

Spayed or Sprayed. The Mad Canceler Strikes Again

By Stan Cronwall

You may have become numbed to my periodic rants about our philatelic world and the elements that are doing their level best to kill it.

But, I'm here to let fly another blast against the powers that make our stamp collecting lives a mess.

It's almost as though USPS periodically convenes workshops or uses other means to solicit input from their people on how to make stamps uncollectible once they have been used to frank items passing through the mails.

Witness just a few of their measures:

Using black broad tipped magic markers to strike a line through stamps.



Loading the canceling devices with red ink that bleeds into the stamp(s) and surrounding area if soaked.

Red ink cancels are popular on mail coming from Hawaii. Maybe someone there thinks it is festive and bespeaks of island fun.

And, then closer to home, we have Truckee and Reno using red ink in their cancelers.

Believe it or not, I once had a senior USPS person look me straight in the eye and tell me that they use red because some of their clerks are color-blind and it helps to see whether a stamp has truly been canceled. A bald-faced lie, or as Colonel Sherman T. Potter in the M.A.S.H. TV series would say, "Pony Pucks"

Currently, let's begin with the spray-on "cancels" that have been with us for a few years, but during the last holiday season served to ruin stamps, date cancels and any other collectable philatelic aspect you might have wanted to salvage from envelopes. Here some examples from one collector to another

franked with some older stamps. It's enough to make you cry.

Wonder how many hard-earned tax dollars went into



developing this insidious cancelling devise and having them installed in most if not all Post Offices. You

can bet that the person inventing it has a contract lasting into perpetuity that gives he or she and their heirs some kind of stipend.

Maybe the next step is to load them with red ink. Shame on me for even suggesting the idea.



Just in case, you think that the ones above are okay because you can read part of it, try this these:

There are U.S. stamp collectors who specialize in postmarks. Just where in their collections will these abominations fit. Maybe the catch-all shoebox of tear-stained might have been.

Finally, do you suppose that our USPS people are working with other countries sharing the ideas on how to make stamps uncollectible?

Check out this opaque plastic wrapper recently used to send a package from the U. K. The sender was a fellow stamp collector thinking that I might be interested or could somehow use the selection of Great Britain stamps on the parcel.

Wrong – not after the U.K. postal authorities used their “killer” canceler to obliterate the stamps.

It is true that the stamps on the wrapper might be peeled off or otherwise removed.

But, tell me who in their right mind would want any of these in their collection.



Once again, the mad canceler has struck. Mission accomplished. The stamps will be relegated to the circular file.

Stan Cronwall was awarded the first Dreiling Award in August 2019. He passed away in the evening of Oct. 26, a regular stamp club meeting day. He was a very active member of NSSS from the year 2000.