

Local post offices in gear for Elvis stampede



STAFF PHOTOS BY DAN DEAR

Oh joy! Birmingham resident Wanda Metzel gazes lovingly upon the sheets of Elvis stamps she bought Friday. Metzel also bought an Elvis Christmas tree ornament that day, so she couldn't afford as many stamps as she wanted.

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

All those tough guys in the '60s who bragged about how they could lick Elvis Presley now can.

As the much-anticipated Elvis stamp went on sale last Friday, the hordes of humanity descended on post offices all over Oakland County bent on investing in little sticky pictures of a man so revered that his former home is a shrine and people still claim to spot him in public once or twice a week.

Not bad for a hefty guy who died face down in the bathroom of a drug overdose 16 years ago.

At Troy's post office a clerk, Phil Eddy, sported Elvis garb, arrived in a pink Cadillac and sang Elvis songs throughout the afternoon. TV "news" people crawled all over the place as Elvis' favorite snacks were served, and customers were "limited" to \$1,000 worth of Elvis stamps each.

The action was more subdued

in Birmingham's post office as about 50 (maybe 52) people queued up to get their hands on a few souvenirs.

Bloomfield Hills inhabitant Erika Eckerman was one of the first in line and spent \$174 on Elvis stamps. "I have seen him in Las Vegas (in 1956)," she said, "and I could kill myself. Someone said, 'Let's meet him,' and I said, 'Maybe next time.'"

Birmingham resident Wanda Metzel, who claimed the honor of first in line, has "been an Elvis fan forever. I've seen him several times in concert (and) I went to Memphis on my honeymoon."

However, Metzel couldn't spend a bundle on stamps because she'd already blown \$10 on an equally valuable item. "I don't have a lot of money because I just stopped and bought an Elvis Presley Christmas tree ornament," she revealed, pulling the treasure from her coat pocket. "This is my second one in case

somebody steals my first one."

Another woman, who would give her name only as Sue, was less enthusiastic. She said she was buying Elvis stamps for a friend. "I had nothing better to do," she said.

One of the few men in line, who gave his name as Pat, said he's "not a big fan, but I think (the stamps are) a novelty. They probably won't be worth much ever, but they'll all be worth face value."

Royal Oak resident Jill William stood near the back of the line and said she was buying stamps for her son, who shares a birthday with The King. "It's just the fact that it's the birthdays together," she said. "It's rather fitting."

Tricia Cannis of Brazil (the whole separate country) came to the Birmingham post office because the lines are shorter than where she's from. Well, really she was visiting family here, OK.



This is fun: Birmingham postal clerk Cathie Rettig stamps the date onto Elvis stamps being purchased by Ellen Firestone for her dad.

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