

The Meter Stamp Society Quarterly



Bulletin

Elections at the MSS

Officer Elections for Meter Stamp Society

CALL FOR CANDIDATES

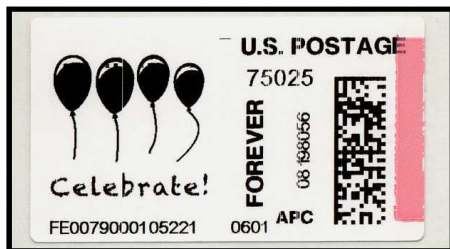
According to the Meter Stamp Society (MSS) By-Laws, posted at the MSS Discussion Group site, regular elections are to be held from a list of candidates solicited from the membership. The officer positions subject to these elections are **President** and **Secretary-Treasurer**. If you are interested in running for one of these offices, send your name (letter or email), by 1 July 2012. A ballot will then be prepared of the candidates for each office and the ballot will be distributed in the Winter 2012 MSS Bulletin. Upon counting the votes, the winners will be announced in the 2013 Spring issue, and the officers will be installed in a ceremony at the August 2013 MSS Convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 8-11 2013.

Send your nomination email to me (joel5215@aol.com) or to my mailing address at:

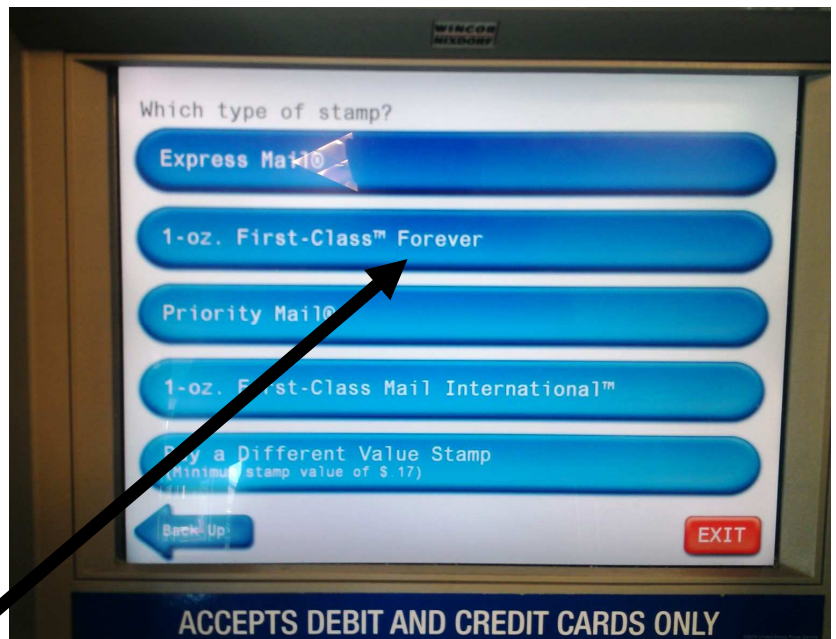
Joel Hawkins
3102 N. 150th Lane
Goodyear, AZ 85395

SSSMC Forever Stamp Upgrade

Peter Elias



New Forever stamps available at *Self Service Ship & Mail Centers*. See Story Page 10.



Your Clue that the Kiosk has the new Forever Stamps.

ACCEPTS DEBIT AND CREDIT CARDS ONLY



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(Contact Douglas Kelsey)

All memberships are on a calendar
year basis, i.e. start Jan 1, end Dec 31.

**The Meter Stamp Society is a non-profit organization
under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
Send financial donations to the Secretary Treasurer
and philatelic donations to the Auctions Chairman.**

Issue Deadlines

Issue	Deadline	Mail Date
Spring	February 25	March
Summer	May 25	June
Fall	August 25	September
Winter	November 25	December

Meter Stamp Society Website:

www.meterstampociety.com

Includes Complete Indexes 1948 to Present

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New Logo by *Miriam Congedo*

Join us on Facebook and LinkedIn

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From the Editor

Stories. In the last year or so we have seen major meter related products introduced without much advance notice, including the feature of this issue, the new Forever stamps from the updated SSSMC kiosks at US post offices. There have also been quite a number of smaller finds along with great feature articles like the Turtle Slogan article in these pages. All of these are provided by watchful members. We are appreciative of members who find these items or write these articles and bring them to our attention. We show our appreciation by listing everyone who contributes to each issue. Traditionally we put that list on the Society News page. Maybe we should put it on the front page. Our members are the only reason this Society exists. Keep up the great work!

Elections. It has been a long time since we had elections for our officers. If you enjoy this hobby this is your time to step up to the plate.

Dave

Turtle Meter Stamp Slogans Miriam Congedo

My collection is based on one of my favorite subjects "Armored Giants and Dwarfs" or...turtles! I love this reptile, and since 1993 I have collected stamps with turtles and tortoises. In the middle 1995 a Belgian friend sent me my first meter stamp with a turtle slogan, Figure 1. It was "love at first sight" before then, I had snubbed all meters (most Italian meters are without slogan). But this first meter opened my eyes to a new world of topical meters!

Maniacal research on internet pages and catalogs, and two articles in a French magazine showed me the potential to acquire new pieces on turtles, terrapins and tortoises. Shortly, in 2000 I published my first version of internet site with about 80 turtle meters. By 2005 they have become 140. Now after 16 years I have cataloged about 225 different meters with turtle slogans!



Figure 1 – NEDERLAND 1984 - Neopost

We have turtles in 20 nations, and in all 5 continents! From Australia, Figure 2, to America, Figure 3, passing from Europe, Figure 4 to Africa, Figure 5 and finally in Asia, Figure 6.

The first tortoise appeared on a meter slogan from

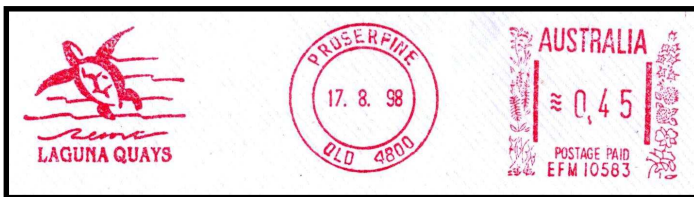


Figure 2 – AUSTRALIA 1998
Neopost Alcatel Electronic



Figure 3 – USA 1941 – Pitney Bowes



Figure 4 – GREAT BRITAIN 1957
Universal Multi-value (Frankopost)

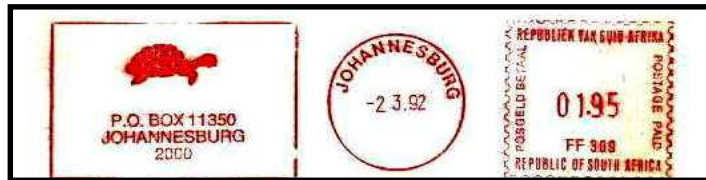


Figure 5 – RSA 1992 - Francotyp Postalia



Figure 6 – SOUTH KOREA 2003 - Neopost Electronic -
Chinese Hieroglyph meaning a turtles

Germany in 1928, Figure 7. The first date I've seen was 25 November 1928. This meter is from the Rheinische Gummi und Celluloid Fabrik, famous for it's production of celluloid dolls.

SchildKrute, over the years, has given us about 30 different meter prints only in Germany, Figures 8 and 9.

Figures 10 and 11 show turtle slogans from Austria and the Netherlands.

Another very old meter came from France, but no turtle appears, only the brand name of a fishing line,



Figure 7 - GERMANY 1931 – Francotyp

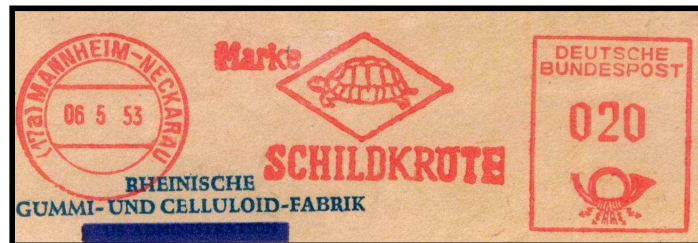


Figure 8 – GERMANY 1953 – Francotyp C



Figure 9 – GERMANY 2000 – Hasler

Turtles continued from page 3

“Racine Tortue” (Turtle Root), Figure 12, first seen on 31 May 1926.

Tortue, a company still operating, gave my collection about 15 different meters in 80 years of activity, Figure 13.

European countries are most productive of meters with turtle slogans, both in the past, and in the present, Figures 14 to 22.

- 14 – FRANCE 2004 - Pitney Bowes/SECAP
- 15 – GERMANY 1955 - Postalia
- 16 – NEDERLAND 1973 - Francotyp (Cc or Ccm)
- 17 – GERMANY 2008 - FRANKIT
- 18 – GERMANY 1949 – Francotyp “C”
- 19 – ITALY 1940 – Sima
- 20 – SWEDEN 1999 - Pitney Bowes

- 21 – GREAT BRITAIN 2009 – Pitney Bowes DM100
- 22 – SPAIN 1969 - Francotyp

As we turn to the Americas we find a few but interesting turtle meter slogans, Figures 23 to 26.

- 23 – CANADA 1935 or 55– Pitney Bowes
- 24 – USA 1965 – Pitney Bowes
- 25 – USA 1993 – Pitney Bowes
- 26 – USA 1953 – Pitney Bowes

Here we have shown a topical collection that can be grouped based on the type of meters, the different countries, franks, town marks, and slogans. A comprehensive collection!

I thank everyone who informs me of new turtles. Miriam Congedo, Italy tartamimmi@email.it. Also visit the website: <http://turtlemeterstamp.altervista.org/> ■



Figure 10 – AUSTRIA 1986 - Pitney Bowes-GB “6300”

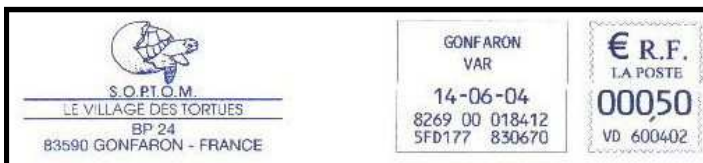


Figure 14 – FRANCE 2004 - Pitney Bowes/SECAP



Figure 11 – NEDERLAND 1962 - Postalia



Figure 15 – GERMANY 1955 –Postalia

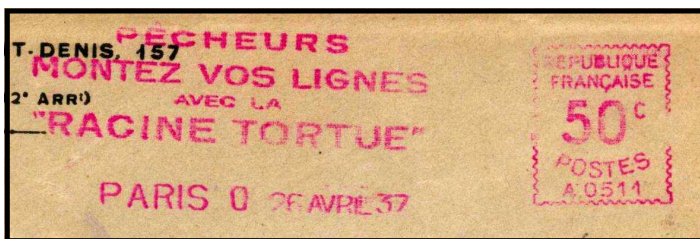


Figure 12 – FRANCE 1937 - Havas “Tiranty”
(Slogan: Fishermen mount your lines)



Figure 16 – NEDERLAND 1973 - Francotyp (Cc or Ccm)



Figure 17– GERMANY 2008 - FRANKIT



Figure 13 – FRANCE 2002 - Secap
(Slogan – Turtle, universe of fishing)



Figure 18 – GERMANY 1949 – Francotyp “C”



Figure 19 – ITALY 1940 – Sima



Figure 23 – CANADA 1935 or 55– Pitney Bowes

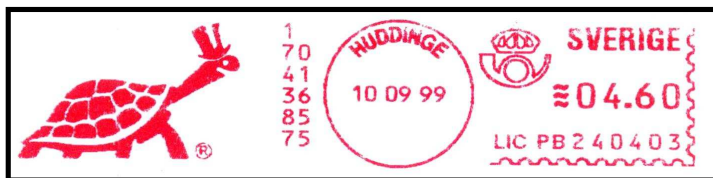


Figure 20 – SWEDEN 1999 - Pitney Bowes



Figure 24 – USA 1965 – Pitney Bowes

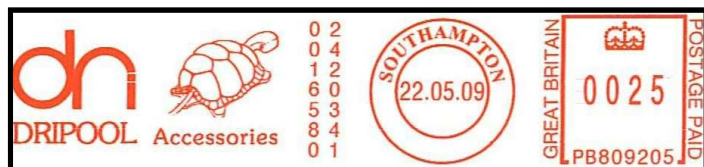


Figure 21 – GREAT BRITAIN 2009 – Pitney Bowes DM100



Figure 25 – USA 1993 – Pitney Bowes



Figure 22 – SPAIN 1969 - Francotyp



Figure 26 – USA 1953 – Pitney Bowes

Postmatic Stamp Affixers

Postmatic is a company (www.postmatic.net) that sells stamp affixers. This type of business has been alive from the Mail-O-Meter days in the early 1900's. The picture at right (Figure 1) is the Postmatic Model 7000SA which is designed to fit onto the obsolete Hasler mail handlers where the postage meter was mounted. Several of these appeared on eBay during the Spring.

Other equipment manufactured and sold by the company includes stand alone machines that can print a permit (Figure 2), affix a stamp and, if desired, print the mailers postmark (Figure 3).

This is the competition for the postage meter vendors. Most of this editor's mail arrives with permits, most pre-printed on the item but some appear machine printed. ■

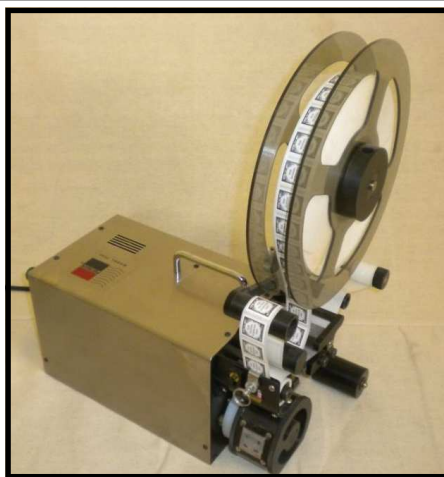


Figure 1. Postmatic Model 7000SA Stamp Affixer designed to fit on obsolete Hasler meter base.



Figures 2 and 3. Other Postmatic models can print the standard permit, affix a stamp, or affix the stamp and print the mailer's postmark.




Computer Vended Postage



PB Cancels Stamp Expressions Service

Otto Bergman reports that on December 15, 2011, Pitney Bowes Stamp Expressions subscribers were notified via E-mail that their service was being upgraded to pbSmartPostage. Stamp Expressions was a service in which a user chosen image could be printed from a personal computer using a special thermal printer known as the PUP. The pbSmartPostage service prints postage from a PC using any PC printer but only on special label sheets for stamps, and no user selected image is possible.

Those with Premium plans would be registered for the Normal payable version, while Basic plan patrons would be transferred to the free Basic mailing solution. The Basic plan allowed users to print postage on sheet and roll stamps, but not on envelopes or shipping labels. The Stamp Expressions PUPs could not be used with the new service. Customers were encouraged to use Windows compatible laser or inkjet printers to print stamps on pbSmartPostage printable postage sheets, or shipping labels on 8.5 x 11.0" plain paper. The vendor would provide a 20% discount coupon to purchase a thermal printer if desired.

Patrons were encouraged to stop buying additional postage, print their current postage, and to stop using their PUPs as soon as possible. Stamp Expressions would be officially discontinued on March 15, 2012. All purchased postage resided on the PUPs, so subscribers could continue to print postage after March 15. However, after that date, it would no longer be possible to reassign stamp denominations to the top 3 buttons, or images to the bottom 2 buttons. To help with the transition, Pitney Bowes set up a pbSmartPostage account for each Stamp Expressions subscriber. Any accounts not terminated by March 15, 2012 would be cancelled by the vendor.

Since pbSmartStamp does not have the option to print stamps with personalized images PB suggested customers could create custom postage at the on-line store, www.pbcustomprint.com. That site is actually operated by Zazzle.com where only 7 different denominations are available rather than the seemingly infinite number with Stamp Expressions. Of course Zazzle.com ships stamps by mail rather than being printed on demand.

Fooling the AFCS Canceler

The bane of the Personal Postage or CVP collector is the fact that most US CVP postage stamps do not get canceled. We've discussed this many times in the past. Otto Bergman has experimented to find ways to trigger the canceler in the USPS sorting equipment. Otto reports that

the use of certain older CVP postage stamps can accomplish the desired result.

Otto's report: "In the beginning, the tagging on SDC, Endicia & Zazzle stamps glowed pink under UV lighting & typically triggered the USPS equipment to apply cancels. Along the way, SDC changed to yellow, and Endicia & Zazzle to green, none of which trigger the equipment to apply cancels. I have no idea what the tagging substances are. By using old stamps with pink tagging in combination with newer stamps without the pink tagging, I typically get my control covers machine cancelled.

Typical consumers of Custom Postage don't wish to have their expensive stamps defaced by cancels, but I like to have a record of when they passed through the USPS system. I usually place them low on the covers to minimize the black ink on the stamps. USPS ink (hand & machine) typically does not adhere at all to current Zazzle stamps." See three examples in Figure 1 nearby.

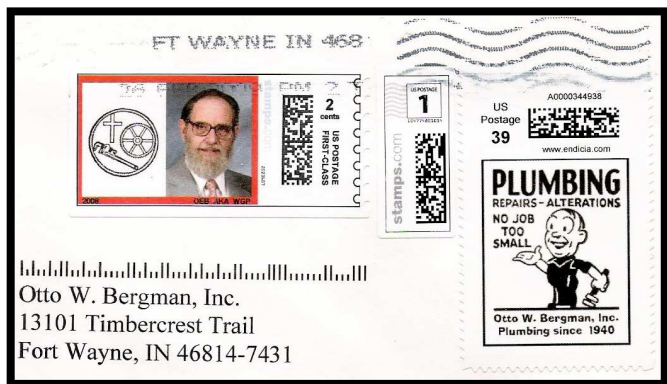
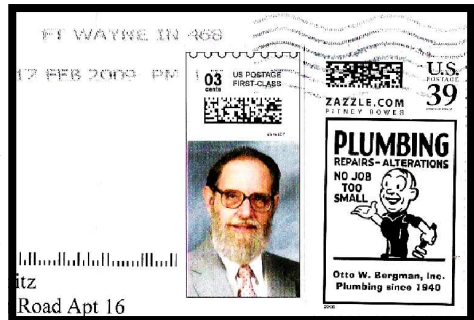


Figure 1. Three examples of older PC Postage (aka CVP) stamps used with newer issues to trigger cancellation.

British Post & Go Bird Stamps

Jim Ashby reports that the February 2012 issue of the *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* announced the release several sets of 40 and 100 gram stamps featuring colorful images of birds, pigs, the UK Flag as well as stamps featuring the Queen's Machin image, Figures 2, 3, and 4. These stamps became available after the November 2011 V2 (version 2) upgrade of the kiosks.

These stamps are produced by Wincor Nixdorf kiosks similar to the USPS APC/SSMC kiosks as reported in these pages.

These stamps are available in addition to the more bland black and white stamp shown in Figure 5.



Figures 2, 3, 4. Colorful stamps from the British Post & Go Kiosks.

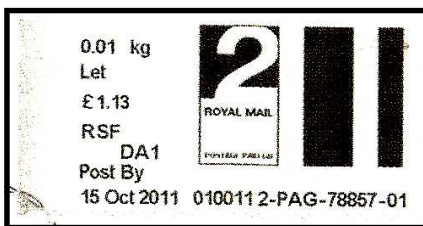


Figure 5. Post & Go V2 Stamp.

The \$1.32 mail&go Stamp (USA)

Why would a \$1.32 Pitney Bowes mail&go stamp be significant? It pays the minimum rate of Form 3877, otherwise known as the "Firm Mailing Book for Accountable Mail". Form 3877 is essentially the "multi-item" version of the Form 3817 (otherwise known as the "Certificate of Mailing"), Figure 6. Peter Elias reports on an unusual usage of this form.

Most consumers are only familiar with Form 3817 when they need "proof of mailing". This is a small form, allowing for name & address of both sender and recipient and just barely enough room for the postage and cancel to be applied. The current fee for form 3817 is \$1.15, and of course the USPS would normally slap on a PVI strip at the counter if you don't have a chance to supply your own postage!

But what if you are mailing more than one item and need proof of mailing? One option is of course to fill out multiple copies of Form 3817 and pay the \$1.15 fee for each one!

What if, for example, you are mailing 3 items? That would cost you \$3.45 if using Form 3817. Form 3877 to the rescue! With this form, you only pay 44¢ per item being mailed. There is a minimum requirement of 3 items,

thus a \$1.32 fee.

The main difference is that all information goes on one form, so if you need to submit proof to the recipients, they would of course see who else you mailed something to (unless you block out those portions).

Even if you are only mailing two items, this is still a bargain, as 2x Form 3817 would still be \$2.30, versus \$1.32 for 3 items on Form 3877, so simply mail yourself a postcard at 32¢ and list it as the third item, so you are still saving money!

Before the postage rates and certain fees were increased on January 22, 2012, the Form 3877 fees were 42¢ per item (still a minimum of 3). Form 3817 fees were NOT increased on January 22nd. So between October 18, 2011, when the mail&go stamp trials started in Dallas, and January 21, 2012, the minimum Form 3877 fee would have been \$1.26. While I do have some Forms 3877 with \$1.26 in postage on them (including various Zazzle, endicia, Stamps.com, Netstamps, etc postage), I am NOT aware than any Form 3877 exist using mail&go stamps. Having realized this, I have purchased a sheet of \$1.32 mail&go stamps have started using them for items that require a proof of mailing (such as the illustration nearby).

Form 3877 comes in a book form, 12" x 7" x 0.7" in size, containing approx. 153 pages (why this odd number I don't know; that's what I counted on a new book given to me at the post office a few days ago). The current books in use are dated February 2002 and you do have to request them specially (they're not exactly laying around the counters, usually buried in some storage closet in the back of the post office...), but they are free, and you don't have to be a "firm" (ie: company) to use them.

I have various examples of Form 3877 dating back to about 2001 (when I used a version dated April 1999 and August 2000), with lots of excellent usages of current commemorative stamps, as well as various custom postage stamps. From 2001 to current, the rates have been 25¢, 30¢, 42¢, 44¢. There was a while where I was not using this form, so they may have been rates between 30¢ and 42¢.

While the individual form pages are bound into the book, they can be removed easily as each page is roulette perforated near the binding.

Just like Form 3817, Form 3877 is one of the few (only?) forms that the US Postal Service has where you, the sender, gets to keep the proof of the fee being paid! For all other fees (ie: delivery/signature confirmation, insured, registered, certified mail, etc), the fee for the article being mailed is on the mail piece itself and those receipts usually only have a postmark on them.

Two recent articles by APS Judge Jay Stotts of Houston discusses the "Early Parcel Receipts and Introduction of Form 3817" and "Evolution of Form 3817", respective-

CVP Continued From Page 7

ly in the Oct. 2011 and March 2012 issues of the *United States Specialist*, the journal of the United States Stamp Society (USSS). These two articles do not mention Form 3877 though, and I am not aware if there are any articles that have been written about Form 3877.

So if you are looking for fairly scarce modern postal history collectibles, look into Forms 3817 and 3877. If anything, it's a way to get nicely postmarked modern stamps!

Article Number	Address (Name, Street, City, State, & ZIP Code)	Postage	Fee	Postage Change	Actual Value if Registered	Weight (lb)	Unit Weight (lb)	SG	PZ	PK	Fee
1. PCSC Art. 1174, 1123, 1101, 1116	ALAN WOOD 65 ROCKY RD WINDSOR, ONTARIO, CANADA	9.46	.44								
2. PCSC Art. 1174, 1123, 1101, 1116	ALAN WOOD 65 ROCKY RD WINDSOR, ONTARIO, CANADA	0.65	.44								
3. PCSC Art. 1174, 1123, 1101, 1116	ALAN WOOD 65 ROCKY RD WINDSOR, ONTARIO, CANADA	.45	.44								

Figure 6. USPS Form 3877 used with pbSmartPostage Stamp

Taiwan ATM Catalog

Karim Roder, with other authors and with the proofing skills of Otto Bergman, has come out with a complete catalog, *Taiwan ATM 1995-2011*. This specialized catalog is written in English, has 86 pages (US letter format) and is in full color. It completely lists all Taiwan ATM (computer vended postage stamps) from 1995 until 2011 and gives detailed background information for each issue. It includes and depicts errors, test prints, proofs, essays, presentation packs, large presentation packs, ATM-related pictorial postmarks, vending machines, vending machine locations, official maximum cards and first day envelopes, gold foils and receipts. The catalog depicts around 540 images, lists around 155 catalog numbers and gives approximately 1,000 prices. Available at Lulu.com

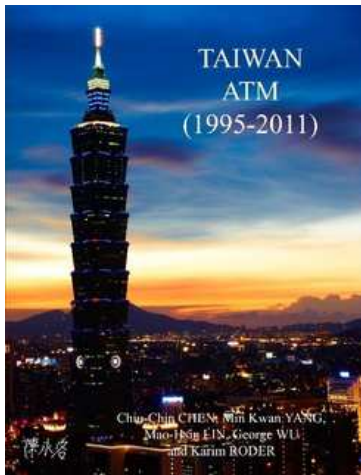


Figure 7. Taiwan ATM Catalog

mail&go Thermal Stamps Listed in Scott

Marty Frankevicz at Linn's told Peter Elias that the remaining listing for the mail&go thermal labels would be assigned Scott numbers in an April 2012 issue of *Linn's Stamp News*.

The labels are listed with "sub-numbering" of CVP75, ranging from CVP75h to CVP75q for labels inscribed:

- Postcard
- First Class Mail
- First Class Mail Intl
- Priority Envelope
- Priority Mail
- Priority Tube
- Priority Box
- Priority - Irregular Shape
- Parcel Post
- Express Mail

"Uninscribed" labels (ie: no service inscription) were assigned to CVP75g last month. No catalog value is given for any of these. The stamp market will have to find it's own value.

New APC (aka SSSMC) Test Strip

Frankie Sutura reports: With the recent announcement of new APC stamps, it looks like St. Peters, MO is gearing up to start selling these in the near future. Tonight was no different for me dumpster diving except I think I came across something interesting. If you remember that recently I've come across small "TEST VEND" stamps usually generated during APC maintenance. Tonight I found the a test strip, Figure 1, of the forthcoming newer large labels. Note the red stripe along the left side similar to the one shown a few threads up. The scan only shows the text part as the strip extends another foot before being torn off. The reverse side has a pattern of one inch wide stripes spaced every 3/4 of an inch that travels the length of the strip along the right side. What's unusual is that there are no die-cuts for peeling the paper from the backing for each label. One wonders if this operation is within the machinery before dispensing the label.

Frankie has since noted that the old style "APC" stamp on this SSSMC is now like the FOREVER upgrade stamp as shown in the story about that upgrade on page 10.

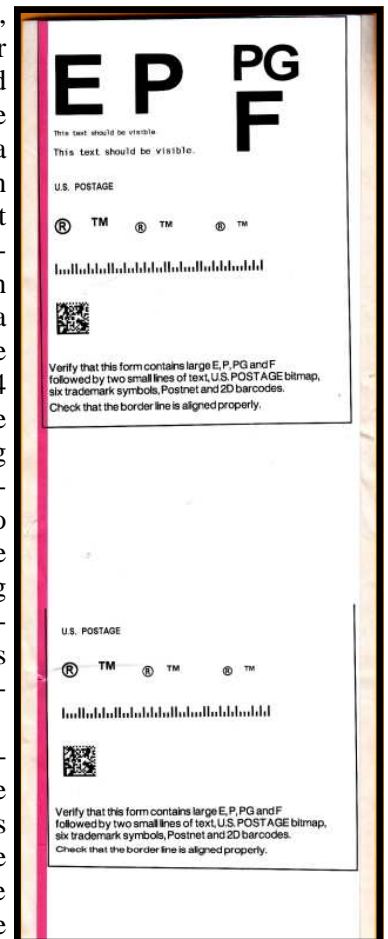


Figure 8. SSSMC Large test Strip found in St. Peters, MO



US News David Crotty



International Registered Mail

While this isn't a real metered mail issue, *Peter Elias* got an unusual metered cover from Bangladesh and noted that, while it was registered, it seemed to arrive in normal mail. This has been a common discussion in other societies as well. *John Butkis* responded with the full story.

"I get many pieces of international registered mail. The whole process changed effective June 1, 2009. Since then international registered mail is handled as first class mail and is no longer part of the domestic registered mail system.

See 39 CFR 20.1. They needed to make cost cutting changes, and hand to hand, lock to lock domestic registered mail is costly. The UPU agreement does not require a hand to hand process for international registered mail. Thus, the USPS changed the International Mail Manual (IMM) 752.13 (June 1, 2009 issue) to read that all mail registered by country of origin must be handled in the domestic First Class mail stream (formerly this was carried with the US Registered mail) from the exchange office to the office of delivery. A signed receipt must be obtained at the time of delivery.

Only about 1 out of every 5 or 6 overseas registered items that I get require me to go down to my P.O. and sign a receipt. Most of the time they don't bother with the signed receipt and deliver to my mailbox. Because it's being handled as First Class mail, you often end up with unwanted additional markings, cross-outs, damaged stamps, etc.

Just FYI, when I first read about the coming changes years ago, I kicked up a big fuss and finally, got to talk with the USPS lawyer who was the main person handling it all for the Federal Register, etc. She said, forget it, it was a done deal. Even though they were still going to provide indemnity claims, they were going to take their chances with in-house theft and other security issues. Indeed, this change places overseas registered mail in a much more insecure position. But, they had no intention of letting people know about the change. The continued signing for the item gives the false impression that all is secure. Of course, at my end they don't require a signature most of the time. I wonder how consistent that is throughout the system. I hope this info is useful."

This editor searched the IMM Archives at USPS.com and verified that, yes, the IMM dated June 1, 2009 was the first issue stating that international registered mail was to be treated like US Certified in the First Class Mail stream. The US Domestic Registered can be insured to up to \$25,000 but most, if not all, countries around the world

only will insure for about 50 euros. Users of eBay are aware that adding Registered to an incoming item from most countries costs about \$1, while the USPS charges \$10.95. Finally, this editor can report that he has to sign for all international registered mail including Canadian Xpresspost at the local post office.

The USPS IMM archives can be found at:
http://pe.usps.com/IMM_Archive.asp

The USPS DMM archives can be found at:
<http://pe.usps.com/archive.asp>

These had been removed when the new USPS.com site was installed but they have re-appeared recently.

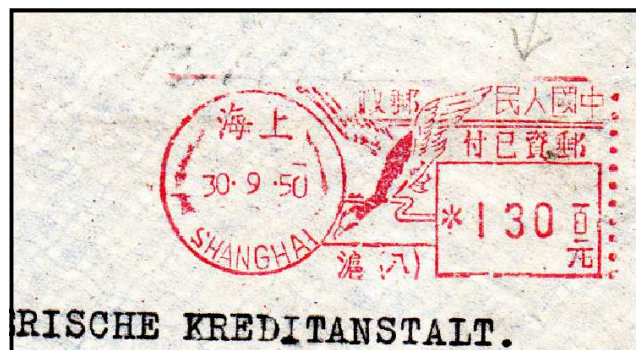
Office Museum Shows all the Old Machines

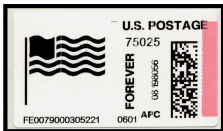
Last year David Crotty made a presentation to the Postal History Symposium conducted by the National Postal Museum at the APS headquarters in Bellefonte, PA. The subject was the machines that accompanied the early postage meters in the mail room. For that discussion I rummaged through a box of office documents (kindly made available to me by *Diane DeBlois* of aGatherin' a vendor of books and ephemera) from the Bircher Company, a manufacturer of an early envelope opener. The letterheads of company correspondence provided a nice assortment of images of other types of mail room equipment which allowed me to lead into the main subject, postage meters.

What I did not find in my research was the Office Museum website: http://www.officemuseum.com/mail_machines.htm, which was recently brought to my attention by *Ross Irwin*. What a wonderful website. Highly recommended. ■

China Meter Sells for \$99

This very well printed cut strip Pitney Bowes IPMSC Type CA3 sold on eBay April 26, 2012 for \$99. The International Postage Meter Stamp Catalog (IPMSC) 2005 print edition lists the value at \$150 for a full cover. The current Wikibooks edition lists the value at \$300.





SSSMC Forever Stamp Upgrade

Peter Elias



On April 12, 2012, the US Postal Service started a nationwide pilot program (10 select post offices on April 12 followed by others in rapid succession) whereby the SSSMC kiosks (Self Service Ship & Mail Center aka APC kiosks - Automated Postal Center) will be able to print "FOREVER" postage labels. "FOREVER" means a stamp will always pay the prevailing first ounce First Class letter mail rate.

The machines visually look the same as before. There are 3 output slots. The middle slot (located under the scale) used to say "Labels", but now reads "Postage", while the slot under the screen says "Stamps" that is not used. The left slot is used for the larger labels that also have the destination Zip Code & bar code on them.

Previously, the older style APC stamps came out of the "Stamps" slot on the right, but now are dispensed from the middle slot.

The menus on the kiosks have also changed. When selecting the "buy stamps" option, the next screen used to say something about a booklet of stamps, but now reads "1 oz First Class Forever". The bottom option for buying "different" values now reads "minimum stamp value of \$0.17" (previously it was \$0.20). This is, however, only for the initial purchase. After purchasing at a minimum of \$1, you are allowed to purchase stamps in increments of 1¢.

While the standard design APC labels can still be bought (effectively from 1¢ upwards), they ARE different. First, they are no longer issued in a single stamp version with a huge peelable border, but now are issued in rows of 1 or 2 stamps. If purchasing stamps in even quantities, both columns will have postage stamps; uneven quantities will result in the postage label on the left and a "this block is not valid postage" label on the right (that also blocks out the pink facing strip).

The limit is that you can only purchase up to 6 postage labels of the regular variety at once (3 rows of 2 labels each)! There is also an option to weigh a mail piece and the system will issue a single larger postage label that also has the destination Zip Code on it.

The new APC labels measure 47 mm wide x 27 mm tall with a horizontal gutter of 7.5 mm and a vertical gutter of 3.9 mm. Other differences compared to the old-style APC stamps are that the pink fluorescent strip does NOT run the entire height of the stamp, but is only 22 mm tall, leaving 2.5 mm of white space at the top and bottom. When the machine prints the "THIS BLOCK IS NOT VALID POSTAGE" on a label, it also prints a black bar over the pink stripe (so that the postal facing & cancelling equipment can NOT react to these labels, thus kicking them out).

The other "stamps" that are now available are 6 different varieties of FOREVER (45¢) stamps. These can be purchased in sheetlets of up to 10 postage labels (of the same design). There is a maximum of 100 labels (ie: 10 sheets) that can be purchased at one time. The menu choices are 1, 2, 3, 4 sheets or "other qty", where you can then select 1 to 100 or 3 to 100 stamps. For the initial transaction, you HAVE to buy at least 3 stamps (which puts you over the \$1 minimum), after that you can purchase as little as 1 stamp.

Before you can purchase the stamps, you have to select one of six designs:

- Celebrate (with Balloons)
- Eagle
- Flag
- Flowers
- Mr. Zip
- Heart

After you select the design, you can then purchase the stamps. As with the regular (non-FOREVER) APC labels, they are dispensed in rows containing 2 labels (up to 5 rows = 10 stamps). Buying an even amount will get you 2 stamps on a row, odd amounts will always end up with 1 stamp + 1 "not valid for postage" label on the last row purchased.

So the options are:

- Sheetlet of 10 (5 rows)
- Sheetlet of 9 + 1 label (5 rows)
- Sheetlet of 8 (4 rows)
- Sheetlet of 7 + 1 label (4 rows)
- Sheetlet of 6 (3 rows)
- Sheetlet of 5 + 1 label (3 rows)
- Sheetlet of 4 (2 rows)
- Sheetlet of 3 + 1 label (2 rows)
- Strip of 2 (1 row)
- Strip of 1 + 1 label (1 row)

If you purchase, for example, 11 stamps, you'll get a full sheetlet of 10 plus a strip of 1 stamp + 1 label. Purchasing 7 stamps will get you 4 rows: 3x rows of 2 stamps and a last row of 1 stamp + 1 label.

The kiosk does actively track your purchases at the bottom of the screen (see photo), it states "Credit Card Active" and the amount purchased so far. The limit is \$50/day. If you reach that or attempt a purchase that would put you over that amount, it immediately stops the transaction and prints out a receipt. The kiosk will NOT let you purchase any more with the same credit card when attempting another transaction! When I did this today, I needed 8 different credit cards to make all my purchases. Since I was there for 2 hours, I attempted to use the same card that I used for the first transaction, and it did let me buy a few minor items, plus one sheet and then decided I could not make any further purchases with that card! For the average buyer, this would probably not be an issue, but it is when you're a collector attempting to buy a lot of these at one time. Given the time (almost 1 hour drive time) and distance (30 miles, either via lots of stoplights and school zones or via a Tollway and then more stoplights and school zones), I can't really afford to go back there every day.

When using a debit card, it will only let you purchase one item (or multiples of the same item); so, if you wanted to buy a set of all 6 designs, you'd have to do 6 separate card transactions. I did NOT have the chance yet to test and see whether the \$50 threshold is also in place for the debit cards.

The postage label stock for the small stamps is a stack of labels in a "z-fold" configuration, with each unfolded section

containing the equivalent of 2 sheetlets of 10 stamps (with rouletting on the backing paper after each 5 rows of labels). The rouletting is also on the folded portion. Since full sheetlets are not always purchased, the spacing of the rouletting on some of sheetlets may have rouletting present between the rows of stamps and can fall anywhere between rows 1 & 2, 2 & 3, 3 & 4 or 4 & 5. The rouletting on a sheetlet, if present, can be unfolded, folded forwards or folded backwards between rows. If no rouletting is visible, then the sheet was perfectly cut at the rouletting.

I was at the SSSMC kiosk for almost 2 hours, and thus aroused the suspicion of one of the postal clerks who told me that they almost called the police since I was at the machine for way too long! But she said she recognized me and knew that I was a collector and thus opted not to call the cops! Phew. Since other people needed to use the kiosk as well, I had to let them buy their one or two stamps.

Note: I am indebted to *Karim Roder* alerting me to the availability of these items!

There are supposedly several other kiosks in the area: Dallas (downtown), Mesquite and Arlington (but all are 45 to 100 mile roundtrips from my house); the one in Houston, well, that's about a 5 hour drive from here. Actually, Oklahoma City is closer to me than Houston.

Stamp Codes - Standard Design (barcode matrix on the left)

Otto and I have been working on deciphering the code structure used on the new SSSMC postage labels.

First and foremost, the right 3 digits (such as the 226 on examples in the Web Appendix) is a date code. While the "standard design" SSSMC stamps do have "Date Sold" on them, the FOREVER stamps do NOT, but, they do have a code and the last 3 digits give away the date.

For example, the scan of the 32c stamps shows a 226 and was purchased on April 23, 2012. Similarly, I purchased stamps on April 20 and they had 223 on them, April 19 had 222 and April 18 had 221.

But what does 226 mean? Using Excel, I subtracted the number 226 from April 23 and came up with September 10, 2011 (9/10/11). The significance of this date is unknown, perhaps the date that the first version of this machine was put into use somewhere in a test environment.

Since these postage labels can be purchased in quantities of 1 to 6, but always in strips of either 2 postage labels or 1 postage label + 1 "not valid for postage" block, we noticed differences in other areas of the code.

The 4 digits preceding the date (ie: 226 in this case) ARE different for the different purchase types:

- 1405 Strip of 1 + 1 Label
- 0905 Strip of 2
- 1505 Block of 3 + 1 Label
- 1605 Block of 4
- 1705 Block of 5 + 1 Label
- 1805 Block of 6

Why is the Strip of 2 out-of-sequence? In looking at my receipt, it appears that I purchased it out of sequence! I had purchased the Strip of 2, but then purchased some other 32c sheetlets, 4 of them actually, before purchasing the strip of 1, thus the other 4 sheetlets have 1005, 1105, 1205 and 1305.

For a similar set of \$1.05 postage labels (also with 226 at the end) we have:

- 1905 Strip of 1 + 1 Label
- 2005 Strip of 2
- 2105 Block of 3 + 1 Label
- 2205 Block of 4
- 2305 Block of 5 + 1 Label
- 2405 Block of 6

The \$1.05 labels were purchased in the order listed (according to my receipt), so, this would indicate that these sets of 4 digits are part of the order in which they were purchased. However, on strips of 2 through sheetlets of 6, all the stamps on any given block or sheetlet have the same numeric codes, so based on the human readable numbers, they are NOT different, however, the barcode matrix is different for all of them, so portions of these codes are only within the barcode matrix, as all of these stamps are technically unique.

Houston: we have a problem!

So here I was, merrily wearing a groove into the floor space in front of the Northwest Plano SSSMC machines while purchasing more FOREVER and "new" standard design APC labels, when the kiosk decided to malfunction.

It had just printed 2 out of 3 of the 32c sheetlets (each with a maximum qty of 6), when it had a mechanical malfunction of some sort. It said it couldn't print anymore and would reverse the credit card charge. It then proceeded to print me a receipt for 30 stamps for \$13.50, although I only had received 20 stamps (= \$9.00). So I do hope that I'll get a credit to my card for \$4.50!

The kiosk then said that while it could NOT print any more small stamps (either FOREVER or standard design), it could print these in a one-up mode using the continuous form that is normally used for printing the large labels! This layout places the label on the left side (along with the red stripe on the left), followed by a vertical line that says "FOLD HERE" and then white space.

The reasoning for this is that the red stripe is fluorescent and used by the USPS scanning & facing equipment. Since this label is 4" wide, the red stripe would be way too far on the left side of the mail piece, which is why they recommend that the extra part of the unprinted portion is folded over to the back of the envelope; that places the stamp image portion properly on the upper right-hand side of the envelope!

This then must be some sort of emergency failover mode that allows the kiosk to keep printing postage in case there is a problem with the small labels! This also makes the the FOLD HERE label variety somewhat scarce, as this mode can NOT be selected under normal operation!

While I was waiting for the manager to fix the issue, I did manage to print a couple of sets of "FOLD HERE" labels both with the FOREVER and the standard variable rate design. I did also get to print one FOLD HERE label with the rate inscription FCM LG ENV (First Class Mail Large Envelope). While I would have loved to have purchased the entire set of rate inscriptions, a bunch of foot-tapping postal patrons behind me prevented that.

When the manager fixed the problem, I did get to see inside the machine and was able to verify that the large labels are indeed on a continuous roll, while the small labels are "2-up" (ie: 2 sheetlets of 10) in a z-fold layout in a box at the bottom back of the kiosk. As a result, I also managed to get a sample "VOID" test label as well as an unprinted strip of 2. A nice bonus!

Forever Continued from Page 11

Final Notes

Today, I went (yet again, sigh...) to an SSSMC kiosk to put 2 theories to rest. So, we are now up to 18 small and 21 large label varieties. Now will come the fun part of scanning all these items (since I will need that as part of a 1-frame exhibit that I will be preparing for our club's November show. Of course by then, all APC kiosks will have been converted).

First, I did manage to get the "hold" label for the standard Express Flat Rate envelope, called EM HFPU FR.

Also, I corrected the hold legal size envelope listing for Express, it's actually EMH LFR EN not EMH LFR ENV.

So, the listing in Table 1 should be the final listing! Phew.

Second, when purchasing a single stamp using the weigh-and-mail option, and you tell it you only owe 1c, then they will make you buy 3 additional 45c (non-inscribed) stamps, so you end up with a block of 4: 1c inscribed rate in upper left corner, and 45c for the other 3 corners.

The theory was that you need to purchase a \$1 minimum (as the first transaction), so I weighed an envelope and told it I had 35c applied, meaning that I only needed a 10c stamp, that plus 2x 45c non-inscribed stamps would give me the \$1 minimum. But, since there are 4 stamps to a block (2x strips of 2), the kiosk would then print a "not valid for postage" block on the lower right stamp, which it did do! See attached scan showing both types of blocks of 4. So these represent the minimum than can be purchased when using the weigh-your-mail option AND it's a debit card transaction OR the first part of a multi-item credit card transaction.

Of course, the average postal patron would NOT do such

tomfoolery, they probably buy the standard offer of the 45c inscribed rate plus 2x additional non-inscribed 45c (+ the not-valid label); so they would also get a block of 4 (3 + 1 label). Of course, since I just thought of THIS option, I guess I'll have to buy this option on the next trip, just to make sure I would get what the usual postal customer would end up getting.

Third: You know how certain restaurants ask you to "upsized" your meal? Well, the kiosk does this as well when buying a parcel post item. Now in this case, the upgrade would actually cost LESS (\$1.90 first class parcel versus \$5.20 parcel post!). Now, that's nice for a change: an upgrade that costs less!

Fourth: There is NO international "box" or package options available (even though there are plenty of priority mail boxes available for mailing such items, however, at the SSSMC, you can only mail international "letters" or "large envelopes" and you are asked if your mail piece ONLY contains correspondence or documents, all other items have to be presented to a postal clerk at the counter (due to customs forms requirements). Depending on whether you use the letter or large letter option, you get presented with slightly different screens; on one of which it says that the "Automated Postal Center" can accept only letters/documents for international mail; strange that they would still refer to it as "Automated Postal Center" when they have renamed these kiosks. Guess they need to check their programming a bit closer.

Fifth: There are tagging variations shown in detail in the *Web Appendix*. Also many photos of all stamps, screen shots and the equipment are in the *Web Appendix*.

Final: Here's the final updated table of services available from the SSSMC Kiosk, Table 1. ■

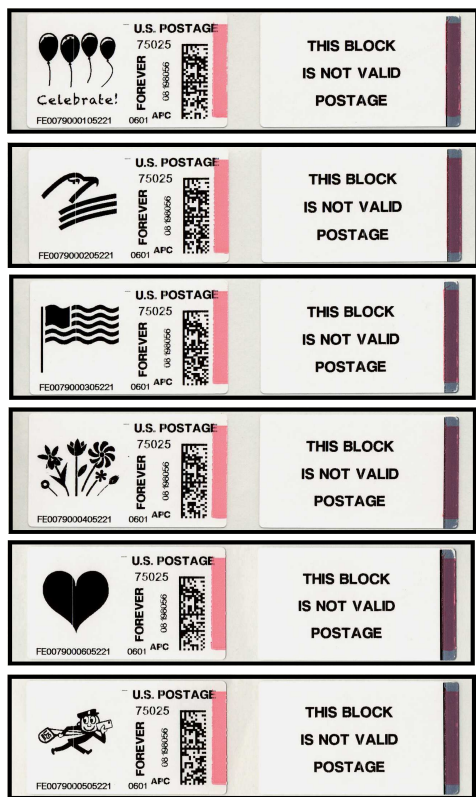


Figure 1. Available Forever SSSMC designs. Printed with "Not Valid" label when purchased single.



Figure 2. Sheetlet of 10 stamps available for each design.



Figure 3. Slightly Different APC label available with the new FOREVER Stamps. Note the new shorter pink phosphor bar. The serial number has moved from below the 2D barcode to a vertical position to the right of "APC". Depending on the positioning of the printing this number can be printed over the pink bar, partially over the bar or completely to the left of it.



Figure 4. “FOLD HERE” variety printed when small label printer fails. Printed on large parcel label printer. Available for singles and sheetlets of 6 stamps for the “APC” style stamp as well as the FOREVER designs. Note phosphor bar runs the full height of stamp and its different location.

Table 1. List of Postal Services Available on Updated SSSMC Kiosks

		SSSMC/APC Service Inscribe Postage Labels		Small Label	Regular	Large Label w/Return Rcpt	Restricted
First Class							
FCM LETTER	First Class Letter	X	X	X	X	X	X
FCM LG ENV	First Class Large Envelope	X	X	X	X	X	X
FCM PARCEL	First Class Parcel	X	X	X	X	X	X
First Class Intl.							
FCMI LTR	First Class Mail International Letter	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
FCMI L ENV	First Class Mail International Large Envelope	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Parcel Post							
PARCEL POST	Parcel Post	X	X	X	X	X	X
Priority Mail							
PRIORITY	Priority Mail	X	X	X	X	X	X
PM FR ENV	Priority Mail Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM SFR ENV	Priority Mail Small Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM LFR ENV	Priority Mail Legal Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM GFR ENV	Priority Mail Gift Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM WFR ENV	Priority Mail Window Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM PFR ENV	Priority Mail Padded Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM SFR BOX	Priority Mail Small Flat Rate Box	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM MFR BOX	Priority Mail Medium Flat Rate Box	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM LFR BOX	Priority Mail Large Flat Rate Box	NA	X	X	X	X	X
PM RR BOXA	Priority Mail Regional Rate Box A	X	X	X	X	X	X
PM RR BOXB	Priority Mail Regional Rate Box B	X	X	X	X	X	X
PM RR BOXC	Priority Mail Regional Rate Box C	X	X	X	X	X	X
Express Mail							
EXPRESS	Express Mail	X	X	X	X	X	NA
EM FR ENV	Express Mail Flat Rate Envelope	X	X	X	X	X	NA
EM LFR ENV	Express Mail Legal Flat Rate Envelope	X	X	X	X	X	NA
EM FR BOX	Express Mail Flat Rate Box	X	X	X	X	X	NA
EM HFPU	Express Mail Hold for Pickup	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
EM HFPU FR	Express Mail Hold for Pickup Flat Rate Envelope	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
EMH LFR EN	Express Mail Hold for Pickup Legal Flat Rate Env.	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
EMHFPU FRB	Express Mail Hold for Pickup Flat Rate Box	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Merchandise Retrn							
GR RTN SVC	Ground Return Service	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
FC RTN SVC	First Class Returns	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PM RTN SVC	Priority Mail Returns	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PR FR ENV	Priority Mail Returns - Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PR SFR ENV	Priority Mail Returns - Small Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PR LFR ENV	Priority Mail Returns - Legal Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PR PFR ENV	Priority Mail Returns - Padded Flat Rate Envelope	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PR SFR BOX	Priority Mail Returns - Small Flat Rate Box	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PR MFR BOX	Priority Mail Returns - Medium Flat Rate Box	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
PR LFR BOX	Priority Mail Returns - Large Flat Rate Box	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA
NA - not avail.size		Available items:		18	31	21	17



World Report

Richard Stambaugh



Canada: one meter type reinstated and a new modern rarity added

1. Long Lost Large Frame Hasler Type C5

In the original print version of the *International Postage Meter Stamp Catalog* Canada Type C5 was an unusually large Hasler stamp known only by a deteriorated photocopy image. Several Canadian collectors doubted the stamp really existed, and these suspicions grew as time passed with no new sightings or reports.

By the time we uploaded Canada to the online version of the international catalog we seriously doubted the stamp's existence and so demoted it from a type classification to a reference note which said its existence was doubtful.

Now, two years later, the story abruptly changes. Canadian collector *Luc Legault* saw the catalog online and emailed me with the surprise that he has the stamp, two copies in fact but one is very poor. The good example is shown here in close-up and on cover, Figure 1.

2. Canadian PC Postage Test Calgary 2000 Type PC1

Lightening struck a second time in Canada as our own editor *Dave Crotty* revealed a PC stamp trialed in Canada in 2000, Figure 2, Type PC1. The trial lasted two or three months, with perhaps a 1000 covers mailed. Few collectors were aware of the trial until it was over.

In the space of the last few weeks the world of Canadian meter stamp collecting has changed significantly with two new major rarities added to the challenge, Types C5 and PC1.

Figure 1. Lost but newly refound Canada Hasler Large frame Type C5, on Cover. Only two examples known.



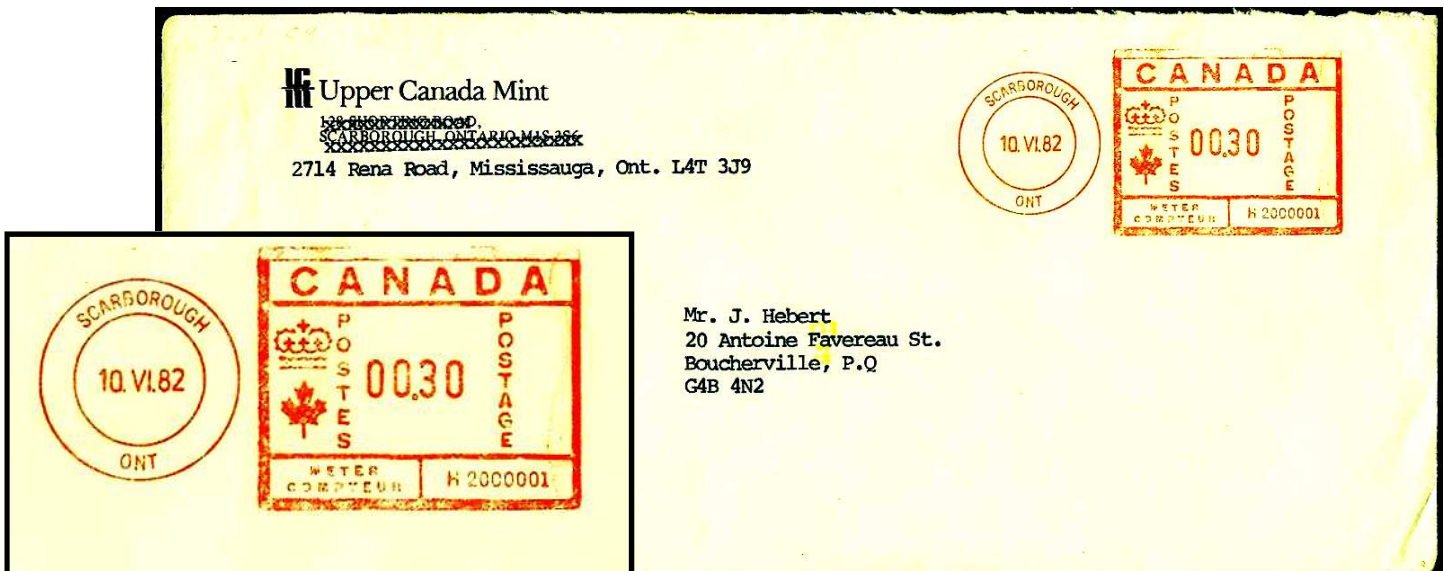
Figure 2. Stamps.com PC Postage Trial for 2 or 3 Months in Calgary in 2000. Canada never approved PC Postage.

Costa Rica: a new type is also the earliest type

A great find by *Roberto Di Casola* is a postally used example of an early Universal "MultiValue" stamp that was previously thought to be an essay rejected due to an engraver's error, Figure 3. The stamp has CENTAVOS as the currency, a monetary unit obsolete in Costa Rica since the late 19th century. This currency name was corrected to CENTIMOS before the meters were issued in 1938, or so we thought. Roberto's find shows convincingly that the error die was released in meter U.1 and was used this way for as long as two years before the die was replaced. The CENTAVOS stamp is cataloged as new Type A0.1.



Figure 3. Costa Rica. Used meter originally thought to be a rejected Essay.



FRAMA WORLD CATALOG 2000

286 pages, all English-French-Italian (only US \$35 or 25 Euro: By registered Mail) See Review in MSS Bulletin #250
WORLD FRAMA Price List (free)
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www.francofolli-automatici.it
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Wanted: Newspaper clippings of Postage meter ads or Aviation Events 1920's to the 1940's to be used in philatelic exhibits. David Crotty, decrotty@yahoo.com (Winter 2012)

Wanted: Articles for the MSS Quarterly Bulletin that describe your area of expertise. Maybe something we've discussed before but from a different angle. Maybe you thought that only you cared about this stuff. decrotty@yahoo.com

Wanted: Flying Eagle Meter tapes (single and especially on cover) and cuts. Please e-mail first at mnjerryk@gmail.com or write to Jerry Kolton, 2535 174th Lane N.W. Andover, MN 55304-1373. (Spring 2012)

free WANT ADS

Wanted: meters from Armenia and Portuguese Guinea. Send details to Richard Peck rp359@idx.com.au.

Wanted: Meter Stamp specimens, proof and essays from the Netherlands and its colonies: Netherlands Indies, Suriname, Curacao, Netherlands Antillean, Aruba, Netherlands New Guinea. willempaterkamp@wanadoo.nl, Willem Pasterkamp Pinksterbioemstraat 12, 8321 XE URK, The Netherlands

SELL YOUR COLLECTION. If you are ready to cash in and don't want to wait 6-10 months for a check from the MSS auction, sell to me. Prompt offer, prompt payment. Rick Stambaugh, 613 Old Corlies Ave, Neptune, NJ 07753. riikstambaugh@yahoo.com (Autumn 2012)

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Australia new sub-group MC

From Australia *Richard Peck* reports a new format for digital meter stamps. The stamp belongs in Group M where all the country's digital stamps are listed. Stamps in sub-group MA have a horizontal 2D barcode inside a larger rectangle. In sub-group MB the stamps have a large unframed square 2D barcode. The new stamp, Figure 4, has a horizontal 2D barcode unframed at left and thus can only belong in a new sub-group (MC).

Austria new sub-group HB

A new find for Austria also generated a new sub-group. *Gerd Eich*, editor of the German meter stamp society's journal, reported a stamp that belongs in Austria's Group H. This group contains Austria's first euro currency stamps. All the Group H stamps known before Gerd's discovery have "EUROCENT" at the top. The new stamp, Figure 5, has it at the bottom. This is the first stamp in new sub-group HB.

Changes to the

International Postage Meter Stamp Catalog

New countries added during the previous quarter are Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Malta, Mali, Maldives, Mauritius, and Mauritania. The catalog is found online at:

<http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/>

International_Postage_Meter_Stamp_Catalog ■



Figure 4. Australia Type MC1.



Figure 5. Austria Type HB1

Society Business

CVP, Customized Postage and Postage Meter Catalogs

Computer Vended Postage

USA: Postwertzeichen mit variablem Wertaufdruck (1989-2010)

271 pages, ca. 300 b/w images, 200 main and 1,000 sub catalog numbers.

Karim Roder

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Traditional Postage Meters

The International Postage Meter Stamp Catalog

Joel Hawkins and Richard Stambaugh

en.wikibooks.org/wiki/International_Postage_Meter_Stamp_Catalog Free

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**Next MSS Meeting
APS StampShow 2013
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
August 8-11, 2013**

The MSS Quarterly Bulletin
1948-2011 On CD



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National Cash Register Company-Meter Stamps by Douglas Kelsey (A Complete Listing)		\$3.00	\$4.00	\$5.00
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1262	EISENBERG	MARC
0941	GANDHI	RANJIT
1356	HELMLINGER	GABRIEL
1354	HENAULT	SCOTT
1358	JOHNSON	DWAYNE
1352	LACHAT	BERNARD
1339	LI	WEIFENG
1094	LOEHR	PATRICIA
1353	MEYER	JAMES
1322	MONK	WILLIS
1308	PEARSON	DONALD R.
0327	PECK	RICHARD
1179	SIMON	KENNETH
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0469	YAMAMOTO	KENICHI