

## News from the ATA Central Office



October 25, 2004

### **AVIATION STUDY UNIT INAUGURATED BY ATA**

On the date that the \$10,000,000 Ansari X-Prize was awarded to the Burt Rutan team for being the first commercial enterprise to launch a commercial aircraft into space twice within two weeks, the newest Study Unit of the American Topical Association took flight. The Aviation Study Unit is open to all collectors of Aviation on stamps regardless of other memberships.

This Unit marks a departure from other existing Study Units as it is an affiliation between the American Topical Association and Thematics SA of South Africa. The new ATA Unit will distribute copies of the "Aircraft on Stamps" Chapter of the Thematics SA bi-monthly newsletter. Officers will be those already in place with that organization.

Negotiations between the President of Thematics SA, Robert Harm; the Director of ATA Study Units, Dalene Thomas; the Editor of "Aircraft on Stamps", Barry Lewis; and the ATA Executive Director, Ray E. Cartier, brought about this new affiliation. The bi-monthly issues of the newsletter will be forwarded to the ATA office via email. They will then be downloaded and printed out for members desiring hard copies of the newsletter. For those members who want to save a little money in dues, the newsletters will be forwarded to them over the Internet in lieu of getting printed copies.

In a 2003 survey of the most collected topicals on stamps, Aircraft came in at number 18. The study of aviation on stamps includes a variety of subtopics in which members can specialize. Examples of these subtopics would be aircraft of WWI, aircraft of WWII, commercial aircraft, jet fighters, flights around the world, X-planes, seaplanes, aircraft manufacturing companies, aviators and aviatrixes, helicopters, aviation precursors and so on.

The beauty of collecting this and other subjects by topic is that specialization based on an individual's preferences can occur. This allows those people who enjoy original research opportunities to ferret out facts that put their own imprint on their collections. One collector hones in on just the Aircraft involved in the sinking of the Bismark. Another specializes in the earliest X-Planes such as the secret Bell X-1 flight that first broke the sound barrier. A third collects stamps and covers depicting just one single aircraft manufacturing facility's products. For those people with an interest in any aspect of flight, the new Aviation Study Unit will offer assistance in the collecting and research of this fascinating subject. Collectors of like interests will be able to share information and build social contacts, adding an element of fun to their hobby.

The Ansari X-Prize Competition shows that with innovators such as Burt Rutan, the study of aviation is still pushing forward. The Aviation Study Unit will follow these and other future innovations in manned flight.

**To join the Aviation Study Unit**, submit your name and all contact information along with \$27.00 for the hard copy format of the newsletter, or send \$22.00 for the same via Internet only.

**Send requests to join to:** ATA Aircraft Study Unit, PO Box 57, Arlington, TX 76004-0057. \$2.00 of this fee is a one-time charge payable to our South African affiliate for setting up the account.

**Payment** can be made via check or money order, payable to the American Topical Association. Visa, MasterCard and PayPal (to [americantopical@msn.com](mailto:americantopical@msn.com)) is also acceptable.

**If you are a member of the ATA or APS**, include that information. Charter membership is open through December 15, 2004.

**For additional information on the American Topical Association** contact the ATA Central Office, PO Box 57, Arlington, Texas 76004-0057 (telephone 817-274-1181; fax 817-274-1184; email [americantopical@msn.com](mailto:americantopical@msn.com), or visit their website at [www.americantopicalassn.org](http://www.americantopicalassn.org).