

Charles J.G. Verge, who was born in Montreal and now hails from Toronto, is widely acknowledged as one of Canada's foremost living philatelists, although he has been active all over the world.

Verge has been an international leader in the organizing and judging of philatelic exhibits, serving since 1995 at over 150 national and international stamp shows in North America, South America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Australia, most recently at Capex '22 in Toronto. For the International Federation of Philately (F.I.P.), he acts as lead trainer and develops the curriculum for the jury academy.

He himself has exhibited in every major exhibit category except two (maximum cards and astrophilately). "I believe that, as a judge, one should understand the regulations and complexities of exhibiting in all classes."

A historian by training, Verge is the author of four books, including one on Canada's 1959 St. Lawrence Seaway 5¢ invert error, and countless articles. For many years he was the stamp columnist for the *Ottawa Citizen*, and he is a frequent contributor to the *American Philatelist* and *Canadian Philatelist*. He is also a past president of the Eire Philatelic Association.

He likes to stress the importance of research, especially in places philatelists often don't think to look. "I find it interesting to do research in history, and bring in things nobody would have thought of," he said in a December interview. "It's important to paint a broad picture."

He cited as an example his exhibit on the U.S. 1959 Dental Health 4¢ stamp. "I spent seven years researching this one stamp. I went through the Third Assistant Postmaster General's collection at the National Postal Museum. I went through the Bureau of Engraving and Printing files. Then it occurred to me to visit the headquarters of the American Dental Association in Chicago. In their archives they had a whole filing cabinet full of material on this stamp issue!"

His book on the Seaway inverts included memos from ministerial archives, detailing behind-the-scenes activity to deflect the embarrassment of the snafu.

Even the most experienced philatelists can still learn, Verge says, recalling the time another judge took him aside at an international show and suggested he rethink the arrangement of his exhibit on Haitian revenues. "He asked me to completely redo the development of the narrative," Verge explained. "It hadn't occurred to me, but he was right."

Verge has worked across borders to bring U.S. and Canadian philately closer together, for instance by helping to broker reciprocity agreements over qualifications for national and international shows. As a member of the Council of Philatelists advising the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum in Washington, he brought to bear his experiences as a board member of the Friends of the Canadian Postal Museum in Ottawa, where he had helped curate some of the material in its collection.

Verge is a 2020 signatory of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. Away from philately, he enjoys spending time with his granddaughter, Lea, and collecting hockey memorabilia.

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Alfred F. Lichtenstein (1876-1947) was widely considered one of the greatest American philatelists of the first half of the 20th century. The award in his memory was established by the Collectors Club in 1952, and its first recipient was Lichtenstein's good friend and co-founder of the Philatelic Foundation, Theodore Steinway.

In addition to the Lichtenstein award, the club announced its award for Best Presentation of 2022 to Jean Wang for her Nov. 2 online talk, "Evolution of a Thematic Exhibit - Blood: A Modern Medicine"; and the Robert P. Odenweller Award for Best Article in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* to Steven Roth for his two-part "Mail by Stage Coach: The Carriage of Mail by Eastern Stage Lines before 1860," which appeared in Vol. 101 Nos. 3 and 4.

More information can be found at the club's web site, www.collectorsclub.org