

Coil Line



Journal of the PNC³
Plate Number Coil Collectors Club

www.pnc3.org

American Philatelic Society Affiliate #185

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**Member Puzzled by the Numbers
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Coil Line

Journal of the Plate Number
Coil Collectors Club (PNC³)

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Coil Line reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.

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All content, letters to the editor and advertising questions should be addressed to the editor. For mail delivery problems, contact the mailer below.

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Mailed from Zip Code 87185 on or near January 20, 2018.



Scott #2252 (issued February 29, 1988) plate # 1

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(For Coil Line-related matters, please see column at left for appropriate contact.)

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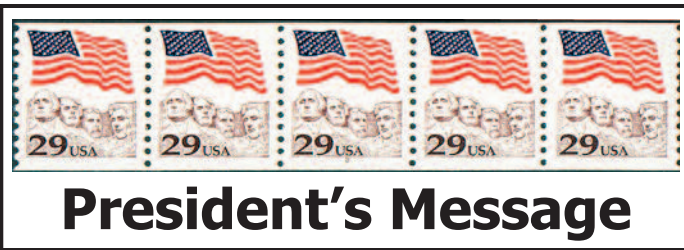
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This will be your final issue of **Coil Line** unless you renew your membership. Also, remember, you need to be current in order to participate in the upcoming club auctions. The next one is scheduled for the March 2018 issue of **Coil Line**.

The election for new officers is just around the corner. We will hold the PNC³ elections in June 2018. The position of president is term limited. Gene Trinks is the Chairman of the Nominating Committee. In my opinion, this is the best way to serve PNC³. So if you have any interest in being on the Board of Directors and being involved with how the club is run, please contact Gene. Biographies are usually listed in the May edition of **Coil Line**, so time is short. Information for that issue needs to be in by April 1, 2018.

Last month I wrote about my frustrations in obtaining a Mailer's Postmark Permit. Since then I have had some suggestions from other members, but I was waiting for the holiday season to end before I tried any more. I will keep you posted.

If you plan to exhibit any of your PNC material, contact Richard Beecher, chairman of the Awards & Exhibits Committee. That way Richard can make sure that the right awards are available for the judges at the stamp show.

Brief note: I have found another issue that is being sold on eBay that is counterfeit. It is the booklet of 10 of the Patriotic Spiral issued in 2016. As usual, it is not tagged. It is printed on Hi-Brite Paper. Where the serpentine die cuts meet at the corners of the stamps, it is much better. However, there is usually a break along the vertical edges, between where one die cut stopped and another die cut started. They are not misaligned, just a gap between the two sets of die cuts. I believe on the real version the full sheet is die cut by one die cutter, but the counterfeit sheet uses at least two die cutters.



"When The Lights Go Out" is a monthly column on tagging. I will try to make the information understandable and interesting to all collectors, beginners and experts alike.

Tagging is what the United States Postal Service uses to detect the stamps on envelopes for proper canceling so stamps are not reused. Collectors have to be able to see the tagging because some stamp issues are printed with different types of tagging or are untagged.

For collectors to detect tagging an ultraviolet (UV) light is needed. UV lights are available in shortwave (SW), longwave (LW) and lights with a combination of both SW and LW.

Shortwave UV is used to detect tagging and longwave UV is used to detect paper types. Many combination UV lights are available. I have always used Raytech lights. I started with a Raytech Versalume combination SW/LW. This light is also AC/DC. It runs on batteries so you can take it to stamp shows. When at home use the AC adapter and save the batteries. I still use this light when I go to stamp shows.

I then advanced to a Raytech LS-7 that did a very good job and was only replaced because I found a Raytech LS-218 at a bargain price. Raytech also makes a LS-4. Both the Versalume and the LS-4 would be great for the beginning collector. UV lights by Spectroline, Lighthouse, Safe and others are also available.

Caution should be used when using your light in SW mode. Shortwave ultraviolet can injure your eyes and can burn your hands. Always point the light away from your eyes and never look at the light. Place the stamps on your work station, turn the room lights off then point the UV light at the stamps and turn the UV light on. Handheld UV lights are meant for short periods of use: turn on, observe and turn off. They are not meant to be left on. Leaving the light on will shorten its life. The light bulbs are available for replacement. I had to replace the light bulb in my Versalume after about eight years of use.

Next month I will write about the basic four types of tagging and we will see what can be found "When The Lights Go Out."

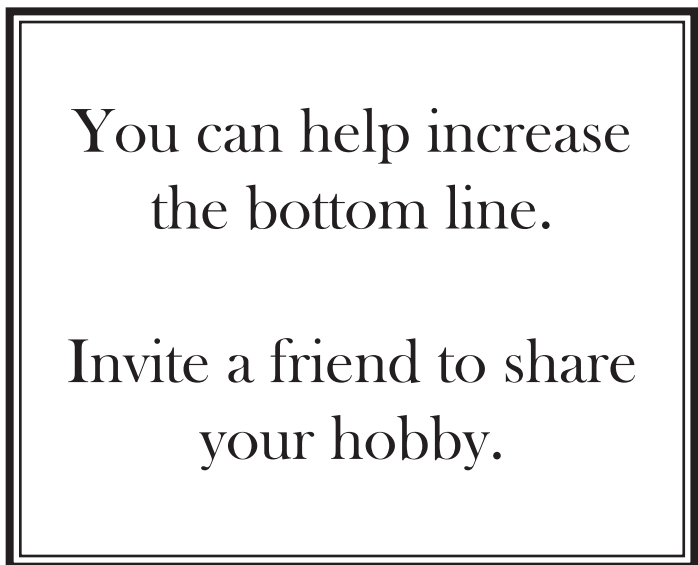


Plate Blocks and PNCs, Up and Down

Bob Rabinowitz

The USPS began placing plate numbers in the selvage of sheets more 160 years ago and collectors began saving them. Most collectors were happy with a single example in any position. However, some wanted all positions and, since in some cases multiple plate numbers were employed for a given stamp, serious collectors assembled multiple copies, including all plate numbers and all positions. This reached major proportions in between 1930 and 1970 when plate blocks were usually four stamps and involved four different corners.

Of course, there were special issues, bicolors, where two plates were employed per sheet. C23, CE2, 702 and 703 and the 8¢ Liberty Sc 1041 are examples. These issues presented special challenges to those who could afford the cost for the many plates and had the time to chase them down, usually with the help of several dealers. Special price lists were put out by some dealers and the *Durland Catalog* came into being.

The brilliant marketing minds of the USPS took note of this and presumably figured if the collectors purchased plate blocks of four, if plate numbers were printed up and down the selvage, creating larger collectibles, it would mean more revenue. So along came the "biggies" in the 1960s and 1970s. Bunching these numbers was certainly feasible but revenue considerations dominated. Note Sc 1363, the 1968 Christmas issue requiring plates of 10, left and right. With dozens of plate numbers, thousands of combinations were possible. Some collectors did pursue all positions but many more threw up their hands and gave up.

By 1980, the USPS realized that plate block collecting had dropped precipitously and thus did their revenue from it. A brilliant decision was made: eliminate the five-digit numbers and replace them with single, and if needed, two-digit codes for each color. At the same time, plate number coils were born. Coils were a mainstay for postage users but had no plate numbers showing unless there was a mis-cut. Suddenly, all coils had plate numbers printed periodically at the bottom of a stamp throughout the rolls.

Collectors latched onto this area of collecting. Many of those early participants were disillusioned plate block people. Dealers sprung up overnight, many of whom had no earlier involvement in selling plate blocks. Lists were generated.

Like plate blocks, occasionally a plate number was difficult to find, for example, #6 on the 18¢ Flag, Sc 1891. Soon ads appeared offering substantial premiums for that number. Collectors and dealers who were "sleeping" during the demise period of plate block collecting sprang into ac-

tion and began searching post offices and canceled accumulations. The growth of PNC collecting continued unabated until lightning struck in 2007.

Unexpectedly, David Failor, USPS Executive Director of Stamp Services, decided that the plate numbers were unnecessary. We were told that other control methods obviated their need. Some think there were other reasons for this decision but nothing has been proven. Failor, as a concession to collectors, continued placing plate numbers where they had been but regardless of the change in plates, they always were number 1. This left nothing much more to look for in post offices and dealer stocks and "dumpster diving" dropped sharply.

Many collectors fled, just as they did when the "biggie" plate blocks appeared and continued. Some continue, filling in the pre-Failor issues. But the PNC market is way off. As a barometer, check the ads in *Linn's* or the number of **Coil Line** subscribers. While this can be turned around at the USPS, I doubt they will consider returning to giving each plate number its own digit rather than using a "1" for all.

More Torn Hesburgh Coils

John Himes

After my initial encounter with tearing of the new Father Hesburgh coil stamps, caused by mail processing equipment (see **Coil Line**, November 2017), I had additional problems with more Hesburghs tearing in the mail stream (see **Coil Line**, January, 2018).

Following the publication of the January article, club member Jim Havlena wrote me to say that he has received 10 Hesburgh coil stamps in the mail, and eight had similar tearing on the right edge of the stamp. (All 10 of Jim's stamps were processed in San Francisco or Oakland, California.) It appears there is a definite problem with the paper that was supplied for the printing of these coils, as none of the other recent coils seem to have this issue.

I did get another copy a few days ago. It was placed on the envelope about two inches to the left of the right-hand edge. This came from another PNCer, so I'm guessing he knew about the tearing issue and placed the stamp well away from the edge of the cover in order to hopefully avoid this issue. Indeed, that stamp was not torn. If you are going to use a Hesburgh coil on a mailing to another collector, try placing the stamp in this same position, about 2" left of the right edge of the envelope. Hopefully you will have better results that way.



So, I Have This Question . . .



I'd like to request information regarding the (5¢) Art Deco Bird non-profit mail rate coil issued February 11, 2011, Scott #4495.

Three plate numbers were utilized for this issue, P1111, P2222 and P3333. It is supposed to be the procedure that a plate number warrants change due to some change in the production of an issue, whether it be press utilized, paper type used, tagging, design change, etc.

I can understand the use of plate P3333, as this number is printed on bright fluorescent paper that glows bluish-white under both longwave and shortwave UV light.

The question arises as to why a change from P1111 to P2222 was made. Neither exhibits any degree of fluorescence, being what is referred to as "dead" paper. Die cutting is consistent among all three plate numbers. All have micro-printed "USPS" in the same location. While plate P3333 does have a different size font for the back number than either P1111 or P2222, these two have the same style and size of number. The sequence in which the colors were laid down is consistent.

The only apparent difference between the two is that the blue-green background of stamps from P1111 is of a deeper color than that of plate P2222. If this is the result of a second printing and not the cause, this can be understood as both colors are within what the USPS considers an acceptable range. On the other hand, perhaps it is indicative of another reason, however unknown.

I should point out that my strip of P1111, with the darker background, has a back number of 1090, which could be from either a 3K or 10K roll. My P2222 strip has a back number of 4630, indicating a 10K roll. It is my understanding that P1111 coils were issued in rolls of both 3K and 10K, so whether roll size has anything to do with it is questionable.

I do not recall ever reading an explanation from the USPS regarding the reason for the change. Can anyone provide an acceptable explanation?

Robert Loeffler

Ed Note: Please send responses to me at vcanfieldp@gmail.com so I can share the answer with our readers. vcp

Rats!

My apologies for letting the first **Coil Line** issue of 2018 go out with a 2017 dateline. As it turns out, the folks who receive checks from me to pay bills are also going to have a problem cashing said checks. It'll take me a few days to get used to a new year but at least the date is correct on this issue.

I hope I didn't cause too much confusion.

vcp

Recent PNC Issue Information

Denom	Issue Name	PNC-ID Number	Scott Number	Issue Date	Plate #	Plate # Interval	Roll Size	USPS Item Number	Tag	WAG or SA	T, M, B Back Numbers
0.02	Meyer Lemons	2018-1		1/19/18			10,000	760400			
<.49>	Father Ted Hesburgh	2017-8	5242	9/1/17	P11111	17	50	799404	Overall*	SA	None
<.49>	Flowers from the Garden	2017-7	5236a	8/16/17	B1111	28	3,000	755004	Overall	SA	B
		2017-7	5236a	8/16/17	B1111	28	10,000	760104	Overall	SA	T
	from 3k roll	2017-7	5236a	8/16/17	B1111	28	500	755015	Overall	SA	B
	from 3k roll	2017-7	5236a	8/16/17	B1111	28	25	755003	Overall	SA	B
	from 10k roll	2017-7	5236a	8/16/17	B1111	28	500	760115	Overall	SA	T
	from 10k roll	2017-7	5236a	8/16/17	B1111	28	25	760103	Overall	SA	T
0.03	Strawberries	2017-6	5201	5/5/17	P1111	27	10,000	760304	Untagged	SA	M
0.03	Strawberries	2017-6	5201	5/5/17	P1111	27	500	760315	Untagged	SA	M
0.10	Red Pears	2017-5 (1)	5039	April 2017	B111111	27	10,000	N/A	Untagged	SA	T, B
(0.05)	USA Star - Blue	2017-4	5172	2/10/17	P111	27	3,000	755104	Untagged	SA	Random
	from 3k roll	2017-4	5172	2/10/17	P111	27	25	755103	Untagged	SA	Random
		2017-4	5172	2/10/17	P111	27	10,000	760204	Untagged	SA	Random
	from 10k roll	2017-4	5172	2/10/17	P111	27	25	760203	Untagged	SA	Random
<.34>	Seashells	2017-3	5170a	1/28/17	P111111	32	100	749904	Overall*	SA	None
<.49>	Fluttering Flag	2017-2	5158	1/27/17	B1111	31	100	749802	Overall	SA	None
<.49>	Fluttering Flag	2017-1	5159	1/27/17	P1111	31	100	749804	Overall*	SA	None
0.10	Stars & Stripes	2016-10 (1)	4963a	10/11/16	B111	27	3,000	N/A	Untagged	SA	T, B
		2016-10 (1)	4963a	10/11/16	B111	27	10,000	N/A	Untagged	SA	T, B
<.47>	Patriotic Spiral	2016-9	5130	8/19/16	P1111	27	10,000	760004	Overall*	SA	T, B
		2016-9	5130	8/19/16	P1111	27	500	760015	Overall*	SA	T, B
		2016-9	5130	8/19/16	P1111	27	25	760003	Overall*	SA	T, B
0.01	Apple	2016-8	5037	8/12/16	P111111	27	3,000	782304	Untagged	SA	T, B
		2016-8	5037	8/12/16	P111111	27	500	782315	Untagged	SA	T, B
		2016-8	5037	8/12/16	P111111	27	10,000	780004	Untagged	SA	T, B
		2016-8	5037	8/12/16	P111111	27	500	780015	Untagged	SA	T, B
<.47>	Flag & Clouds	2016-7 (1)	5052	7/18/16	B11111	31	100	N/A	Overall	SA	None
(0.25)	Star Quilts	2016-6	5099a	7/6/16	B11111	28	3,000	781004	Overall	SA	T, B
		2016-6	5099a	7/6/16	B11111	28	25	781003	Overall	SA	T, B
		2016-6	5099a	7/6/16	B11111	28	10,000	799904	Overall	SA	T, B
		2016-6	5099a	7/6/16	B11111	28	25	799903	Overall	SA	T, B
(0.05)	NDN USA Star	2016-5	5061	4/18/16	P111	27	10,000	777504	Untagged	SA	T, B
		2016-5	5061	4/18/16	P111	27	25	777503	Untagged	SA	T, B
0.05	Grapes	2016-4	5038	2/19/16	P111111	27	10,000	781904	Untagged	SA	T, B
		2016-4	5038	2/19/16	P111111	27	500	781915	Untagged	SA	T, B
<.49>	Flag & Clouds	2016-3	5052	1/29/16	S11111	31	100	787302	Overall	SA	None
<.49>	Flag & Clouds	2016-2	5053	1/29/16	P11111	31	100	787304	Overall*	SA	None
(1) Scott did not assign a catalog number for this new release, though PNC ³ did assign a PNC-ID number.											Top
These items cannot be ordered from the USPS Philatelic Fulfillment Center.											Middle
*	NOTE: After careful inspection, it is observed that these Ashton Potter coils have overall tagging.										Bottom
These items do NOT have block tagging as suggested by USPS announcements.											
Compiled by Andy Jakes 12/21/2017											

Regional Meeting Hosts Sought

Several members have made it a habit to promote meetings in their areas. New meetings are encouraged as a way to share your hobby and enjoy the fellowship of like-minded collectors.

For information about hosting a meeting, contact regional meeting chairman Tony Bruno, PO Box 624, East Lyme CT 06333-0624 or email tbee@aol.com.

PNC³ meeting notices are advertised at no charge in the newsletter. Please submit details to the editor three months in advance of the meeting.



Happy Hunting with Al Haake

Making Finds Today

Very few varieties or scarce numbers are produced today and making a great find at a post office is nearly impossible. So where would a PNC hunter look for that rare item? Well, for the last several years all of my finds have been found in large PNC accumulations. Many collectors and dealers do not look for tagging errors, scarce die-cuts or varieties.

Some of the items I have found include 3271 #11111 with round shoulder die-cut, 2915A 78777 10X10 die-cut, several untagged errors, color shades and many other tagging varieties and plate varieties. With that being said it is getting very hard to buy these lots at a price where the gamble is worth the risk. The resale value of postage continues to tank. I used to be able to move postage for around 80 percent. Now it would probably take 30 to 40 percent to move a large mixed lot.

All precancel material is nearly impossible to move. So even if you bought a \$5,000 face lot for 50 percent, your downside without a find would be \$500 to \$1,000. Even a great find would only get you back to even. This situation has gotten this way mainly because the postal service refuses to exchange old postage for new. They used to make 10 percent on the exchange. If I had postage pasted in their countable format, you could get back say \$4,500 for \$5,000 face. Even then if I were to discount the new postage on a sale at 90 percent you are still only a little above break even. It was still a gamble, but the downside was negligible.

Also compounding the downside on postage is the public's desire for self-adhesive only. The lick-and-stick era is gone. I do believe that postage lots at auction will also continue to decline. The supply seems to be never ending and the demand decreasing. This definitely means that fewer finds will be made by hunters like me.

Coil Line Classifieds

LONG-TIME collector dispersing PNC collection of used singles on and off cover. Numerous commercial covers among the offerings. From early to late issues. Priced to move. Want lists appreciated. Contact Dennis Sadowski, PNC #1229, 3245 Nagle Rd., Avon, OH 44011-2059 or email polisheditor@hotmail.com 2/18

PNC USED singles, used strips, MNH PS5s. Great prices! Guaranteed quality! No hassles! Visit <http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/HimesPNCs> or send LSASE for lists to John Himes, PO Box 453, Cypress, CA 90630-0453. Please specify what you collect. Or email johnwhimes@yahoo.com 12/18

SELLING PNC collection organized in 40 Vario binders. Several rarities. Asking \$3,000 if I ship, \$2,500 if you pick up. Full inventory, specify docx or PDF. Please send email to mandodennis69@comcast.net. 2/18

Membership Update

as of January 1, 2018

New Applicants

Robert Wark 2368
5739 Cheshire Drive
Titusville, FL 32780
rdw61fla@gmail.com

Alfred Marulli Jr. 2369
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Palm Beach, FL 33480
marulli@comcast.net

Membership at Beginning of Month	473
New Applicants	2
Membership at End of Month	475

Notice

Orders for Catalog Chapters

NO orders are being accepted, filled, and mailed in
January, February and March 2018.

A new order form will appear in **Coil Line** in March or April 2018 and
also on the PNC³ website.



Beyond the Numbers

Lynnette Wood

Sacré Bleu!

Issued on September 2, 1988, the 25¢ Honeybee coil stamp fulfilled the domestic first class rate in effect. This stamp can be found with just two plate numbers: #1 and #2. Plate #1 is known to have three types: a tall "1" that extends into the stamp design; a "1" that was shortened by removal of its top serif; and a "1" shortened but with the top serif added.



The best place to see the differences between these three types is at our very own PNC³ website:

<https://www.pnc3.org/Data/Honeybee-compare.php>

Other varieties include Scott 2281f which, if you have a UV light, can be easily distinguished by its noticeably larger block of tagging than that found on the 2281. Scott 2281h has the tagging omitted.

From a coil collector's perspective, the stamp is significant in that it was the first U.S. coil stamp printed using a combination process; specifically, a combination of intaglio and offset printing. As a result, there are several color omitted errors (Scott numbers 2281b through e). There is also an imperforate variety, Scott 2281a. These are all varieties identified in the Scott catalog

It is the plethora of varieties not identified in the catalog that really takes us beyond the numbers. In the **Coil Line** archives I found a series of monthly articles by Mac Johnson, called "Buzzline," which lists more than 100 printing varieties! (The relevant issues are the five from December 1989 to April 1990). Now, while some will certainly consider this "flyspeck philately," it does seem that some of the varieties he identified are quite persistent. One can't help but admire the patience and effort that went into inspecting, compiling and organizing the volume of stamps that resulted in Johnson's list.

For myself, I am afraid that if I head down that rab-

bit hole, I will become one Alice who never escapes Wonderland. I like closure, so for me to start exploring varieties that require a microscope, or at least a powerful magnifier, doesn't seem like a good way to get there.

Instead, I will entertain you with a bit of trivia about blue honey. Blue (or sometimes purple) honey appears periodically in hives. Honey enthusiasts will pay a premium for blue honey; beekeepers themselves speculate how it comes about in the first place. Are bees extracting the juices of berries, such as blueberries, blackberries, elderberries or huckleberries? Or does the blue color come from the nectar of specific plants (kudzu has been named as one possible culprit) or from the mineral content of the soil in which the plants grow? At least in one case, the source was tracked to M&M candy!

Unlike individual buyers, who may seek out blue or purple honey for its special taste, European Union guidelines for food ingredients intended for human consumption have strict rules concerning color; for honey these guidelines don't seem to include blue, green or purple.

So when, in 2012, honey bees from a number of apiaries in northeastern France began producing green and blue honey, the beekeepers found themselves with a lot of honey they could not sell. In such a case, it was worth tracking down the source. What they discovered was that their bees had picked up the color from candy waste. Mars shipped M&M residue to a nearby bio-gas plant for processing. The residue was being stored outside, where the bees found it to be a convenient source of sugar. Et voilà! We have closure!

I have gone far beyond the numbers in this column. Maybe too far. I'll get back on track in next month's column. In the meantime, please do send your thoughts and comments to me at PNCsAreCool@gmail.com. I always enjoy receiving your email.

Mailing List Available

The club mailing list can be rented. A one-time usage fee of \$50 includes preprinted labels.

Contact secretary Daniel Farrar
farrard2@gmail.com
for more information.