

THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN PHILATELIST

JOURNAL OF THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB



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THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB

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 828-447-4699

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 Stan Kumor

Secretary:
 Jay Rogers

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Auctioneer: Jay Rogers

Membership: Robert Taylor

Journal Editor: Randall Chet
 Email: randallchet@gmail.com

WHOM TO CALL

If you cannot make a meeting, club event, presentation, or have a question or a suggestion, please contact:

Robert Taylor
 828-447-4699

GENERAL INFORMATION

COVID-19 NOTICE: UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, IN-PERSON MEETINGS HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED. The Asheville Stamp Club meets at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, 1617 Hendersonville Rd, Asheville, NC in the Blue Ridge Room of the Community Center at 1:30 pm on the third Sunday of each month. Bring stamps and covers to sell, trade, or show. There are Nickel Boxes and Envelopes of stamps with new material being added all of the time. The Club's 2020 Scott catalogs will be at the meeting; 2020 World Classic, US Specialized. As always, there will be the 50-50 Drawing and Door Prizes.

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SMOKE SIGNALS

I apologize for the missing issues of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist. My several jobs have not allowed me to devote the time to put together this publication. You might think that something like the current pandemic would offer me a break, but you would be wrong! My graphic design work has slowed a bit, but my wife's online pottery sales have exploded, and my online stamp sales have done the same. Strange times we are living through. While puzzles are on back-order at Amazon, we are blessed with this rewarding hobby to take part in and hopefully share. Mainstream news outlets have even been reporting the growing popularity of stamp collecting among young people.

Maybe the crisis will give clubs and philatelic societies a much needed innovation shot in the arm (pardon the pun). The APS has launched its Stamp Chat meetings. The Charlotte club has held its recent meetings via Zoom, as we will be doing Sunday May 17 at 2pm. For more info about this see Jim's VP Message, and Frank's short article about Zoom on page 13.

Until we can resume our regular get togethers, please take care to stay safe. If you need to be out and about, be aware of the people around you, don't touch your face, and wash your hands frequently with soap and water (the best way to kill any virus, not just Covid-19). Just as during past national emergencies, everybody should regard this as his patriotic duty. Stay Healthy! --Randall

Email your articles, letters, classified ads, auction items, and comments for the Smoky Mountain Philatelist to Randall Chet: randallchet@gmail.com
 Deadline for the July-August issue: June 25th

ASC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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COLLECTOR **DEALER** (CIRCLE ONE)

I COLLECT _____

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Please print, fill out and bring to a club meeting with \$10 payable to ASC, or send to Jay Rogers, Secretary ASC, 15 Hickory Court LN, Hendersonville, NC 28792.

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It seems like forever since we held our last ASC meeting at Deerfield. There have certainly been some changes since then. Phrases like “shelter in place” and “social distancing”, which would have seemed so strange and out of place before, are now on everyone’s lips. Many lives have been lost to a virus hardly anyone had heard of just a few months ago. And in the blink of an eye our economy has gone from record highs to depths not seen since the Great Depression.

Although I and no one I have talked to personally knows anyone who has been sickened by COVID-19, one casualty of the pandemic that hits very close to home has been our ability to meet at Deerfield. For the foreseeable future we must make other arrangements. To compound matters our dear president, Robert, has had some serious health issues and I am temporarily stepping in to help him out. Hence the Vice-President’s instead of the President’s message.

But, things are beginning to turn for the better. The COVID-19 pandemic is easing and people will gradually be returning to a more normal life. Robert is being treated for his health issues and is improving. He expects that the treatment will restore him to full capacity and he will be rejoining us as soon as he can. Likewise, it is just a matter of time until Deerfield can welcome us back. We just have to be patient until their administration feels it is safe to allow outsiders to return. They have a tremendous responsibility to their residents, who are among the most vulnerable to the virus.

On May 7th a small group of ASC members met in a virtual pilot meeting via Zoom. Zoom is a novel technology that allows individuals to converse and see each other via computer. I know some of you have already become familiar with it through virtual family get togethers.

At the pilot meeting it was determined that, starting with the May meeting, we will hold regular monthly ASC meetings via Zoom until we can return to Deerfield. I understand that the Charlotte Stamp Club has already begun holding Zoom meetings. So, our next meeting will be at 2 PM on Sunday, May 17 via Zoom. Jay will send out his usual email “blast” announcing the meeting. Elsewhere in this issue of the SMP Frank Wheeler, our “Zoom Master”, will explain how Zoom works to those of you who are unfamiliar with it. He will also explain how those without a suitable computer can attend the meeting via telephone.

Another decision we made about our virtual ASC meetings is that each should have an educational program. Accordingly, Don Denman has graciously agreed to give us a presentation on “The Smallest Post Offices” at the coming meeting. Don is extremely knowledgeable in this area and some of them are quite fascinating. In real estate lingo they would probably be described as “cute starter post offices”.

I look forward to seeing you all at the May meeting. Hopefully my barber shop will open soon enough so you don’t have to look at my shaggy hair. Neither my wife nor my cat has stepped forward to offer to cut it. They both profess no talent in that area. My cat is a world authority on napping, so I guess that will have to do.

All my best to everyone in these challenging times and, remember, whenever you get bored, there is always your stamp collection patiently waiting for your attention!

Best regards, Jim

DON DENMAN RECEIVES APS KEHR AWARD

The Asheville Stamp Club’s very own Don Denman received the American Philatelic Society’s Kehr Award on September 15, 2019. The annual Kehr Award is awarded by the APS to a philatelist whose work significantly contributes to the future of the stamp collecting hobby. Don has spent thousands of hours compiling information and files into a digital philatelic library which is available to the public as the Stamp Smarter Philatelic Learning Center website (www.stampsmarter.com). Stamp Smarter is inviting, easy to navigate, and filled with educational content from corner to corner. We recommend you spend some time exploring the many free resources on this website and share the link with other collectors. *Congratulations Don!*



Don Denman was presented the Kehr Award on September 15th by APS Executive Director Scott English, in recognition of his efforts to preserve and share philatelic knowledge widely through the Stamp Smarter website.

A FEW WORDS ON THE SHADES OF BRITISH STAMPS

Bob Bowler



In my previous two articles (SMP Volume 11, Nos. 1 and 5) about shades of British stamps during the reigns of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII, I provided information on the shades found in the Scott Catalogue, Stanley Gibbons Concise catalogue and Stanley Gibbons Specialty Catalogues Volumes 1 and 2. The articles were an introduction to the subject of shades known to exist in British stamps of these early reigns. The story continues with two definitive series issued during the early years of King George V.

I am passing over the first issue under George V known as the Downey Head issue, since it was short-lived and limited to only 2 denominations, 1/2p and 1p. I start with the second issue, produced from 1912 through 1924 with Royal Cypher watermark and the King shown in the familiar left profile. I am passing over high values, coil stamps and design retouches for the sake of simplifying this presentation. The stamps included in Scott are 14 denominations ranging from 1/2p to 1 shilling plus three minor shade varieties and one color change (the 9p of 1922). Total = 18 stamps. By way of comparison, Gibbons Concise catalogue, lists no fewer than 50 main entries with at least two shades (and up to 6) for each denomination. Gibbons includes numerous watermark varieties that go unmentioned in Scott. The Gibbons Specialty catalogue adds many more shades bringing the total to 139! Clearly, some shades were given priority in the Concise catalogue while others were considered minor. But wait – there's more!

I have purchased many of my shade varieties from a dealer in Britain who has a specialist in shades on his staff. This individual expertizes for the Royal Philatelic Society of London. He has at his disposal a reference collection that allows him

to match shades under an Otlite. This collection comprises scores of stamps with shade varieties that do not appear in any of the three catalogues. My guess is that somewhere between 2 and 3 times as many shades exist as are found in even the Specialized catalogue. What is going on here?

The printer of most of these stamps was Harrison and Sons Ltd. Over the dozen years they printed these stamps, there were many individual orders from the postal authorities and consequently numerous lots of inks which, as I understand it, were made from materials obtained from Europe. I suspect the First World War caused a great deal of disruption in the ink supply. Add to this the imprecise process to create individual ink lots that characterized printing for decades from the reigns of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII, the variation of shades was likely an inevitable feature of the process. Variations in the paper stock and coatings added to the variability of the appearance of stamps but that is beyond the scope of this article.

In 1924 the stamps began to be printed on paper with a different watermark, Crown and Block GVR Multiple, thus forming a new set. Scott lists 12 denominations with no shade varieties. Remarkably, so does Gibbons Concise catalogue! Gibbons Specialized lists 66 shades across the set. This set was in use for ten years as was the first set which leads me to conclude the lower count of varieties can be attributed to tighter control of dye lots and, perhaps, better-controlled sources.

I strongly recommend collecting unused copies to avoid the possibility of the shades being altered by use and soaking off. I still have a few stamps in my collection that were not only used but experienced radical changes in color and appearance due to being soaked off paper.

In summary, there are four levels of completeness of these two sets, depending on which catalogue one uses and how deeply one wishes to dive into the sea of minor and uncatalogued, shades. For myself, I am drawing the line at Gibbons Concise because I have other stamps I want to my collection besides these sets. As a side note, I would like to know if issues of other countries exhibit similar ranges of variability. It wouldn't surprise me since printing technologies, at least in Europe, were approximately equivalent in precision.



Basic colors of the 1912 and 1924 King George V definitives

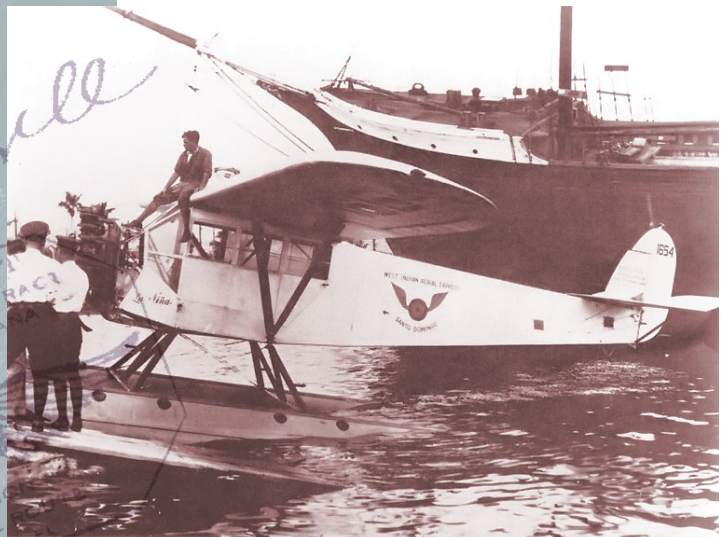


POSTSCRIPT TO “THE DAY LADY LUCK SAVED PAN AM”: (CY CALDWELL (1892-1979))

Jim Haxby

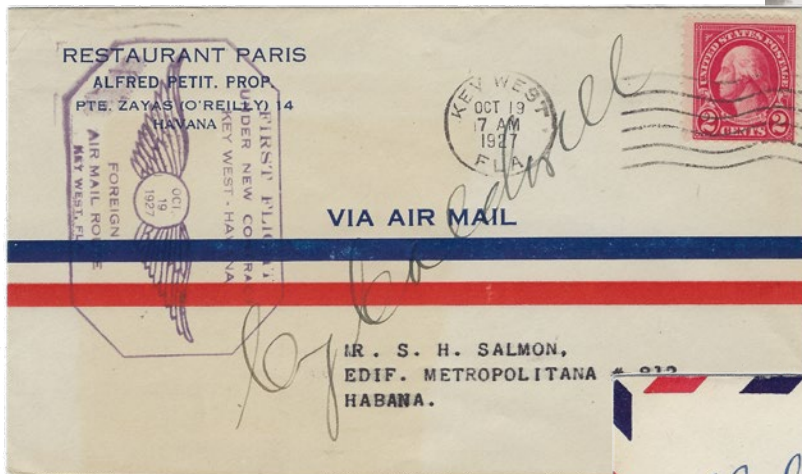
After I contributed the article on the first Pan Am's early history I've been lucky enough to acquire a cover from the pivotal October 19 flight from Key West to Havana autographed by the pilot, Cy Caldwell. Such covers are scarce and some, like mine, have the signature in large letters scrawled diagonally across the face. Such an autograph suggests that the maker was hardly a shy, unassuming person. This prompted me to look deeper into Caldwell's life. Below is some of what I found.

Cyril (“Cy”) Cassidy Caldwell was born in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia on Jan. 13, 1892. He worked in a bank from 1908-14, then became a theatre manager in 1914. In 1915 he bought an airplane and taught himself to fly, soon becoming an exhibition flier in New England. The following year he joined the Royal Flying Corps (which later became the Royal Air Force) and served in World War I in a night bombing squadron, stationed in France and flying into Germany. After the war he flew for the Canadian Air Board. Caldwell married Myrle Rumble in 1920. In 1922 he and his family moved to the United States and Caldwell joined the Martin Aircraft Co. as a test pilot. In that capacity he also competed in various flying contests during the mid-20s, often flying planes manufactured by Martin.



West Indian Aerial Express' Fairchild FC-2, La Nina, used to initiate Pan Am's air mail service from Key West to Havana.

Pilot Cy Caldwell's autograph on a cover flown on the inaugural flight on Pan Am's route from Key West to Havana, Oct. 19, 1927.



Naturally the competing pilots socialized with each other and some became friends. One of Caldwell's pilot friends was Basil Rowe, a great racer and one of the best stunt pilots of his day. This friendship would later lead to the fateful 1927 flight that saved Pan AM.

In the fall of 1926 Basil Rowe and his flying friend, Bill Wade, travelled down to Puerto Rico with two new Waco monoplanes to barnstorm for an audience most of which had never even seen an airplane. They also made charter flights for businessmen. In 1927 Rowe decided it was time to set up an airline in the islands, with regular flight schedules. Using money from Dominican Republic and a few U.S. investors, Rowe and his associates incorporated the West Indian Aerial Express on June 20, 1927.

The new airline needed more planes so Rowe went north on a buying trip. His first acquisition was a trimotor Keystone Pathfinder, which he named Santa Maria and flew back himself. Rowe also bought a single-engine Fairchild FC-2 float plane. He named the Fairchild La Niña and talked his friend Cy Caldwell into flying it to Barahona, Dominican Republic for him. It was during that trip that the special charter "hop" that saved Pan Am took place.

In 1929 we find Cy Caldwell associated with another commercial flying concern, the Thompson Aeronautical Corporation. They had been the winners the previous year of a contract route to fly air mail for the U.S.



Post Office. Their route was designated CAM 27 (Contract Air Mail Route 27) and encompassed cities between Chicago and Buffalo. In May of 1929 Thompson Aeronautical instituted a direct service between Detroit and Cleveland, involving Keystone-Loening amphibian planes flying over Lake Erie. Some of the covers for the Cleveland to Detroit leg bear Cy Caldwell's unmistakable signature as the inaugural pilot.

Pilot Cy Caldwell's autograph on a cover flown on the inaugural flight on the CAM 27 route from Cleveland to Detroit, May, 1929.

Also during the 1920s Caldwell began to take advantage of another of his talents – writing. He was a prolific writer and became Associate Editor of one of the most respected aviation magazines of the day, Aero Digest. Cy Caldwell wrote a number of books, including a biography of Henry Ford in 1947 that went through five editions in the next ten years.

By 1930 Cy Caldwell gave up flying altogether to concentrate full time on his writing, something that would occupy him for the rest of his life.

ALL STEAMED UP

Jim Haxby



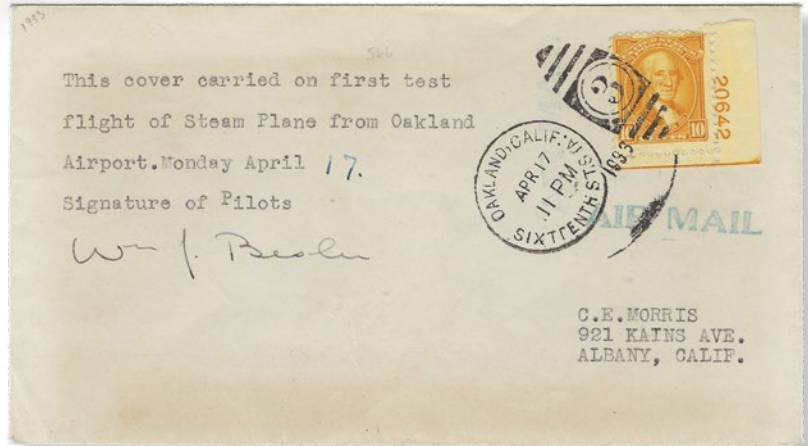
On April 12, 1933 at the airfield in Oakland, California a group of people stood looking up at a small biplane passing about 200 feet overhead. That was not necessarily unusual. Charles Lindbergh's "hop" to Paris six years earlier was indelibly impressed on many peoples' minds and airplanes still held great excitement for the general public. But what was unusual were the newsmen standing, pointing their cameras skyward. There was even a Hearst Metrotone News truck with a cameraman perched on top operating a large movie camera. Obviously, this was no ordinary flight. To underscore the importance of the demonstration flight a small packet of covers, signed by pilot William Besler and now scarce, were carried on board.



The Besler plane on one its three demonstration flights on April 12, 1933.



A commemorative cover flown on the Besler plane and signed by pilot, William Besler.



As the airplane passed overhead the pilot shouted out to the people below and they could hear and understand what he said. This astonishing feat was possible because the plane's engine made almost no noise! The aircraft was a Travel Air 2000, a popular biplane model of the day, which had been converted to steam power. And, to add to the novelty, when the pilot brought the plane in for a landing he reversed the rotation direction of the propeller to act as a brake, bringing the plane to a stop in less than 100 feet. The novel steam-powered aircraft was the invention of William Besler, a mechanical engineer and his brother, George, a geologist. Movies of the Besler steam plane demonstration can be seen on YouTube.

The idea of adapting steam power to machines, even flying machines, was hardly new. In 1852 Henri Giffard used a crude 3 hp 462 lb. steam engine to propel the world's first dirigible near Paris. Over the ensuing decades aviation pioneers worked to adapt steam power to heavier-than-air aircraft, but the Wright brothers' 1903 success with an internal combustion engine powering their Wright Flier tipped the balance in favor of the latter type power plant. While the use of steam engines for aircraft languished after 1903, their use to power automobiles continued to develop and would become important for the Besler aircraft thirty years later.

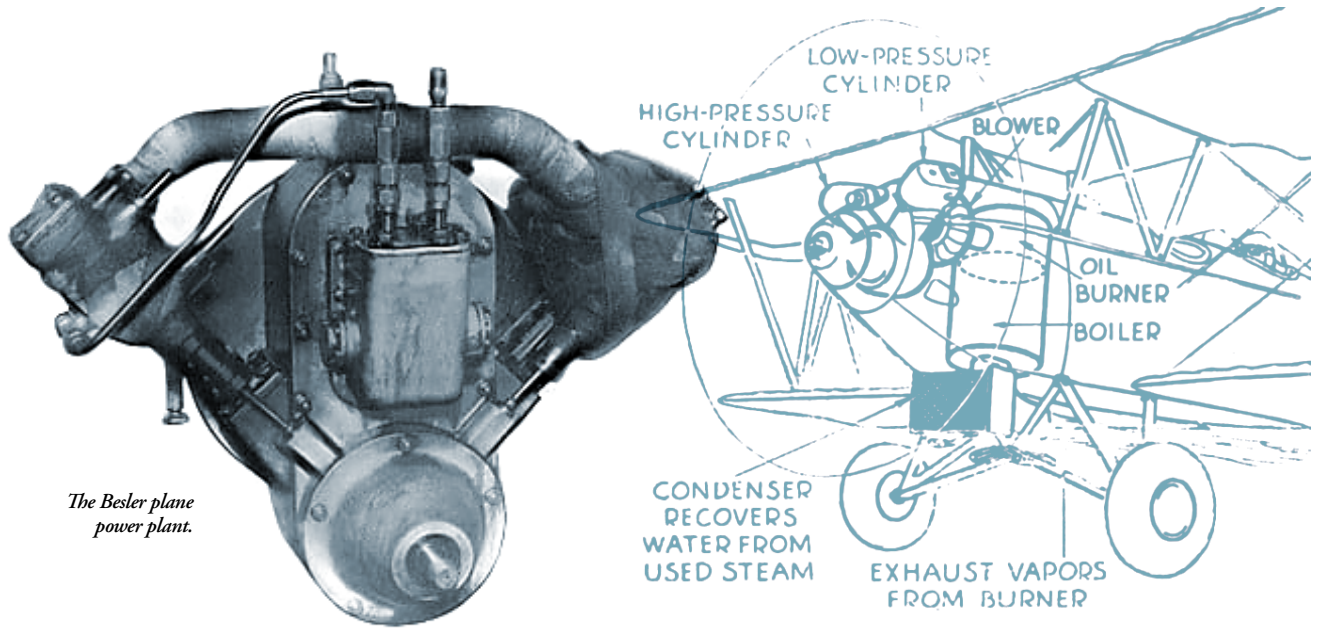
An important figure in the Beslers' steam aircraft success was steam-vehicle pioneer Abner Doble (1890-1961). Doble built his first steam car by 1909 as a high school student. In 1915 Abner and his brothers went to Detroit, secured \$200,000 capital and founded the General Engineering Company. This was followed, in 1921, by a move to Emeryville, California and recasting the company as Doble Steam Motors Corp. The Doble Corporation built cars throughout the 1920s. Their most successful product was the Model E, which could reach speeds in excess of 90 miles per hour and

drive 1500 miles before needing to refill its 24-gallon water tank. The burner unit was run on inexpensive fuel oil. Notable owners of these coveted cars have included Howard Hughes and Jay Leno.

By the late 1920s the Doble company was in financial difficulties and in 1931 went bankrupt. In the later part of this process the Beslers became associated with Abner Doble and Nathan Price, a Doble Steam Motors engineer, and purchased much of the Doble plant and patents. Using some of their parts from the Doble cars, the Beslers began working on a steam engine for an airplane about 1930. Three years later the engine was ready to be substituted into the nose of a conventional internal combustion engine Travel Air 2000.



Jay Leno shows off his 1925 Doble E-20 steam car. This car was originally owned by Howard Hughes.



The Besler plane power plant.

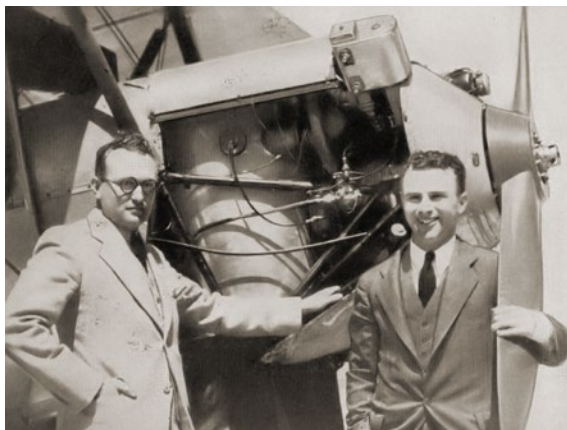
The aircraft power plant that the Beslers developed was quite familiar to those who had followed the progress of the Doble automobiles. The main components were the engine, the barrel-shaped steam generator behind it and the condenser below. The engine was a two-cylinder double-acting V design, with the cylinders of unequal diameter, which developed 150 hp and turned the propeller shaft at about 1650 rpm. The steam generator contained about 500 ft. of tubing. The water was introduced into the lower coils and superheated steam

drawn off the upper coils. Exhaust steam was sent to a condenser (made from part of a normal automobile radiator) for recovery of about 90% of the water for reuse.

At the beginning of a flight the pilot flipped a switch to activate an electric blower that sent air and fuel oil spray through the burner, where an electric spark ignited the oil. The flame ran downward around the coiled tubing and in less than five minutes the steam pressure was high enough for takeoff. The operation of the power plant was essentially automatic once started. The steam generator tank held 10 gallons of water, enough for about 400 miles of flight.

Following the steam plane demonstration Abner Doble worked as a steam-engine consultant for many years. Nathan Price went to work for Boeing to help design steam aircraft engines. When Boeing dropped the steam concept in 1936 he transferred to Lockheed and was later instrumental in designing their first jet engine. The Beslers continued working on steam engines and in 1936 the New Haven Railroad tested a two-car Besler Steamliner. But, as internal combustion engines continued to evolve, no more steam-powered airplanes were introduced and Besler's 1933 flight became an interesting sidelight in the progress of aviation.

The Beslers, George left, William right, in front of their steam plane, with part of the power plant exposed.



References:

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CASE #634: WASHINGTON'S MYSTERIOUS LONG EAR

Last December I stumbled across this very interesting piece at the FLOREX Stamp Show. US Scott #634 with the "Long Ear Recut". It is a listed variety in the Scott Specialized catalogue, but it is actually very badly photographed/illustrated.

The example I have is in the center of a block of 9 stamps – which most of the original examples were collected this way. The normal stamp is on the Left and the long ear is on the right. Note the hard line cut through the center of the ear – making it look like the Greek letter Phi.

This is a fairly scarce variety – but they are available as they were found shortly after production. They are from Plate 20342 UR position 34. So if you find an upper right pane of 634 with plate # 20342 you have this variety.

It is unknown why the ear was recut – but most likely the engraver saw something during plate production that was wrong and tried correcting it. He did a good enough job to use the plate, but left an interesting variety for us collectors. This variety actually carries a hefty price tag in the \$200+ range – but can often be had for less. But make sure it is properly identified as I have seen many incorrectly identified for sale.

Last month I also obtained an excellent group of US errors, and varieties as part of a collection Robert Taylor recently acquired. Thanks Robert!!! Over the next 6 months I will highlight several of those, including some excellent color shifts, missing colors, imperforate between, and more, so stay tuned.

Happy Hunting! Scott



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THE CAROLINA BONSAI EXPO STAMP EXHIBIT

Tom Krill

The weather was great for the weekend and the turnout for Carolina Bonsai Expo 2019 and Ikebana Show probably broke all previous records. There were of course the annual displays of bonsai from clubs all over the southeast and the usual vendors of bonsai trees, pots, soils and accessories. For the first time this year Arthur Joura, curator of the North Carolina Arboretum's permanent bonsai collection, incorporated the World of Bonsai on Stamps exhibit by yours truly. This also provided the Asheville Stamp Club the unique opportunity to promote the club and hopefully bring in some new members. Of course, I could not have done this without the help of the Asheville Stamp Club and I deeply appreciate the participation of Robert Taylor and Amanda Schlanz. They provided the frames, tables and an easel for the club placard. Both attended on Saturday and Sunday and put forth their best effort in support of the club and talking to interested persons. Indeed, we had some lively discussions with visitors on the value of stamp collecting. Many thanks to both of you.

I had prepared in advance 34 cachet envelopes with the 2012 bonsai stamp issue which were sold at \$5.00 each or the set of 5 for \$20. Two people purchased the set of 5. Proceeds of those sold at the welcome desk went to the arboretum and the balance went towards offsetting the expense of producing the envelopes and the purchase of the stamps. The Asheville post office was very cooperative in cancelling the stamps on the day of the show.

This year was the 24th Carolina Bonsai Expo usually held in October however the 25th anniversary show will be held on June 13 and 14 next year. While the autumn show includes a lot of evergreen trees a spring show is likely to bring out more flowering bonsai. Apparently Arthur was impressed with the stamp exhibit and has said he would like us to participate in the June show. By that time I hope to have expanded the exhibit to three frames.

Again, I think we need to be promoting our great hobby wherever and whenever the opportunity arises to insure that yet another generation can experience the joy and educational experience we have had.



LET'S ALL ZOOM! (WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?!)

Frank Wheeler

Hello everyone and welcome to the new age of virtual meetings! As our illustrious vice-president has mentioned a small group of us held a 'Zoom' meeting on Thursday May 7 to see how a meeting of the stamp club might work should we choose to try it. The result was a resounding success as a good time was had by all and we were able to discuss matters in question and laugh and enjoy the time together. We decided that it would be perfect for a club meeting and as Jim has said we are going to launch with the May 17 meeting.

So, you ask, just how does this Zoom thing work? Well, the truth is its remarkably easy. Jay will send out an email to the membership which will include an 'Invitation to join' All one has to do from the comfort of their own computer is to click the invitation link provided and one will be prompted to either join the meeting or if you haven't already done so, download the free Zoom application. (I heartily advise everybody to go to zoom.us to sign-up and download the app beforehand). It is best to sign-up using the device you intend to Zoom with. (*Editor's note: I prefer to use my iPad to Zoom. It's built-in camera is of excellent quality and the Zoom app performs flawlessly. Same with my iPhone. There are many good on-line tutorials for Zoom. I suggest searching "How to get started with Zoom" in your favorite search engine or on YouTube.*)

Laptops are also good devices to Zoom from as most contain built-in cameras, but if you intend to use a desktop computer, you will want a camera, just so you will be fully visible in your Sunday-best T-shirt or Tuxedo (or evening gown). If you do not have a camera, you will still be able to participate though. The invitation also includes an audio only option so that you can dial



in and participate as if it is a teleconference. You will still be able to see everyone else and enjoy the presentation but of course you will not be visible.

I would like to recommend that if you do not have a cam that you consider purchasing one. They are inexpensive through Amazon, eBay or other outlets. It is likely that our unfolding world will be making much use of the Zoom technology and other comparable virtual meeting places as they become available in the marketplace. And of course they facilitate great opportunities for visual get-togethers with friends and family who we might not be able to see in person until the world returns closer to normal.

So check your inbox as the day approaches for your special invitation. We are looking forward to this opportunity to get together in this new way.

Til then, Happy Stamping! --Frank

Member Dealers: Are you interested in reaching more collectors? Time to take advantage of your free 2.5" x 2" display ad! You editor and designer can even style it for you. It's just one of the benefits available for Asheville Stamp Club members. And if you are reading this but are not yet a member, our membership application can be found on page 2 of this journal. Contact randallchet@gmail.com for your ad.

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A TALE OF EDUCATING YOUTH ABOUT PHILATELY

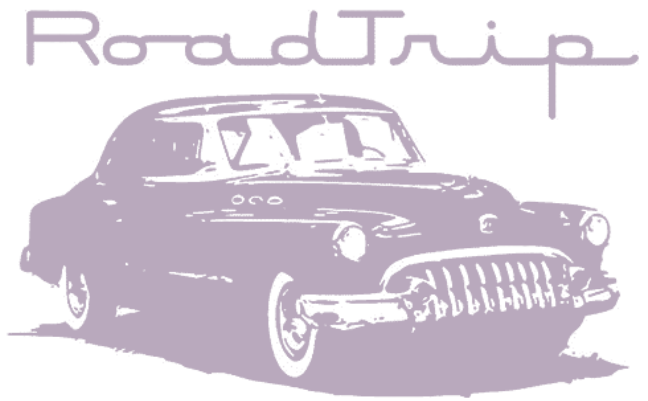
Bill Churlik

Several years ago, there was a regional stamp show in Charleston. Lance, my neighbors' son, and I had planned to do a VERY long day trip to go see it. Kind of a going away present as the family was moving the following week. It ended up with Maria, my other stamp friend and club member, her friend Teresa, Lance, and I going down to Charleston for the show. We got rooms and stayed over night. The 4-way split made it more affordable. My son Joshua also sent me some money to help fund the vacation. (He has just landed a good paying job).

Now Maria not only collects stamps, she has 2 old Lincolns.... '85 & '89. Am I in trouble or what? I love older Lincolns. We checked out the '85 on Thursday and everything was OK. On the way down I went thru Newberry, SC to show Lance the old house that I had been restoring. I ended up giving the grand tour of all the old houses and history there. We got to Charleston and then did a quick survey of the show. Afterwards we drove to the Battery for supper. Lance had a friend that lived in the area and he came to join us for supper. Afterwards the boys walked down to the water front and we drove down and along the Battery. Nice houses!

With all the city lights, I did not notice our car's headlights were dimming. Then, once on the Battery the car dies. We get a jump from the only fellow I have ever met who just happened to have a multimeter in his trunk. The battery read about 11 volts. Not good. By this time the boys caught up to us. Lance is a bit worried about the car. It was a long walk back to Burnsville. We got the car started and moved on.... The car dies again, this time in a bad turn on the road. So here we are, 9 o'clock at night pushing a dead Lincoln down the Battery in front of those million-dollar houses! Lance got to steer while the rest of us pushed! (My friend Emilie say only I can pull off a stunt like this.) Lance's friend called his father to come to help. We all decide that it won't do any good to jump start it again. Since Maria had AAA, she called for a tow. Ben's father got a taxi for her and Teresa to get back to the motel.

Lance and I went with the tow truck. The driver was one of the funniest people I have ever met. He took the scenic route to the garage. In doing so, he told us about every wreck he had towed as we passed though the city. He told us about towing illegally parked cars, cars double parked blocking driveways, cars towed sideways because of two cars trapped them by parking too close. He was a real storyteller.



Once we arrived at the garage, we had to leave the car in front of the garage gate with the key under the floor mat. I thought that this was a very bad idea and said so! He said the car would be quite safe there. The garage was behind the Generation XXX strip club and there were always police cruisers there. (When I told the story at my studio the following week, one of my students said she knew where the club was...something about amateur night...we'll not go into this!) Fortunately the garage was open for half a day on Saturdays so I had the alternator replaced.

I eventually got to the show after lunch. Lance bought several souvenir sheets. I picked up some album pages of stamps, and Maria found several Trans-Mississippi issues. We eventually got back to Burnsville safe and somewhat sound that night.

Maria and Teresa also taught Lance how to do a Puerto Rican U-turn. You have to keep all the wheels on the ground and do it in front of on coming traffic! Did I mention that Maria is descended from Spanish nobility and that her grandfather gave a castle to the church because he did not want to live in Spain? Teresa did textile restoration for Biltmore House and raises high end horses. She had enough sense not to be a stamp collector....

It has been a long time since I have laughed so much or had so much fun. Lance was almost in a daze from all that he experienced. His mother, Valerie thought the trip would be a good educational experience for him! How little did she know. The Burnsville Philatelists do Charleston! Hmmm, there is another large show in Columbus this summer...