

**2023 Annual General Meeting of the Éire Philatelic Association
October 21, 2023**

Minutes

Our AMG was held via Zoom starting at 11:00 at EDT. The meeting was called to order by President Bob Benninghoff, who is filling out the term of our elected President David Brennan. Bob thanked all of the staff and officers of the ÉPA who keep this fine organization functioning.

Our AGM had 20 in attendance. The first order of business was a moment of silence for seven departed ÉPA members:

Bernard C. Clancy (0504)	Michael Giffney (0105)
Barry Cousins (2795)	Kenneth Grant (1849)
Michael Drum (1115)	Paul J. Kelly (2744)
Barra O'Keeffe (3001)	

The **Secretary** determined that a quorum was present and the Minutes of our last AGM (October 15, 2022) were approved. The Secretary indicated that the ÉPA membership has held steady during the last fiscal year at 268 members. Tax forms were filed at the State (CA) and Federal levels for the fiscal year 2022.

The new website, developed by Wordpress, is up and running. We are now able to deliver *The Revealer* in an online formate and implement the new dues structure. In addition, we are no longer limited to the size of *The Revealer* on the website, or any exhibits that we post. However, the association is in need of a permanent webmaster. The Secretary reported that we had a Board meeting on October 14, 2023 with nine members in attendance. The Minutes of the meeting have been distributed and the reports are covered in these AGM Minutes.

The Secretary receives many inquiries about collection disposal. He always encourages people to join the EPA and sell their material through our auction. Bob Kemper has put together an informative info sheet on collection disposal. Please send an email to me for a copy (jsharkeyepa@me.com).

Treasurer's Report – Jean and Benninghoff reported that the ÉPA is in good financial shape, largely due to the hard work of our outgoing auction manager Bob Kemper and our new auction manager Michael O'Reilly, providing almost \$5000 to our account during this past year. We also received \$2273 in member donation, including \$1000 from a very generous donor. Donors received a special postcard from Stampa 2023, compliments of the Benninghoffs. The cost of printing and mailing the Revealer remains our biggest cost, at \$6665 this year. We no longer can use Bulk Mailing, because of the decreased number of issues mailed. A **Motion** was made and seconded to reduce, but not close, our Irish bank account and make transactions via PayPal. A decision was made to drop the option of Life

Membership in the ÉPA due to increasing costs. ÉPA dues will remain the same for the current fiscal year, 2023-24.

Past-President's Report - David Brennan indicated that he had to step down as President due to failing health. He made an executive decision to appoint Bob Benninghoff to fill out his remaining term and to appoint Jean Benninghoff as our Treasurer and Michael O'Reilly as a Director to replace Barney Clancy. He thanked the Secretary for his help during the year and closed by saying "We have a great team in place and I see blue skies in our future. Slainte."

Auction Manager's Report - Outgoing Auction Manager rBob Kemper reported that when he started in this position 9 1/2 years ago, the auction had about 100 lots and generated about \$2500 na year. In order to increase revenue, separate inserts were added to *The Revealer*, and the auction was sent online to every member with an email address. In addition, bid confirmations and outbid notices were sent to members. We now have \$20,000 to \$25,000 in sales and generate \$4,000 to \$5,000 in revenue to the ÉPA. In these past years, there have been a total of \$136,000, with \$27,2000 in revenue to the ÉPA. The auction has been an excellent tool for member recruitment and revenue was used to upgrade our website. Members are urged to use the auction to ban and sell material and to donate their duplicate material. **Please send in material for our auction.**

Michael O'Reilly, our new auction manager, thanked Bob for his years of service and making a smooth transition of managers. Michael is now on his second auction, which contains some excellent new material. Updates will be sent to members. The auction closes on November 15th. Michael was thanked for taking on this large job.

Stampa Report - Brian Warren reported on the recent Stampa, held in Dublin. There were thirty-three exhibits of Irish material. Member Karl Winkelmann won the ÉPA's Joseph E. Foley Medal for his exhibit "The Dublin Censor Office", among other awards. ÉPA Certificates were awarded for "Irish Registered Mail 1841-1922 (Stan Challis), "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" (Brian Harmon), and "Irish Architecture Definitives" (Brian Harmon). A **Motion** was made and approved to continue to award ÉPA certificates at Stampa for the best Irish multi-frame exhibits. The next Stampa will take place on October 11-13, 2024.

Awards Committee Chair Mike Canavan announced the ÉPA Awards. Mike thanked the members who served on the three committees.

The **Thomas E. Field Memorial Award** was presented to Brian Callan for outstanding contribution to Irish Philately. Brian Callan has done much to promote, encourage and enhance Irish Philately for over 30 years. Brian has exhibited in over 100 shows in the USA, Ireland and Europe and other parts of the world. He has prepared exhibits in all categories of philately including postcard, traditional, postal history, postal stationery, thematic and aerophilately. Brian has helped greatly in the

USA, exhibiting at shows that have needed help with their frame count. Brian is a prolific author and has written numerous articles for *The Royal Philatelist*, London, *The Revealer*, Irish Philately and *Die Harfe*. He has recently published a book titled: *Graf Zeppelin LZ-127 Airmail to South America*.

The **Vincent A. Linnell Award** was also presented to Brian Callan for the best article in *The Revealer*. Brian provided a discussion on a topic rarely seen in *The Revealer*. In his well-researched articles on telegraph development in Ireland, he discusses a means of transmission of messages that greatly shortened the time of communications, compared with the mail coaches and railways. This increased business opportunities for enterprise and profit. The articles describes the stamps that were used by several telegraph companies and contain excellent references for further reading and research.

New Business -

1. Awards

President's Award - A **Motion** was made and passed to create a new ÉPA award, the President's Award, to be given by the president at the AGM to a member (or members) of the ÉPA who have undertaken outstanding service to the association in the past 12 months. The awards' committee will consist of the President, a Vice-president and the Secretary. The official name of the award will henceforth be known as the **Richard Kelly President's Award**. Rich was our longest-serving President, serving from 2012 to 2020.

Thomas E. Field Memorial Award - The Field Award, started in 1967, is named in honor of Thomas E. Field of Skelmanthorpe, England, for outstanding contributions to Irish philately. A **Motion** was made and passed to change the name of this award to the **David J. Brennan Award**. This award is open to anyone considered to have a positive impact on Irish Philately. David served as President (1997-2001, 2022-23) and is the winner of most of the current ÉPA awards. He was also past-president of the John Barry Chapter of the ÉPA and editor of the *Emerald Postmark*.

The John J. Clark Award - The Clark Award, started in 1983, was named in honor of John J. Clark, ÉPA Secretary (1951-1961) for outstanding service to the ÉPA. A **Motion** was made and passed to change the name of this award to the **William A. O'Connor Award**. Bill was ÉPA President (2003-2007), winner of the Clark Award, the Field Award, the Joseph E. Foley Medal and the Mercer Bowers Award (2014, 2017). This award is open to ÉPA members only.

The Vincent A. Linnell Award - The Linnell Award, named in honor of Vincent A. Linnell, ÉPA president (1969-71) was started in 1983 to recognize the best article in *The Revealer* in the previous 12 months and is open to all authors. This does not include articles republished from earlier issues of *The Revealer*. A **Motion** was made and approved to change the name of this award to the **Brian Warren Award**. Brian, the Vice-President of

the ÉPA for Europe and long-time Director, is perhaps best known for his articles in *The Revealer*, "That Was The Year That Was", which documents every aspect of Irish philately during the year.

It was agreed that these awards can be given out to the same person multiple-times.

2. Membership Recruitment

Michael O'Reilly led a discussion on how to increase membership in the ÉPA. Other societies are having the same problems with membership. The auction remains a major source of our revenue and the avenue for member recruitment. Members have joined to make use of the auction for disposal of family stamp collections. Both auction managers are in support of opening our auctions to outside bidding, with a 15% buyers commission; the stipulation being that they may only purchase material from ÉPA members, but not sell material. Non-members should have access to the auctions through our website. This should have no effect on our non-profit status.

The suggestion was made to give a one-year complimentary membership to potential members. Some Board members have subsidized one-year memberships for potential members. We need online advertising and our president indicated that he is working on this. We should consider social media to recruit younger members. We also need more articles on Irish philately in journals such as *The American Philatelist*. Bob Benninghoff invited members to participate in a weekly Skype meeting on Irish philately. Please contact Bob for a link to this meeting (rmerc01@aol.com).

3. Future ÉPA General Meetings

NOJEX plans to have its stamp show in New Jersey in October 2024. The ÉPA will study the possibility of an in-person AGM at this meeting, in addition to its Zoom meeting. Updates will be forthcoming in *The Revealer* and on our website.

The ÉPA will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2025. Suggestions on how to celebrate this anniversary are welcome.

Many thanks to Brian Warren for his excellent presentation "The Irish Post Box" which was presented at the end of our AGM. Also thanks to Mike Canavan for his assistance with this presentation and setting up our AGM.

Respectfully submitted,
John B. Sharkey,
ÉPA Secretary,
October 28, 2023

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