

# ***BULLETIN*** of the Empire State

***Postal History Society***

Volume 50 Number 4

December 2017

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:\***

**BUFPEX 2018**

**BUFFALO STAMP CLUB**

**Cheektowaga, New York March 3-4, 2018**

VFW Leonard Post

2450 Walden Ave.

Cheektowaga.

George Gates, 716-633-8358

gghg53@aol.com

\* Taken from American Philatelist

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

In this season of joy, I wish to take a moment to wish all the members of the society a safe holiday and all the happiness for the New Year.

David Przepiora

## ***EXCELSIOR!* DEADLINE**

The deadline for the March 2018 issue of *EXCELSIOR!* is February 1<sup>st</sup>.

As an incentive, submitting a one to four-page article will get you a one year extension on your membership and a five-page article will get you a two year extension. Just think – if you write regularly for *EXCELSIOR!*--you'll have the potential of earning free membership for life!.And think about how you will enrich yourself and others.

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**BULLETIN DEADLINE**

**DEADLINE** – The deadline for the March issue of the *BULLETIN* is **March 1**. The editor is always looking for short (1/2 page, 1 page, 1½ page or 2 page) articles to fill spots in the Bulletin. Submit to [largin@verizon.net](mailto:largin@verizon.net). Larry Laliberte

## **ESPHS POSTAL HISTORY AUCTION #11**

I would very much like to end the hiatus of society postal history auctions early next year. There is no question that Auction #10 set a high-water mark in quality, variety and volume of lots offered since I've been conducting auctions for the membership, but some changes will come with Auction #11.

Our Board recently approved posting future auctions on our much-enhanced web site and concomitant to that allowing non-member visitors to the site to both consign to and bid at the next auction. Auction #11 will therefore be a test case for the procedural changes needed to welcome visitors to our auction.

The biggest change is to open the door to members of the philatelic societies that compete for the biennial Sweeting Award, which is open to 10 states making up the U. S. northeast and was last won by Massachusetts Postal Research Society. Members in good standing of those societies, acknowledged by society membership secretaries, will be invited to consign up to 10 pieces of postal history of any type with a short description and minimum bid determined by the consignor— the same rules which have governed our last ten auctions.

But before this change happens, I really, really, want to hear from readers of this issue of the *BULLETIN* about how my auctions can be improved, and on the other hand frankly whether anyone cares about mail auctions that take 2 months in this era of BUY IT NOW!! on-line listings. Please take a few minutes to think it through and send me a note at RBRAMWELL@NC.RR.COM or PO Box 4150, Pinehurst NC 28374. Thanks!

### **Taking a 'Fun Break'**

**By George DeKornfeld**

We all enjoy postal history otherwise why would be here? We like to decipher routes, explain rates, and derive a historical perspective from the contents of our treasures (if available), especially from the stampless era. We tend to heavily favor 19th-century items and avidly search for them in dealer's boxes or on the various venues available to us on the internet. We love engraved stamps, and quite rightly so given the effort and talent that went into creating them. All this amounts to a rather heavy intellectual load to carry while we enjoy our chosen pursuits, not that there's anything even remotely wrong with that.

Now take yourselves back to a simpler time when most of us were (a lot) younger and just starting out in the hobby. Recall the joy we felt when filling spaces in our new stamp albums or discovering a new First Day cover in our mailbox. In this issue of *The Bulletin*, we're going to revisit those

simpler days to make a case for periodically taking a break from our more scholarly interests and just enjoying some fun postal history items, in this case, First Flight and related covers. (That said, these covers and their visually appealing cachets can also provide as deep a level of research potential as a collector elects). Let's check out a few.

The United States Post Office Department awarded air mail routes to various airlines, the ones flying abroad being designated as FAM's (for 'Foreign Air Mail'). Regular FAM-5 contracted service began on May 21, 1929 and was awarded to the now defunct Pan American



Fig. 1. New York to Brasilia.

Airways that carried mail to and fro from several Central and South American countries. In Figure 1 we see the front of a First Flight cover flown from New York City to Brasilia, Brazil in 1960 that sports a rather Spartan hand-stamped cachet. The envelope was franked by a 10-cent Runner Holding Torch Air Mail issue of 1959, Scott C56, tied by a New York (IDL)



Fig. 2. Back stamp on the Fig. 1 cover.

NY Air Mail Field PTS circular date stamp with barred killer. This

marking, which takes a bit of deciphering, provides us with some history about the New York originating airport. The 'IDL' stands for

'Idlewild' Airport which we all know today as JFK, and the 'PTS' refers to 'Postal Transportation Service,' that part of the U.S.P.O.D. in charge of all mail in transit, including air mail. The back stamp, found in Figure 2, is a beautifully struck 'Brasilia Telecomunicacoes' receiving handstamp.



Fig 3. Cover commemorating the opening of Niagara Falls Muni. Airport.

Figure 3 brings us to an air mail-related event cover. Commemorating the opening of the Niagara Falls Municipal Airport on June 13th, 1929

as well as the Fifth International Festival of Lights, this 2-cent Government Stamped Envelope was up-rated by a vertical pair of the 2-cent carmine rose Civil Aeronautics Wright Airplane issue of 1928, Scott 649, tied by Niagara Falls duplexes of the correct date. The cachet depicts an airplane flying over The Falls as well as indicating the Route, CAM (Contract Air Mail) 20, which was awarded to Colonial Western Airways in May of 1927 (renamed American Airways Company in 1929). Known today as Niagara Falls International, this airport is a joint civil-military airfield, sharing its runways with the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station.



Fig 4. First Flight Cover for TWA's coast to coast inaugural flight.

Our final example can be found as Figure 4, another First Flight Cover, this one commemorating Trans World Airlines' inaugural Super Constellation (Lockheed L-1049) Coast-to-Coast trip. In addition to being an attractive air mail cover, this one came, like a Cracker Jacks Box, with a prize inside, an official TWA enclosure advertising the flight (Figure 5).

Easy to look at, mostly inexpensive, and easy to come by, covers like the ones shown are just plain old fun to collect!

Easy to look at, mostly inexpensive, and easy to



Fig 5. Right, the surprise insert from TWA.

## GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY CENTENNIAL?

By Bob Bramwell

Had this cover been in my hands when I wrote the article titled *From Edison to "Electric Charlie": The Schenectady Post Office Enters the Age of Industrialization* published in September's EXCELSIOR!, I would certainly have found a way to include it. But I am now pleased to be able to present it in the *BULLETIN*.



Looking carefully at the cachet you would think the date October 14, 1878 commemorated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of founding the General Electric Company. The folks in G.E.'s Self-Promotion Department went to the trouble of convincing the Post Office Department to recognize a GENERAL ELECTRIC CENTENNIAL STATION

and assign ZIP Code 12345 to it. But they momentarily forgot that the company did not exist under that name until 1892. In fact, that October day in 1878 was when Thomas Edison was issued a patent for an improved design of the incandescent light bulb he'd been working on in Menlo Park, New Jersey for more than 6 months.

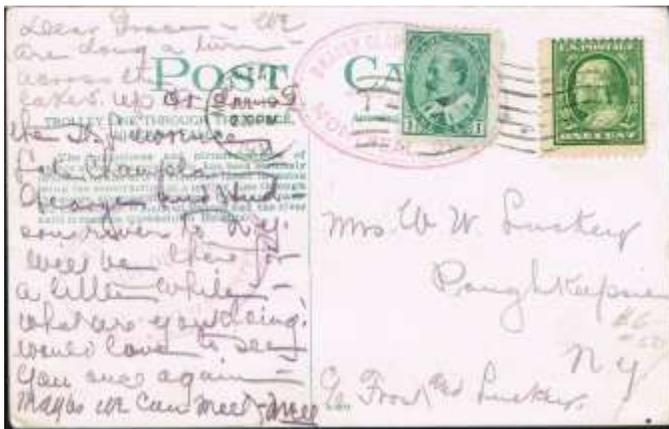
How did it happen that Edison moved to Schenectady? Squeezed for space in his New York City EDISON MACHINE WORKS, Edison was prowling around Albany for acreage in May of 1886 when Col. Robert Furman of Schenectady heard they were there, rushed over, and convinced Edison that the failed McQueen Locomotive site, with its 2 completed buildings on up to 10 acres, would suit Edison Machine Works perfectly. A price was agreed by August and August 26<sup>th</sup> 1886 has ever since been commemorated as the day Thomas A. Edison arrived by train in downtown Schenectady.

Strangely, the cachet also shows Charles P. Steinmetz as if he were working on a light bulb with Edison. German-born Steinmetz did not arrive at Ellis Island until 1889, and became a U. S. citizen in 1894.

## A QUESTION OF PROCEDURE.

By Larry Laliberte

This post card, destined for Poughkeepsie, NY, was posted in Montreal, Que. on Jul 19,



1911 where it was pulled by a postal clerk after being machine cancelled because it was franked with a US stamp. The face side of the card also has a Jul 19 circular hand cancel. Normally, the card would be forwarded with double the rate postage due. This card however went to the “Branch Dead Letter Office” in Montreal on July 20<sup>th</sup> as is indicated by the oval magenta strike in the message area.

Did the clerk want to take the most expeditious means to dispose of this card and simply place a 1 cent Canadian stamp on the card, cancel it with a pink oval and send it on its way? Another question arises. Look closely and you will also note that the “Branch Dead Letter Office” cancel date is Jun 2\_, 1911.

The message is transcribed here - *“We are doing a turn across the lakes-up and down the St. Lawrence, Lake Champlain George and Hudson river to N.Y. will be there for a little while – what are you doing! Would love to see you once again – maybe we can meet –*