



## Spring Is Really Coming!

As I write this column (early February), Pennsylvania's Punxsutawney Phil has made his appearance on "groundhog day" promising six more weeks of winter. As you read this, March may really be coming in like a "lion," so I can't wait for April's promise of sunny spring days. As I write this column we are also busy getting ready for APS AMERISTAMP EXPO in Arlington, Texas, but as you read it, our winter show and exhibition is history. For this column I can only provide you a taste of what this show is or was about.

Prior to the show, the APS Board met to hear reports and consider such items as membership retention and promotion, our year-end finances, an update on website development, long range planning, and by-law revisions. Other items included reports and recommendations from the Committee on Accreditation of National exhibitions and Judges, a

proposal on APS patron and supporting memberships, and future show locations. At each winter and summer meeting I provide a report to the Board that discusses our experience for the past year. Here are a few highlights:

At year's end the APS and APRL are presented with both a positive and challenging picture for the coming year and beyond, since the national economy has impacted our budget. The recently appointed joint APS/APRL Long Range Planning committee is a testament to the resolve that both the staff and our Boards have in addressing these challenges. In 2008 we revised the APS operating budget, making very difficult decisions to eliminate some staff positions. We ended the year with a net gain of \$27,000 on a budget of about \$4 million. The APRL posted an operating loss of more than \$160,000 on a budget of just over \$400,000. The challenge ahead for 2009 is to watch our expenses and revenues, rely-



### *March/April Member Special*

## A Special Introduction to Sales Circuits

**Are you new to circuits  
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See "Sales Talk" page 258 for more information.

**Offer expires April 30, 2009.** Visit our website at [www.stamps.org/Services/ser\\_CircuitRequest.htm](http://www.stamps.org/Services/ser_CircuitRequest.htm) to sign up.

# Plan to Visit the APC



## Summer Saturdays at the APC

The American Philatelic Research Library, APS Circuit Sales, and the APS Administration Department will be open from 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**June 6 • June 20 • July 18 • August 1  
August 15 • August 29**

ing on the use of unrestricted donated funds to help balance our budget. We perceive this as stopgap, short-term measure as the long range planning committee commences its work how we can address these issues in the future.

We ended the year with 40,064 members, a decline of 2,801 members from the year before. The Campaign for Philately raised \$541,000 in cash contributions in 2008. We also obtained multi-year pledges totaling \$166,570 from twenty-three individuals.

APS educational opportunities were a hot commodity in 2008. More than eighty students attended a sold-out Summer Seminar and this year's will be better than ever. Classes are filled on a first-come first-served basis, so register today. Forty members took advantage of a new opportunity in philatelic learning — APS "On the Road" Courses. These mini-seminars were held prior to several WSP shows around the country. See page ??? for this year's schedule and locations. Stamp Saturday, our adult beginner course, continues to be a popular attraction at both our winter and summer shows.

Another new perk of membership introduced in 2008 was the *APS Special E-Delivery Newsletter*. More than 8,000 members view the e-newsletter each month. One of our most popular initiatives has been the creation of downloadable album pages. In 2008 we covered topics from states to flags to baseball — a total of eight albums. Our website re-development is progressing, and are looking at a launch this

summer. Advertising revenue in *The American Philatelist* reached a six-year high. The Young Philatelic Leaders fellowship has sufficient funds thus far to sponsor two Fellows to participate in one year of the program.

More than 5,500 items were expertized by APEX in 2008. Quick ID reviews increased significantly over the prior year. The APRL (Library) saw an increase in usage over the prior year. About 4,000 members receive sales circuits, purchasing stamps from about 675 sellers. While StampStore sales declined over the previous year due to the economy, it was still our second best year ever, posting \$1.36 million in gross sales compared to \$1.5 million the previous year. StampStore presently lists about 300,000 items, adding 3,000–5,000 items per week.

Last, but not least, our APS AMERISTAMP EXPO in Arlington, Texas shows promise to be one of our best winter shows yet. We'll comment on that next month.

## APS StampCruise

For the past twenty-five years the Society has sponsored an annual stamp cruise for APS members that combines fun at sea and stopping at various ports-of-call with various philatelic activities. This past January, I had the opportunity to participate in my first cruise. While enjoying the eastern Caribbean, we visited the Philatelic Bureau of the Turks and Caicos Islands, attended a stamp seminar, and held an on-board stamp auction. More than seventy stamp collectors, spouses, and other family members made up the largest contingent yet to sail with APS. The majority were first-time participants, many of whom we do not see at stamp shows nor in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. It was great to meet a group of enthusiastic members whom we would not normally have direct contact with.

Plan on joining us for the next cruise, January 17–23, 2010. We will be visiting the Caribbean — where the sky is sunny, the sea is blue, the gentle trade winds blow— and several stamp-issuing ports-of-call. Watch the April *AP* for more information.

## Reminder for All Collectors

As you may or may not be aware, the APS accepts your, or your loved one's, collections as "in-kind" donations that can be used as tax deductions within IRS regulations.

All donations are carefully inspected and eventually re-offered at special rates to APS members, provided free of charge to youth stamp groups and schools across America, and added to the APS reference collection.

*Hours upon hours of effort go into collecting and this is a wonderful way to pass on the energy placed in your collections to others, young and old.*

For further information, please contact volunteer Richard Nakles, APS in-kind donations, at [rnakles@stamps.org](mailto:rnakles@stamps.org).

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