

THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN PHILATELIST

JOURNAL OF THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB



ESTABLISHED 1924 • APS CHAPTER NO. 0793-64417 • SINCE 1971

September - October 2020
Volume 13, Number 2

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THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB

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 Jim Haxby

Treasurer:
 Stan Kumor

Secretary:
 Jay Rogers

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Auctioneer: Jay Rogers

Membership: Robert Taylor

Journal Editor: Randall Chet
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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

Welcome to another issue of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist. First I would like to thank all our members who have participated in our monthly Zoom! meetings. One side benefit of virtual meetings is the ability to take part even if you are not local. I for one have enjoyed having Bob Bouvier join us from his new locale in Texas. I would also like to thank member Frank Wheeler for his indefatigable promotion of our club. With every collector he meets, he never fails to say good things about our little community. True to form, he has recruited John Apfelbaum as a dealer member, who has graciously decided to share his blog posts with us. You can find John's insightful look at the collecting gene on page 20.

In the same vein, Tom Krill has been sharing his articles and thoughts with us over the last year. He is the editor of the Lexington Kentucky Henry Clay Philatelic Society monthly newsletter, and this month he has contributed a bit of a "collecting bio" of himself, which starts on page 16. It is always fascinating to get to know members' collecting stories, so if you would like to share your story, please send it to me at randallchet@gmail.com.

Finally, with the change of the seasons, and the ending of daylight savings time, I can at long last enjoy winding down in my new stamp room, tongs and magnifier in hand, sorting stamps, and hopefully putting just a little bit of order back into my world. I don't mind if I never complete it; to quote Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Its the not the destination, it's the journey."

As always, 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 January-February issue: December 25th

ASC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

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COLLECTOR **DEALER** (CIRCLE ONE)

I COLLECT _____

RECOMMENDED BY _____

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

Greetings to all! Since the last issue of the SMP we have held more monthly ASC meetings and our first philatelic auction via Zoom, all of which were successful. Each meeting has included regular club business as well as an educational program presentation. The last presentation was by Dick Hall on a very interesting Swiss philatelic subject. Our members have a wide range of collecting interests and it is always a pleasure to delve into new areas. Our sincere thanks to Dick and all those who are willing to step up and make a presentation to the group.

Our Zoom meetings have about half the attendance of a typical face-to-face Deerfield meeting, but they are an important thread, along with the SMP, that continues to bind our club together. We have recently heard that due to the recent uptick in coronavirus cases Deerfield will be unable to invite us to resume our meetings there until after the first of the year. So the Zoom meetings continue!

Our November club meeting is a very important one and I encourage as many of you as possible make

arrangements to attend. It is time for the election of club officers for 2021. The following slate has been presented: President – Jim Haxby, Vice President – Frank Wheeler, Secretary – Jay Rogers, Treasurer – Stan Kumor. Additional candidates can be brought forward at the meeting. I should emphasize that every one of the present candidates is offering to run as a gesture to help the club and we would be delighted if others were willing to step forward to take our places! Jay and Stan in particular deserve our special thanks for consenting to stand for office one more time; both were looking forward to a much-deserved retirement after many years of service.

Finally, I want to recognize our President, Robert Taylor, who is obliged to retire due to health reasons. Robert has been the face of our club for some years now and has thereby brought much credit to the ASC and himself. Three cheers for Robert!

As always, stay well and don't be a stranger to your stamp albums!

Best regards, Jim

THE REVENUE CORNER

THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST AND THE FIRST LAST

Randall Chet

Pictured is the first commemorative documentary revenue stamp ever issued by the US government: Scott #733. Issued on July 2, 1962, it pictured the Internal Revenue headquarters building in Washington DC. The building, completed in 1930, was the first in what is now known as the Federal Triangle between Constitution and Pennsylvania Avenues.

First, second class and county seat post offices, as well as Internal Revenue offices offered these stamps for sale, although they were not valid as postage. Scott #734, the same design with "Established 1862" removed, was issued in 1963, and paid taxes on bonds, deeds, debentures and other legal documents. A seldom-scene meter stamp picturing the building was briefly used before the tax laws were revised and these, the only commemorative tax stamps ceased to be required after December 31, 1967.

Adhesive backed federal revenue stamps were first used in 1862, the year our present-day tax organization came into being. The adhesives saw wide use during the Civil War, helping to pay down the massive debts incurred by the war.



CONVERGING ON CHICAGO IN 1933: THE VISITS BY THE ITALIAN AIR FLEET AND THE GRAF ZEPPELIN TO THE CENTURY OF PROGRESS EXPOSITION, PART 1

Jim Haxby



As the world began to climb out of the recession that followed the end of WWI, several countries held major fairs during the 1920s. In the United States a two-week event called the 1921 Pageant of Progress was held in Chicago. This event took place on the Municipal Pier (Navy Pier) and attracted over one million visitors. World's fairs in various locations in Europe soon followed. And closer to home the Philadelphia Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition was staged in 1926.

The events of the 1920s encouraged the City of Chicago to plan for a major event on the scale of its first world's fair, the World's Columbian Exposition of 1892-3. With the centenary of the founding of the City of Chicago coming up in 1933, Chicago business and civic leaders decided to hold a world's fair to showcase the city's first hundred years. Accordingly, in January 1928 a non-profit organization called A Century of Progress was founded to set up and manage the fair.

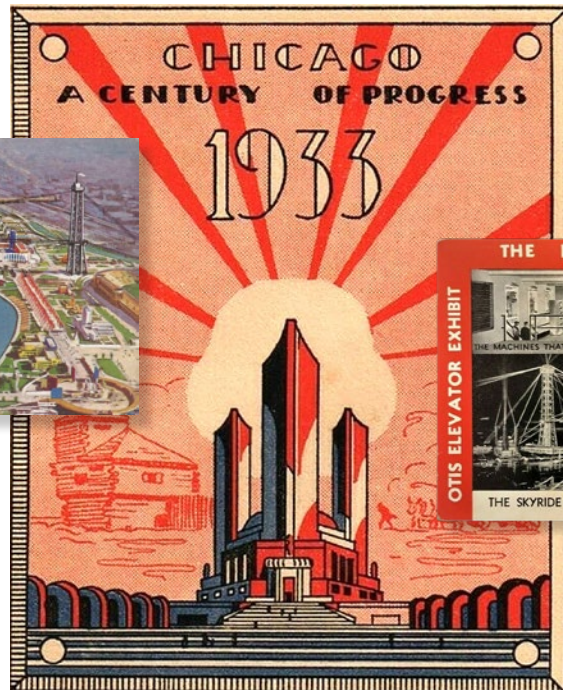
The final fair site included Northerly Island, 3.5 miles of the adjacent lakefront between 12th and 39th streets and the lagoon between, some 427 acres in all. Northerly Island, an artificial island built from material dredged up from Lake Michigan, was originally conceived as the northern most of a series of island parks (the rest were never built).

As plans for A Century of Progress were developing, a group of Chicago scientists and doctors approached fair authorities and made a successful case for changing the primary theme of the fair to the advancement of mankind through science and making it a showcase for modern living, consumerism and entertainment. The unofficial motto of the fair became, "Science Finds, Industry Applies, Man Conforms."

The most prominent architectural feature of the fair was the Skyride, a giant transporter bridge (1850 ft. long and 628 ft. high), with one tower on the mainland and the other on Northerly Island.

The fair was financed entirely through private funding. After the financial arrangements were in place fair organizers convinced Congress to extend invitations to foreign governments to participate in the fair. Congress also authorized construction of a government building.

Postcard showing an artist's rendering of the Century of Progress fairgrounds. The fair's tallest feature, the Skyride, is in the center



A Century of Progress poster showing the Federal Complex



Postcard with detail of the Skyride. The Federal Building, projecting lights skyward, is just to the left of the Skyride's left hand tower

The Federal Complex became one of the most important structures at the fair (and one of the few to endure for any length of time after its closing). The complex consisted of the Federal Building and the States Group (designed by architects Edward H. Bennett and Arthur Brown, Jr.). It was located on Northerly Island, not far from the gigantic eastern tower of the Skyride.

The Federal Building itself contained a round, domed central structure, surrounded by three fluted towers (representing the three branches of government). Many pictures of the Federal Building were taken from the ground looking up, with one of the towers equally centered between the other two in the picture. Depending upon the angle from which the photo was taken, this gave the effect that one tower was taller than the others. The closer the photographer, the taller the "centered" tower appeared to be. This distortion was carried over into various fair poster designs, as well the design for the 3c surface mail commemorative stamp and, as will be seen in Part II, the 50c air mail commemorative stamp.

Despite the United States being in the midst of the Great Depression, A Century of Progress was a resounding success. In the two years it ran it attracted about 39 million paying visitors and it became the first world's fair to turn a profit.

After the fair Northerly Island gradually evolved to serve new uses. In the year following the Century of Progress workers demolished most of the fair buildings. It was converted into a peninsula in 1938 by connecting the north end of the island to the mainland via an earthen causeway. Work on a downtown Chicago airport on the peninsula (something that had been contemplated as early as 1925) began in 1946 and the airport with its single runway opened as Meigs Field in 1948. Meigs Field and the Federal Building were demolished in 2003 and Northerly Island became primarily a nature

Photograph showing the Federal Complex, with the Federal Building flanked by the Hall of the States. One tower of the Skyride is at the right.



The 1c and 3c surface mail stamps issued for the Century of Progress

preserve, consistent with what was envisioned back in 1909 when the island parks were first proposed.

During the fair's 1933 season there were notable aerial visits: the Italian air cruise of 24 seaplanes in July and the German airship, Graf Zeppelin, in October. Both events involved the carriage of special souvenir mail, which provides me with an excuse to cover them in this space.



*General Italo Balbo,
1896-1940*

Italo Balbo, the Fascist Eagle

The leader and principal planner of the 1933 Italian air cruise was General Italo Balbo (1896-1940), by that time a famous aviator, a popular figure among Italians everywhere and the heir apparent to the leadership of the Italian Fascist Party should something happen to Benito Mussolini.

Balbo was born in Ferrara, in northern Italy on June 6, 1896. His parents were schoolteachers. In a gesture of patriotism his father named his son Italo, to honor the nation in which he was born. Italo exhibited an adventuresome spirit at an early age. As soon as Italy entered WWI Balbo joined the Italian Army's Alpine Corps, hoping to help Italy gain back lands lost to Austria before the war. Balbo was promoted to a position of command and reached the rank of captain. He received three medals for valor by the time WWI ended.

In the period immediately after WWI the Kingdom of Italy was in a depressed state, with several factions vying for power. The Italian National Fascist Party was formed in 1921. Balbo, who had met Benito Mussolini in 1915, was extremely patriotic and promptly joined. The young Balbo became an energetic and effective fascist organizer in Ferrara and surroundings. Mussolini then made Balbo leader of the Blackshirt militia, the enforcement arm of the party. Balbo led gangs of men who went to opponents of fascism to coerce conformity, sometimes by violent means. In 1922 Balbo and three associates organized the March on Rome which resulted in the fascists com-

ing to national power. This placed him squarely in the inner circle of Italian fascism.

Balbo continued to rise rapidly in the party. Recognizing Balbo's organizational abilities and his interest in aviation Mussolini promoted him to Undersecretary of State for Air in 1926. Balbo realized his ambition to learn to fly and began building the Regia Aeronautica Italiana (Royal Italian Air Force). His work resulted in upgrading Italy's military and commercial aviation. In 1928 he became General of the Air Force and in 1929 Minister of the Air Force.

Unlike the other well-known Italian fliers of the period, who made single-plane flights, Balbo developed the idea of mass flights, involving multiple aircraft flying in formation. Such flights had a more impressive effect, he thought, both on the airmen involved and the people who saw them. In all Balbo made four mass flights, two in the Mediterranean (1928 and 1929) and two trans-oceanic (1930/31 and 1933). The trans-oceanic air cruise of 1930/31 went from Rome across the south Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro.

Preparations for the Century of Progress Cruise

The air cruise of 1933 was Balbo's fourth and final Italian air cruise. Unlike the first three air cruises, where the men and planes returned by ship, the fourth cruise was to be a round trip involving a double crossing of the north Atlantic to America. Balbo had been profoundly impressed by his visit to the United States in 1928, when he travelled by surface transportation. To him the United States represented a vibrant, technically advanced country that would require a major effort if the Italians were to impress it with its aviation prowess.

The American air cruise was originally planned to take place in 1932 as Crociera Aerea del Decennale (Decennial Air Cruise), to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Italian fascists coming to power. Technical problems made it necessary to delay the trip until 1933. Taking place in 1933 enabled the trip to accomplish three things: mark the 10th anniversary of the Italian fascists (albeit a year late), celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Italian Royal Air Force and visit the world's fair in Chicago.



The aircraft for the 1933 Italian Air Cruise, the Savoia-Marchetti SM.55X

General Balbo inspects his crews and aircraft in Orbetello (near Rome), Italy prior to departure

The aircraft for the 1933 air cruise was the Savoia-Marchetti SM.55, a successful design introduced in 1926 and used on Balbo's three previous air cruises. The 1933 air cruise, with its double Atlantic crossing, was by far the most challenging cruise to date and was a trip that few other countries could have mounted at that time. The SM.55 was modified for the long trip and designated SM.55X. The 'X' stood for the decennial of Italian fascism. Among the most important improvements in the design were more powerful engines (750 hp each), enlarged fuel tanks and metal (vs. wood) three-bladed propellers. The speed of the aircraft increased from 215 to 280 km/hr (maximum) and 165 to 225 (cruising) and the range increased from 3100 to 4000 km (2500 mi.).

General Balbo was thorough in his preparations for this important trip. In fact preparations began in May 1931, just two months after the completion of his previous air cruise.



General Balbo in Londonderry, Northern Ireland

*General Balbo in Shediac,
New Brunswick*

The Incoming Trip

Early in the morning of July 1, 1933 Balbo's armada of twenty mail-carrying planes, four non-mail-carrying planes and a single reserve plane took off from the sea-plane base at Orbetello, Italy. They headed over the Alps in formation in a much-photographed seven-hour flight to Amsterdam. Upon landing in Amsterdam the cruise suffered the first crash and first fatality of the trip. Capt. Mario Baldini's plane overshot the designated landing area and flipped over, killing one of the crew members. Most of the planned festivities of the Amsterdam visit were cancelled out of respect for their deceased crew member. However, Balbo did hold meetings with some dignitaries, who included the aircraft designer Anthony Fokker and Lady Grace Drummond-Hay, the Hearst journalist who had been a passenger on the around-the-world flight of the Graf Zeppelin in 1929.

The following day the armada flew for five and a half hours to Londonderry, Ireland. A highlight of the stay there was a visit with the Lord Mayor of Londonderry. Bad weather at their next destination, Reykjavik, Iceland, delayed their departure until July 5. Once in Iceland, unfavorable weather again set in and the flight held in place for another six days before the weather cleared enough to make the trans-Atlantic crossing.

The group departed for Cartwright, Labrador on July 5. After a twelve-hour crossing they arrived over Sandwich Bay in Cartwright and set their aircraft down for a well-deserved rest. Interestingly, during their brief stay



in Cartwright the armada missed by one day the arrival of Charles and Ann Lindbergh, who were on their survey trip of the North Atlantic for future commercial airline routes.

On July 13 the planes departed on the next leg of the journey, a six-hour trip down to the resort town of Shediac, New Brunswick. There Balbo had a cordial meeting with Canadian officials. The following day, July 14, it was on to Montreal, where they received a large, noisy welcome.

*General Balbo's
aircraft, I-BALB lands
on Lake Michigan next
to the fairgrounds, July
15, 1933*



Ed Kelly, the Mayor of Chicago, presents the key to the city to Balbo

Finally, on July 15 came the final flight of the incoming trip to Chicago. The planes neared the Century of Progress grounds about 6 in the evening. As large crowds lined the Lake Michigan shoreline to get a glimpse of the armada, the planes flew past the fairgrounds and swung back into the wind for their landing. As usual, the planes landed one at a time with Balbo's plane first. I-BALB made a perfect landing which was recorded by movie cameras. It is unlikely that Balbo was at the controls. Probably it was General Aldo Pellegrini, Balbo's personal pilot and a man with much greater flying skills than Balbo.

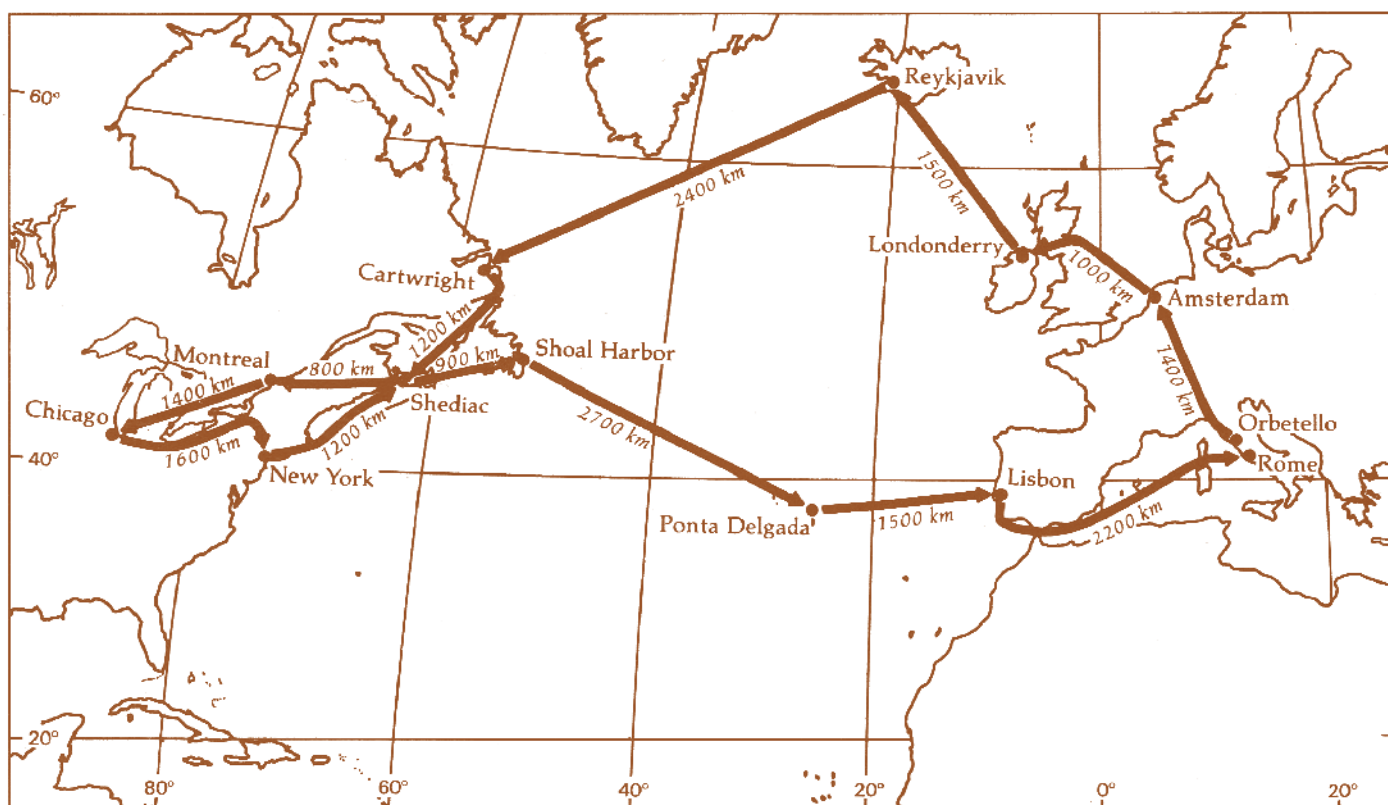
As the armada was landing, 43 American fighter planes and the U.S. airship Macon flew overhead in salute. Once on the ground, Balbo and his men were transported to the fairgrounds by 50 automobiles for an hour's visit, then on to Soldier Field where Mayor

Edward Kelly welcomed the aviators before an audience of some 100,000 people. Kelly proclaimed the day Italo Balbo Day and announced that Chicago's 7th Street was to be renamed Balbo Avenue.

On July 17 Balbo Avenue and a monument to Christopher Columbus, subsidized by Chicago's estimated 300,000 Italian-Americans, were dedicated. The statue bore a plate mentioning Balbo's visit. During a visit to his office Mayor Kelly also presented Balbo with a key to the city. In turn General Balbo presented I-BALB's anchor bouy to the Chicago Historical Society.

Probably the most unusual event during Balbo's stay in the city occurred at the fair. Balbo was made an honorary Sioux Indian and received a fancy head dress and the name, "Chief Flying Eagle", something that delighted him.

The route followed by Balbo's Italian Air Cruise of 1933



The Outgoing Trip

The return trip to Rome began on July 19 with a flight to New York. The armada arrived over Manhattan about 7:30 in the evening. There they were again greeted by the largest airship in the world, the U.S.S. Macon, along with about 100 planes, who dipped their wings in salute to their Italian visitors. Balbo's squadron landed at the Floyd Bennett seaplane base at the tip of Coney Island.

The next day Balbo and a select group of his most senior pilots lunched with President Roosevelt at the White House. This was followed on July 21 with a ticker-tape parade down Broadway. It was the largest such parade the city had seen up to that time. That afternoon Balbo addressed a gathering of some 60,000 at Madison Square Garden. On Sunday, July 23 Balbo made a visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral, followed by a meeting with flier Wiley Post, just back from an around-the-world flight.

*U.S.S. Macon over
New York during
greeting to Balbo
returning from
Chicago*



From New York the return trip to Rome was to follow a route similar to the inbound trip. On July 25 the armada flew to Shediac, New Brunswick and on July 26 they flew to Shoal Harbor, at Clarenville, Newfoundland.

In Newfoundland the aviators found themselves frustrated by bad weather in the Atlantic. The original return route was across to Ireland, but the weather forced Balbo to choose a more southerly route through the Azores and Lisbon. Finally, on August 8, they departed for the Azores. Fifteen of the planes landed at Ponta Delgada and the other nine at Horta.

The next day the armada departed for Lisbon. In the process one of the planes, I-RANI, flipped over on takeoff, killing one of the pilots. Balbo only learned of the accident upon arriving in Portugal.

On August 12 Balbo and his men made the final flight to Lido di Roma and landed in the early evening. The waiting crowds included Mussolini and members of the royal family. The next day the fliers were allowed to make a triumphal march under the Arch of Constantine, something accorded to their Roman forefathers after a great military victory. Everyone received promotions. General Balbo was made Air Marshal, a new title created for the occasion. The

members of his crew were promoted in accordance with their current rank. Another honor that came to Balbo and his chief aid and personal pilot, General Pellegrini, was the American Distinguished Flying Cross in 1935.

But the notoriety Balbo received from his flight was double-edged. Benito Mussolini was by nature a jealous person. Plus, Balbo was already the heir apparent to the leadership of the Italian Fascist Party and he was sometimes quite vocal in his opposition to some of Mussolini's ideas. So only a matter of months after Balbo's return home Mussolini appointed him to be Governor-General of Italy's north African colony, Libya. That action effectively removed Balbo from the center of political power and made him less of a threat to Mussolini.



*Mussolini greets Balbo upon his
return to Rome*

It turned out that General Balbo would remain in Libya for the rest of his life. As the 1930s progressed he proved to be an excellent administrator. Balbo also continued to strongly oppose some Mussolini's actions, such as his anti-Jewish stance of the late 1930s and his alliance with Nazi Germany. Balbo was more sympathetic to the British than he was to the Nazis. In 1940, after the Second World War had begun, Balbo's plane was flying near Tobruk, when it was mistaken for an enemy and shot down by Italian anti-aircraft guns, killing all on board.

One of the aspects of the 1933 air cruise that Mussolini found particularly frustrating was the naming of a street in Chicago after Balbo. Il Duce requested that a street or building be named after him too, but that never happened. Quite possibly in seeking such a favor, Mussolini directed that a monument to be created to commemorate Balbo's visit and gave it to the City of Chicago in 1934 to be erected in front of the fair's Italian pavilion. The monument consists of a thirteen- by three-foot column, taken

from the site of Prospetto a Mare, a building dating from the 1st century BC, in the ancient port town of Ostia, near Rome. The column was placed on a contemporary base of limestone with a special message from the people of fascist Italy inscribed on it.

The Balbo monument remains in the same place today (in Burnham Park not far from Lake Michigan), though all the fair buildings are long gone. So far this monument has escaped the current rash of statue/memorial removals, but the City of Chicago recently deemed it prudent to remove its statue of Columbus.



The monument to Balbo's visit presented by Mussolini to Chicago in 1934

The Special Stamps and Covers for the Century of Progress Cruise

Italy & the Aegean Islands

The regular air mail stamps for Italian dispatches were issued in two values, 25 and 50L, each as a triptych, consisting of a label with the Italian flag on the left, a 5.25 L stamp (the rate for an ordinary registered letter by express mail) with King Victor Emmanuel III in the center and either a 19.75L or a 44.75L stamp at the right (the supplementary rate for the flight). The right-hand panel of the 19.75L bore mythic figures from a painting by Guido Reni and on the 44.75L was a rendering of the Roman Coliseum with the aircraft flying across the ocean toward the skyscrapers of Chicago.

The 25L rate was for destinations in Europe, including Iceland, and the 50L rate was for destinations in the United States and Canada.

The triptych stamps received three kinds of black overprints on the label at the left, depending upon the intended use of the stamps. The first kind was for general use and was overprinted APPARECCHIO (aircraft), below which were the identification letters for one of the twenty designated mail-carrying aircraft. Since each pane contained twenty triptychs, each plane's identification letters appeared once per pane. In all 10,000 triptychs of each value were printed for each mail-carrying plane.



Italy triptych 25 and 50 lire stamps overprinted for covers flown on I-QUES

Cover Rome to Chicago with 50 lire triptych overprinted for flight on I-TEUC



Cover Shediac to Chicago with \$1.37 in Canadian postage



Cover Chicago to New York with \$1.70 in U.S. postage

Cover Chicago to Rome franked with \$3.65 in 1893 Columbian Issue stamps



Cover New York to Rome with \$3.60 in U.S. postage

The general rule in assigning the identification letters was I- (for Italy) followed by the first four letters of the pilot's last name, e.g., I-BALB for General Balbo's ship. The only exception to this was I-DINI. The pilot was Capt. Baldini. The combination I-BALD was considered too close to Balbo's I-BALB, so the last four letters of Baldini's name were used instead. The complete list of mail-carrying plane identification letters and the corresponding pilot names is shown below.

Aircraft Identification Letters	Pilot	Aircraft Identification Letters	Pilot
I-BALB	General Italo Balbo	I-BORG	Capt. Bruno Borghetti
I-PELL	General Aldo Pellegrini	I-MIGL	Capt. Alessandro Miglia
I-LONG	Lt. Col. Ulisse Longo	I-ROVI	Capt. Umberto Rovis
I-NANN	Capt. Umberto Nannini	I-TEUC	Capt. Giuseppe Teucci
I-DINI	Capt. Mario Baldini	I-QUES	Capt. Luigi Questa
I-GIOR	Capt. Gennaro Giordano	I-LEON	Capt. Leonello Leone
I-RECA	Capt. Enea Recagno	I-VERC	Capt. Alessandro Vercellone
I-BIAN	Capt. Vincenzo Biani	I-NAPO	Capt. Silvio Napoli
I-ARAM	Capt. Mario Aramu	I-RANI	Capt. Umberto Ranieri
I-BISE	Capt. Attilio Biseo	I-CALO	Capt. Jacopo Calo Carducci



Italy triptych 25 and 50 lire stamps overprinted for covers from the Aegean Islands

50L Triptychs for state service received the overprint SERVIZIO DI STATO on the left label and did not receive any aircraft designation. The primary purpose of these stamps was for use by Italian city mayors to send greetings to the mayor of Chicago, hence only the 50L value was needed. A total of 5,000 of these triptychs were produced.

Italian Colonies of Cirenaica and Tripolitania

The stamps for Cirenaica and Tripolitania were conventional single 19.75L and 44.75L stamps with designs unique to them. Since the stamp value failed to include the registered express mail fee of 5.25L, that amount was added to the covers using regular stamps. The total printing was 20,000 of each value for each colony.

All the varieties of the Italian stamps were valid only for the trip and the unissued residues were returned by the post offices to Rome immediately after the planes departed for Amsterdam. The creation of so many varieties, especially the use of the aircraft identification letters, created hardship for many trying to maintain their stamp collections in the depths of the economic depression. The stamps did not sell well, even when a group of remainders were sent to New York dealers for sale there.



Cyrenaica 19.75 and 44.75 lire stamps. The additional 5.25 lire postage was paid with regular stamps.

Iceland Issue

To accommodate mail for cruise covers dispatched from Iceland the government overprinted regular issue 1, 5 and 10 krona stamps of the 1930-31 issue. The red overprint reads Hopflug Itala 1933 in two lines. The three values made up the 16 krona rate to America, to which 30 aur had to be added for regular postage.

Iceland 1, 5 & 10 krona stamps overprinted for the Balbo flight



Newfoundland Issue

The Newfoundland government negotiated with General Balbo to carry covers back to Rome bearing a specially-overprinted Newfoundland air mail stamp. The negotiations led to 8,000 of the 1933 issue 75c air mail stamps being overprinted in black 1933 GEN. BALBO FLIGHT \$4.50 in four lines. This price made the Newfoundland stamp the most expensive stamp of the cruise. The high price was the result of Balbo's de-

mands: of the \$4.50 selling price the Italians received \$3.75 and the Newfoundland government received \$0.75.

Collectors winced at the high price of the Newfoundland Balbo flight stamp but it nevertheless sold well. All 8,000 of the special stamps (overprinted as 2,000 blocks of four) sold. Most of the stamps remained unused. Fewer than 1,200 Newfoundland stamps were used on covers for the cruise.



Newfoundland 1931 air mail issue
75c stamp overprinted \$4.50 for the
Balbo flight to Rome



Cover
St. John's,
Newfoundland to
Rome

Conclusion

The covers flown by Balbo's 1933 air cruise are scarce to rare. The question naturally arises why this is so. On the incoming trip about 3,500 covers were flown and on the outgoing trip about 2,400 covers were flown. The flown quantities, plus normal attrition, explain the scarcities.

Did the planes' cargo capacity limit the number of covers that could be flown? Each of the twenty mail-carrying planes could carry 100 kg. (220 lb.) of mail. If we assume 15 covers per pound, the total number of covers the twenty planes could carry would be (220 lb./plane)(15 covers/lb.)(20 planes) = 66,000 covers. This is far in excess of the

number of covers flown, so the limitation was the demand for the covers, not the capacity of the aircraft.

After the 1933 air cruise, before all the accounting was completed, Balbo claimed that the Italian stamp sales would likely be great enough to bring the overall cost of the trip into profitability. He was wrong. The sales were mismanaged and the Italian stamps had less costly competitors for the philatelists' money. Part of the remainders were distributed among the aviators and the rest went onto the auction block as a group. Even today it is still possible to buy full panes of some varieties.

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A LIFETIME OF COLLECTING

Tom Krill

One thing I have noted about the members of the Henry Clay Philatelic society is that they are great conversationalists, each with a very broad based background and just fun to be with. The sum total of our lives' experience makes for some wonderful exchanges and new friendships.

As with many of us, my first education in stamp collecting came with my quest for the Stamp Collecting Merit Badge in Boy Scouts. I never touched the Scotch Tape after that! I had no idea then how this hobby would predict much of my future. Part of the Boy Scout experience was Boy's Life Magazine. I wrote in for a Stamp Collecting Pen Pal and waited for endless months when finally a letter arrived from Boy's Life advising me that there were no boys available but if I was willing to accept it to contact this girl in Japan. We exchanged several letters and thus began a small collection of Japanese stamps. Later on they introduced me to a boy in Sweden but I think my interests were more with the girl in Japan.

Some of the early exchanges



Later on in high school a couple of us friends decided to join the junior club of the Phoenix Philatelic Society. This meant that if our parents could not drive us we had to take two bus rides a distance of about 20 miles from Tempe, AZ to get to the North Phoenix meeting location. The guidance we received there and the opportunity to learn and do an exhibit implanted the hobby once and for all. Ghana was a newly independent country, the first in Africa, and so I did a map and a little history to exhibit the first stamps of Ghana. For that I won a certificate, a ribbon and a used 1951 National Stamp Album which houses my US collection to this day.

Throughout my university days and early years of employment stamps were not a part of life. Certainly that early experience which exposed me to world stamps and those pen pals led me to bigger things. Growing up in the Southwest I was curious to learn Spanish, learn about Mexican culture and later on Latin American history and finally to choose a graduate school of international business.

Armed with a working knowledge of Spanish and a smattering of Portuguese, I was ready to spend my career in Latin America. But the company sent me to Hong Kong. I reluctantly agreed but for 18 months only. 18 months turned into 14 years. Travel throughout the territory would be frequent. On my very first trip in tow of one of my seasoned colleagues we were in Bangkok booked at the same hotel where Lufthansa crews stayed. Although I did not realize it at the time, he knew a number of the Japanese stewardesses who flew with Lufthansa and suggested we go to the hotel disco that night. So the first dance in the Far East was with a Japanese girl. The future comes closer.

This rare First Day Cover twice (1935 and 1937) turned up at a Hong Kong stamp shop



After several years I thought it would be nice to have a set of First Day Covers from the time I arrived in Hong Kong. That turned into a quest for all of the Hong Kong Commemorative First Day Covers, and then inevitably for a complete collection of Hong Kong stamps.

An Australian colleague decided to get serious about stamps and build an Australian collection so he began to get the Philatelic Society circuit boxes sent to the office. Out of that I too began to assemble a small collection of Australia and New Zealand. The stamp auctions in Hong Kong were also quite fun. There were periodic auctions at a local auction house, John Bull stamps held a monthly auction and Stanley Gibbons even had a few over the years.



A trophy from a Stanley Gibbons auction

The icing on the cake, as it were, came out of my frequent trips to Burma for most of those 14 years. Our agent's neighbor was a collector and it became a lasting friendship from the start. Throughout the 1970's and early 1980's in my work there I felt our company was bringing some technology and equipment in some small way may lead to a more democratic open country. Yes,

it was a repressive regime even then, but one did not get any sense of the violence that would erupt in the last decade.

First day cover of the end of Burma's first democracy headed by Aung San. Today, Aung San Suu Kyi bravely follows in her father's footsteps



Over several years I built a complete collection of Burmese stamps in exchange for bringing in many items not readily available in Burma including clothing, medicines and once even enough cabbage seed to plant a large field and on another occasion a stethoscope for a graduating medical doctor.



A cover linking two collections

Remember the mountain top scene in "Love is a Many Splendored Thing"? This is where I proposed to Akemi one night in 1975



Weekend stays in a number of other countries sent me looking for stamp shops and free time in Hong Kong allowed me to be a member of the Hong Kong Philatelic Society.

It was during the third year Hong Kong that I met Akemi, a Japanese citizen working in Hong Kong who would eventually become my wife. She has been at my side ever since and has graciously tolerated my various hobbies including stamp collecting.

We came to Lexington in 1986 and I joined the Henry Clay Philatelic Society soon afterwards. It would be several years, nearly 20 in fact, before I could become active in the club. Lexington has been good to us in providing excellent schooling for our son, including the Japanese Saturday School where he was the first student to complete all 12 years. Needless to say my interests have come full circle and I am now, at last, working on a collection of Japanese stamps.

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CASE #2281: THE BEE THAT WOULD NOT SIT STILL

For most the “Honey Bee” coil is a very unassuming modern coil – usually not worth a second look, other than to use it for postage. But this stamp has many very interesting varieties surrounding it. First, this is the normal stamp:

Then, as with many other coils this comes as an imperf error:

It also comes with the Black “bee” omitted:

But the printing team had a heck of a time – Keeping the bee aligned as it wanted to “FLY” off the stamp – This one shows where it is out of register, and actually was used. This mis-registration of the bee comes in all sorts of degrees of mis-registration, but this is the only one I have.



Normal #2281

#2281 Imperf error

#2281 Bee omitted error



#2281 Misaligned bee error

There was also a controversy surrounding these stamps and the BEP. Normally the BEP would send a letter to its employees for a job well done. However, in this case, they produced less than 100 souvenir cards for their employees who worked on this project. Those cards read, “In commemoration of those employees of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, whose sheer brilliance, dedication, steadfastness, innovativeness, and technical know-how made ‘Project Honeybee’ a success. The Bureau salutes you.” Considering the production issues they had this was a very nice thing the BEP did for that group of employees.

But, when collectors learned of these cards, they complained that they were collectible souvenirs that hadn’t been made available to the public.

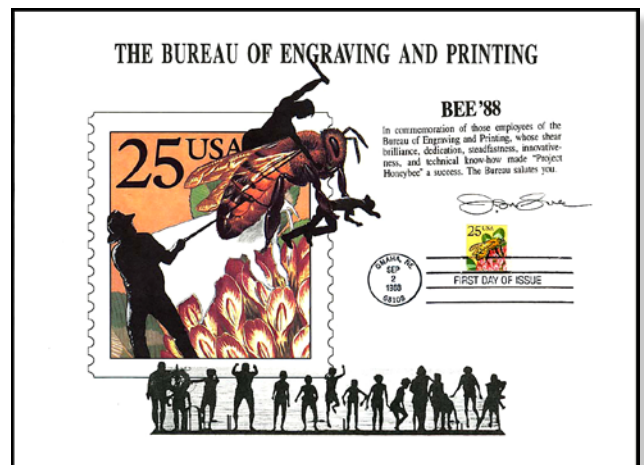
“Project Honeybee”
BEP Souvenir Card

I’m not sure the misspelling of “sheer” was

intentional or not, but the skewing of the printing was. Kind of an inside joke to the issues they had during production. I personally really like the wrangling of the bee design. Very fitting for the production issues they had.

Seems that even printed bees are hard to make sit still! There are a lot of fun and interesting varieties to be had in modern stamps—if you know where to look.

Happy Hunting,
Scott



THE IMPULSE TO COLLECT



"Stamp Collector", Curt Bruckner, 1961

There are three main conscious reasons why people collect anything and there are specific modifications of these principles about why they collect stamps in particular. First, collecting satisfies the desire to set and achieve goals. Stamp collecting is a particularly satisfying hobby in this regard in that, because of our extensive catalogs, collectors know what they need to obtain more clearly than most other collecting hobbies (try getting a complete collection of red buttons). If a collector sets a goal of obtaining a set of Famous Americans he can readily achieve it. Goals can be set at easy to very difficult levels depending on the collector's interests and needs. Second, collecting fulfills our need for orderliness. People have a need to arrange things in ways that make sense and in this regard, philately is one of the best hobbies as our albums and neat page lay out make ordering different pieces of paper easy and interesting. And third, people collect because of an aesthetic appreciation of the artistic properties of the objects they collect. Here too, philately is at the top. Each stamp is a miniature piece of art ready for our perusal and examination at any time.

Our dealer-members have a unique perspective to our hobby and we invite you to share your unique insights and experience with our club. If you would like to contribute, please send your correspondence to the editor: randallchet@gmail.com

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