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## CONTENTS

## Editorial

### 159 Fiume issues during the De Poli's

Constituent Assembly *Oliviero Emoroso*

### 168 Italian propaganda postcards during WWI

*William Velvel Moskoff & Carol Gayle*

### 174 Unpaid Mail between the Kingdom of

Sardinia and the Swiss Cantons *Grahame Lindsey*

### 179 Can You Help: 1941, Trieste - USA

*L. Pizskiewicz*

### 180 Some unusual frankings of the Decennial

Mass Flights *Claudio Riccardo Incerti*

### 187 Decamere: Previously unrecorded notelope

*Bill Clark*

### 189 Early UPU postcard from Heligoland

*Stephan Jürgens*

### 191 + 197 On the Bookshelf *GM*

### 194 50th Anniversary Asiago's

Philatelic Art Awards *Danilo Bogoni*

### 199 New Issues

### 203 Telegraph Service in Fiume *G. Migliavacca*

### 208 Secretary Notes *Andy Harris*

If you were to judge how the stamp business is doing by just looking at how many people physically attend auctions you will be deceived; even before Covid, many buyers preferred to place their bids "live" on the internet. The immediate consequences are: higher prices fetched by auctioned items and anonymity.

There is more to it: a Vienna auction company had informed buyers that their mid-November "mail auction" had been uploaded on their website. I took a tea break and looked at what was for sale; well, there were four lots of interest all regarding Lombardy-Venetia covers from my town. I was rather disappointed to see that each of those lots bore the word "SOLD" in red. Yet, the auction was to be closed three weeks later. Of course, they weren't millionaires' jewels, nevertheless, they went even before the sale took place. Auction companies in Italy are quite optimistic due to the increase in turn-over and new buyers.

The American Philatelic Society (APS) has informed its members that stamp collecting is in the news again, featured by the Long Island, New York newspaper, Newsday.

Headlined "A Hobby that Sticks: Stamp Collecting keeps people glued during a pandemic" the article features APS members: two former presidents, Stephen Reinhard and Wade Saadi, and longtime member Ron Huetter.

APS Executive Director Scott English is also interviewed about the organization's growth.

"We've seen membership applications grow significantly," he said. They've also seen demographic shifts. While 80% of APS members are over 60 and only 9% of all members are women, half of the new applications are female, English said. "Applications are substantially more female, diverse and younger."

GM