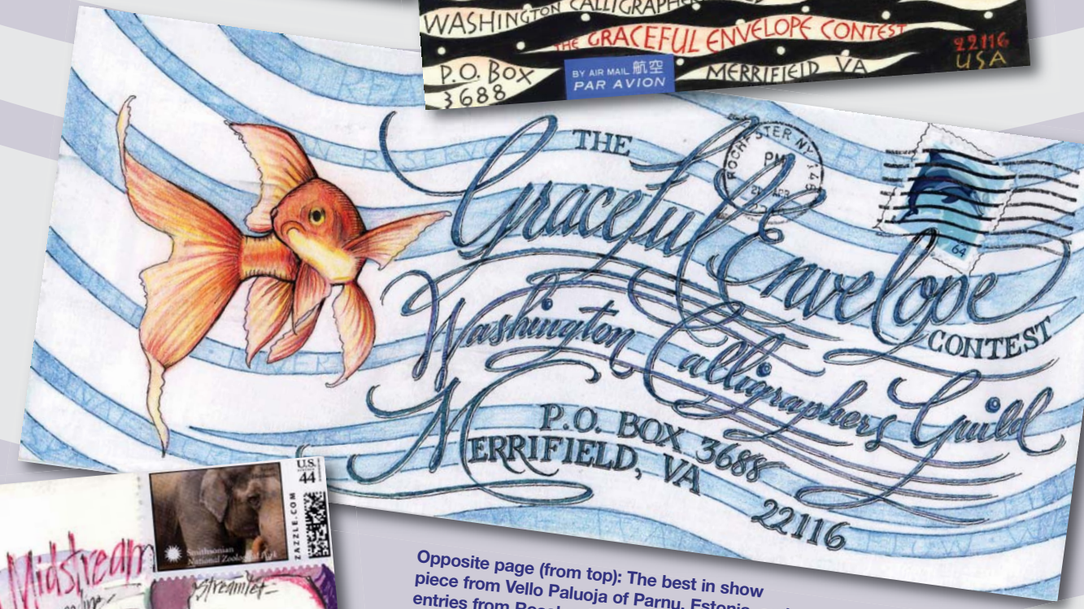


Streams of Creativity

Participants from around the world designed, illustrated and mailed their masterpieces in an annual contest that celebrates the art of written correspondence. The Graceful Envelope Contest, now in its 16th year, is sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers in conjunction with the Washington Calligraphers Guild.

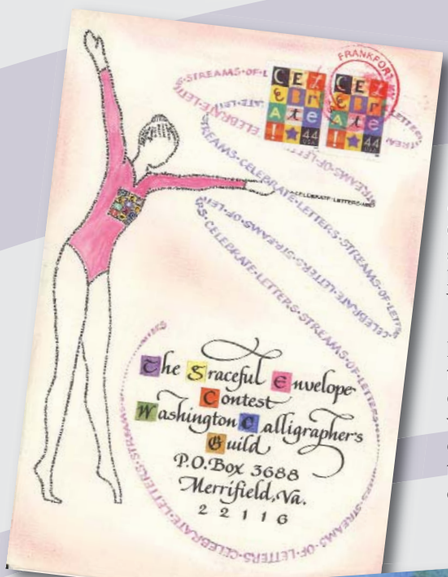
The 2010 theme, "A Stream of Letters," yielded hundreds of entries that celebrate letters or lakes, books or brooks, alphabets or aqua, words or water conservation, the mail stream or a mountain spring and other ideas that flowed from the theme and entrants' creativity.

A trio of judges selected this year's contest winners —Washington Calligraphers Guild President Theresa Daly; professional calligrapher and illustrator Tamara Stoneburner; and NALC graphic designer Mike Shea. They looked for creative interpretation of the theme, skill in lettering and illustration, and effective use of color and design, among other criteria.

The top prize was awarded to Vello Paluoja, of Parnu, Estonia, for a skilled and creative entry that included a carefully constructed literal stream of alphabetical letters. Other notable entries interpreted the theme to include subjects as diverse as sea life, a stream of despair and rhythmic gymnastics. As with all entries, the submissions themselves were envelopes that passed through the regular mail stream.

Out of nearly 150 entries received in the adult division, nine other envelopes were selected as "Winners" and 14 were given the distinction "Honorable Mention." The judges also picked student winners from more than 300 entries in the junior and children's divisions.

Some of the winning envelopes are reproduced here. All winning adult entries are also on display in the lobby of the NALC Headquarters building in Washington, and winning entries in all of the categories can be seen online at calligraphersguild.org. Information about the 2011 contest will be announced early next year. ✉



Opposite page (from top): The best in show piece from Vello Paluoja of Parnu, Estonia, and entries from Rosalee Anderson of Frankfort, KY, and Carol DuBosch of Portland, OR.

This page (from top): Envelopes from Joan Gooderham of St. Catharines, ON, Canada; Yumie Tanaka of Kashiwa, Chiba, Japan; Rhonda Cavanagh of Spencerport, NY; Carol Meetze-Moates of Julian, NC; and Jacqueline Davis of River Falls, WI.