

Whippoorwill E-Comment

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Gale Mueller, Wood Engraver Of the First Order

To me, the brightest star of the Scottsdale AAPA convention clearly was Gale Mueller, who gave the Friday morning keynote illustrated talk on the art of wood engraving. I have observed the constant rapid perfection of his art in recent years, and believe that he is one of the finest wood engravers in the nation. After watching a demonstration by his



mentor Frank Debenham on DVD, Gale told us of his own personal experiences. It was outstanding in every way. During odd moments the rest of the day, Gale sat at a table and displayed his block-supporting sandbag and engraving tools and demonstrated his flawless technique. He had a scrapbook of finished engravings which were in exquisite detail. One of the highlights of the day was a trip to the Phoenix City Library Special Collections press room where his convention theme engraving of a desert scene was hand-inked and printed on a large Hoe flatbed press. We each pulled a souvenir copy of our own. I intend to frame mine and



display it on the wall of our den, where two more of his outstanding bird prints already hang. Gale is truly interested in birds. He and Johanna Shipley are expert birders and added many new birds to their life lists on this convention trip.

The table where Gale sat with his engraving tools and prints was a popular



center of attraction. All gathered to watch him work and examine his prints and proofs. Count me as his number one fan! I hope he attends the Cleveland convention next year so I can spend more quality time with him. Getting to meet him again, after last seeing him at the Little Rock convention, was one of the highlights of my convention trip this year.

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