

Creating Modern Rarities:

The New Scott Neopost Listings

by John Ryskamp

Due to the tiny number of extant examples, when the Neopost web-enabled stamps received their major listing numbers in the new Scott specialized catalogue (CVP39-CVP53), they immediately became the first classic 21st century U.S. stamps. A glance at other census figures shows why: there are only nine mint \$3.50 stamps, which puts them about on the same order of rarity as Scott 80, the 1867 5¢ "A" grill, of which eight are known, and which has a catalogue value used of \$130,000 (and no unused value given).

Thanks to ongoing cooperation from Neopost and collectors, it is possible to refine census figures to a degree rare for computer vended postage. I encouraged every collector I met to get these stamps while they were still available, knowing they were not variable rate stamps (unlike their IBM counterparts, CVP35-CVP37). Few people listened.

In the discussion below, numbers given are census numbers. Consistent with CVP1-CVP30, first day stamps and first day covers are noted. "Neopost" (N) or "SimplyPostage" (S) appeared randomly on the lower selvage of the four-stamp sheets; I note uniform occurrence of one or the other on sets. This listing updates the online catalogue and the November 2005 U.S. *Stamp News* article ("Introduction to the Neopost Webenabled Stamps"). "Extant" means mint examples.

CVP38: This stamp is mislisted. If listed at all, it should be listed in a footnote under the "Personal Computer Postage Section" because it was printed by the same method: running prepared sheets through a personal computer printer.

It is questionable whether this stamp should have a major listing. The Scott catalogue says this in its "Catalogue Listing Policy": "Items distributed by the issuing government only to a limited group, such as a...philatelic exhibition...will be included in a footnote. The fact that a stamp has been used successfully as postage...is not in itself sufficient proof that it was legitimately issued."

A defender of the listing says this: "The sheets as they were given away at the show did not have postage on them but only labels with just the Simply Postage logo. In order to get the free postage the user had to log on to SimplyPostage.com, enter the sheet number, and print out the postage on the sheet. The fine print on the bottom of the sheet says 'UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE Approved licensed vendor' and 'Offer expires after the first 500,000 respondents or after 9/30/00'."

CVP39: See CVP41, below.

- a. Unglossed tagging: 12 extant
- b. Tagging missing: 6 extant
- Blot in flag: 1 extant

CVP40: This stamp should be listed as CVP39a (unless CVP39 is renumbered—see below). The "machine number at UL" was placed on the stamp at that location, in error. There are 140 of these stamps, 48 of which show another error—unglossed tagging.

CVP41: This stamp is misplaced. The first design issued was the "circle of stars," which is not mentioned in the listing and should be. Thirty of the "circle of stars" stamp are extant. It was followed by the eagle and stars, which was followed by the flag. We do not yet know of any first day examples or first day covers, of any of these three designs. The listing does not make it clear that CVP41 was intentionally issued without control numbers (it is not an error). 180 stamps are extant.

CVP42: There is no eagle and stars stamp "with machine number at UL." This stamp does not exist. The reference is apparently to the control number, and again, this is not an error. 32 stamps are extant.

Customers could print up to five panes of Nos. CVP39-CVP42 in each transaction. Panes were consecutively numbered identifying the total number of stamps and panes in each transaction.

The following quantities apply to the sets with the flag design, which is about 98% of extant four-stamp sheet sets.

\$1.36-192

Blue: 46; 30 Baltimore, 16 Hayward

Blue2: 29; 2 Baltimore, 3 Hayward, 19

Dallas, 1 Rosslyn, 4 Troy Hill

Intermediate Blue: 14; 13 Baltimore, 1 Hayward

Light Blue: 103; 103 Baltimore

\$2.72-86

Blue: 41 (14N, 12S); 31 Baltimore, 10 Hayward

Blue2: 17(2N); 2 Baltimore, 3 Hayward, 9 Dallas, 1 Rosslyn, 2 Troy Hill

Intermediate Blue: 12(1S); 12 Baltimore

Light Blue: 16 (2N, 6S); 16 Baltimore

\$4.08-89

Blue: 43 (6N, 3S); 33 Baltimore, 10 Hayward

Blue2: 18(1S); 2 Baltimore, 3 Hayward, 10 Dallas, 1 Rosslyn, 2 Troy Hill

Intermediate Blue: 12(1N); 12 Baltimore

Light Blue: 16 (3N, 2S); 16 Baltimore

\$5.44-90

Blue: 42 (3N, 1S); 32 Baltimore, 10 Hayward

Blue2: 17 (4S); 1 Baltimore, 3 Hayward, 10 Dallas, 1 Rosslyn, 2 Troy Hill

Intermediate Blue: 15; 15 Baltimore

Light Blue: 16 (4S), 16 Baltimore

\$6.80-94

Blue: 40 (2N); 30 Baltimore, 10 Hayward

Blue2: 20; 6 Baltimore, 3 Hayward, 9 Dallas, 1 Rosslyn, 1 Troy Hill

Intermediate Blue: 14; 14 Baltimore

Light Blue: 20 (2S); 20 Baltimore

The following includes a census of complete sets. Incomplete sets exist, missing sheets as well as individual stamps.

CVP43: 21¢ (95 extant)

June 24, 2002 (Scott date of June 2003, is error)

- a. "ERROR" in place of control number: 20 extant
First day dated: 20 extant
- b. Set of 2 booklet panes of 10: 3 Hayward, 1 Rosslyn

CVP44: 23¢ (1180 extant)

2nd ounce and postcard stamps are indistinguishable; however, only the 2nd ounce stamp was issued in a booklet pane of 10, and was not issued in panes of 30, 40 or 50.

June 25, 2002, 2nd ounce (Scott date of July 1, 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 10 extant

June 30, 2002, postcard

a. First day dated: 17 extant

b. First day overprint: 10 extant

c. First day cover: 1 extant

d. Booklet pane of 10: 15 Hayward, 7 Baltimore, 6 Chicago

e. Set of 2 booklet panes of 10: 22 Hayward, 7 Baltimore, 6 Chicago

f. Set of 3 booklet panes of 10: 1 Hayward, 2 Baltimore

g. Set of 4 booklet panes of 10: 1 Hayward, 2 Baltimore

h. Set of 5 booklet panes of 10: 3 Hayward, 2 Baltimore

CVP45: 34¢ (149 extant)

June 21, 2002 (Scott date of June 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 78 extant

b. First day overprint: 20 extant

c. First day cover: 5 extant

d. "ERROR" in place of control number: 128 extant

First day overprint: 10

e. Set of 2 booklet panes of 10: 5 Hayward, 1 Rosslyn

CVP46: 37¢ (1460 extant)

June 30, 2002 (Scott date of June 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 24 extant

b. First day cover: 16 extant

c. First day overprint: 4 extant

First day cover: 4 extant

d. "ERROR" in place of control number: 27 extant

First day overprint: 10 extant

First day cover: 3 extant

e. Set of 2 booklet panes of 10: 23 Hayward, 7 Baltimore, 6 Chicago, 1 Rosslyn, 2 Troy Hill

f. Set of 3 booklet panes of 10: 1 Hayward, 3 Baltimore, 1 Rosslyn

g. Set of 4 booklet panes of 10: 1 Hayward, 2 Baltimore

h. Set of 5 booklet panes of 10: 2 Hayward, 5 Baltimore

CVP47: 50¢ (190 extant)

June 25, 2002 (Scott date of July 1, 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 10 extant

b. Booklet pane of 10: 6 Hayward, 6 Baltimore, 7 Chicago

CVP48: 60¢ (370 extant)

June 25, 2002 (Scott date of July 1, 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 10 extant

b. First day overprint (June 30, 2003) error: 6 extant

First day cover overprint error: 2 extant

c. Booklet pane of 10: 5 Hayward, 13 Baltimore, 6 Chicago

d. Set of 2 booklet panes of 10: 1 Hayward, 5 Baltimore

CVP49: 70¢ (180 extant)

June 30, 2002 (Scott date of June 2003, is error)

a. "ERROR" in place of control number: 8 extant

First day overprint: 8 extant

First day cover: 2 extant

b. Booklet pane of 10: 5 Hayward, 6 Baltimore, 6 Chicago

CVP50: 80¢ (180 extant)

July 3, 2002 (Scott date of July 1, 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 20 extant

b. First day cover (sheet of 10): 1 extant

c. Booklet pane of 10: 7 Hayward, 5 Baltimore, 5 Chicago

CVP51: \$3.50 (9 extant)

June 25, 2002

a. "ERROR" in place of control number: 1 extant

b. Booklet pane of 1: 3 Hayward

c. Booklet pane of 5: 1 Hayward

Here is the proposed listing for the \$12.45 stamp, which Scott does not list

CVP[]: \$12.45 (1 extant)

June 25, 2002

a. Booklet pane of 1: 1 Hayward

CVP52: \$3.85 (74 extant)

June 30, 2002 (Scott date of July 1, 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 1 extant

b. "ERROR" in place of control number: 3 extant

c. Booklet pane of 1: 7 Hayward, 11 Baltimore, 7 Chicago

d. Booklet pane of 2: 1 Hayward, 1 Baltimore

e. Booklet pane of 5: 1 Hayward, 1 Baltimore

f. Booklet pane of 10: 1 Hayward, 1 Baltimore, 1 Chicago

CVP53: \$13.65 (72 extant)

June 30, 2002 (Scott date of July 1, 2003, is error)

a. First day dated: 1 extant

b. "ERROR" in place of control number: 26 extant

First day overprint: 1 extant

First day cover: 1 extant

c. Booklet pane of 1: 5 Hayward, 7 Baltimore, 5 Chicago, 1 Rosslyn

d. Booklet pane of 2: 2 Hayward, 2

Baltimore

e. Booklet pane of 5: 1 Hayward, 2 Baltimore

f. Booklet pane of 10: 1 Hayward, 2 Baltimore

Nos. CVP 43-53 were printed only with the stated values.

The above statement also applies to CVP38-42.

Addendum: Value Forerunners as an Important New U.S. Specialty

On only two occasions—and they are recent—regular fixed-rate U.S. stamps have been issued before stamps of the same values were issued by the U.S. itself. This has been made possible because during the past few years USPS has authorized private vendors of computer vended postage to issue stamps for specific values. Computer vended postage is often confused with variable-rate meter strips, and to be sure, some computer vended postage has been variable rate. But not all and, little noticed by collectors (although they have obtained major Scott numbers), these fixed-rate CVP stamps have suddenly provided a new historical dimension to U.S. philately, one which will continue to produce rarities as rates change.

The First Value Forerunners

During 2001-2003, USPS sponsored a beta testing competition between Neopost, NCR and IBM for the contract to put automated postal centers in post offices. IBM won, as is attested by 2,500 of its APC machines nationwide. However, to Neopost goes the honor of producing the first value forerunners in U.S. philately. Beginning June 30, 2002, the first day for new Priority and Express Mail rates, Neopost was authorized to issue \$3.85 and \$13.65 stamps as part of its beta testing. At this time, NCR and IBM produced only variable-rate stamps (Scott CVP34-37). Figure 1 shows sheets of the two Neopost values, CVP52-53.

It was only on July 30, 2002, that the U.S. issued its own stamps for these values (Scott 3647 and 3648). That is, for a month, two fixed-value stamps could only be obtained at the few Neopost kiosks—a situation without pre-



Figure 1, new Neopost values:
top, \$13.65 value;
right, \$3.85 value.

stamps. Although no photostamp first day covers were made when photostamps first appeared, the vendors learned the lesson of Neopost, which had a small first day program for its

June 30, 2002, issues—these are among the rarest U.S. first day covers. Reportedly, one or more of the photostamp vendors had the presence of mind to make first day covers (not available to the public) for its new values.

IBM issued its own four values only on January 8, the first day of the new rates. This was a Sunday

when few post offices were open. Apparently little attention was paid to these stamps, but there is one combination first day cover with all four values (Figure 2). Here are approximate figures for two values: 30 solo 63-cent, 30 solo 84-cent. There are also 3 solo \$4.05 and 1 solo \$14.40. The solo usages include one cover for each of the values with full selvage, apparently the first usages of the IBM stamps with full selvage.

And that's it, so far, for first day covers for what will be four major Scott numbers.

The IBM stamps are held in such contempt that these are the first FDCs made for any of them. There are also mint first day values, important to distinguish because Scott lists first-day dated mint examples for the first CVP stamps. Here are approximate figures for those values: 63-cent, 28; 84-cent, 28; \$4.05, 28; \$14.40, 23.

And the value forerunners for these new issues? The U.S. weighed in on February 24 with its 63- and 84-cent stamps, and on March 17 with its \$4.05 and \$14.40 stamps. Thus, prior to those dates, fixed-value stamps for some of these values were available from only four vendors. By the way, the dates of production of photostamps can be ascertained by scanning the coding; the companies can apparently do this.

cedent in the history of U.S. philately. For the period June 30 through July 29, there are 33 mint \$3.85 stamps and 44 mint \$13.65 stamps.

The Second Value Forerunners

By the time new rates came into effect on January 8, 2006, Neopost and NCR had lost the competition (NCR stopped producing in 2000 or 2001, Neopost in 2003), IBM had installed its kiosks and was issuing four fixed-value stamps: 60 cents, 80 cents, \$3.85 and \$13.65 (CVP58-61). By January 8, three other CVP stamp vendors had entered the market. These are the photostamp vendors Zazzle, Stamps.com and Endicia.

The four successor rates are 63 cents, 84 cents, \$4.05 and \$14.40. Before January 8, 2006, Stamps.com and Zazzle had produced \$4.05 and 63-cent stamps, as well as other fixed-value stamps; Endicia had produced 63-cent stamps as well as other fixed-value

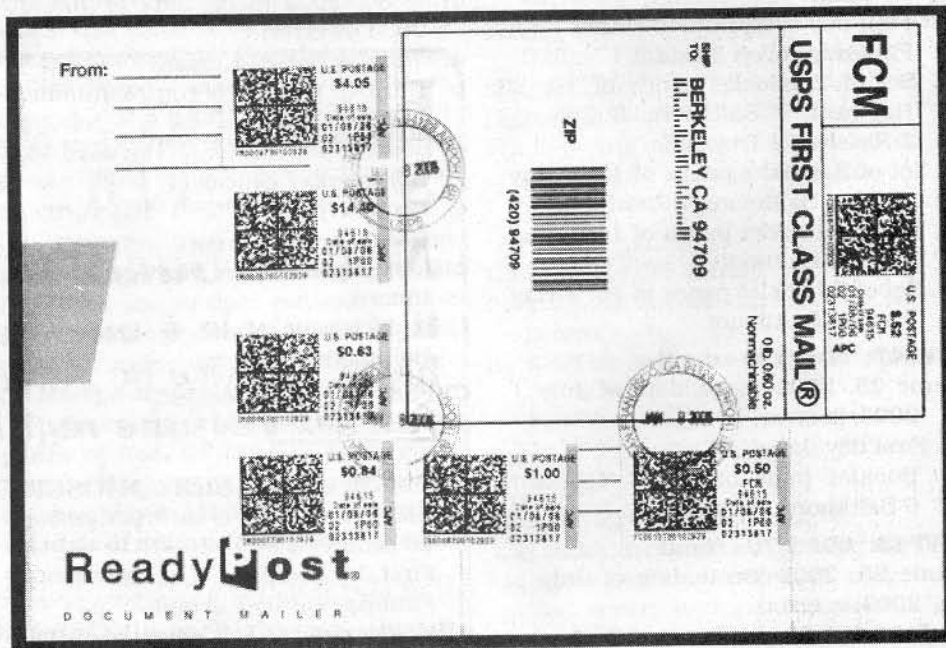


Figure 2. Combination cover showing January 8, 2006 usages of new values: \$4.05, \$14.40, 63¢, 84¢ (left column, top to bottom)

2CVP8b-14b, Patriotic PhotoStamps / stamps.com set of 7 dif. 23¢ to \$3.85	\$ 27.50
2CVP15-22, Patriotic PicturePostage / endicia.com set of 8 dif. 23¢ to 60¢	\$ 19.95
2CVP23-36, Patriotic ZazzleStamps / zazzle.com set of 14 dif. 23¢ to \$3.85 "2005"	\$ 47.50
Combo Special #1 : 2CVP8b-14b, 2CVP15-22, & 2CVP23-36 instead of \$94.95	Only \$ 87.50
2CVP37-50, Floral ZazzleStamps / zazzle.com 14 dif. New Denoms. 24¢ to \$4.05 "2006"	\$ 44.95
2CVP51-57, Floral PhotoStamps / stamps.com set of 7 dif. New Denoms. 24¢ to \$4.05	\$ 24.95
2CVP58-65, Floral PicturePostage / endicia.com 8 dif. New Denoms. 24¢ to 63¢	\$ 16.95
Combo Special #2 : Floral CVP37-65 New Denoms, instead of \$86.85	Only \$ 79.50

Figure 3. Dealer listing of photostamp value forerunners

The Photostamp Value Forerunners

How common are mint examples of the forerunner photostamp values? Probably very common, since during the two periods they were sold on Ebay and by at least one dealer (Figure 3). The rush to sell the sensational new photostamps worked against photostamps as value forerunners, and doubtless few of the owners are even aware that they have value forerunners. None of the photostamp vendors sells the 84-cent or \$14.40 stamps.

The IBM Value Forerunners

The IBM stamps benefited from collector neglect, and are rare. Even rarer are mint IBM examples after January 8, 2006, but before February 24/March 17. So far, there are only two sequences of the four values, produced on February 21. Needless to say, used examples of these stamps before February 24/March 17 are important postal history, but mint examples beginning January 9 (that is, not first day) through February 23/March 16 are the real rarities, because—unless examples survive by chance—one actually had to be aware of the idea of value forerunners in order to obtain them. This shows how important knowledge is, and how philatelic rarities can come into existence even though the material is available at 2,500 kiosks! Who knew?

For the 84-cent and \$14.40 values, the mint IBM examples are the only examples of value forerunners. Examples of these two stamps produced on the first day are, of course, forerunners, but they reflect more an interest in first day material. It is examples produced after January 8 which reflect solely the forerunner status. Thus, mint examples of these two values, produced, for the 84-cent value beginning Janu-

ary 9 through February 23, and for the \$14.40 value beginning January 9 through March 16, are the ultimate rarities of the IBM stamps. Actually, they are the ultimate rarities among forerunners so far, and rarest among them are \$14.40 stamps produced during the period beginning February 24 through March 16. This was the first time a sole fixed-value forerunner stamp was available from a sole vendor. There is one mint example from February 25, and it is difficult to believe that another one will come to light.

Long derided as variable-rate stamps available in unlimited and unascertainable quantities, hidden away at the back of the book among the special purpose issues, CVP regular stamps have consistently generated rarities. This should not come as a surprise when we regard them as the kind of postage which has traditionally produced rarities: early examples of innovations in the method of stamp production.

The most surprising of all are the value forerunner stamps which anticipate issues by the U.S. itself.

They are locals in the sense that they are privately issued, but differ in being authorized by the U.S.

They are provisionals in the sense that they anticipate U.S. issues, but differ in not being government issued.

For these reasons, value forerunners should be considered separately,

even catalogued separately. At the same time, it is not difficult to contemplate the U.S. authorizing a private vendor to issue a stamp which is not CVP, is for a fixed value, and is issued prior to the same value by the U.S. For example, the vending perforation stamps differ from this description only in that the U.S. provided the stamps. In short, ultimately it may simply be the historical status—and not the method of production—which distinguishes value forerunners.

And the fixed-value 39-cent stamp, which was also issued by the three photostamp vendors before January 8? After all, the U.S. only issued its 39-cent stamp on January 9. Are the photostamp 39-cent stamps value forerunners? No, because the U.S. issued a regular 39-cent stamp on March 20, 1985: Scott 1867, the Grenville Clark stamp, in the Great Americans series. For that matter, it issued an airmail 39-cent stamp on February 13, 1985: C114, the Sperry stamp in the Aviation Pioneers series.

Beginning August 2004, Stamps.com began issuing a \$1.06 stamp. If the U.S. were now to issue a \$1.06 stamp, would the Stamps.com stamp occupy the second rank among the value forerunners, after the two Neopost values? No, because the rank depends on when the U.S. issued its stamp, not on when the private vendor issued its stamp.

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Invert and Mirror Image Grid Errors On the Neopost Stamps

by John Ryskamp

The graph encryption (hereinafter the "grid") on the Neopost webenabled stamps performs the same function as the grill on classic U.S. stamps. It is a security feature. In the case of the grill, it is to prevent reuse of the stamp. In the case of the grid, it is to trace the purchaser and place of purchase of the stamp.

Here we announce a mirror image and mirror image invert errors on the Neopost stamps.

The Neopost webenabled four-stamp sheet stamps (CVP39-CVP42) were the first (and—along with the Neopost ten-stamp sheets stamps, CVP43-CVP53—are still the only) regular tête-bêche United States stamps. This arrangement caused problems in orienting the grid and led to major errors.

Easily 90% of the four-stamp sheets show the disposition of the grid displayed in Figure 1, a sheet from the test kiosk in Warrenton (which, despite the appearance of this sheet, never dispensed stamps to the public). Note that the left stamps present a rough edge of the grid to the flag (arrow, magnified inset of lower left grid), with straight edges at top and right. The right stamps present a straight edge to the flag, with rough edges at top and right.



Figure 1

The orientation of the grid could be manipulated, at least on a column basis (left and right column). The orientation in Figure 1 was not the intended orientation of the grid on the four-stamp sheet Neopost stamps. On both the "circle of stars" design (not yet listed in Scott) and the "eagle and stars" design (CVP41-CVP42, which should precede CVP39-CVP40, since CVP41-CVP42 were issued earlier), grids in both columns present a straight edge to the design, with rough edges at top and right when the design is viewed right side up, as shown in this lightly printed [computer enhanced here] sheet of CVP42 (Figure 2, with straight edges more visible than rough edges).

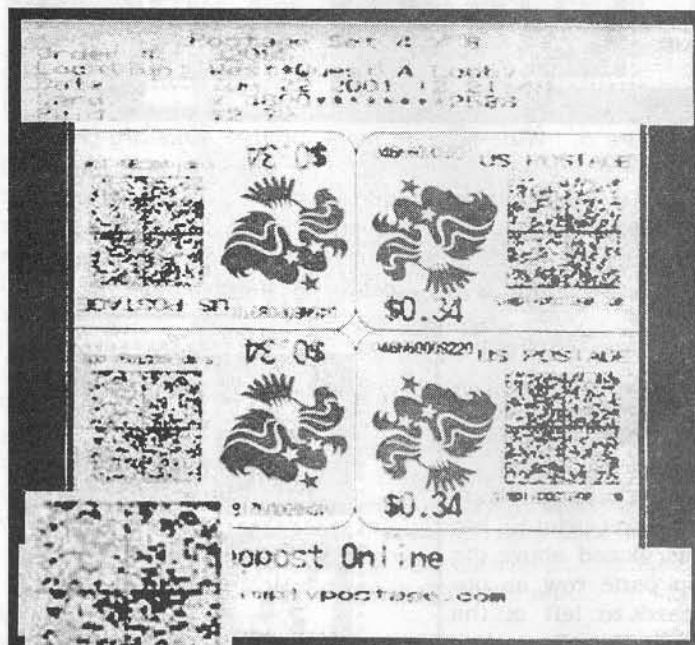


Figure 2

However, when the flag design was introduced after the short-lived "eagle and stars" design, the grid was not corrected for the stamps in the left column, as shown in CVP40 (Figure 3). Instead, the grid is now a combination invert and mirror image; about half of the 140 extant examples of CVP40 show this double error. That it was an error is revealed in a late

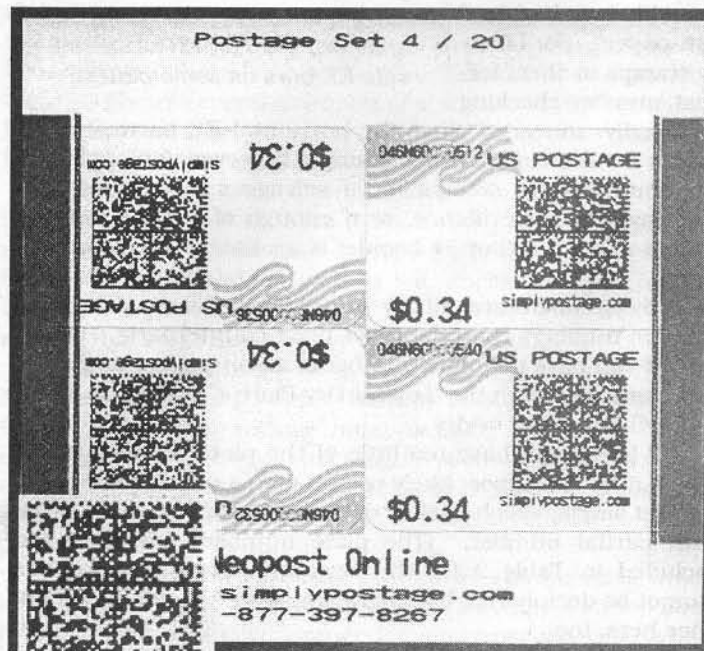


Figure 3

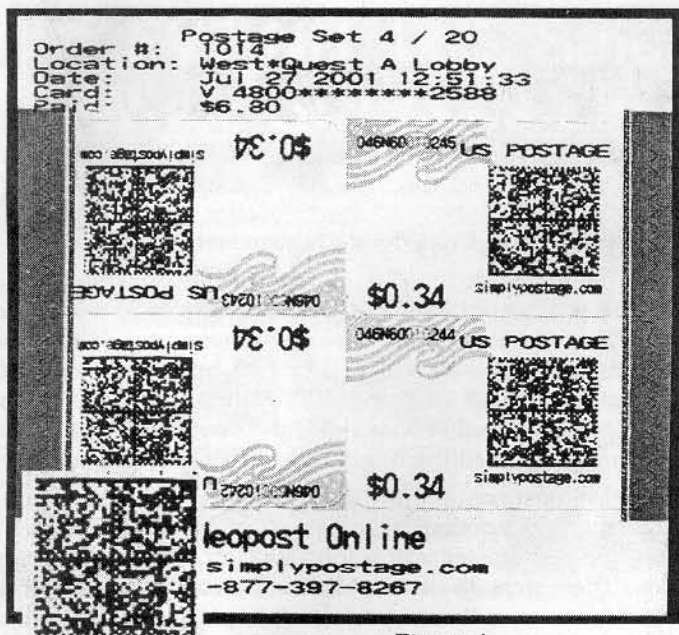


Figure 4

example of CVP40, in which the grid is given its proper orientation (Figure 4).

The indicia were then moved around, to produce CVP39 (again, the Scott chronology is reversed; CVP40 was issued before CVP39). In Figure 5 we see all stamps presenting a rough edge of the grid to the flag. However, the straight edges are not at top and right. Instead, they are at bottom and right. What has happened here? The grid has been made a mirror of its proper orientation. So far, this is known on 64 stamps of Scott CVP39, three sheets of which (12 stamps) show another error: un glossed tagging.

In correcting the mirror grid, the right stamps had their grids reversed, but the left stamps simply had the mirror grid inverted, reverting to the error of the left stamps of CVP40.



Figure 5

This is the disposition of the grids we see in Figure 1, which was retained until Neopost stopped producing four-stamp sheet stamps on June 25, 2002.

Ironically, then, this is not a rare error on CVP39. The reason for choosing to stick with it, is clear enough: holding the grid element steady regardless of the orientation of the design, also made it easier to deal with any potential further moves of the indicia, although there were no further changes either in the design or the arrangement of the indicia. But that could not have been known at the time.

The Neopost mirror image errors are in addition to the unique mirror image on Scott 60X1, the Mt. Lebanon Confederate provisional. The mirror image invert errors are in addition to inverts on Scott 119-121, 294-296, 1610, 2630 and C3.



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More Errors on Neopost Stamps

by John Ryskamp

Continuing where we left off in our July 2006 USSN column, where we discussed Invert and Mirror Image grid errors, this month we turn to additional Neopost error categories.

I. "BLOT IN FLAG" Errors:

Constant varieties occur on some of the Neopost stamps. These apparently occur as a result of small bits of matter clinging to the plate printing the flag design on the stamp paper. This leaves, at regular intervals, a blot on the flag design of certain stamps.

The Blot Error on the Four-Stamp Sheets

The Neopost Hayward, California, kiosk was taken out of service on March 15, 2002, in order to test the ten-stamp sheets. Four-stamp sheet printing was resumed on May 9, but the paper was installed incorrectly, leading to three error sheets for CVP39, one of which sheets is Figure 1. There are six examples of the error stamps in the left column, which show tagging plus three indicia missing.

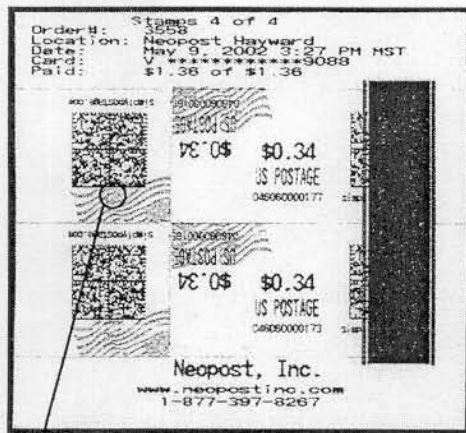


Figure 1

However, the upper left stamp in Figure 1 shows an additional feature not present on the other two error sheets: a blot in the flag just below the center of the grid (arrow). When it was discovered, the question was, is it a freak or a constant variety? It is not seen on extant Hayward four-stamp sheets prior to May 9 (nor on any four-stamp sheet stamps from other kiosks), but a sequence of all five available sets (\$1.36, \$2.72, \$4.08, \$5.44 and \$6.80) from May 10, 2002, shows that it is indeed a constant variety, occurring on



Figure 2

every fifth sheet of this set (Figure 2). There are 10 examples of this blot error, a small number because the four-stamp sheet program ended on June 20, 2002, at Hayward.

The Blot Error on the Ten-Stamp Sheets

We don't know when a blot began occurring on ten-stamp sheet values. However, there are examples on Hayward sheets dated July 29, 2003. The Neopost program ended on August 23, 2003, and the blot is unknown except on Hayward sheets. The ten-stamp sheet blot is also a constant variety, occurring every other sheet (not shown).

Curiously, this is a constant variety even on values on which it occurs only on one example, since different values were produced on the same roll of stamp sheet paper. There are seven examples of CVP46 showing it, nine examples of the 23-cent stamp (CVP44), two examples of the 60-cent stamp (CVP48), one example of the 50-cent stamp (CVP47), one example of the 70-cent stamp (CVP49), one example of the \$3.85 stamp (CVP52), and one example of the \$13.65 stamp (CVP53). It is unknown on the 80-cent stamp, but it is known on two void labels (Figure 3, p. 27).

II. "ERROR" ERRORS:

The wonderful "ERROR" error is the only error in philately which identifies itself as such. It marks the place where the control number should appear on ten-stamp sheet stamps, but doesn't. It remains unexplained. Where it occurs in both columns, it is also the first tête-bêche error in U.S. philately. It occurs on twenty 21-cent stamps (CVP43). It is unknown on the 23-cent stamp, although at 1180 extant mint examples, the 23-cent stamp is second in survivors only to the 37-cent stamp (1460 examples).

The largest number of examples of the "ERROR" occur on the 34-cent stamp in its ten-sheet form (CVP45, 128 examples), since this is the stamp



Figure 3



Figure 5

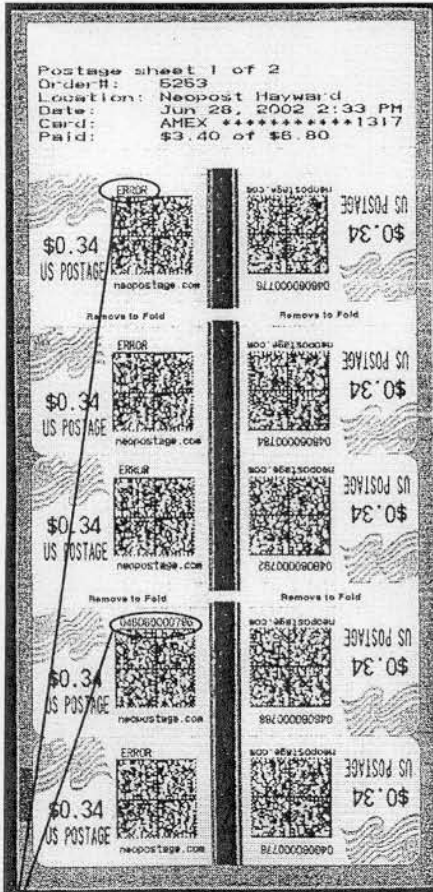


Figure 4

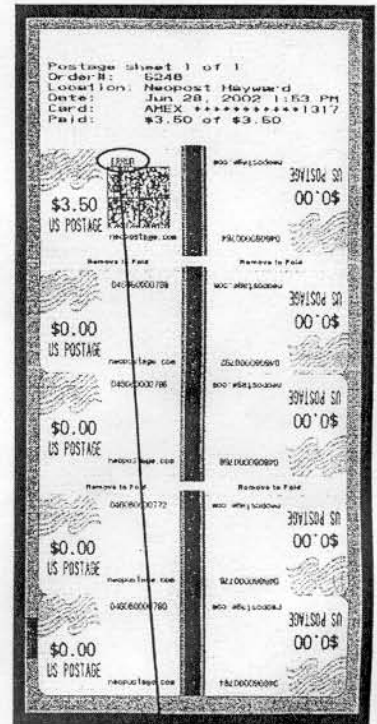


Figure 7

that was produced most often during the brief period of the availability of it and the \$3.50 and \$12.45 stamps (June 21 through June 29, 2002). One of the most interesting groups of examples occurs on the \$6.80 set in Figure 4. The "ERROR" occurs only in the left column and not on the fourth stamp down on the first sheet (shown). It occurs on all five stamps in the left column of the second sheet (not shown). There is also one other set showing this configuration.

Ten of the 27 "ERROR" stamps on the 37-cent stamps, also show the First Day overprint (Figure 5).

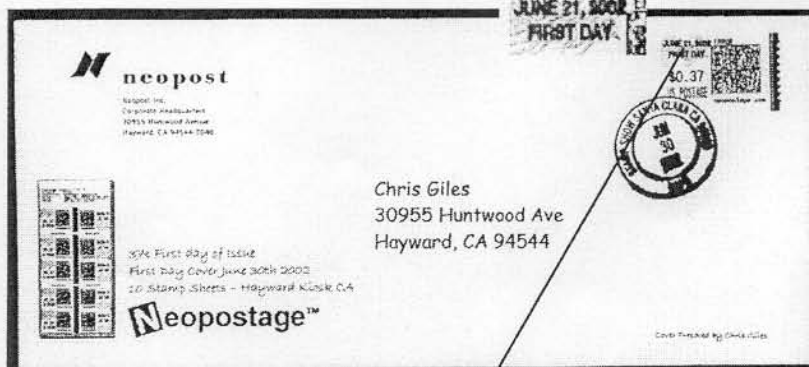


Figure 6

Three of these overprinted "ERROR" examples also occur on examples on first day cover, including one with a first day overprint which is itself an error (June 21, instead of June 30—Figure 6). No "ERROR" stamps are known among the 50-cent or 60-cent stamps. However, there are eight mint examples of the "ERROR" on the 70-cent stamps and two used on first day cover, one of which has a first day overprint.

The "ERROR" is also unknown on the 80-cent stamp. Since the "ERROR" is known on only one \$3.50 stamp (CVP51—Figure 7), and there are only nine \$3.50 stamps, this is an important "ERROR" stamp.

The most important "ERROR" example, of course, is the unique \$12.45 stamp which was published in the November 2005, *USSN* and has yet to re-

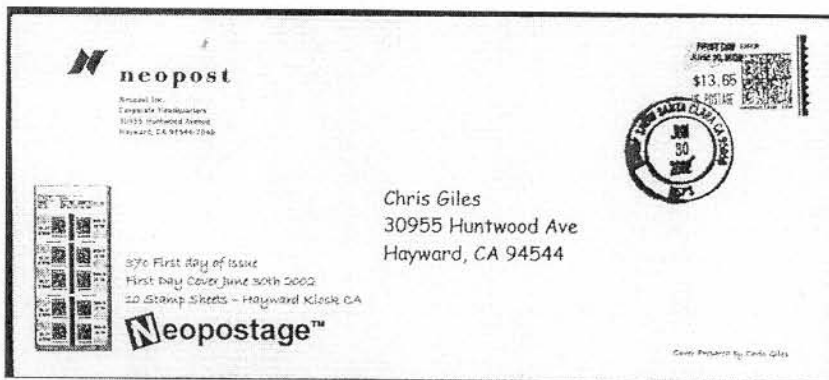


Figure 8

ceive its Scott listing. When it does, it will be the only unique regular U.S. stamp confirmed unique (five issued, four confirmed destroyed). Three examples of the "ERROR" occur on the \$3.85 stamp.

July 3, 2002, was the first day of the ten-stamp sheet stamps at the Baltimore kiosk, and most of the \$13.65 "ERROR" stamps were produced on this day (26). However, three were produced on the first day of the stamp, June 30, 2002, including two with a first day overprint, one of which was used on an FDC (Figure 8). This is the only first day cover made for the \$13.65 value.

III. CONTROL NUMBER ERRORS:

"Control" is a term of art in discussing control number errors on the Neopost webenabled stamps (CVP39-53). In fact, this number, which appears below the graph encryption, controlled nothing and was briefly removed at the beginning of the four-stamp sheet program; it's not even clear why the numbers were put on the stamps in the first place. Nevertheless, as a design element they were subject to mistakes, and they produced major errors.

The Control Number Error on the Four-Stamp Sheets

The four-stamp sheet control numbers are a series of eight numbers appearing on the stamps of two four-stamp sheets in sequence. Thus, the sequence replayed every other sheet, whether on a new set (of the five available sets: \$1.36, \$2.72, \$4.08, \$5.44 and \$6.80) or within the sheets of a set. This was the sequence of the last three numbers (the only changing digits of the control number) when the first errors occurred on CVP 39:

LEFT	RIGHT
520	528
516	524
536	512
532	540

Figure 9, however, shows a 20/20 sheet repeating the numbers on the 16/20 sheet; the 20/20 sheet stamps are the error stamps (arrows).

A wonderful example of the control number error occurred after the last three numbers had been changed, around December 2001, to these:

LEFT	RIGHT
185	161
181	189
169	177
165	173

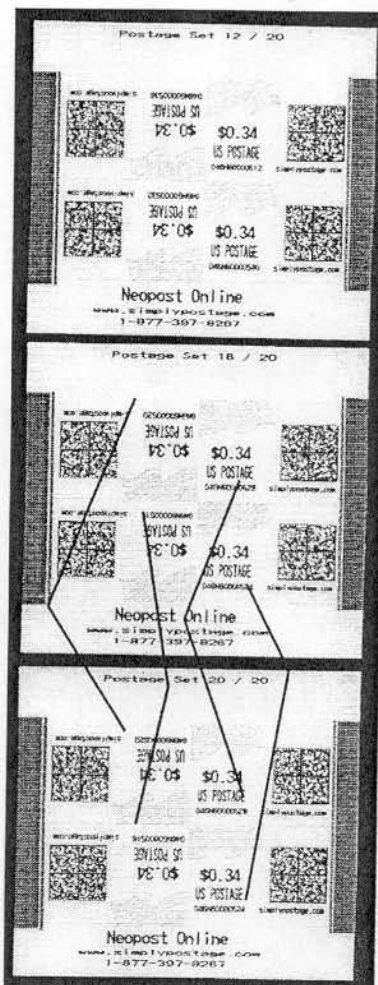


Figure 9

Not shown, there are examples where two different error sheets occur across a sequence of two sets. In another example, there is a sequence of multiple error sheets between sets, in part of a series of three of all the sets produced in sequence.

There are, later in this series, five more error sheets with the same sets of numbers, as well as two error sheets and a pair of error sheets, with the alternate set of numbers.

Even later in the series, this sheet pops up, which is not of the "duplicative" type (Figure 10).

Taking the stamps on this sheet from left to right:

173 shows rough edge of the graph encryption facing the number, which is an error and the only error example of CVP39-173.

189 shows correct graph orientation, but the stamp occurs in the wrong place.

165 occurs where and as it should.

181 occurs in the wrong place, and there is something else "wrong" with it. For purposes of symmetry, Neopost early on adopted an orientation of the graph encryption which had the straight edges at the left and bottom on the sheet, even though this meant that the left column stamps were (common) errors (all stamps should show the straight edge facing the control number, with another straight edge at the bottom of the encryption. 181 in Figure 13 shows straight edge facing the control number, with straight edge at bottom of the encryption.

It turns out that this is the only example of CVP39-181 with the correct graph orientation: a non-error rarity!

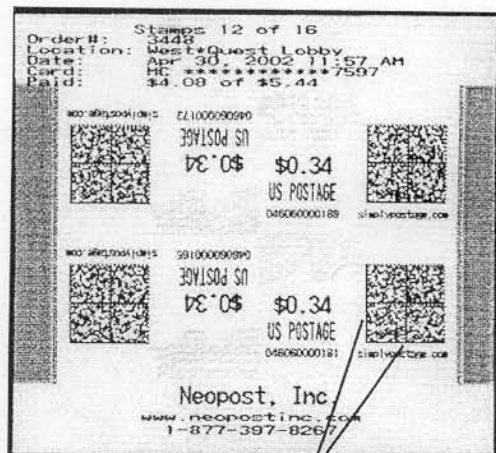


Figure 10

To be Continued