

Introducing the Australian Philatelic Federation . . . Part 9

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The February magazine detailed the wide range of support services available from the APF that are available to individual collectors, stamp clubs or state councils. This support is supplemented by similar types of services from the various State and Territory Councils.

The Australian Philatelic Federation (APF) would again like to acknowledge publicly the many exhibition frame sponsorships already received, and to express their appreciation for the generosity demonstrated by this continuing support. The frame sponsorship plaques are currently being prepared and should have their first showing at Mandurah in November. A number of larger donors have agreed to forego their plaques, thus increasing the value of their contribution. These special donors will be acknowledged in a display frame at every National exhibition. This is good news for the smaller donors, as their plaques are now almost certain to be mounted at every National exhibition.

In Part 8 of this series I advised that the APF is currently investigating what may be an exciting addition to its range of services. Unfortunately, negotiations have not yet reached a stage which permits publication of the details.

Therefore this month's article will highlight a major change to our website plus some of our services to assist collectors –

- Research assistance service, and
- The Forum.

Whilst the State Councils maintain philatelic libraries, they are located in the capital cities, which can restrict accessibility. In order that collectors who do not have recourse to these facilities are not disadvantaged, the opportunity exists to seek answers and remove uncertainty. Naturally, these same facilities are available to collectors who have unsuccessfully exhausted all their options.

Upgrading the APF Website

For the past thirteen years the APF website has been maintained by Denis Rosenfeld, who has taken the website from inception to a highly informative source, a task demanding dedication, an all-round philatelic knowledge and loads of spare time.

Denis believes that now is the time to introduce a “new and fresh face” to the job, and consequently did not stand for re-appointment at the recent APF Annual General Meeting. The new webmaster is Jeff Trinidad, with many years of website experience.

During its life, the website has grown substantially. Over this period there have also been changes in collectors' requirements. Therefore, the APF Executive considered that the appointment of a new webmaster was a good time to review the website with a view to a more logical grouping and improved navigation, both essential elements of a successful website.

With a website as large and complicated as ours, the revision will take some months to complete. However, the good news is that the basic revised format is now online, and a visit could be advantageous. New information will be progressively added over the next few months. The website address remains unchanged at www.apf.org.au.

The website provides many opportunities to seek additional information, especially regarding the various international and national exhibition classes, as well as giving access to the two facilities described below.

Whilst further expansion of the information available from the website is planned, some particular fields or topics can be overlooked. The webmaster would gratefully accept any amendments to the data on the website. Simply email Jeff at jeff@jystamps2000.com.

However, to suggest a new section, or a new type of information, or a modification to the structure of the website contact our Public Relations Officer, John Moore, at PO Box 528 Cardiff NSW 2285, or by email to moore.john@optusnet.com.au.

Research Assistance

The APF Research Assistance service is designed to assist collectors in learning about their fields of interest and helping find solutions to difficult philatelic problems by seeking to provide information not readily available to the collector.

A request for research assistance should be directed to the relevant State Research Officer (SRO), preferably in the form of a written request, supported by photocopies of relevant material. In most cases, these SRO's have access to extensive philatelic libraries. Where necessary, the SRO may refer the matter to the National Coordinator for further advice. A complete listing of the SRO's is shown on the APF website at www.apf.org.au/research.

The National Coordinator is David Collyer, who can be contacted by either writing to P.O Box 201, Gladesville, NSW 1675, or by emailing to d_collyer30@hotmail.com.

Please note, this service is not to be used for expertisation of stamps or for valuation purposes.

The Forum (This facility has now been discontinued – it was attracting unwanted non-philatelic topics).

A very much underused facility provided by the APF is the Forum, to be found on the website under Support Services. Its purpose is to provide collectors and philatelists with a convenient means of seeking input and assistance with a given project, area of research or problem where the information required is unlikely to be available through conventional research methods, and then to publicise the eventual outcome of the request.

Initiators of Forum requests are requested (but not obliged) to provide the APF webmaster with the responses which they receive, or to prepare a summary of the new information obtained. Forum initiators are particularly encouraged to do this where the subject matter is considered to be of general interest to the wider philatelic community.

Examples of possible Forum requests are –

- Researchers preparing or updating philatelic literature. Where the information being sought is expected to be published, the name of the journal or publication and expected availability should be provided;
- Private collectors wishing to obtain information to assist with exhibits;
- Philatelic Organisations wishing to promote existing or proposed events or publications; or the formation of meeting groups and they are seeking information and/or interested persons.

The Forum operates with the following simple guidelines –

- The Forum is open to any bona fide collector;
- Persons wishing to have requests posted on the Forum must provide a short subject title, brief description of the information being sought, a contact name and preferably an e-mail address;
- Persons able to assist should respond directly to the person listing the topic, not the APF or the APF webmaster;
- Forum Requests will initially remain posted for 12 months with extensions granted on request from the originator;

- Where the information sought may already exist, then the Research Assistance Service described above should be utilised in the first instance;
- The Forum is **not** to be used to seek exchange correspondents, penpals or advertise private collections for sale, nor is it a chatroom.

The website will lead you through the registration process. After your registration has been confirmed by email you can enter your research request.

Change to the Frugal Exhibition Class

The Frugal exhibition class seeks to provide an opportunity for collectors to display an exhibit comprised of interesting philatelic material which is of low cost, and in doing so enhance their philatelic skills. It is intended to encourage those who might be discouraged from exhibiting by the high cost of items needed to compete in some of the other classes. This class is only available at the National Level. The Frugal class concentrates on the criteria of treatment, importance, knowledge, research and condition.

The class name derives from the low wholesale value of the entire exhibit, which is limited to 5 frames. At the recent meeting of the APF this upper limit was significantly increased from \$750 to \$1,000. Should the wholesale value of the exhibit exceed this upper limit, then penalties will apply resulting in a loss of points.

Further information can be obtained about the Frugal class by visiting the APF website at www.apf.org.au/frugal, or by contacting the Class Coordinator, Ian McMahon, either by writing to P.O Box 891, Jamison Centre, ACT, 2614, or emailing ian.mcmahon4@bigpond.com.

Next Month

Next month's article at this stage is still uncertain. Depending upon progress it may be the exciting new addition previously alluded to, or, if not, the support services provided by the APF to overseas exhibitors.