

REMOVING SELF ADHESIVE STAMPS FROM PAPER

By Michael Donohue

Now that the cold weather is upon us it is time to work on stamp projects. Perhaps one of those projects would be removing the paper from those later issue singles. Many people will just trim the paper back and leave them on-piece. I prefer clean, off-paper copies for my collection. Over the years I have tried many different methods and found three that work the best. Let me share them with you.

First, we must remember that self-adhesive stamps use an oil-based gum so soaking in water really isn't an option. It can be done, but it is time-consuming, and the results are usually less than desirable. We need a chemical compound capable of dissolving the gum without damaging the stamp or leaving residue behind. The three products I have found that do the job quickly and effectively are Bestine, odorless mineral spirits, and my favorite, Pure Citrus. While all work great, there are a few drawbacks worth mentioning. Bestine which is rubber cement solvent/thinner would be my favorite except for the fact the fumes are toxic, it is extremely flammable, difficult to find and a bit pricey. Odorless mineral spirits are not totally odorless so the stamps will have that aroma for a while. Pure Citrus is an air freshener made from 100% orange oil. So, if you don't like the smell of oranges, that could be a problem.

The procedure is the same for all three products and requires only a couple of items: a plastic tray to soak the stamps, a metal blade putty knife, and some paper towels. Place the stamps face down in the tray and wet the paper with product. Wait about 30 seconds and then use the knife to carefully lift the stamp off the paper (it helps to sharpen the knife on one side to give it a chisel point).

At this point you can do one of two things; Apply talcum powder to the back of the stamp to kill the sticky or place the stamp face down on a hard surface and use the knife to scrap the residual gum off. You will need a paper towel to wipe the gum that rolls up on the knife, so you don't redeposit it back on the stamp if you need to make another pass. Blot the stamp with a paper towel to remove excess product and be sure you got all the gum. Now just lay the stamps on a hard surface and let them dry. No need for a book, the stamps do not curl when dry. With experience this goes pretty quick. Try it, you will like it.

Ed. Note – There is an alternative for Bestine that is a little less expensive, Beacon Solvent & Thinner. It's the same solvent and not as hard to find.

<https://www.beconadhesives.com/product/solvent-thinner/>



STAMP PUZZLE



Gene Golebiewski submitted another photo of a jigsaw puzzle that covers three hobbies at once: philately, reading, and jigsaw puzzles. The 1000-piece puzzle is titled **Authors**. He suggests that it “would be a good start for a topical stamp collection”.

PICTURES FROM JANUARY AUCTION

JANUARY 12, 2023 at The Knights Hall

