

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**'GIANT MAGNOLIAS ON A BLUE VELVET CLOTH' BLOOMS
AS NEW U.S. POSTAGE STAMP**

WASHINGTON – Considered one of the finest 19th-century painters of landscapes and still lifes, Martin Johnson Heade was honored today when the U.S. Postal Service issued its fourth stamp in the American Treasures commemorative stamp series. The new stamp is based on Heade's circa 1890 painting, "Giant Magnolias on a Blue Velvet Cloth," in the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. The dedication ceremony was held during the American Philatelic Society's StampShow 2004 in Sacramento, CA.



"Our popular American Treasures series showcases some of the finest works of American art and crafts," said Governor Robert Rider, member of the presidentially-appointed U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors, who dedicated the stamp. "We are proud that this stamp, depicting one of America's favorite flowers, will travel quickly, easily and affordably on letters and packages to every home in America."

"The magnolia stamp will soon be used and admired by millions of Americans," said Janet Klug, President, American Philatelic Society. "And this beautiful stamp will inspire many to begin collecting stamps."

In addition to Rider and Klug, Rosemarie Fernandez, Acting District Manager, Sacramento District, U.S. Postal Service; John Hotchner, Member, Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, U.S. Postal Service; and Elizabeth C. Pope, President, American Stamp Dealers Association, participated in the ceremony.

Inaugurated in 2001 with the Amish Quilts stamp pane, the American Treasures commemorative stamp series continued in 2002 and 2003 featuring artwork by John James Audubon and Mary Cassatt, respectively.

To see the Martin Johnson Heade 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 is also available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Beautifully framed prints of original stamp art for delivery straight to the home or office are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 141 million addresses 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 mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today's postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 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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