APS and Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum Release New Book

One small error that produced 100 years worth of stories

The Inverted Jenny – popularly known as the upside-down airplane stamp – is the United States’ most famous postage stamp. Desired by collectors from around the world, the little red, white and blue stamp has been making news for 100 years now.

A single Inverted Jenny – with an original price of 24 cents – cost its first real collector $1,500 a century ago. A perfect stamp from an original sheet 100 – the only sheet ever released to the public – could bring nearly 1,000 times that price today.

What makes the stamp so special and who has pursued and owned it?

The Stamp of the Century, a new book by Kellen Diamanti and Deborah Fisher to be released May 1, tells about the origins of the airmail stamp and particularly focuses on those who sought out and have owned a copy over the past 100 years.

“... The stories told here reveal the passions of collectors, portrayed in an endearing way, connecting both the worldly and bizarre,” said Cheryl Ganz, Ph.D., curator emerita of philately at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

Characters from the famous to infamous abound in these pages. Among those you will meet are William Robey, who discovered a sheet of 100 error stamps at a Washington, D.C. post office and ultra-rich collector Colonel Ned Green, whose wealth came from his mother, “the Witch of Wall Street.”

Within The Stamp of the Century’s pages are the stories of brave soldiers and wayward pilots; owners of old money and new money; industrialists and politicians; smart, strong women who dared to shine in a hobby dominated by men; war heroes and schemers; the braggadocio and collectors of quiet gentility.

The book will be officially unveiled May 1 at the National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C. In a day filled with activities at the National Postal Museum, the U.S. Postal Service will issue the first of two first-class forever postage stamps commemorating the 100th anniversary of the advent of U.S. airmail. Following the ceremony, Stamp of the Century authors Kellen Diamanti and Deborah Fisher will be on hand to autograph the book and talk with museum visitors.

Additionally, the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum has invited the authors to conduct the museum’s History After Hours presentation on the evening of May 2. The discussion will focus on the impact of airmail on Washington, D.C. The authors will be on hand after the presentation to autograph books and talk with visitors.

The Stamp of the Century has been published by the American Philatelic Society in partnership with the NPM. The book will be available for purchase ($24.95, plus shipping) from Smithsonian bookstores and from the American Philatelic Society at www.stamps.org/publications.

About the Smithsonian’s National Postal Museum

The National Postal Museum is devoted to presenting the colorful and engaging history of the nation’s mail service and showcasing one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world. It is located at 2 Massachusetts Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C., across from Union Station. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). For
more information about the Smithsonian, call (202) 633-1000 or visit the museum website at [www.postalmuseum.si.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu).

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**About the American Philatelic Society**

With nearly **29,000 members** in more than 110 countries, the APS is the largest, non-profit organization for stamp collectors in the world. Founded in 1886, the APS serves collectors, educators, postal historians, and the general public by providing a wide variety of programs and services.

The mission of the Society is:

- to promote stamp collecting for people of all ages
- to offer services to its membership and to philately in general, including knowledge and education, which enhance the pleasure and friendliness of stamp collecting
- to initiate and coordinate new programs for the benefit of stamp collecting and of all collectors
- to represent the United States of America in the world body of philately
- to assist its members in acquiring and disposing of philatelic materials

The Society is entirely supported by membership dues, gifts, and the sale of publications, souvenirs, and services.

The American Philatelic Society is located in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania and online at [www.stamps.org](http://www.stamps.org).