



## POSTAL NEWS

EMBARGOED FOR 9:15 A.M. PT  
RELEASE  
May 7, 2009

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Release No. 09-048

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### The Simpsons Get 'Stamping Ovation' To Tune of 1 Billion Stamps

*Favorite Character Vote continues through May 14 at [www.usps.com/simpsons](http://www.usps.com/simpsons)*

*High-resolution images of the stamps are available for media use only by contacting [roy.a.betts@usps.gov](mailto:roy.a.betts@usps.gov)*

LOS ANGELES — "Ay, Carumba!" A 'stampede' of one billion *Simpsons* stamps began escaping from America's 34,000 Post Offices and infiltrated the nation's mailstream following the issuance of *The Simpsons* stamps and postal cards today. The first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony took place at Twentieth Century Fox Studios in Los Angeles. There, *The Simpsons* Creator and Executive Producer, Matt Groening, along with Executive Producer James L. Brooks join the voices behind the famous characters appearing on the stamps (Dan Castellaneta, Julie Kavner, Nancy Cartwright and Yeardley Smith) in conjunction with the Postal Service in celebrating the stamps. Hank Azaria and other voice actors from *The Simpsons* will be in attendance to lend their support. The longest-running primetime comedy in television history has become a cultural and ground-breaking phenomenon since the series launch in 1990. This honor solidifies their place in history.

The Postal Service is reminding the world to visit [www.usps.com/simpsons](http://www.usps.com/simpsons) to vote early and often for their favorite *Simpsons* stamp. Results of the ballot stuffing that ends May 14 will be announced shortly thereafter.

We're looking to encourage a younger generation to develop an interest in stamp collecting by creating stamps they can relate to," said U.S. Postal Service Vice President Ground Shipping James P. Cochrane. "The Postal Service commemorates Homer, Bart, Marge, Lisa and Maggie as *The Simpsons* are currently in its 20th year as a regularly scheduled half-hour series in 2009, making it the longest-running comedy in the history of American prime-time television."

The show is a critical and popular favorite and has won multiple Emmy awards, a Peabody Award and numerous other accolades.

"It's an incredible honor to be on a U.S. postage stamp," said Matt Groening. "I honestly can't believe it. I thought the Pillsbury Doughboy would come before us."

Joining Cochrane and Groening in dedicating the stamps were *The Simpsons* Executive Producer, James L. Brooks, actor Kelsey Grammer, and Chairman of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television, Gary Newman.

"It's only supposed to be dead people on stamps," said James L. Brooks. "Somehow we were able to overcome that."

Elie Dekel, Executive Vice President of Fox Licensing and Merchandising added, "After 16 years in development, we are so proud to have reached this major milestone for *The Simpsons*. An amazing accomplishment for a show that the world has loved and laughed at for twenty years, and counting."

### ***The Simpsons* Beat the Odds**

The U.S. Postal Service receives approximately 50,000 suggestions for stamp subjects each year, yet only about 20 topics make the cut. *The Simpsons* is the only television show to be featured as the sole subject of a stamp set while still in prime-time production. *Sesame Street* and *Monday Night Football* were in production when they were honored on stamps as part of the *Celebrate the Century: 1970s* series issued in 1999. *Seinfeld* aired throughout the 1990s. The *Seinfeld* stamp was issued in 2000 as part of the *Celebrate the Century: 1990s* series.

Other stamps commemorating TV shows that were not in production as part of the 1999 *Celebrate the Century* series included: *I Love Lucy*, *Star Trek* and *All in the Family*. *Jim Henson, the Man Behind the Muppets* was honored in 2005. *The Muppet Show* aired from 1976 to 1981.

### **How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark**

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at [www.usps.com/shop](http://www.usps.com/shop), or by calling 1-800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes, to themselves or others, and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

The Simpsons Stamps  
7001 South Central, Rm. 338  
Los Angeles, CA 90052-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by July 8, 2009.

### **How to Order First-Day Covers**

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 1-800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment  
Dept. 6270  
U.S. Postal Service  
P.O. Box 219014  
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

**Order Philatelic Products at [www.usps.com/Simpsons](http://www.usps.com/Simpsons)**



**The Simpsons Stamps Booklet**

Booklet of 20 44-cent *The Simpsons* stamps with one of four possible covers (Homer, Marge, Bart, or Lisa and Maggie). Item # 679040, \$8.80.



### All Four Simpsons Stamps booklets

The complete set of all four booklets of 20 44-cent *The Simpsons* stamps. Individual covers include Homer, Bart, Lisa, and Marge and Maggie. Item # 679098, \$35.20.



**Stamped Postal Cards**

*The Simpsons* stamped postal cards set of 20 Premium Stamped Postal Cards featuring the artwork from the 44-cent *The Simpsons* stamps includes four cards for each stamp image. Item No: 679066, \$14.95.



**Digital Color Postmark**

*The Simpsons* Digital Color Postmark for the 44-cent *The Simpsons* stamps, featuring all five stamps.  
Item # 679068, \$7.50.



**Cancellation Keepsakes**

*The Simpsons* Cancellation Keepsake features the Digital Color Postmark with all five stamps, plus a booklet of 20 with one of four possible random booklet covers (Homer, Bart, Lisa or Maggie and Marge). Item # 679099, \$16.30.



**First-Day-of-Issuance Covers**

The complete set of all five First-Day Covers for the 44-cent *The Simpsons* stamps. Item # 679063, \$4.10.







**Simpson Character Matted Giclée prints**

These special 11 x 14-inch prints feature each character stamp image from the 44-cent *The Simpsons* commemorative stamp release are available for \$24.95 each. Homer Item No: 841966, Bart Item No: 841967, Marge Item # 841968, Lisa Item No: 841969 and Maggie Item No: 841970.



***The Simpsons Family Framed Art***

This is a special 11 x 22-inch framed artwork featuring all five stamps from the 44-cent *The Simpsons* commemorative stamp release. \$59.95, item 841965.

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## ***The Simpsons*** **Background Information**

The U.S. Postal Service recognizes *The Simpsons*, entering its 20th year as a regularly scheduled half-hour series in 2009, making it the longest-running comedy in the history of American prime-time television. The show is a critical and popular favorite and has won multiple Emmy statuettes, a Peabody Award, and numerous other accolades.

The Postal Service's art director for this project, Derry Noyes, was pleased to use original artwork by Matt Groening, the cartoonist who created the Simpson characters and named them after his own family.

*The Simpsons* has become a cultural institution enjoyed by fans worldwide; many observers cite it as the best show on television. It is intelligently written, delightfully witty, and attracts numerous guest stars, including Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, John Waters, Gore Vidal, Natalie Portman, Mick Jagger, Meryl Streep, and many others. The show has been cited in *The Guinness Book of World Records* as having "the most celebrities featured in an animation series."

The Simpson family resides in the town of Springfield. Homer works as a safety inspector at the local nuclear power plant; his wife, Marge, tries to keep the peace in her household; their son Bart is a mischievous ten-year-old; eight-year-old Lisa is an intelligent, saxophone-playing vegetarian; and baby Maggie conveys emotions by sucking on her pacifier. These characters, created by Groening, have become pop culture icons.

The talented actors who give voice to *The Simpsons* and other Springfield citizens are Dan Castellaneta (as Homer, Krusty, Grampa, Barney, Mayor Quimby, and Groundskeeper Willie); Julie Kavner (as Marge, Patty, and Selma); Nancy Cartwright (as Bart, Nelson, and Ralph Wiggum); Yeardley Smith (as Lisa); Hank Azaria (as Moe, Apu, Chief Wiggum, Professor Frink, Comic Book Guy, and Dr. Nick Riviera); and Harry Shearer (as Mr. Burns, Smithers, Ned Flanders, Principal Skinner, Reverend Lovejoy, and Kent Brockman).

Groening named the Simpsons after his own family: parents Marge and Homer, sisters Lisa and Maggie, and his alter ego, Bart, whose name is an anagram of *brat*. Groening suggested the cartoon version of his family when writer-producer James L. Brooks was looking for a property to develop into short segments for use on the sketch-comedy series *The Tracey Ullman Show*. The animated family first appeared on the Ullman program in 1987, then in a Christmas special in 1989, and had its debut as a regular series on January 14, 1990. The show became a hit in its first season. The 20th anniversary of its series launch date will be Jan. 14, 2010.

The shocking colors — the blue of Marge's hair, for example, and the yellow skin — were intended at first to offset the simple design of the characters. By now, however, the vivid color palette has become part of the show's multifaceted appeal. Other factors contributing to its success include sophisticated writing combined with irreverent slapstick and subversive humor. The show combines jokes for the thinking viewer with straightforward physical comedy, serving up something for everyone. "It's written for an adult audience and children are invited," according to Brooks.

The emotional bond shared by the characters is central to the show's magic. Homer, a slave to appetite and whim, is the nominal head of the household, but the more levelheaded Marge seems to be the one really in charge. Their son Bart is an underachiever and proud of it. He is mischievous and impudent; there are few things he likes better than making prank phone calls to Moe's Tavern. When Bart first appeared, he was viewed with alarm as a countercultural insurgent; today, he is generally regarded with less worry and more affection. Lisa, the intellectual in the family, is sometimes isolated by virtue of her high-mindedness; baby sister Maggie hardly speaks, preferring to simply suck on her pacifier.

Bart's signature phrases — such as “Don't have a cow, man!” — have entered the lexicon, along with Homer's exclamation “D'oh!” (The latter, typically indicated in the script by the words “annoyed grunt,” has even entered dictionaries.) College courses, including “The Simpsons and Philosophy” at the University of California, Berkeley, have been organized around the series; academic articles by the hundreds have used its characters and situations as inspiration.

*The Simpsons* is a path-breaking cartoon that has created new opportunities for animated comedy, influencing edgy programs such as *South Park* and *Family Guy*. One of the creators of *South Park*, Matt Stone, calls *The Simpsons* “the best show in the history of television” — in agreement with *Time* magazine, which named it the Best TV Show in its “Best of the Century” feature.

The series has been praised by religious leaders such as Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who said it is “generally on the side of the angels and on the side of sense.”

Americans from more than a dozen towns called Springfield competed to have their city declared the home of these beloved cartoon characters and to host the premiere of *The Simpsons Movie* in the summer of 2007. (The winner was Springfield, VT.) The movie was a number-one hit at the box office, suggesting that this popular family will be entertaining fans for years to come.

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Please Note: For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at [www.usps.com/news](http://www.usps.com/news).

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 149 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes, six days a week. It has 34,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. Named the Most Trusted Government Agency five consecutive years by the Ponemon Institute, the Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail. To learn about the history of the Postal Service visit the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum: [www.postalmuseum.si.edu](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu).