



# Linn's Stamp NEWS

MAY 28-JUNE 4

## WORLD STAMP SHOW-NY 2016

SPECIAL PREVIEW

Worldwide stamp  
rarities on display

John Lennon's  
stamp album

More than 200  
stamp dealers

Spectacular exhibits

Fun activities for  
the whole family





# Vintage Curtiss Jenny biplane to be on display

**A superb example of the Inverted Jenny, one of the world's most famous stamp errors, will be auctioned off while a nearly identical plane that inspired its name greets WSS-NY 2016 attendees.**

One of the most storied aircraft in history — or at least, in philatelic history — will make a surprise appearance at World Stamp Show–NY 2016, offering visitors an unprecedented opportunity to see in person the plane from the most famous U.S. stamp of all time, the Inverted Jenny.

The restored, hundred-year-old Curtiss JN-4H biplane, which on most summer weekends flies in vintage-aircraft shows at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in Dutchess County, N.Y., is being brought to the Javits Center in Manhattan for the eight days of the once-a-decade international stamp show.

The display of the Jenny, as the JN plane has been affectionately nicknamed since its days as a World War I trainer and pioneering mail plane, is being made possible through a generous financial donation from Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries of New York, as well as the show's organizers.

Visitors will be able to admire the plane at relatively close quarters in a special display area next to the show's registration desk, in the airy atrium of the Javits convention hall dubbed the "Crystal Palace."

The plane will also be united with one of the inverted-center stamps that secured its place in philatelic lore. Siegel has announced it is offering the highest-graded example to date from the original sheet of 100 on May 31, in an auction at the show.

The story of how the Jenny came to serve not only as the fulcrum of the nascent U.S. airmail service but also the centerpiece of one of America's most famous stamps is ensconced in philatelic legend.

Though the actual Jenny used as a model for engraving America's first airmail stamps has been lost, the one from Rhinebeck is nearly identical to the one depicted on the stamps.

Scott Trepel, president of Siegel Auction Galleries, traveled last fall with another World Stamp Show organizing committee member to Rhinebeck to negotiate the terms of the plane's loan to the stamp show.

At their meeting, Clay Hammond, one of the aerodrome's board members and himself a pilot and a sometime stamp collector,



**This United States Inverted Jenny error stamp, the highest-graded example to date, will be auctioned at World Stamp Show–NY 2016 by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries. An example of the Curtiss JN-4H shown on the stamp will be on display at this international stamp show.**



**This restored Curtiss JN-4H biplane, owned by Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in Dutchess County, N.Y., will be on display at World Stamp Show–NY 2016. The display is being made possible through a generous financial donation from Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries of New York, as well as the show's organizers. Photo ©PhilipMakanna/GHOSTS.**

jokingly asked if the intention was to hang the plane upside down from the ceiling.

Transporting the plane to New York City will involve partially dismantling it and hauling it in a pair of trailers. The century-old craft is not high-tech: Its wings can be removed and reattached relatively easily.

Thousands of JN-model planes, in several variants, were manufactured for the United States Army by the Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company of Hammondsport, N.Y., east of Buffalo, in 1916 and 1917. They were so successful that they were adopted by the militaries of several countries, including Britain, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and China.

The prevalence of this trusty, inexpensive piece of flying equipment at the close of World War I helped launch the civil aviation industry. The U.S. Post Office Department had already observed with keen interest the pioneer flights of the 1910s, and decided to buy surplus Jennys for its fledgling scheduled airmail service.

This was kicked off with much haste and fanfare on the morning of May 15, 1918, when two Jennys took off from Washington and New York, flying toward each other.

At least that was the plan. The pilot who left Washington quickly became disoriented and flew south by mistake, crash landing in a field. He took the mail to a nearby train station and sent it back to Washington.

Each of the two-seater planes carried a mail bag in the front with a pilot in the rear. Most of the letters were franked with the brand new, bicolored 24¢ stamp (Scott C3) hurriedly issued for the event.

The stamp was printed in a red-and-blue combination that involved each sheet passing twice through the hand-fed, flat-plate presses at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing; once for the vignettes and once for the frames.

A small number of the 100-subject sheets got turned around between the two steps, and the little blue biplanes ended up inverted in relation to their red frames.

Just one of these error sheets ever reached the public. It was bought over a post office counter in Washington, D.C., on May 14 by a young stockbroker named William T. Robey.

Robey later recalled that his heart skipped a beat when the post office clerk handed him the sheet of errors in exchange for his \$24.

He quickly cashed in with a Philadelphia stamp dealer named Eugene Klein, who wrote Robey a check a few days later for \$15,000 — in those days, a princely sum that enabled Robey to buy a new house.

Klein, for his part, immediately resold the sheet for \$20,000 to the famous collector Edward H.R. Green, who instructed Klein to break it up into singles and blocks for resale. Fortunately, Klein had the foresight to first

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thrilling experience to be present when a rarity of \$100,000 or more gets hammered down.

Beginners of all ages should enter the "Welcome to Stamp Collecting Pavilion" and "TurningPoint Foundation Pavilion Theater" to participate in interactive displays, watch

informative videos and just have fun learning stamp collecting basics. There will be plenty of free stamps and hobby tools while supplies last.

This is a great place for families especially to spend quality time together. Educational groups have already started making reservations for visits during school days

Tuesday through Friday.

So widen your horizons when you come to World Stamp Show-NY 2016 by sampling all of the above!

*Tom Fortunato is chairman of marketing and public relations for World Stamp Show-NY 2016. ■*

## Q&A

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lifts all the boats." I might add: "The philatelic ship will be included."

2. Increased concentration on higher value items.
  3. Continued increase of total expenditure in the stamp marketplace.
  4. Continued increase in the demand for items of the highest quality.
  5. Continued slow increase in the study and collecting of postal history.
  6. Continued dominance of auction organizations in the philatelic market.
- Let's keep our fingers crossed, hoping and wishing that nothing to derail this train should ever happen. ■

## CURTISS JENNY

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number each stamp in pencil on the back, so that future generations of collectors could readily identify each invert by its position in the original sheet.

Nowadays, prices for an Inverted Jenny (Scott C3a) typically reach the low-to-mid six figures at auction.

Scott Trepel, the president of Siegel, says he has handled more examples of the Inverted Jenny than anyone else in business today.

In a recent newsletter, Trepel recalled the story of an Inverted Jenny getting sucked up in a vacuum cleaner. The unfortunate accident happened to Robert Zoellner, who later

bought a replacement C3a: position 58, the eighth stamp from the sixth row of the sheet.

That position-58 stamp will be offered by Siegel during World Stamp Show-NY 2016.

Graded extremely fine-superb 95 by the Professional Stamp Experts firm, position 58 is considered perhaps the finest of a breed that sadly includes many damaged and off-center examples. Its last sale by Siegel, in 2005, was for a then-record \$577,500.

"At World Stamp Show I will fulfill a lifelong dream of introducing an Inverted Jenny to the Jenny airplane," said Trepel.

"After that, my ambition is to fly in the Jenny carrying one of the stamps." ■

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