

From the Editor

Susan J. Martin, *Middle Tennessee State University*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *OpenPhilately*! *OpenPhilately* is a completely Open Access journal, free of any fees for both authors and readers. It is hosted by the James E. Walker Library at Middle Tennessee State University and is archived and made accessible as part of the Walker Library's Journals@MTSU service.

What is Open Access?

For over 25 years academic libraries have advocated for a different model of academic publishing, Open Access (OA). Open Access is a publishing model where research outputs (articles, data, etc) are distributed online, free of any type of access charges. Led by the good work of organizations such as Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA), there are now many OA journals published by for-profit and non-profit publishers, including libraries.

Why Open Access?

As a new philatelist, I was surprised at the number of paywalls around accessing philatelic literature. As a librarian, I was not. As I delved into philately, I did discover philatelic literature that was free, but was often limited to older back issues and not to more current material. However, the most important philatelic scholarship was completely behind the paywalls of societies which carry their own barrier, membership. Memberships not only have an annual cost but, in some cases, one also needs one or two philatelic references or nominations.

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As an academic librarian, I am fortunate to have access to a wealth of information for my research and scholarship. As a philatelist, my access to information was limited unless I could afford to join numerous societies. I decided that I wanted to minimize the boundaries philatelists face in obtaining philatelic information. *OpenPhilately* endeavors to be a journal without boundaries - with a broad content base like the *American Philatelist*, without commercial advertisements, like the *London Philatelist*, and most importantly, without any type of paywall to access or use.

Publishing on the Walker Library's Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform provides long-term stability for the journal and ensures access. Additionally, it provides content indexing via Google Scholar with the possibility of other indexing and abstracting avenues.

About the Issue

This first issue contains a variety of scholarship and ideas. There's a brief piece about 17th century maritime mail; an introduction to the sporting competition of the Island Games and its commemorative stamps; a pedagogical technique on using postage stamps in the higher ed classroom; and finally, a piece that narrates the struggle and barriers encountered in the field stalwart, the stamp club.

This modest first issue will hopefully be the first of many. To grow, improve, and gain additional functionality, such as more robust indexing, the journal needs additional folks willing to serve on its editorial board to review submissions, assist with copyediting, and layout. We always need content – consider writing a brief piece or submitting a brief exhibit. However, the most critical need the journal faces is a robust editorial board. If you are interested in serving on the editorial board or in another capacity, reach out to me.