

## **ANNUAL SPACE UNIT MEETING AT TEXPEX EXHIBITION, DALLAS, TEXAS**

The Space Unit's annual meeting was held at the Texas Philatelic Association's TEXPEX Philatelic Exhibition, February 28-March 2, 2014, in Dallas, Texas. Spring had already arrived at this beautiful Dallas location with the show being graciously hosted at the Hilton Dallas Fort Worth Lakes Executive Conference Center, a four star resort hotel and conference center. Indeed it was a superb venue for stamp and space cover collectors, friends, and visitors in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area.

Attendees to TEXPEX, though, were anxiously anticipating a presentation by a member of the Mercury 13 women in space program, Wally Funk, an astronaut candidate tested by Dr. Randy Lovelace and supported by the U.S. Air Force in 1961. The program's challenging objective was to test the first women to become qualified as women astronauts in the U.S. Space Program.

Mercury 13 women's space program youngest member, Wally Funk, was the TEXPEX Philatelic Exhibition's guest speaker. Funk a qualified candidate from the program is still a commercial pilot and aviatrix specializing in acrobatic flying. She charmed the audience with her quick witted presentation about women qualifying for spaceflight in the Mercury 13 test program in 1961 against incredible odds for women doing this. She noted that the women of Mercury 13 program in many cases either met or beat the qualifications of the Project Mercury male astronauts who took the same tough astronaut training. After speaking, Wally talked to Space Unit members about her experiences during rigorous astronaut testing at the Lovelace Clinic, Albuquerque, New Mexico. After her presentation, she autographed many of the attendees' Project Mercury space covers, providing wonderful memories of hearing her informative presentation of this early space related training program and the chance to meeting her.

Space Unit members were well represented in the competitive philatelic exhibiting at TEXPEX and won the following philatelic awards. Former Space Unit President Ray Cartier, took a Gold medal, and Space Unit Gold medal as Best Exhibit of the Show with his stunning five frame "Primary Recovery Ships" exhibit. This was followed-up by U.S. FIP Representative David Ball winning a Vermeil award for his impressive upgraded ten frame exhibit, "Americans in Space: Project Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo." Former Space Unit Vice President John Macco, scored with a Silver-Bronze medal for his exhibit titled, "Apollo-Soyuz Test Project."

Space Unit members also were busy in the noncompetitive exhibit category. Two Space Unit members displayed three noncompetitive philatelic exhibits at TEXPEX and wowing the crowd viewing the exhibits. Space Unit member, professional artist, and U.S. stamp designer, Chris Calle displayed a tremendous exhibit for "Stamp Design Artwork." Former Space Unit President Ray Cartier excelled once again in this category by showcasing two different noncompetitive exhibits, "Mars 1: The Soviets' First Attempt to Hit the Red Planet," and a second noncompetitive exhibit entitled "A Study of NASA VIP Cards."

Twenty-six members and guests attended this year's Space Unit annual meeting including Tom Steiner, SU President, Steve Durst, SU Vice-President, Terry Chamberlin, SU Treasurer, Dave Blog, SU Secretary, Jim Roth, SU Editor, Chris Calle, SU Professional Artist, Wolf Magnus, Logistics Manager, Steve Garner, SU Writer, Bob Boyd, SU Member, Michael Cartier, SU

Acting Editor, Cheryl Ganz, Smithsonian Postal Museum, and many others.

The Space Unit annual meeting finale included a sumptuous Texas barbeque hosted at the home of former Space Unit President Ray Cartier and his wife Karen in Arlington, Texas. As in all of these informal get-togethers, there was great food, delicious Texas barbeque, wonderful camaraderie with old and new friends, lots of space talk, and of course those ubiquitous trade sessions going late into the night. One of the highlights of the trading sessions this year was the acquisition by a lucky member of an early Neil Armstrong signed X-15 cover for his first X-15 test flight. The members at the barbeque agreed, it doesn't get any better than this.

## **SPACE UNIT ACTIVITIES IN 2014**

**The “Astrophile” Journal.** “Astrophile” editor Jim Roth has resigned, and we wish Jim and his family well. We have made a job offer to a new editor to further promote publication of the “Astrophile” journal to overcome recent problems in publishing the journal. We have set a new goal to publish four, 96 page “Astrophile” issues per year. The new editor we are courting is experienced in publishing and expert in using InDesign software, the software we are already using for the “Astrophile.” I anticipate regaining our “Astrophile” schedule this next year to meet the new goal of publishing four “Astrophiles” per year. Despite some serious setbacks over the last couple of years and recent turnover losing our editor, Space Unit members feel that our best years are still ahead of us.

Substantive articles appearing in the “Astrophile” issues of 2014 were noteworthy and varied covering these astrophilatic topics: “The Apollo 1 Tragedy and Apollo 1 Gallery” by Steve Durst; “The Beautiful Land Across the Water, Wallops Island History,” by Steve Durst; “KH-9, Big Bird Spy Sat” by David Chudwin; “Space City Cover Society and NASA Local Post,” by Stephen Garner; “Space Stamps,” by William Waff; “Soviet Union, Dogs with the Right Stuff,” by Jim Reichman; “Soviet Citizen in Space,” by Jim Reichman; and “Remembering John Glenn’s Flight on SCC Covers,” by Chuck Vukotich.

Other noteworthy “Astrophile” articles included these: “Apollo 7 – The Unsung Heroes,” by Umberto Cavallaro; “Flight of the Phoenix,” by Apollo 7 Astronaut Walter Cunningham; First off the Pad – Apollo 7,” by Steve Durst; “Front Row Seats to History, the Instrumented Tracking Ships of Apollo 7,” by Steve Durst; “Servicing Apollo Tracking Ship Covers,” by Joseph Frasketi, Jr.; “The Piccards: An Exploring Family,” by Ray Cartier; “There’s Gold in Them Thar Hills, Rare Recovery Ship Cover Found,” by Ross Smith; “Soviet Unit, To the Stars Philatelic Exhibition,” by Jim Reichman; and “Soviet Union, Conquerors of the Cosmos,” by Jim Reichman.

**Space Unit Membership and Major Meetings.** Membership of the Space Unit continues steady at 422 members from the United States and the international community. In 2014, formal Space Unit chapter meetings in the U.S. were held at five major astrophilatic venues. Space Unit members held formal meetings at the following stamp shows. Shows marked with an asterisk (\*) are among the most prestigious astrophilatic shows in the U.S. : Texas Philatelic Exhibition February 28-March 2, 2014, Dallas, Texas\*; Springfield Exposition, March 1-2, 2014, Springfield, Virginia; National Philatelic Exhibition, June 6-8, 2014, Washington, D.C.\*;

Baltimore Philatelic Exposition, August 29-31, 2014\*; and the Chicago Philatelic Exposition, November 21-23, 2014, Chicago, Illinois\* rounding out the year's activities.

**Space Cover of the Week (SCOTW) Blog, Web Site under [www.collectspace.com](http://www.collectspace.com).** The Space Cover of the Week is accessible under webmaster Robert Pearlman's parent web site, [www.collectspace.com](http://www.collectspace.com). The web site continues to be a big hit with space stamp and cover collectors and is free and open to all visitors to read articles contributed by astrophilatelists concerning space stamps and space covers and addressing space gatherings, space topics and news items on a near real time basis. The six major contributors to the SCOTW web site are all Space Unit members and are Bob McLeod, Dennis Dillman, Steve Durst, Tom Steiner, Ray Cartier, and John Macco.

SCOTW web site topics in 2014 included the following articles: Orion EFT-1 Launch and Recovery Covers, Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 Flown to the Moon Covers, Space Craft Special Edition Covers, Rosetta and Philae Comet Landing Postmarks, Planet Pluto, 1935 to 2015, Development of the X-15 Engine, TM-18 and the MIR Space Station, First Launch at Cape Canaveral, Voyager 1-Are We There Yet?, USPS Planning 2014 Solar System Stamps (USPS slipping this to 2015?), and Soviet Union-First to the Stars Exhibit.

It is anticipated that this forward reaching effort by Space Unit members will attract younger collectors and astrophilatelists just starting out on their space journey. The site is successfully appealing to a younger more computer savvy group of collectors. Additionally, we feel it looks intelligently towards our future and the future of space stamp and space cover collecting. Recently, the Space Cover of the Week site celebrated its 6 year anniversary and a 300<sup>th</sup> Space Cover of the Week posting, Soviet Union Crashed Nuclear Satellites. Yes, it has been an exciting ride!

### **WORLD STAMP SHOW-NEW YORK 2016, GAME ON!**

Planning is in full swing for World Stamp Show-New York 2016, the first major World Stamp Exhibition to be held in New York since the New York National Stamp Exhibition of 1937.

It's less than two years away now, so hang on to your stamp albums!

World Stamp Show-New York 2016 will be here before you know it. This major International Philatelic Exhibition exhibition will take place at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York from Saturday, May 28 to Saturday, June 4, 2016. Stamp and cover dealers, exhibits, seminars, first day ceremonies, world-class auctions and much more will dazzle you!

The Space Unit will be a participating organization for this major stamp show and will have members and a show table for attendees, guests, and visitors for the 8 day show to be held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center, New York. The Space Unit will also host a visit to The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum to see the USS Intrepid, CVS-11, primary recovery ship for the Gemini 3 space mission, and also contains the space shuttle Enterprise, the prototype space shuttle that paved the way for NASA's space shuttle program becoming operational. We hope to see you there and to welcome you to this once in a lifetime experience in New York City

See this WSS New York web site for additional show information: <http://www.ny2016.org/>

**Webmaster Ross Smith's Web Site for the Space Unit.** Space Unit member Ross Smith continues to dazzle us with his stellar efforts and web postings on the Space Unit website, <http://www.space.space-unit.com/>. Access to the SU web site also is free, and available to anyone via the Internet using the site link shown above. Reprint articles from the "Astrophile" journal at the "Articles" selection button. Other articles from the Space Unit archives are often shown and feature varied and interesting space stamp and space cover related articles, such as these:

"Cosmonaut Autograph Collecting"  
Author and Former Space Unit Vice President, John Macco  
<http://www.space-unit.com/articles.htm>

"Twelve Men Who Walked on the Moon"  
Author and Former Space Unit Editor, Bill York  
<http://www.space-unit.com/articles.htm>

"International Space Station (ISS) Mail Delivery"  
Author and Space Unit Director, Bruce Cranford  
<http://www.space-unit.com/articles.htm>

"Hubble Stamps, First Day of Issue"  
Author and President, JPL Stamp Club, Jim Rose  
<http://www.space-unit.com/articles.htm>

"LM-Our First Moon Ship"  
Author Bob Weinberger  
<http://www.space-unit.com/articles.htm>

Many thanks and best regards,

Steve Durst  
Space Unit VP

[Submitted by David S. Ball, US rep to FIP]