



POSTAL NEWS

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U.S. Postal Service Brings Wonder and Amazement to Town with New Limited-Edition Vintage Circus Posters Forever Stamps *Stamps Available Today Online and at Post Offices Nationwide*

SARASOTA, FL — Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, *Children Of All Ages*... step right up and share the magic of the circus as the U.S. Postal Service today issues the new, limited-edition Vintage Circus Posters Forever stamps. With the help of a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey ringmaster and clowns, the new stamps were unveiled during an interactive stamp dedication ceremony held at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

Customers may purchase the stamps at the [Postal Store](#), at 800-STAMP24 (800-782-6724) and at Post Offices nationwide or visit ebay.com/stamps to shop for a wide variety of postage stamps and collectibles.

The new Vintage Circus Posters Forever stamps are modeled after original circus posters — including those promoting the *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus* — and are now part of the Tibbals Digital Collection at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

“P.T. Barnum, the great American showman, businessman and founder of the Barnum & Bailey Circus, once wrote that ‘the noblest art is that of making others happy.’ At the Postal Service, we think these new stamps will do a spectacular job of doing just that,” said Ellen Williams, member, Board of Governors, U.S. Postal Service, in dedicating the new stamps.

“We hope people will proudly display these new stamps on all their cards, letters and packages and, just like the circus does, we hope they will bring joy, wonder and amazement into the lives of everyone who receives them.”

Joining Williams to dedicate the stamps were Mark Riddell, national public relations director, *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus*; Steven High, executive director, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art; and David Shipman, ringmaster for *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Presents Super Circus Heroes*.

The circus has brought together Americans of all ages and walks of life to watch the amazing acts and let imaginations soar. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, companies such as *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey* used evocative posters to let people know that an exciting attraction was coming to town.

“The magic of the circus is celebrated here every day at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the estate of the Circus King John Ringling,” said High. “There is no better place to issue stamps honoring circus history than in Sarasota, the Circus Capital of the World. We are grateful for the philanthropic efforts of Howard and Janice Tibbals, whose collection and life’s work including their namesake building on our campus ensures that the legacy of the American circus will never be forgotten.”

“We are honored to be a part of this celebration along with our partners at the U.S. Postal Service and The Ringling Museum. At *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey* we create circus legends, The Ringling Museum preserves the history and now the U.S. Postal Service celebrates that history and honors the legacy of the circus,” said Nicole Feld, executive vice president for Feld Entertainment and producer of *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*.

About the Vintage Circus Posters Forever Stamps

The Vintage Circus Posters Forever stamps pay tribute to the wonder and amusement of the circus which Americans have enjoyed since the late 18th century. This pane of 16 self-adhesive stamps features reproductions of eight vintage circus posters.

In the 19th century, lithography became the medium of choice for poster artists. *The Amazing American Circus Poster*, a book featuring the work of the Strobridge Lithographing Company, describes the process as being “based on the principle that oil and water do not mix.”

Using grease crayon or liquid, the artist applied the design in reverse onto a flat surface such as limestone. A chemical process fixed that grease image to the plate, making it receptive to holding ink. Then, the surface was moistened, covered with an oil-based ink and printed onto paper. During the process, the wet, blank areas repelled the ink.

Companies such as Strobridge and Erie Lithographing & Printing created bright, detailed works of art that were displayed prominently in cities and towns across the United States. These posters were not simply modest, restrained ads either. They were big and bold — just like the circuses they touted. Poster size was measured by the “sheet.” A sheet was 42 inches by 28 inches (or vice versa). But posters didn’t stop at one sheet. There were two-sheet, three-sheet, four-sheet and even 12-sheet, 24-sheet and 100-sheet posters, which covered entire sides of buildings. The language incorporated on the posters was usually as colorful as the images it described.

These eye-popping late 19th and early 20th century posters showcased majestic elephants, fierce tigers and colorful clowns, alongside acts such as acrobatic gymnasts, graceful wire dancers and daring stuntmen. Colorful clowns were also poster mainstays. “Clowns might easily thrive outside the circus,” *The Amazing American Circus Poster* states, “but the idea of a circus without clowns is almost inconceivable.”

Each stamp features one vintage circus poster. The pane’s verso text includes a brief discussion of the history and purpose of circus posters. The selvage features an image of a circus entrance shot by photographer Edward J. Kelty in 1937. Art director Greg Breeding worked on the stamp pane with designer Jennifer Arnold.

Customers may view many of this year’s other stamps on Facebook [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), Twitter [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps), Pinterest [pinterest.com/uspsstamps](https://www.pinterest.com/uspsstamps), Instagram [instagram.com/uspostalservice](https://www.instagram.com/uspostalservice) or on uspsstamps.com, the Postal Service’s online site for information on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

Ordering First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at local Post Offices, at The Postal Store at usps.com/shop, or by calling 800-

STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Vintage Circus Posters
Postmaster
1661 Ringling Blvd
Sarasota, FL 34230-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark up to a quantity of 50. For more than 50, the price is five cents each. All orders must be postmarked by July 4, 2014.

Ordering First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog, online at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-782-6724. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-782-6724 or writing to:

U.S. Postal Service
Catalog Request
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are 10 philatelic products for this stamp issue:

- [472104](#), Pane of 16 with selvage, \$7.84
- [472106](#), Press Sheet with die cuts, \$47.04 (print quantity of 2,500)
- [472108](#), Press Sheet without die cuts, \$47.04 (print quantity of 2,500)
- [472110](#), Keepsake (Pane of 16, 1 random single Digital Color Postmark), \$9.95
- [472116](#), First-Day Cover (set of 8), \$7.44
- [472118](#), Full Pane First-Day Cover, \$10.34
- [472119](#), Cancelled Full Pane, \$10.34
- [472121](#), Digital Color Postmark (set of 8), \$13.12
- [472130](#), Ceremony Program random single, \$6.95
- [472124](#), Framed Art, \$39.95

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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