the event mentioned in the USA Philatelic, I'd never even have known it was in town. No TV or radio coverage that I heard even once. I know for a fact the exhibitors at

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the show were extremely disappointed, and I can't blame them. I'm sure the philatelists of the area were aware of it, but the general public had no idea.

In business, when a company no longer advertises for whatever reason, it is doomed. Other than the "USA Philatelic" magazine, I can think of no USPS marketing effort on the behalf of stamp collecting. I do see an increase in its effort to sell its mail services, but none directed at the stamp collector. It seems to me that a company with the distribution resources of the USPS should be able to produce and deliver advertising more effectively than is being done currently.

Why doesn't the USPS produce a stamp to benefit its own cause? In 1972, it issued a stamp commemorating stamp collecting, and I'm not aware of anything since. I don't know what is required to issue a USPS stamp, but if I were in charge (ha, ha) I'd be pushing my own cause a bit more aggressively.

Sorry to have rambled so long, but you did ask the questions!

Living in Long Beach, I have no regular access to your column. Do you have a Web site or an e-mail letter that carries your column? If not, I'm going to have to wait until my mother-in-law sends her next newspaper clippings.

Are you aware of any stamp columns published in the Long Beach/Los Angeles areas?

(Ordinarily, I would omit the last few paragraphs, but they do give me a chance to plug my employer's Web site <www.insidevc.com>. Search on the name John Weigle to find the stamp columns that are online. Can any Federation members who live in the Long Beach/Los Angeles area help with the question? Are there are any stamp columns in the local papers? If not, should we make it a goal to try to get some? — Editor)

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Coming events 2001

Jan. 26-28: SANDICAL:
See front page.

March 17-18: VENPEX,
annual show of the Ventura
County Philatelic Society,
Gem & Mineral Building,
Ventura County Fairgrounds
(Seaside Park), Ventura

April 27-29: WESTPEX,
Cathedral Hill Hotel, San
Francisco, Calif. (Future
Dates: April 26-28, 2002;
April 25-27, 2003; April 23-
25, 2004; April 22-24,
2005.)

Oct. 5-7: SESCAL,
Radisson Hotel (formerly
Wyndham Los Angeles Air-
port Hotel), 6225 W. Cen-
tury Blvd., Los Angeles, the
annual Federation-sponsored
show. Future dates: Oct. 4-6,
2002; Oct. 3-5, 2003; Oct. 1-
3, 2004; Oct. 7-9, 2005.

Minutes of the Oct. 7, 2000, meeting of The Federated Philatelic Clubs of Southern California

Call to order: President-elect Pete Balliett called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. at SESCAL 2000. There were 17 members attending with 15 clubs represented. Pete Balliett was standing in for President Bill Estes who is on his honeymoon.

Mr. Balliett, as his first order of business recognized Louise Christian for her 25 years of dedication to the Federation and her long tenure as the Federation newsletter editor.

Mr. Balliett welcomed everyone, introduced the officers and had people in attendance introduce themselves.

Reports: The minutes of the last meeting were read. Corrections were made regarding Bob Thompson's status as related incorrectly at the Expo 2000 meeting. Mr. Thompson is not a fugitive, but was freed on his own recognizance. There were apparently three Robert Thompsons on the police books in Ventura and incorrect information was released. The minutes were accepted as corrected.

Waltraud Helms gave the treasurer's report for the period of July 1, 2000, through Sept. 30, 2000:

Balance as of June 30, 2000	\$ 271.98
Income	\$ 110.00
Expenses	\$ 159.24
Balance as of Sept. 30, 2000	\$ 222.74

It was moved and seconded to accept the treasurer's report.

Wallace Craig presented the SESCAL report as follows:

1. There were 3,800 postcards sent out to remind people about SESCAL. Today's attendance was 280.

2. Wallace announced that this would be his last SESCAL as general chairman. Ray Clary has agreed to take the position but Mr. Craig will remain as his assistant.

3. Mr. Craig will be dealing with the new hotel ownership. All contracts are expected to be honored.

4. Regarding the case against Bob Thompson, Jim Bowman set up the case and

researched all of the documentation. The trial is expected sometime after Oct. 30, 2000. SESCAL is hoping for restitution and probation. There has been no cost to SESCAL for legal fees.

Mr. Craig recognized Waltraud Helms for her hard work in getting information together for the district attorney. It took six months to accumulate the facts. \$17,542 was taken.

A new policy requires a regular audit so that there is no possibility of even an appearance of irregularity. Earl Norris and Bob de Violini conducted the last audit. Les Landfair suggested that a policy of no double office holding could also prevent a repeat of the problem. Mr. Balliett could appoint a committee to look at a change of the by-laws. Les Landfair, Ken Weber and Ray Clary were appointed to look at the by-laws with an eye to possible changes.

Old Business: Ray Clary announced that the youth turnout had been disappointing. SESCAL is seeking a means to bus kids to SESCAL 2001. The Geosafari games purchased by the Federation are available for use by the federation clubs for a nominal cost of shipping and replenishment of batteries.

New Business: Les Landfair announced that SANDICAL will be at the Del Mar Fairgrounds Jan. 26-28, 2001. The show hotel will be the Del Mar Hilton. There will be no charge to get into the show, but there will be a fee for parking. The next Federation meeting will be at SANDICAL at 2 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 27.

SANDICAL organizers are looking into the possibility of a shuttle from the train depot in Oceanside.

There was no further business.

Wallace Craig moved that the meeting be closed. Ken Weber seconded the motion. Pete Balliett closed the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Happy holidays to all Federation members and clubs.

Ventura sponsors annual Youth Stamp Fair

By John Weigle

The Ventura County Philatelic Society has tried to attract new collectors to the hobby with an annual Youth Stamp Fair that is now 10 years old. It's held on the third Saturday in October. This year, about 80 people registered, a smaller crowd than we've had in previous years..

We're not sure how successful we'll be in the long run, although several people have returned for several years in a row, so we know we've generated at least some interest. In fact, one girl attended every fair until this year's; we don't know if she has dropped out of collecting or was just too busy to attend.

Unfortunately, we will probably never know how successful – or unsuccessful – we've been because so many people collect as children, drop out and then return in later years. My hope has always been that children who attend the Youth Stamp Fair will remember the adult collectors they saw at the event when they get older and are looking for something to occupy some of their adult hours. By the time they decide to return to the hobby, however, they might have moved to another community or those of us running the Youth Stamp Fair might not be around to see them return. Still, if we do nothing to attract people to the hobby, we can be reasonably certain it will ultimately die or at best grow very slowly.

The Youth Stamp Fair is held in the Anacapa Middle School cafeteria in Ventura because I advise a junior club at the school. If we didn't have that connection we'd have to find a different location, which would probably cost us money. That would put a definite damper on the effort because we must already rent a site for our annual show, VENPEX. Interestingly, only a few of the Anacapa club members have attended any of the Youth Stamp Fairs, even though the club co-sponsors the event, and the members help fill the goodie bags and send out the invitations.

If you're interested in trying something similar, here's a rundown of what we do.

Those attending sign in at a registration table. This gives us a list of people to send invitations to in the following year and a central spot to distribute whatever goodies we have been able to get. This is also where visitors guess the number of stamps in a large peanut butter jar. The person who comes closest wins the jar, along with a world album, hinges, tongs, a magnifier and a perforation gauge, all bought by the club. The jar and other prizes are awarded at a regular society meeting on the third Monday of November (in the past we did it at our first meeting of the month on the first Monday, but the church we meet in is also a polling place, and working around the voting booths proved too complicated).

Those attending can visit the rest of the tables in any order, and we encourage them to visit empty tables rather than waiting to start at the first one and moving clockwise. The people running each table give a brief demonstration of whatever technique they're showing, answer any questions and stamp the Passport to Fun that people get when they sign in.

Those who complete the passport get extra stamps when they leave (everyone gets a packet of stamps when they register, too).

The workstations cover:

Soaking: We emphasize soaking stamps rather than tearing them off paper and show the process, using stamp on colored paper and white paper to demonstrate the potential problems of colored paper.

Storage and mounting: We try to show a variety of methods, ranging from glassine envelopes to stock books to printed albums.

Literature: It doesn't always succeed, but the idea is to show beginning material that can be found fairly easily. This should include some stamp finders, the USPS Guide to U.S. Stamps, the Black Book of U.S. stamps, Scott catalogs, Brookman catalog and other materials members are willing to lend.

Perforations and watermarks: These are probably of limited interest to brand new collectors, but we want to show that they exist and how to find them. We used to include watermark trays in our prize packages but stopped because we didn't want to provide the fluid (because of the cost and the possible dangers to children) and the tray seemed pointless without it.

World collecting: Two of our members, the husband-wife team of Gordon and Virginia Williams, prepared a stamp ID quiz (the people at the table are generous with clues), and everyone who takes it wins a prize.

Topicals and covers: The idea here is to show some of the many topics that collectors enjoy. We're guessing that many children might be more attracted to dogs, cats and other such topics than to plating definitive stamps or finding numbers on plate number coils.

Cachet design: Everyone who wants to can prepare a cachet, based either on the stamps they pick for the envelopes or simply their artistic talents. This year, we used the special cancel prepared by the American Philatelic Society for Stamp Collecting Month to cancel the covers. If you have a cachet contest, be sure to prepare some sample envelopes showing the space needed for the address, stamp and cancel. Many youths have little or no experience sending letters. We give prizes for first, second and third places in three age groups.

Pick and choose: Surprise! This is our most popular area. Using stamps donated by club members and others, we prepare several boxes of stamps for the children to search through. We start with U.S. and foreign boxes, but they don't always stay sorted. Participants can take as many stamps as they want, as long as they're not just scooping them up and putting them in a bag. We ask adults taking stamps to pay a nickel each for them to discourage our own members (and other adults) from getting lots of free stamps for their collections from material donated for youth work.

(Continued on page 5)

More about Youth Stamp Fair

(Continued from page 4)

Boy Scout merit badge adviser: Ken Weber, who is also our Federation representative, is a certified merit badge counselor and helps Scouts working on the Stamp Collecting merit badge.

Because I work at the local newspaper, we have also been able to have a design-a-stamp contest on the paper's Young Star (youth) page. The paper runs the rules and a box with a perforations-like border for the contestants to design their stamps. We also accept larger drawings. We provide a theme (this year's was sea creatures, based on the Stamp Collecting Month stamps) and require that the designs include "USA" and the first-class rate (we tell them what it is at the time of the contest). We give first, second and third prizes in three age groups, just as we do with the cachets.

The winners in the jar contest and the cachet contest get prize packages that include at least a certificate prepared by one of our computer-literate members (Helen Long), hinges, tongs, magnifier and perforation gauge. They also get to pick a prize from the items we've received from various dealers and publishers. The winners of the design-a-stamp contest get the certificate and stamp packets. We don't include the collecting tools because many of the entrants don't come to the Youth Stamp Fair and we have no way of knowing how interested they are in collecting.

This year, we gave the design winners the beginning stamp album published by the American Stamp Dealers Association.

We have had excellent results obtaining donations from

President's message

First, I wish to thank all the thoughtful Federation members who signed the "Congratulations" card for their kind thoughts.

Between getting married and a wonderful nine-day train trip to Glacier National Park during "Change of Colors," I had to leave SESCAL at noon on Saturday. I thank Pete Baillet, president-elect, for performing the president's duties during the remainder of SESCAL.

This issue of The Philatelic Review will reach you during the frenzy of the holiday season. I hope it is happy and very merry indeed. As the holiday season winds down, there will again be time to direct our energy toward philatelic interests.

Last year provided challenges to the Federation that included theft charges against a former SESCAL chairman, a drop in the number of dealers and, therefore, a drop in SESCAL revenue, and the sale of the Wyndham Los Angeles Airport Hotel and its impact upon future SESCAL shows. Each of these issues has either been resolved or is under control as reported elsewhere in this issue.

A year ago, I voiced three concerns: stamp sales on the Internet affecting stamp shows such as SESCAL; e-mail accounting for a much greater portion of written communications; and getting new members into our hobby.

My first concern seems unfounded. According to the "Insider" in the Dec. 4 issue of Linn's, ridiculously high prices initially received from e-Bay philatelic sales rapidly diminished as this market quickly attracted new dealers offering much competitive material. Prices normalized and e-Bay is becoming a market for lower-priced material.

Auction agents are busier than ever, and collectors seem to prefer dealing with a real person when obtaining more expensive material.

My second concern also seems to be unfounded. New issues of U.S. stamps and quantities printed of each issue indicate that the annual number of stamps produced is increasing.

I remain concerned about new members, but that concern is somewhat abated after seeing kids attending AND EXHIBITING at SESCAL 2000.

Frames had been assembled and exhibitors were mounting their materials. A very bored young lady stood by while a young boy, no older than 14, mounted his exhibit dealing with California postal history. I did a double take when I noted it to be of "professional" quality, telling a story, and doing it well. He answered all my questions, including displayed items and how he had made pages on a computer in impressive detail.

I shifted my focus to the young lady. No, she was not a relative; she was a "Nanny," currently pressed into the not too happy role of chauffeur.

I noticed an exhibitor looking at the boy's exhibit after the judging on the following day, and I was unable to resist telling him of the exhibitor's youth and knowledge.

"I know," he said. "I'm a dealer, and he bought several of the exhibit items from me over the last three years." This made my day!

The year 2001 always seemed to be some date in the distant future, the true beginning of the next millennium, a date to be associated with a rather memorable science fiction movie. It is here ... we are here ... what will it bring? I predict that it will bring confidence ... confidence in collectors, in the dealers, in SESCAL, and in the hobby.

HAPPY 2001!

Bill Estes, President

The editor's corner

I apologize for the lateness of this issue, but problems getting contributions, including the time and place of the meeting, delayed production. With any luck, most of you will get it in time to plan your attendance at the next meeting at SANDICAL. (As usual, I won't be there because I work on Saturdays.)

The Reporter is published quarterly, so we need a long advance notice of your shows or other public events. I'd like to run a fairly detailed calendar of special events of Federation member clubs, but I can't do it unless someone tells me about them. Please include me on the distribution list for your show prospectus and for any other notices you send to the philatelic press. My address is John Weigle, P.O. Box 6536, Ventura, CA 93006-6536, or you can e-mail me at <jweigle@vcnet.com>. And if it's not too much trouble, I'd like to see your newsletters, too. They'll give me ideas about things that you might not have time to write up and send.

There has been no response to the article in the last issue about retaining members. Is no one trying to do it, or has everyone been too busy attracting new members and keeping the old ones to tell the rest of us how you do it?

All the clubs I've had any experience with (stamps and otherwise) have problems keeping old members and getting new ones, so I find it hard to believe that Federation members don't face the same difficulty. But I'm also sure that some of you have great successes, and we'd like to share them with other Federation members. Please send your ideas and techniques to me at the above e-mail or regular mail addresses so we can all help each other.

I'd also like to know what you do for your regular programs. The Orange County Philatelic Society has a white elephant sale (not necessarily philatelic material) near the holidays, according to its newsletter, and it seems to draw a good response from the members. What do the rest of you do? I'm especially interested in programs that don't cost much because none of us has a giant treasury.

Finally, does your group have a Web site? If so, please send me the URL (uniform resource locator) so we can publish a list in The Reporter.

— John Weigle, editor

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FIRST CLASS

TO: