

Philatelic Profile: Greg Balagian

Born – March 18, 1953

First introduction to collecting – 10 years old

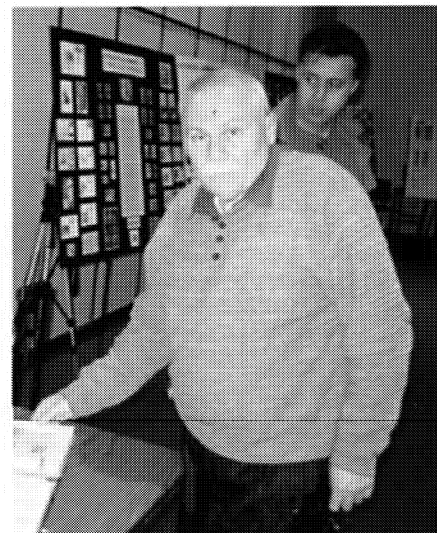
Member – American Philatelic Society (APS), American Topical Association (ATA), Union of Philatelists of Armenia, Armenian Philatelic Association (ArPA), ARPHILA

Collecting interests – topical (cats of pray), drums and percussion instruments, poodle

Exhibitions:

- Ⓓ Armenian Republican Stamp Shows – 1983, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989
- Ⓓ Transcaucasian Stamp Shows – 1986, 1987
- Ⓓ USSR National Stamp Shows – 1986, 1988, 1989
- Ⓓ International Stamp Shows – Armenia – Djer Shopron (Hungary) 1987, USSR-Bulgaria 1988, Djer Shopron – Armenia 1989
- Ⓓ National Topical Stamp Shows – Milwaukee, Wisconsin (2004), Dallas, Texas (2005), Portland, Oregon (2008), WESTPEX San Francisco, California (2010)

Awards – In Armenia – 2 bronze, 2 silver, 1 large silver, 1 vermeil; in the USA – 4 vermeils



Igor Grigorian: When and how did you start stamp collecting?

Greg Balagian: I started collecting stamps at the age of ten.

IG: What made you collect stamps?

GB: My father was a stamp collector.

IG: Did you collect worldwide stamps, or were you attracted to specific countries only?

GB: First worldwide, but very soon I became interested in topical collecting.

IG: Where you ever limited financially to buy stamps and philatelic materials?

GB: What do you think? Of course!

IG: Could you describe in more details your national collections?

GB: The only national collection was Armenia and Armenia related stamps.

IG: When you started collecting stamps seriously, were you interested in learning more about people and events on the stamps?

GB: Yes, that is why I became topical collector.

IG: Have you ever been elected to a philatelic governing body?

GB: Yes, I was a vice-president of Armenian Philatelic Society for two years.

IG: Have you participated in any stamp exhibitions?

GB: Yes, I did participate in 18 Republican, Regional, National and International exhibitions while I was living in Armenia, and I participated in four National stamp shows while living in the USA.

IG: Besides being a hobby and means to spend one's free time, what is so important about collecting stamps? Does it benefit society?

GB: Stamp collecting helped to widen my knowledge of world history, culture, arts and nature. It absolutely benefits the society.

IG: Could you share a personal experience with our readers?

GB: My main topic during the past few years has been Wild Cats and all aspects of representation of felines in human culture. Besides being a stamp collector and exhibitor, I spend a serious time on the philatelic research and writing. This year, the American Topical Association published two volumes of my handbook, "Wild Cats in Art" which includes worldwide stamps with images of various felines in art. I also write extensively for "Cat Mews" the quarterly publication of Cats-on-Stamp Study Unit. My most recent article was about my discovery of the very first stamp with an image of a feline. The common believe among cats-on-stamps collector was that the very first stamp with an image of a lion was the 1851 stamp of Tuscany, but while doing a research for my most recent exhibit about heraldic lions, I discovered that the German city of Hanover issued its first stamp in 1850, and that stamp depicts a heraldic lion on the coat of arms.

