

SYNOPSIS

THE U.S. PREVENT DRUG ABUSE STAMP AND ITS FIRST DAY COVERS (updated 8-14-26)

Purpose: This exhibit showcases the U.S. Prevent Drug Abuse stamp of 1971 (Scott #1438) and its first day covers and usages. It illustrates the results of the exhibitor's 28+ years of research and diligent search for material.

Treatment/Development: This exhibit contains most of what one would expect in a conventional first day cover exhibit, including material on the designers of the stamp, stamp production information and material, printing freaks (color shifts, under inking, & ink smears), a misperf, a previously unreported paper variety, publicity material, relevant autographs, an unofficial first day cover, First Day Ceremony programs, FDOI cancellation varieties (including a previously unreported one), government cachets, hand-drawn and hand-painted cachets, promotional FDCs, printed cachets, the two recorded first cachets, available cachet production materials, unusual cachets, unique and apparently homemade cachets, unidentified cachets, stuffer cards, generic cachets, a few representative modern add-on cachets, combination covers, and intended and unusual non-first day commercial uses.

Especially interesting items include:

- FDCs autographed by the stamp designer, Miggs Burroughs, and the originator of the design, K. Gardner Perine
- Personal, handwritten letter from Perine regarding stamp and design
- Previously unreported paper variety
- Stamp color freaks and shifts on & off FDCs
- Solvent smears and a significant misperforation
- Two label varieties from cases of 125,000 stamps
- Original press release
- Original AP wire story and photo
- Unique unauthorized use of stamp before nationwide release (first unofficial FD cancellation exhibitor has found in 30 years search)
- Previously unreported FDOI cancellation variety
- Artmaster and Articraft archive material

- Setoff of engraved cachet design on reverse of Fleetwood FDC
- Previously unreported printing on reverse of Fleetwood FDCs
- Anderson cachet design printed upside down
- Misplaced Overseas Mailer rubber stamp cachet
- Multiple FDCs with ≤ 35 cachets made
- "Fractured" uses and special services on FDCs
- A Postkrieg/"Prohibited stamp" FDC rejected by Latvia.
- Non-FD domestic and international uses, including multiple weight covers, a third class use, an international printed matter use, and various special services

The exhibit does **not** contain:

- Original archival material on the stamp because it is not available to collectors. (A BEP copy of the original Model, analogous to BEP photos of essays or original designs often shown in exhibits of early FDCs, is included)
- The unique Dorothy Knapp add-on cachet produced years after the stamp was issued - not relevant.
- Either the business size ArtCraft FDC variety or the ArtCraft/Overseas Mailer variety listed in Severe's ArtCraft Cover Listing. The Exhibitor has seen neither in 28+ years of searching.

Knowledge/Study/Research: This exhibit is the product, not simply of the exhibitor's 28+-years of purchases of philatelic material, but also his research in available sources and independent study of that material. In addition to relevant information on the stamp, cachetmakers, and cachets derived from standard philatelic references and the sources listed in the bibliography, the exhibit also reflects the exhibitor's discovery of stamp printing freaks, a previously unreported FDOI machine cancel, and a previously unreported paper variety.

The exhibitor also obtained and analyzed documents from the BEP archives and the APRL clipping file, reviewed relevant articles and ads in First Days magazine, calculated applicable postal rates, and deciphered cachet printing methods. He

also examined and identified add-on cachets based on clues in the designs, printing methods, identified cachet producers, or conditions of the covers.

It should also be noted that there is no Mellone's Cachet Catalog of First Day Covers for this issue. Accordingly, the exhibitor has identified the cachetmakers based on his own observations, knowledge, and research.

Importance: Although a modern issue, the Prevent Drug Abuse stamp was one of the earliest U.S. stamps to focus on "social awareness" rather than to commemorate a person, place, or event. Also, several important items identified above and in the exhibit are unique or only known copies which, when combined with the exhibitor's knowledge and research over the past 28+ years as reflected in the exhibit, make creation of a comparable or better exhibit on this stamp and its FDCs difficult or impossible, at least so long as this one exists.

Challenge/Difficulty: As with most modern issues, several mass-produced cacheted FDCs of the drug abuse prevention stamp are readily available and included in the exhibit as necessary to tell the story of this stamp. However, as noted above, the exhibit also contains a number of cachets with production runs of 35 or less, including several that appear to be unique or homemade. The exhibit also contains scarce examples of cachet errors and stamp production freaks, such as ink smears and color shifts - both mint and a few on cover on FDCs, as well as a substantial misperforation freak. Many of the remaining items listed under Treatment/Development also are unique or difficult to find.

With any modern FDC exhibit, moreover, some of the most difficult material to locate is appropriate usages. The exhibit contains more than a full frame of First Day and non-First Day usages, including only copies of solo use covers exactly paying the 8¢ international Printed Matter rate and the domestic Third Class rate known to the exhibitor. It also includes covers to Nigeria and India, and the previously mentioned Postkrieg FDC to Latvia.

Condition: Nearly all the material is pristine, as one would expect for such modern items. The

one notable exception is the FDC autographed by K. Gardner Perine, which is in poor condition but is the only one known to the exhibitor.

Presentation: The exhibit is shown on slightly darker beige paper than normally seen for two reasons. First, it avoids the common tendency of bright white modern covers and stamp perforations blending in and washing out as when lighter paper is used. And second, the darker beige is a complementary color to the blues in the stamp, avoiding the distractions resulting from use of other darker colors.

NOTE: Please disregard the much older version of my exhibit (4 frames from 2012) that is available on the web. While much of the material is carried over to the current exhibit, the older version does not remotely reflect the treatment, knowledge, or challenge of the current exhibit.

Recent Changes to Exhibit: The exhibitor has made significant improvements to the current, 7-frame exhibit since it was last shown at GASS 2025, reorganizing the first section and removing redundant printing freaks and less important material while adding an unauthorized first day use, an upgraded Doctor Blade Flaw block, original news articles, and two unique new FDCs.

Bibliography:



(info available at http://henak.net/HenakHome/1438_Combined.pdf)
(Note, this is a LARGE file containing hard-to-find materials. Use caution before printing it out!)

PDF File includes this synopsis and information below:

-*Prevent Drug Abuse*, S.P.A. Journal 291 (Jan. 1976)

-APRL clipping/subject file on Prevent Drug Abuse Stamp (U.S. Scott #1438)

THE U.S. PREVENT DRUG ABUSE STAMP AND ITS FIRST DAY COVERS

Purpose: This conventionally organized first day cover exhibit showcases the U.S. Prevent Drug Abuse stamp of 1971 (Scott #1438), its production, FDCs, and uses.

Plan of Exhibit

- 1 Stamp Purpose, Concept, & Design
- 2 Stamp Production
- 3 Distribution
- 4 Publicity
- 5 First Day Ceremony
- 6 First Day Cancellations
- 7 First Day Covers
- 8 Postal Uses
- 9 Epilogue/Call to Action

Background: As the psychedelic 1960's came to a close, many viewed drug abuse as a significant national problem. The Post Office Department, soon to become the United States Postal Service, did its part in the anti-drug campaign, authorizing a commemorative stamp designed to draw attention to the devastating effect of abusing illegal drugs.

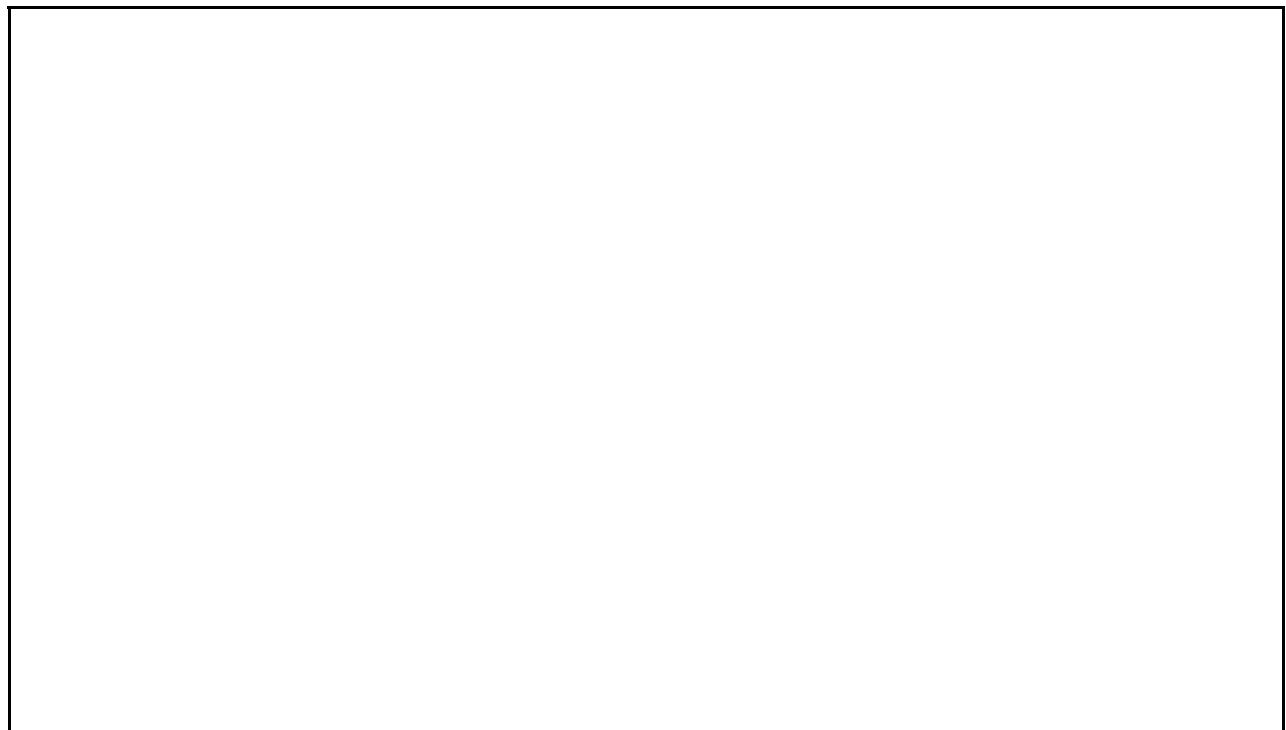
The chairman of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee approached Miggs Burroughs, an amateur artist with no formal training, explaining that they were looking for a young artist to create a design that would appeal to young people. They wanted a despondent-looking teenager and expressed that the colors needed to be very flat.

Using his then-girlfriend as a model, Burroughs responded with a simple but dramatic design emphasizing light and shadow. Burroughs' medium of choice was paper. He used one color for the background, one for the silhouette, and yet another for the shadow.

*For synopsis and
additional information*



***Red frame or type:
unique or especially unusual item
and personal discoveries***



Ralph Dyer Hand-Drawn and Hand-Painted First Day Cover

Dyer produced cachets from the 1928 Molly Pitcher issue through the 1970's