

# HPS

## THE PERFORATOR



**April  
May  
June  
2015**

**THE  
NEWSLETTER OF  
THE HOUSTON  
PHILATELIC  
SOCIETY**

**EDITOR - JAY STOTTS**

Send articles for publication, classified advertising (Free!), news of members, exhibit award information or anything else of general interest to club members to:

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### TEXPEX Acknowledges Houston's Effort

HPS members showed up in force with exhibits to support the TEXPEX World Series of Philately show held February 27 through March 1, 2015. Seven of the show's exhibits, comprising 53 of the 170 frames of competitive exhibits (31%) were from HPS members and immediate past president Bill Fort, now living in northern Virginia, added another 6 frames.

TEXPEX Show Chairman Vince King took a moment during the Awards banquet to acknowledge the contribution of the Houston exhibitors.

A list of HPS exhibitors is shown below.

#### Award Winners ...

*Editor's note: Please report your activities as an exhibitor and we'll give you the spotlight here in the Winners' column.*

**TEXPEX, Feb. 27 - March 1, 2015, Grapevine, TX:**

**Larry Ballantyne** - "U.S. Private Inter-City Posts 1839-1895" - Gold medal, American Philatelic Congress Award.

**Denise Stotts** - "Japanese Art" - Gold medal. American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors Award of Excellence (Plan and Headings), American Topical Association Medal.

**Jay Stotts** - "The 5¢ General Kosciusko Stamp of 1933" - Gold medal, Collectors Club of Chicago Philatelic Exhibitors Award, American First Day Cover Society Award.

**Jane King Fohn** - "The 9¢ Alamo Stamp and Its First day Covers" - Gold medal, Texas Postal History Society Emery Award (Post 1900).

**Ron Strawser** - "Postal History of the United States Famous Americans Series" - Gold medal, United States Stamp Society Statue of Freedom Award.

**William Drummond** - "Ellan Vannin: Isle of Man" - Vermeil medal.

**Bethel Strawser** - "Pursuing the Bluebirds of Happiness" - Single Frame Vermeil medal, American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors Gold Award of Honor.

**Garfield-Perry MARCH PARTY, March 18-20, Cleveland, OH:**

**Bryant Korn** - "1847 5¢ Issue Covers from Ohio" - Silver Medal.

## Upcoming Philatelic Shows & Bourses ....

### May 29-30, 2015

**Houston TSDA Bourse.** Crowne Plaza Hotel, 7611 Katy Freeway (I-10 West, south side feeder road.) Bourse hours are 10-5 on Friday and 9-4 on Saturday. Web site: [www.tsdastamps.com](http://www.tsdastamps.com).

### June 19-20, 2015

**Okpex 2015.** Okpex is an APS World Series of Philately 2-day show. The venue is the Reed Conference Center, 5800 Will Rogers Road, Midwest City, Oklahoma. The zip code is 73110. Hours are Friday, 10-6 and Saturday 9-4.

### July 31 — August 1, 2015

**Houston TSDA Bourse.** Crowne Plaza Hotel, 7611 Katy Freeway (I-10 West, south side feeder road.) Bourse hours are 10-5 on Friday and 9-4 on Saturday. Web site: [www.tsdastamps.com](http://www.tsdastamps.com).

### September 18-20, 2015

**Greater Houston Stamp Show.** Humble Civic center, 8233 Will Clayton Pkwy, Humble, TX. This will be our 19th consecutive year at this venue and the 68th edition of our show. Our single-frame exhibit color this year is Green. We anticipate a very special competition within the Green single-frame competition. The exhibiting team Unhinged from New England has challenged our very own HPS exhibiting team, the Midnight Mavericks to a head-to-head shootout. Ron Strawser is coordinating those details. We also expect to be hosting the first ever competition between professional stamp dealers within the Green competition. At least three dealers - Doug Weisz, Terry Kurzinski and Labron Harris have all expressed interest.

**Houston Philatelic  
Web Site:**

<http://www.houstonstampclub.org/>

## Upcoming Meetings ....

### April 20 ...

#### **Perforations on Stamps**

HPS member Jonathan Topper will provide a presentation on one of the most basic areas of stamps, the perforations.

### May 4 ...

#### **Synagogues on Stamps**

Mort levy, an architect by profession with share one of his specialties, Synagogues on Stamps.

### May 18 ...

#### **The World's Most Difficult Stamp Quiz**

This is our most torturous meeting of the year, a night where the group is split into four or five teams and we try our best to answer a series of grueling philatelic questions for Quizmaster Ron Strawser. If this were reality TV, it would be an episode of Survivor.

### June 1 ...

#### **Egyptian Definitives**

John Germann will present this program on Egyptian definitive stamps.

### June 15 ...

#### **Quarterly Called Floor Auction**

Members are invited to bring up to three lots for sale at the auction. These are our most highly attended meetings and the Spring Auction contained 46 lots, grossing \$1032, so bring some great material to sell or bring cash to take advantage of some great buys.

### July 6 ...

#### **Postal Stationery**

Ron Strawser, an international Gold Medal winning exhibitor in the area of postal stationery, will give us a talk on his specialty.

### July 20 ...

#### **Isle of Man**

William Drummond exhibits the postal history of this postal jurisdiction and will share his expertise with the group.

### August 3 ...

#### **Liberia Waterlow Stamps, 1892-1905**

## Our Hobby's Heritage ...

# The History of Measuring Perforations

By Jay Stotts

In the early days of collecting postage stamps, the Brits, called the "English school" by author L.N. Williams, in his encyclopedic *Fundamentals of Philately*, cared only about differentiating stamps by differing designs. This was circa 1866, when the "French school" took notice of the number of perforations on stamps if they detected a change.

Discerning collectors in 1866 noted that "The first set of Russia has 10 by 14 dents, and during the past month a fresh series has been emitted, 12 by 17 ..." The dents were identified, in this case, as the horizontal side first followed by the vertical side.

Frenchman Dr. J.A. Legrand noted that, from individual stamp to individual stamp with the same design, the height and width could vary slightly, making it hard to classify a stamp issue.



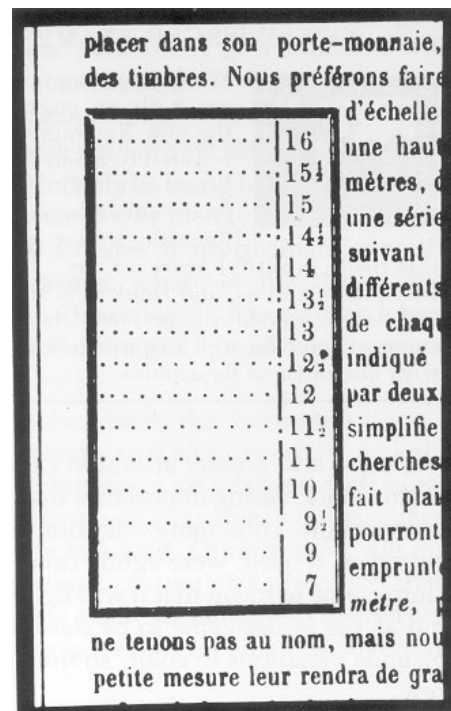
These two U.S. stamps of the period (Scott 67 and PR2) were perforated on the same machine, but were classified as 16 x 15 dents and 58 x 32 dents.

Dr. Legrand sought to "gauge" the number of perforations to create a standard that had no direct reference to the stamps themselves. He noted that, in gen-

eral, the height of an ordinary stamp was about two centimeters tall, so he adopted two centimeters as his standard length. He published his findings in the Belgian magazine *Le Timbre-Poste* in October, 1866.

He counted the number of teeth in his standard length to generate a perforation gauge for a stamp. He called his gauge an "odontometre". The two U.S. stamps previously shown measured gauge 12. He accepted half perforations, but disregarded any finer measurement.

The illustration of Legrand's odontometre as published in the 1866 article and reproduced in Williams' book, revised edition, published by the American Philatelic Society in 1990.



Legrand further noted that the number of perforations could be determined either by measuring the number of tooth peaks or the number of indentations. The results were the same either way.

Collectors were driven to catalog stamps as a matter of organizing their collections. Sir E.D. Bacon wrote in *The London Philatelist* in 1922: "Since the time when collecting stamps began the chief object that all philatelists have concentrated their efforts upon has to draw up a catalogue list whereby they can arrange their specimens in the correct chronological sequence in which they were issued for postal use."

The early philatelists accomplished cataloging of their specimens by incorporating Dr. Legrand's new odontometre.

# Postal Experiments Offer Great Hunting

By Jay Stotts

For U.S. collectors, The Post Office Department, it seems, has provided a countless stream of opportunities for collectors to search out obscure gems, the products of experiments that didn't quite pan out.

For example, postal usages of the 1970 Christmas issue seemingly should be quite easy to obtain, the type of material that you would expect to find in a dollar box. And that's where you'll find them if you can find them correctly used - but good luck!

The story starts with the 1969 Christmas issue from a year earlier. In 1969, the post office decided that precanceling Christmas stamps might speed up the mail handling process during the holiday greeting card season. Odd sized greeting cards didn't have to go through the cancelling machines and avoiding damage to the mail was another bonus. Baltimore, New Haven, Atlanta and Memphis were the four major cities chosen for the 1969 experiment. Finding one of these stamps used on an envelope during the intended season is not an easy proposition and you probably won't find one of these in a dollar box.



The four 1969 precanceled Christmas stamps.

Now, back to the story of the 1970 stamps. Based on the success of the 1969 experiment, TH U.S.P.O. decided to expand the 1970 Christmas precancel stamp program. The Boston Region (all of the New England states) were issued Bureau precanceled stamps as well as 68 additional cities throughout the country. I have searched the internet, but can't locate a list of the 68 cities.

The October 5, 1970 announcement indicated that the five precanceled stamps (Scott 1414a, Nativity and 1415a-1418a Christmas Toys) indicated that the precanceled stamps were valid for postage only until January 31, 1971. Postmasters were instructed that precanceled stamps that were used after December 26 were to be canceled despite the precancel. For the experiment, all post office jurisdictions that got precanceled stamps also got non-precanceled stamps.

Since, for the first time, mailers were using precancels without the need for a permit, the Associated Press perceived and wrote about the possibility that unscrupulous mailers might soak the stamps of envelopes and re-use them, and of course, the U.S.P.O. was concerned about that, leading to the requirement for canceling after December 26.

The Post Office Department estimated that \$750,000 in processing was saved, but they also estimated that 21% of the precanceled stamps were soaked off and reused. The latter number caused the P.O.D. to look for another approach the next year.

Because there was a moratorium on usage after January 31, 1971, patrons could return their remaining precanceled stamp at the local post office and exchange them for non-precanceled postage.

In a January 4, 1971 page 2 article about the stamps in the Rome, New York *Daily Sentinel* evening newspaper, they reported:

*"Because mail originating from the Rome Post Office had stamps of both varieties, no attempt was made to sort the cards and letters and eliminate those bearing the experimental stamps from the canceling process, Rahmer said."*

Frederick A. Rahmer was the officer-in-charge of the Rome Post Office. He reported that the decision was based on costly manpower for sorting the mail. All Rome precanceled stamps on mail were over-canceled with a postmark, which may have been the case in other post offices as well.

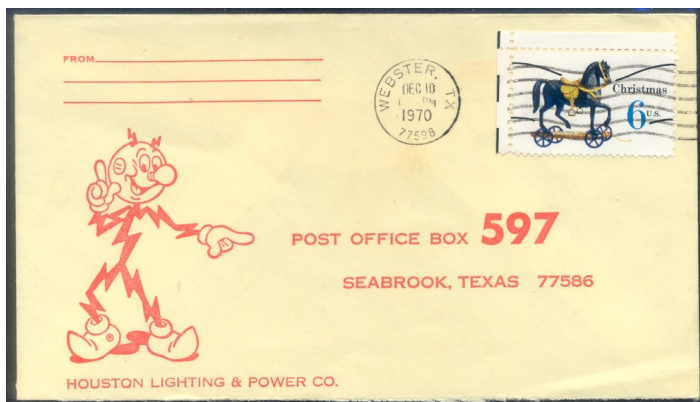
There are several postal history possibilities for collecting these precancels on cover:



1.) Collecting a precancel on a seasonal cover from one of the issuing post offices without an additional cancel (obviously not one originating from Rome, NY). The cover illustrated below has a mailer's return address label from Louisville, KY. Although there is no way to confirm the mailing post office or the date of posting, this is most probably an example of usage of the stamp from one of the 68 distribution cities, Louisville, and was probably used prior to December 25, 1970.



2.) Precanceled stamps used from a distribution city, but canceled in that city and before December 25. A cover from Rome, NY, would provide such an example. The cover shown below features the Toy Horse precanceled stamp. Despite the precancel, the cover was machine canceled in Webster City, TX on December 10 to paid an electric bill.



3.) Precanceled stamps that weren't originally canceled on cover, were subsequently soaked off and reused and successfully delivered to a second destina-

tion. These may be difficult to detect, especially without a comprehensive list of the original cities to get the stamps.

4.) Precanceled stamps soaked off the original cover and reused, but detected by the postal system and marked for postage due.

5.) Stamps used after January 31, 1971, and recognized as not being valid. These could be marked with various auxiliary markings. A documented cover posted from Derry, NH on February 27, 1971, carries two markings, VOIDED and POSTAGE DUE 6¢. In the Rome Daily Sentinel article, Rahmer indicated that they would mark mail Postage Due after January 31.

6.) Stamps used after January 31 that sailed through the system without being flagged for improper usage, but with a cancel indicating the city of usage and date of use.

Let us know if you have any of the precanceled 1970 Christmas stamps used in period on cover and which of the six variations apply.

The next Christmas stamp experiment was the 1974 issue, the Dove Weather Vane atop Mount Vernon. This is the 10¢ self-adhesive printed under contract by Avery-Dennison.



The stamp is a precancel, as designated by the imprint, so it was intended to save the thousands of dollars for the Post Office Department in processing activities by not running the mail through the canceling machinery.

The key difference this time, of course, was the decision to issue the stamp as a self-adhesive. The P.O.D.'s thinking was no more soaking off and reusing on another piece of mail. Lesson learned.

# The Danish Stamp Heist of January 27, 2012.

Four contract truck drivers were hired on January 27, 2012, to transport stamps from the Danish Post Danmark to an incineration facility in Copenhagen. Police contended that the men devised a plan to steal more than 23 million kroner (about 4.1 million U.S. dollars) worth of the stamps, intent on selling them on the black market at a fraction of their face value. The men were aged 31, 34, 43 and 54.

At least one sale was made by a fifth man, age 36, selling 150,000 kroner worth of stamps. A man that purchased some of the stamps from the 36-year-old was also arrested.

What the thieves didn't realize was that the stamps were destined for the incinerator because they had a printing error. The thieves, obviously not philatelists were without a clue as to the true potential value of the errors. Had they pilfered and successfully marketed only a small quantity, they may have been successful.

Danish detectives consider the case closed, but the story as published by *The Copenhagen Post*, indicated that all of the stamps may not have been recovered.

## Classified Ads:

*Members may place philatelically related Buy, Sell, or Trade ads in The Perforator free of charge. HPS Dealer-Members may place free classified or feature ads in The Perforator at no charge as well. Member ads will run indefinitely until the advertiser requests a change or cancellation. Send copy to the editor.*

**Wanted:** U.S. unusual postal history material; 1887 large banknote issue, 10¢ through 15¢ Washington/Franklin issues. Also, U.S. 19th century green cancels. David Willig, Houston, TX, cbhz3@hotmail.com. 713-201-2042.

**Buy/Sell/Trade:** Texas Postal History. Email John Germann at [jghist@comcast.net](mailto:jghist@comcast.net) or phone 281-493-3938.

**Stamp Position Open:** Sam Houston Philatelics has need of an individual or two to assist on our growing auctions, retail and mail sales. Interested individuals please call Bob Dumaine. Must be bondable. 281-493-6386.

**Morocco stamps & covers.** Do you have in your collection examples of stamps and covers showing cancellations from Mogador, Morocco? I am gathering images of the many cancellations used in Mogador for a study of the postal systems operated in that city up to 1956. This includes stamps of Morocco, French Morocco, German Offices in Morocco, British Morocco Agencies, Gibraltar, Spain and Spanish Morocco, and local issues. Also includes stamped and stampless covers originating in Mogador and handled by French, German, British and Spanish postal systems, the state-run Cherifien post, local postal carriers, maritime carriers and the Catholic Church. Contact: Rich Bajenski at [RBajenski@hotmail.com](mailto:RBajenski@hotmail.com), or locate me at HPS stamp club meetings.

## The Houston Philatelic Society....

Enjoy the fun of stamp collecting by sharing your interests with fellow collectors at an upcoming HOUSTON PHILATELIC SOCIETY meeting.

When : **First and third Monday of each month at 7:30 PM**

Where : **West University United Methodist Church, 3611 University Blvd., Houston, TX**

Visitors and new stamp collectors are always welcome.

Officers:	President: Ardy Callender	Vice-President: John Germann
	Secretary: Jay Stotts	Treasurer: Larry Ballantyne
	Past President: William Fort	Webmaster: Jonathan Topper
Board of Directors:	Rich Bajenski	Clayton Finney
	Stan Katz	Bryant Korn
	Ron Strawser	Jonathan Topper
		Tom Herbert
		Denise Stotts
		David Willig