

FIP Philatelic Literature Commission

Newsletter 1/04

A Happy New Year to all Delegates of the Commission. The Bureau is sorry that we have been unable to produce a Newsletter since 2000, but our Secretary, Charles Verge, has been severely committed to Canadian National philately, and has just not been able to compile an edition. This current Newsletter is just a temporary measure to give you some news. However, whilst not producing a Newsletter, your Bureau has been very busy in a number of areas:

Philatelic Literature Website. A lot of effort has been devoted to establishing a website for the Commission. It has been felt that such a website should contain new information to assist researchers and bibliophiles. It should not be simply a propaganda website, but should contain information of importance to FIP Delegates. The website now contains a lot of information. Welcome statement, list of delegates, bureau members CVs, website evaluation information, and literature results. In addition, we have compiled lists of FIP Research Medal awardees, RPSL Crawford Medallists, and we are working on compiling a list of all literature that has gained Large Gold Medals in FIP Exhibitions. One major addition to available literature is three lists prepared by Brian Birch, UK who has agreed to permit these to be published on the website. First, he is compiling an Index of Cumulative Indexes of Journals, worldwide. This currently extends to over 300 pages. Additionally, he has provided major listings of "Biographies: Literature Dealers and Bibliophiles" and "Biographies: Stamp Dealers and Philatelists"; these are very major works (100s of pages) that have been made available to the Commission, and through our website, to philately in general. The site currently can be found at the following website address - www.norbyhus.dk/fipliterature. Maintaining this site and preparing Word text into html takes a lot of work and we are very fortunate that Toke Nørby has run this aspect of our Bureau's activities. Please do visit the site. It really is good, if I say it myself! Spreading the FIP Literature News. Articles have been written by the Chairman for publication in NAPE (Asia/Australasia Philatelic Exhibitors), AAPE (North American Philatelic Exhibitors), and FEPA News. These articles have covered the Literature Competition results, and comments, for PhilaKorea and Europhilex (Cyprus) 2002. In addition, an article has been published reviewing the judging of the 2002 Website Competition.

2003 FIP Website Competition. After much thought and discussion, we decided that the FIP Website Competition had reached its main objectives, and the time taken to judge the sites entered was far too great to continue with a limited number of judges. When Charlie Peterson initiated the Competition back in 1999, websites were in their infancy, and the judging of sites was important for a number of reasons. It gave new websites the opportunity of being advertised by FIP. The awarding of 'medals' gave an incentive to webmasters. The critique, hopefully, gave some pointers on how to improve the website. However, in the early days, websites were only about 20 pages long, whilst nowadays, some are really huge. Our own FIP Literature site has in excess of 1,500 pages! With non-US judges tending not to have 'broadband', judging of a large site could take a very long time. So, the decision was taken that the judges would be better employed working on literature itself.

Bureau Members. Many of the Commission's Bureau Members have been busy. Osvaldo Giordano (Argentine) continues to produce fantastic amounts of philatelic literature that is sent to all delegates. He dominates philatelic literature in South America. Toke Nørby (Denmark) continues to develop our website, and after receiving the ruling from the FIP Board, pays and maintains the website. Tony Virvilis (Greece) has undertaken a project to list all current commercial philatelic journals in Europe, mainly for FEPA, but of importance to FIP. He has also found time to produce the first comprehensive bibliography of philatelic literature on Greek Philately, of which I had the honour to write a Foreword.

With the elections due to be held in Singapore later this year, there will be a major change in the members of our Bureau. Juhani Olamo has been seriously ill for the past two years and has been unable to undertake any duties. He, along with Tony Virvilis, are the longest serving members of the Bureau. Juhani, I am pleased to say, is back looking at literature, but is remaining outside organised philately whilst his health becomes fully restored. Tony Virvilis is also standing down as a Bureau member as he feels that somebody new is important for the Bureau. He remains as FEPA Director responsible for philatelic literature, and thus we will still have the support of his activities. Charles Verge (Canada), as already mentioned, has been unable to do the job of Secretary to the Bureau through heavy calls on his time nationally within Canada. So, the Bureau will look very different with only Toke and myself standing for re-election.

On behalf of FIP and the literature community, I would like publicly to thank Juhani, Tony and Charles, three fine philatelists, for all their work in support of the Commission, and I am sure that we shall continue to meet you at various world exhibitions.

News. One sad piece of news is the passing of Robert de Violini of USA. Robert has been a major force in the introduction of electronic philatelic literature, and was a website judge right from the beginning. The world is a richer place because of him.

Honorary President Knud Mohr RDP has taken on the responsibility of editing the important journal, FFE (Fakes, Forgeries, Experts). This journal is more like a handbook and is published once a year. The journal was founded by Paolo Vollmeier RDP, who has acted as publisher and editor for the first six issues. He will remain a member of the editorial board, along with Carl Aage Moller, and the new editor. The publisher will be Claes Arnrup, Postiljonen, the international auction house. We wish Knud well and I am sure of us are more than willing to provide help if needed.

Delegates to the Commission. On a final note, we are very surprised that only just over half of the FIP Member Federations have appointed a delegate to the Commission. We are not sure why, but please press your national federation to appoint somebody who can act a focus for literature in your country.

Francis Kiddle RDP FRPSL

Chairman, FIP Philatelic Literature Commission