

# The Cover Story

## Valid or Invalid? by The Editor

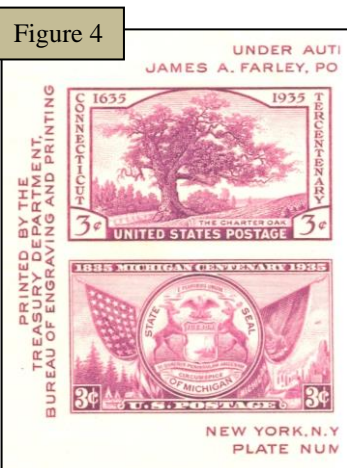
It is time for a voyage into the murky waters of rules and regulations. What prompted this article was the mailing pictured on the front cover that shows the use of a Special Delivery stamp (Scott E18) [figure 1] in combination with another more contemporary stamp to make the 45<sup>c</sup> first class rate in effect before the rate change in January of 2013. Many folks and often times USPS workers are under the mistaken impression that Special Delivery stamps are still valid for postage. The following statement details the regulation.

*According to Tony Wawrukiewicz book (2011), US Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011, the prohibition on using Special Delivery stamps for other than Special Delivery service dates to the original order in 1885, later codified in the Postal Laws & Regulations of 1902. He says, "The stamps designated for this service were to be used for this service alone, not for regular postage or for a registration fee."*

The key is the phrase “for this service alone....” This simple statement excludes the use of Special Delivery stamps from paying any part of postage fees used for other services. Thus in the dense and often times archaic logic of the USPS, since there is no service available for “Special Delivery” the stamps no longer hold any value for use.

I often have received mail in the last 10-15 years with Special Delivery stamps used. I would guess that better than 75% of the letters have made it through the system without being caught. However, I can remember a couple letters nailed for postage due by some knowledgeable USPS employee. (At least I hope that is an accurate statement).

You can roll the dice and hope that your out-going letter franked with Special Delivery stamps is not noticed but I will not take the risk.



This next issue is coming from memory – so I hope that I am getting it correct. Souvenir Sheets such as 730, 731, 735, 750, 751, 778 and 779 were widely seen and used during the 1930s. In the more recent era 948, 1075 and 1311 saw a great deal of use. Pictured on the front cover are 778 [figure 2] and 948 [figure 3]. Those two souvenir sheets have a total value of 12<sup>c</sup> and 15<sup>c</sup> respectively. If you have a desire to use parts of a souvenir sheet you must leave enough of the identification information to tie it to the original sheet. Thus using that logic, figure 4 is a legal use for a total of 6<sup>c</sup>, while figure 5 is an illegal attempt to use 15<sup>c</sup> of value. Once again the ability



for a USPS worker to know the specifics of these regulations is in question. In an effort to avoid problems whenever I use a souvenir sheet of any nature – I use the whole sheet. However there have been a couple of times such items have been docked for unrecognized postage by an overzealous worker drone. Such are the ways of the USPS!

[Editor’s Note: I would like to thank the ever helpful philatelic knowledge of John M. Hotchner for providing the allusive information to complete the first part of this article. His time and trouble have been greatly appreciated.]

# Phil the Postage Stamp by Randall Priest

## CHAPTER 15 ALICE'S HOUSE

Suzanne and I spent the rest of the day in the young girls pocket. We could not see anything but the smell and noise of the fair was very clear.

That evening when the young girl, whose name is Alice arrived home, we were taken out and placed on a desk. Having been in the dark most of the day, it took a moment for my eyes to adjust to the light. As I looked around I can see many objects that I could identify. There on the desk, was a magnifier, some steal jaws, and other things that I have seen before. It was obvious that this young girl knew about stamps. She sat down at the desk and began to pull out some books. Turning the pages she found what she is looking for. She turned Suzanne face down and with a pencil makes a note on her back. She put the book away and takes out another book. This time I am checked out and then turned face down and a note is written on my back. It does not hurt, but it does tickle a little.

We were turned face up and now Alice takes out a see-through envelop that already contains some stamps, and we are added to the envelope. We were then placed into a box and put on a shelf. After we get settled I asked some of the others who they were and where they had been. Rich introduces himself, and we began to get to know each other. Rich has been with the young girl for some time. Checking with the others, most had been together for a long time. As each one of my new friends are introduced, I find that there is a common thread connecting us together. It is those five rings that is found on most of us. I do not have those five rings on my face, however I am included into the group.

Each one of us has something to do with some games called the Olympics. After talking to all of the different stamps in the envelope I discover that each one of us has different numbers from different games. Some of the games were played in the winter and some were in the summer. Some of my new friends were from countries that I had not heard of before. Just hearing there speech had me thinking about how different we are but also alike. We each had stories to tell about our adventures.

One day Alice takes the see-through envelop and spreads us out on the desk. As she moves us around and around she gets us arranged the way she wants. Just then Alice's mother comes into the room. She ask, "How it is coming." Alice explains, "I have put together twenty different pages each with a different subject that is found on stamps. Some of the other subjects are: Chess on stamps, Mail boxes on stamps, Telephones on stamps, Flags on stamps, Air Mail stickers, Motorcycles on stamps, Maps on stamps, and etc. This page is about twelve different Olympic games held over the years."

Alice picks up each one of us then places us onto a page with a flap added to our back. This was upsetting to some who had not had this experience before. Some of us explained that this was not harmful, just a little uncomfortable. After hearing just what Alice is doing I am curious to talk to some of the others who have been placed on pages. There must be some exciting stories to be heard from some of those pages. The page we were on is then placed into a book, and then onto a shelf.

This is the end for now.

This story could be continued.....

[Editor's Note: This is the final installment in the long running Phil The Postage Stamp Story. Many thanks to Randall Priest for his imagination and diligence in completing this work – We do hope to see more chapters!]