

Self-sticking stamps are challenge to collectors

The newer self-adhesive "peel and stick" stamps being issued by the Postal Service are very popular. But they present collectors with a new challenge: how to save these stamps in our collections for the future. The problem is that most self-adhesive stamps use gum that is petroleum based.

Will this gum retain its stability and remain inert over time or will it migrate into the stamp or backing paper? No one knows for sure as we have no long term studies on self-adhesive stamps. The only experience we have was the 1974 U.S. "Peace on Earth" Christmas stamp, our first self-adhesive. All unused stamps left on the original backing became discolored when the adhesive bled through the paper several years later. The result was heavy staining on the face of all stamps not removed from their original paper backing. After this experience, the Postal Service did not issue self-adhesive stamps again until 1989 when a better adhesive had been developed.

Use mineral spirits to soften the adhesive on used self-adhesive stamps. Carefully dampen both the front and back of the adhered stamp. Let it stand for a minute or so and then peel the stamp away from the envelope. A few drops of mineral spirits used with a cotton swab will remove the remaining gum. Rinse the stamp with clean water and press between blotters or newspaper to

straighten the copies.

New Express Mail Stamp

A new Express Mail stamp will be issued by the Postal Service Aug. 4 during the American First Day Cover Society convention. The new stamp depicts the lift-off of the Space Shuttle "Endeavor," which is NASA's replacement for Shuttle "Challenger" which was tragically lost in 1986.

The stamp depicts flight STS-67 on June 21, 1993, which was under the command of Ronald J. Grabe. The flight was the first to carry the space lab module, a cabin like area for experiments. A space walk during the flight tested techniques later used to repair the Hubble space telescope.

The new stamp replaces the \$9.95 Moon Landing Express Mail stamp issued last year. Copies of the new stamp may be obtained locally.

Donald Duck 60th Anniversary

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Donald Duck, who first appeared in a Disney "silly symphony" animated short in 1934, "The Wise Little Hen." Sierra Leone, the West African nation on the Atlantic, reproduces 10, 50-year Disney sketches envisioning Donald as he would have been painted by the Old Masters. Among others, he is depicted as "Mona Lisa," shown nearby, and "Whistler's Mother." Write: IGPC, 400 West 34th St., New York, NY 10001, to obtain these stamps.

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