

Barbara R. Mueller's Receipt of Lichtenstein Award Highlights Collectors Club Dinner

The annual awards dinner of The Collectors Club, on May 13, 1981, saw Barbara R. Mueller receive the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award. Only the second woman in history to receive the award, Miss Mueller was feted for her outstanding services as a philatelic journalist and editor. Her remarks upon receiving the medal follow.

When Mr. Silver called me that wintry evening during the last holiday season, just before New Year's, to tell me that I had been selected to receive this great honor, he began the conversation by saying, "I have some good news for you." "Great," I thought to myself, "he has written an article for the *Essay-Proof Journal*!" For the past 20 years that has been my idea of good news. And, Phil, I can still use an article, and while I'm at it, speaking to such a distinguished assemblage of philatelic experts, I may as well ask for articles from you, too. See me after these proceedings end.

But after I recovered from the initial shock of Phil's good news, I went through my file of the *Philatelist* for the years 1952 to date, making a list of those who preceded me in this honor and noting their reactions to it. That was a really depressing task, because it made me keenly aware of the caliber of people upon whom this Club bestows the Lichtenstein Award. Truly, in my heart, I feel out of place in their ranks. Of course, when I consider the man whose philatelic career the Award commemorates, I feel very humble, indeed.

Unfortunately, I never met Mr. Lichtenstein either in person or by correspondence, but that in itself is not so unusual. For example, Henry Goodkind, in accepting the 1963 Award, deplored the fact that there were fewer people alive and active then who knew Mr. Lichtenstein than were on the scene in 1952 when the Award was created. He predicted that in 1973 there would be even fewer. Well, this is 1981.

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Barbara R. Mueller receives the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Award from Philip Silver, Lichtenstein Committee chairman. (Photograph by Boutrelle.)

I first became fully aware of Mr. Lichtenstein's presence on the philatelic scene in 1947, the year of his death. I well remember passing through the Lexington Avenue entrance to the old Grand Central Palace and walking up the stairs to the main floor of the Centenary International Philatelic Exhibition, where the Court of Honor was dominated by a huge, draped portrait of Mr. Lichtenstein. I thought to myself, "How sad that he could not be here to see the show; he worked so hard for it." And, incidentally, I still think that 1947 show was the best international held in post-war America, but then, we all probably feel that our first international is always the greatest. As Mr. Silver said when he accepted his Lichtenstein Award, "What is lost for most of us is the emotional as compared to the intellectual approach to stamp collecting."

After Mr. Lichtenstein's death, I quickly became aware of the role his daughter played in furthering her late father's philatelic dreams, including the Philatelic Foundation. Mrs. Dale achieved philatelic greatness and thereby assisted in the recognition of the efforts of her sister philatelists without the raucous and strident assertiveness so often associated with the self-appointed leaders of women's movements for so-called equality and rights. She was a lady in every sense of the word.

And that, in itself, is one reason why I am so pleased to become the second woman to receive this Award. I pledge myself to continue to work for philately in the Louise Boyd Dale

spirit, to concentrate on sharing knowledge rather than merely possessing it.

Actually, for quite some time now, I have been in effect a vicarious collector, as it were. I derive my pleasure from working with others on their studies and journalistic projects; I try to make the philatelic press safe for ordinary amateurs, so that we all can have some fun.

I have noted that some recipients of this honor have commented extensively upon the state of the hobby or its future. I am not a soothsayer, although I have definite opinions on many of the things going on in philately today to the detriment, I believe, of its future welfare. Of course, one of these things is the emphasis on so-called investment. Recently, I clipped a few paragraphs out of the financial section of the *Milwaukee Journal* which truly express my sentiments on this subject. The editor of that section wrote, in regard to investing in collectibles, "I guess I call this the darker side because I believe society as a whole is diminished when we reduce stamp collecting, works of art, or jewelry to the least common denominator—greed. These investments take out of the public's hands the very things that add to the quality of life and leave them nothing in return. I believe in investing. Our society couldn't function without investment. That's the surest way to building a security for an individual. But investment should be in the future, not the past. It should be productive, helping companies or individuals to grow. I guess I believe investments should add to society, not diminish it."

It doesn't require much perspicacity either to forecast a time within this century yet when the world-wide use of postage stamps will be greatly diminished by technological advances in communications media, leaving the stamp primarily to a governmental propagandizing and profit-making role. On the other hand, the same technology will greatly assist in philatelic research and investigation. With increasing public access to computers, the tedious tasks of assembling and analyzing data, for instance, will become quick and easy. In fact, I know of several such philatelic computer programs underway now, ranging from the data banks of U.S. plate number information maintained by specialists in the BIA to checklists of topical designs compiled by the American Topical Association.

Thus, on balance, I am optimistic about our beloved hobby, and especially so when I think of a group like The Collectors Club at the helm, helping to steer our "love boat" through the upcoming perilous waters.

That is the second reason why I am so deeply grateful for this recognition from the premier philatelic club in America and why I shall redouble my efforts to give as much to philately as philately has given to me. I am now one of those very fortunate persons, who in the words of Herbert Bloch, have received this honor for something they like to do. Thank you.