



## Election for FIP President 2018

### Six challenges

Last month I made seven promises. Thanks to those who responded.

Amongst other questions, I have been asked what is my policy for attracting more young people into philately? The truth is that in the digital age, it is difficult. Attracting young people is just one challenge, so here are the most important challenges facing us. And no, I don't have all the answers.

#### **Where are the youngsters?**

Some national federations are better than others in working with young people, and you can see this in exhibitions where Sweden, Slovenia, Taiwan and others seem to be more successful than, for example, the United Kingdom. The US has been successful with those in their teens and early twenties, with its 'Young Philatelic Leaders Fellowship'. We could start by finding out what makes some federations successful, and others less so.

Learning from each other, and sharing good practice is only the beginning. Ask yourself how many youth exhibitors become adult exhibitors?

So the first challenge is how to spread good practice, and this should be a priority for us to ask the youth commission for a project plan for the next two years, and to get them on the Internet. How can it be that the commission with responsibility for youth has no digital presence?

Young people are in the world of Snapchat and Instagram, and not even Twitter or Facebook. We are not at first base with the young people of today. This is a clear failure in the part of our Board and Congress, and not of the Commission.

#### **Where are the women?**

The second challenge, perhaps even more important, is to answer the question, where are the women? With women being at least half of humanity, our FIP Board no longer has any female member. Ask yourself who speaks for women in philately? My guess is only WE, 'Women Exhibitors' based in the USA. Let's ask WE for a project plan for the next two years.

#### **Where did our reputation go?**

The third is to answer the question, why is the image of philately, or stamp collecting so negative? It's possibly worse in the West than in Asia. Ask a non-collector for their description of a stamp collector, and the result will not be easy listening.

We need to work together with the trade, the collectors and organised philately to address this question. We should start by commissioning research from a non-philatelic agency on the image and perception of our hobby. Then we might have a starting point.

Whatever the result, we need a small but very varied working group to report to Congress, again within two years.

### **Where are the international exhibitors?**

The fourth is why are there so few international exhibitors? At best, the FIP has 2500 international exhibitors worldwide, out of up to 100 million collectors. In fact, we have no idea how many collectors there are. Last year, fewer than 800 exhibitors showed material in FIP exhibition frames.

How can we meet the objectives of the FIP constitution if we don't know what our target market is? If we don't know who our likely customers are, how can we promote our enterprise to them?

### **Where is our academic respect?**

The fifth is how do we connect with the non-philatelic world? Our members are researchers, experts and authors. We study historic correspondence, past and present printing technologies, transportation, the rise and fall of governments, wars, new nations, space and digital technologies in areas such as the mechanisation of the post. When did you last see a philatelic article in a non-philatelic journal or newspaper?

I'm not ashamed to say that I don't have the answers to these challenges. The fact that they exist is a challenge to our Board. They cannot be addressed by the Board alone, and we will need to appoint groups of individuals to work through proposals on which we can all agree to work in the coming years.

I'm for broadening the Board, for widening responsibility, and for working together with all who wish to see our great hobby succeed. You don't need to meet face to face to do this in our digital world, so if we have the will, it can be done.

### **Where is our self-respect?**

It might be enough for some of our colleagues to get regular judging assignments, or to be commissioners at exhibitions. To these, I ask do you and your Federation agree that we have these challenges? If you agree, then what are you and your federation doing to ensure that we can have a successful future - and you should be voting for change.

The first of the FIP objectives is to promote stamp collecting and philately. This has been a priority since the creation of the Commission for Press and Information in 1959.

By any measure this has not been successful. We should promote philately to people of all ages, races, colours and creeds. There's no quick fix to this, but all of our FIP Federations have to prioritise promotional activities – and work together for the future.

I believe that if the FIP gave a real lead, it would quickly gain the respect of all its federated membership.

If you agree, then vote for me in December. If you don't agree, then please let me know why the status quo is good enough.

Chris King  
London 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018