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MONKEY (STAMP) GREETES 2004 LUNAR NEW YEAR

Final Image Dedicated in Award-Winning U.S. Postal Service Lunar New Year Commemorative Stamps Series

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. – A first day of issue ceremony for the Lunar New Year – Year of the Monkey stamp took place today at the Nob Hill Masonic Center. The Year of the Monkey stamp is the last of twelve stamps commemorating the Lunar New Year in the award-winning series issued by the U.S. Postal Service.



“The Lunar New Year stamp series began in December of 1992, with the Year of the Rooster,” said Donna Peak, the Postal Service’s vice president, Finance, and Controller, who dedicated the stamp. “Now, over a decade – and eleven stamps – later, we are dedicating the final stamp of one of the most beautifully designed, colorful and festive series ever issued by the Postal Service.”

The 2004 Year of the Monkey stamp is available at San Francisco Post Offices today, and will be available at Post Offices nationwide starting tomorrow.

Following the issuance of the Year of the Rooster stamp, the Year of the Dog, Boar, Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Ram, and now Monkey, were issued in successive years to complete the series. Each stamp was created by designer Clarence Lee, who used an intricate paper-cut design of each animal on a variety of vivid backgrounds. Lau Bun added the words “Year of the ...” in Chinese calligraphy for each animal to every masterpiece. The greeting “Happy New Year” is shown in English.

Joining Peak for the ceremony were David Louie, reporter/anchor, KGO-TV (ABC); Stamp Designer Clarence Lee; Walter Wong, president, San Francisco Chinese Chamber of Commerce; Bill Wong, president, Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association; Claudine Cheng, past president, Organization of Chinese Americans, Inc.; and Scott Tucker, San Francisco district manager, U.S. Postal Service.

Lively, witty, inventive, intelligent and good at problem solving, the Monkey is the sign of the inventor, the improviser and the motivator in the zodiac. Legend says a person born during the Year of the Monkey is fated for success at whatever he or she chooses to do. No challenge will be too great.

Observed by people of Asian heritage, the traditional New Year also marks the beginning of a new season called Spring Festival – a time of renewed hope for a prosperous future often celebrated through family reunions.

To see the Year of the Monkey stamp and other images from the 2004 Commemorative Stamp Program, visit the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop and click on “Release Schedule” in the Collector’s Corner.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. A wide selection of stamps and other philatelic items are also available at the Postal Store (www.usps.com/shop), and www.postalartgallery.com offers beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service visits more than 141 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world’s mail volume — some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.

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