

## Modern U.S. Uncut Press Sheets

All United States postage stamps are printed as press sheets. The press sheets are cut into smaller pieces called panes of 4 to 12 or more, before they are sent to post offices for sale to customers. Uncut press sheets are not issued for every U.S. stamp. When they are made available to the public, they become a separate collectible item which is the subject of this exhibit.

### History of Uncut Press Sheets

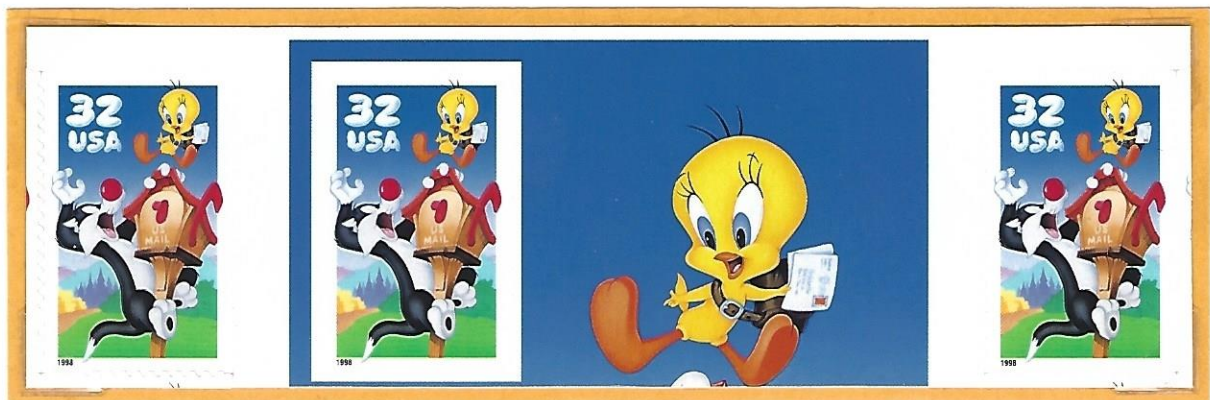
Various U. S. stamps of the 1902 series were sold in imperforate uncut sheets and only to commercial users of stamp vending and affixing machines. When the public complained, they were also made available to collectors. Dealers and collectors cut these sheets up and saved position pieces and blocks that came only from uncut sheets.

In 1933 and 1934, Postmaster General James A. Farley supplied uncut press sheets of some U.S. new issues to friends and dignitaries, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt. When word got out, the furor went well beyond the stamp-collecting community. Yielding to pressure, in March 1935, the U.S. Postal Office Department made available uncut sheets of 20 previously issued stamps.

The first modern U.S. uncut press sheets were issued in 1994. Unlike the previous sales in which the public demanded the sale of uncut press sheets, the modern uncut press sheets were a deliberate marketing ploy for sale to collectors as a revenue-raising scheme of the U.S. Postal Service. Lately, some collectors are accusing the Postal Service of operating in secrecy, keeping the numbers of imperforate sheets – so called no-die-cut sheets – a closely guarded secret until the moment sheets have gone on sale at first day ceremonies

### Challenge

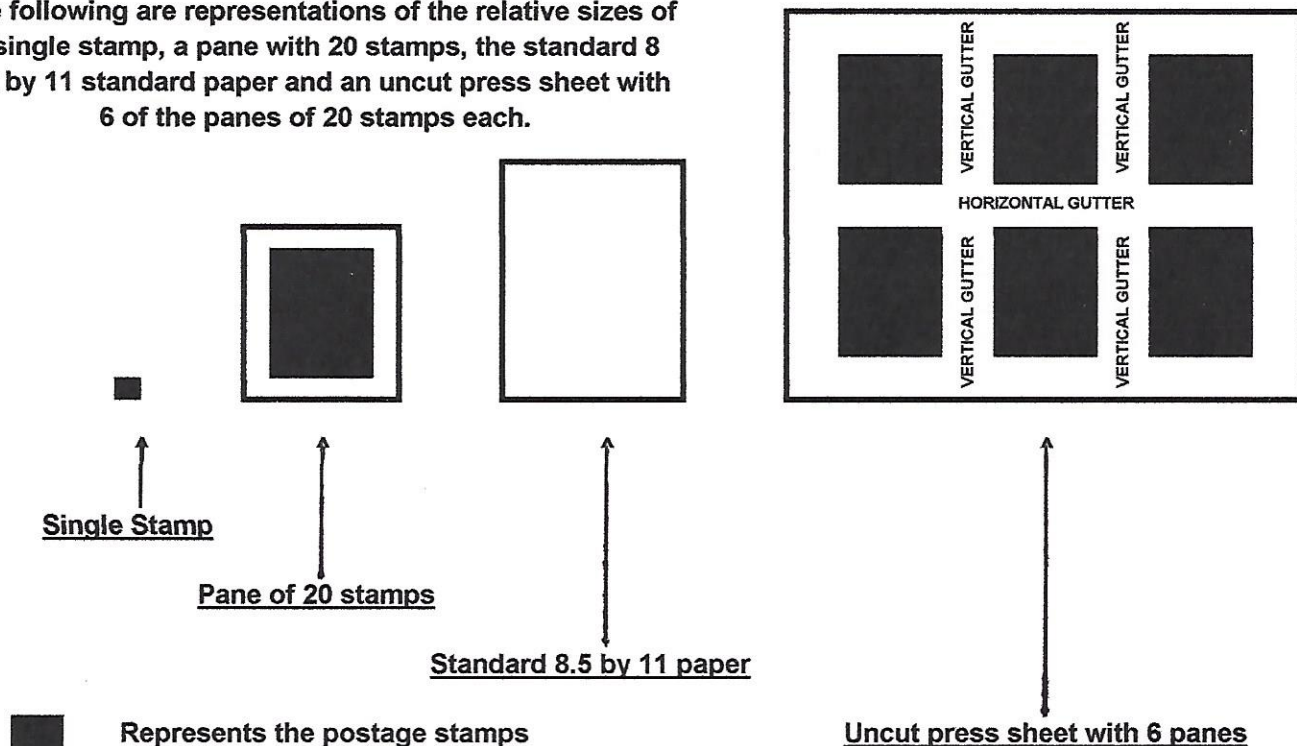
The main challenge for collecting and exhibiting uncut press sheets is that they are too big to fit into a conventional album except through “position pieces” like the one shown below of a horizontal pair with vertical gutter which includes the Extra Single Center.



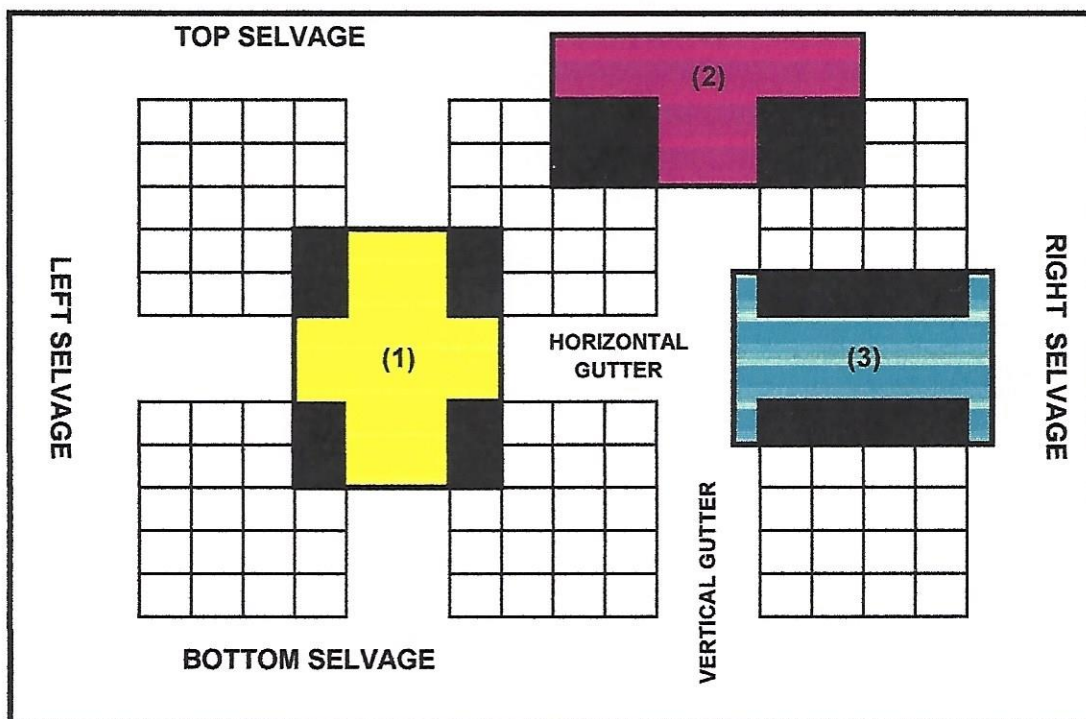
### Objective

The main objective of this exhibit is to demonstrate that uncut press sheets are viable collectible and even “exhibitible” philatelic material. The exhibit presents some of the more unique modern uncut press sheets: the first, the scarcest, the smallest, the trickiest, the largest, tallest, widest, the most popular of the modern press sheets, etc. and concludes with an example of the controversial no-die-cut sheets.

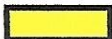


The following are representations of the relative sizes of a single stamp, a pane with 20 stamps, the standard 8 1/2 by 11 standard paper and an uncut press sheet with 6 of the panes of 20 stamps each.



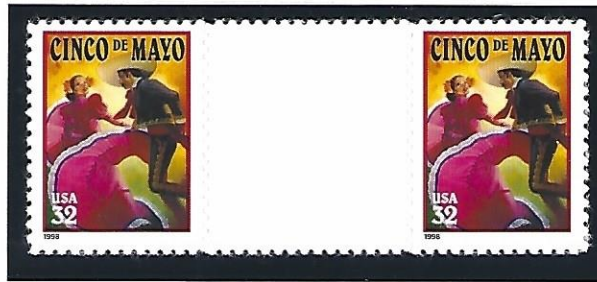
Uncut press sheets are too large to fit a regular stamp album. Accordingly, some collectors prefer to save what are known as "position pieces", pairs and blocks of stamps that because they contain gutters, clearly show they come from an uncut press sheet. The gutter is the uncut margin paper between adjoining panes on the sheet. Please see the illustrations below.



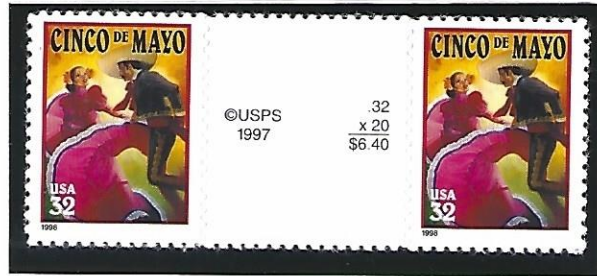
Basic Position Pieces from an Uncut Press Sheet

-  (1) Cross Gutter block of 8 or XG8
-  (2) Horizontal block of 8 with vertical gutter or BK8wVG
-  (3) Vertical block of 8 with horizontal gutter or BK8wHG

# VERTICAL GUTTERS



HPRwVG - Horizontal pair with plain vertical gutter



HPRwVG - Horizontal pair with vertical gutter showing USPS copyright mark, the stamp denomination, number of stamps in a pane, and price of a full pane



Horizontal stamps with plain vertical gutter and top selvage of the uncut press sheet with plate numbers



Horizontal stamps with plain vertical gutter and bottom selvage of the uncut press sheet showing the plate numbers and position

# CROSS GUTTERS

On the right is a XG8 which means Cross Gutter with a block of eight (8) stamps, in this case positioned vertically.

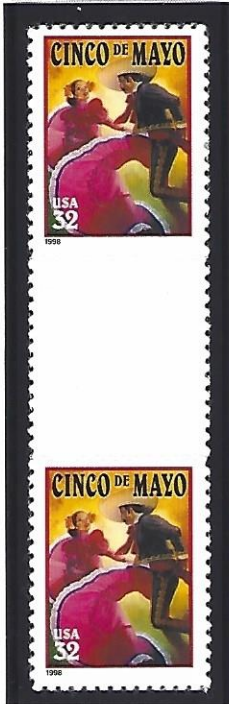


On the bottom is another XG8 or Cross Gutter with a block of eight (8) stamps, this time the stamps are positioned horizontally.



## HORIZONTAL GUTTERS

Gutter (philately), the space between panes of postage stamps that creates configurations of "gutter pairs" or "gutter blocks"



On the left is a VPRwHG which stands for vertical pair with plain (i.e. no markings) horizontal gutter.



On the right is another VPRwHG or vertical pair with horizontal gutter which includes the plate position.



On the left is a VPRwHG which stands for vertical pair with horizontal gutter. This pair includes the left selvage of the uncut press sheet and the gutter includes the plate numbers.



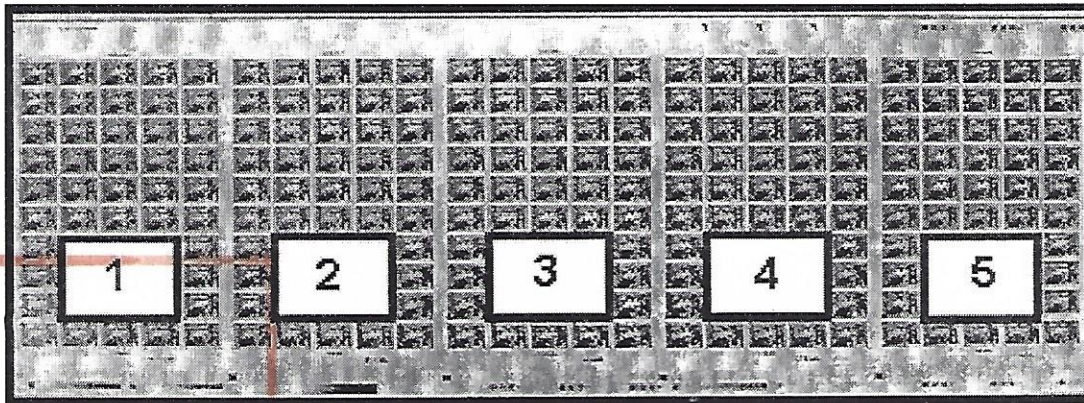
On the right is another VPRwHG or vertical pair with horizontal gutter showing the plate numbers. This pair includes the right selvage of the uncut press sheet.

## KWANZAA - UNCUT PRESS SHEET

The Kwanzaa press sheet was issued on November 22, 1997, the second self-adhesive press sheet (Bugs Bunny was the first). The press sheet sold out very quickly with only 1,817 sheets issued.

The full press sheet consists of 5 panes in a strip, the first layout in press history. There are 50 stamps in each pane for a total of 250 stamps in a full press sheet. This unusual size sheet required tight rolling to fit in shipping tubes and the self-stick stamps reacted by unsticking.

Half of the available sheets were recalled 35 days after going on sale. Eventually, slightly over 1,800 were available and sold out, making the 1997 32c Kwanzaa the scarcest modern U.S. press sheet. Below is a representation of the full press sheet.



Position Piece

The horizontally formatted strip of eighteen (18) stamps with vertical gutter below came from the first plate position as shown by the mark in the bottom selvage. The bottom selvage also shows the plate numbers, the USPS copyright mark with the year 1996 and various squares demonstrating progressions of different colors.



## 1994 LEGENDS OF THE WEST - UNCUT PRESS SHEET

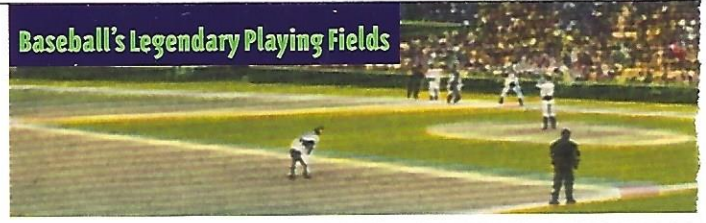
This is the first of the modern uncut press sheet issue of the United States Postal Service. The Legends of the West issue also became a controversial one. The original set was recalled when it was determined that they had the wrong person shown as Bill Pickett. When the USPS decided to raffle off 150,000 sets of the recalled Legends of the West, some collectors who bought at market prices in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000 range brought an action in court to stop the further issuance. The USPS prevailed in the courts and 150,000 sets were sold to the public by lottery. The Recalled Legends of the West did not have an uncut press sheet version.

This is a cross gutter block of twenty (XG20) showing all 20 stamps in the set.



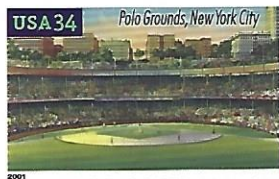
# BASEBALL'S LEGENDARY PLAYING FIELDS - UNCUT PRESS SHEET

Cross gutter block of 32 (XG32) of the Baseball's Legendary Playing Fields. Note bottom pane is reversed.



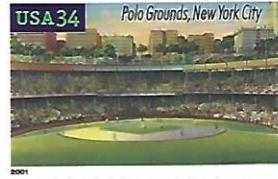
V 1 1

V 1 1



© 2000  
USPS

.34  
x 20  
\$6.80



V 1 1

V 1 1



**"WIDEST" Modern Uncut Press Sheet**  
41 inches width and 13.25 inches height



V 1 1

V 1 1



© 2000  
USPS

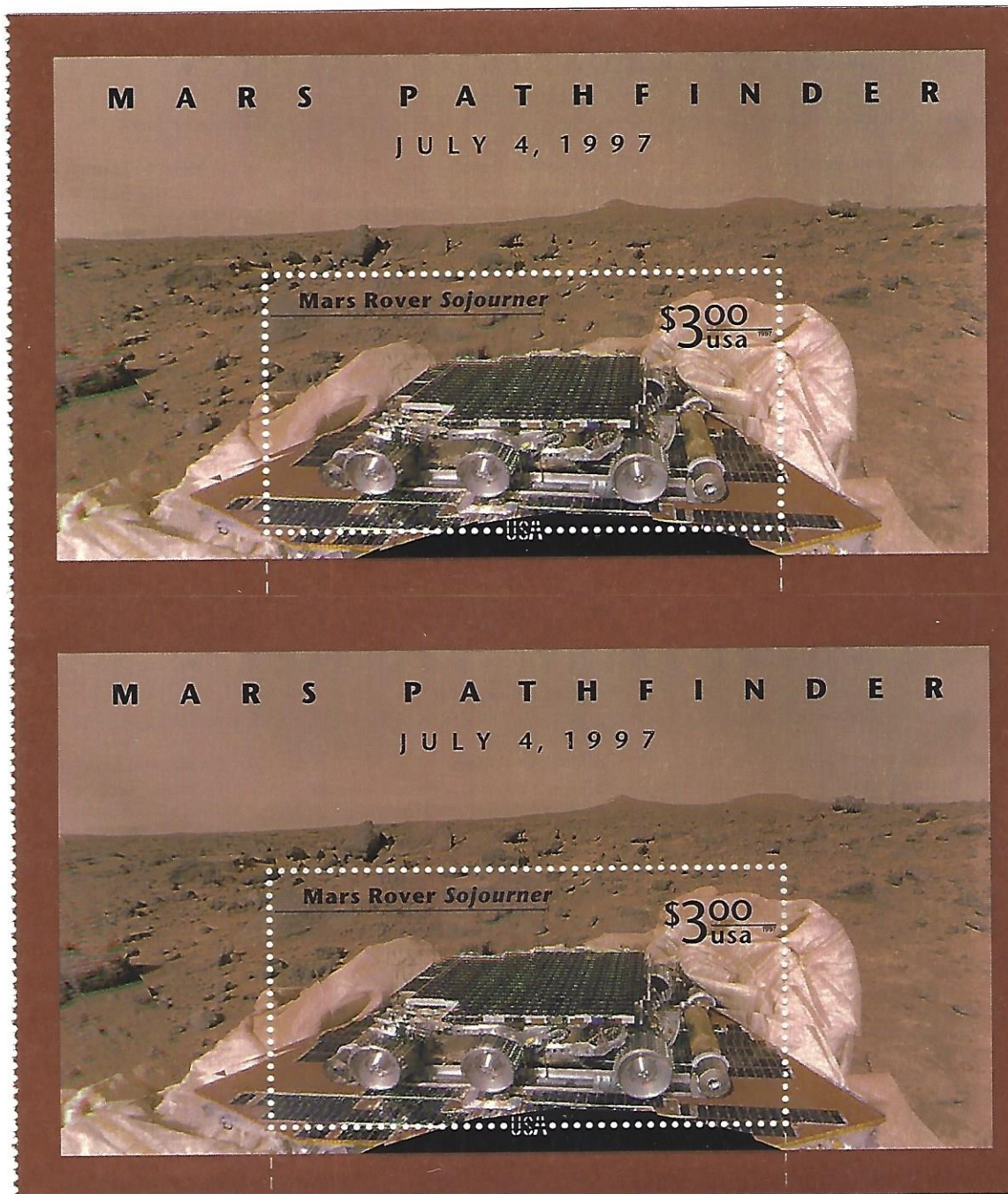
.34  
x 20  
\$6.80





The Mars Pathfinder - Uncut Press Sheet

The \$3.00 stamp in this souvenir sheet is the biggest stamp ever issued by the United States.



HORIZONTAL GUTTER

This is a vertical pair with a horizontal gutter (VPRwHG)

**"BIGGEST STAMP"** Issued by the U.S.A.

## BUGS BUNNY - UNCUT PRESS SHEET

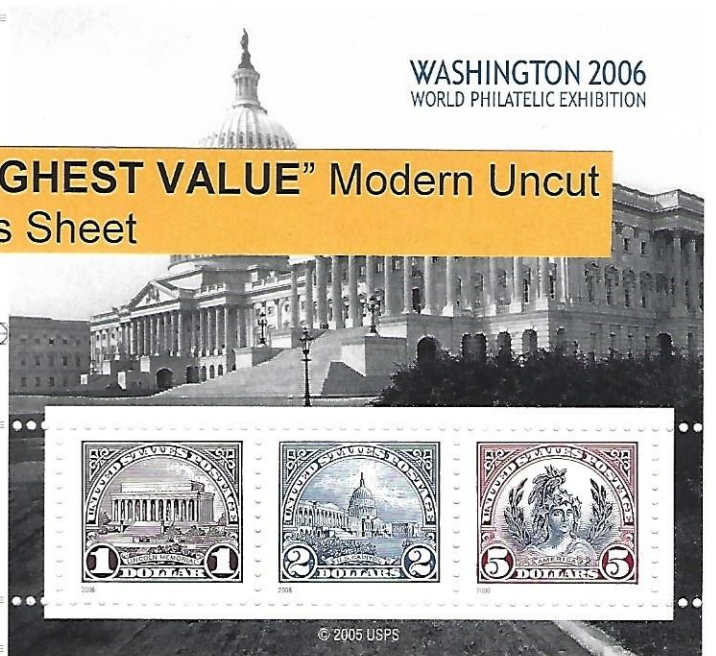
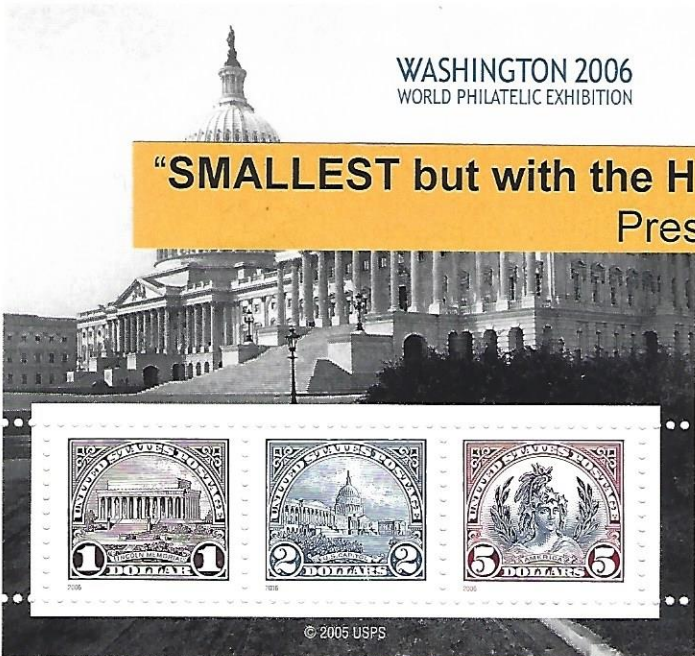
Although 7th in the U.S. modern uncut press sheet issue, the 32 cents Bugs Bunny sheet ignited collectors and dealers alike. The wacally wabbit adorned the first self-adhesive uncut press sheets, which were actually half press sheets, cut in half horizontally, purportedly to facilitate handling. The USPS asked the printer to deliver 10,000 each of the top and the bottom halves. What the USPS made available for sale, however, were 5,244 of the top half and 5,856 of the bottom half. Bugs press sheets were a sellout, largely because of a startling discovery. Stamp writer and U.S. specialist Ken Lawrence noticed that the uncut sheets were not simply larger versions of the same Bugs panes being sold in the post offices, The Bugs uncut press sheets differed in that they had no roulettes, the tiny vertical slits for separating the panes of stamps. This discovery resulted in the Bugs sheet inventory selling well and evaporating in nine weeks.

### "MOST POPULAR" Modern Uncut Press Sheet

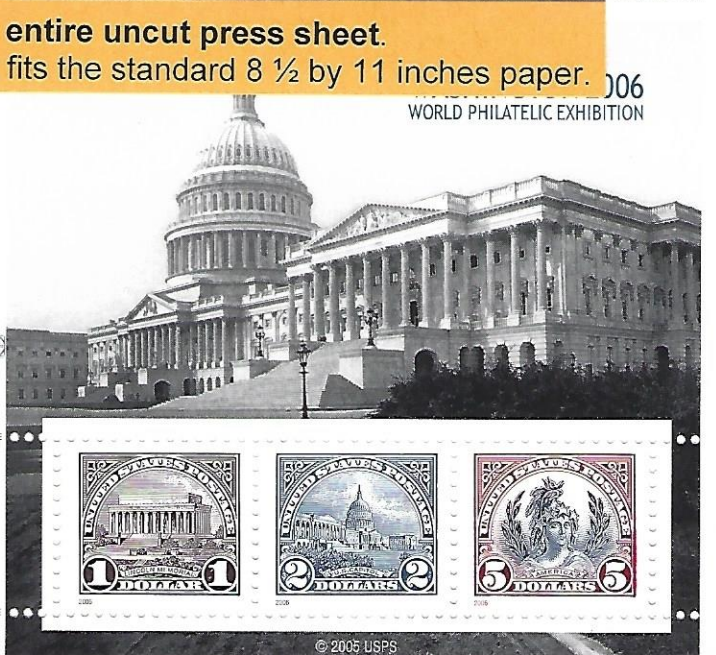


# WASHINGTON 2006 WORLD PHILATELIC EXHIBITION

Smallest in size but with the highest value per square inch uncut press sheet issued by the USPS to date



**“SMALLEST but with the HIGHEST VALUE” Modern Uncut Press Sheet**



**You are looking at the entire uncut press sheet.**  
This is the only uncut press sheet that fits the standard 8 ½ by 11 inches paper.

006



HENRY FONDA (1905-1982) was noted for his naturalness and sincerity in stage roles and on the screen. Effective in comedic or dramatic roles, he typically played thoughtful men of integrity. In a career spanning nearly 50 years, he won many honors, including a Tony Award in 1948 for his work in the Broadway production of *Mister Roberts* and the Academy Award for best actor in 1982 for *On Golden Pond*.



LEGENDS OF HOLLYWOOD (HENRY FONDA) - UNCUT PRESS SHEET

37 x 20 = \$740

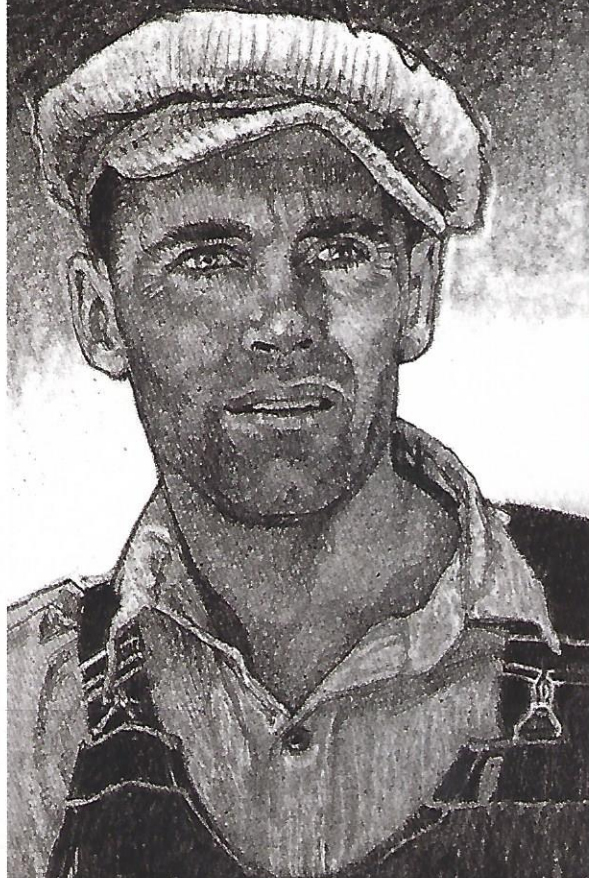


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“LARGEST” Modern Uncut Press Sheet



LEGENDS OF HOLLYWOOD



Henry Fonda is the 11th in the Legends of Hollywood series. It was issued on May 20, 2005.



The uncut press sheet consists of nine (9) panes with a width of 26.874 inches and a height of 23 inches for a total of 618 square inches making this uncut press sheet the "Largest" amongst the modern uncut press sheet.



HENRY FONDA (1905-1982) was noted for his naturalness and sincerity in stage roles and on the screen. Effective in comedic or dramatic roles, he typically played thoughtful men of integrity. In a career spanning nearly 50 years, he won many honors, including a Tony Award in 1948 for his work in the Broadway production of *Mister Roberts* and the Academy Award for best actor in 1982 for *On Golden Pond*.



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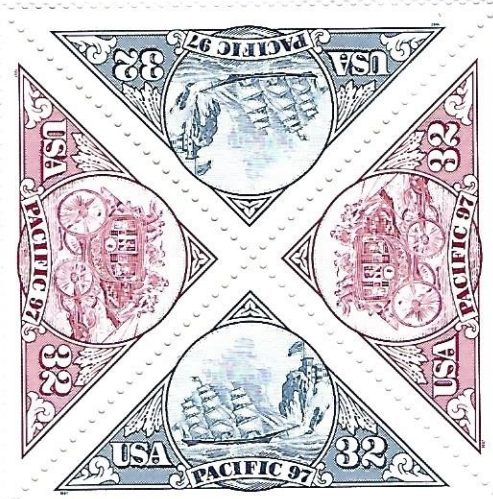


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# PACIFIC 97 - UNCUT PRESS SHEET

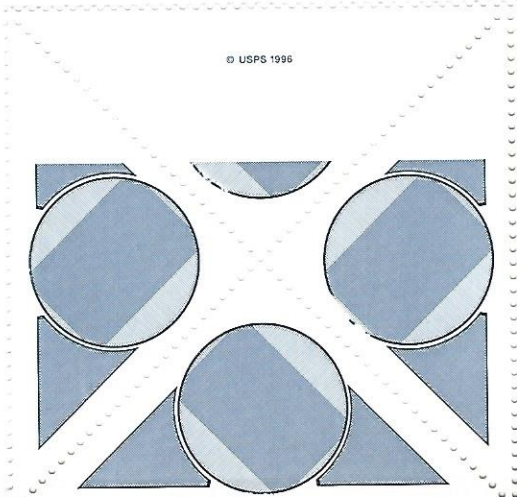
For all four-sided stamps, it is easy to characterize the pair and gutter as either vertical pair with horizontal gutter or a horizontal pair with vertical gutter. In the case of Pacific '97 triangles, which one of these is a horizontal pair with vertical gutter and which one is a vertical pair with horizontal gutter?

This one looks like a horizontal block of 8 with vertical gutter.

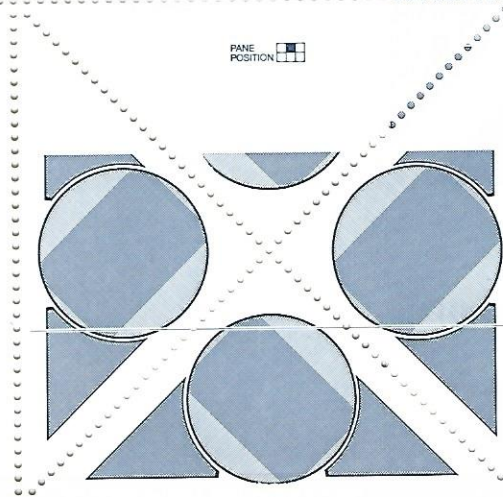


© USPS 1996

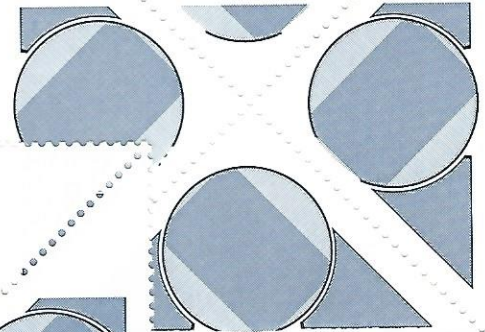
## “TRICKIEST” Modern Uncut Press Sheet



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA MAY 29-JUNE 8, 1997



PACIFIC 97 INTERNATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION



CALIFORNIA MAY 29-JUNE 8, 1997

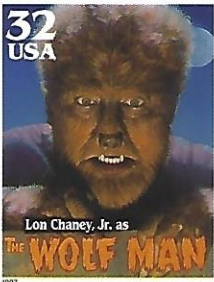
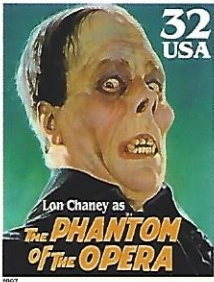
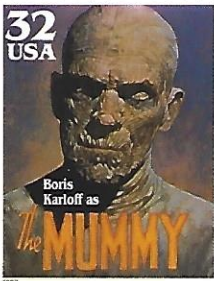
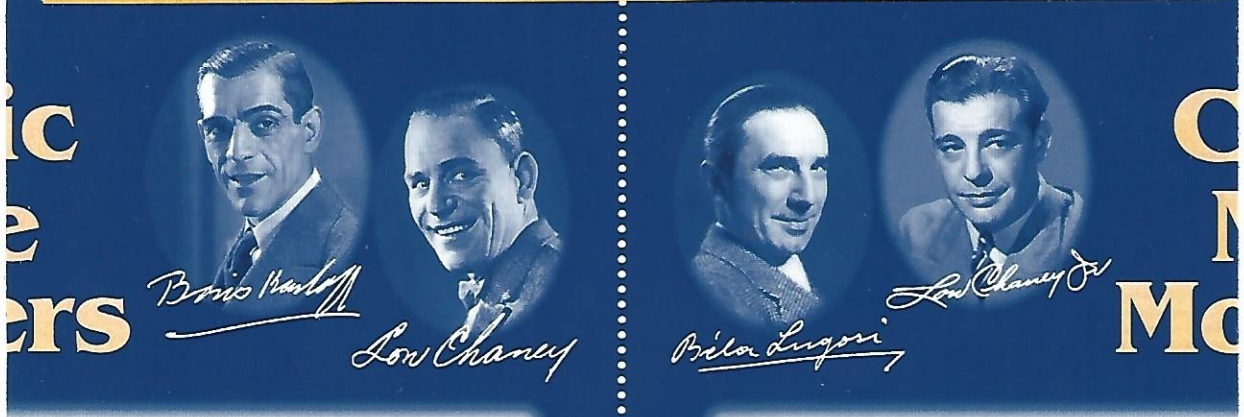


This one looks more like vertical block of 8 with horizontal gutter.

**CLASSIC MOVIE MONSTERS - UNCUT PRESS SHEET**

Below is a horizontal block of 16 with vertical gutter (BK16wVG) of the Classic Movie Monsters issued on September 30, 1997. This position piece also includes the header of the pane of 20 stamps.

**"TALLEST" Modern Uncut Press Sheet**  
22.5 inches width and 27.2 inches tall



32 x 20 = \$6.40

©USPS 1996

# SUNDAY FUNNIES

Issued on July 16, 2010, this uncut press sheet gives an illusion of a tête-bêche because the panes are positioned upside down in relation to the other on a vertical format.

In philately, tête-bêche (French for "head-to-tail", lit. "head-to-head") is a joined pair of stamps in which one is upside-down in relation to the other, produced intentionally or accidentally.



CROSS GUTTER THAT GIVES AN ILLUSION OF A TETE-BECHE



This is a block of ten cross gutter pair showing all the five stamps of this issue. This position piece came from the bottom panes of the uncut press sheet and is larger because of the top selvage which includes the name of the stamp issue "Sunday Funnies".

**USPS sales of imperforate uncut press sheets come under fire; collectors complain of secrecy.** (Linn's Stamp News - March 14, 2016)

"Some collectors are accusing the Postal Service of operating in secrecy, keeping the numbers of imperforate sheets - also called no-die-cut sheets - a closely guarded secret until the moment sheets have gone on sale at first-day ceremonies."

