

A Recap of 2000

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

I will follow the format I used last year to recapitulate the philatelic highlights of 2000. The column is divided into four parts: stamps, organized philately, philatelic literature and the stamp trade.

STAMPS

With the Millennium series over, Canada Post returned to a more reasonable number of stamps in 2000: 53. This was 14 stamps more than had been announced for the year in the fall of 1999 and did not include the many new definitives released in late December to cover the rate increases effective this January 1.

In addition, there were four special envelopes. The highlight was undoubtedly the new Greeting stamp called "Picture Postage" on which you can put a label bearing any photograph you choose — as long as you own the rights to it (Figure 1). This worldwide first was launched at the 72nd Convention of The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada in Winnipeg on April 28.

Since there was no advance publicity only 170 sheets of 25 were produced during that weekend. The Greeting stamps are basically picture frames with blank centers. Booklets of five exist with a selection of stickers to choose from to fill the frame.

For the holidays a new frame adorned with holly was issued October 5 with a selection of appropriate festive stickers



Figure 2: The Christmas 2000 Greeting or Picture Postage stamp.

(Figure 2). It is important to note that each of the Greeting Stamp/Picture Postage frames will be catalogued individually because each of them is the denomination-bearing stamp. With the increase in postage rates, more of these frames will become available.

New issues not mentioned in the February 2000 "O Canada" column include two pieces of postal stationery. The first is a Valentine's Day lettersheet issued in cooperation with Hallmark Cards (Figure 3). There are at least two distinctive shades of this 46-cent lettersheet that sold for \$1.99. Quantities printed are unknown but at that price not many must have sold.

The other is a double window preprinted #10 envelope bearing the Year of the Dragon stamp (Scott 1836). This envelope was prepared for the Asia International Corporation (AIC) and you can find the company's logo printed on the flap of the envelope (Figure 4). There were two printings of 300,000 each for this envelope. Four thousand of the first printing and seven thousand of the second were available for sale through the National Philatelic Centre in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Both printings have sold out.

Previously unannounced additions to the 2000 stamp program included the Greeting/Picture Postage mentioned above; a single 46-cent domestic letter rate commemorating the 25th anniversary of Petro-Canada, Canada's national oil company; and a 95-cent

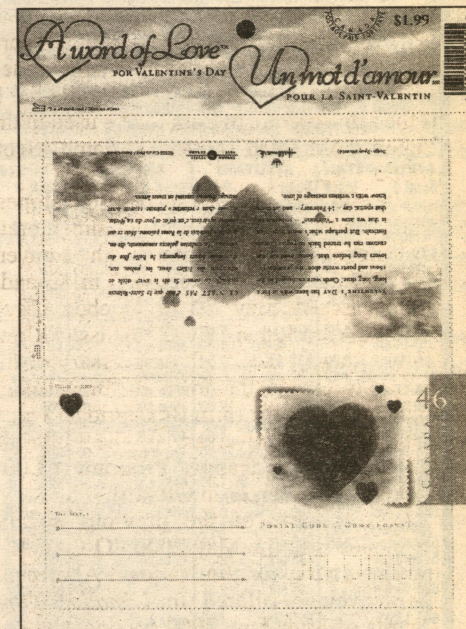


Figure 3: The Valentine's Day lettersheet prepared in cooperation with Hallmark Cards.

international rate stamp to celebrate the Queen Mother's 100th birthday (Figure 5).

A series of Fresh Water stamps, five for the U.S. rate and five for the international rate, was issued in booklet form on May 23 (Figure 6). These stamps replaced the tourist series stamps previously announced but later postponed to 2001. The beauty of these self-adhesive booklet stamps made them an instant hit and they sold out within a few weeks.

Other interesting 2000 stamp information includes two unintentional varieties. The first concerns the 68 Millennium stamps issued in sheetlets of four. Canada Post was pressured by collectors and the media to reissue the Millennium stamps originally planned to be sold only in a Prestige book. The 68 stamps were reissued in 17 sheetlets of four between December 1999 and March 2000. In January an eagle-eyed stamp columnist, Ian Robertson, noticed that the "c1999" found on the reissued stamps was in a smaller print font and that the stamps were also a slightly lighter shade than the book stamps.

The second concerns the Petro-Canada stamp issued September 13 in Calgary. The die-cut Petro-Canada stamps were offered in booklets of 12 stamps. The perforations were rather unusual with two pointing out at right and bottom and a single perforation pointing out at left and top. This configuration was reversed with the single Petro-Canada stamps found in the July-September 2000 Collector's Pack and *Collection Canada 2000*, the annual souvenir book (Figure 7). As far as I know, this new configuration has never been found in the booklet.

By the way, because of the increasing price of gas during 2000, these stamps were very unpopular. Petro-Canada had many unsold booklets at their outlets. They decided in December to let their clients exchange 430 "petro-points" for each booklet. For each \$1 you spend at a Petro-Canada gas station you get 10 "petro-points." So for spending \$43 you get a free booklet of 12 stamps worth \$5.52.

Linerless coils in rolls of 100, familiar to American collectors, were to make their appearance in Canada on August 18. They didn't because of technical difficulties. They have been tentatively rescheduled for this year.

Two new printings of the 46-cent Maple Leaf flag self-adhesive booklet of 30 stamps were available in 2000. The first, issued at an unknown date, was printed on coated

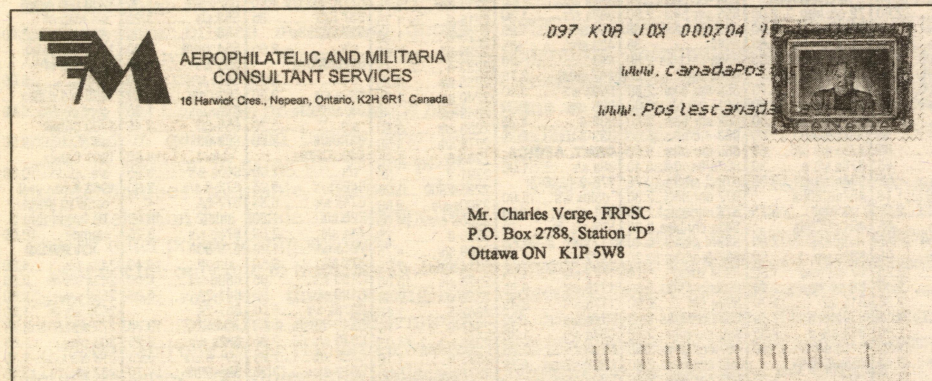


Figure 1: A picture postage stamp with the original frame of Richard K. Malott among other things, the editor of *The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland Catalogue*.

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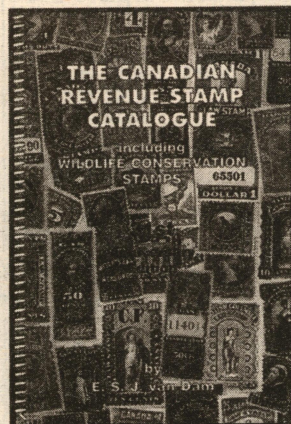
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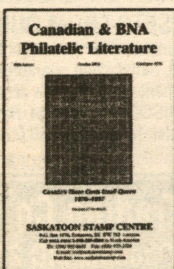
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papers and the second (September 1) included a detachable scratch-and-win card for a Canada Post's Prizes by the Million contest.

Xpresspost services were extended to the United States as of July 4 and two different size prepaid envelopes were available for this two-day service.

If you think the officer on the Lord Strathcona's Horse regiment stamp issued on November 11 is familiar, it should be. It is the same picture of Sam Steele used in the Yukon Gold Rush centennial stamp (Scott 1606c, Figure 8).

The four Figure 9 special envelopes, which each sold for \$1.50, commemorate Dr. Michel Sarrazin on the 300th anniversary of the first mastectomy in Canada (5,000 issued May 29 in Quebec City); National Aboriginal Day (7,000 issued June 21 in Ottawa); the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Bracebridge (5,000 issued July 15 in Bracebridge, Ont.); and the 10th anniversary of the Fulbright Educational Exchange Program (5,000 issued September 29 in Ottawa).

As for some of the previous special envelopes (see the May 2000 "O Canada") the illustration for the National Aboriginal Day envelope offered in *Canada Stamp Details* of May-June 2000 was not the one that was sold (Figure 10).

I think that Canadian postage stamps have improved in quality and beauty over the years. In addition to using the varied printing techniques available, Canada Post design selection has made our stamps the envy of other postal administrations.

I am not the only one to think so. In 2000, Canada Post received three prestigious awards: two related to the Millennium Collection and one for the Hands of a Master definitive series. The Millennium Collection received the Ovation Award of Merit from

the International Association of Business Communicators and *Graphika* magazine's Grand Prize in book design.

By far the most prestigious was won by the definitive series (Scott 1673-1680) issued April 29, 1999 (Figure 11). With this set Canada won First Prize at the 30th Asiago Philatelic Fine Arts Competition, which is under the patronage of the President of Italy.

ORGANIZED PHILATELY

Canada's many philatelic organizations were rather quiet in 2000. Perhaps this is in anticipation of this year's 150th anniversary of Canada's first postage stamps and the transfer of the responsibility for the Post Office from the Colonial Office in London to the Provincial Governments of Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Two societies elected new executives and boards of directors. Horace Harrison of Maryland was elected president of the British North America Philatelic Society and I was elected president of The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC).

Canada's eighth signatory to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelist was elected in 2000. Michael Madesker, a former president of The RPSC and current three-term president of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie's Commission for Youth Philately signed his name to the Roll in September in London, England, during the British Philatelic Congress.

Most of Canada's stamp clubs were founded since 1950. Only four are more than 100 years old. In 2000, the Winnipeg Philatelic Society became the fourth and the Kitchener-Waterloo Stamp Club celebrated its 65th year of continuous operation. Harold Beaupré, one of its founding, and still active member, attended the banquet held on October 25 in honor of the club's birthday.

PHILATELIC LITERATURE

It was another bumper crop year for literature collectors. Some of the most important publications in 2000 were coffee table books. *Special Delivery: Canada's Postage Heritage* was released on November 1. The book, written by Chantal Amyot, Bianca Gendreau and John Willis and edited by Francine Brousseau, all of the Canadian Postal Museum, retells the interesting history of Canada's Postal Service. It is available in either English or French, is well written, profusely illustrated and an easy read for all.

A wonderful book that is more pictures than text is *The Sound of Water: Fresh Waters of Canada*. The book has hundreds of photographs taken throughout Canada by Mia and the late Klaus Mathes. It also contains a number of Mia Mathes' reflections on water. This book is available in English or French and was published with the help

of Canada Post. From the Mathes's photographs came the 10 fresh water stamps issued May 23, in booklet format.

For the philatelist there is D. Robin Harris' *Centennial Definitive Series, 1967-1973*. The Centennials are probably Canada's most interesting stamp series since the King George V Admirals series of the 1920s. Harris treats his subject well and with much detail. It is a useful and handy 500-page book for beginning collectors and specialists of the series. The book is available either with a spiral binding; in a 3-hole punch format or hardbound.

Another interesting publication is George B. Arfken and Walter R. Plomish's *Air Mails of Canada, 1925-1939. The Development and Postal History of National and International Mails*.

The book is the first definitive study covering the beginning of airmail postal service



Figure 7: The two different die-cut perforations found on the Petro-Canada stamp.



Figure 8: The same picture of Sam Steele was used for both the 2000 Regiment stamp on the left and the 1996 Klondike Centennial issue on the right.

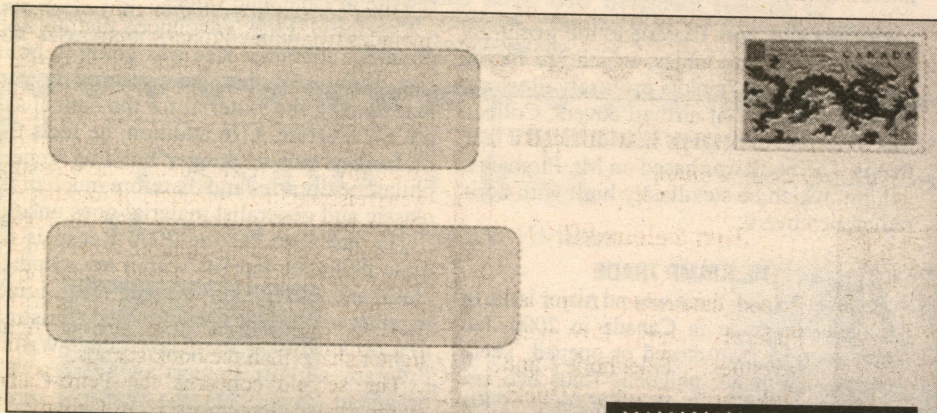


Figure 4: The window version of the Year of the Dragon envelopes prepared for AIC.

Figure 5: Canada's commemoration of the 100th birthday of The Queen Mother based on a photograph taken by William Conran on the Queen's 99th birthday.



Figure 9: The four special envelopes issued by Canada Post in 2000.

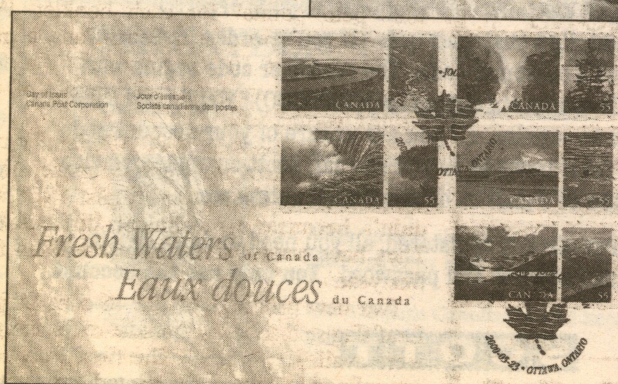


Figure 6: The Fresh Water stamps issued May 23 were a sellout.



Figure 10: The unadopted essay for the National Aboriginal Day envelope.

VAN DAM and THE CANADIAN REVENUE STAMP CATALOG

At last, the long awaited new Canadian Revenue catalog is ready. It is a labor of love for Mr. Van Dam. And needless to say, most invaluable for any collector or dealer handling these hitherto greatly undervalued stamps. The only fault I personally can find is the very modest figure Mr. Van Dam is charging for it.

I note on one page the

suggested retail
spiral bound \$21.95
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Presumably the last line does suggest the price is in cheap Canadian funds. This is quite the bargain, to say the least. Postage rates being what they are these days, why it would cost at least \$10.00 to mail the book. Personally, judging how valuable this catalog can be for collectors using it, I consider a figure of at least \$300.00 for it, to be far more appropriate.

That's how good it is. I am going to run this advertisement in several magazines, mostly in the U.S.A. and it would be most worthwhile to at least 500 readers in each of these magazines to order this catalog from myself. Here is a useful offer. Send \$30.00 U.S.A. or \$40.00 Canadian and I will have a copy for you in the next mail along with some most worthwhile Canadian Revenues worth every cent of the amount sent in. Better still, send \$200.00 U.S.A. or \$300.00 Canadian and see what I can still do in the form of rare Canadian Revenues. Not as strong as it used to be but you will still get some of the magnificent engravings that the American Bank Note Company produced in the form of Revenue Stamps for Canada.

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Figure 11: The Hands of a Master definitive series that won first prize at the Philatelic Fine Arts Festival.



Figure 12: Canada Post's first Christmas tree ornament in conjunction with Hallmark Cards.

Only two can be recorded. The first was The J. Ronald Saint Collection of New Brunswick sold through Brigham Auctions starting with their 6th auction on June 2. The other was the S.J. Menich Collection of Canadian Postal History of the Victorian Era. Both sales were quite successful and high prices were realized for rare material and items of great quality.

One of the Canadian areas of collecting that has constantly realized high prices in the last few years are the Large Queens. Most of these stamps were short lived (1868-72) except for the 1/2 cent (1868-82) and the 15 cent (1868-97).

Whatever the auction, wherever it is being held, collectors of Large Queens are there and outbidding each other for any Large Queen stamp or any Large Queen postal history item. The prices realized in the last two years for this issue could be considered astronomical and will surely require a rewrite of catalogue values.

Charles G. Firby announced that his 14th philatelic literature sale was going to be its last. Firby said that the overhead cost of maintaining the material for the annual sale did not warrant it. In addition, he feels that philatelists are no longer building general philatelic libraries and therefore much of the classic and generalist material goes unsold.

The last item for the 2000 Recap is not quite philatelic but fits within my mandate. Hallmark Cards and Canada Post joined together to produce a handcrafted Christmas tree ornament for the Santa Letter-Writing Program and in support of literacy. The ornament (Figure 12), the first in a series, depicts a young child putting a letter in a mailbox and a Santa reading it on the other side. It is a good cause to support.

in Canada and from Canada to the world. In addition to its rate tables, which are found nowhere else, the book is profusely illustrated with commercial airmail covers. Collectors of airmail will know how difficult a feat that is. The book was based on Mr. Plomish's exhibit, which he steadfastly built with non-philatelic covers.

THE STAMP TRADE

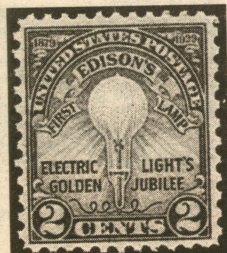
As far as I know there was no major issue in the philatelic trade in Canada in 2000. No major shop or firm closed or opened. There were no new major philatelic finds like last year's discovery of the unissued 1994 Christmas stamps. It was just normal business.

It was also a quiet year for name sales of British North America or Canada material.

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