

We Need Your Help

As an APS member and a reader of *The American Philatelist*, you are uniquely qualified to spread the word about the APS and help us grow our membership. Each year the APS sends personal invitations to thousands of collectors, but prospects are more likely to act on advice from people they know. We need you to be an ambassador for the American Philatelic Society.

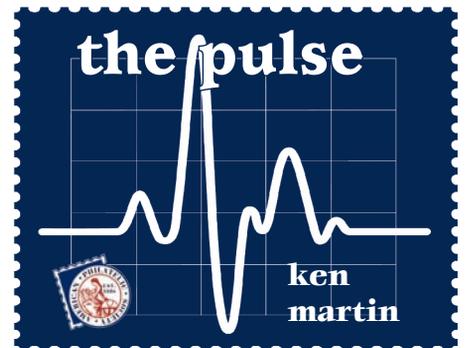
Beyond talking to people about the APS, what else can you do? Do you have a Facebook page? So does APS: www.facebook.com/american.philatelic.society. Why not include the APS under your list of favorites? What do you do with your old issues of *The American Philatelist*? When you are finished reading each issue, consider passing it along to a friend or colleague. Just say "Here, I thought you would enjoy reading this. I'm a member, you might be interested in joining, too."

As I write this, we are approaching the time of the year when we drop unpaid members from the membership rolls. Although it appears that the number of members dropped will be the lowest since 1988, it will still represent more members than we have added to the rolls over the past year. We are blessed with a very loyal membership and very high member retention, but even if we retain 90 percent of the membership we need 3,500 new members each year to avoid losses. Please consider how you can help us to begin to grow our membership.

Debate seems to be heating up within philatelic organizations over what amount and type of the organization's website content should be made available to the public and what content should be restricted to members. Traditionally, the APS has made nearly all the content on its website available to its broader public in order to promote the hobby. We reasoned that making contact information for our dealer-members publicly available helps them get more business. We also provide information on our chapters and affiliates, with the thought that if an individual joins a group already affiliated with the APS we will have a shot at recruiting them as an APS member as well. In addition, we believe it is important to support the hobby by helping to promote stamp shows; thus we provide them with free listings.

While there are differing opinions on all these (and more!), the controversy seems to really erupt when it comes to providing access to digital publications. Because publications are the lifeblood of many organizations it is understandable that most groups provide limited access to their online offerings. For example, some organizations will try to tease you into joining by providing the first couple paragraphs of articles from their current publication; others may choose to provide access to single article per issue. Still other groups offer new articles each month on their website and even maintain an extensive archive of past articles. (The Ephemera Society, affiliate 256, www.ephemerassociety.org, is one such example.) A few groups limit access to the current year's offerings to members and charge for access to past issues, while other groups make electronic issues available to the public after a certain period of time.

The trick is to find a way to balance promoting the hobby while, at the same time, providing special benefits for members only that would encourage them to join your organization. We would like to hear



how your group is striking a balance between providing content that will bring viewers to a website and offering attractive member-restricted content. And, by the way, if some or all of your organization's past publication issues are digitally available to the public, please let our Library know so that we can add this information to the Journals listing in our online catalogue (which is publicly available).

Of course, you don't have to be affiliated with a group's website to have opinions and suggestions about online content: what's desirable and what isn't. Please contact me at kpmartin@stamps.org, by phone at 814-933-3817, or write to me at 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823.

Weather tends to limit the number of visitors we get over the winter months. However, I am happy to report an early surge this year, many of whom have stopped on their way to or coming home from shows. Following our February Charleston show, Van Siegling, president of the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Stamp Club and a director of the American Topical Association, made an impression on the staff when he brought doughnuts and bagels! Members George Paddock from Bloomfield, Indiana, Felix Perez from Okinawa, Japan, and Keith Stupell from New York City also braved the weather to visit the same week in mid February.

More recently, out-of-state visitors have included Mike Hirschhorn from Sydney, Australia; Tony Dewey and Paul Goodwin from Connecticut (who spent time at the American Philatelic Center both going to and coming from the Garfield Perry Show); Hilda and Parker Bailey from Florida; Kathy Johnson and Terry Kurzinski from Illinois; Dan Arnold, Herbert Breuer and Ray Humbertson from Maryland; Bob Cordaro from Michigan; Carl Troy from New Mexico; Tom Corvette and Willard Meyers from New York; Tim McRee and Roger Skoyles from North Carolina; Ken Pitt and Gerald and Karen Robbins from Virginia; and Charles Rebek from Wisconsin.

We look forward to a busy summer and hope to see many more of you on your way to or from NOJEX, NAPEX, STAMPSHOW, AMERICOVER or BALPEX; to attend SCOPEX or our annual Summer Seminar; for Volunteer Work Week as part of a summer vacation or as a side trip to business travel.

Summer visitors also should find our property a little more appealing as the latest renovations have been completed, allowing our newest tenant to move in ahead of schedule. Now if the weather will just cooperate long

enough to permit landscaping along the now completed Regency Walkway, made possible by the generous gifts of Regency Superior Auctions. (Regency is one of two official auctioneers for STAMPSHOW in Columbus this August. The second show auctioneer will be Harmer-Schau.)

I also am delighted to report that Mystic Stamp Company and its president Don Sundman completed their \$200,000 pledge, made in honor of Don's dad Maynard Sundman, a year early. This generous gift provided for Sundman Hall, which not only allows us to host the Summer Seminar at the American Philatelic Center but generates income year-round by providing rental space for community events such as Bellefonte Victorian Christmas, a jazz festival, political debates, blood drives, wedding receptions, and class reunions. Mystic Stamp Company is also in its second year of sponsorship of our free monthly downloadable mini-albums. We are always interested in partnerships that allow us to provide additional services and better promote the hobby.

Unfortunately, I also have sad news this month. Ephraim "Duke" Day, our Stamp Theft Committee chairman for several years, passed away in early March. While he had been on disability from life-threatening injuries incurred as a police officer, he continued to use his skills to help many APS members and non-members. Some of you may remember the awards banquet at our winter show in Norfolk, Virginia where Duke, his wife, and their only child all exhibited — and 8-year-old Elizabeth received a higher medal than her mother or dad. Our sympathies to Regina and Elizabeth. Vice President Nick Lombardi, who also has a law enforcement background and who had been assisting Duke, will now be in charge of this important member service.

Lesser known in the broad philatelic community, but better known to the APS staff, was Charlie Rupert who also has passed away. For as long as I can remember, until his retirement just over two years ago, Charlie visited two or three times in the typical week usually providing advice and assistance with our various printing needs. He received his 25-year member pin in 2002, but he had been involved even longer with the printing of both the *AP* and the *Philatelic Literature Review*, back to the days of old-fashioned cut-and-paste page layout.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention the recent passing of Earl Boal, *American Philatelist* Editor Barb Boal's husband. A golf professional and lifetime member of the PGA who believed *everyone* should play golf (no excuses accepted), Earl not only shared the pleasures of

a topical stamp collection with Barb (golf, of course), but after his retirement the Editorial office could look forward to occasional treats of homemade cranberry bread.

Despite our best efforts, at least one gremlin snuck into the April Recognition issue of *The American Philatelist*. In the list of Vooy's Fellows, an asterisk noting deceased Fellows that should have appeared after Charlie Peterson's name instead appeared following Dan Walker's. We thank the observant readers who caught this error and assure you that APS Treasurer Dan Walker is still with us.

Finally, as I hope you have already noted, this is our biannual election issue. So if you have not already done so, please read the candidates' statements and exercise your right to vote. Thanks for all you do to help our hobby.