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WE think

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF WOMEN EXHIBITORS

In today's world of wanting "instant gratification," philately can be a painstakingly S—L—O—W process. Nancy Clark explains why.

Some subjects take a lifetime to collect

While I know it is popular to encourage folks to get their collections in the frames as soon as possible, the fact remains that there are some subjects that really do take a long time to understand and for which it takes a long time to accumulate sufficient materials for a fully "ready" collection.

I remember watching my grandmother put together her molasses doughnuts. She didn't measure anything, just knew how much of each element to put in the bowl. When it came time to fry them up in lard, she knew when the temperature was right without using a thermometer. After all, she'd done these on an old wood stove when I was tiny and was still making them using an electric deep skillet. The experience bred by years of work in the kitchen counted. She knew how to change the ingredient mix when the weather was damp or exceptionally dry. She automatically adjusted for cutting them out with a glass or with a tin cutter. This was experience, and that counts.



But in collecting, it's not just experience that counts. I used to joke with the head of the Cultural Olympiad for the Olympic Games in 1996 that collectors don't have want lists, they have death lists, referring to the fact that on unique items,

experience has shown us who has that special item, but we are aware that it likely will not be placed on the market until that owner leaves this world. This man was actually upset at this concept, but it is a fact that there are certain items

which exist in sufficiently small numbers that they are not readily available.

Judges are fond of citing the dictum that a collection with depth is one that cannot be purchased on a single bourse floor; in other words, it takes some time and care to assemble a worthy exhibit. If you can replicate what is in the frames by a single trip to a stamp show, it is too early to show the material in the frames.

“There is enough, in most collecting areas, for there to be multiple award winning collections. However, the focus must be clearly defined and maintained.”

This raises a different but related question; how many people can successfully exhibit a specialized area of philately? There are a number of approaches to this issue. Due to the scarcity of “star quality” items, just how can more than a few collectors exhibit in an area (while they are waiting for the necessary individuals to bring to sale those key items).

At a recent show I saw several collections of South Africa, all of which had significant rarities. Some crossed over the same spheres, but their focus was sufficiently different that all of the exhibits did well. And therein lies a truth. There is enough, in most collecting areas, for there to be multiple award winning collections. However the focus must be clearly defined and maintained.

I recently was able to obtain at auction a cover I never thought I’d own. The Kennebunk MS postmark has only two copies recorded. It was a political “statement” by the postmaster of Kennebunk, Massachusetts,

¹ Bowdoinham has a similar postmark, used both before separation and after. It, while desirable, is more common.

² In the auction of David Jarrett’s material, the first lot went for \$4500. The second lot, the Kennebunk MS, went for \$1300.

District of Maine. He did not want to see the area secede from Massachusetts to be a state on its own.¹ When the better of the two covers extant came up for sale, I was ready.

So now, finally having achieved the opportunity to eat spaghetti for a month due to getting the Kennebunk MS cover, I now have the item I’ve taken a lifetime to acquire. Actually the cover’s auction price was not as much as it might have been. Scarcity is not always reflected in cost; rather cost influenced by popularity. The collection is now one that I will always be comfortable sharing with friends either in the frames or in person.

But that single cover, which will be the newest star in the firmament of my District of Maine exhibit, did not keep me from exhibiting and achieving decent award levels prior to this fall. My first international gold level exhibit at Rocpex Taipei in 1981 did not have this cover; but it focused on Maine Postmasters and how they treated the mail. The key item then was the earliest postmaster free frank from the District of Maine. Since this Kennebunk cover does not have a postmaster free frank it was not essential to that story. The Way Mail from Maine exhibit also did not need this cover, though it won the Single Frame Grand back when Platinum was still an award level. For that exhibit, the key item was a way cover that traveled by water.

Other special items starred in other exhibits featuring Maine. It is not always essential to have the “collection of a lifetime” to create an exhibit nor to win a good award.

Of course now, as I am frantically rewriting exhibits for the northeastern state postal history competition at NOJEX, I am placing this Kennebunk MS cover prominently. Having achieved the collection of a lifetime, it’s time to share it with proper, if restrained, pomp!

[Ed.’s Note: Nancy’s exhibit received a gold medal at NOJEX. Congratulations, Nancy!]

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This is a publication of WE — Women Exhibitors — Whose mission is to be the vehicle through which women exhibitors can encourage each other through sharing information, ideas, experience, advice, problems, and solutions.

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“One cannot reap immediately where one has just sown.”

WE Festival for Philatelic Women II (A.K.A. "Fest II")

By Ruth Caswell

Eighteen WE members gathered for Fest II at the Denver Crowne Plaza Hotel, which was also home to the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show (RMSS). The program for Fest II, held May 12-16, 2010, had two strands: one for beginning exhibitor/collectors/non-traditional (BCNT) and one for intermediate/advanced (IA) exhibitors. Two significant donations by Sue and Jim Dempsey enabled Fest II to happen. WE is very grateful for their generosity.

Fest II started with a pizza party on Wednesday evening, with some of us a bit time lagged depending on when our flights arrived. The camaraderie started with refreshing friendships and making new ones, enjoying pizza and wine, which was donated by the Dempseys, and learning about the coming events and "Where's Abe" contest. "Where's Abe" is a quest to find various kinds of philatelic information in the exhibits in the frames. Quest participants have a list of items to find, and then must show their knowledge of the items by providing exhibit title, frame numbers, and page numbers. For example, two items for the quest were a piece of mail that survived a plane crash and a coil stamp with a plate number. The lists were turned in to the quest coordinator who checked them for accuracy.

Thursday, all attendees plunged into philately. The BCNT team learned the how-to of exhibit construction (Pat Walker), the elements of thematic exhibits (Denise Stotts), and how to use ephemera in exhibiting (Art Groten). Their final topic for the day was "Tools of the Trade" (Liz Hisey), the very practical knowledge we all need to get those

marvelous philatelic items we have onto the exhibit page.

The IA team spent the morning in a judging seminar. The topic was "The Art of Being Judged" led by Pat Walker with judging critiques by Tim Bartshe and Ken Martin. After an introduction to what judging is all about and a review of title and synopsis pages, the less timid put their exhibits up in the frames for critiquing. All present, whether bystanders or the one being critiqued, learned a lot from an "at the frames" critique.

All who had any free time, worked on the "Where's Abe" contest. Exhibitors mounted their exhibits at RMSS, and then were treated to a wonderful evening at Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library (RMPL).

RMPL "opened all the doors" for WE! The library does indeed now have more doors to open as another building was recently added to the library. The RMPL volunteers provided transportation to and from the library for all of us. The *hors d'oeuvres* were grand. The history of RMPL was presented through a narrated slide show; it was quite interesting for those of us who did not know about the library beginnings. Following the show, docents were at several stations throughout both library buildings to "show and tell" about holdings, procedures, and so forth. All had a wonderful and informative time.

Thank you to Sergio Lupo, president of RMPL board of directors and the numerous volunteers who helped us have an evening to remember.

The BCNT team started Friday with "Casing the Bourse," led by Pat Walker and Dalene Thomas. What a way to start the day! They learned the ins and outs of talking with dealers, how to find the particular items you want, and finding your way around the bourse floor.

In the afternoon, they learned about Exhibiting PPC's (Tim Bartshe), Stamp Printing Basics (Bob Hisey), and Types and Classes of Exhibits (Liz Hisey).

"WE is expecting exhibits from this team, as they now know more than many of us about getting their exhibit into the frames."

On Saturday, the BCNT team started with an exhibit tour (Liz Hisey) as they talked about the basics of exhibiting. Then Pat Walker acquainted them with how to use *Publisher* to prepare exhibit pages. WE is expecting exhibits from this team, as they now know more than many of us about getting their exhibit into the frames.

The topic for the IA team was "You Be The Judge." (Pat Walker) This consumed all Friday and Saturday morning. After an introduction to judging, the team members became judges with list of exhibits to judge, how to score, and instructions for preparing the UEEF forms, and when and what to report the following day. This group spent most of the afternoon at the frames, working in groups to judge the assigned exhibits. Saturday morning found this group gathered together as if we were the jury.

Two groups, one supervised by Pat Walker/Liz Hisey and the other by David McNamee, reported and justified their medal levels, quibbled about differences (and were enlightened by our mentors), and learned to convey our

"It is very strange that the years teach us patience — that the shorter our time, the greater our capacity for waiting."



Fest II Participants. Front row (from left to right): Bethel Strawser, Sheri Soraci Jennings, Bonnie Smith, Dalene Thomas, Patricia Stilwell Walker, Liz Hisey, Denise Stotts, Hilary Griffi. Back row: Ken Martin, Elizabeth Nettles, Lisa Foster, (obstructed) Nancy Swan, Ruth Caswell, Lyman Caswell, Bob Hisey, Tim Bartshe, Anne Harris.

Photo courtesy of Anne Harris.

thoughts about exhibits judged. This seminar “You Be The Judge” was designed by Rich Drews, and carried out at Fest II by Liz, Pat, and Tim who had all participated in Rich’s seminars. This model is so successful that AAPE and WE are sponsoring it again at AmeriStampExpo 2011. WE hopes it will be taken to other venues.

These two days were enlightening to all who participated. Somehow, we found time to work on “Where’s Abe?” which required a lot of time at the frames to find the information for the quest.

It was fitting to close Fest II with a *Celebration Brunch*, as there was lots to celebrate. Libations were provided by the

Dempseys, and awards and congratulations were abundant.

The Fest II team was: Liz Hisey and Pat Stilwell-Walker, co-chairs; Liz Hisey, registration; Pat Walker, program; Denise Stotts, Where’s Abe; Dalene Thomas, program printer; and Kristin Patterson, labels. All of these WE members deserve a big round of applause for bringing Fest II to fruition. WE toasted them at the *Brunch*, and it is fitting for everyone who is reading this to do so again.

**Will there be another
WE Fest?**

Help us decide by
answering a quick
online survey

(Copy and paste into your browser
window)

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/
s/22NQ5G5](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/22NQ5G5)

“Patience creates confidence, decisiveness, and a rational outlook, which eventually leads to success .”

Amazing WE

By Ruth Caswell

WE will not rest on these laurels, but will continue to provide a vehicle through which women exhibitors can encourage each other through sharing information, ideas, experience, advice, problems, and solutions.

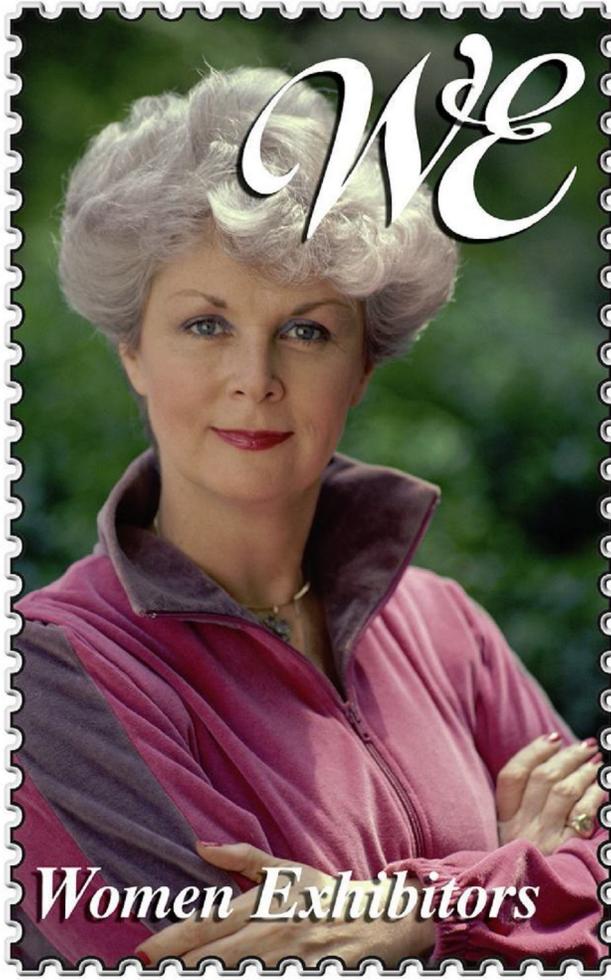
The accomplishments of WE are amazing. Since this group was started in February 2007 with 13 members, WE has continued to grow in membership, to meet exhibiting goals, to mentor beginning exhibitors, and to welcome collectors.

WE membership is now over 100, including men and women. WE is supported by APS and AAPE, by dealers and donors, and by friends. WE held the first *Festival for Philatelic Women* at the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte in May 2009. This was followed by *Fest II*, held at Rocky Mountain Stamp Show (RMSS) in May 2010. Both of these were quite successful, although very different programs. At Bellefonte, WE enjoyed the APC with all the advantages of being at APS headquarters and APRL. The picture of this first gathering of philatelic women did indeed tell "1000 words."

Fest II, held in conjunction with RMSS, provided programs for collectors/beginning exhibitors and intermediate exhibitors. A part of the *Fest II* program will be transported to AmeriStampExpo 2011 and sponsored by AAPE and WE.

In exhibiting, WE took the challenge to put up 40 frames at CoalPex (2008) for a one time "Women only" show. Our next frame number venture was the *Bellefonte Festival* where the goal was 80 frames. Then WE took on the task of trying to get 120 frames. RMSS invited us to take up the challenge, and WE met that challenge and had a few frames to spare. At RMSS, there were at least three WE members who were first-time exhibitors

at a WSP show, and one won the novice award. So, Gold winners, move over as newbies are on the way.



At RMSS, WE took up the challenge of competing with several other teams who had exhibits at the show. WE approached this challenge with some trepidation. However, Pat Stilwell-Walker's Grand Award put WE at the top. Many thanks to all who exhibited and won medals and awards that contributed to WE's success.

Remember

WE

Membership
Meeting

STAMPSHOW

Richmond, VA

Saturday

August 14, 2010

Bring your lunch!



"One cannot reap immediately where one has sown."

SOREN KEIRKEGAARD

Where we've been, where we're going

By Janet Klug

What's Next?

WE is indeed an incredible group, formed by women with the express charge to assist and encourage women in their philatelic pursuits. I think WE, under the leadership of **Ruth Caswell**, has done a good job of fulfilling its mission. Ruth reports on WE's successes elsewhere in this issue of *WE Think*.



In order to stay successful, new ideas must be fostered, nurtured, tried and evaluated for effectiveness. This is how businesses and organizations thrive. This is how WE has become successful and why WE members have benefitted from the programs and services offered by WE.

Survey

With the successful conclusion of WE Fest II in Denver this past May, WE (and we) now turn our thoughts to "what's next?" Right now thoughts of a third festival are swirling around and WE are/is trying to figure out if doing another festival is a good thing, or too much of a good thing. Maybe WE should focus attentions elsewhere. So WE would like YOUR thoughts on whether or not a third Festival for Phila-

telic Women is desired by our members, and if so, what form should it take. Please respond to an online survey. There are only four questions, you will remain anonymous, no salesmen will call, you won't get spam, and it won't take but a minute of your time. Here is the link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/22NQ5G5>

Future of *WE Think*

The initial plan for *WE Think* (this journal) was to offer it quarterly. In theory, that is a grand idea, and I am certainly willing to do a quarterly. However, in practice, this is not working. Getting people to write for *WE Think* is not easy. So the publication of *WE Think* is on an infrequent schedule and it happens only when the editor (me) receives sufficient content from the members (you) to make an issue. If you want *WE Think* to be quarterly, please write something for it. If you don't want *WE Think* to continue, that's OK, too. Just let Ruth or me know, and we'll take the appropriate action.

I have been asked why WE has two publications. Actually, many philatelic organizations have two publications. One is a newsletter, designed to keep members informed of timely issues and breaking news. The other is a journal, whose purpose is to provide articles, how-to instruction and research, and even opinion pieces.

Idea for *YOUR* article...

If you need an idea to get you started writing, here is one for you. Most of us go to a show or shop on eBay and end up buying something that may not be exactly what we collect. So write about

it! We can start a column called "Why did I buy...."

Or write about anything philatelic that is on your mind. WE'd love to hear it!

Thanks

I'd like to take this editorial space to thank **Barbara Harrison** for editing the monthly newsletter *WE Expressions* since the founding of WE. She did a terrific job of keeping all of us informed and entertained. I wish Barb well and hope to see her at a stamp show soon. Also, I'd like to welcome **Anne Harris** as the new editor of *WE Expressions*. Help Anne out by sending her news and information for the newsletter.

For your calendar...

Events of interest

STAMPSHOW 2010

August 12 - 15

Richmond, Virginia

Thursday, August 12

4:30 p.m.

Showing your stamps on YouTube by Liz Hisey

Friday, August 13

10:00 a.m.

Postal history or usage — choosing the right approach by Patricia Stilwell-Walker
1:00 p.m.

The road to becoming a judge by Liz Hisey

Saturday, August 14

11:00 a.m.

**WE Membership Meeting
(bring your lunch!)**

4:00 p.m.

Victorian letter writing by Diane de Blois

Check the schedule for changes and additions.

"She who fails to plan, plans to fail."

PROVERB

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