

2009 – First ASITAF public event

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy and the 40th anniversary of the historic first moon landing. AS.IT.AF. soon moved to bring astrophilately back to life in Italy, by organizing non-competitive exhibitions that reactivated the "desire to exhibit".

The first public event was, in April 2009, as part of the "Pontino Collecting Days" which took place at the Piana delle Orme Museum in Borgo Faiti (Latina).

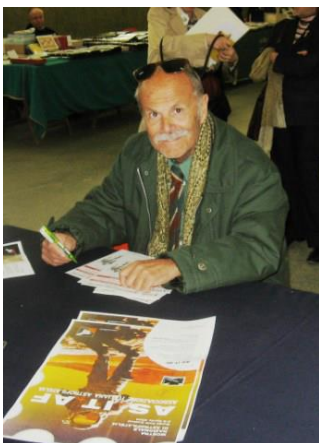
ASITAF actively participated in an ongoing initiative, that expanded with the "astrophilately" area by bringing 5 exhibits prepared by its members, which were added to the 5 space-themed philately exhibits presented by local collectors.

It also offered to opportunity to meet lot of interested people and attract new ASITAF members



For this first public event we issued the first AS.IT.AF. commemorative postcard, designed by Carlo Torcelli, who had already designed the AS.IT.AF logo for us.

During the *Piana delle Orme* Event, AS.IT.AF. had its first special pictorial postmark designed by Ottavio Irio Fantini, a talented and versatile artist, who was also one of the most active designers of stamps for the Vatican City, San Marino and Monaco.



Left: the artist Ottavio Irio Fantini who designed our first special postmark for the Event in Borgo Faiti (Latina). Right, souvenir photo with Ottavio Fantini. Luigi Bussolino (left) and Pietro Pantanella (right)

In the following months we made our contribution to events organized in Turin, Grugliasco (To), Trecate (No), Chiavari (Ge) and Pecetto (To), where the cancellation designed by our Honorary Member Chris Calle was used. He also designed together with his father Paul Calle the postcard of the event which features the "Man on the Moon" that is perhaps the best known of all the American postage stamps:



The experimental trilogy “*Mercury-Gemini-Apollo: Three Steps to the Moon and Beyond*” was exhibited for the first time in Chiavari. The American magazine *Astrophile* devoted an article to the event¹. The "trilogy" prepared by Cavallaro, Martina, and Rega, aimed at presenting in an "open class" style, somewhat unusual at the time, true astrophilatelic covers accompanied by historical notes, photographs, geographical maps, historical documents, and vintage mission patches. It was our first attempt to get "serious" philately out of the small group of experts to which it was confined.



The encouraging success of the general public and school groups inspired us to represent the "trilogy" in different contexts, in the following years – when the part of Martina was replaced by Santandrea – and then to start the search for new exhibition styles which then originated exhibits such as *WOMEN IN SPACE*, *ITALY IN SPACE* and others² largely shown in different places in Italy and abroad.

¹ See www.asitaf.it, Section *ABOUT US*.

² See www.asitaf.it, Section *COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITIONS*.



For the first time, Astrophilately was invited by the Italian Philatelic Federation to represent Italian Philately in the prestigious Court d'Honneur of the **MonacoPhil 2009** international philatelic exhibition held at the beginning of December in MonteCarlo, in the **Principality of Monaco**: it was the first time that a collection of astrophilately entered the Palaces of the Prince of Monaco



*Left: Bruno Crevato Selvaggi and Umberto Cavallaro in front of the Astrophilately exhibit;
Center and right: Igor Rodin (Chairman of the FIP Astrophilately Commission (Photo Sergej Rodin))³*

Another peculiar activity started by AS.IT.AF. in 2009 was the preparation of commemorative covers to document important space events in which Italy was involved, such as the launch of GOCE and Herschel & Planck, the official delivery ceremony of NODE-3 to NASA at the Thales Alenia Space premises, the arrival of NODE-3 at the Kennedy Space Center, etc.

³ http://astrophilatelist.com/photo/exhibitions/monacophil_2009/6