

WORLD STAMP SHOW-NY 2016 REPORT

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The once every decade international stamp show held in the United States took place at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City between 28 May and 4 June 2016. It was my pleasure to attend every day of this exhibition and I hope this report will provide a sampling of the many aspects of this show.

The exhibition occupied more than 300,000 square feet of space on the third floor of the center. In addition, there were 17 rooms on the first floor used for seminars, meetings, first day ceremonies, and presentations. With so many simultaneous events, it was not possible to do everything on the schedule.

At the opening ceremony, we were treated to a special guest appearance by none other than Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton is currently quite popular in New York not only because he is one of the city's favorite sons, but also due to the hit musical, *Hamilton*, currently playing on Broadway.

As some readers may know, I have an award winning exhibit with Hamilton as the subject. So, I was quite pleased to see him there and hear his remarks on how he was more responsible for the set up and operation of the post office department than his good friend Ben Franklin.

As with every stamp exhibition, the show could not operate without a corps of volunteers. Both Lisa Foster and I worked several hours as volunteers at the Youth and the Adult Beginner areas. Both locations were very well attended by visitors and were busy all day. I found it very rewarding to meet and assist new collectors with learning about stamp collecting.



With my friend Alex at WSS



Multitude of pictorial cancels at the USPS booth

The US Postal Service had a huge area that included games, free photo souvenirs, and of course, sales of stamps and other products.

There were seven first day ceremonies involving the issuing of 49 new US stamps during the show. In addition, the UN held two first day ceremonies and other postal administrations also held ceremonies and issued new stamps at the show.

There were long lines each day at the USPS booth to purchase stamps and have the various show cancels applied on covers that you could create yourself.

One of the fun activities that I did not expect I would enjoy so much was the quest to obtain stamps and

cancels in my philatelic passport. I managed to acquire 79 from the many postal administrations and organizations.

In addition to the USPS, there were dozens of other postal administrations. They were all doing very good business not only with servicing the passports, but also with many recent issues of their own. Canada Post got some of my money for their new Star Trek series.

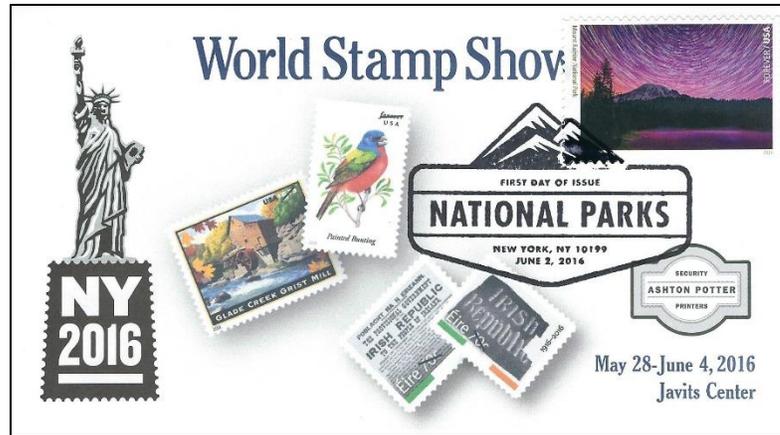
Australia Post had a new butterfly souvenir sheet issue on each day. The cancelled version was only available at the show. Since this is one of my topics, they received a healthy amount from my wallet.

Not everything at the show was costly. There was lots of free stuff provided by many booth holders such as philatelic reference publications, souvenir items, and interesting promotional material.

Many booths had show souvenirs. At Mystic Stamp, you could get your photo with a rarity. Ashton Potter handed out free envelopes that you could use to make your own souvenir covers.



Butterfly items at Australia Post booth



Souvenir cover made with a free Ashton Potter envelope

There were interesting and unique displays all around the exhibition. Many of the world's greatest philatelic rarities were there. I personally saw the One-Cent British Guiana, the Swedish Treskilling Yellow, the Hawaiian Dawson cover, and many others. There were at least seven copies of the Inverted Jenny at the show, two of which were involved in auctions. There was probably one billion dollars-worth of philatelic material in that hall.

Other less valuable, but just as interesting displays included John Lennon's boyhood stamp album and an actual Curtiss JN-4H aircraft on loan from the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in Dutchess County, New York.

I was unable to attend every first day ceremony, but I did make it a point to go to the one for the UN Peacekeepers stamp because in my former career I served as a UN Peacekeeper in the Middle East. I took the opportunity to prepare some of my own cachets and had them serviced by the UN Postal Administration there.

The most interesting first day ceremony for me was the double issue for the "View of Our Planets" and "Pluto Explored" sheets. Remarks were made by a stellar group of NASA scientists including Dr. Alan Stern, the principal investigator of the New Horizons space probe that continues to send remarkable photos of the former ninth planet and its moons.



John Lennon's stamp album

There were more than 30 auction firms at the show, five of which conducted auctions there. The highlight was the sale of one of the Inverted Jenny stamps for \$1.35 million including the buyer's premium. Yes, I got to see the stamp close up.

More than 120 dealer booths offered everything from inexpensive covers to million dollar rarities. I noted that most dealers were very busy on all days. At one booth dealing in covers, they had to add a second row of chairs in the aisle to accommodate all the customers.

Philatelic societies of all types were well represented. I spent some time at the American Topical Association booth and they always had visitors many of whom came to get their passports serviced. During the show, the ATA managed to recruit an unprecedented 78 new members despite being located in the back section of the hall. Much of this effort was due to the work of one of our own Biology Unit members, Jeffrey Hayward. Jeff, who lives on Staten Island (a part of New York that he cautioned is in no way related to Manhattan), served as the local point of contact. He organized the ATA booth and helped man its operation every day.

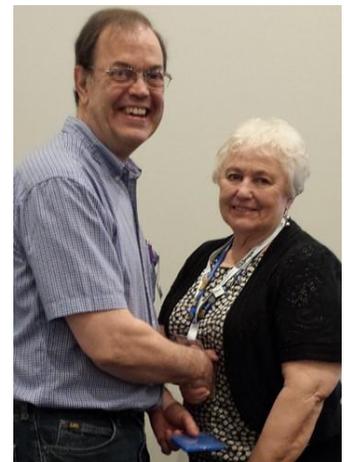
The ATA did not hold its regular National Topical Stamp Show this year because of the World Stamp Show, so it used this show to hold its annual Board meetings and general membership meeting. The membership meeting was on Friday, 3 June at 1:00 PM. During this meeting, the incoming new officers and board members were sworn in.



ATA Board swearing-in ceremony

L to R: Robert E. Lamb, Director; Jack Congrove, 2nd Vice President; Dawn Hamman, 1st Vice President; Amanda Morgenstern, Director; Vera Felts, Executive Director; Dale Smith, President; Laurie Ryan, Secretary; Beth Collins, Director; Larry Davidson, Director; Jack André Denys, Past President; Jeffrey Hayward, Director, and Dick Roman, Director.
Not present: Dennis Dengel, Treasurer

The new President is Dale Smith from Kansas City, Missouri, formerly the First Vice President. Dawn Hamman of Venice, Florida, was elected First Vice President and yours truly was elected as the Second Vice President. Laurie Ryan of Cincinnati, Ohio, was re-elected as Secretary. Dennis Dengel of Poughkeepsie, New York, was elected as Treasurer. The general meeting was very well attended. Our Unit Secretary-Treasurer, Chris Dahle, received his 25-year ATA membership pin there.



Chris Dahle receiving his 25-year pin from Executive Director, Vera Felts



Dr. Läge describing exhibits

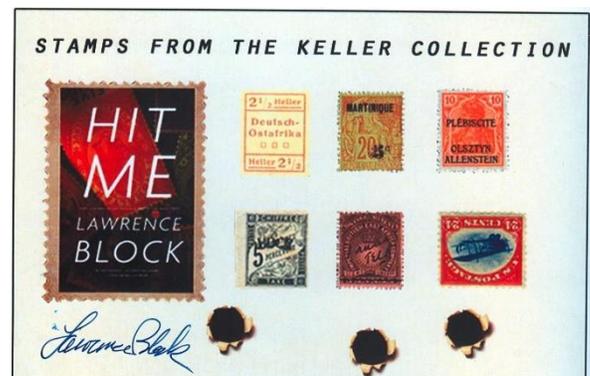
The meeting ended with an excellent and witty presentation by Dr. Damian Läge, an international philatelic judge from Germany, about making a thematic exhibit. After this presentation, Dr. Läge led a tour of the thematic exhibits and described the positive and not so positive exhibiting techniques.

In a first for any international show, the American Postal Workers Union had a booth where they promoted support for some of their labor causes including a return of the philatelic sales windows.

During the show, there were society meetings, seminars, and presentations on all sorts of philatelic subjects including exhibiting, postal history, thematic collecting, and many others.

In addition to these, one event that I particularly enjoyed was a presentation by award winning mystery writer Lawrence Block on "A Hit Man and His Stamps." Block gave an entertaining and humorous description of the genesis of the hero of several of his novels, Keller, a contract killer who takes jobs in order to get money to buy stamps to add to his collection.

One of the most memorable events at the show was the news conference on 2 June at which position 76 of the stolen McCoy Inverted Jenny block was returned to the American Philatelic Research Library. I am sure that the mystery of how this stamp ended up in Northern Ireland will fascinate philatelists for years. It was a privilege to witness its return by the FBI.



Souvenir card from Lawrence Block

Of course it would not be an "exhibition" without exhibits. I was unable to view each of the more than 4,100 frames of competitive exhibits. I tried to concentrate on the classes that were of most personal interest: Thematic, Youth,

and Open. Many of the Traditional exhibits were so esoteric that you had to be expert in the particular area to really appreciate them.

The Open and Modern classes were presented for the first time at an international show. Also, there was an Illustrated Mail (first day covers) category that was not an official class, but was offered on an experimental basis.

The top three honors all went to Traditional or Postal History exhibits. Grand Prix d'Honneur: Alvaro Castro-Harrigan from Costa Rica for "Panama: First Issues as a State of Colombia and Their Forerunners."

Grand Prix International: Wei Gang from China People's Republic for "China: The Postal History of Mongolia 1841-1921."

Grand Prix National: Gordon Eubanks for "The United States Imperforate Issues of 1851-1856 & Their Importance in an Expanding Postal System."

In the Thematic class, there were several exhibits with a biological subject. The top award among these was "Pigeons-Great Diversity in the Wild-Domesticated and Admired by Man," by Lutz König of Germany. It received a Large Gold with



Lesley Marley with her exhibit

a score of 96 out of 100. Close behind it was "A Whale's Tale," by Lesley Marley from UK. It also received a Large Gold with a score of 95.

Gold awards went to "The Palm, a Royal Plant," by Giovanni Licata of Italy with a score of 93; "Hunting: Necessity, Sport, or Extermination?" by Ruth Ordoñez Sanz of Spain (91); "Flower Magic," by Linda Lee of Australia (90); and "Liquid Life: Blood from an Ancient Myth to a Modern Medicine," by Peter Weir from UK (90).

"The Coconut Palm," by Phillip Stager of Florida received a Large Vermeil award with a score of 85. Vermeil awards went to "The Butterfly Effect," by Greg Herbert of Maryland (82) and "Dog," by Guolzang Zhang of China (80).

In the Youth class, the highest award was Large Vermeil. These were won by "The Rooster of Decaris Issue," by Tanguy Pron of France; "Visit to the Farm," by Harold Fernandez of Cuba; "The Bear's Family," by Laure Michiels of France; and "My Friend's Dog," by Daiana Aylen Casielles of Argentina.

Not all of the show was fun and games. There were serious problems with the new style display frames. They are much lighter than the current frames, which is an advantage. But the lightweight construction makes them flimsy and subject to warping and splitting of the windows. Some WSP shows cancelled their orders for the frames as a result.

The Javits Center being under union operation tried to charge all of the booth holders additional fees for using union workers to move their material into and out of the hall. These fees were all in the five figure range and came as a complete surprise to the dealers and auction houses.

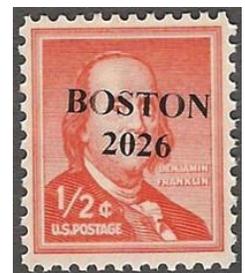
Negotiations took place between the booth holders and the show organizers with the result that the booth holders were not charged these fees. But I suspect that someone had to pay the union and that would most likely be the show organization. This would certainly have an adverse effect on any show profits.

The next international show in the US is planned for Boston on 23–30 May 2026. That year will mark the 250th birthday, or sestercentennial, of the United States. I predict that there will be a plethora of Americana related stamp issues by multiple postal administrations.

I hope to see you there.



New York FBI Assistant Director Diego Rodriguez thinking, "I'm holding a quarter million dollars in my hands."



Souvenir stamp from Boston 2026