

Study Groups Report

Study Groups have been described as one of two key components that contribute to the rich society life of BNAPS, with the other key being the Regional Groups. It is through participation in these two activities that most BNAPS members find ways develop new exhibits, share their research and increase their enjoyment of philately. It is from those pursuits that the publications department and Topics find their content and fulfill their goals of increasing philately's knowledge base and reach.

The 20 current BNAPS Study Groups (including two groups in the process of formalizing their existence and one that is trying not to go dormant) have been active to varying degrees over the past year. A regular read through Centerline Reporter Derek Smith's regular column in Topics quickly reveals the depth and breadth of study, new discoveries and ongoing deliberations on a wide range of subjects.

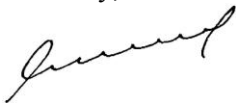
Since most Study Groups (SGs) use the annual society convention to meet face-to-face, it continues to be the newsletters from each group that serve to connect and inform SG members between conventions. Most SGs meet the requirement that a minimum of three newsletters be published in a calendar year. Some fall significantly short of that requirement – either by design (e.g. Admiral SG...one issue in nearly two years that covers a huge amount of material) or circumstances, like a lack of contributors, the same overworked volunteers having to pull it all together, etc.

During the SG leaders meetings at BNAPEX 2011, we will discuss the many challenges of keeping SGs active, productive and vibrant. SG leaders will have an opportunity to express any concerns about the current systems in place to support them, and will get a chance to discuss ways that some SGs have found to flourish, even with small numbers of active participants. We will also discuss stipends, the voucher system, accurate (and timely) membership list submission, the J.S. Siverts Award for newsletter editors and communications between SGs. In all discussions, the good of the society and its future ability to serve the philatelic community will be placed front and centre.

The Fall and Winter of 2011/2012 will be a time of much dialogue between the SG leaders and me as we consider the future of Study Groups. I know we will tackle several long-standing issues head-on and come to reasonable, healthy solutions that will ensure that Study Groups can continue to be such an essential part of BNAPS.

On a personal note, I am grateful for the warm welcome I have received to this position and for the many conversations I have had with Board colleagues and study group leaders over the past year. I continue to learn from each of you as you support my efforts to accomplish the many duties in this portfolio. For every misstep I have made, I have also taken a step on solid, new ground. I am counting on the continued support of Board colleagues and the BNAPS membership in my work over the coming year.

Sincerely,



Peter MacDonald
VP Study Groups
Ottawa, ON
August 27, 2011