

'ROYAL 2001' NAT. PHIL. EXHIBITION

(REVEALS NEWS OF MAXIMAPHILY'S ACCEPTANCE)

By George Constantourakis

'Royal 2001' Annual National Phil. Exhibition sponsored by the Royal Phil. Society of Canada (RPSC) and hosted by our local 'Lakeshore Stamp Club' was held between April 6 to 8, 2001 at Dorval, a suburb of Montreal. Canada Post honored this event by launching on April 6, 2001 on the grounds of this Exhibition, a special stamp-on-stamp, reproducing Canada's 1st postage stamp, the 'Three Pence Beaver' (*Front Cover*) marking 150 years of the administration of the postal service by Canada itself. On Apr. 5, 1851 the Imperial Government transferred authority of the postal administration in Canada, to the government of the Province of Canada.

'Royal 2001' had a total of 75 Exhibits of 288 frames. These were: 3 Exhibits in the 'Court of Honor', 39 General Exhibits, 8 one-frame exhibits, and 25 Youth Exhibits. Most of the General Exhibits were of an International level caliber receiving 18 Gold medals, 7 Vermeil, 11 Silver, and 3 Silver-Bronze. I took an active part in this exhibition, first as an exhibitor at the National level of 'Royal 2001' with a unique collection of mine on the 'History of Maximaphily' (see relevant article in this issue) composed exclusively of Maximum Cards; second as a first time Apprentice Judge at the Regional level for the 'Lakeshore 2001' exhibition.

My overall experience was a roller-coaster one, but thanks God it ended on the high note. On Fri. Apr. 6 I had my baptism as an Apprentice Judge under P. Campbell. There I realized that even though I was very strong in one area (Maximaphily), I lacked knowledge in many other philatelic areas. Having checked the rules for the 'Thematics Division' I realized with surprise many basic differences. Overall, I think I did fine as I managed to score the exhibits very close to that of the other two Judges with me. I was quite impressed with my Chief Judge. He had developed his own score sheets for each division, which greatly facilitated my task. Furthermore, he never made use of the exhibition catalog, which lists the names of the exhibitors, as to avoid any possible subjective judgment.

On Sat. Apr. 7, I had some free time to stroll among the dealers. I found a few M.C. but I was mostly pleased with my finds of some fine old postcards. I also had the opportunity to talk with the president of 'Federation Quebecois de Philatelie' Mr. Latulippe, who told me that Maximum Cards will be most appealing to Young Collectors, and invited me to make presentations on Maximaphily to the their Youth Wing. That is a challenge that I intend to undertake, hopefully by the next year.

By noon on Sat. the results were posted in front of each exhibit, and found that I had won a Vermeil medal. This was a respectable result. In a sense I was satisfied. In the afternoon there was a 2-hour long Judges Critique. Attending the meeting as an observer was Mr. Knud Mohr the president of F.I.P. the true VIP. of this National Exhibition. I went there simply to get some feedback on my strong points and areas that I will need to improve. When I asked for their comments on my exhibit, they answered that they were impressed with its organization and presentation. Then I

innocently asked about how many points had my exhibit receive, only to be told that they do not give points for a 'Special Studies' exhibit. This response was simply unbelievable to my ears, and I decided then and there to put forward some pointed questions. Having exhibited only in Europe - nationally and internationally - in the Class of Maximaphily, my point of reference was the rules set up by the F.I.P. I was simply not aware, at that moment, that in North America for 'Special Studies' exhibits there is not a point-scoring system. Also I was not aware that in North America there is not such a thing as a Large Vermeil medal; and that certain of our Classes (or better say Divisions) do not correspond with the F.I.P.'s International Classes. I then stated that this exhibit was supposed to be judged as a Maximaphily exhibit by a Judge familiar with the rules of Maximaphily, as promised by the President of the RPSC Charles Verge and Ann Triggie (the US Liaison and Special Advisor to the RPSC President). Mrs. A. Triggie who was present, stated that my exhibit was supposed to have been judged as a 'Maximaphily Exhibit'. However as it turned out the current 4th Edition of APS Manual of Phil. Judging did not include a chapter for Maximaphily, while the soon to be published 5th Edition will include such a chapter. I then questioned if the judges were aware of the rarity of the material (many one of a kind items) and the depth of the research, particularly as it relates to tracing the steps that led to F.I.P.'s Acceptance of Maximaphily, and pointed to the President of the F.I.P. who happened to be present in the room. One judge, went as far as to say that I should exhibit Maximaphily nationally in Europe and not in Canada. I had been doing this for the last 6 years, but after 30 years in Canada the time had come for me to knock at the door of the nationasls here in Canada, in N America. On a personal level I felt a bit uneasy that I dared question the establishment, and I did reflect on my own actions; but as a spokesman for Maximaphily I felt very proud that I had done so. Maximaphily's point of view had to be given a voice, and I was speaking not only on my behalf but of many other such collectors. In particular I had in mind a former member of MACSU who had approached me on the first day of the Exhibition stating : ' I had exhibited with old Canadian M.C. and got only a Silver-Bronze and then I got discouraged'.

Certain of the Judges - to their credit - did see my point of view. However there must be others that might not yet have forgiven me for 'rocking the boat'. If I happened to have offended any of them, I take this opportunity to apologize, as my sole intend was to give voice to our concerns. I should add, that I was quite impressed by many of the Judges, by their knowledge particularly in the field of their expertise, and I aspire to rise to their level. Now coming to the Judges defense, they did not have a 'synopsis' (summary) of my exhibit in their hands, simply because up to that moment - with my European points of reference - I was totally unaware of it; and this is a pleasant revelation to me. A synopsis is a unique and suburb tool that on the one hand permits the exhibitor to express certain points and draw attention to some crucial parts of his work; and on the other it facilitates the task of the Judges by directing them to their own appropriate research.

In the evening I went to the Awards Banquet. This event was also a unique experience for me, as I got to see the 'who is who' of Canadian Philately. I have the highest respect for all these people that came in front to receive their awards, as their exhibits are the result of a lengthy labor of love. Two special and most deserving special awards come to mind, that to Kurt Glatzfelder for his Youth Exhibit on 'Space Exploration', plus that to B. Heiffel for her Thematic Exhibit on Disabilities.

At this banquet I was seated at the Judges table right next to Alan Hanks the Chief Judge (the former president of the American Topical Association 1984-87). Now these were the people that I had a contention earlier on. Mr. Hanks proved to be a most pleasant and interesting person. We referred to the regular column in their journal on 'Topical Maximaphily' by our vice-president Mr. S. Safiano. I expressed to him our intention to reformulate our Macsu Charter in such a way as to qualify in becoming one of A.T.A.'s Chapters by focusing -besides the rules of Maximaphily; on Topics as they relate to North America. He was most attentive and receptive.

Sunday April 8, this was a day that offered me many pleasant and unexpected surprises. Early in the morning I attended a presentation of the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors given by our RPSC President Ch. Verge. There he informed us that following a tele-conferencing between the directors of the APS (Amer. Phil. Soc.) and the RPSC last February, it was agreed to follow a bold, all inclusive approach to Philately. There will be the following Classes (Classes are not 'exhibit types' but major sections within an exhibition) General for two or more frames; One Frame for exhibits of one frame (16 pages); and Youth for exhibits by young persons under the age of 18 in the U.S. and under 21 in Canada. There will be the following Divisions (this term corresponds to that of 'Classes' in Europe and Internationally by the F.I.P.) Postal, Revenue, Thematic, Display; plus two new divisions 'Illustrated Mail', and Charity/Promotion/Cinderella. These new rules will come into effect from August 2001.

Our Maximaphily is now officially accepted as a sub-division of the 'Illustrated Mail' together with (and independent of) other sub-divisions of Advertising Covers, Patriotic Covers, Corner Cards, Cacheted, Illustrated and Imprinted Covers/Cards, First Day Covers and Maximaphily. Maximaphily is characterized as an exhibit composed solely of maximum cards. There is a Note stating: "The distinction of Illustrated Mail is its focus on the illustration or illustrated subject of the philatelic material, i.e., the advertising, patriotic message, or corner card, or cachet subject, rather than its postal use".

I raised a few explanatory questions as to having on request Maximaphily exhibits judged under the FIP Maximaphily rules. Mr. Verge answered me that even though philatelic exhibitions are free to designate the Divisions that will be accepted, in two years time at the most, no club will dare refuse such a request. During this meeting Mr. Verge introduced me to Mr. Knud Mhor president of the FIP, who was attending the meeting as a 'rare bird' in Canada. Mr. Mohr made a reference about our president Daniel Olsen. I then informed them of the interest expressed on

Maximaphily by the 'Youth' representative and of my intentions of promoting Maximaphily here in Montreal where the influences of North America and France do merge. I take this opportunity to extend on behalf of MACSU my sincere thanks and gratitude to Mr. Charles Verge, Mrs. Ann Triggles, and all APS & RPSC officers involved, for giving an official recognition to our discipline of Maximaphily.

I know, we would have liked our own National Division, but as a first step this is most welcomed. The ball is now in our yard. We all have to get involved and participate in regional and national exhibitions. You can start simply with one frame (16 pages) exhibits of your topic of interest. Here, when I spread the news, I had people telling me that they had material to put a one-frame exhibit. Once we activate ourselves by exhibiting and thus attracting new members, we can then come back to the APS and RPSC with data of our activities and ask for recognition as an Independent National Division of Maximaphily.

A little later on that day I assisted at the Regional Judges Critique of 'Lakeshore 2001', as an Apprentice Judge. To be frank I felt uneasy, fearing that maybe a 'smart cookie' will put me on the spot, the same way I had done myself the day before. Thanks God it went smoothly as I had my notes on hand and made my points. Maybe the only thing on my part was that I was lacking a degree of confidence or authority, but I will never pretend to play the expert if I am not such yet. My intention is to expand my knowledge in other philatelic disciplines.

In the afternoon I had to attend a 'Judging Seminar' presented by Dr. Powell and P. Cambell. It was a most informative seminar for me on the General Criteria for the Evaluation of Competitive Exhibits. This was followed by announcing and explaining the 'New Classes and Divisions Terminology' that I had learned about in the morning. Most of the Judges were unaware of this and the reactions were varied. Overall I think they were positive, as they understood that the future of Philately lies with inclusiveness. One of the Judges pointed to saying: "There George, there is your Maximaphily accepted", and another in the back applauded.

On a personal note, during the first part of this Seminar on the General Criteria among other things an explanation was mentioned on the term 'Felicitations'. You see, my Vermeil also stated 'With Felicitations' and I had been puzzled overnight about its significance if any. Well it does mean a lot. Felicitations is given for exhibits that show outstanding philatelic research and originality and is given only once for the same exhibit. I could not believe what a difference a day made for me.

Later on that afternoon, just before the closing of the Exhibition, I had the opportunity to approach Mr. Knud Mhor, President of FIP and had a chat with him. He had actually gone and seen my exhibit. He was very pleasant, understanding, and diplomatic. I had seen him before at a distance in Madrid. I offered him a copy of our journal as it had a report on ESPANA 2000. When I explained to him my intention to write a report on ROYAL 2001 exhibition, he expressed his interest in receiving a copy of it.

All in all, this Exhibition was a very eventful one, and I am looking forward to a brighter future for Maximaphily in North America, but with the help of all of you.