

Report on the Astrophilatelic Activities in Germany 2014

A year of transition

For astrophilatelists organized in the German “Weltraum Philatelie e. V.” association, 2014 was a year of transition. The old board, composed by Florian Noller as President, Hans Dittscheid as Vice President and editor of the club’s magazine and website, and Reiner Brosi as treasurer, did not want to run for a new term. Noller had become President after the death of Peter Wilhelm in 2006, while Brosi had acted as treasurer for 22 years. Dittscheid, who had assumed editorship of the magazine in 2006 and served as webmaster of the club’s website, had become Vice President only three years ago.

Caught by surprise, the annual assembly in the city of Essen in May elected a new Board. 61 year old Dr Stephen Lachhein is the new President of the association. Lachhein lives in the city of Leverkusen, is a professional chemist and former manager with Bayer. 56 year old Jürgen Peter Esders is the new Vice President of „Weltraum Philatelie“. Esders is a politologist and journalist by training and lives in the Belgian capital, Brussels. His work will focus on the magazine and newsletter of the association and exhibitions. While former President Noller was unanimously elected as treasurer, he stepped down from his new office two days later. Thus, a new general assembly was required, which took place at Bonn in October of the same year, electing Michael Anderiasch from Dinslaken as treasurer. 49 year old Anderiasch is a certified accountant and authorized officer for accountancy in an industrial firm. Dr. Hans Ferdinand Virnich from the town of Sinn and Siegfried Zimmerer from Stuttgart were confirmed in their office as honorary assessors.

Stephen Lachhein, who is an enthusiastic exhibitor himself, wishes to incite German astro collectors to exhibit their treasures more frequently. Lachhein leads by good example: his own collection was first shown on the International stamp show at Gmunden/Austria, winning a silver medal in the regional class. Re-worked, the exhibit will again run in the bi-national German-Czech competitive exhibition “Euregio Egrensis” at Chomutov in Northern Bohemia in May 2015. Lachhein hopes to take part in the National Exhibition taking place in the Austrian city of Gmunden again, this August.

Vice President Jürgen Peter Esders focused on re-launching the associations’ bulletin, traditionally published four times a year. He won new authors for the paper and published three editions by the year’s end, each of which comprising around 60 pages. At the same, he continued to publish the association’s newsletter, providing members with up to date information on events, astronaut contacts, covers and postmarkers, distributed to members both via e-mail as by post. Also, an appearance of the association on Facebook has been launched.

Both Presidents will also focus on improving international relations. The co-operation with the Austrian Gmünder Weltraumfreunde was confirmed; the German collectors will continue to provide their Austrian counterparts with copies of their magazine. During the Gmunden 2014 exhibition in August, Presidents of four German-speaking astrophilatelic associations, from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Czech Republic sat together to discuss details of their co-operation.

The new Board also wishes to extend the outreach of the association: informal meetings for chat, swap and sale among members shall be organized several times a year, in different regions of the country. A first such gathering is planned for mid-March 2015 near

the city of Frankfurt. President Lachhein also wishes to enhance the contact to astronauts and cosmonauts, either by inviting them to the club's events or by organizing visits to public appearances of the flyers. In this context, the next annual assembly may be organized near a public appearance organized in Eastern Germany to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the first space walk, starring Alexei Leonov.

The club's new website, launched only a year ago, is at the moment temporarily down due to transition issues. A new webmaster has yet to be found.

2014 saw the publication of two volumes of the catalogue on space stamps from Africa. This tireless effort by author Dieter Steinbrecher over many years is giving birth to a collecting tool that will serve astrophilatelists in many years to come. This brings the number of catalogues edited and published by Steinbrecher to a total of nine. The series of catalogues will be culminating with a third volume of space stamps in Africa.

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