

ERROR DISCOVERY

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On 9 August 2018, at the APS-ATA joint show in Columbus, Ohio, the US Postal Service issued a self-adhesive pane of 16 stamps containing four different designs depicting stylized dragons. I was third in line at the postal station when it opened at 10:00 AM and purchased 15 panes for use on some cacheted covers I had prepared.



Regular Pane of Dragon Stamps

After my purchase, I went to help at the ATA booth. The ATA had also prepared sets of cachets with different designs for sale on each day. Because Vera Felts, the ATA Executive Director, was busy organizing the booth, she had not yet purchased stamps for placing on the covers. To save time and speed up getting them cancelled and ready for sale at the booth, I began using my stamps to place on the covers.

Shortly thereafter Vera brought about 70 panes that she had purchased for their covers. I replaced the stamps I had used from my purchase with those and began using the ATA's stamps on the rest of the covers.

By then Larry Davidson, one of our Biology Unit members, was also helping apply the stamps. After using perhaps five or six panes, I picked a new pane and tried to remove one of the stamps from the bottom row. It would not peel away and I looked closely to find that the die cuts had shifted about 60 millimeters toward the top of the pane and into the top margin. This left the bottom row of stamps totally imperforate.

I showed the pane to Larry and we agreed that it was an error. We searched the pile of remaining panes and found the next 13 panes with similar die cut shifts, some of which were not as severe.



Error pane highlighted to show die cut shift

With Vera's permission, I took the panes to the nearby Scott Publishing booth to show to Jay Bigalke, the Editor of *Linn's Stamp News*. He was speaking with another person and when he finished, he turned to me and saw I was holding several of the panes.

"Please don't tell me they omitted the metallic ink," he said.

"I can't tell you that, but they omitted the die cuts," I replied.

He took one of the panes and his eyes widened. He turned to me and said, "This looks like a major error," to which I agreed.

"I'm trying to contain my excitement," he said. So was I.

He asked permission to hold on to one of the panes to scan for a report on the discovery in *Linn's*, which Vera granted. The ATA plans to sell the panes to raise funds for the organization.

Some might say that discovering a major error on a US stamp is a once-in-a-lifetime event. It certainly was a highlight of the show for me. See page 14 in the 3 September 2018 edition of *Linn's Stamp News* for a report on this discovery.