



PACIFIC '97!

The West Coast gets its first International!

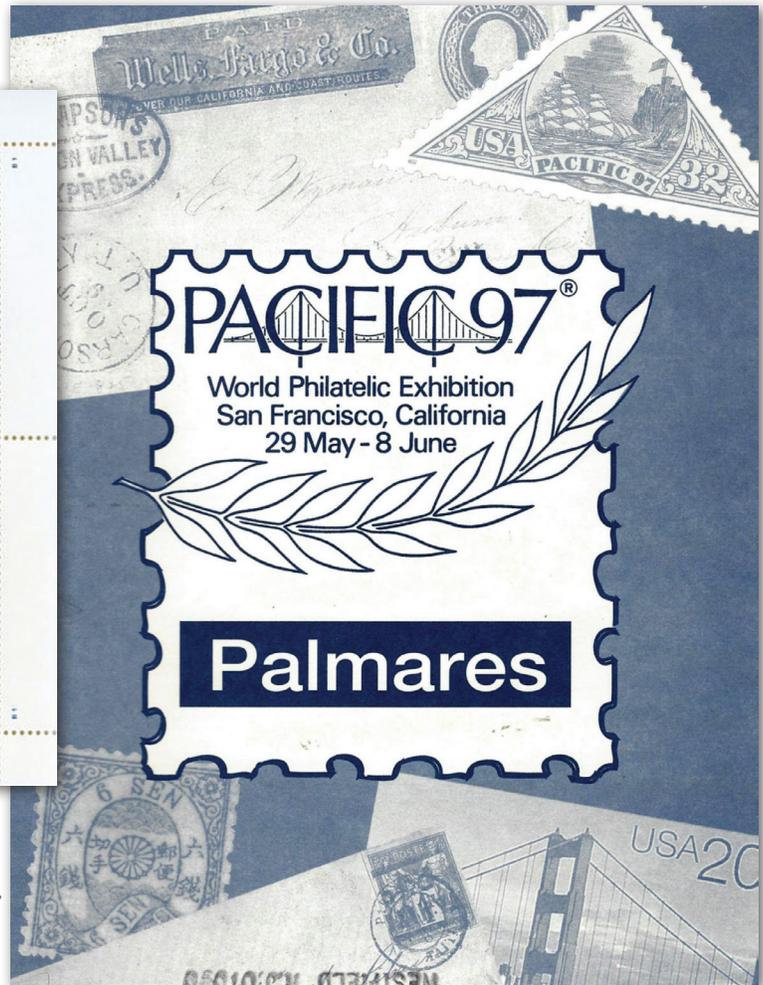


The author sends warm thanks to Bob Rose and Henry Laessig for providing illustrations for this article.



Figure 2. The unusual, precedent-setting souvenir sheet of triangular stamps was a major hit of PACIFIC 97. Easily the most unusual postal emission ever released at a U.S. international.

A booklet listing all of the show's award winners, called the *Palmares*, was printed and distributed at the Awards Banquet.



Pacific 97, the ninth United States international philatelic exhibition, ran from May 29 thru June 8, 1997 in San Francisco, California. The show occupied more than 400,000 square feet in the North and South Halls of the Moscone Center, the fourth largest Convention Center in the country.

Seven Bay Area collectors headed up the Organizing Committee, working for nearly a decade to produce the first U.S. IPEX on the West Coast. Walton Eugene "Gene" Tinsley was President; Stephen D. Schumann was Vice-President and James A. Bowman was the executive officer. Walter Ninde, Bob deViolini, Werner Helms, Bud Sellers, Bob Lamb and Lois Evans-deViolini rounded out the team. Robert W. Thompson was the Exhibition Manager and Dickey B. Rustin was the USPS liaison to the Committee. (It is a happy note to remark that Steve Schumann is the Commissioner General for World Stamp Show-NY 2016.)

What a difference 50 years makes! You will recall that the IPEX scheduled for 1946 was delayed one year until 1947, in order to observe the centennial of the first United States postage stamps

issued in 1847. After the very successful eighth IPEX in 1986, AMERIPEX, the 1996 U.S. IPEX was also delayed one year so it could celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the first U.S. Postage Stamps. As we described in the March 2015 issue, the 1947 show, CIPEX, featured a United States Post Office-issued souvenir sheet reproducing the first two U.S. Postage stamps, the 5-cent Franklin and 10-cent Washington, and it was sold for the face value of 15 cents. Fifty years later the United States Postal Service decided to issue two souvenir sheets in honor of Pacific 97, each containing 12 stamps—modified reproductions of the two 1847 stamps.

Instead of the 5-cent and 10-cent face value, as in 1947, the sheets contained 12 Franklin stamps with a face value of 50 cents each and 12 Washington stamps with a face value of 60 cents each. These souvenir sheets, designed to bring attention to Pacific 97, worked exceedingly well that year. A hub-bub was caused because the USPS announced in February that the Pacific 97 sheets would be on sale only during the 11 days of the Show, and the remainder on hand after June 8 would be destroyed. The philatelic commu-

San Francisco's beautiful (and huge!) George Moscone Convention Center was host to PACIFIC 97.



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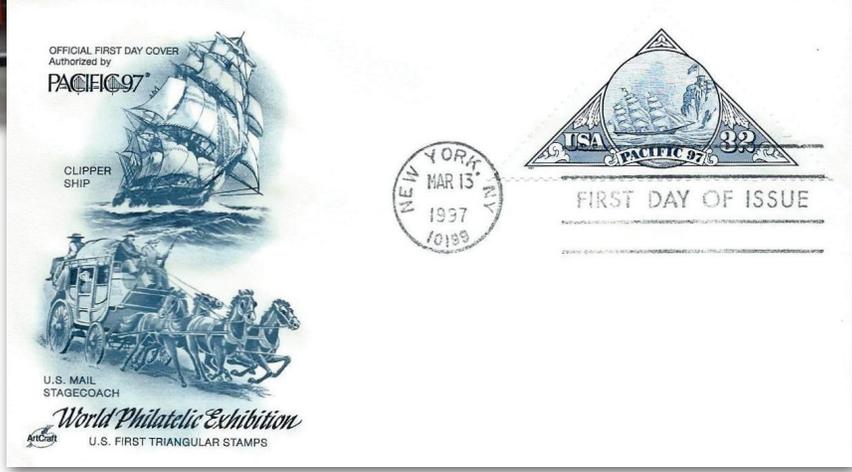
Dated Magazine

Have You Been Short-Sheeted?
Page 556

Figure 1. The APS Board votes to purchase thousands of sheets.



Cinderella collectors were elated that the Washington Press revived the custom of issuing show related labels.



The USPS helped to promote Pacific 97 at a first day of issue ceremony at the the New York Postage Stamp Mega Event in March 1997.

nity was up in arms! Randy L. Neil, then President of the American Philatelic Society, wrote to the USPS on behalf of 50,000 collectors that the collecting community shouldn't be denied a chance to buy the sheets because the opportunity was reduced by the USPS to an unreasonably narrow window. He wrote that such a restriction is most exploitative of the collecting public and should be condemned.

Michael Laurence led the philatelic press' objections by writing in *Linn's* that the "USPS obviously doesn't realize that collectors regard deliberately limited editions with the profoundest contempt." The USPS relented a bit and allowed a brief extended period for mail order. As shown in Figure 1, the APS Board of Directors voted to purchase thousands of sheets, and made them available at face value to their members. In the end, as shown in the *Scott Specialized* "Quantities Issued" section, of the four million copies of each sheet produced, only about 600,000 were sold, with the remainders being destroyed.

The USPS honored Pacific 97 with the release of two promotional stamps 60 days prior to the opening of the show, shown in Figure 2. The stamps garnered a great deal of attention as they were the very first triangular shaped stamps ever issued by the U.S.

Both the souvenir sheets, and the triangle stamps were designed by Richard Sheaff, a long time design consultant to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC), and responsible for the designs of over 300 U.S. Postage stamps. We note with pleasure that Dick is an avid reader of (and contributor to) *ASD&C*, which gives us this opportunity to say "Thank you, Dick, for all you have done to promote our hobby!" To round out the Pacific 97 postal emissions, Dick also designed two postal cards that were issued at the show. Academy Award Winning actor Karl Malden was at the show to be the keynote speaker and dedicate the two postal cards, issued on June 2. The cards depict the Golden Gate Bridge. At the time, Malden was in his eighth year as a CSAC member.

Pacific 97 was under the patronage of the FIP (Federation Internationale de Philatelie), the organization that has responsibility for approving and accrediting international exhibitions throughout the world. FIP decides upon the rules that will govern these shows. Pacific 97 benefited from the FIP's expanded approved list of categories which were: Championship, Traditional, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Aerophilately, Astrophilately, Thematics, Maximaphily (the collecting of Maximum Cards), Revenues, Modern, Youth and Literature.

George Washington

GEORGE WASHINGTON SOUVENIR SHEET ■ SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Presiding

George Kikuchi
Postmaster of San Francisco

Welcome

James A. Bowman
Executive Officer
Pacific 97

Honored Guests

Richard Sheaff
Designer of
Souvenir Sheet

National Anthem

Sergeant Jack Tatum
Postal Police
Inspection Service
San Francisco Division
U.S. Postal Service

Remarks

George Washington

Dr. Virginia Noelke

Chair
Citizens' Stamp Advisory
Committee

Dedication of Stamps

Allen R. Kane
Chief Marketing Officer &
Senior Vice President
U.S. Postal Service

Figure 3. Linn's Stamp News distributed a free 120 page Show Program to show attendees

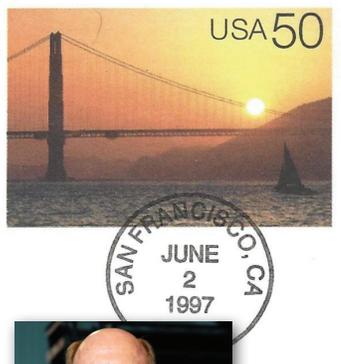
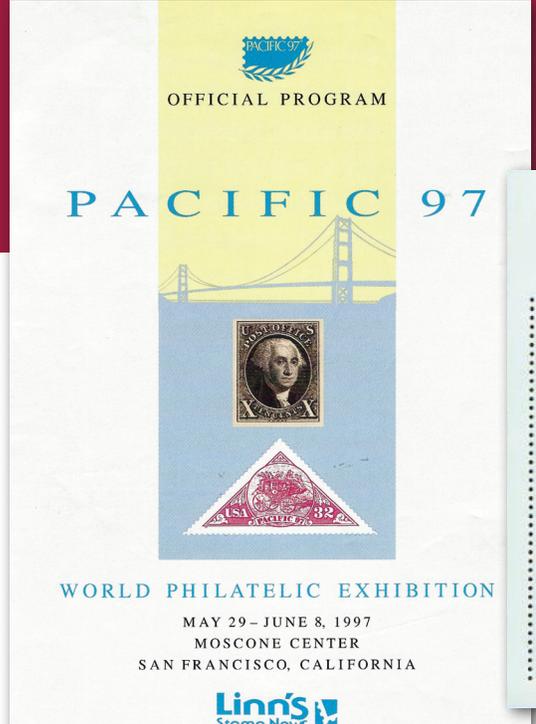


Figure 4. Future National Postal Museum Director Allen Kane's USPS role at Pacific 97 shown on this first day ceremony program.



Famed stamp designer Richard Sheaff, who was a member of the Pacific 97 Organizing Committee, designed all of the postal emissions connected to the Show.



There were more than 600 exhibitors from 48 countries. The exhibits were carried to Pacific 97 by 65 Commissioners representing 58 countries. The jury was made up of 42 jurors, representing 22 different countries, including 10 from the United States (the host country) and nine from the FIP. There were also ten apprentice judges from nine different countries. One of the apprentice judges was Michael Dixon, who went on to be President of Washington 2006 (to be described in our next issue). The Jury President was F. Burton "Bud" Sellers, of Arizona, one of the greatest supporters of our hobby. (He served as President of the American Philatelic Society from 1985-1989 and again from 1991-1993, and was presented with the APS' Luff Award two times.)

There were three Grand Prix Awards presented by the jury. The Grand Prix d'Honneur (for "best in the entire show") went to Jura-jit Gongvatana of Thailand for *Siam: The 19th Century*. The Grand Prix International (for "the best International Exhibit") went to Pichai Buranasombati of Thailand, for *Great Britain: Early Line Engraved Issues*.

It was most interesting that the two winners were both from Thailand, as there was so much emphasis on the Pacific Rim countries during the show. The Grand Prix National award (for best in show of stamps from host country) went to George J. Kramer for his *Across the Continent*. George's exhibit showed how mail crossed the American continent before the completion of the trans-

continental railroad in 1869. Gotta love those ponies!

Early in the Pacific 97 planning, the organizers announced that there would be an unprecedented and unique Court of Honor Exhibition, consisting of 100 frames, from 20 exhibitors, each showing five frames. Because this was the first IPEX on the Pacific Coast, the 20 exhibits of outstanding material were from the Pacific Rim Countries (those are countries which are touched by the Pacific Ocean). Eight of the 20 were by Americans: Robert A. D'Elia, Quintus Fernando, Mary Ann Owens, Alfred F. Kugel, Kenneth J. Kutz, Norman Hubbard, Robert Odenweller and Anonymus.

There were 202 dealers who purchased booths of all sizes—135 of the dealers were from the U.S. and 67 came to San Francisco from 22 different countries highlighted by 20 stamp and auction dealers from England. *Linn's Stamp News* provided the free 120 page *Official Program* shown in Figure 3. This handy booklet, which was distributed at the show entrance, was also mailed in advance to all Linn's subscribers.

The Pacific 97 Committee collaborated with the folks at the American Philatelic Congress (www.americanphilateliccongress.org) to create a hardbound *Pacific 97 Handbook* integrated into their *Sixty-Third Congress Book*. It sold for \$38 at the show which included a free year's APC membership. While a very creative idea, and containing two dozen beautiful color plates, and eleven very informative papers on all aspects of stamp collecting, it con-

The Official Bulletin was sent to exhibitors around the world inviting them to Pacific 97.

PACIFIC 97 SAN FRANCISCO, CA



Self adhesive show labels were distributed to dealers and collectors to help promote the show.

The predominant theme for PACIFIC 97 was the observance of the 150th anniversary of America's very first postage stamps—as commemorated with these souvenir sheets.

PACIFIC 97 SAN FRANCISCO, CA



tained 400 pages and weighed more than three pounds! As a result, most show attendees preferred to stick with the *Linn's Show Program*. And the remainders of the *Handbook* were extraordinary. I recommend that you search *Pacific 97 Handbook* on the Internet, where you can sometimes obtain a copy of this valuable and historic resource for under \$10!

The USPS occupied the center of the South Hall with foreign post offices and various stamp dealers around them. They had a very large youth area, frequented by Bugs Bunny (who had recently been depicted on a new postage stamp) and other cartoon characters. They had anticipated large crowds, and set up numerous windows to keep the lines moving, although there were times when the lines were very long. One of the highest ranking USPS officials to preside at various events was Allen Kane, who was their Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer at the time, as shown in the FDC program in Figure 4. In 2001, he retired from his 30 year career with the USPS and was appointed as Director of the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum. Under Kane's visionary leadership, the NPM conceived of and created the William H. Gross Gallery, which opened in September 2013.

The Washington Press of Florham Park, N.J., maker of Artcraft cachets, played a major role at Pacific 97, as the company had at each IPEX since 1947. In addition to issuing its cachet covers for the souvenir sheets and triangle stamps, as shown in Figure 2, they

also produced nine souvenir sheets each containing four Cinderella labels for a total of 36 seals commemorating the show. It restored the custom begun with the American Bank Note Company at the first IPEX of issuing exhibition seals (see *ASD&C*, January 2015, page 29).

As hard as it may be to remember, the Internet was in its infancy in 1996-1997, and Pacific 97 created an early website at the web address of <http://www.west.net/~stamps1/pacific1.html>. This is how the early websites URLs were composed, and sadly there is no remnant of the website available.

When Pacific 97 closed, there was great celebration of its 11-day success. Soon afterwards, it was disclosed that it had incurred a huge debt of nearly \$500,000. All but one of the previous IPEXs had passed on seed money to the next show, and there would be no money passed on to the 2006 organizers.

Through the extraordinary efforts of many dedicated collectors and additional support from the USPS, all of its debts were eventually paid, but there was concern about the future of the every-ten-year IPEX in America. Many lessons were learned from this experience, which will benefit all future shows. Stay tuned in the November-December issue of *ASD&C* to explore Washington 2006, a resounding success in every way. Whew! Let's all meet at World Stamp Show-NY 2016 – check it out at www.ny2016.org! ☒

