

Your Postal Podcast 50th Edition Transcript – July 2012

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Watkins: Welcome to Your Postal Podcast. This is Richard Watkins of U.S. Postal Service Corporate Communications. In this July twenty-twelve edition, we'll talk with the President of the National Baseball Hall of Fame about four legendary baseball players who will soon appear at Post Offices nationwide. And we'll join two photographers who have developed a picture-perfect solution for sharing their cross-country photos taken in every state in the Union. Finally, we'll have our monthly roundup of postal news.

Being selected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame is a great honor and one few players achieve. In our first segment, Diedre Tillery takes us to New York, where preparations are under way for four legendary Hall of Fame players to receive another rare honor – that of being on a U.S. postage stamp.

Major League Baseball All-Stars Stamps' Segment

(Sound of baseball being hit and crowd cheering)

Deidre Tillery: Every Major League Baseball player dreams of being enshrined in Cooperstown, New York, at the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Four who made it to the Hall are getting another honor – their own postage stamps.

The third weekend in July, Cooperstown's population of 1,800 will grow exponentially, as baseball fans attend the annual Hall of Fame Weekend, which includes the July 20 First Day of Issue Ceremony for the Major League Baseball All-Stars stamps.

Jeff Idelson, President of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, is excited about hosting the event.

Jeff Idelson: Looking forward to having Ralph Kiner, who played for the Pirates, here for the opening and unveiling of the stamps, as well as Margaret Stargell, who is the widow of Willie Stargell.

Tillery: Each of the four players being honored on postage stamps left a lasting legacy on the game of baseball...and America.

Idelson: You've got four great representations of baseball and baseball history. With Larry Doby, one of the finest gentlemen I ever met, you have the man who integrated the American League playing for the Cleveland Indians just 12 weeks after Jackie Robinson made his debut for the Brooklyn Dodgers in April of 1947. Great star of the Negro Leagues. Fit in wonderfully in Cleveland, and is a pioneer in his own right for what he did to advance the game to where it is today as very encompassing and open-armed.

Willie Stargell; you're talking about the heart and soul of the Pittsburgh Pirates, "We are Family," the Sister Sledge song era of the late 70s. He was the guy who led them to a championship over the Orioles, and was renowned for hitting monster home runs, and had a smile and an enthusiasm that's unparalleled.

Joe DiMaggio. This is a guy who played centerfield in New York for the New York Yankees. Of course he had the 56-game hitting streak. He was a cultural icon being married to Marilyn Monroe, and he is the class and dignity that baseball represents so well.

Ted Williams wanted to be known when he died as the greatest hitter who ever walked the earth, and I don't think you'd find many people that would argue with that. He was a phenomenal player in Boston – 521 lifetime home runs. He was the last guy to hit over .400; .406 in 1941. He was also a great asset to this country, not serving in one, but in two wars as a fighter pilot in World War II and Korea. So you have four guys who represent American history so well, and deservedly so.

Tillery: The stamp event will not be the Hall's first.

Idelson: We opened our doors, June 12, 1939. Twenty-five thousand or so came to welcome the first four classes of electees: 1936, 7, 8, and 9. Twelve of them were living, 25 in total. It was a great baseball celebration, and the Postmaster General, Mr. Farley, was here to issue the first stamps related to baseball ever, and he sat across the street from the Hall of Fame in the Cooperstown Post Office and did the first set of cancellations showing the great, unique bond between baseball and the U.S. Postal Service.

Tillery: This year two new members will be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame: Barry Larkin of the Cincinnati Reds and Ron Santo of the Chicago Cubs. For those who played the game, it's a rare honor, says Idelson.

Idelson: Two-hundred-ninety-seven total individuals in the Hall of Fame, of which 207 are players. To give you an idea of just how difficult it is to earn election to the Baseball Hall of Fame; there have been 18,000 players to wear major league uniforms since the game's inception in 1871, 1 percent of them ever end up with a bronze plaque.

Tillery: Idelson extends an invitation to everyone to visit Cooperstown, which is in a picture-perfect location.

Idelson: It is truly a step back in time. If you can imagine yourself driving into Cooperstown on rural country roads, maybe you close your eyes as you turn the corner on to Main Street, open them and you would think that you've entered a Norman Rockwell painting – that's what Cooperstown is.

Tillery: Those wanting to learn more about Cooperstown and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum can go online to baseballhall.org.

Watkins: And it seems baseball fans can't get enough of their favorite players and that includes stamps. Responding to overwhelming demand, the Postal Service has produced an individual stamp sheet for each of the four All-Star players and will hold First-Day of Issue dedication events on July 21st in the cities where each one played.

The individual player stamp sheets will be sold only in limited quantities beginning July 21st at select Post Offices in Boston, Cleveland, Cooperstown, Pittsburgh and New York City. Customers may preorder the stamps and collectible products online now at

usps.com/play-ball, or by calling 1-800-STAMP24. Orders will be accepted and honored through August 31, 2012.

Photographers and Postcards Segment

Watkins: On June 1st, two professional photographers based on the east coast began a three-month transcontinental road trip to photograph people, places and things in each of the lower 48 states in the U.S. But what's truly unique is that the photographers -- Andrew Kenney from Maryland and Jake Jones from Alabama -- are mailing thousands of self-printed postcards from every one of the 48 states they pass through -- with visits to Alaska and Hawaii also planned. Their project is called "Postcards from Nowhere," and the pair created a website that tracks their location with photo updates. Kenney and Jones said they developed the postcard project in response to those who asked that they send them something or wished they could come along. Jake Jones says that the photo postcards will let everyone who's interested take part in the journey as it unfolds.

Jake Jones: We'd kind of said that we had both been wanting to take a road trip, and we both wanted to do the whole continental U.S, and every time that we would mention the project to somebody they would be like, "Oh, we would love to be able to come with you. Like, we're jealous that we can't do this thing." So from that, we started to try to brainstorm and come up with a way that people could, in some sense, follow along with us.

Watkins: And Jones says from the beginning he and Kenney were drawn to the power of the postcard to make an impression.

Jones: Just the fact of having the tangible quality of it. I think that people love getting mail. I think there's nothing that brightens up somebody's day more than going to the mailbox and seeing something addressed to them, especially when you're mostly getting bills. It's nice that like people take notice and that whenever they get that piece of mail that's addressed to them and it's from someone they know that there's an appreciation. And it's been good. We've had a really good response and people have really jumped on board with it and been very, like, pleased with everything that's happened so far.

Watkins: Kenney says he and Jones also enjoy getting comments from the nearly 900 backers, who receive the photo postcards.

Andrew Kenney: The way that everyone can be involved and sort of explore the country from their couch, in a way. I mean everyone wants to go out and do this kind of trip but can't necessarily do it. You know, people are getting to see glimpses into every state; maybe they've been to a state and maybe they haven't, but they get to see new parts of the country.

Watkins: The pair's postcards are produced entirely in each state, as they go. They take a picture of something they consider "decidedly awesome," print the postcards and take them to a Post Office to send them. Friends, family and their followers will know where the postcard is from based on the postmark -- and they include an occasional handwritten message. The postcards are printed on acid-free, heavyweight card stock and are suitable for archiving and framing.

For more information about the Postcards from Nowhere tour, visit the Kickstarter website at kickstarter.com/projects and look for "Postcards from Nowhere."

News Roundup

Watkins: And now, here's a look at recent postal headlines:

Eighty-one percent of consumers will buy a product after they receive a free sample, and most prefer to sample products at home, according to a recent study by Opinion Research Corporation. A pilot product sampling program conducted by the Postal Service last year, successfully delivered about a half-million co-op sample boxes to homes in several key markets to test the idea. The *Sample Showcase* pilot invigorated shared sampling, as various other companies have launched similar programs.

The Postal Service followed the pilot program up by hosting the recent 2012 USPS Sampling Innovation Symposium, a forum featuring leaders from consumer packaged goods companies and advertising agencies across the nation. The goal: To develop creative strategies on growing a home-delivery product sampling program.

In other news, two international music legends were honored last month when the U.S. Postal Service and La Poste of France issued the Miles Davis and Edith Piaf stamps. This is the first time that the U.S. and France have jointly issued a stamp since 1989, when both countries honored the bicentennial of the French Revolution.

The Miles Davis and Edith Piaf stamps also feature another historic first: A "quick response" or QR code is printed on the back of the stamps. The code can be scanned with a smart phone. A landing page opens with an option to listen to music from Davis while viewing photographs and a timeline of the lives of both Davis and Piaf.

Edith Piaf is one of the few French popular singers to become a household name in the United States. Renowned American jazz trumpeter Miles Davis is beloved in France, where he performed frequently.

In celebration of these new stamps, *Your Postal Podcast* is giving away a collectible First Day of Issue Commemorative Folio for the Miles Davis and Edith Piaf stamps to one lucky listener. The folio contains a full 20-stamp sheet of the U.S.-issued stamps as well as first-day-of-issue cards with both the U.S. and French versions of the stamps. To enter for your chance to win the folio, simply post a comment about this month's podcast on the *Your Postal Podcast* webpage. One winner will be selected at random from all qualifying comments.

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