

Linn's Stamp NEWS

World's Largest Weekly Stamp News and Marketplace

Postal Service saves Operation Santa

The popular USPS Santa letters program and a North Pole post-marking effort will continue in 2010.

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Is this the first Christmas stamp?

The "Xmas 1898" inscription on this Canadian stamp gives it an undeniable holiday connection.

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Vote for your favorite U.S. stamp of 2009

Individuals and stamp club members are invited to participate in the 2009 Linn's U.S. Stamp Popularity Poll.

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Gross sale nets \$3.28 million for museum; auction record set for single Canadian stamp

By Matthew Healey

A cover with the world's only mirror-image stamp and a record-setting Canadian 12-penny stamp were the highlights of a Nov. 19 double auction that raised \$3.28 million to benefit the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum.

These were among 220 other items belonging to billionaire bond manager William H. Gross, who by now is as famous in stamp collecting circles as he is on Wall Street.

His collections of Confederate stamps, including many rare postmasters' provisionals, and British North America stamps were offered in back-to-back sales by Spink Shreves Galleries in New York. Gross and his wife, Sue, immediately donated the entire proceeds to the museum.

The donation is part of a total gift of \$8 million that the Grosses



This Canadian 12-penny Queen Victoria stamp (Scott 3) from the William H. Gross collection was sold by Spink Shreves Galleries for \$299,000 on Nov. 19. Gross and his wife, Sue, have pledged toward the building of a new visitor center to allow the public better access to the national stamp collection and to learn about philately.

In recent years, Gross has sold other parts of his worldwide collection and donated the proceeds to charities such as Doctors without Borders.

Including the latest sales, Gross has now realized nearly \$15.5 million from selling his stamps, making his the most valuable stamp collection ever sold, according to Charles F. Shreves, president of Spink Shreves Galleries.

Gross, whose firm, Finco, has earned billions trading bonds, decided to collect stamps after his own analysis of the rare stamp market over the long term convinced him that top-quality stamps could rise in value at a rate comparable with other investments.

The sales of his stamp collections in recent years have generally proven him right, with some stamps

Photo: Linn's page 40

U.S. 27¢ Kiwi color-omitted error stamps found

By Jay Bigalke

Multiple examples of a recent U.S. coil stamp color-omitted error have been discovered and certified as genuine.

The 27¢ Kiwi coil stamp (Scott 4280), from the set of five 27¢ Tropical Fruit stamps issued in April 2008, has been found with one specific light green ink com-

pletely omitted. As a result, the 27¢ denomination, the fruit name and the year date are missing from the Kiwi stamp.

The stamps are from a coil of 100 printed by Avery Dennison.

The error stamps were certified as genuine by the American Philatelic Expertizing Service on Nov. 19.

The person who discovered the error stamps asked not to be named. Tom Fortunato of New York has assisted the person who made the discovery, and spoke with Linn's about the errors.

According to Fortunato, two rolls of the Tropical



Part of a coil strip of United States 27¢ Tropical Fruit stamps, digitally cropped. The single light green "1" from the plate number is missing from the Papaya stamp. The missing light green ink eliminates all the inscriptions on the Kiwi stamp.

Fruit stamps were purchased by a local business.

"The stamps were used over an eight- or nine-month period when a co-worker noticed that one of the stamps looked funny," said Fortunato.

The co-worker noticed the denomination was missing from the Kiwi stamps, and removed several of the Kiwi error stamps from

Photo: Linn's page 12

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READY TO EXPIRE? MAILED DECEMBER 7 \$2.50

IF THE DATE ON YOUR LABEL IS JANUARY 18, 2010 (011810), IT'S TIME TO RENEW.

'Deck the halls ...'

Linn's Oct. 5 news story about the United States 44c Winter Holidays stamp described the plant in the border of the Toy Soldier stamp as ivy.

The leaves and distinctive red berries are actually from a holly bush, a plant traditionally used for Christmas decorations, especially in wreaths.

R.C. de Mordaigle
Olancho, Calif.

When a scout is not a Scout

I wanted to thank the Postal Service for the 44c Scouting stamp to be issued in 2010.



The United States Postal Service will issue this 44c Scouting stamp in 2010.

While the stamp avoids specifically honoring the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Boy Scouts of America, nonetheless it is a Scouting stamp. Isn't it?

But when I looked at the stamp design, it is obvious that the scout in the design is not a Boy Scout.

Boy Scouts wear a neckerchief with a sliding clasp with the tails in the front. The scout in the stamp design is wearing a bandanna tied around his neck with the tails in the back, as can be clearly seen in the larger background silhouette.

Boy Scouts wear brown shirts, Cub Scouts wear blue or brown shirts, Sea Scouts wear blue shirts, and Venture Scouts wear green shirts. None of the Boy Scout divisions wear a red shirt, as is worn by the scout in the design.

Also, where is the rest of the patrol? No Boy Scout is to go off alone as this one has done.

Considering the close relationship between the Postal Service and Scouting over the past 100 years, I think that the Postal Service could have done a much better job with the design of this stamp.

Greg Tant
Hayesville, N.C.

I have some questions about the Scouting stamp.

Why? A commemorative stamp should commemorate something: achievement, existence, success. The proposed Scouting issue doesn't commemorate anything. Neither the centennial of Boy Scouts of America nor the organizational name are mentioned on the stamp.

Who? Who is sitting on the mountain top? Who is in silhouette with binoculars? I have decided that it is me, even though I haven't been dead for five years yet. I can wear a nonspecific hat. I can wear a bandana. It might be a Boy Scout — I'm pretty certain it isn't a Girl Scout — but it doesn't say. So it might be me or Kit Carson. It just says "Scouting." Scouting the frontier or scouting for a bargain, the stamp doesn't say in either inscription or design.

Huh? Why waste the time of the designer, the Postal Service, and the collector on this totally generic noncommorative?

Issues that dare not speak the name of what they purport to commemorate say to the world that we as a stamp producing entity have nothing to say. Stamps should be about something in order for the hobby to stand for something.

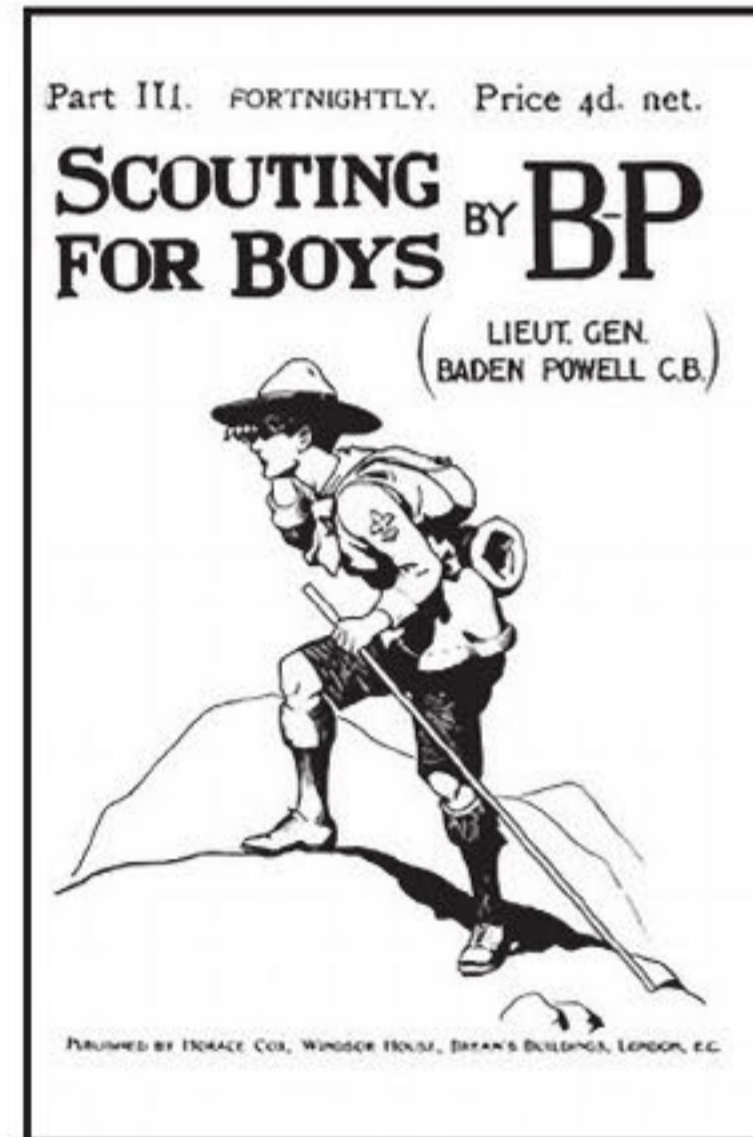
Philip Shore
Asheboro, N.C.

The 44c Scouting stamp appears to follow the Postal Service's recent trend of commemorating an organization's anniversary without directly referencing it. Other stamps in the same category include the 37c Candy Hearts stamp (Scott 3833)

for the Necco Co., the 39c Love: Hershey's Kiss stamp (4122) for the Hershey Co., and the 44c Pansies in a Basket stamp to be issued in 2010 (for the 100th anniversary of the Hallmark Co.).

What a relief it is to know that there will be a stamp honoring the centennial of scouting in America.

The spectacular stamp design harkens back to a 1908 cover of Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, which was reused as the cover image of a Boy Scouts of America price list dated 1911.



The cover design of *Scouting for Boys* by Lt. Gen. Robert Baden-Powell.

The 2010 stamp design successfully translates and updates that exploration theme to a modern American setting.

Tom Broadhead
Knoxville, Tenn.

I was pleased to see the design of the 44c Scouting stamp to be issued in 2010 even though it bears no inscription specific to our Boy Scouts of America.

I wonder where I could find out what other designs were proposed.

The design of this stamp looks more like the dictionary definition of scouting as opposed to anything specifically related to the Boy Scouts.

Robert Burger
Saginaw, Minn.

Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook series, published each year since 1983, frequently shows proposed stamp designs that were not used. Publication of the Yearbook for the stamps of 2009 is planned for the second half of 2010.

Ephemera

Congratulations to Janet Klug for the highly enjoyable Nov. 23 Refresher Course on ephemera.

Perhaps she could consider writing a follow-up about ephemera as viewed by judges at exhibitions and how ephemera can be integrated with other elements in an exhibit.

Benjamin R. Beede
North Brunswick, N.J.

The Lincoln Imp

This is perhaps a bit late, but I was just reading the June 29 Refresher Course article on collecting formats by Rick Miller.

The description of Figure 3 says that the machine cancellation on the British Queen Elizabeth II stamp depicts a ballerina doll.

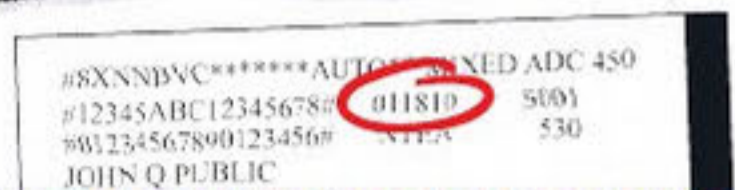


In fact, it depicts the Lincoln Imp, and this is supported by the little bit of text on the image with the letters "Linc" and postcode "LN1" which is Lincolnshire, England. Undoubtedly, this is where the letter the stamp was on was posted.

The Lincoln Imp is a stone figure in the Angel Choir at Lincoln Cathedral. According to legend, Satan sent the imp to destroy the choir, but an angel caught it and turned it into stone.

John Skotchley
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire, England

Watch Your Label!



SEE AD ON PAGE 34 FOR DETAILS

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