

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from Ontario! In my last message, I mentioned the 1979 ATA show in Spokane, but I did not say anything about the exhibits, most of which had titles such as *Animals on Stamps*, *Golf on Stamps*, and *Trees on Stamps* and I could see why these could be called "Topicals."

However, there was one exhibit titled *Nuremberg, Tale of a City*, by Ingeberg Fisher, and this was far more detailed with many different philatelic elements. It led me to think about exhibiting myself and since I had always liked "bugs," the collection of material started.

The 1980 (Maine) and 1981 (Chicago) shows had even more of "thematic" exhibits and in the latter show, two names appeared: Mary Ann Owens with *The Elephant* and George Guzzio with *Penguinalia*, and both exhibits were given high awards.

In 1983 (San Antonio), Mary Ann and George exhibited again, with George taking the Grand Award and Mary Ann the Reserve Grand Award. I had served on the jury for the first time as an apprentice, replacing a juror who had fallen sick. It was pretty challenging to "jump in with both feet," as it were, but I enjoyed it. Another thing about these three shows was that I was starting to accumulate material on "bugs" in order to put together my own exhibit. This of course made the shows more interesting, rather than just being a visitor.

Early in 1984, the then ATA President, Don Smith, telephoned me at home and said, "How do you feel about serving as the next ATA President?" Well, to use an old expression, "you could have knocked me down with a feather," and after a short pause to consider, I said yes.

My first show as President was in Lincoln, Nebraska, and since I was now automatically on the ATA Board of Directors, I attended my first board meeting. Since the ATA had been founded by Jerry Husak as the "American Topical Association," and many members (exhibitors) were now assembling their material in a "thematic" fashion, would the word "topical" fall out of favor?

Well, time has proven that the word can include both Topical, Thematic, and now Display types of exhibits. We did experience some problems along the way with a decline in the number of exhibits being entered in the ATA shows, and since our show was held under the rules of the American Philatelic Society, this was fairly serious. However, it appears that it was just a "bump in the road" and the problem has just about disappeared.

Until next time...

Alan J. Hanks