



Stamps by Larry McInnis

Capex 87 Not a Success For Average Collector

In case you've forgotten or, heaven forbid, didn't know, CAPEX 87 was a big international stamp show held in Toronto June 13 to 21, sponsored by the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada to mark the 100th anniversary of organized philately in Canada.

It was only the third such international exhibition for Canada: the first was in 1951 and the other in 1978, all held in Toronto.

Was CAPEX 87 a success? That's important: last year, AMERIPEX 86 in Chicago, a similar but larger exhibition, was such a runaway success it is still being described as the greatest exhibition in the history of philately, in every regard, from competitive entries to dealers to — most important

— attendance.

CAPEX 87 could never compete with AMERIPEX 86, nor was it expected to.

CAPEX 87 was a success, and it was a failure. In sum total, though, it failed more than it succeeded.

Attendance has been estimated at or about 20,000 by Don Atanasoff, editor-in-chief of *Canadian Stamp News*, far less than the 1951 exhibition, and a small percentage of the 1978 attendance.

Atanasoff's attendance estimate was close to the estimate of Donna O'Keefe, senior editor of the American publication, *Linn's Stamp News*.

"Capex mismanaged the press," read the headline in Atanasoff's review of CAPEX 87. He was right, of

course. It was abominable, before and during.

"CAPEX takes different approach to success," read O'Keefe's news-style presentation.

She was right, of course, but when is success not success?

Atanasoff's comments on the disorganization of CAPEX 87 were scathing and accurate. Practically everything was done badly or, worse, not done at all.

O'Keefe knew all this, too, but the veteran show-goer softened her report.

She reported dealers were buying and selling among themselves (something I ob-

served on Wednesday and Thursday of the show, when I was there), when they weren't playing cards in the snack bar (which I didn't observe).

"Collectors from the United States were doing most of

the buying," O'Keefe reported. "It was not unusual to see dealers lining up at the bank downstairs (it was at Toronto's Metropolitan Convention Centre, by the way) to exchange U.S. dollars for Canadian dollars.

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