



JOURNAL OF THE
PLATE NUMBER
COIL COLLECTORS
CLUB - PNC³

COIL LINE

Coil Line: The Early Years

The PNC³ quietly reached a milestone in its *Coil Line* journal, this, the 400th issue. Challenges in preparing recent issues, especially covering in October one of our largest club auctions, precluded having a robust recognition. Join us here in a modest look-back of *Coil Line's* beginnings. We welcome your reminiscences, especially of those collecting friends no longer with us, for consideration in later issues.

High school teacher, intrepid collector and part-time dealer Tom Maeder was initial club president Gene Trinks' choice for editor. Tom's one-page Vol. 1, #1 May 1988 "newsletter" shared his introduction to PNCs. He ended with an invitation to club members to divulge their collecting interests to inform *Coil Line's* focus.

I never personally met or communicated with Tom, but his evident good humor slipped out in some of his writings. His recounting of a trip to New York City as a gift to his wife can bring a lot of head-nodding.

The tale is told on page one of the October 1988 issue, number 4, and first one to follow prior issue by just a month. It was the second issue to reach six pages.

(please see next page)

More in this issue...

Coil Line awards announced (President's Message), page 145
3 Fruits designs on mail, all with PNCs... (plus)
32¢ FOP research question (Readers Forum), page 146
Tagging Compound "X" (Readers Forum), page 147



"Affixer" Coils Return to Forever Flag Formats in 2022

New Designs Also Refresh Other Coil Series

In a November 1 press release, the U.S. Postal Service announced initial entries of its 2022 postage stamp program. Note that for new stamp information shared here, a USPS disclaimer applies: "All stamp designs are preliminary and subject to change."

A new Forever Flag design replaces the 2019 version, "Flag over Navy Pier." That design was offered in booklets and in a coil format that came only in rolls of 100. It followed on the heels of several annual Flag designs likewise offered.

The 2022 version shown at right returns to a more robust set of formats that includes an "affixer" version in rolls of 3,000 and 10,000 designed for use in lettershop affixing machines. These large rolls have the stamps spaced along the liner backing with a small gap between. This allows the affixer to "tip" individual stamps onto envelopes being fed in a conveyor system.



(adapted from USPS image)



(designs of larger booklet size)

Speaking of affixer rolls, it seems the USPS has continued a "flowers" series to meet mailers' desire for a "pretty" design choice on mass mailings. The 2022 edition are four designs of "Mountain Flora." (Note the media image shown at left is of a booklet/20 format also to be issued. These designs are larger than those to be adapted to the smaller area of coils, yet to be seen.) Both rolls of 3,000 and of 10,000 will be offered.

Part of the USPS description reads, "These four new stamps celebrate the beauty of mountain flowers. Each Mountain Flora stamp features a different flower: a purple pasqueflower, an orange-red wood lily, a bright yellow alpine buttercup and a dark pink Woods' rose. The artist's hand-drawn illustrations, *(please see next page)*



Welcome! If you are a new reader to *Coil Line*, PNC³ is in our 33rd year. We are a community of stamp collectors focusing on plate numbered coil issues of the USA. The first PNCs were issued in 1981 and, in Feb. 1988, a group of PNC specialists founded our club. *Coil Line* was launched in May, 1988 and serves (along with other club literature) to inform collectors on the many aspects of PNCs. Studies include scarce numbers, varieties, printing methods, market values, PNCs on mail and more. Thanks for visiting, and we hope you'll join us!

► *Coil Line – Early Years* (from previous page)

Coil Line reached eight pages for the first time with the Nov. 1988 issue, #5. Page numbers were still not used. We'll pause here at the Dec. issue, #6, since it has more "firsts" and is 33 years ago this issue.

Issue #6 jumped to a whopping 14 pages. (Oh, the freedom to not be tied to "multiple of 4" required by today's print-shop color printers...) And pages were numbered for the first time.

In "Letters" (page 2) attorney and well-known PNC dealer Ed Denson shared a significant insight he learned at a first-day ceremony. Interestingly, it relates to today's "patriotic vs. pretty" duality in design choices, brought up in this issue's coverage of the recent USPS coil news.

"At the ceremony for the [13¢] Police Patrol Wagon, I heard a speaker describe the reason for the Transportation Series – lots of advocacy organizations will use these stamps for their mailings. ('Pro-Life and Anti-Life' he said with a sort of naïve charm.) The stamps themselves need to be unexceptional – to upset no one.

"What better than obsolete and often insignificant means of transport? One reason for the series' long life is probably that it's hard to know what could be less likely to upset people. I like long series, myself, and hope that they keep it going until it rivals that Turkish series that seems to go on forever."

Incidentally, as reported in the Sept. 1988 issue, #3,

► *New Coils in 2022* (from previous page)

refined digitally, create a block-print aesthetic."

After some absence, we have a USPS media image of a new coil issue that looks like a coil. That is fitting, as the new offering in stamps "intended for bulk mailings by authorized nonprofit organizations" will only be issued in coils (no roll sizes given yet).

Having a setenart pair of designs (*at left*) is a first for the series launched in 1995 of undenominated coils inscribed "Nonprofit Org/USA" and costing 5¢. (Mailers settle on-account the difference to rates.)

Called "Butterfly Garden Flowers," the USPS states, "Each stamp features one of two flowers that butterflies love to visit: scabiosas or cosmos. Inspired by block-printed textile and pattern design, the artist hand-carved the images into linoleum blocks. After inking the blocks, she pressed them onto paper, scanned the images and added color digitally. Art director Antonio Alcalá designed the stamps with original art by Rigel Stuhmiller."

The remaining coil announced so far in the 2022 program turns out to be the last new self-adhesive issue in the low-value "Fruits" series to replace a water-activated gum issue of the American Design series. The 4¢ Blueberries will be issued in panes of 20 and affixer rolls of 3,000 and 10,000. They replace the 4¢ Chippendale Chair issue (Scott 3755, 3761A). *(please see next page)*



(artist's "coil", adapted from USPS image)

"Al Cibulskas was the winner of two years free membership for winning the contest 'Name the Newsletter.'" [To Be Continued...] – Ron Blanks

► **New Coils in 2022** (from previous page)

What to make of this flurry of announcements after a recent lull in new designs for the respective coil categories?

Interestingly, no “Forever” flag design available to the public in rolls of 100 has previously also been issued in affixer rolls. One has to go all the way back to 2009’s 44¢ Flag to find a flag design issued in booklets, rolls of 100 and larger rolls.

With the 2022 Flags Trio design (our initial name), the USPS has apparently chosen to forego for now having a non-flag design for its “patriotic” offering in the retail letter-rate, large-roll category. 2019’s “Star Ribbon” (Scott 5362) was the last such issue. It also happened to be issued in just one more format, ordinary panes of 20 (Scott 5361).

Note that the USPS announced the 2022 Flags Trio will also be available “in panes of 20.” Since “booklets of 20” were also mentioned, we can assume panes of 20 refer to the traditional four rows of five pane with selvage all around, and serpentine die cuts on four sides of all stamps. Likewise, the backing liner has rouletted cuts between stamps to facilitate sales of individual singles at the counter.

Before 2019 Star Ribbon, one has to go back 12 years to 2007’s 41¢ Flag to find a design in large rolls as well as humble panes/20.

The 2022’s four-part Mountain Flora continues a recent tradition of offering a “pretty” design choice in large rolls as well as in booklets. This started with 2017’s four-part Flowers from the Garden, followed by 2020’s ten-part Wild Orchids. In each case, the coil designs are reduced versions of their respective booklet designs.

Some of us will greet the “flowers” series’ 2022 edition wistfully. 2017’s four designs had about three years to be collected used on-cover before the ten-part Orchids appeared. Some will recall this

is based on the photographs of the late Jim Fowler. Jim was a member of PNC³ and passed last year a few months after the Wild Orchids were issued.

Only some two years will have elapsed before the Orchids are replaced. They are not even listed in the 2021 fourth-quarter *USA Philatelic* sales catalog. (The online USPS store still offers them.) Few of us will receive a full-priced (58¢) franking that shows a mass mailer chose the “pretty” design offering in large rolls instead of Star Ribbon.

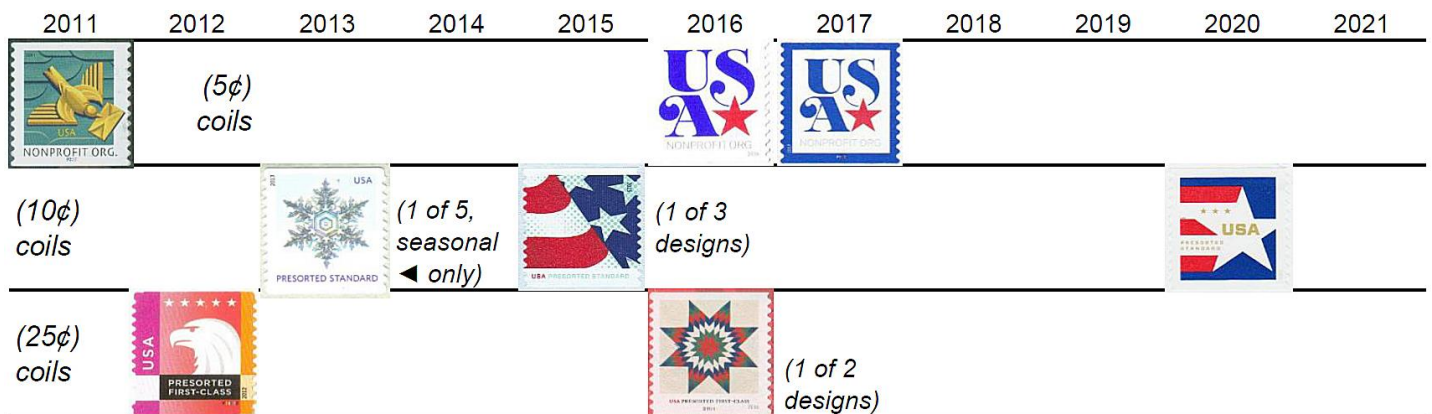
Finding ten different during their sale period (plus an eleventh, the *Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid* when it sports the plate number) seems possible only for those connected to such mailings somehow (or those consistently able to “dumpster-dive” near heavily targeted recipients who discard them).

Pivoting from the scarcely seen mass mailings to the most ubiquitous, 2022’s nonprofit-org setenant pair finally offers a fresh lively franking for fund-raising mail. The chart below shows how many years the present slate of undenominated presort coils have been in-use. Including its unframed forerunner, the (5¢) “USA Star” has appeared for six years running.

This is twice as long as the three years that USPS officials in 1995 stated would be the average time for presort coil designs to be replaced. Few would mind longer if designs were as varied as the Wild Orchids.

The 4¢ Blueberries news is somewhat of a surprise. It follows the last Fruits series coil (2¢ Lemons of 2018) by *four years*, or a few days less if it’s issued a mere weeks away by January 18! Even the Scott catalog could not bring itself to reserve numbers for the last two coils in the series (3¢, then 2¢); each are scattered elsewhere after the 1¢, 5¢, and 10¢ editions.

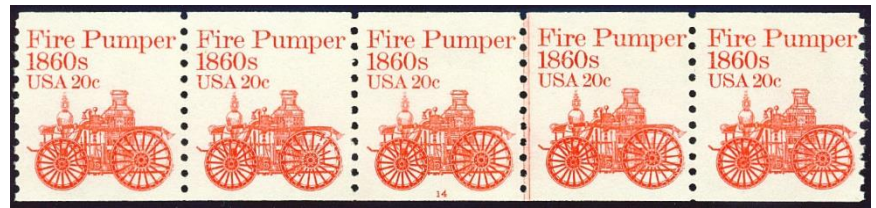
A 4¢ in the series might not have occurred, thought as useful as a 3¢ coin retired in the 1800s. But nonprofit mailers will welcome it. (See page 146.) They will get to replace a 3¢ and 5¢ with a 4¢ pair to join five 10¢ coils to prepay postage on reply envelopes.



Shelf Lives of Recent Undenominated Presort Coils (2011-2021).

Coil Line

Journal of the Plate Number
Coil Collectors Club (PNC³)
Published by: PNC³
ISSN: 1931-5112



Scott 1908 plate # 14 (issued Dec 10, 1981, 40 years ago this month)

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Advertising Rates (one insertion)

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A check or money order, made out to PNC3, must accompany camera-ready ads. Advertising copy must be submitted by the 10th of the month prior to the month of publication. Please send all copy to Ronald Blanks, Coil Line editor, rblanks_stamps@yahoo.com.

Classified ad rates are six cents a word per issue with a minimum of \$3.00 per ad. Members receive two 50-word ads per year per member at no charge. (There is a 10¢ per word cost for more than 50 words.)

All submitted material, including articles, are edited for inclusion in **Coil Line** and must be received by the 10th of the month prior to the month of publication. Article submission guidelines are available upon request by emailing the editor at the email address above.

Coil Line reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.

Coil Line is published monthly and is available digitally with annual member dues of \$12.00. A printed version of **Coil Line** is also available. To U.S. addresses, to receive printed edition add \$26.00 for First Class Mailing. To Non-USA addresses, add \$34.00 for mailing. Past print issues of **Coil Line** are available at \$2.50 per copy (quantities limited).

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

Postal mailings prepared by: Brian Snippen, 1010 Blue Sage Rd NE, Rio Rancho NM 87144. Send email to: snippenb@gmail.com. Phone: 505-404-1624.

Mailed from Zip Code 87185 on or near November 30, 2021.

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President's Message

Tom McFarland

Earlier this year the American Philatelic Society re-launched their affiliate newsletter and website competition. The competition is now called Star Route Awards, drawing an analogy between the challenges of mail delivery via Star Routes to the outreach provided by affiliates in growing the hobby through their communications. VP John Himes, with Board concurrence, submitted five recent issues of *Coil Line* and our website URL to the APS for Star Route Award consideration.

We're pleased to report that *Coil Line* received a Large Gold award and pnc3.org received a Large Vermeil. APS created a video of the Awards Ceremony that can be viewed either on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cb1OZ4v8Xyg> or on the APS website at <https://stamps.org/community/star-route>. The APS page includes a list of all of the winners.

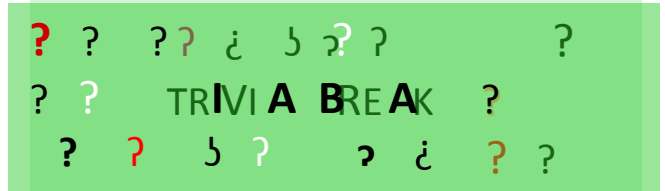
The competition judges also provided some comments about both *Coil Line* and the club website, many positive, as well as some suggestions for improvement. We'll be reviewing that information going forward with an eye toward implementing some of the recommendations.

The United States Postal Service issued a press release on November 1st, announcing several stamps planned for issue in 2022. The list includes four new coil issues involving eight designs. See Ron Blanks' article on page 141, which includes illustrations related to the future PNC issues.

As the end of the year approaches, I would remind everyone to send in their renewal dues payment as soon as possible. The renewal form appears on the wrapper of this issue.

Finally, I would like to wish all members and their families a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

Have a happy, healthy and safe holiday season!



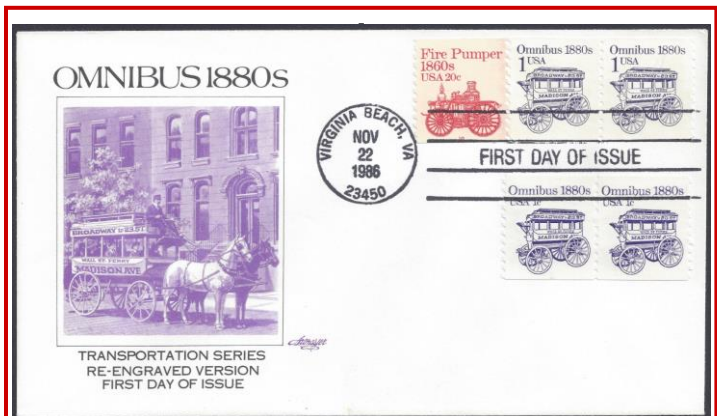
What makes the 11¢ Caboose design in the Transportation Series unique among all PNCs?

Send your answer to the editor at rblanks _ stamps @ yahoo. com, or send text or leave voice message at 757.478.8719 by December 20th. We'll share any responses (and answer) in the next issue.

How well do you know your PNCs? This puzzle spot will feature details that do not require special tools to notice, just the "attention to detail" our hobby is known for. Your suggestions are welcome for your own Trivia Break entry for fellow readers.



◀ **HINT** to Nov.'s question: Another look at its object. (See Nov.'s page 138.) Answer on page 147.



(cropped images)

Dan Farrar shares an "incidental PNC" on first-day cover, after seeing story in Sep/Oct issue. Fittingly(?), neither 1¢ pair has a plate number. (22¢ was letter rate in 1986.)






**Readers
Forum**







close-up from third coil in image at right



32¢ FOP Question. I have an item that I do not recall seeing anything written up about. I'd like to pose a question to our members requesting information about it, such as: Is there a confirmation copy in anyone's holdings and if so, would it be possible to determine which position it is from; such as 12L, 6R, etc.?

The item in question is a FOP #2915, with a malformed "5" in the 1995 year date, the right stamp in a strip of three. Attached is a 1200 dpi scan, along with a close-up. Thanks. — *Rob Loeffler #1566-L*

Joe Sedivy's Thank You. I would like to enter a small thank you to Jim Perry for his kind words for me in the November *Coil Line* about running the club auctions for over 30 years.

I would also like to give thanks to my wife! Without her assistance I would be way behind in getting each auction closed. She is a very big help to the club, not just to me. Judy does not collect stamps but allows me to have all the fun with them.

But her role in each auction is to pull the lots and email all the winning bidders with the totals that they owe and where to mail the checks. This allows me to package the lots and figure out the postage needed to mail them out to the bidders.

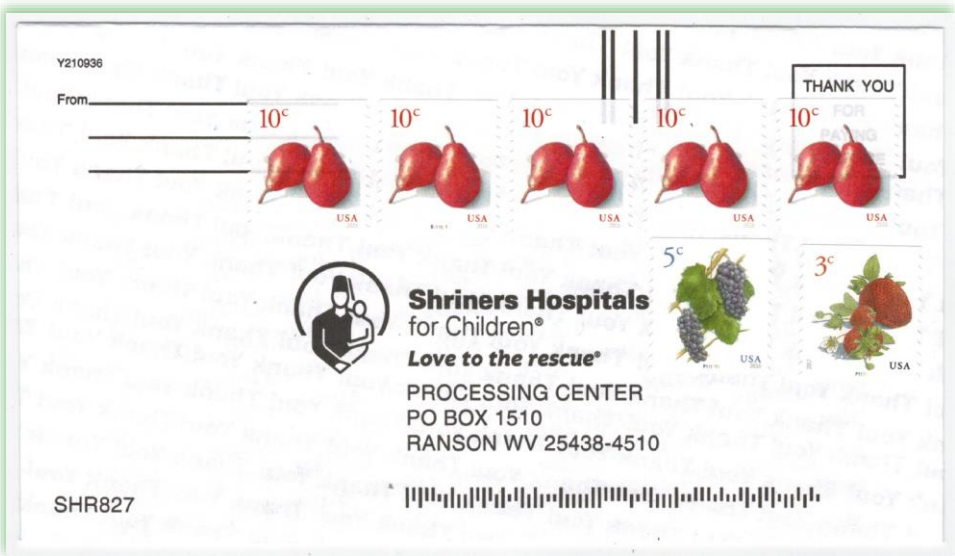
I would also like to thank all the members who take part in the auctions and hope that new members join in as quickly as they can. If there are ever any questions about a lot in any auction, please contact me either via email or a phone call at any time now that I am retired. (It use to be after 6 PM when I was in the working world.) I will answer all questions or send you a scan of the lot you are inquiring about.

— *Joe Sedivy #598-L*

PNCs Trifecta, from Shriners! PNC³ member Jim Lowery sent me this courtesy reply envelope from Shriners Hospitals that someone sent him Nov. 9th (*below*). This is a fantastic find! Thanks for sharing!

I've given this some extra thought and it occurs to me that with a little Ronsonol lighter fluid and two nice mint PNCs, you could easily remove the two lower stamps and replace them with PNCs. So I would caution readers not to pay huge amounts of money for these types of covers, as they could be easily faked. Still, it's nice to see one come out of the Shriners organization untouched like this.— *John Himes #957-L*

(please see next page)



close-ups of plate numbers cropped from cover image



► Readers Forum *(from previous page)*

Tagging Compound “X”. In the October *Coil Line*, Doug Iams commented on the Red, White and Blue tagging types [Scott 4894-4897]. I have been saying for some time that there are three tagging responses to shortwave u/v, the typical yellow-green glow given off by zinc orthosilicate, an ambiguous glow given off when the high-bright phosphors in the paper respond to shortwave, diluting the yellow green zinc orthosilicate response, and a white glow given off by “compound x.”

Iams wrote, “First of all, there is zero evidence the ones that glow bright white (or bluish white) under SWUV have a new different taggant. What we see while a SWUV light is on, is the combination of the response of both the taggant and any optical brighteners present.” This is wrong.

I have examples of stamps printed on totally dead paper, dead to longwave and dead to shortwave, that glow bluish white under shortwave. There is zero contribution from any paper brightener.

A perfect example is the 17¢ Bighorn Sheep, Scott 4138 [pane/20], plate V1111, printed on paper that is dead to u/v, long and shortwave, and where a block of taggant is applied to just the stamps and not the selvage. Having selvage untagged lets us look at the paper without the taggant. It’s dead.

This stamp was also printed, with plate number V1111, on medium high-bright and on high-bright paper. The stamps printed on dead paper gave us a clear look at unadulterated taggant, the infamous “compound x.”

Bighorn Sheep was also printed on prephosphored paper by Avery, and it gives the typical bright yellow green-glow. The plate number of that version is V2222.

Donald Kasper, an expert in infrared reflectance spectroscopy, has identified minerals for me in the past. His lab is excellent and his identifications have been spot on, confirmed in another lab by x-ray diffraction.

Since the taggant in these stamps is a mineral, it occurred to us that we could identify it using this technique. To get a reference, we used a sample of willemite, zinc orthosilicate, from Franklin, New Jersey. To confirm the result, Don used a sample of willemite from Zambia. They were the same.

(please see next page)

Member Benefit Renewals in 2022

Next issue is first one for 2022. All members are entitled to two, 50-word ads per year at no cost. Additional words or ads are charged at 10¢ per word. Perhaps there’s a research project, or some items on your want list you can’t find? Try a classified. – January’s issue is the first one available for 2022. Please send ad copy via email to the *Coil Line* editor by the 15th of month prior to desired issue. (See page 144 for contact info.)

Trivia Break answer to November’s question: (10¢) Stars & Stripes is the only PNC issue (so far) with *year dates of different colors* within its designs.

Coil Line Classifieds

Housecleaning. Have for your collection, most coils 1980 to date -- on covers. Some personal covers, most are commercial covers. No PNCs! All USPS hand canceled or machine canceled. Request for Postage. George Mercier, PO Box 16843, Worcester MA 01601

FOR SALE; RW73b DUCK STAMP Souvenir Sheet with 2 signatures. PSAG graded Superb 98 OG NH. A beauty \$350. Ed Wigger 717.697.0255 swanhunter1@aol.com

PNC USED singles, used strips, MNH PS5s, purple machine cancels. 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.

USED PNCs on and off cover. Our new eight-page list of Used PNCs is yours free. We also have a free new 33-page list of MNH PNCs, Booklets, Booklet Panes, many by plate number and position. Specify which list is wanted. Vic Collinino, PO Box 300-P, Stratham, NH 03885-0300 or email your name and address to vimco@comcast.net.

► **Readers Forum** (from previous page)

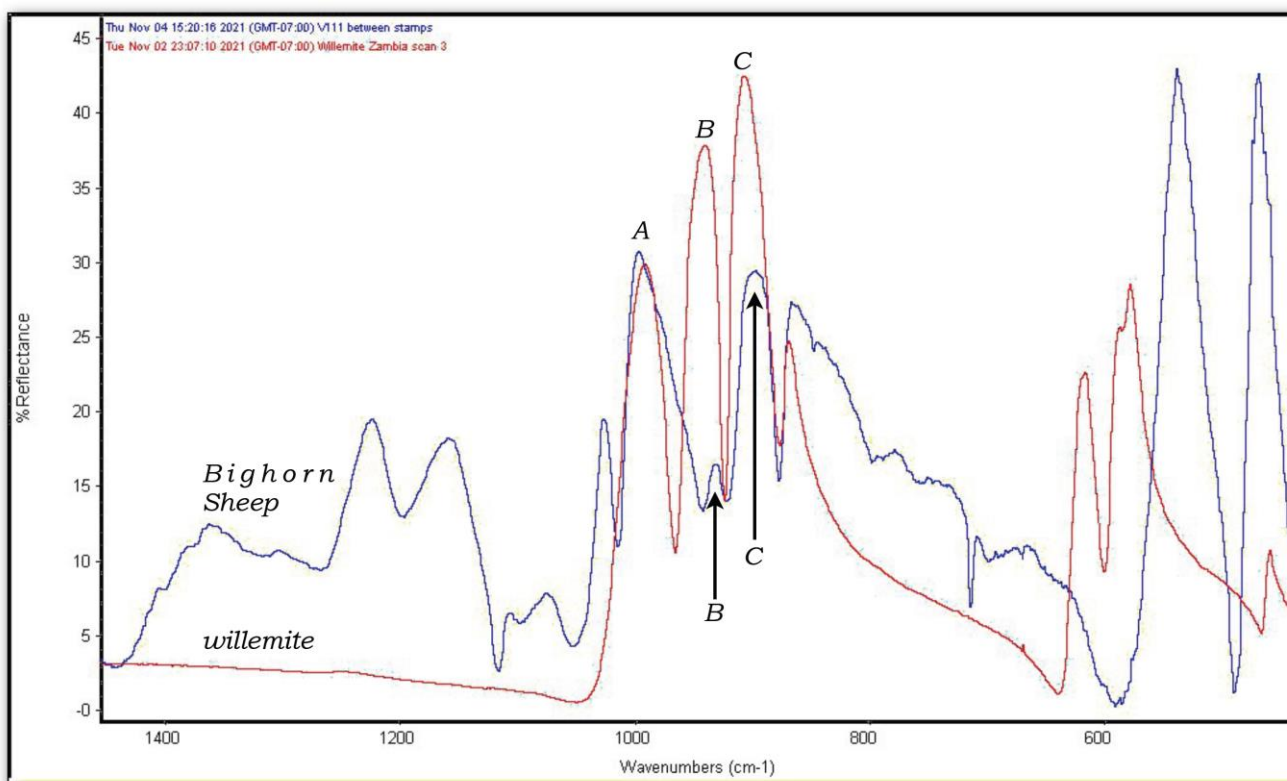
The system uses a laser to excite the atoms in a sample. The atoms absorb photons, oscillate, deform and emit electrons. When the electron cloud falls back to its ground state, the atoms emit photons, which strike the detector. This behavior is governed by the structure of the particular mineral.

The photons are converted by the detector into an electrical signal which is processed into a graph. The wavelength of the peaks on the graph, on the horizontal axis, not the height of the peaks, is what identifies a mineral. The New Jersey and Zambian willemite had peaks at identical wavelengths.

Looking at the dead selvage of a Bighorn pane where the stamps themselves glowed white under shortwave, only clay was detected. That made sense,

since this is a clay-coated paper and the selvage was not tagged. Looking at the margin of a stamp, willemite was detected. So why does it glow white and not yellow green? The willemite used in taggant is synthetic willemite. This compound was the first phosphor used in fluorescent tubes. So why did those lamps not glow yellow green? If you dope zinc orthosilicate by replacing some of the zinc with manganese II, the color of the fluorescence changes to white or bluish white.

Many minerals fluoresce with different colors under shortwave, the difference in color being caused by impurities. The normal fluorescence of willemite is a strong yellow green. With Mn^{+2} replacing some of the zinc, the fluorescence is white or blue white. This is compound x, which is not the form of willemite used on most stamps. But it is clearly being used on some.



Result of scans of willemite sample from Zambia and the white margin on a 17¢ Bighorn Sheep stamp [from pane/20] that fluoresces bluish white under shortwave u/v. The red line is willemite. The blue line is from the stamp.

The peaks at A, B and C are diagnostic of willemite. Notice that the peaks at B and C are shorter for the stamp (the blue line), but the wavenumber, on the horizontal scale, is the same. The wavenumber is diagnostic.

Since the willemite on the stamp was ground to a powder and suspended in a varnish to make the taggant, the instrument detects more than one crystal face, resulting in the reduced height of the peaks at B and C.

The additional peaks to the left and right of A, B and C on the blue line are due to the presence of other minerals in the stamp, primarily clays in the paper coating. The mineral line (red) is simpler since it was a clean example of willemite. (*Letter, and above content from U.S. Stamp News, Dec. 2020, Rudy de Mordaigle #1830*)

Annual Membership Dues are Due for 2022!

Mel Borofsky, PNC³ Treasurer

Now is the time to renew your PNC³ membership for another year. You can opt to use the paper renewal form located on the wrapper of this month's *Coil Line*. Those of you with the electronic version of *Coil Line* will need to print out the paper form.

You can also pay your dues via PayPal. Go to the club's website: www.pnc3.org. On the left side of the screen, click on PNC3 MEMBERSHIP then select RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP ONLINE, or go to <https://pnc3.org/club/RenewMembership.php>

If you choose to renew via PayPal and your personal information has changed, please notify us via the Change of Address form on the PNC³ website www.pnc3.org. Again, go to PNC3 MEMBERSHIP and then select CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM. You may provide this information directly to the Club Secretary, Dan Farrar, whose contact information is located in the Elected Officers area of *Coil Line*.

Whatever format you use, please do this while it's fresh on your mind.

Life members who opt to receive *Coil Line* electronically don't owe additional fees, but please send in the renewal form to keep us apprised of any changes in your status. This helps make sure we can make contact when needed.

Most members do a good job of remembering their membership number and placing it on the paper form. (This speeds the renewal process.) If you choose to use PayPal you can add your membership number in the comment section. If you don't remember your number, send in the payment anyway and remember to look on your check when it is returned, I will add your number to your check. If you would like a membership card with your number imprinted, please indicate "send membership card" on the paper form and I will make sure you receive one via return mail. You can also request a membership card on the comment section of your PayPal payment.

Thanks in advance for keeping your membership current and helping us keep PNC³ a strong and viable part of the philatelic community. We look forward to serving you in the coming year.

ALL MEMBERS: Please fill out and return this form before December 31, 2021

2022 PNC³ Membership Update Form

Name: _____ PNC³ Number: _____

Address: _____ () Check if new address

City: _____ State: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Country: _____ email address for *Coil Line*: _____

Day Phone: (____) _____ Evening Phone: (____) _____

	<u>Regular Member</u>	<u>Life Member</u>
USA - Annual Dues with Electronic Full Color <i>Coil Line</i>	___ \$12.00	___ Included
USA - Annual Dues with First Class Mailing <i>Coil Line</i>	___ \$38.00	___ \$26.00
Worldwide: Annual Dues with Electronic Full Color <i>Coil Line</i>	___ \$12.00	___ Included
Worldwide: Annual Dues with Surface Mailing <i>Coil Line</i>	___ \$46.00	___ \$34.00
Membership Pin with PNC ³ Logo (postpaid)	___ Add \$7 USA, \$9 Worldwide	

Please remit by check or money order payable (in US funds) to: PNC3

Mail renewal form and remittance to: Melvyn A. Borofsky, PNC Treasurer
101 West Sterling Way
Leesburg FL 34788

(Please do NOT send payment for more than one year as the dues structure may change next year.)

For Club Use:

Date received: _____ Amount: _____ By: _____

In accordance with the PNC3 bylaws (ARTICLE II, SECTION 3c), Life Membership may be requested by an individual member in good standing who has been a member for 10 continuous years and who submits a fee equal to 10 times the current annual dues. Any member whose membership number is 2197 or lower has the necessary 10 years of membership as of December 31, 2021.

This Life Membership fee pays for membership and includes electronic delivery of *Coil Line*. Life members desiring first-class mailing AND those with foreign mailing address will have to annually remit to the Club Treasurer the additional amount then in effect for mailing. See chart above. Life Membership fees are not refundable.

If you wish to apply for Life Membership, please complete the name and address information at the top of this form, along with the items below, and submit the form to the Treasurer along with the Life Membership fee which is 10 times a member's current annual dues.

Date of Birth: _____ Signature of Life Member Applicant _____