

Revision of Judges Manual – Your Input is Welcome!

By James Pullin

A team of judges, exhibitors and reviewers has been working on the 7th Edition of the *Judges Manual* for several months. Experienced judges, assisted by exhibitors known for their expertise in various areas, developed a draft manual. The revision team reviewed this draft and made comments and suggestions. Results of this team work are now presented for final public review. This review period provides exhibiting collectors, as well as the entire philatelic community, opportunity to make positive and constructive comments and suggestions regarding their experiences. The philatelic community hopefully will enable the committee to incorporate the public's thoughts.

All philatelists are encouraged to download the draft at <http://stamps.org/7th-edition-judges-manual> on the APS web site. There is no charge. Comments can be forwarded to Dr. Edward Andrews, chairman of the revision committee. Dr. Andrew's email is afacinc@yahoo.com. Public comments are welcome and necessary.

U.S. AIRMAIL CARRIED BY BALLOON

By Jim Archbold

On a hot summer day August 17, 1859, Prof. John Wise stood at the town square in Lafayette, Indiana, waiting next to a balloon named Jupiter. He was a balloon enthusiast and a well-known aeronaut; he was to be the pilot. A postmaster handed him a bag with 123 letters. The destination of the balloonist and his precious cargo was New York City. Delivering letters by air had been attempted before. There had been carrier pigeons and in 1785 a balloon flight from Dover, England to Calais, France with mail.

Now John Wise was attempting the first for the United States and hoping to set a record for the longest balloon flight, over 800 miles. But the weather didn't cooperate as the wind was blowing southwest, not east, even at 14,000 feet. Five hours later – and just 30 miles later, he gave up and landed in Crawfordsville, Indiana. So the mail, only partway by air, was put on a train to New York City.



A month later, he tried again! This time he made it to Henderson, New York – flying nearly 800 miles. A storm forced a crash landing, and he lost the mail.

A piece of mail from Wise's first flight has survived and now resides in the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. John Wise continued his balloon flights as he flew observation balloons for the Union Army during the Civil War. He died in 1879 at age 71, doing what he loved, when a storm pushed his balloon into Lake Michigan.



Reminiscences

By Michael Rogers

We're here to deal...

I'm a schmoozer. If you come from a big city, you'd smile with understanding on the term "schmoozer." I'm a friendly guy. I talk with my hands. Words flow. I write my stories the way I speak. Rarely do I not get along with someone.

Being a dealer means knowing the technical points. Had the sum total of my career been expressed by my Winter Park Stamp Shop, I would have had just the one employee by my side. An employee provides insight and knowledge. Trial and error led me to Alvin Hintz, who was with the store darned near 20 years. A terrific friend.

Collectors lose confidence with a dealer who incorrectly catalogs or inflates the grade of stamps. In our business, it's harder to buy quality material than it is to sell it. Often hidden gems would pop up in accumulations that had gone by unrecognized. The astute dealer who knows his stuff can value material higher and buy accordingly.

The former ASDA president Leo Scarlet famously opined that every seven years a dealer would buy something that would change his life. My life changing event occurred in 1982 with the purchase of a huge China and Asia accumulation in 29 stuffed cartons. In one fell swoop, I became an Asian dealer. The transition to specialist and auctioneer was marked by a great many uplifting events.

Along came James Kerr who was raised in Korea by Christian missionaries prior to the second world war. He spoke the Korean language and was an authority on Korean philately. Jim came to work in my company and, in time, we developed a close relationship. Not only did Jim understand Asian philately, I could count on him for wise advice.

I received a phone call from a gentleman living in Jupiter, Florida who offered a vast private treaty consignment of Japanese stamps and gold coins. For whatever reason, he did not want to sell through auction and preferred to sell for a set price less commission. Jim and I set out and we were received into a fine pool home in a retirement community about an hour's drive north of Ft. Lauderdale.

He sure liked Jim. What's not to like? Both were retired military, men of the

world. Both liked their scotch and told great stories.

Me? The guy ranked me out. Never losing a beat, he criticized and cut me head to toe. Why'd I say that? Nothing because I was baffled. After about 20 minutes, he lost energy and went to the back of the house, ostensibly to obtain more material. I figured he was getting second wind for another attack.

As I started packing up my tongs and catalogs, Jim grabbed my arm, asking me what I was doing. I explained I was tired of being insulted. Jim whispered "Remember what you came for. You are here to do a deal. He isn't angry with you. When he returns, look at his skin, he is dying. He is jealous of your youth; he is angry with your vitality." I sat there mulling it over and Jim continued "if you leave, what do you have tomorrow?" So when he returned, I braced for more and wrote the agreement. Glorious material. Sure enough, the gentleman passed away a few weeks later.

A few years later, I was working a stamp show outside of San Francisco. As would happen on many an occasion, I was approached about a collection at home. Would I come see it? As an inheritance, someone on my side of the counter never knows whether its treasure or not, but mention China and my ears perk up.

The older man who assembled the collection and accumulation was easily in his eighties. I would have had more success speaking to him but he had a stroke and could not. The daughter controlled the meeting and was clearly distrustful. I commiserate. Likely her first experience and I have done this countless times.

What I was offered was the China Qing Dynasty 1878-1911 and People's Republic of China. It was splendid material and very clean. Stock pages with China Qing Dynasty big blocks of Dowager high values cancelled to order and large dragons stuffed on cards, row after row. Topping the box of PRC was a set of sheets of the 1949 Trade Union #5-7 originals for example. My eyes glazed over dreamily. Yummy!

I explained I could either purchase, accept for private treaty sale and sell for a small commission, or accept for public auction. I made a valuation which was rejected. It was clear her reason for rejection was personal animus as opposed to price because she did not know the market. I as-

sured her that with consignment, the pre-consignment valuation was strictly for insurance since we worked on commission. With great reluctance, I left.

Upon returning home, I considered how to salvage the transaction. Plan B: send the charming Jim Kerr. Jim had retired by then and was living up north. All that was needed was an older man to comfort her. Contracts signed, Jim transported the material to Florida. Within a couple of weeks I had a deal going to sell this material for a very good price. I conveyed the price to Jim who tendered it to her. She signed off on it and I sold it. Everyone happy.

A few months later, Jim was contacted with the family's magnificent Hong Kong. The Hong Kong market had become a speculative beast, zooming up, anticipating the turnover of Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997. Everyone anticipated further gains in HK prices afterwards. What no one knew was the market would nosedive soon after the take-over.

Larry Gibson came to my company in 1997 just about the time that the HK was being offered. Ever a warm and hearty fellow, he is a most knowledgeable philatelist. While Jim knew China, I was concerned he might not know HK. I sure had no doubts about Larry's abilities. Thus I worked it out that Larry and Jim would meet in San Francisco and receive the consignment.

Once returned to Winter Park, Larry and I described the Hong Kong for public auction. It appeared in the 1998 Michael Rogers Inc auctions. Jim related to me afterwards her wish that I have no part in the description of her consignment. I got a chuckle out of that because I spent countless hours on her material, proving the statement "the more work done to a consignment, the better the realization."

You may be thinking that I should have recused myself and left the describing of the Hong Kong in the Michael Rogers Inc auction catalog to others in my company. I viewed her instruction as inherently without logic. She chose me to sell the family Hong Kong and then wanted to bar me from describing it? Fact is, I've built two wonderful Hong Kong collections. My enthusiasm comes through in a distinctive writing style when describing in an auction catalog. After our 1998 auctions were concluded, Jim Kerr was congratulated on the fine presentation. ☒