

## This Day in History... September 20, 2002

### Spay or Neuter Stamps

On September 20, 2002, the USPS issued the Spay or Neuter stamps in Denver, Colorado. The stamps had been the result of an extensive decade-long letter writing campaign.

The push for these stamps began in 1997. At that time, a group of concerned citizens began the Stamp Out! Pet Overpopulation campaign. With the help of humane societies, veterinary colleges, and the general public, thousands of letters and petitions flooded the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee requesting a stamp that encouraged people to spay or neuter their pets. In 2001 alone, the committee received over 300,000 letters.

The citizens' committee recommended the subject to the US Postal Service, which decided to go forward on the project. The image of a puppy and kitten had already been approved for stamps in the Love Series. After it was determined that brides wouldn't necessarily want puppies and kittens on their wedding invitations, it was decided they would be used for the Spay or Neuter stamps.

Photographer Sally Andersen-Bruce went to animal shelters near her Connecticut home to find just the right models for the upcoming issue. Kirby was an eight-week-old shepherd and collie mix who was scheduled to be adopted shortly after he had his picture taken. The future owner of Samantha the cat came as the artist was photographing her.

The design for the new stamps was revealed on *The Price Is Right* game show. Bob Barker, the host, often encouraged his audience to spay or neuter their pets. The pane of 20 stamps highlighted Kirby and Samantha in front of a black background. The words "spay" and "neuter" were printed in ink that matched the animals' eye color – green for Samantha's stamps and brown for Kirby's. If you have an ultraviolet light, you can see another pet-related

feature on these stamps. The tagging was done in the shape of the animals' faces.

The First Day of Issue ceremony for these stamps took place on September 20, 2002, during the 125th annual conference of the American Humane Association in Denver, Colorado. The USPS worked with the American Partnership for Pets, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), and other animal health and welfare groups to promote these stamps. In a press release for these stamps, the USPS pointed out that this was "the first US postage stamp to call attention to the pressing issue of pet overpopulation."



*The Spay or Neuter stamps were intended to raised awareness of overpopulation of dogs and cats.*



*Issued in 1966 to promote humane treatment of all kinds of animals, this stamp marked the 100th anniversary of the ASPCA.*



*1982 stamp issued at a convention of the Humane Society of the United States.*



*Stamps picture 10 adopted dogs and cats to encourage people to adopt shelter pets.*

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