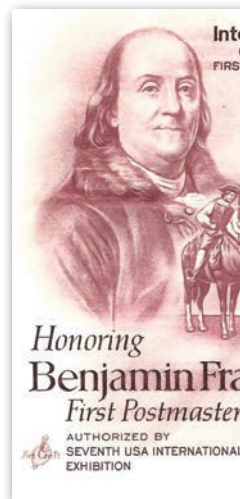
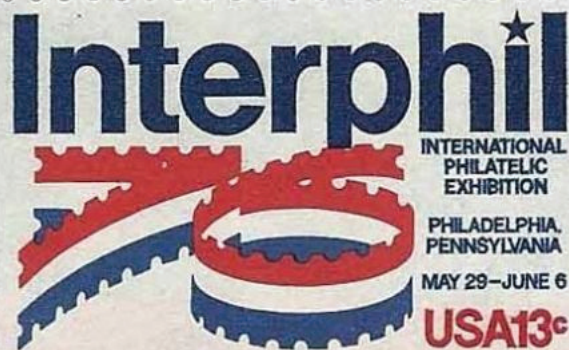




INTERPHIL!

America celebrates its birthday with a huge stamp show!

What better way to celebrate stamp collecting during America's Bicentennial Year than bringing our Seventh U.S. international stamp show to the city where our nation was born? Shown here: The pre-show promotional labels, the beautiful stamp issued in its honor and the cover of the spectacular show program.



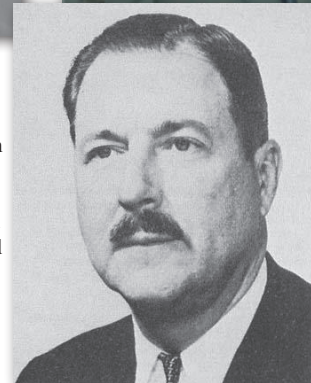
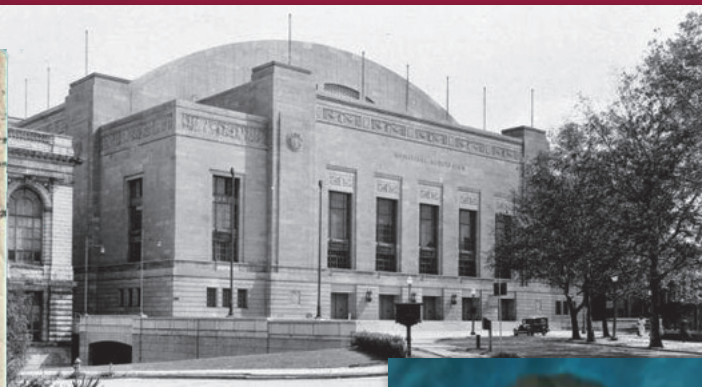
The Seventh U.S. International Philatelic Exhibition, Interphil 76, ran from May 29 thru June 6, 1976 at the Convention Center of Philadelphia, Pa. That's exactly 40 years before World Stamp Show-NY 2016 opens its doors at 10 AM on Saturday, May 29, 2016. Daily show hours were 11 am to 8 pm and admission was \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children.

Did you ever notice the muskets on the U.S. se-tenant block of four (Scott No. 1565-68)? Well those of us who were at Interphil on opening day got to see and hear six of them being fired into the air to signal the opening of the Seventh International Philatelic Exhibition, which was named Interphil 76, in honor of the Bicentennial of the U.S. After the muskets were fired off, the crowds were let into the Philadelphia Convention Center for the show. The throng of approximately 20,000 made for extremely crowded conditions, and caught the show organizers off guard. The rest of the days never came close to the opening day attendance but all stakeholders were generally pleased with the overall attendance.

Robert J. Stets, the show's Executive Director, proclaimed that

"an array of philatelic rarities, the Aristocrats of Philately, valued at \$5 million, will highlight the Court of Honor of the Show." He noted that some of these rarities had never been seen publicly in the United States and certainly never together all under one roof. There were a total of 31 different "Aristocrats" which were assembled for this once in a lifetime viewing opportunity. It was quite a glorious experience for me. I had been to FIPEX as an 11 year old, I missed SIPEX, so this was really a big deal.

As described in our previous installments for the shows held 1926, 1936, 1947, 1956, and 1966, the U.S. Post Office Department issued a souvenir sheet, a unique sheet or pane of stamps expressly to honor each event. In 1976, they issued four souvenir sheets without the name of the show. They were the four Bicentennial souvenir sheets, which many collectors do consider the Interphil sheets, but when browsing through a stamp collection, any connection between the sheets and Interphil can easily be missed. In fact, word quickly spread around the show floor that a local 91-year old collector had found one of the sheets without perforations and without the denominations imprinted. Early on in the sales of these innovative sheets, several lucky collectors discovered printing or perforation freaks and errors.



Interphil was held in the Philadelphia Convention Center (above). Major officials of the show were (from upper right, clockwise) F. Burton Sellers, president; John R. Boker, Jr., chairman of the international jury; and James T. Devoss, Executive Director.



Thousands of people at the show bought an official first day cover (an example at left), but some collectors used their imaginations—and even old covers with the 1926 Sesqui-centennial stamp affixed—and came up with unique souvenirs like the cover shown at top cancelled at both Interphil and also at the 1926 Exposition! Quite a contrast between the design of the two stamps and their show cancellations!

The USPS held the largest booth space at the show and lines were long throughout the day. They were particularly pleased to bring the very last Highway Post Office (HPO) to Interphil and visitors had a chance for first hand viewing of a once integral component of mail delivery. HPO service between Cleveland and Cincinnati had ended in 1974. The USPS was very proud of its *200 Years of Postal Service Development* exhibit, a huge five-module presentation that attracted much interest.

A demonstration of the printing of postage stamps was run all day long each day, courtesy of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. BEP employees demonstrated how engraved plates were prepared for the press, the inking process and the actual printing of postage stamps. This was a feature that was enjoyed by collectors at each IPEX held every 10 years starting in 1926 through 1956.

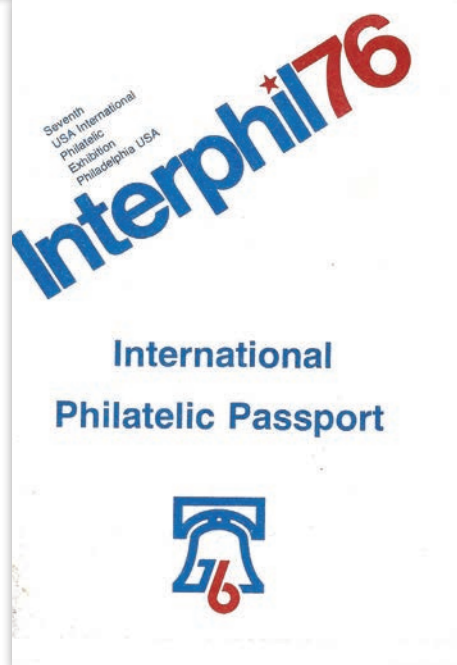
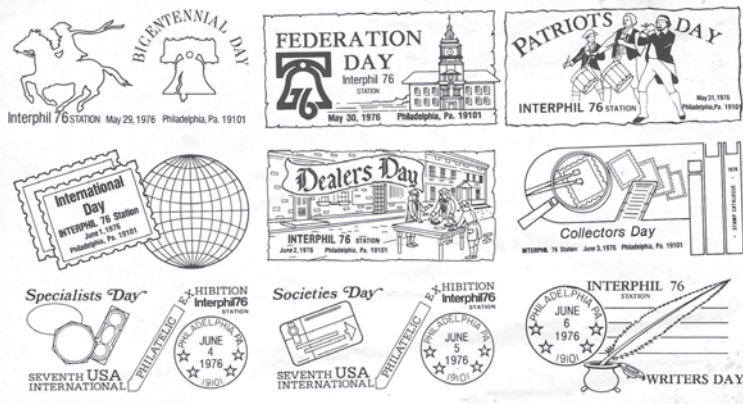
There was reunion of the Inverted Jennys, the famous airmail stamp listed in Scott as No. C3a. There was the plate block, three blocks of four and a number of singles on view. Seeing so many of these cherished U.S. icons in one place exemplified the scope and breadth of the exhibition.

The famed British Guiana Penny Magenta was on view in a unique exhibition case. It was shown in the Court of Honor court-

tesy of Irwin Weinberg, a dealer from Wilkes Barre, Pa., who had put together a syndicate to purchase the stamp. Weinberg has done so much to promote the hobby throughout his lifetime, especially with his aggressive efforts to promote the scrawny looking smudged stamp. Weinberg had purchased the stamp in 1970 for \$280,000 and at the time of Interphil, Weinberg claimed the value of the stamp had escalated to \$1 million, and was insured for \$750,000 during Interphil. "Just looking at the stamp is a thrill for me, and I so enjoy watching people look at it." Weinberg told visitors. Thank you, Irwin! (The Penny Magenta will again be on view at World Stamp Show-NY 2016 having been sold in 2014 for more than \$9 million.)

There were about 3,300 exhibition frames, each holding 16 album pages. All exhibitors had to have won a previous gold award in order submit an entry for Interphil

John R. Boker chaired the 33-member jury from 19 different countries. They labored intensely to decide on four grand prix level awards. The International Grand Prix went to a West German collector, Horst G. Dietrich, for his exhibit on Afghanistan. He received a miniature sterling sword thrust into a block of cut crystal which could be withdrawn and used as a letter opener.



Upper left: The nine different daily show cancellations for Interphil—each day designated with a different theme. At right, the huge two-section special edition of *Linn's Stamp News* produced for free distribution at the show.

Below left: The front cover for the then-unique innovation of a special "Philatelic Passport" sold at the show.



At left: Examples of two pages from the *Interphil Philatelic Passport* showing stamps from two of the 35 nations represented with booths at the show—and their official cancellations.

The grand prix national, the award given to the best collection from the host country, went to Louis Grunin of Spring Valley, N.Y., for his nine frames of classic *United States stamps, 1847-1861*. The jury awarded a special prix d'honneur to *The Honolulu Advertiser* for its superb collection of Hawaiian Missionaries. This exhibit represented the merged efforts of Alfred Ostheimer and Thurston Twigg Smith.

The award for the best among previous international high award winners is the honor class grand prix, and this was awarded to Wallace W. Knox for his Great Britain exhibit. Knox's exhibit included two "first day covers" of the Penny Black, the world's first postage stamp issued on May 5, 1840.

This great show introduced the *Interphil 76 Passport*, an innovation seen for the first time at a U.S. International. It was designed to enable the show visitor to gather stamps and postmarks from the nearly three dozen foreign postal services which set up post office sub-stations at Interphil. The passport is the highlight of many souvenir type items available to create permanent memories of this show which coincided with the host country's 200th Birthday, America's Bicentennial.

There were 105 stamp dealers from around the world including 12 super booths designed as colonial shops. In addition, there were 35 foreign postal administrations participating, and 35 philatelic societies and associations holding booths to receive their members and recruit new members.

Business was very brisk for the huge bourse of dealers, and several did business in excess of \$100,000 for the eight days, a very

significant amount in 1976 dollars (equal today to which would be the equivalent of \$415,000 today)...yes indeed, it was a great show for many participants.

On the evening before Interphil closed, more than 1,000 collectors paid \$30 each for the Awards Banquet in the Grand Ballroom of the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel. Interphil President James T. DeVoss chaired the evening and the awards were handed out by John R. Boker, chairman of the jury.

The *Interphil Catalog* (shown on page 52) is a wonderful reference book on stamp collecting, with a full color centerfold featuring the "Aristocrats of Philately" which were on display on the show floor. This special catalog is often seen online for sale in the ten dollar range, and includes an engraved souvenir page by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the only "official" Interphil item produced by the BEP, sewn in between pages 56 and 57. Its existence is noted in the 2015 *Scott Specialized U.S. Catalog* among the souvenir cards, but it is listed without a Catalog number or a retail value. The catalog was produced for Interphil by Duane Hilmer and the staff of the Collectors Institute Ltd. of Omaha, Nebraska, then owners of Scott Publications. Hilmer is credited with bringing full color reproductions to the hobby when he produced the first full color *Scott Stamp Monthly* starting in 1972.

The show was a considered a success in every way. Stay tuned in the September issue of *ASD&C* to explore AMERIPEX, the 1986 U.S. International, one of the most successful jumbo stamp shows in the history of our hobby. Let's all meet at World Stamp Show-NY 2016 – check it out at www.ny2016.org! ☐