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2007 Winter USA Philatelic Catalog Provides Sneak Peek at Early 2008 Stamps

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WASHINGTON, DC — Stamp enthusiasts receiving their winter edition of the Postal Service's *USA Philatelic* catalog later this month will be the first to see two stamps to be issued early next year — Year of the Rat and Charles Chesnutt.



Lunar New Year: Year of the Rat

In observance of Feb. 7, 2008 Lunar New Year holiday, the U.S. Postal Service introduces a new series of Lunar New Year stamps that will continue through 2019. Beginning with the Year of the Rat in 2008, stamps issued in consecutive years will include the Year of the Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Ram, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Boar.

Art director Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD, worked on the new series with illustrator Kam Mak, an artist who grew up in New York City's Chinatown and now lives in Brooklyn.



Charles W. Chesnutt

With the 31st stamp in its Black Heritage series, the U.S. Postal Service honors Charles W. Chesnutt (1858-1932), a pioneering writer recognized today as a major innovator and singular voice among turn-of-the-century literary realists who probed the color line in American life. In novels such as *The Marrow of Tradition* and short stories such as those collected in *The Conjure Woman*, he probed the color line in American life.

Art director Howard Paine of Delaplane, VA, wanted a stamp that suggested Chesnutt's intelligence and dignity; the portrait painted by stamp artist Kazuhiko Sano of Mill Valley, CA, was based on a 1908 photograph from the collection of Fisk University.

Customers interested in receiving the free *USA Philatelic* catalog published four times annually may call 800-STAMP-24. To maximize mainstream media exposure of next year's stamps, the Postal Service will take advantage of the slow news period between Christmas and the New Year by unveiling near the end of December other stamps to be issued in 2008.

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