

# American Astrophilately

*American Astrophilately: The First 50 Years*,  
by David S. Ball / A&A Publishers,

1312 Winchester Drive  
Charleston, SC 29407

8" x 10" Softbound, 344 Pages with DVD  
of 700+ pages of supplemental material.

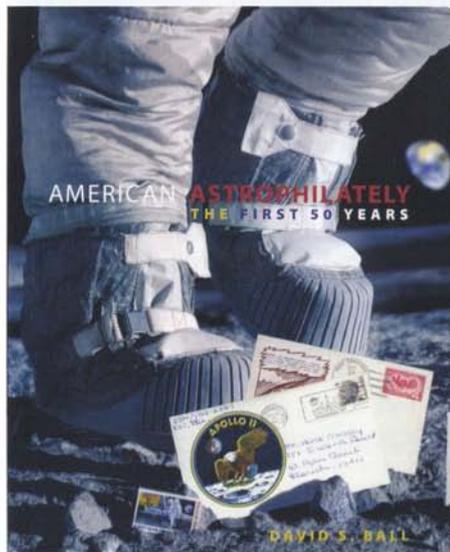
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*This prodigious work on Space Event covers has been reviewed in Orbit, Topical Times, Airmail Journal, and American Philatelist. The American Philatelic Society awarded the book the Gold Medal for Literature at the Richmond APS Stampshow in August 2010, the largest event of the year.*

*Since then it has been bought by collectors in sixteen nations. It is sold by dealers in Berlin, Rome and Sydney and well as several here in the States. American Astrophilately is sold at the National Postal and Air & Space Museum (the most popular on the planet). It is stocked at Barnes and Noble and the Kansas Cosmosphere. It is now available at Kennedy Space Center, Johnson Space Center, and Marshall NASA facilities.*



*American Astrophilately has been nominated for the prestigious 2010 Eugene M. Emme Astronautical Literature by the American Astronautical Society that recognizes "the truly outstanding book... about the positive impact of astronautics upon society." The award is in honor of Eugene M. Emme, NASA's first historian. Previous recipients have included; Frederick I. Ordway III, James R. Hansen and Arthur C. Clarke.*

## Review by Jim Reichman, Space Unit

I have to admit, up front, that I harbor misgivings about some of the tenets that form the foundation of the philatelic study field being labeled "astrophilately". In particular, these concerns relate to the exclusionist guidelines these collectors have adopted which disqualify otherwise world-class, philatelic exhibits relating to the history of spaceflight. On the other hand you have to admire the tenacity these astrophilatelists employ to seek out and document the details of philatelic, commemorative, space covers and their backgrounds. Such attention to detail is the "right stuff" that turns any regular space collector into a true cosmic-philatelist.

David Ball's book on American astrophilately is one that few aspiring astrophilatelists should be without. Although narrowly focused on the space programs of the United States, it does provide guidelines and useful examples of how astrophilatelists around the world should address and model their own philatelic research and documentation energies. I would even go so far as to recommend the book to the rest of the space collectors/philatelists, i.e., those of us whose cosmic collecting and exhibiting interests tend to violate one or more boundaries of the astrophilatelists' precepts.

One of the main reasons for these recommendations is that a major por-

tion of David's book is filled with an interesting collection of philatelic monograms, vignettes, and even some short these written by the experts and first-hand participants in the field of astrophilately. These articles address a wide variety of philatelic subjects related to the American space program. Although not a new approach to adding authenticity and scope to a space book's content, it certainly enlivened the discussions of what could have quickly devolved into a matter-of-fact documentation of acceptable and unacceptable astrophilatelic exhibition materials.

One of these articles was of particular interest to my own Russian spaceflight philatelic interests. This was a fascinating story about how one enterprising stamp dealer was able to get two, same-day postmarks (one from Moscow and one from Cape Canaveral) on the same covers commemorating both launches (Soyuz and Apollo) of the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project. Given the number and variety of these types of discussions in the book, it would be fair to say that almost every space collector will find at least one and probably many of these articles that will pique their own personal interests.

Interspersed in and around these articles are others written personally by David that introduce and supplement those astrophilately subjects. Included in his writings are discussions supporting the foundations for and justification of the astrophilatelic tenets that deal with issues like acceptable postoffices, time zones, postmark classifications, and backdating.

Interestingly, some of these discussions address the problems associated with blindly applying some of these tenets. One case in point, brought up by the author, is the astrophilatelic tenet requiring covers be postmarked on the event date at/near the ground station controlling the spacecraft. Strict adherence to this requirement makes no sense when, e.g., postmarking philatelic covers commemorating a deep-space probe event when telemetric news of that event (i.e., whether it actually happened long/short was successful) would not reach the ground station until the day after these covers were required to be postmarked because of how far out in deep-space the probe was at.

Since this book is being billed as a resource that would help novice col-



Typical spread from Section II, featuring covers for historical missions. The author has chosen six covers from launch to recovery, juxtaposed with important milestone dates of each mission. This layout is for the Apollo 11 Lunar landing mission.

lectors identify envelopes which meet the International Philatelic Federation guidelines for exhibiting, I went on eBay and randomly selected US space covers being offered there that fit within the timeline and space-mission boundaries addressed in David's book. Each such cover selected was then compared against the reference materials and guidelines of the book. Many were fairly easy to categorize and were, in fact, even included in the hundreds of the full-color, example covers shown in the "World of Covers" section. Unfortunately, there was almost as many for which an assessment was in doubt or could not be made. Were it not for an open email dialog with the author to help resolve these issues, I would have been left wondering. My concern is that other readers/collectors will probably not have such access to help resolve their questions.

From my perspective, these problems arise because of two issues. First is the lack of adequate introductory explanations on how to read, interpret, and relate the information, matrices, postmark/cachet images, and associ-

ated comments found in Parts II and III of the book and the files on the accompanying computer disk (CD). Without such information, the average reader will easily get lost amidst all the philatelic details. Second is the lack of an adequate editorial review which should have caught and resolved those deficiencies as well as several other mistakes that were found in the book.

Bottom line is that this is probably too valuable a resource to pass up, especially for committed astrophilatelists. However, readers need to buy it with the understanding that the book does have a number of content issues. My recommendation is for purchasers to first read the Part I astrophilatelic articles and similar materials located in the "Articles" folder on the CD then read the seminar briefing slides (also on the CD) labeled "Section for Astrophilately" before venturing into the other materials in this book. With any luck, even die-hard, cosmic-philatelists like myself can learn a thing or two from these astrophilatelists.

Continued on next page

**Putting Their Stamp on the Moon**  
by guest author Chris Calle, with Paul Calle

On July 28, 1969, the United States Postal Service issued two stamps to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first landing on the Moon. One stamp was issued for one cent and the other 25 cent commemorative stamp. The stamps were the first and last in a series of stamps issued to mark the anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission. The stamps were designed by the artist and the artist's name is "Calle".

Paul Calle's interest in Space Art dates back to his early years as an illustration painter and using a thick and when artist's hand techniques are common for such. Science Fiction magazines as Galaxy and Amazing became, in the 1950s, the main inspiration for the many planets and space scenes that he drew. He was a member of the Science Fiction Art Society of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and was involved in the design of the Apollo 11 mission. He was also involved in the design of the Apollo 11 mission.

In 1962 Paul Calle was chosen as one of the first eight artists of the newly established NASA Art Program. The purpose of the program was to record for history, space exploration through the eyes of artists. At 33 years of age, Paul was the youngest of the group. Beginning with Gemini's Program, Mercury flights in May of 1964, Paul Calle has documented the action surrounding Primary Mission, Gemini, Apollo and the Space Shuttle from the launch facilities of Cape Kennedy to the orbital centers in the South Atlantic.

Paul recalls "Sometime in the early 1960s I received a letter from Dr. Lester Cordell, director of painting at the National Gallery of Art asking me if they would like me to consider painting and drawing facilities at Cape Kennedy. I was a member of the Science Fiction Art Society and I would be happy to take part in the project. He listed the names of the artists, some were well known. Names included Lester Dahl, Fred Holt, Andrew Wright, and Paul Calle. I can imagine my friend Paul Calle and Andrew Wright. I assumed that my friends at the National Gallery were painting and I assumed the artist's name. About a week before we were to meet at the Cape I received a letter from Dr. Cordell. He mentioned that he had received the letter and was disappointed that the mission was still. And he began my involvement with the NASA Art Program.

When no suitable arrangements were made to be photographed, budget issues and no real sense of purpose to be followed. We needed to be in a group and travel the system back to the moon. One day I was at an exhibition looking for a table display and someone I thought they would make an interesting picture. Being a free spirit I wandered from the group and took my own way through the hall, past the tables and found a man sitting at a table with some pieces of the complete. I inspected my picture, pencil, pen and set about working on my drawing.

After about half an hour I was coming through the hall when I saw the security police. I laughed and said I was wondering how long it would take you to find me. They did not laugh and told me they had been watching me. "I had several pieces of work," I said. "You've got a very good camera or they were my own work. I printed and paper to make some drawings." It seemed funny at the time but the next thing I knew I was being escorted to the security building to find someone at NASA who could identify me. Jim Donahue, one of the men who had been in the room, came and showed up the man's name. While talking to the man I said, "Paul, you're with the group." It seemed like I was a highly sensitive man. The building was a decent complex that would show any market going off course.

"One of the men I found was a long strip that led up to the John Backus. You could get around the back to the back that would end in the Gemini Group area. While doing my drawing I had a sense of the many projects that were on the way regarding the Cape's flight. I was familiar with their activities and what I knew they had the credit would go where they wanted it to go. They explained with all the information listed in the computer they knew exactly where the rocket would go. They asked if I could explain how I looked up at the rocket, what the steps would be in my hand, how to draw through my eyes on my hand. They were holding the pencil and put that stamp on a blank piece of paper. They were so focused for me to be very well-known.

"Being around my father's artwork had always been interesting," Chris recalled. "I remember one time he might have explained the design of the stamp? Getting up the credit was in one house so my siblings and I had his name on my father's artwork. Some time ago we were and working that I described as much of the excitement of the time and my father's relationship that could be in 1967 when he was working on painting related. Right after that I was in the Gemini Group, NASA and Gemini Group. I had a lot of time and before to my father to see as reference his painting. My dad and the men, before and during up to the garage on a hill like the scene and for weeks my brother and I would watch them when nobody was around to see the before and so on the globe. My parents recall that one of us would go into the space and without anyone knowing and captured them by taking the scene as if the moment was alive.

In 1967 Paul Calle had the unique privilege of designing the first US Space stamp in the history of the Postal Service. The stamp depicted the first US space walk of Ed White. The first day of the mission was Cape Canaveral. Paul Calle, "At the launch site after the Countdown was going on to a final mission, Michael Collins who was the third US space walker. I asked Mike what it was like to walk in space. He said that it was so wonderful to the spacewalk."

Typical article from Section I, this one by Guest Author Chris Calle about his father's body of work with US Space stamps.

## Review by John Macco, Space Unit

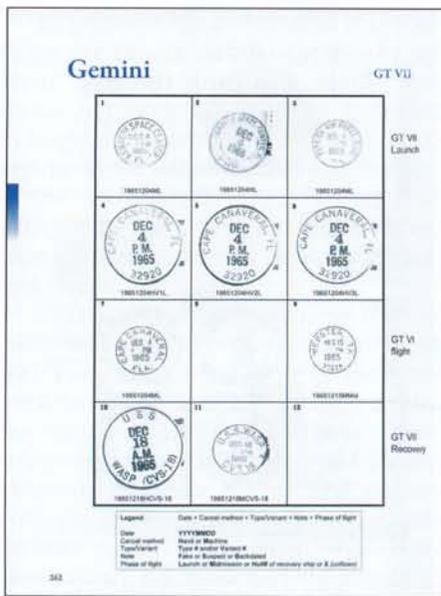
As an astrophilatelyst for almost 40 years, I am always looking for reference books on the early space program, its covers and astronauts to add to my space library. My quest for this information has been fulfilled with the publication of *American Astrophilately*. What author David Ball did when writing this book was to solicit articles from astrophilatelists on various aspects on space cover collecting. Articles from Morris Beck, Joe Frasketi, Steve Durst, Ed Bizub, Ross Smith, Eberhard Coelle, Reuben Ramkissoon, Sean Marsar, Beatrice Bachmann and Les Winick are included in the book. One of the articles I was especially interested in was the article by Eberhard Coelle on the creation of the dual cancelled ASTP launch cover cancelled Moscow and Cape Canaveral. Eberhard related all the logistics needed to make the creation of the cover a success. After these articles, there are scans of covers from the early space programs and scans of the postmarks associated with the covers as well as the postmarks associated with the NASA Official Cachets. Also included with the book is a resource DVD which includes articles, reference spreadsheets, sample exhibits, FIP regulations and the Paul Calle archives of his stamp designs. I would highly recommend this book to all astrophilatelists to add to their space library.

**“An extraordinary contribution to the field.”**

— Don Boggs, *Boggs Spacebooks*

## Review by Charles J., Vukotich, Jr. Space Unit, Associate Editor

American Astrophilately may be viewed two ways. It is an interesting book, The first 120 pages features articles by many experts in astrophilately. These would be of interest to a beginner, as well as to an advanced collec-



Typical page from Section III, a compendium of postmarks from a variety of missions, both machine and hand cancels, for key events within that mission.

tor, like your Associate Editor. There is emphasis on recovery ships, flown covers (especially for the Apollo Program), official NASA cachets, and the Apollo-Soyuz Test Program. There is a nice introduction to the work of Chris and Paul Calle, a subject of great interest, which readers should and can explore in more detail in other works. This is followed by two huge sections on covers which are pretty, and even fun to look at, but is probably of interest to a more beginning collector.

American Astrophilately is identified by the author as a guide book for exhibiting, helping collectors to recognize envelopes which meet the International Philatelic Federation (FIP) guidelines for exhibition for United States material at stamp shows.

Your Associate Editor has a few minor issues with the covers and cancels section. There are a number of early space launch covers with suspect cancels, and even though these are identified as such, they are out of place in this section, and should have been

**“One impressive book,  
and one well worth  
getting your hands on.”**

Colin Burgess, *Into the Silent Sea*

included in a separate section on suspect covers – an article on this subject would have been a good adjunct to an article on Riser fakes. The cancels on these covers are shown in the cancellation section without note that they are suspect. It is probable that many collectors would be confused.

The enclosed DVD has a ton of material. Some of it is useful and interesting. The Calle archives are just cool, and the best material on the DVD. A lot of the other materials can be considered to be very basic. It's not clear why the “philately” excerpt from the Postal Manual and a declassified report “Animals and Man in Space” were included. On the other hand, filling the DVD with material doesn't cost more, so perhaps this is just a picky observation. There is a whole section on FIP regulations. Be aware, the rules for astrophilately exhibiting are changing, so these are of limited usefulness – those considering creating an astrophilately exhibit would be well served by contacting the Space Unit for guidance on the updated changes.

It's fun for beginning collectors to read about the astrophilately hobby; it really adds to the enjoyment of collecting. American Astrophilately is a good basic reference book. If you have no reference books in your philatelic library, this one can be recommended. More experienced collectors will find less to like about American Astrophilately, but many of the articles are interesting and the Calle material is definitely worthwhile. Forward the URL ([www.AmericanAstrophilately.com](http://www.AmericanAstrophilately.com)) to your family, and tell them that Father's Day, Birthday, etc. is coming. It would be a lot better than the useless stuff they usually buy.

## Excerpts from Topical Times Review by George B. Griffenhagen

“The first 120 pages of this volume describe U.S. stratospheric balloon flights initiated on June 2, 1957, and unmanned satellites commencing with Explorer launch Jan. 31, 1958. This is followed by launching and tracking ship covers for Mercury (1961-63), Gemini (1963-66), Apollo (1966-72), Skylab (1973) and the Space Shuttle (1973-2004).

“Part two of the volume illustrates, in full color, 45 unmanned flight covers, 48 Project Mercury covers, 66 Project Gemini covers, 90 Project Apollo covers, and 36 post-Apollo covers. They include the launch date as well as the recovery date.

“Part three illustrates more than 800 postmarks, divided into the aforementioned groupings. These postmarks commence with Explorer 1, launched in 1958, to the X-Prize civilian space flight in 2004. The volume concludes with a glossary of terms employed and a short bibliography. The volume also includes a DVD, consisting of an equivalent of 700 pages that picture sample award-winning exhibits, explains International Philatelic Guidelines (FIP) regulations for exhibiting, APS judging regulations and the landmark article on NASA VIP cards authored by Ray Cartier.

“As the introduction suggests, this landmark volume is essential for all space event cover collectors and budding astrophilatelists. It is our conviction that a copy should be included in all philatelic libraries.”

**“If you are interested in  
collecting U.S. Space covers,  
this is a ‘must-have’ book”**

— Bonny Farmer, *The American Philatelist*

*The author is scheduled for book signings of American Astrophilately at Smithsonian Air & Space May 31st, National Postal Museum June 1st, and the Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles on June 2nd, 2011.*