APS: The First Century

by Robert L.D. Davidson

When American Philatelic Society members met for their fifty-sixth annual convention in Baltimore in August 1941, few could have imagined that all-out war was only months away. Fewer still, perhaps, could have envisioned the reforms that would transform the Society in the course of the coming decade.

One hundred and seventy members attended the Baltimore meeting, along with fifty-five guests, not a small turnout, considering the instability of the international scene. President Rollin E. Flower was re-elected, and the officers who had served for the preceding two years were all re-elected. The trend toward re-electing the same officers gave rise to a charge that the APS was run by "The Gang"; the AP offered little by way of reply.

This convention established the APS Hall of Fame, to recognize late, great philatelists. The original fifteen members were: Sir Rowland Hill, John N. Luff, John W. Scott, T.W. Tapling, John K. Tiffany, James L. Lindsay (the Earl of Crawford), P.N. Wolseley, Charles S. Severn, Fred L. Melville, Charles Lathrop Pack, Charles J. Phillips, Edward S. Knapp, Beverly D. King, Hugh M. Southgate, and Ralph A. Barry.

Finances were in excellent condition; profits from the AP had reduced a long-time deficit in that budget item. Membership stood at 4,839. Frank Bruns, chairman of the 1847 Centennial Celebration, reported, "Due to the uncertainties of the past year it is difficult to envision 1942, much less 1947." He did suggest that the convention might endorse a souvenir sheet for the centennial of the first U.S. postage stamps.

The usual discussions about tampering with stamps produced the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the American Philatelic Society in convention assembled, that the Society unqualifiedly condemns the sale or disposition of any philatelic item which has been reperforated, repaired, regummed, or otherwise altered, unless the true character of such item is clearly and definitely designated thereon.

And be it further resolved, that a special committee be appointed by the President to study and report an effective procedure for the designation of such items for consideration by the next convention, the conclusions and recommendations of the committee to be first reported in The American Philatelist.

The Brooklyn Philatelist, publication of the Brooklyn Stamp Club, Chapter 172, won the first chapter publication competition for the Washington Philatelic Society trophy. The decision was a close one, the winner achieving a 3-2 victory over The Bulletin of the Philatelic Society of Pittsburgh, Chapter 5.

And the matter of auctions was dealt with as follows:

Be it resolved by the American Philatelic Society in convention assembled, that a standard code of rules and regulations for the conduct and operation of philatelic auctions is requisite in order to protect and safeguard the interest of the patrons of such auction and that a special committee be appointed by the President to formulate such a code of rules and regulations for consideration of the convention, the conclusions and recommendations of the committee to be first reported in The American Philatelist.

There was much debate at the 1941 convention on the question of whether to meet in Cuba in 1942. Fortunately, considering the earth-shaking events of the next year, the group voted, by a better than four-to-one margin, to convene in Cleveland. New names appearing on the Society’s roles at this time included Maurice Blake, Don Haverbeck, Lou Robbins, Bill Sems-
Donald F. Lybarger.

rotta, Mortimer Neikken, Lawrence Shefield, Ernst Cohn, and Sam Ray. Long lists of members "In Service" began to appear, and would grow longer. Some members were active in British War Relief, which had a philatelic committee.

In the April 1942 issue of the *AP*, Ashbrook, Perry, Chase, and Brookman were among the writers. What other society publication could gather in one issue such an assembly of philatelic scholars?

When the 1942 convention met in wartime Cleveland, an astounding 284 members and guests attended. Society membership had slipped to 4,757, but perennial Treasurer Howard W. Elliott reported an overall gain in Society funds of $1,115. The total of all funds was a healthy $80,000.

At this convention occurred one of those lightning strokes that dramatically changes history.

Donald F. Lybarger, a member of the Board of Vice Presidents, was asked to give a paper, "A Long Range View of the American Philatelic Society." Lybarger, then serving his second term with the Cleveland team of vice presidents, was a judge in that city's court system and an attorney. He was an avid philatelist, known as an authority on the 1918-20 offset printings of the United States, and he often wrote on that subject. He later became one of the great presidents of the APS, holding the office for six years.

His presidency will be reviewed next month. Here, it is important to devote considerable space to his 1942 presentation. Lybarger believed the Society should have six objectives: to provide social, educa-

They're Fighting Fools!...We Must Give Them Backing!

This souvenir of the Cleveland convention, a patriotic cachet printed in red and blue, is a vivid reminder that in 1942 the United States was at war.

1942 convention logo focused on history and the Great Lakes.

The "V" for Victory was already a familiar wartime symbol when the APS convened its annual meeting in Cleveland in 1942.

Cleveland, Ohio
August 12-16, 1942

The American Philatelist
meeting the right radically to change the policies of the Society."

Lybarger proposed amending and simplifying the by-laws to permit much simpler methods for at-large participation in the functions of the Society. And the Society's relationship with its chapters, some very strong indeed, needed improving, he said. He suggested that perhaps a representative from each chapter should attend conventions as a voting delegate.

Then he made his major recommendation — that a central office be established. It should be away from a large city, he said, but near the center of the philatelic population. It should be a repository, a general filing center, and a source of information for the officers, who should continue to be elected from the wide geographic range of membership.

To administer this newly reorganized Society, he proposed that an executive secretary be appointed to exercise the authority of the existing offices of secretary, treasurer, and archivist, as well as that of the business manager of The American Philatelist and the recruitment committee. This executive should be completely divorced from any dealer operations, and should devote his full time to the business of the Society.

According to Lybarger's estimates, a budget for these changes might amount to only thirty percent more than total monies already being sent in different directions to pay for Society business. His budget assured clerical and secretarial assistance, as well as reasonable rent for office space.

He ended his speech with this summary:

The American Philatelic Society has had a great history. It has gone far toward bringing collectors together, spreading a knowledge concerning philately, promoting the hobby, establishing high standards of conduct, and in general, speaking in a representative capacity for the stamp collectors of America. Fortunately for the present generation of members there is still much to accomplish. The hobby calls on the Society for forthright leadership. As individual members we must meet the challenge. Internally the Society is strong. It can continue so not by standing still in smug contentment, but rather by a persistent effort toward betterment. When we see a more efficient and modern method of handling our affairs, we should examine it open-mindedly and when convinced of its merit adopt it. In short, on occasions such as this we should seek a long range view of the Society and govern our decisions accordingly. Then will the future of the A.P.S. be as secure as its past has been.

After long and sometimes explosive debate, most of the judge's recommendations were adopted — some outright and some "in principle." By-laws were amended, and it was clear that the majority of the members were ready to enter a new era.

Milwaukee was chosen as the site for the 1943 convention.

The winner of the second Washington Philatelic Society trophy for best chapter publication was The Beacon, put out by the Binghamton Philatelic Society, Chapter 119. Note was made of the passing of "Dolph" Fennell, editor of the AP from 1921 to 1936.

Lybarger's great speech led to his nomination for president in the next APS election. Within a few months, he was endorsed in the columns of the AP by the Garfield-Perry Club and by several prominent philatelists.

Ralph A. Kimble, editor of the AP, was called to military service, and Lester Brookman of Minneapolis became acting editor. The journal was reduced in size because of the war; it had lost most, if not all, of its European advertisers. Brookman, already referred to as a knowledgeable author who wrote on nineteenth-century U.S. issues, was an excellent choice to serve as acting editor, and a willing one. Nearly 200 other APS members were listed with Ralph Kimble on the APS Service Roll, among them Morton Joyce and Roger Weil.

Among the established philatelic scholars who were writing for the AP at this time, one of the most prolific and thorough was Clarence Brazer, the authority on essays and proofs of U.S. stamps. World events were reflected in an AP article on "The Postal Markings of the Allies in Great Britain." Author Norman Hill illustrated Czechoslovak, Polish, and French markings.

One of the philatelic organizations that flourished in these years was the Association for Stamp Exhibitions, Inc., which, as its name implies, was involved in many such endeavors. It existed until about 1980, when it joined with the American Academy. The Association was praised for its purchase of war bonds; it advocated that the APS and its chapters might do likewise.

For students of U.S. classic issues, the AP in the year 1943 was a classic. It included warm debate between Ashbrook and Perry over the "premieres gravures" stamps and 1861 usages. Any student of these years would profit from reading these articles and could admire Acting Editor Brookman's even hand at the throttle. Brookman himself was a first-class authority on the subject.

By February 1943, the APS Service Roll had lengthened considerably, and notices of "killed in action" began to appear. The war, however, seemed to have little impact on philatelic articles, which continued to appear in various journals. A British member wrote a long letter in support of Lybarger's recommendations.

The war did have one disastrous effect on the Society: a large drop in membership. In April 1943, 308 were dropped for non-payment of dues. Membership fell below 4,500.

Lindquist, Charles Sidney Thompson, Ed. Richardson, George Van den Berg, Franklin Bruns, Eugene Klein, Stephen Rich, Dan Hansworth, Henry W. Holcombe, George Ward Linn, George F. Stilphen, Willard O. Wylie, Edward Stern, Max Johl and F. Walter Pollack. Should the reader wish to see what some of his favorite writers in this philatelic All-America team looked like, he or she need only to refer to the April 1943 AP.

Max Johl, Dan Vooyos, and Private Henry Van Dyke were still listed on the ever-lengthening Service Roll. One wonders how Dan continued his new effort, the Philatelic Literature Review, which appeared in this year. Perhaps his later interest in the American Philatelic Research Library was prompted by this endeavor. August Dietz was still occasionally publishing his Confederate Bulletin; his great work, the Dietz Confederate States Catalog and Handbook, was in the final stages of preparation.

The July AP brought the surprising news that the 1943 convention in Milwaukee had been 'postponed' by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors. The reasons were many: Milwaukee lacked accommodations, transportation was extremely difficult, and the President of the United States had requested that all unessential travel be avoided.

President Flower made an interesting suggestion to APS members who had planned to attend the convention: Why not take the money that would have gone for travel to Milwaukee and buy ten-year war bonds? 'And our 1953 convention can be known as the 'War Bond Convention.' ''

Elections were to be handled by the Credentials Committee in Milwaukee, and voting would be by mail.

A "Reference Ballot" was included which requested all members to vote on two major proposals. The first did much to eliminate the proxies, and the second had to do with the polling of the whole membership for their votes. Lybarger's reforms already were taking effect. In a full page ad in the AP, George Linn endorsed the proposals and urged the membership to support them.

The September AP announced, with what appeared to be the obvious pleasure of the acting editor, that Donald Lybarger had been elected, with all his fellow candidates, by a practically unanimous vote, and that proposition No. 1 had carried by a vote of 1,322 to 241. Proposition No. 2 needed a quorum of the whole Society and did not gain it, but was favored by a 1,472-91 margin. Lybarger was installed as president of the American Philatelic Society by the Buffalo Club on September 18, 1943.

Next Month: The Lybarger Years.

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**REFERENDUM BALLOT**

(Submitted for the vote of the members in accordance with By-Laws Art. V, Sec. 39 & Art. XIII)

**PROPOSAL NUMBER ONE**

A Resolution to amend the By-Laws of the American Philatelic Society by eliminating therein all provisions for proxy voting.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the members of the American Philatelic Society that the By-Laws of the Society shall be and hereby are amended by striking therefrom all provisions for voting by proxy, as follows:

(a) By striking out Section 3 of Article III, and renumbering the preceding sections of said article in proper sequence;

(b) By striking from Sec. 4 of Art. III the words:—"or be properly represented by proxies;"

(c) By striking from Sec. 4 of Art. IV the words:—"and the form of proxy," and the words:—"either in person or by proxy;"

(d) By striking from Sec. 5 of Art. IV the words:—"either in person or by proxy;"

(e) By striking from Sec. 9 of Art. V the words:—"and substitutions may be in form of a combined ballot and proxy for the annual convention;"

(f) By striking from Art. XIII the words:—"or by proxy;"

**VOTE HERE →**

| In favor of Proposal I | Against Proposal I |

(Vote by putting an "X" in one of the above squares)

**PROPOSAL NUMBER TWO**

A Resolution to amend Art. XIII of the By-Laws of the American Philatelic Society dealing with the percentage of votes required to secure future By-Laws' amendments.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the members of the American Philatelic Society that Art. XIII of the By-Laws of the Society shall be and hereby is amended to read as follows:

The By-Laws of the Society may be amended as herein provided. Amendments may be proposed (a) by the Annual Convention; (b) by petition signed by at least 15 members in good standing; and (c) by vote of a chapter of the Society.

A proposed amendment shall be placed in the hands of the Secretary at least 60 days prior to the operation of the annual convention and shall be published in the American Philatelist at least 60 days prior to said convention. A proposed amendment shall be mailed to each member of the Society in good standing not less than 30 days prior to the operation of the annual convention and other material is sent out by the Secretary in keeping with the provisions of Art. IV, Section 4, hereof. Amendments and any one may be included with a proposed amendment, provided, expense of printing the same is paid for by those interested. The form of ballot shall provide a space wherein each member may indicate his vote for or against the proposed amendment. Ballots shall be tabulated and reported by the Credentials Committee. Amendments shall be accepted by a two-thirds favorable vote of the members voting. The American Philatelist is hereby authorized to publish the proceedings of any part of the principal of the funds thereby created except upon a two-thirds vote of the entire membership.

**VOTE HERE →**

| In favor of Proposal II | Against Proposal II |

(Vote by putting an "X" in one of the above squares)

When the 1943 APS convention was "postponed," Society members were asked to vote by mail on two major proposals for amending the Society's by-laws. Ballots were printed in the AP.

856/September 1986

Fellow Members—

**VOTE**

George Ward Linn, APS 2452

It is immaterial whether you take time to mark the ballot for officers for their election is assured by the usual custom, BUT DO NOT fail to VOTE on the Amendments. This is one of the most important steps for improvement that has been offered by the Society in many years. Perhaps, if this amendment carries, the future may offer opportunities for some real constructive work in the Society.

Only by active participation in the affairs of the Society can you hope to get results. The bars may now be let down whereby it will be worth the effort to take an active interest. In the past no one except the inside crowd had any more chance than the proverbial snowball in Hades.

**VOTE FOR THE AMENDMENTS**

After you vote, send 25c for one year or $1.00 for four years subscription to Linn's Weekly Stamp News, the great American Weekly Philatelic Newspaper that prints the News that you don't find in any other paper.

After you have received a few copies, if dissatisfaction, ask for your money back and it will be refunded in full.

Sample copy for a postal card.

Address The Publisher

GEORGE W. LINN, A. P. S. 2452

Sidney, Ohio, U. S. A.

George Linn took a full-page advertisement in the AP urging members to vote in favor of the amendments to the by-laws.

The American Philatelist