



News from the American Philatelic Center *Home of the* American Philatelic Society and American Philatelic Research Library

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Greater Toronto Area Philatelic Alliance Visits the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte



Canadian collectors pore through APS Sales Division circuit books during the April visit of the Greater Toronto Area Philatelic Alliance to the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania.

by chartered bus, arriving Thursday afternoon at the APC for a reception in Sundman Hall with American Philatelic Society Director of Education Gretchen Moody, who was instrumental in arranging the itinerary for the visit. A tour of the facilities, including the American Philatelic Research Library and the newly installed Headsville Post Office preceded a dinner hosted by APS Executive Secretary Peter Mastrangelo, who welcomed the Canadian collectors.

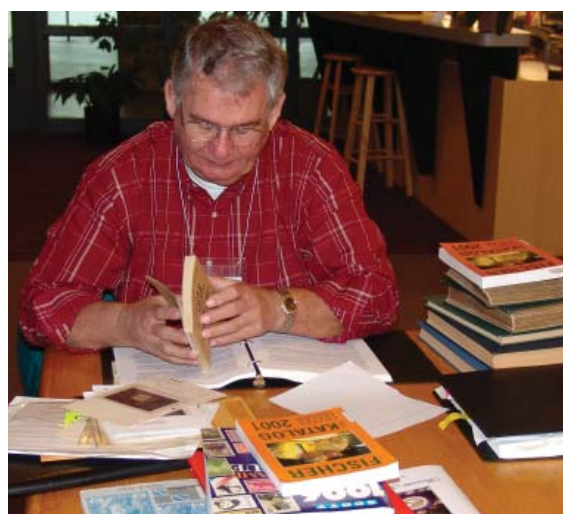
After a good night's rest at a hotel in nearby State College, the Canadians returned bright and early Friday morning to visit the APS Sales Division and the APRL. The morning included audiovisual presentations on the "History of Air Mail" with APS Media Manager Fred Baumann, "Sales Trends in Stamp Store and Circuits" with APS Sales Division Director Tom Horn, and "Computer Technology in Philately" with Barb Boal, editor of *The American Philatelist*. Visiting collectors were free to take part in whatever opportunities suited their interests, while most non-collecting spouses elected to spend the day shopping at malls and outlets in Altoona, about an hour southwest of Bellefonte.

In addition to a chance to browse sales circuit books and the library stacks after lunch at Sundman, Friday afternoon included a bus tour to Pennsylvania State University Print Services and the renowned Penn State Creamery that taught Ben & Jerry how to make ice cream. A reception and dinner at Sundman Hall rounded out the day, with former *American Philatelist* Editor and

Members of the Greater Toronto Area Philatelic Alliance (GTAPA) celebrated the arrival of seasonable spring weather with a three-day road trip to the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania April 3–5.

The Alliance had visited the APC previously in 2006. Based in Canada's largest city, member clubs include the Bramalea Stamp Club, East Toronto Stamp Club, Insurance and Banking Philatelic Society, North Toronto Stamp Club, North York Philatelic Society, Polish-Canadian Coin and Stamp Club, Scarborough Stamp Club, Toronto Stamp Collectors Club, Ukrainian Collectibles Society, and West Toronto Stamp Club.

Toronto is 300 miles (484 kilometers) from Bellefonte – about a six-hour drive, not including time to clear Customs and Immigration at the border. Thirty GTAPA members and spouses made the trek



Other collectors visiting from the Toronto area spent much of their time cracking the books in the American Philatelic Research Library at the APC in Bellefonte.

“Peripatetic Philatelist” Bill Welch the featured speaker, aptly discussing the far-flung journeys, joys, and rich rewards of his life in the stamp hobby.

After breakfast at the hotel on Saturday morning, GTAPA members returned to the APC for more buying and library research. Director of Expertizing Mercer Bristow regaled interested collectors with his high-tech insights on the subject of authenticating philatelic material, titled “CSI: Bellefonte.” APS Deputy Executive Director Ken Martin spoke on “Letters, Flats and Parcels: What hath mechanization and automation of the mails wrought?”

After a farewell lunch at Sundman Hall, the bus departed for Toronto early Saturday afternoon, full of collectors with new acquisitions for their albums, new information to enhance the hobby and, we hope, fond memories and new friends.

After his return to Toronto, GTAPA President Peter Butler who organized the excursion said, “we had an even better time than we did in 2006. The presentations by the APS staff were excellent. They are so professional! Clearly the staff focus their entire effort on service to members. Their care and concern for meeting the wishes of the group was wonderful to experience. ..from coming in on Saturday, to arranging for a van to take shoppers to the malls, to following through on all the special requests. The only frustration was having so many choices! The group was truly impressed with the facility and the people. It received our highest praise and commendation. We can’t say enough about how great our weekend was.”

Another visitor, Garfield Portch, said of the return to Toronto, “A number of our members were snoozing most of the way home so I knew that the trip had them tired out. Among those who took the trip in 2006, the discussions on the bus revolved about the belief that this trip was better.

“The proof of the excellence of the trip, however, was the often-asked question, ‘Can we do this again, soon?’ Our answer was affirmative — we will plan another trip next year! Thank you all for everything.”



Barb Boal, editor of *The American Philatelist*, gives a PowerPoint presentation on “Computer Technology in Philately” to visiting Toronto area stamp collectors.

one of the largest population concentrations in North America. (Canada is home to 1,009 APS members, or 2.36% of the society’s current membership. Some 94% of APS members live in the United States.)

If you’d like to know more about planning a philatelic visit to the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte — whether as an individual, or with a group — contact Gretchen Moody by e-mail at gretchen@stamps.org or call 814-933-3810.



APS Volunteer Richard Nakles (right) presides over a standing-room-only crowd of cheerful cover-collecting Canadians. Sales during the visit of the donated materials that Richard organizes netted the APS just under \$1,000.

Gretchen Moody said, “We enjoy hosting collectors, either in groups like our Canadians, or as individuals. It’s a terrific way for us to stay in touch with collectors.” Moody noted that three members of the Toronto group had joined the APS during the April visit.

Most APS members are well aware that the American Philatelic Center in central Pennsylvania — where APS has had central offices for 63 years — is readily accessible from the northeast and Great Lakes regions of the United States, near major highways from all points of the compass. It is within a three- to four-hour drive of New York City, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Washington, DC.

However, many U.S. members may be surprised to learn that Bellefonte is just over 200 miles from the southern tip of Canada’s “Golden Horseshoe” — a densely populated, industrialized region curving around the west end of Lake Ontario. With a population of 8.1 million, it is home to more than a quarter of the population of Canada, making it