

## A look back at scam of 0.1¢ 'provisionals'

By Ken Lawrence

In reviewing Rob Washburn's booklet, *PNCs on Cover*, Steve Esrati lamented that Washburn did not retell the sad saga of the Redwood City, Calif., "postmaster's provisionals." It's the story of a successful scam, carefully crafted to fleece sophisticated collectors and editors.

First, some background:

On Nov. 1, 1981, the third class bulk rates for permit holders rose. The minimum per-piece rate for commercial bulk mail sorted to three or five ZIP-code digits (the "basic presort" rate) became 10.9 cents. Before then the rate had been 10.4 cents from March 22, 1981, to Oct. 31, 1981, and 8.4 cents for almost three years before that.

No stamps were printed in the 10.4-cent denomination. On March 20, the Postal Service authorized mailers to continue to use 8.4¢ Piano coil stamps at the new rate, with the balance due in a lump sum at the time of mailing, a practice known as false franking.

The original false-franking authorization expired July 1, but on July 16 it was extended to Oct. 1. On Oct. 6 it was extended again to Dec. 1, thus

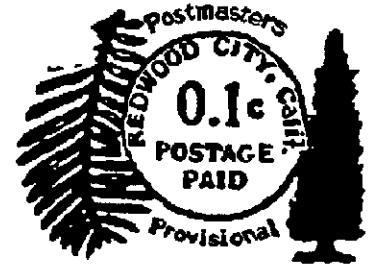
continuing past the increase to 10.9 cents. On Dec. 31, with no new stamps yet available, the false-franking authorization was extended "until further notice."

Despite gaps in the authorization, probably because postal officials were preoccupied with concerns other than the technical lapse of the false-franking rule, the practical effect was that precanceled 8.4¢ Piano stamps were used on mail at three different postal rates, from its original release some time in July of 1978 (first day for the tagged collector edition was July 13), until it was finally replaced by the precanceled 10.9¢ Hansom Cab stamp in the spring of 1982 (first day for the tagged edition was March 26).

An individual cover franked with a precanceled 8.4¢ Piano stamp may represent any of three rates—8.4 cents if mailed before March 22, 1981; 10.4 cents if mailed between then and the last of October; 10.9 cents if mailed Nov. 1, 1981, or later.

Since bulk mail normally does not receive a dated postmark, it is usual-

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## USPS inspectors ban mixtures, may dry up used PNCs

By Howard A. Moser

An action by postal inspectors in December 1989 will have a devastating effect on the supply of used PNCs.

Postal inspectors have persuaded the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that its 50-year-old Stamps for Missions should discontinue gathering and selling U.S. stamp mixtures. The inspectors' reason for this is that some of these used stamps may have ended up in illegal cancel-cleaning operations.

The postal inspectors readily agreed that Stamps for Missions was doing nothing illegal and that the decision by the Missouri Synod was voluntary.

The first indication of the things to come was in a letter from Bob Rinckenberger, owner of Bob's Stamp Room, a St. Louis mixture dealer, dated Dec. 16, 1989.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON MIX #11:** My supplier of this mix (a large religious organization) may not supply this mix after the first of the year. I don't really know what is behind it, although they said a couple (of) postal inspectors came to their office and stated that **selling mixtures is illegal.** [Emphasis added by TPN, ed.]

I have never heard of any law forbidding selling mixtures ... although I do know that washing (cleaning cancels off) is illegal and ... using uncanceled stamps from mixtures such as this is ille-

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## USPS is unconstitutional

If a postal inspector told the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church that selling mixtures is illegal, we have another instance of lying by the Postal Service.

Previous lies have involved the reason why the 22¢ Test coil was printed (USPS said it was to test mail-handling machinery, but the real reason was to prevent stamp washing) and the claim that USPS loses \$50 million a year because of illegal stamp washing, a total that is impossible to ascertain and probably exaggerated.

At this point we must make a political statement. There is no room in the United States of America for a federal agency that is not under the purview of Congress. When the Post Office Department was made into a semi-public agency under President Nixon in 1971, Congress lost not only its right to set rates, but also its right to review the way the Postal Service operates.

In a democracy, this is disgraceful. The Founding Fathers set up a system in which one branch of government would check on another. An administrative action could be reviewed in the courts and in Congress. The President has a limited veto over Congress (subject to override) and the courts can rule a law unconstitutional. Judges can be impeached by Congress.

But nobody controls lying postal inspectors. Nobody

## The Plate Number

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protects the public, not even a church with 2.6 million members, from high-handed USPS action.

And the last big lie, that the church stopped making mixtures "voluntarily," can be dismissed simply because it is laughable. President Nixon resigned from office "voluntarily," too. But we all know that the House was ready to impeach him if he did not.

The Postal Service needs to be brought into compliance with the U.S. Constitution.

## LETTERS: *Yosemites found without a plate number*

I recently bought a roll of 100 of 25¢ Yosemite stamps that had no plate number visible, even under magnification (the stamps are well centered, so that's not the problem).

Not even a portion of a plate number was detectable. I took aluminum foil and gently rubbed it over the entire length of the roll to see if the intaglio impression of a number was there, but I could not find one, so if I did not miss the number then it's not merely an inking problem. Has anyone else reported missing numbers?

John Bensko  
Memphis, Tenn.

### 'P' on wrapper label

You asked for reports of other 25¢ Flag plates printed on phosphored paper that have a "P" on the label. Plate 3 has a "P" label.

One of my rolls of phosphored Plate 3 has a constant inking variety. The bottom loop of the "3" is missing. Under 4× magnification, the uninked portion shows embossing where the missing part of the loop should be.

Alan Thomson  
Northwood, N.H.

*In reply:* Phosphored Plates 2 and 9 have also been found with the bottom of the plate number missing. In addition, one report (not confirmed by inspection)

dated before phosphored stamps were issued, indicates that the block-tagged Plate 3 may also show this variety.

### How do 12s differ?

Is there a way to distinguish between the 12¢ Stanley Steamer precancel from the Cottrell and from the B press other than the absence of a joint line?

Philip Crouse  
York, Pa.

*In reply:* B Press stamps are smaller. If you have a strip with a joint line and one without, you can see this by laying one on the other. That difference allows you to make a gauge.

You take an unnumbered stamp on which you have been able to identify the press and cut it in half horizontally. Now you lay this gauge on top of any unknown strip and compare widths. If they match, the stamps are off the same press; if not, they're off different presses.

### Purple cancels

I have been keeping track of purple machine cancels on PNC commercial covers for quite some time. My articles in *Coil Line* have mentioned them since the first article I ever wrote.

The following are the purple machine cancels known on commercial covers: 18¢ Flag (1-7); 20¢ Flag (1-9); 20¢ Consumer Education (1-4), 18¢ Surrey (1-

16), and 20¢ Fire Pumper (1-16).

Rob Washburn  
Skowhegan, Maine

The experimental period of purple machine cancels was the early 1970s, long before PNCs. When the ink was in standard use in the early 1980s, it was no longer experimental.

The decision to phase out purple ink was taken in 1982, but with the proviso that existing stocks in the field should be used up, not discarded.

Several sectional centers still had purple ink in 1983, and a few in 1984, but it would have been rare in 1985, when the 22¢ Flags were issued.

Also, I think you'll find that "fiber roller" (*TPN* page 38) refers to an inking-in roller, not a tagging plate.

Ken Lawrence  
Jackson, Miss.

### More Honeybee FDCs

In your January issue you asked for reports of other cachets on 25¢ Honeybee.

I prepared 50 hand-colored cachets with plate strips of seven from Plate 1. My idea was to be the only cachet maker to have used strips of seven. Unfortunately, the issue is sold out; other Anagram PNC FDCs are still available.

Alex Rogolsky  
Anagram Hand-Colored Cachets  
Rockville, Md.

# THE NEW PNCs

## \$1 Seaplane debuts April 20 in Phoenix

Because there was a "desperate need" for a \$1 coil stamp, supplies of the \$1 Eugene O'Neill stamp having been nearly exhausted, the Postal Service moved up the issue day of the \$1 Seaplane stamp and canceled the 05 Circus Wagon.

The new stamp was to be issued April 20 at Aripex in Phoenix, Ariz. The red-and-blue Seaplane is the first bi-colored stamp in the Transportation Series without a service indicator. It is also the highest value issued in the series.

The good news for PNC collectors is that one will need to buy only five \$1 Seaplane stamps from the Philatelic Sales Division to obtain a strip with a plate number.

Even the reduction to five stamps from the previous six to obtain a plate number necessitated a change in the *Domestic Mail Manual*, according to a USPS spokesman. But the rule *DMM* (Section 163.533) applied only to plate numbers; it did not apply to joint-line strips of the O'Neills, even though it clearly included line strips. The *Philatelic Catalog* required the purchase of only four stamps to obtain an O'Neill joint-line strip. The USPS spokesman said, "We have been aware that they've been doing this, but they were not supposed to."

The Postal Service was unable to release information on the Seaplane stamp until March 23, possibly because of the need to change the *DMM*. Information was to be sent to the philatelic press on March 27.

The stamp is available in rolls of 500 and the plate number is on every 52nd stamp. That would seem to indicate that it was printed on the B Press, but the USPS spokesman said there was no indication in the official announcement as to what press the stamp was printed on. (Belmont Faries, writing in *Stamp Collector* for April 7, stated: "The stamp is being printed on the B Press.")

Day of issue: April 20, 1990

First-day city: Phoenix AZ

Size Overall: 0.87 x 0.96 inch or 23.1 x 24.4mm

Image: 0.71 x 0.82 inch or 18.0 x 20.8mm

Press: Not stated

Size of roll: 500

Plate number: every 52nd stamp

Color: Blue (PMS 295) on "Seaplane 1914"

Red (PMS 186) on "\$1 USA"

The stamp will be assigned the *PNC Catalog* number "\$1T1," assuming that its plate number would be 1. The dollar sign is needed to differentiate it from the 1¢ Omnibus. The Scott Catalog will term it 2468. (USPS now provides Scott numbers in its *Stamp News USA* announcements. In the past, Scott would release the information only in its *Scott's Monthly Journal*.)

For a description of the seaplane, called an "airboat" in 1914, see the *TPN Data Bank* on the back page of this issue. □



## 05 Circus Wagon coil indefinitely postponed

The 05 Circus Wagon stamp originally scheduled to be issued April 20 at Aripex in Phoenix has been indefinitely postponed. The stamp was to have been the first in the Transportation Series using the system of stating the face value introduced in the 05 (5¢) Luis Muñoz Marin stamp.

The 5¢ stamp was not urgently needed when supplies of the \$1 Eugene O'Neill stamp started to run out and the schedule allowed for the introduction of just one new stamp, "so we decided to postpone the Circus Wagon," a spokesman for USPS said.

Ken Lawrence, writing in *Linn's*, had speculated that the Circus Wagon was being introduced because the 5¢ Milk Wagon was just plain ugly.

But chances are that if USPS has accepted the need for a new 5¢ coil stamp to replace the Milk Wagon, it will be issued before the introduction of the new postal rates, tentatively scheduled for May 1991.

The first-class rate is expected to go to 30 cents if the independent Postal Rate Commission accepts the recommendations of the USPS. A 5¢ stamp is needed to enable mailers to use up 25¢ stamps to meet the new rate. At the last rate hike, supplies of the 3¢ Conestoga Wagon coil were insufficient and 3¢ Parkman coils were taken from the vaults and sold for makeup postage.

But, just in case the Postal Rate Commission does not accept the 30¢ rate for first-class mail, undenominated stamps may be in the offing as makeup postage should the makeup rate be less than a nickel.

Since the last rate hike, USPS has issued 10 Transportation PNCs, 25¢ Yosemite, E stamps and Honeybees. □

## Constant varieties—Part XXVII

By A.S. Cibulskas

### 2¢ Locomotive

a. Plate 8. Line parallel and left of joint line. Similar to line previously reported on 14¢ Iceboat. Constant at 1L. (SAdams)

### 4.9¢ Buckboard

a. Plates 1 and 2. Mat variety shows a dot left of the back left wheel. On examples submitted, the variety was at 3R, with the gap at 1R. That puts this constant mat variety 2 stamps to the right of the gap. (Lentz)

### 5.2¢ Sleigh (

a. See article on Page 47 of this issue.

### 7.1¢ Tractor

a. Plate 1 (old inscription). "Dirt clod" gouge at about 5 o'clock below and left of the lower left rear tire. Constant at 13R. (Phelps)

b. Plate 1 (old). Oil drop under the front axle. Constant at 2R. (Phelps)

c. Plate 1 (old). Small dot centered above "9" of date. Constant at 2L. (Phelps)

### 11¢ Caboose

a. Plate 1, P/C Red dot over "8" of date. Constant at 13R. (Lentz)

b. Plate 1, P/C Mat variety. Horizontal wedge about 2mm long and 1mm wide just above bottom precancel bar and just right of perfor. Constant at 4L. (Lentz)

### 13.2¢ Coal Car

a. Plate 1. Dot centered in front of the coal car. Constant at 8L. (Maves)

### 20¢ Flag

a. Plate 14. Dot over "U" of "USA." Constant at 3R. (Hoppis)

### 20.5¢ Fire Engine

a. Plate 1. Dot above the middle of the front hood. Constant at 22R. (Phelps)

### 25¢ Bread Wagon

a. Plate 1. Gouge or crack juts out from the front top left of the wagon. Constant at 19L.

b. Plate 4. See article on Page 47 of this issue.

# Buying from Philatelic Sales Division is still a lottery

Buying PNCs from the Philatelic Sales Division has always been a form of lottery. You could never tell what you would receive.

At one time in 1985, when strips of five of Plates 17 and 18 of the 18¢ Surrey were selling for more than \$25, the division was merrily shipping them out at face.

The division currently lists several forms of Yosemite roll. Three types are listed only as rolls of 100. Item 0725 is not identified as to roll length, but it is supposed to be from the B Press. If you want to gamble with \$125, you just might get a roll of 500 from Plate 2 off the B Press with block tagging. The label, which has no "P," has a written notation identifying it as "0725."

There's only one thing wrong with that notation. The B Press also printed rolls on phosphored paper. So far, Plates 2 and 3 are known from rolls of 3,000 and Plate 3 from rolls of 10,000. The question that has yet to be answered is whether they also exist as 500s.

David Barrie-LaVergne of the PNC Label Study Group has been trying to sort out the Yosemite. The top table at the right is what he has found so far.

The second table was compiled by Alan Thomson for *Coil Line* to list roll sizes of the 25¢ Flag. Comments are welcome about both tables.

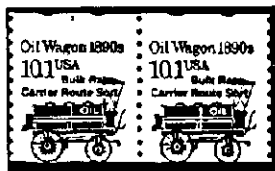
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James A. Courter II has found a new constant plate variety on Plate 8 of the block-tagged 25¢ Yosemite in which the right top of the tall, dark trees at the right of the stamp is missing. Courter (2100-325 Paces Forest Court, Raleigh, N.C. 27612) has several strips of the variety for sale or trade, with and without plate number. The variety occurs on every stamp in the coil.

Courter has also found a miscut strip of the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon from Plate 2 (with red overprint) in which the bottoms of the wheels are at the top of the stamp. Naturally this provides a strip with a whole, clear number on top.

It might be pertinent to point out here that the only number-on-top varieties listed in the *PNC Catalog* are those that are whole. Said A.S. Cibulskas, the keeper of the lists, "You've got to have

## All the PNC news that fits we print



some criteria, and then you must stick to them. If the numbers are

nicked, they are not listed."

\*\*\*

H. Harry Mueggenburg has acquired the untagged errors and tagging EFOs of

probably also from Plate 7, in which there is no trace of any plate number at all.

In previous finds of this sort, from Plates 2 and 3, it was found that the entire plate number could, in fact, be seen as an embossing under magnification with the lower portion uninked, making these into inking varieties. Bush's report is the first of a totally missing number.

\*\*\*

Joe Lane, the Houston PNC dealer, wants to know what 25¢ Honeybees missing the black intaglio printing are worth. Phil Rose, a collector, wants to know what a splice

would cost from one of the new jumbo rolls of 10,000.

To find out, TPN called Scott Magdule of Montclair Stamp Co., a dealer in errors and EFOs. Magdule estimated that the buy price of the intaglio-missing Honeybee should be \$100 for a pair.

"A pair?" he was asked.

"Yes. U.S. coil stamps are traditionally sold as pairs."

He estimated the sales price of the splice at \$10 to \$20.

Meanwhile, veteran PNC dealer Al Haake estimated that a splice should sell for less than \$10, in part because they are so easy to create by do-it-yourselfers (but see Page 55 for a description). Haake knew of one dealer who was setting a \$100 price on splices, which, he said, "I think is way too much."

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Scott Adams has found another variety on Plate 5 of the block-tagged 25¢ Yosemite. Already known is the "black forest" found by Con Keydel and the "ski slope" found on all copies of the black forest. What Adams has discovered is a ski slope on Plate 5 in which the trees are the normal green. □

HELP USPS DELIVER TPN TO YOU. LET US HAVE YOUR 9-DIGIT ZIP CODE.

IF YOUR LABEL SAYS "3-90," THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE UNLESS YOU RENEW.

## The 25¢ Yosemite

Philatelic Catalog item	Contents	Box label	Contents
0725	Block tag, B Press	725	400 rolls of 500
?	Block tag, B Press	725	8 rolls of 3,000
?	Block tag, C Press	737	800 rolls of 100
7737	Phosphored	7737	800 rolls of 100
?	Phosphored	7726	8 rolls of 3,000
?	Phosphored	Sticker 1	50 rolls of 500

Key to stickers, all printed by computer:

1	25 CT. FLAG, 500s P, 50 coils	Green
2	25 CT. FLAG, 500s, 50 coils	Red
3	25 CT. FLAG, 500s, 50 coils	Black
4 (small)	C Press (from flat of block-tagged 100s)	Red

## Roll sizes (preliminary)

Plate	Key	Plate	Key	Plate	Key	Key to roll size
1	B	5i	—	9i	A	A = Rolls of 100
2	—	6	A	10i	A	B = Rolls of 500
2i	B, C, D	7	—	11i	A	C = Rolls of 3,000
3	B	7i	A	13i	A	D = Rolls of 10,000
3i	B*, D	8	B	14i	—	i = Phosphored
4	B	8i	A, B*			* = Has "P" on label
5	A	9	—			

Alfred (Tag) Boerger, who was America's pioneer dealer in tagging. Boerger once published the *Handbook on U.S. Luminescent Stamps* and was one of the original philatelists who kept track of the Post Office Department's Dayton experiments.

\*\*\*

Veteran PNC researcher Larry G. Haynes has been sent to Europe by his company. After six months in England, he will spend two years in France. His company is forwarding all mail to him.

\*\*\*

More and more Yosemite are showing up with parts of the plate number missing. Allen Bush in Arkansas and Ron Maifeld in Ohio both report Plate 7 phosphored with only the top of the "7" showing. Maifeld (6508 Craigland Court, Cincinnati, OH 45230) says he has many examples available for trade.

Bush also reports an entire roll of 100,

# Finding of a se-tenant precancel strip deletes a section in 1990 PNC Catalog

By Stephen G. Esrati

Until mid-February, the working drafts of the 1990 *PNC Catalog* included a breakdown of the two precancel styles found on the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon and the 12.5¢ Pushcart.

The breakdown was based on reports by Leland S. Warzala (*TPN*, September 1989) and Kim Cuniberti.

But the illustrations and tables, which



## Half gap is found on a 10.9T2P

A small chart has been added to the checklist for precancel gaps in Appendix A of the 1990 *PNC Catalog*. It lists the known positions of half-gap precancels as follows:

Half gaps		
The following precancels with half gaps (exactly at the vertical center of the stamp) are known:		
<b>5.2c:</b>	3/5	1/2L
	4/5	3/2L
<b>5.9c:</b>	3/4	1/2L
<b>9.3c:</b>	1/2	4/2R
	3/4	1/2R
		1/2R

Note that there is no reference to any half gap from the 10.9¢ Hanson Cab.

But there will be by the time the catalog is published.

A half gap on the num-

bered stamp from Plate 2, which could have come from a shifted Line gap or a shift in a precancel at 1L (never reported previously), was found by Gerald H. Clark of Utah.

Since it is strongly believed that all precancel gap positions have not been found by PNC collectors, and since this may prove to be the first indication that a Gap 1L may exist, the find is important.

Let's hope we find the "lost gap" at 1L before too long. □

are shown below, had to be withdrawn from the draft and will not appear in the catalog.

The reason is that Richard J. Nazar found a gap strip of the 12.5¢ Pushcart from a Plate 1 strip on Type III paper showing the gap at 10R that exhibited both styles of the precancel, one style on either side of the gap.

When he called me, he said: "I've got bad news for you."

He had sent his strip, printed in the light olive color, to Warzala for an opinion. As to the appearance of the "e," Warzala replied: "Three stamps left of the gap have the open 'e'; three stamps right of the gap have the closed 'e.'"

And that meant that the handy-dandy way of differentiating the stamps most easily by examining the "e" was no longer valid.

Actually, the "handy-dandy" method was not all that great in the first place. It worked fine on the olive Pushcart, but when Cuniberti tried to analyze the "e"s on the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon, he found that it was nearly impossible to establish clearly whether the "e" was open or closed because of the nearly black appearance of the "slate blue" color of the Oil Wagon.

Warzala withdrew his third conclusion, that "12.5¢ stamps on Type III paper have a Type A precancel, which has an open 'e.'"

Warzala suggested to me that I delete any reference to the "e" from the 1990 catalog. Cuniberti concurred, saying: "It's Lee's thing, and if he wants it deleted, we should."

Warzala conceded that even on the Type B precancel, 6.5% of the stamps he

examined showed an open "e."

"Of the more than 700 stamps with Type A precancel that I looked at, 100% had the open 'e.' Realistically, though, I did feel that the conclusion would not hold, simply because Type B wasn't closed all the time."

Asked whether it was possible that we had run into another se-tenant precancel style, similar to Style AB or BA on the 17¢ Electric Auto, Warzala said he could not be sure.

"What may have happened is that the printers switched precancel mats while they were printing the stamps with the gap at 10R."

To make a long story short, all references to the "e" were dropped in a later draft of the catalog. But that does not mean that Warzala's original finding was wrong.

As a matter of fact, he may have been 100% correct, except in the case of Gap 10R.

But all this means that further study is needed before we engrave the "e" distinctions in stone by placing it in the catalog.

This is how the catalog would have looked:

### TWO PRECANCEL MATS USED ON 10.1¢ OIL WAGON, 12.5¢ PUSHCART

On 101.T1P, the "e" of "Rate" is almost closed. The entire letter has a rounded, fat appearance. On Plate 2, the "e" is leaner and has a squared-off appearance.

On the 12.5¢ Pushcart, use of the two mats is also related to color differences and different paper types.



<b>Type A:</b>	Found on 10.T2P and all 12.ST1P printed on Papers I and III.	<b>Type B:</b>	Found on 10.1T1P and all 12.ST1P printed on Paper II.
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### Checklist (not in catalog) 10.1T and 12.5T precancels

	Paper		
	I	II	III
10.1T1P	•	•	•
10.1T2P	•	•	•
12.5T1P light olive	•	•	•
12.5T1P dark olive	•	•	•
12.5T2P	•	•	•
Precancel style			
	A	B	
10.1T1P	•	•	
10.1T2P	•	•	
12.5T1P light olive	•	•	
12.5T1P dark olive	•	•	
12.5T2P	•	•	

## Here's a jumbo label

Labels for the new rolls of 10,000 are the same size (88.5mm) as the labels used on rolls of 3,000, albeit with different inscriptions.

The accompanying picture (from Richard Nazar, who also made the measurements) is shown in actual size.

The black background is from a chipboard that measures 182.2mm in diameter. A similar, but blank, chipboard disk is on the bottom of the roll.

The label itself is printed in purple (PMS 240U).

\*\*\*

No sooner had the last issue of *TPN* gone to the printer, than egg was splattered liberally across its face.

Nazar and Kim Curiberti had calculated that a roll of 10,000 PNCs had one chance in 28 of having a paper splice. They had come to this conclusion mathematically, based on the average length of a roll of paper as 21,000 feet.

But on *TPN*'s printing day it was learned that Frank Marrelli had found three splices in one roll of 10,000 of the 16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon from Plate 2.

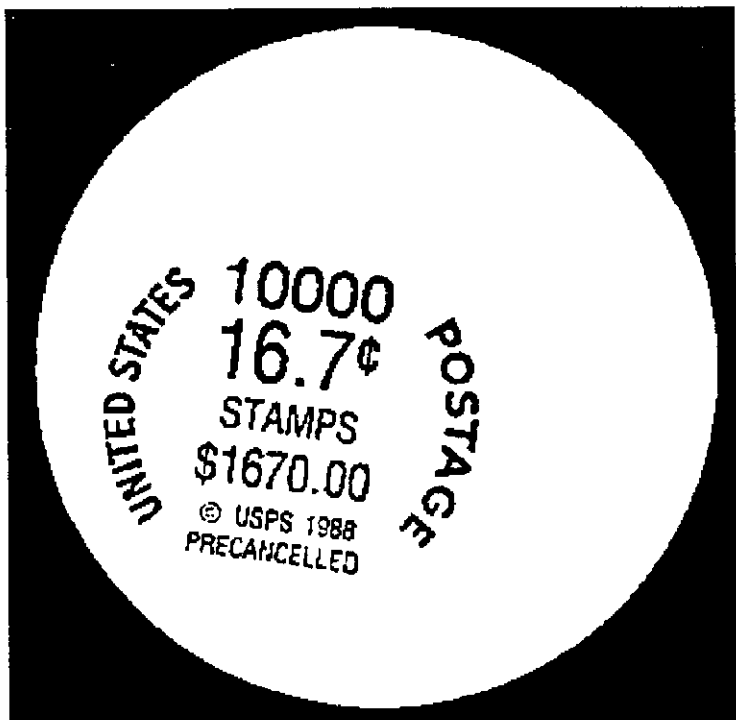
So it is time to explain the apparent discrepancy.

There are two kinds of splices that can occur on stamps: a mill splice and a BEP splice. It is a BEP splice that we expect in the jumbo rolls because one roll of paper must be joined to another when paper runs out.

A mill splice occurs in a roll as delivered by the paper maker. Judging from internal BEP documents, such splices are not uncommon. Each time it occurred during the period for which we have minute-by-minute press activity reports, a new roll had to be placed on press.

When this happened on the B Press, at 11:15 p.m. on Sept. 8, 1989, the web rollers needed to be cleaned. Production resumed at 1 a.m.

A BEP splice is also done by the pressmen when



**HARD TO FIND**—Because rolls of 10,000 cannot be opened in post offices, collectors need ingenuity to find labels. This label is shown full sized.

the paper web breaks. In exasperation, a foreman noted that on Sept. 12 there were web breaks "all day."

Obviously, when the pressmen do a splice of a broken web, the 21,000-foot length of the roll does not matter in calculating the number of splices needed to print a coil of 10,000 stamps.

Thus it is possible that there may

be more splices in rolls of 10,000 than theory would lead one to believe.

It should be noted, also, that the interval between plate numbers varies when a splice occurs. It is known, for example, that a spliced roll of *Yosemites* has been found with the interval between plate numbers measuring only 15 stamps. □

## *When's a numbered strip's flaw not a variety on that strip? Easy, when it's on the paired plate across the joint line!*

The 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog* lists a constant plate variety for Plate 6 of the 17¢ *Electric Auto*. The variety has a dot to the left and above the "E" of *Electric* just across the joint line from the numbered stamp.

That puts the variety on the stamp we call 1R.

"But it's not really on Plate 6," said Scott Adams, a veteran hunter for constant plate varieties. "By being on the other side of the joint line, it's really on Plate 5."

To prove it, Adams will show anyone who doubts his observation a pair of strips with the dot over the "E." One

clearly shows the plate number 6; but the other carries a 7, because that plate was also paired with Plate 5.

Adams' observation makes us recall that our system of identifying stamps on the paired Cottrell plates has a convention that calls a flaw on the numbered strip by the number shown on the strip, and does so even when the flaw is on the other side of the joint line, meaning that it is not on the plate that carries that number.

Adams' observation affects many stamps. But the convention remains.

The last time someone made suggestions for modifications in the way we



**PLATE 6?**—This variety appears on strips with a "6" on the stamp left of the joint line, but the flaw is on Plate 5.

identify PNCs, readers howled the suggestions down in protest.

But in the 1990 catalog, the flaws on 17T6 will be identified more correctly and will also be shown for 17T7. □

# Is new plate crack a Whip continuation?

By A.S. Cibulskas

A constant plate crack has been found, reported, and confirmed on precanceled Plate 2 of the 5.2¢ Sleigh, one of the earliest PNCs, issued in 1983. The crack appears on strips with the gap at 5L.

Once seen, the crack is so obvious it makes one wonder why it has gone unreported for so long. The possibility exists that the newly found crack may be an extension of the "Sleigh Whip," one of the most widely known plate cracks.

The crack originates between the "2" of "5.2" and the cent sign on the numbered stamp. It starts at the upper part of the cent sign, curves to the left, parallels



**NEW**—Crack found by Scott Hoppis.

the upper right slope of the "2," then curves to the right to extend essentially vertically to the midpoint of the right base of the "h" in "Sleigh." It is assumed that it may continue upward coincidentally with the right vertical line of the "h" as it then extends upwards and outwards from the point at which the right vertical of the "h" turns to the left. This upward-and-outward extension is approximately 0.5 to 1mm. I have examined sufficient multiple copies to confirm constancy.

The new crack was discovered by Scott Hoppis and was reported in early January. Since only one copy was originally submitted, I was a bit skeptical as to constancy.

It should be noted that it is not unusual for reported varieties to be unconfirmable as to constancy, but constancy is a strict criterion that must be satisfied before I list a variety in my variety column.

Subsequently, Hoppis submitted multiple copies to confirm constancy. All examples were essentially identical, i.e., they have the same size, shape, intensity, depth, length, etc.



© Nazar, '90

From the beginning Hoppis speculated whether this was an extension of Sleigh Whip II (shown at left) or a different crack. The new crack does, indeed, seem to start where Sleigh Whip II ends.

Careful examination of both cracks tends to confirm this hypothesis, due more to the fact of obvious differences than evidence of a positive link.

The confirming example (and thus proof positive) would be discovery of a strip showing both Sleigh Whip II and the newly found crack. If it is a true extension, such examples should exist.

Perhaps this will yet be forthcoming.

\*\*\*

A collector who wants to remain anonymous has found a drastic miscut on a roll of 100 from Plate 4 of the 25¢ Bread Wagon that resulted in a strip of three



that almost has a complete double plate number.

As the illustration at the left shows, the design is centered low and the normal plate number is near

though clear of the bottom edge of the stamp. The number at the top is slightly nicked at the top.

As is common on the 25¢ Flag issues, certain rolls are cut so they produce larger than normal vertical dimensions. Coincidentally, some are also smaller than normal. Apparently such was the case with this Bread Wagon roll.

I know of no other examples with such a dramatic result in any miscut except for the 8.3¢ Ambulance (and that is the result, in part, of a misplacement of one of the plate numbers as well as a miscut).

To report varieties, please write me at 28 Westwood Rd., Stamford, Conn. 06902. □

## Pilot and passenger on \$1 Seaplane coil a first for PNCs

The \$1 Seaplane stamp is not only the highest denomination to be issued in the Transportation Set, but is also the first PNC to show human beings, a pilot and a passenger.

The lack of people in the designs has given many Transportation stamps a ghostly look, bicycles without riders, baby buggies without a mother, and, finally, a San Francisco cable car climbing a hill without an operator.

Written across the nose of the fuselage on the seaplane is "Benoist," a reference to Thomas Benoist, its manufacturer and designer. □

**Book-collectors' edition  
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by Joseph Agris, M.D.  
Only 60 of 500 remain  
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### ADLETS

**Classified ads are 15 cents a word. There is no charge for your address. Members of PNC<sup>3</sup> are entitled to one 25-word free ad-let each year.**

**USED** Transportation plate number singles, pairs and strips. Very challenging, interesting, and inexpensive. Some covers also. Price list for SASE. Max Hickox, Box 21081, Denver, Colo. 80221. (5-90)

**1989 LIGHTHOUSE PNC** strip supplement: \$25 list, my price \$21.25. No supplement this year for singles album. Esrall, P. O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

**UNTAGGED ERRORS:** Breadwagon, Yosemite, others for trade or sale. Untagged coils on commercial covers on approval. Buying tag varieties. TAG SHIFT HARRY Mueggensburg, 3525 Bluff Court, Carmichael, CA 95608. (5-90)

**BUYING PNC FDCS.** Write first. Thomas Gilt, 19959 Haviland Ave., Bronx, NY 10472. (4-90)

**COMPLETE** Lighthouse PNC album in 2 binders, \$300. Steve Esrall, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

**LIGHTHOUSE** album supplements are out. Please let me have your order to let me gauge the size of my order. All supplements are 15% off list price. Steve Esrall, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

# 0.1¢ 'postmaster's provisionals' were a scam

Continued from Page 41

ly not possible to know for certain what rate it really represents, unless some other evidence dates the cover, such as a printed advertisement or dated contents.

There is nothing unusual about this procedure. Mail was not rejected or delayed because the face value of the postage stamps differed from the nominal rate (nominal because in addition to the minimum per-piece rate, mailers must also pay the annual fee for a bulk-mail permit).

On May 22, 1983, the basic presort rate for bulk third-class mail rose to 11 cents. Once again lacking precanceled stamps denominated at the new rate, the Postal Service authorized continued use of 10.9¢ Hansom Cab precancels, with the balance due at the time of mailing, until Oct. 1, 1983. On Oct. 27, with no 11-cent precancels yet available, the false-franking authorization was extended "until further notice."

Precanceled 11¢ Caboose stamps were finally issued in February 1984 (first day of the tagged edition was Feb. 3). Once the new stamp was available everywhere, the 10.9¢ Hansom Cab stamps were withdrawn, on March 31, 1984.

This overlap gave mailers an opportunity to use up their old stamps with a smooth transition to the new ones. After the period of authorized third-class use of a stamp expires, mailers can turn in unopened coil rolls for a full refund. On partial rolls they get 90% of face. Or they can be used as postage on first-class mail by holders of precancel permits.

[One dirty little secret of the PNC hobby is the way some collectors and dealers have abused the 90% rule, by buying precancels, stripping out the plate-number strips, and turning in the scrap for a 90% refund, even during the time when most collectors were led to believe that there was nothing they could do with precancel scrap.]

To put all this into its proper perspective, one should bear in mind that stamps of any kind are an unnecessary frill on third-class bulk mail. The only postal requirement is an imprint noting that postage has been paid. The responsibility for determining that correct bulk-rate postage has been prepaid rests with the bulk-mail acceptance unit where the mailing originates, not with postal personnel elsewhere in the system who would have

no way of knowing whether the postage on an individual piece corresponded properly to its initial presort.

With that background in mind, we can proceed to the Redwood City story: a specific case of the use of precanceled 10.9¢ Hansom Cab stamps after the rate rose to 11 cents. As a practical matter,

*Stamps of any kind are an unnecessary frill on third-class bulk mail.*

the 10.9¢ stamps remained valid for third-class, bulk-mail postage from May 22, 1983, to March 31, 1984, although a technical lapse in the notice authorizing false franking occurred from Oct. 2 through 26, 1983.

Despite that clear instruction, Craig Dremann, proprietor of Redwood City Seed Co., claims to have feared that uninformed postal employees would delay or fail to deliver his seed catalogs if they lacked the full 11 cents in face-value postage.

By a stroke of luck, Dremann happened to have a Scott catalog handy and, after a quick read of the "Information for Collectors" section, decided that the solution would be "postmaster's provisionals" in the amount of 0.1¢. He asked his local postmaster to create a handstamp for such a provisional. Postmaster Cunningham told Dremann he would need authorization from higher authority. Dremann called divisional headquarters and was referred to Washington, where Sheryl Beller, a mail classification specialist at the Rates and Classifications Division, told Dremann that no rule forbade use of his handstamp.

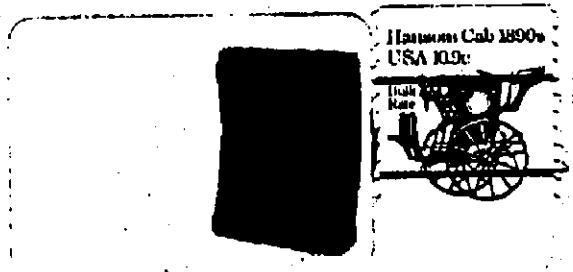
Dremann then made two pictorial handstamps inspired by Confederate provisionals of Charleston, S.C., and Danville, Va., illustrated in his Scott catalog. One shows a redwood tree and leaf, the other just the leaf, adjacent to a circle

that reads "REDWOOD CITY, CALIF., 0.1¢ POSTAGE PAID" inside, and "Postmaster's Provisional" top and bottom outside. He prepared his bulk mailing, creating four varieties by using two colors of ink, green and magenta, with each of the two handstamps, one per envelope alongside a precanceled 10.9¢ Hansom Cab stamp.

When Dremann took his first batch to the post office on Feb. 10, Postmaster Cunningham was skeptical enough to call Beller in Washington, too. With her assurance that the handstamp violated no regulation, he accepted the mailing.

Dremann then fired off a news release to *Linn's*, which took the bait and ran a story, "Seed company granted provisional handstamp" on its front page of March 26, 1984, together with a photo of one of the covers and full-size reproductions of the two handstamps.

That brought the Redwood City "postmaster's provisionals" to the attention of Frank Thomas at the USPS Stamps Division. Thomas immediately ruled the handstamp an "unauthorized postal



From Rob Washburn's collection.

**CENSORED**—The trick worked once, but on the second try, a white label covered the "provisional" and black marker obliterated the part that showed through.

marking," definitely not a postmaster's provisional, and forbade its further use.

When Dremann brought another batch to the post office on March 29, he learned the bad news. On all 1,148 pieces, the handstamp had to be obliterated—covered with an adhesive label and blackened with a marking pen. Those covers are the non-philatelic, genuine postal history of the loophole that wasn't.

Unfortunately, Frank Thomas had not acted quickly enough to prevent Dremann and others from realizing huge profits on the scam, inadvertently fattened by the credulous *Linn's* coverage.



**Redwood City Seed Co.**  
P. O. Box 461  
Redwood City, California 94064 USA



**CRAIG DREMANN**  
P.O. BOX 381  
REDWOOD CITY 94064

**FROM ME TO ME**—To make sure his seed catalogs got through the mail, Craig Dremann invented a "postmaster's provisional." Then he mailed 434 to himself and told *Linn's* all about it. When USPS' Frank Thomas read about it there, he said, "Cease and desist," but by that time the profiteers had already cleaned up on yet another scam. Prices at one time were at \$100 for a set of four. The illustration above and the one on Page 41 are taken from Rob Washburn's *PNC's on Cover*.

Before Thomas' order reached Redwood City, Dremann had mailed 3,404 pieces, including 76 to stamp collectors and 434 to himself, roughly 125 sets of the four designs as purely philatelic concoctions.

Howard Karlin and Don Sproule wrote a sympathetic account of this episode, which appeared in the Third Quarter 1985 issue of *Modern Postal History Journal*. That surprised me, since editor Terence Hines is a self-proclaimed hardcore postal history buff who has no patience with contrived covers.

The Karlin-Sproule article estimated, based on a "non-scientific survey," that less than 10% of non-collectors who had received the seed catalog kept the covers. But some have read this carelessly as suggesting a total supply of 10% of the number mailed. If the estimate is accurate and properly interpreted, more than 800 of the covers survived, or more than 200 of each version.

Soon sets of four of the Redwood City "provisionals" were being sold for \$100. I bought a single example to illustrate my book, and later resold it for the same price, not really happy about either transaction.

In an auction last year, Dann Mayo described one of these covers honestly and failed to sell it for the \$36 reserve, which is encouraging.

Nevertheless, collectors being what we are, these covers are virtually certain to

increase in value, just as contrived first-day covers have.

Collectors and dealers who bend USPS rules for gain are rarely deterred by setbacks. Karlin and Sproule wrote: "In February 1985 the bulk mailing rate increased to 12.5¢. Again stamps of the appropriate denomination were not available at the Redwood City post office. A handstamp was again created, this time with the help of Postmaster



From Rob Washburn's collection.  
**HERE WE GO AGAIN**—When the rate went to 12.5¢, Dremann tried it again, this time with the help of the postmaster.

Cunningham."

The rate rose from 11 to 12.5 cents on Feb. 17, 1985. Precanceled 11¢ Caboose stamps were authorized for false franking until June 16, 1985. In April, precanceled 12.5¢ Pushcart stamps were shipped (April 18 was the first day of the tagged version).

I suppose we should all be asking ourselves, "What is it about our hobby that makes it so attractive to parasites, and why do we buy their products?"

But we do collect them. Even Michael Laurence's prize winning exhibit of Transportation coils includes a Redwood City "postmaster's provisional" cover. Laurence is publisher and editor of *Linn's*. □

[P.S. from Rob Washburn. When the bulk rate went to 12.5¢, Redwood Seed Co. made another set of handstamps for 1.5¢ to be used with the 11¢ Caboose.

[These handstamps came in four colors, but were all the same design.]

## Researchers:

**LITERATURE BARGAIN OF THE YEAR** for first 15 who order. 1989 and 1990 *Esrati PNC Catalogs*, plus *Danson's Specialized Catalog of PNC's on FDC, Souvenir Pages and Ceremony Programs*. All three books for \$30 postpaid.

**FIVE ESRATI Catalogs** (1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989) for \$40.

**WANTED: USPS Philatelic Catalogs** before April 1982. I have duplicates of most issues since then.

## Ken Lawrence

Dept. TPN, P.O. Box 3568  
Jackson, MS 39207  
(601) 969-2269

## A fable: How USPS made church 'volunteer'

Although the figure cannot possibly be ascertained, the Postal Service claims it is losing \$50 million a year from re-use of washed stamps, a total that represents 200 million letters using illegally re-used stamps.

Ken Lawrence, who carefully checked USPS annual reports while writing his book, found no arrests for stamp washing in fiscal 1989.

Further, it is not economical for a large mailer to hire many people who will put glue on washed stamps to save money on a large mailing with stamps bought at a fraction of face. Labor costs would exceed the cost of postage honestly paid and applied.

So 200 million illicit letters are probably a conversational fiction that somehow caught on.

But Myron G. Hill, Jr., a lawyer who edits law books known as Smith's Review Series, puzzled over the question posed in reports that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had "voluntarily" given up its Stamps for Missions program.

Enter RICO (Racketeer-Influenced Corrupt Organizations), the law Congress passed to fight the mob but which prosecutors have turned into a tool against white-collar crime.

The Missouri Synod, Hill believes, was told that because of RICO an innocent party doing something that is perfectly legal may face prosecution if its activities are later shown to have been employed in a criminal act.

Hill gave this example: "In pre-RICO days if the telephone company was asked to install 20 telephones in the back room of a bookstore, it had done nothing wrong. But under RICO, prosecutors may expect that the telephone company should have figured out that the phones would be used by an illegal bookmaker and is liable to prosecution."

Such extensions of RICO to the innocent are the center of a legal storm that is slowly winding its way through the appeals process of the U.S. courts.

But it would not take much imagination to figure out what really happened in Bob Rinkenberger's confused account of what postal inspectors told the synod.

Here is how a playwright might have reported it:

**POSTAL INSPECTOR:** We understand you fellows collect stamp clippings sent in to you by people all over the world, and then sell these clippings through Stamps for Missions. Is that right?

**STAMPS FOR MISSIONS:** Yes, but...

**PI:** And you have no control over what

happens to the U.S. stamps you collect in this fashion?

**SfM:** Yes, but...

**PI:** And the stamps you sell might be feeding Mafia operations, where they wash used stamps, hire illegal immigrants (below minimum wage) to wash and reglue them, and then use them on large mailings to defraud the U.S. Postal Service of \$50 million a year. Is that correct?

**SfM:** No, but...

**PI:** Under the anti-Mafia law called RICO, that means your church is aiding and abetting organized crime in stamp laundering. You wouldn't want to cause a great organization like the Lutheran Church to stand in the dock charged with helping the Mafia, would you?

**SfM:** No. We would never do that.

**PI:** Then don't you think you should stop collecting these stamps that end up in criminal hands, encourage illegal immigration, cheat the Postal Service out of revenue, and enrich the Mafia?

**SfM:** We suppose so.

**PI:** Good! Then we'll report to Washington that you are voluntarily ending the collecting of these used stamps.

**Curtain speech (by Ken Lawrence):** And that's how USPS boosted sales of mint stamps, by cutting off used. □

## Mixtures are illegal, inspectors are quoted as telling source of 30% of used PNCs

*Continued from Page 41*

gal.

I have always sold [this mix] for its philatelic content and hopefully will be able to continue to do so. If this source dries up, I will probably not offer it again....

I hate to lose this one, but I've learned not to fight City Hall. I'm just too small.

Mix 11 is described as "U.S. Common. Mostly current rate definitives, but includes fractionals, some commems, un-canceled, etc." It was sold by the pound at \$11.50 for 5; \$16.50 for 10; \$26.50 for 20, and \$115 for 100.

The story was picked up by Victor Volland, a reporter for *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, on Jan. 25.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has given up a profitable fund-raising effort to help thwart "stamp washing," the dirty business of re-using canceled postage stamps....

The Stamps for Missions program ... may

have been an unwilling supplier of canceled stamps that eventually found their way to stamp washers.

...Last year, the synodwide program cleared \$12,899 from canceled U.S. stamps plus donated ... stamps.

...The Postal Service figures that 99% of the common U. S. stamps that are salvaged from old envelopes and packages wind up ... with stamp washers....

The Postal Service approached the Missouri Synod, which has 2.6 million members worldwide and is headquartered here [In St. Louis], to ask its members to stop collecting and selling canceled U.S. stamps

I live about 30 miles from St. Louis and can remember when Stamps for Missions was started. □

[Editor's note: What is important in Howard Moser's article is that he may have found the "smoking gun"—Rinkenberger's statement that church officials told him that the postal inspectors had said "selling mixes is illegal."

[No law forbids it.

[Meanwhile, Stamps for Missions is in limbo, as are collectors of used PNCs.

[Rinkenberger estimated that Stamps for Missions accounted for 30% of the mixtures sold in this country.

[Moser takes pains to note: "I don't know that the postal inspectors lied to Stamps for Missions. In fact, I think they made it clear that the program had done nothing illegal."

[Later, Rinkenberger said his supplies were dwindling. He cited contradictory reports on what had taken place. "You can see," he wrote, "I'm confused. The inspectors stated the Lutherans were doing nothing illegal, but when the Lutherans were advised a lot of the mix would eventually end up being 'washed,' they decided to quit a program that had been going on for nearly 50 years."]

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# Pantone System has drawbacks in philately

By Ken Lawrence

Phil Rose and Steve Esrati are correct. The Pantone Color Products Selector is a useful guide for stamp collectors, and allows greater precision in color identification than products supposedly tailored to our specific needs. But it is important to understand what the Pantone Matching System (PMS) is, and what it isn't.

PMS is a uniform system of ink colors created by exact percentage blends of a group of primary colors. The primary colors have PMS names but not numbers. The blends are numbered.

The very same ink will have a different appearance, in hue and intensity (technically, chromaticity and luminance), on different papers and in different printing methods.

In offset printing, the greatest difference is typically between a given ink on uncoated stock and the same ink on coated stock. The inexpensive Pantone fan (that's the Selector used by Phil and Steve) includes only swatches on uncoated paper, and the numbers therefore have the suffix "U."

These are approximations, and they are especially ill-adapted for visually match-

ing the same numbered colors on Transportation coil stamps, even though these coils are all printed on uncoated paper stock. That's because the Pantone system is normally used in lithography, a process that lays down a very thin, always transparent, layer of ink.

To get technical, the color you see on offset-printed stamps is a blend of ink reflectance, ink transmittance (twice), paper color, and some dichroic polarization. In lay terms, offset inks are perceived by a collector not only in terms of the ink used, but also light quality, light angle, and the paper on which they are printed.

Our Transportation coils, on the other hand, are all printed by an intaglio process that puts down an opaque image so thick you can see it, feel it, and measure it with a micrometer. What you see is the pure ink color modified by the reflectance characteristics of its surface texture. (In currency printing, but not in stamps, the dichroic effect of varying the depth of intaglio image is exploited as a security device.)

Of all the common printing techniques, only Serigraph (silk screen) yields a thicker, denser printed image than line-engraved intaglio. Gravure and other etched recess-printing systems, and letterpress methods, including flexography, lay less thick ink images, but not as thin as offset.

Because of these differences, neither the U-suffix swatches in the fan, nor the more comprehensive samples in the Pantone encyclopedia, will give anything more than a rough visual approximation of the stamp color printed from the identical ink pigment formula.

The two printed products (the Pantone swatch and the stamp) are so dissimilar that they react differently to each type of ambient light, as Phil noted. Varying the spectra, the intensity, and the incident angle of the light source or sources will result in non-uniform changes in appearance of the two ink images.

Besides these complexities, it is also important to realize that stamps printed before BEP and USPS adopted the PMS standards (beginning with the 22¢ William Faulkner commemorative issued in 1987) are not PMS colors. These were secretly blended ink formulas that deliberately differed from graphic arts industry standards as a security measure. Al-

Please turn to next page

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The January issue (#1) contained Pages 1 through 18.  
 March (#2) to Page 36.  
 May (#3) to Page 56.  
 July (#4) to Page 76.  
 September (#5) to Page 94.  
 November (#6) to Page 112.

# Honeybee's yellows differ, but BEP denies difference

Colors in the Honeybee do not always appear the same. This is particularly true of the PMS Yellow, used in the solid background:

Richard Learn of Florida, a specialist in the Honeybee, noticed strong variations in the background yellow. Others have noticed what they perceived to be varieties in other colors, such as green and orange.

Before anything else, then, it is necessary to discuss the colors used in printing the Honeybee.

Used are three process colors: yellow, cyan and magenta. These colors, when they appear in conjunction with each other, create the entire color spectrum. Orange is the result, as you can see by examining the stamps under high magnification (10x is enough), of having yellow and magenta dots in the same area. Green is cyan plus yellow dots.

What needs to be recalled here is that the use of process colors is the blending of colors to create other colors.

Registration of the five offset plates used to print the Honeybee (the two yellows, black, cyan, and magenta) is critical to the correct appearance of the

stamps. The clover leaves would be blue if the process yellow were not in register.

Slight shifts in registration can affect color more subtly, moving the orange parts of the bee's body or changing the colors of the flowers slightly.

But the difference in the color of the yellow background, which is solid PMS yellow, has nothing to do with registration.

John M. Hotchner's "U.S. Notes" in *Linn's* for Feb. 5 took up the question of "dark" and "light" PMS yellow.

Hotchner asked BEP to explain and received a reply from Ira Polikoff.

Polikoff reported that BEP gathered up a batch of used Honeybees and compared the PMS yellow scientifically. "...[T]here are no significant differences in pigmentation," Polikoff told Hotchner.

Polikoff explained the apparent differences by noting the factors that can affect the color intensity of ink on paper in the offset printing process.

"These factors," he said, "include the viscosity of the ink, pigment concentration, press settings, water balance in the offset press' fountain solution" the microstructure of the paper and surface chemistry.

His conclusion was that any of these factors can alter the color intensity on a stamp and all the stamps examined represented normal color variations.

In plain English, dark and light yellow Honeybee backgrounds, as seen under BEP's photo spectrometer, are all the same.

Philatelically, however, a dark yellow and a light yellow are different.

Differences in the perceived color of a stamp have always been noted by collectors and have been catalogued since the dawn of philately.

While no one has yet done a detailed study of the Honeybee's yellow background, here are some possibilities that would not be covered by BEP's factors that affect color:

• Two different offset presses were used to print Honeybees, the Goebel Op-

tiforma and the Goebel D Press. We can tell them apart in several ways:

Optiforma product was finished on the Goebel C Press and bears C Press tagging. On Plate 1, C Press tagging has rectangular corners. Furthermore, seam lines, if any, have an interval of 25 stamps and do not stay at the same distance from the plate number.

D Press product comes entirely off that press. On Plate 1, the tagging has rounded corners. Seam lines, if any, repeat at the same position in relation to the plate number and have an interval of 24.

Does the use of one press or the other affect the perceived color? It is worth recalling that Dr. Robert Rabinowitz said six months ago that he could differentiate between the presses based on differences in the red color.

• Does the change to textured tagging on Plate 2 have anything to do with the differences in the perceived color?

While we are unable to explain what causes the texture in tagging (see *TPN* March 1990, "BEP denies texture in tagging"), whatever causes it may also affect the way the solid yellow background is printed. If the texture results from a fiber roller, which affects the solid tagging compound, could it also affect the solid yellow color?

All reports of readers' findings are welcome. □

*Color registration on the Honeybee shows great variations, Gerald Clark finds. See Page 54.*

## Pantone System has drawbacks in philatelic use

*Continued from preceding page*

though it is easy to find near matches, as Phil has done, precise scientific measurements of the ink spectra would show discrepancies.

For that reason, I think a chart (such as Phil Rose's in the March issue of *TPN*) that lists both nonstandard colors and PMS colors should include some notation differentiating approximate visual matches to nonstandard colors from comparisons to actual PMS blends on uncoated paper.

As long as our best guide is a subjective match, this proposal may seem like nit-picking. But when the price of a color reflectance microdensitometer eventually falls within the reach of hobbyists, we'll be glad we preserved the distinc-

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# Bee register is often way out

BEP may have congratulated itself with a snazzy card (see *TPN* January 1990) for keeping the Honeybee in its cage. But it did not always succeed.

Inspectors did not find all the Honeybees in which the registration of the four offset colors and the one intaglio color failed to match.

Gerald H. Clark of Utah, who has intensely studied used copies of the stamp, has found not only stamps in which the offset did not mesh with the intaglio, but even stamps in which one offset plate was out of register with the other three.

Here are some examples:

**Offset black shifted left:** The black frame and "25 USA" are shifted far to the left, leaving white space between the left edge of the frame and the other colors.

**Intaglio black shifted down:** This results in a number on top and a downward shift of the black parts of the bee. The yellow and orange parts of the bee's body are far above the black outline. This stamp shows a truncated plate number "1" at the top of the stamp.

**Intaglio bee shifted sideways:** This results in what dealers are calling "Bee out of cage" or "Bee outside frame." In one of Clark's examples, the shift is to the left on Plate 1. This has a truncated "1." There is also a strip from Plate 2 in which the bee is shifted out of the frame to the right.

The most dramatic Honeybee, however, was not found by Clark but by dealer Joe Lane.

Lane's find was of Honeybees with the

intaglio completely missing. This removes both the body of the bee and the plate number. A previous such find, by Jon Denney of M&M/Southwest, was from Plate 1. Denney knew, despite the



**NUMBER ON TOP**—When the intaglio prints low, the bee is shifted down, but so is the plate number. On this stamp, there's a full (truncated) "1" on top.

missing plate number, because the "missing Bee" variety was on only part of a roll. The rest of the roll printed a shifted bee, but showed a plate number, which was, of course, shifted, too.

The Denney find, of course, proved conclusively that BEP inspection failed completely. The possibility exists that pressmen uncoupled the intaglio plate while the press was running to mark the coils for rejection.

But, as apparently happens all too often, the inspectors missed the signal and allowed the stamps to go through. □



**BEE OUT OF CAGE**—Here the intaglio parts of the stamp (the bee's black body) are shifted dramatically to the right.



**BLACK OFFSET SHIFTED LEFT**—The black offset plate, which prints the frame line, is shifted left, into the perfs on the left.

## Yosemite (and other) FDCs

25F1, Block tag, Artmaster PS/3	\$5
25F5i, Phosphor, Artmaster, PS/3	\$15
25F5i, Phosphor, Farnam, PS/3	\$25
25F5+25F5i, Phosphor and block 2xPS/3, Farnam	\$65
25F5+25F5i, Phosphor and block 2xPS/3, Artmaster	\$35
25F6i, Phosphor, Farnam PS/3	\$45
25F6i, Phosphor, Artmaster PS/3	\$20
25F7i, Phosphor, Farnam PS/3	\$35
25F7i, Phosphor, Artmaster PS/3	\$20
25F7+25F7i, Phosphor and block 2xPS/3 Farnam	\$75
25F7+25F7i, Phosphor and block 2xPS/3 Artmaster	\$35
25F8i, Phosphor, Farnam, PS/3	\$5
25F8+25F8i, Phosphor and block 2xPS/3 Farnam	\$45
25F8+25F8i, Phosphor and block 2xPS/3 Artmast	\$35
18¢ Flag, 5, Pair, Colorano, cancel on #	\$100
20¢ Of cial, Pair, Colorano	\$55
(22¢) Of cial, Single, Americana	\$75
(22¢) Of cial, PS/3, Artmaster	\$85
(22¢) Of cial, PS/3, Farnam	\$95

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## Curve helps identify Yosemite crescents

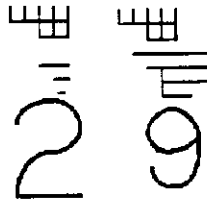
Jeff Channell has been studying the 25¢ Flag over Yosemite stamps that display only part of a plate number.

He calls them "Crescents in lieu of Plate Numbers."

Channell found some rolls at the Naval Shipyard Branch Post Office at Vallejo, Calif., in phosphored rolls of 100 at a time when the Shipyard branch had rolls from Plate 9.

Channell also obtained a commercial cover from dealer E.J. Didway that was mailed from a branch of the Oakland, Calif., post office. It, too, had a crescent instead of a plate number.

Channell had just enough of the crescent available for study on the roll obtained from the Shipyard branch to compare it to a stamp known to be from Plate 2. The curve of the crescent was much more acute than it is on the loop of the 2. Also, the distance of the crescent from the lowest cross-hatching of the



**CRESCENTS**—The curve on the "9" is more acute than on the "2." See below for just the crescents.



water in the lake matched the distance exhibited by a full plate number from Plate 9. The 2 is much closer. Thus Channell has established a way to differentiate between 2s and 9s.

The illustrations are schematic and not drawn to scale. They are based on Channell's findings. □

## Never saw a splice? Here's a description

What does a splice look like? That's the question being asked by readers who have never seen one.

The partial stamp on the right of the cut is on top of the paper of the stamp to the left of the cut.

On the gummed side, a white strip of gummed paper, resembling stamp paper and about 3/8-inch in width is mounted across the junction of the two rolls of paper.

If one carefully peels back the portion of the stamp on the right, one will see that the stamp on the left (the bottom one) is not fully printed. Its right side is white.

Where the two partial stamps abut, the printing does not match perfectly. The above description is based on a strip from a roll of 16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon and the cut was through the "W" of "Wagon." But the parts of the "W" did not come together correctly. □

## Private vaults

*Clerks in 5 post offices hide stocks for PNC dealers by using false listings*

By Edward Gould

I do a lot of searching throughout the Postal Service and have found more than an occasional occurrence of privileged information, misinformation and unanswered letters.

To date I have been in touch with more than 3,000 post offices. While 95% to 99% are staffed by honest, hard-working individuals, the 1% to 5% who, in my opinion, range from uncooperative to downright dishonest, are almost without exception employed as accountable paper custodians or philatelic clerks in large distribution centers.

These individuals do not need to concern themselves with sales volume because their offices are large enough to have volume anyway. So the question arises: Why then do they seek to block collectors who are merely trying to buy at their post offices what those offices have for sale?

I believe that the answer is that these individuals are in cahoots with some

PNC dealers and give those dealers favored treatment, including the guarding of desirable material by storing them in private caches in the post office and by falsifying their inventories.

I, too, was blocked from purchasing the 7.6¢ Carreta from Plate 3. Before World Stamp Expo I received a reply and even a second confirmation that rolls of Plate 3 were in stock at one of the post offices mentioned in the last issue of *TPN* ("USPS curbs press rights as dealers get inside info"). When the philatelic clerk there received my order, the order was directed to the accountable paper clerk. The order was then returned to me with a note stating that no rolls of Plate 3 had been found, only Plate 2.

The subtlety of the lie almost escaped me. I was about to file the note, but instead I set it aside and pulled out my 1988 correspondence. There I found another note from the same station. The handwriting was the same.

The 1988 note said: "We do not look

for plate numbers. Try contacting the Philatelic Sales, Washington, D.C."

I immediately wrote another letter, but this time I was ignored.

The sad thing about the above incident is that it was not an isolated case. Individuals in the Postal Service transfer stock and then store quantities of rolls in Postal Service vaults for their preferred customers.

I have found the "storage vaults" of five PNC dealers in various post offices. Some go so far as to hide rolls by listing them as some other issue with the same denomination in their inventory reports. I know this to be standard practice in many post offices, but there is a way to tell if something is wrong:

For example, what if there are no current sheet stamps, but only coils, for a particular denomination and the printout shows "255 sheets of 18¢ stamps," all of which are, in fact, rolls of 500 of the 18¢ Surrey. □

## Bee buzzings

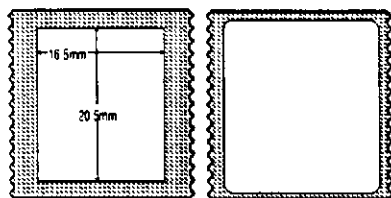
Don Eastman, Alan Thomson, Myron G. Hill, Jr., and Kim Cuniberti have thrown cold water on the neat way we broke down the tagging on Plate 1 (truncated) of the 25¢ Honeybee in the January issue.

What we said then was that the tagging on the C Press was rectangular and the tagging from the D Press had rounded corners.

Well, it isn't that simple!

The illustration below shows the rectangular, C Press tagging on the left. That is correct.

But the D Press tagging needs a bit more explaining.



**BEE TAGGING**—D Press tagging's "rounded corners" sometimes look almost square. But tagging is larger than from C Press, left.

## Tagging varies in same roll

Hill noticed it when he was editing a draft of the 1990 catalog. "You should indicate that the dimensions of the D Press tagging vary," he said.

That was relatively easy to accomplish.

But then Thomson got into the act:

"Don Eastman sent me a Plate 1 Honeybee strip of 30 with the seam lines at 7R. It has combined square-corner and round-corner tagging. Don's strips are shorter than mine, so he cannot find the transition points. I can.

"It goes like this: From the numbered stamp through 2R, the corners are round. From 3R through 10R, the corners are square.

"Moving in the other direction, from the numbered stamp through 11L, the corners are round; from 12L through 19L, they are square."

Thomson sent in a diagram to show what he meant. We have reproduced it below.

Did we have to change everything we



**STRIP OF 30**—The shape of the tagging block varies from rounded to square in Alan Thomson's long strip. The ⊥ is the plate number, a truncated "1."

## Prices surge; 20F4 disappears

Prices of PNCs, as measured by the TPN Average, climbed sharply in March and April.

The surge was most obvious in some of the more expensive strips included in the average, and may be even greater than is shown in our chart.

That's because stocks of Plate 4 of the 20¢ Flag, which is included in the average, have dwindled. Several dealers bought out the supplies of other dealers whose prices were below the market. Yet those old prices are still reflected in the average even though the prices no longer reflect actual stocks of the stamps.

It is estimated that 20F4 may soon climb above \$1,000. The italicized price in the 1990 *PNC Catalog* is \$500. It is such rapid changes as this one that have made it impossible to compile an accurate TPN Average for the 1990 catalog for this issue of *TPN*. The catalog will go to press after this magazine is mailed

out. And several other strips have performed similarly, although not to the same scale as 20F4.

Another factor affecting the average is the bargain-basement pricing by two dealers, Dennis Chamberlain and Tom Maeder. Both have issued recent price lists that show markedly lower prices than other dealers. Maeder's prices are included in the average; Chamberlain's arrived too late to be included.

Maeder said he believes his prices are fair in that he does not have the over-

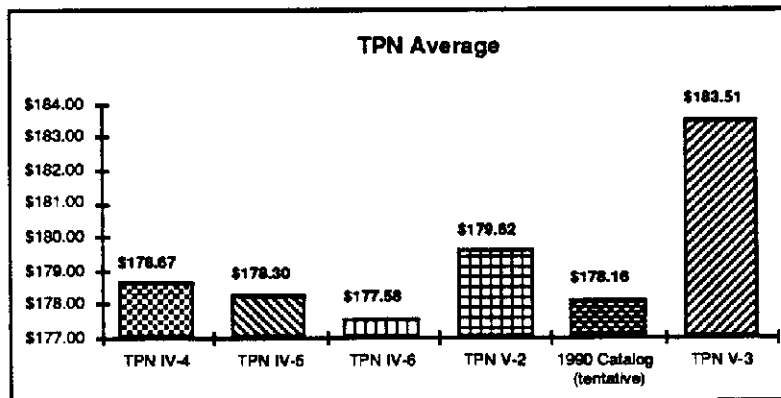
head done for the truncated Plate 1 in the catalog? Not at all, Cuniberti reassured us.

"The rounded corners are not always so obvious," he said. "In some instances they are quite subtle. I have some where the top corners are almost square, but at the bottom of the stamps, they are still slightly rounded."

So what we have done is this: Plate 1 (truncated) has tagging in the shape of the small rectangle at the left of our illustration when printed on the C Press. When printed on the D Press, it is much larger, but dimensions vary. It usually has rounded corners, but these are sometimes subtle.

It is not clear cut, but since Thomson's report arrived at *TPN* on April 4, a week before the catalog was to be ready to go to the printer, that's as accurate as we are able to get for the 1990 catalog.

But as fans of the Brooklyn Dodgers used to say: "Wait till next year!" □



head of other dealers and because he believes PNCs are overpriced at present.

But Maeder conceded he may have erred when he sold a 20F4 to another dealer for \$240. The buyer advertised it at \$475 a few weeks ago.

Stamps climbing in price recently include 25F1 (block); 25F7 (block); 25F9 (block); 25F6i (phosphored); 8.5T2P; 12T1PR; 18T15 and 18T16; 20T6; 20T16, and 18M4P.

An area that bears watching is the 22¢ Flag, just starting to rise. □

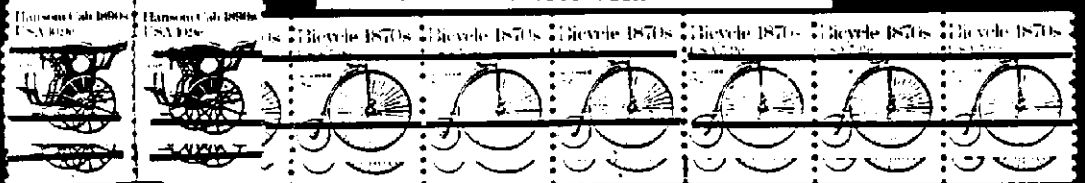


Not a fancy ad, just a typical page out of my stock book.

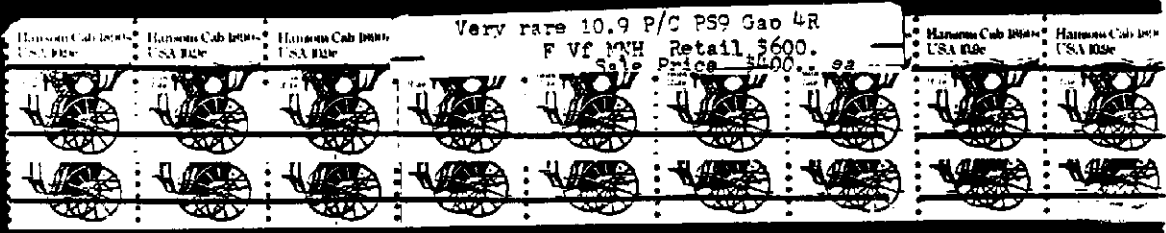
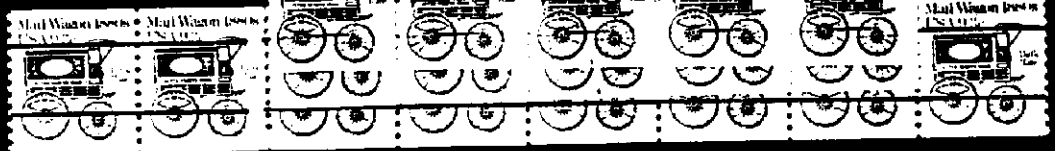
The Honeybee-missing strip of 8 has been sold. Pairs are \$150 each.

Pairs 10.9 MNH XF \$65. VF \$55.

5.9 Rare 4546, Gao on line MNH  
XF PS7 \$70.00 each



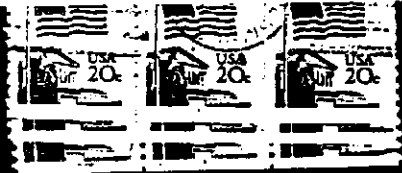
9.3 MNH XF \$526 \$195.00 each  
9.3 P/C XF PS8 \$125.00



Very rare 10.9 P/C PS9 Gao 4R  
F VF MNH Retail \$600.  
Sale Price \$400.00 ea

.20 Flag used PS 3 \$4 5 6 \$40. each

5.2 MNH XF+ PS 5 \$95.00 #5



.25 Honeybee, black missing making  
it look as the bee flew away \$60.



.18 Flags, Used have several to  
pick from #1 perfs on r side required \$150.00, #2 VF used \$400.  
#3 XF used \$300



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## Data bank of official information

### 05 Circus Wagon

STAMP NEWS 9, Feb. 15, 1990: The Postal Service today provided additional information on its first day of issue schedule...

Date	Subject	City of Issuance
April 20	Circus Wagon 5¢ coil stamp	Phoenix, AZ

### FDC totals

STAMP NEWS 17, March 14, 1990: The following first day of issue cancellation totals were reported by the Postal Service for 1989.

25¢ Flag over Yosemite coil	118,874
7.1¢ Tractor coil	202,804

### Last update to the 1989 PNC Catalog

8.4T3—Plate 3 of the 8.4¢ Wheel Chair, in rolls of 3,000, B Press, about Feb. 20. (Dr. Rabinowitz)  
25F211—Plate 2 of the 25¢ Flag Over Yosemite, in rolls of 10,000, B Press, about Feb. 27 in Salt Lake City. (Clark)

### \$1 Seaplane

STAMP NEWS 23, March 27, 1990: The Seaplane stamp ... features an engraving of an artist's drawing of the Benoist Type XIV Airboat, designed and built by Thomas Benoist in St. Louis, Mo.

On Jan. 1, 1914, the airboat was used to establish the world's first scheduled airline service, flying between Tampa and St. Petersburg, Fla.

The Type XIV carried a pilot, one passenger, and express cargo on the flight of about 18 miles between the two cities. The fare for the 23-minute flight was \$5.00, including baggage up to a combined passenger/baggage weight of 200 pounds.

Express cargo shipments ranged from newspapers to hams and sides of bacon.

The venture proved unprofitable and closed March 31, 1914.

The stamp was designed by noted aerospace industry artist Chuck Hodgson of Newhall, Calif., who also designed the Transpacific airmail stamp and the China Clipper and DC-3 airmail postal cards.

### Circus Wagon postponed

STAMP NEWS 26, April 2, 1990: The \$1.00 Seaplane Transportation Series coil stamp will be issued April 20 at ARIPEX '90, in Phoenix, AZ. The five-cent Circus Wagon Transportation Series coil stamp, which had been scheduled for issuance April 20 at ARIPEX, has been postponed until later in 1990. Additional information concerning the Circus Wagon stamp will be included in a future issue of *Stamp News USA*.

## Youngblood book a primer on tagging

*Stamps That Glow*, by Wayne Youngblood, Linn's, Sidney, Ohio, paper bound, \$4.95

Wayne Youngblood, a member of the Plate Number Coil Study Group, has put together a useful primer on U.S. tagging. It is not a comprehensive study of worldwide tagging and does not pretend to be.

For PNC collectors, the 90-page booklet does not add much that is new, but it does take a poke or two at a corporate cousin of the publisher, Scott Publishing Co. For example, in discussing the phosphored and block-tagged versions of the 25¢ Yosemite, Youngblood says: "The major printing differences between these stamps should afford them catalog status."

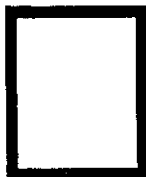
The booklet is not a catalog. It describes such things as untagged errors, high bright papers, and other varieties, but it does not enumerate the stamps that have been found that exhibit these varieties.

It had been hoped that Amos Press would somehow pick up the torch laid down by Alfred G. Boerger, whose *Handbook on U.S. Luminescent Stamps* last appeared in 1975. This booklet is not it.

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