

## STAMPS / By Charles Verge

# Selecting subjects for stamps sometimes skirts the rules

**B**ecause of my last column I am asked to explain how Canada Post (CPC) selects subjects for any given year's stamp program. It is a timely subject because, as you will see, the policy underpinning the process is crumbling and needs revision.

CPC's board of directors approved the current *Corporate Policy on the Selection of Postage Stamp Subjects and Designs* on Aug. 13, 1987. It states that the primary objectives of the proposed stamps must be that they instil pride of Canada in the minds and hearts of all Canadians; they appeal to a broad segment of the population; they encourage the buying and collecting of stamps; and they enhance Canadian stamps in philatelic circles.

Suggestions for stamp subjects are welcome from all sources including CPC staff and researchers, politicians and the Stamp Advisory Committee (SAC). The policy recommends that suggestions be forwarded to the SAC at least two years before the year in which CPC would issue the stamp.

The SAC reviews suggestions and, as the policy states, should give preference to those subjects that meet the "objectives mentioned above and the following criteria:" they relate to Canada and are of national interest or significance; they evoke Canadian history, traditions, accomplishments or natural heritage; they illustrate the social, economic and cultural life of Canada; they commemorate the birth, contribution or some event in the life of a prominent Canadian; and foster a spirit of national and international goodwill and understanding.

The policy continues by saying that since many requests are received, SAC "adopts the not unreasonable practice of not favoring subjects or designs that would:" honor a living person; commemorate a person or event on other than a 25th, 50th or multiple of 50th anniversaries or that have already had a commemoration within the last 25 years.

SAC, composed of 10 to 14 Canadians from various fields, meets at the call of the chair to also review the proposed design of stamps. CPC's media relations spokesperson will not release the names of SAC members for fear that Canadians will lobby them. SAC usually makes its recommendations for next year's stamp program in the summer. In practice, however, it continues to change the program well after that date.

The CPC board approves the program and it is usually announced in December.

Now let us look at recent or proposed issues (issue date in brackets) to see if they are eroding the corporate policy. Overall most, if not all, Canadian stamps meet the primary objectives and criteria.

People who are still living have appeared on stamps contrary to the policy, but mainly because they were models for the designers (for example, the Hull family on the Keep Fit stamps, 1974) or because it could sell stamps (many actors who are still alive are found on the 10 film stamps, 1996).

The 25th/50th anniversary policy has also taken a major beating in the last few years.

The Charter of Rights' fifth anniversary (1987); 30th anniversary of the Vancouver Opera (1989); the 75th anniversaries of the Grey Cup (1987), National Hockey League (1992), Group of Seven (1995) and Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (1997); the 125th anniversaries of the T. Eaton Co. (1994) and B.C. joining Confederation (1996) are examples of exceptions to the rule.

The Quebec en fleurs issue (1997) comes only 17 years after a similar stamp celebrating Les Floralties de Montreal (1980) and goes against the once in 25 years policy.

CPC launched the first issue of 1997, celebrating the Chinese New Year (Year of the Ox), in Vancouver on Jan. 7. The stamps were issued in sheets of 25 and in a fan-shaped souvenir sheet of two stamps. CPC announced it as the beginning of a 12-year series as Chinese New Year celebrations are in cycles of that number.

Ken Brownlee, a longtime Ottawa Philatelic Society member, passed away Dec. 31. He was famous for his philatelic storytelling and his knowledge of the Ottawa scene. His death leaves another void in this city's philatelic memory. We extend our sympathies to his wife Mildred and son Fraser.

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For questions and comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [verge@sympatico.ca](mailto:verge@sympatico.ca)

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS / By Charles Vergé

# Philatelic bits and pieces

Over the past year I have picked up small bits of information that might be of interest to you. In addition, many readers have asked for more web site addresses for philatelic information. This column brings you both.

Two North American national philatelic societies have joined the cyber world. You can reach the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC) at <http://www.interlog.com/~rpsc> and the home page of the American Philatelic Society can be reached at <http://www.west.net/~stamps1/aps.html>.

Here are some topical/thematic sites to add to your list: Another bird site <http://www.philatelly.com/zoology/birds.htm>, where the author continues regularly to build the site. <http://www.philatelly.com/geography/bridges.htm> is the home for another popular collecting area: bridges. <http://www.freenet.hamilton.on.ca/~aa754/cpc.html> is the site to check if you collect Christmas-related philately. [http://www.philatelly.com/zoology/domestic\\_cats.htm](http://www.philatelly.com/zoology/domestic_cats.htm) will be a start on finding more about domestic short- or long-haired cats on stamps. If dogs are your interest then it's [http://www.philatelly.com/zoology/domestic\\_dogs.htm](http://www.philatelly.com/zoology/domestic_dogs.htm) to find your man's best friend on stamps.

Other sites for stamp clubs and societies: The International Collector's Society can be reached at <http://www.kiosk.net/stamps>; the Canadian Forces Philatelic Society at <http://www.sfu.ca/~dgronbec/cfpshome.htm>; the Scandinavian Philatelic Society is at <http://www.pherber.com/sps.html>; and the Scandinavian Collectors Club can be reached at <http://www.nb.net/~downs/scc/scc.htm>.

A few more sites of interest are: <http://www.west.net/~stamps1/pacific1.html> for PACIFIC '97, the World Philatelic Exhibition in San Francisco (May 29-June 8) — note that it's "pacific" in the address above and not "pacific"; <http://www.stampshows.com> will get you a listing of current and future stamp shows mainly in North America.

At least 39 of the 50 American states have state postal history societies. If you collect or are interested in some aspect of state postal history, please send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope and I will send you a copy of the list of

these 39 societies.

On Dec. 21, 1995, Malaysia issued a hologram souvenir sheet showing a satellite in orbit to celebrate the launch of the MEASAT 1 (Malaysia East Asia satellite).

Collectors of soccer-related material (or football as some parts of the world call it) are in for another major increase to their collection. France will hold the 1998 World Cup of Football in 10 of its cities and towns.

The French postal service is heavily involved in promoting the event. It intends to issue at least 12 stamps and many other philatelic products including pre-stamped postcards and envelopes.

If you are interested in these issues, contact the French philatelic bureau at Service philatélique de la poste, 18, rue François-Bonvin, 75758 PARIS, CEDEX 15, France.

A number of countries, including Tonga and the Marshall Islands, plan to celebrate the coming of the 21st century by issuing series of stamps either showcasing major events of the 20th century (Marshall Islands) or insisting that they will be the first country to encounter the 21st century (Tonga).

Watch for a continued debate, among many Pacific islands, as to which will be the first to do so. My nod goes to Tonga. It really is the only independent country that straddles the international date line.

In 1963, Tonga was the first country to issue gilt-foil stamps. It was also the first country to issue free-form stamps. From 1969 until 1980 when they ceased to be issued, Tonga's free-form stamps took the shape of such things as coins, hearts, maps, the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games logo, oil derricks, the Boy Scouts' emblem, crosses, bananas and coconuts.

ORAPEX '97, Ottawa's National Stamp Show, will be held April 26 and 27 in the RA Centre's curling rink on Riverside Drive. Exhibitors interested in applying to show their collections can obtain entry forms by writing to me c/o the *Citizen*.

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**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



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# U.S. railway mail pet had remarkable voyage

**T**his is the story of a very special dog who, by the end of his life, had thousands of friends and places where he was welcome.

Owney's lifelong association with the United States Post Office Department began one cold autumn evening in 1888. That is when the homeless pup crept into the Albany, New York, post office and cuddled up on a pile of old mail bags. The mail clerks soon adopted him and let him accompany them on their mail routes.

The origins of Owney's name remain a mystery. Some conjecture he was named after a mail carrier, or from mail clerks repeating over and over, "Who owns you?" It didn't really matter, since his name was to become known worldwide as a great traveller.

Owney felt safe wherever there were mailbags. He first rode with the bags from the Albany post office to the local railroad depot. It was natural that he would progress to riding in the railway mail cars.

His first trip took him to New York City. Gradually, the trips took him farther afield. It wasn't unknown for Owney to be away from home for months on end. The clerks in Albany bought him a collar to identify him if he got lost or in trouble.

Known primarily as the mascot of the Albany post office, by 1892 he had become the faithful companion of the U.S. railway mail clerks. Around that time, the Albany clerks decided to record his journeys by asking railway mail clerks to affix a baggage tag to his collar.

It didn't take long for the tag collection to grow and overwhelm the tiny collar. To lighten his load and make room for more tags, U.S. Postmaster General John Wanamaker presented Owney with a special harness-like jacket.

As Owney travelled, trips home to Albany became fewer, but his friends in Albany remained loyal. Only once did Owney have to be bailed out and that happened in Montreal.

It seems that when he followed the mail bags to the Montreal post office he was seized for not having a dog licence.

Canadian officials wrote to the Albany post office informing them of Owney's whereabouts and demanding \$2.50 for his room and board before

they would release him. The "ransom" was paid.

Owney's travels took him all over North America, to Mexico and Alaska — no mean feat for a small terrier in the 1890s.

His most remarkable voyage took him around the world. He started in Tacoma, Washington, on Aug. 19, 1895, aboard the steamship *Victoria* on its way to China. After a trip of 228,800 kilometres in 132 days, he returned to New York and was put on a train back to Tacoma to complete the voyage. He was sent registered mail part of the way and some postal clerks created a special mail class for him: "Registered Dog Package."

Before he died on June 11, 1897, he was honored and fêted by dog lovers all over the U.S. Kennel clubs and dog shows presented him with medals and ribbons.

His last major trip was to the Far West where, appropriately, he attended the convention of the National Association of Postal Railway Clerks. He received a rousing 15-minute standing ovation.

Owney was well loved not only because he was a loyal friend, but because he was considered a good luck charm. Railway accidents were common during that time; 400 are recorded in 1893 alone. However, no train on which Owney travelled ever met with an accident.

After his death, his friends ensured he wouldn't be forgotten. They took up a collection for his preservation, and Owney was first exhibited at the Post Office Department headquarters in Washington, D.C. Since 1911, he has been under the care of the Smithsonian Institution, first at the Museum of American History and now at the National Postal Museum.

The National Capital's inter-club stamp exhibition is Feb. 27 at 8 p.m. in the Canada Room at the RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Dr. The evening is a great introduction to area stamps clubs and interesting people. Join us.

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For questions and comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [verge@sympatico.ca](mailto:verge@sympatico.ca)

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# No stamp to ring in Bell's birthday

**M**arch 3 was the 150th birthday of Alexander Graham Bell. It passed without a Canadian philatelic tribute and none is planned.

It amazes me why Canada Post fails to honour a man who, with Thomas Edison, was among the greatest inventors of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Both men's inventions were catalysts to social changes. One just has to mention long distance, the Internet and E-mail to see how much the invention of the telephone has affected our lives.

Working with his father, Mr. Bell developed speech therapy methodologies to aid in communicating with the deaf. His work on iron lungs, the desalinization of sea water and the photoelectric cell are more examples of Mr. Bell's influence as a change agent in our lives.

In partnership with J.A.D. McCurdy and other young engineers, Mr. Bell founded the Aerial Experiment Association in 1907. They experimented with kites and aircraft and the Feb. 23, 1909, flight of the Silver Dart at Baddeck, N.S., is considered the first successful flight in Canada. He touched many other aspects of science and the humanities — far more than this column has the room to describe.

Although it will not issue a philatelic tribute this year, Canada Post has honoured Mr. Bell twice in the past: in 1947 for his 100th birthday; and in 1974 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the invention of the telephone.

Over the years, many countries have commemorated Mr. Bell on their postage stamps. Some of these, with the year of issue in brackets, are: Argentina (1944); Chad (1976); India (1976); Lesotho (1987); The Maldives (1978); Mauritania (1972); Monaco (1965); Niger (1972); Togo (1976); the United States (1940); and Uruguay (1976). These stamps and the many illustrated postal meters used by private companies could make an enjoyable exhibit.

Although many countries might still issue stamps for Mr. Bell this year, the only announced item is a program in Scotland.

Mini-Ex, the Ottawa-Hull inter-club exhibition hosted this year by the RA Centre Stamp Club, was held Feb. 27. Some 100 people heard from Chantal Amyot of the Canadian Postal Museum. Ms. Amyot spoke on the opening of the museum's permanent exhibition facilities June 11 and two upcoming exhibitions: *The Winged Messenger* (June 11-Sept. 30), dealing with the birth of air mail; and *The Value of the Error in Philately* (June 11-Oct. 13), featuring priceless international philatelic gems.

The Ottawa Philatelic Society (OPS) won the inter-club trophy by winning three of the four categories in competition. Jim Kirch, Al Chadwick and David Madeley respectively won in the British North America, Foreign and Topical categories. Andy Ellwood of the Canadian Forces Philatelic Society won the Miscellaneous category.

Alf Dyer's Great Britain, Edward VII — High Values was the winner of Best-in-Show and Most Popular Exhibit.

Canada Post issued a new press release listing the 1997 stamp program, including a March 3 single stamp for the Billes brothers, founders of Canadian Tire, on its 75th anniversary and a June 12, two-stamp set honouring race-car driver Gilles Villeneuve.

Two 100th anniversaries will be commemorated: the Victorian Order of Nurses (May 12) and the Knights of Columbus (Aug. 5). A new series on historic highways will begin in June and continue for three or four years.

It is Canada Post's Canada Day 1997 offering, replacing a series of twelve prominent Canadians. That series, due in September, has been reduced to four stamps featuring federal politicians Réal Caouette, Judy Lamarsh, Lionel Chevrier and American-born Martha Black.

*Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For questions and comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca)*

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Exhibit's title page first step to success

**W**ith ORAPEX '97, Ottawa's National Stamp Exhibition, coming up April 26-27 at the curling rink of the RA Centre on Riverside Drive, I thought it might be appropriate to jot down a few ideas on what you should expect to see when you look at the title page of an exhibit at the show.

These are the same items an exhibitor should introduce into the title page, items a judge looks for when attributing an award to the exhibit.

Has the dust jacket of a book enticed you to purchase it or was it by examining the title and content pages that you decided? The same can be said of stamp exhibits. The object of the exhibit's title page is to make the viewer take notice and want to buy. It is a brief theme of the exhibit, with its parameters, prologue, setting, era and mood wrapped into one page. Has the exhibitor been successful in this marketing attempt? Below are some pointers on how you, as a viewer, can make sure he or she has done the work.

The title is the predominant element of the page and should stand out. An exhibitor can use large computer fonts or a commercial transfer type to achieve this. The subject chosen can influence the style of lettering. Martin Luther and the Reformation would work well in German Gothic. It also suggests time and place. Lettering can be formal, bold, ancient, modern. Different sizes of type can be used but three or four on a title page should be sufficient.

What does it all do? It gains attention and keeps the exhibit from becoming anonymous.

The choice of the title is important. Exhibitors should be careful to avoid single word titles such as Sports or Music, or titles with the added words On Stamps. The following titles suggest vast subjects but with parameters that need no clarification: Music — Renaissance to Romanticism or Sports of the Ancient World

The exhibitor may choose to include a philatelic or postal item on the title page. If one is displayed, it is preferable that it should be postal. This is the exhibitor's chance to open

with a bang and say: "How's this for openers and, yes, there is more to come." It can be a stamp, cover, fancy cancel, essay or proof. The choice is left to the exhibitor. Hopefully, the item is appropriate, is not lost in a page and is not in competition with the title.

Look for short, to-the-point statements of intent and scope of the exhibit. American international exhibitor George Guzzio's statement for his exhibit can serve as an example. He described Penguinalia as "the world of the penguin as seen through the medium of philately: from discovery in the wild to the captivity of modern civilization." The first part is intent; the second is scope. Further descriptions are for the exhibit.

A title page is effective when it does not look like the exhibitor has whipped it up at the last minute and there is some evidence of experiments with size, fonts, colours, spacing and layout. The title page is the exhibitor's calling card, an expression of the exhibitor and the exhibit's theme. If you can follow the exhibit through the title page, then the exhibitor has succeeded in creating a road map for the better enjoyment of the stamps and philately on display.

The spring issue of Canada Post's sales catalogue, *Collections of Canada*, has a new, more attractive look. However, it suffers from the same problem as previous issues. By the time you receive it, nearly all the stamps and products in it already have been on sale for some time. When my copy arrived March 26, the only product it showed not yet on sale was the *Quebec en Fleurs 97* booklet, which was to be issued yesterday.

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For questions and comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [vergecs@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergecs@sympatico.ca)

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



May 17, 1997

## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Pearson deserves honour on anniversary of birth

As a nation, why do we refuse to issue stamps for people who deserve it? April 23 was the 100th anniversary of the birth of Canada's foremost diplomat. He was one of Canada's representatives to the founding of the United Nations and became president of its General Assembly in 1952. His greatest diplomatic coup came when he proposed that the UN become involved in peacekeeping, an area of Canadian interest still. For his efforts, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957.

If that were not enough, he led the government that gave us the Canada Pension Plan, universal medical care, a new flag and official bilingualism. Most other countries would jump at the chance to philatelically honour such a person.

Lester Bowles Pearson (1897-1972) deserves better from our Post Office than the limited edition set of three souvenir envelopes available only through the National Philatelic Centre in Antigonish, N.S. Did you know that Mr. Pearson and Louis St-Laurent (PM from 1948-1957) are the only two prime ministers never honoured by a commemorative stamp?

And while I am on this subject, the May 12 45¢ stamp honouring the 100th anniversary of the Victorian Order of Nurses really should give more attention to its founder, Lady Ishbel Marjoribanks, Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair (1857-1939).

You can look up any biography of the lady and see how her years in Canada were important to the improvement of the status of women, health care and many other areas of social needs of the times. Although she is not on the stamp, she is marginally represented at all four corners of the pane of 20 with tiny cameo pictures. If we cannot honour a Nobel Prize winning prime minister on our stamps, my guess is that we probably do not want to portray a British aristocrat even if she had a major impact on Canada's social development.

In previous columns, I mentioned

the lack of information concerning this year's postal issues. When Canada Post released in February an amended list of stamps for 1997, I didn't believe that it was complete. During the CS-DA show in Toronto April 18-20, the Canada Post booth handed out a list of future issues with their proposed dates of issue. Why is this type of information not generally available?

Here is the list with their dates of issue. All stamps are 45¢ denominations unless otherwise stated: Law Society of Upper Canada (May 23), Ocean Fish (four stamps, May 30), Confederation Bridge (two stamps, May 31), Scarlet Tanager (No. 10 envelope, June 3), Gilles Villeneuve (45¢ + 90¢, June 12), John Cabot (joint issue with Italy, June 24), Scenic Highways - Canada Day (four stamps, June 30), Industrial Design Conference (July 23), Maxville Highland Games (Aug. 1), Knights of Columbus (Aug. 5), World Congress of PTTs (Aug. 18), Year of Asia-Pacific (Aug. 25), Canada-Russia Hockey Series (two stamps, Sept. 15), Famous Canadian Politicians (four stamps, Sept. 26), Supernatural Creatures (Oct. 1), Moose Definitive (\$8, Oct. 15), Christmas (45¢, 52¢ + 90¢, Nov. 3) and Royal Winter Fair (Nov. 6). A cautionary note: Since this is Canada Post, "subject to changes" are the imperative words for this list.

The fish and Confederation Bridge stamps and scarlet tanager postal stationery will debut at the Canada Post booth at PACIFIC '97. This World Philatelic Exhibition is May 29-June 8 in San Francisco. A large contingent of Canadian exhibitors, dealers and philatelic organizers will be there. The show is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first U. S. postage stamps.

*Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can be reached on Internet at: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca)*

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Self-adhesive stamps can be soaked off paper

**P**ACIFIC '97, the World Philatelic Exhibition in San Francisco, ends this weekend and I am enjoying every minute. My next column will have the results of local entries at this event.

Most letters from readers concern stamp collections they have on hand or inherited. From time to time, readers raise questions for which I have no answer or that are of general interest.

One reader asks about soaking self-adhesive stamps off paper. I could find little on the subject, so I asked Canada Post and friends for help.

Canada Post's terse answer was to "simply soak them in warm water like any other stamp."

John Hotchner, columnist for *Linn's Stamp News*, suggests that some care is needed, although he uses the same procedure he has used for the last 35 years with a few refinements.

The procedure is simple. Use a lukewarm water bath, "thumb" the stamp free of gum and place face down on a half-folded sheet of newspaper. This is where Mr. Hotchner's refinements come in. Make sure that when removing the stamps from the water you take off all the gum, particularly on the edges. You might have to pull or remove the stringy remnants. Do not overlap the stamps when laying them on the newsprint. If you do, they might stick together in the drying process.

In the past, newspaper sheets could be piled one on top of the other. Today, with the new gums, you should lay out the sheets individually to dry for about 12 hours. The last step is to put the dried stamps in a telephone book and weight the book down. Two days later, your self-adhesive stamps should be ready to mount in albums.

Another reader asked what guarantees he should expect from auction houses when he turned over his collection for sale. He felt that those offered by the auction house he was dealing with were not sufficient.

In fact, they were well within the standard norm and practices. I explained to him that reputable auction houses will provide a temporary receipt on the spot when you transfer the material to them. Later, once they have had time to examine the material more carefully, they should give you a more comprehensive receipt, usually in the form of the lotting arrangements for sale.

In other words, they should give you a sales contract detailing a little more precisely the way in which they will sell your material. The contract should also itemize the expected costs you should expect to pay against the sales realizations. It is prudent, if you are the seller, to ask the auction house for a pamphlet listing the important information you should know, including the selling charges.

Auction houses have varying base rates of commission for sellers. It could be 10, 15 or 20 per cent. In addition, it is important that you find out if there are insurance, transportation, illustration or storage charges or you could be in for a rude awakening when you receive the sale's proceeds.

Most auction houses will spell these out for you without asking, but don't forget that they are in business to make money. You want a good return on your investment, so don't hesitate to bargain for better terms and rates. Sliding scales of commission charges for sellers are frequent. If your collection is important enough, you can probably obtain specific non-monetary terms suited to you and your collection.

The National Postal Museum — the truncated version without the archives and library — now occupies permanent display space at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, 100 Laurier St., Hull.

The official public opening is June 12 when two special exhibits will be highlighted. The first is *The Value of the Error*, a multimillion-dollar exhibit on stamps whose errors in colour, printing, perforation, etc., increase their value. The second exhibit on mail carried by air, specifically by Air France and its predecessors, is entitled *The Winged Messenger*. Both exhibits have guest curators. Pascal Rabier from the Musée de la poste of Paris, where *The Value of the Error* was conceived and originally shown, and Maj. Richard K. Malott, retired National War Museum curator and Canada's foremost specialist on aerophilately.

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**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Canada, Italy honour Cabot anniversary

Canada and Italy have issued a very attractive joint stamp issue honouring the 500th anniversary of John Cabot's appearance on the shores of North America. He landed at Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland, on St. John's day, June 24, 1497. Others believe Cabot's landfall to be at Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, or somewhere in New England.

John Cabot was born near Genoa, Italy as Giovanni Caboto (Caboto means coastal seaman in Italian). Around age 11, Cabot was in Venice where he began a career in trading and map making. By 1476, he had married. He and his wife, Mattea, had three sons: Lewis, Sebastian and Santius (Sancho). Sebastian became well known as an explorer in his own right.

Rejected in Italy, Spain and Portugal in his attempt to obtain backing for his trips, Cabot moved to Bristol where he anglicized his name. Bristol was second to London as a major English seaport. It is not surprising that Cabot proposed Bristol try to divert the spice trade from the Mediterranean countries so that, if it succeeded, it would become the richest port in Europe. The merchants promised to supply money and ships if Cabot could get the King's approval. Fortunately, England's monarch, Henry VII, had a businessman's love of profit and readily agreed.

Cabot made an exploratory journey in the Western Atlantic in 1496. Bad weather and severely reduced provisions drove him and his Bristol crew back. In May 1497, Cabot set off on the *Matthew*, a new ship probably named after his wife. We now know that Cabot never reached Asia, but discovered the "New Founde Landes."

Cabot arrived back in Bristol on Aug. 6, 1497 to a hero's welcome and set out to inform the King, who gave him a reward of £10 and a pension. Cabot suggested another voyage to the King and was given five ships for his 1498 trip. Sadly, John Cabot did not return from this third trip, although the four other ships of the fleet did. It is not known what happened to him.

Sebastian Cabot did such a good public relations job in taking credit for his father's work that it wasn't until the 19th century before documents began to surface and John Cabot finally received the recognition he deserved.

In 1897, Newfoundland issued a series of 14 stamps honouring the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Cabot at

Newfoundland. The commemoratives had a dual purpose for they commemorated the 60th anniversary of the reign of Queen Victoria. Two Holbein paintings were used to show Cabot and King Henry VII. The Cabot painting, identified as John Cabot on the stamp, is really one of Sebastian painted by Holbein for King Edward VI in the 1550s.

In 1920, some provisionals were issued using the 1897 Cabot stamps. The 15-cent and 35-cent were surcharged "Three Cents" in black, while the 30-cent received a "Two Cents" surcharge in the same colour.

Newfoundland, being as close to Europe as you can get in North America, became the departure and landing stages of many of the most famous transatlantic aeronautical attempts. On three occasions, the 1897 Cabot stamps were overprinted or surcharged to be used as airmail stamps. In 1919, the 15-cent Seal Hunting stamp was surcharged \$1 for the Alcock and Brown flight. November, 1921, saw an overprint on the 35-cent Tourism stamp for the St. John to Halifax air mail service. The classic Newfoundland airmail is the one issued on May 18, 1927 for the de Pinedo flight. The 60-cent Henry VII stamp was overprinted "Air Mail/De Pinedo/1927" in three lines. If you are lucky to own one, it is valued today at between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

PACIFIC '97 results for local participants include large vermeil medals for "Bytown" (pseudonym) for his Canada, 1851-1867, and Michel Forand for editing *The Congress Book*, 1995. Vermeil medals went to James Kraemer, St. Helena. 1856-1927 and Guillaume Vadeboncoeur, The Small Queens of Canada; large silvers to Michel Forand and Charles Freeland for *Bermuda Mails to 1865*; silvers to Richard K. Malott for *Canadian Military Air Letter Forms* and Joseph Monteiro, *Perforating Errors of Canadian Postage Stamps (1953-1996)*; and silver-bronzes to Andrew Chung and Hank Narbonne for *The New Specialized Catalogue of Canada Post Official First Day Covers*.

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## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Creativity stands out in Canadian issues

**R**ecent Canadian stamp issues are some of the most creative ever. The Confederation Bridge duo with a non-postally valid label between; the creative use of the margins around the panes of the Ocean Fish, Victorian Order of Nurses and Cabot stamps; and the layout of the Villeneuve Motor Car Racing panes to provide for gutter pairs are some excellent examples of the art of the graphic artist and industrial designer.

On July 23, Canada Post will issue a stamp to honour the 20th International Industrial Design Congress being held in Toronto.

Although there is only a single stamp, each will be separated in the pane of 24 stamps by 24 individual labels representing Canadian achievements in industrial design. Each pane contains 12 different labels in two different colours.

The labels are reminiscent of those used to separate the 1994 stamps to honour the late Gov.-Gen. Jeanne Sauvé. The Sauvé stamps had four different labels representing four different phases of her professional life: journalist, Member of Parliament, Speaker of the House of Commons and Governor General.

There might be an outcry from collectors who feel that Canada Post is forcing them to buy a full sheet of the Industrial Design stamp to ensure that they have a complete collection of labels.

Will we see all these different labels attached to their respective stamps in the coffee table book, *Canada Collection '97*, when it is issued at the end of the year?

Here are some Internet sites for those interested in the British Caribbean area.

The home page for the British Caribbean Philatelic Study Group (BCPSG) is <http://ourworld.compuServe.com/homepages/BCPSG/> while its sister organization, the British West Indies Study Circle, has [http://ourworld.compuServe.com/Steve\\_Jarvis/bwisc.htm](http://ourworld.compuServe.com/Steve_Jarvis/bwisc.htm) as its web address.

The BCPSG is North American-based and promotes interest in, and research into, the stamps and postal history of former British colonies, territories and independent nations in the Caribbean and South and Central America.

If you are interested, contact BCPSG secretary Peter J. Kaulback at 108 Byron Ave., Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 3J3.

Some 90 dealers will be attending

the 19th annual Thousand Islands Stamp, Coin, Postcard and Collectables Show at the arena in Clayton, New York, on July 26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and July 27 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Admission is \$1 Cdn. or U.S. and 50 cents for children. I'll be there next Saturday. Drop by and say hello.

Recently, the U.S. Postal Service issued a set of stamps featuring movie monsters.

Now, Great Britain's Royal Mail has released a four-stamp set dedicated to *Tales of Terror* featuring Dracula, Frankenstein, Jekyll and Hyde, and the Hounds of the Baskervilles.

And to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the British Horse Society, the Royal Mail has released a set of stamps depicting photos of the Queen's own ceremonial horses.

The illustrations show two carriage horses from the Royal Mews and two mounts from the Household Cavalry. The guards are pictured alongside the horses in full ceremonial attire.

Check local dealers for these stamps of Great Britain or write directly to the Royal Mail, British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon St., Edinburgh, Scotland EH3 5TT.

*With files from The Associated Press*

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Questions and comments can be sent to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can be reached on Internet at: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca)

**NEXT WEEK: Coins**



August 9, 97

STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# New postcards available in Ottawa

On July 2, Canada Post released postage-paid postcards featuring the current 45-cent Canadian Flag definitive. The stamp on the card has no denomination, but the card reads *Postage paid. For posting in Canada and delivery worldwide.*

Twenty-five different cards are available, either singly or in four sets. Sets were prepared for, and are only available in, Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto (five cards each) and a 10-card generic Canada set.

Only eight sales outlets have them in Canada besides the National Philatelic Centre. There are two sites in Montreal and three each in Toronto and Ottawa. Ottawa sites are Canada Post Headquarters' shop on Riverside Drive, Station B at Sparks Street Mall and Elgin Street, and Station D on Laurier Avenue West. When I went to the headquarters' shop, the five Ottawa cards were available but only seven of the Canada cards. They cost \$1.29 each. However, through the National Philatelic Centre, 74 St. Ninian St., Antigonish, N.S., B2G 2R8, you can purchase each city pack for \$5 and the Canada pack for \$10. Canada Post considers this a pilot project until February. If successful, other cities will be added.

Close working relationships between the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada and the American Philatelic Society (APS) were the byword during the last four years under the APS presidency of Randy L. Neil. John M. Hotchner's election as president for the next two years will ensure they continue to develop and progress. Mr. Hotchner won in the closest and toughest fought APS election in recent years. He received 5,071 votes while his opponent, former Board of Vice-Presidents Chair Ken Lawrence, received 4,597 votes. Mr. Hotchner is a popular philatelic writer.

Two other well-known writers join him on the new board: Lloyd de Vries, who used to pen particles for *Stamp Collector* and now writes for *Linn's* and *Scott's Stamp Monthly*, and Wayne Youngblood, the publisher of *Stamp Collector* and *Stamp Wholesaler*, who was the top vote-getter among the seven candidates vying for the four positions of director-at-large. Ann Trigg of Clarence, New York, and Jeanette Knoll-Adams, of Indianapolis,

round out the elected directors-at-large. With their election, the board has more women members than any previous board as they join Pat Stilwell-Walker, who was re-elected vice-president, and Janet Klug, who won the position of secretary.

Four new stamps were issued this month in what is normally a quiet time of the year. Pipes and drums, Scottish country dancing and the Caber Toss illustrated the Aug. 1 release for the 50th anniversary of the Maxville Highland games. The emblem of the Knights of the Columbus took pride of place on the Aug. 5 issue commemorating their 100th anniversary in Canada. On Aug. 18, pictures of various communication workers and the logo of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International labour organization will be found on a single stamp in honour of its 28th World Congress. The last stamp will be issued Aug. 25 for Canada's Year of Asia Pacific. It is a thematicist's dream showing a collage depicting many key trade issues; its date of issue coincides with the opening of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Energy Ministers meeting in Edmonton.

Always happy, showing pleasure in seeing you and greeting you with the words of Wilbur the pig in *Charlotte's Web*, "Salutations, my fancy way of saying hello," is how I will always remember Ron Kitchen who died last Sunday of cancer. Ron was a stalwart of many of the Ottawa stamp clubs. Although his collecting interests were eclectic, he specialized in Ottawa post card views and military and railway mail. Constantly accompanied by at least two cameras, he took it upon himself to record, during the last three decades, the history of philately and stamp collecting in the Ottawa area. These efforts will stand as a memorial to him. Our condolences to Lillian, his wife of 55 years, and to his family.

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For questions and comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [verge@sympatico.ca](mailto:verge@sympatico.ca)  
**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



August 30, 97

STAMPS • BY CHARLES VERGE

# Canadian stamps honour four federal politicians

**O**n Sept. 26, Canada Post will issue stamps celebrating four federal politicians who made their mark on Canadian life — Martha Louise Unger Black, Julia Verlyn (Judy) LaMarsh, Lionel Chevrier and Joseph David-Réal Caouette.

Martha Unger (1866-1957) was born into Chicago high society, but left to join the Klondike Gold Rush. She supported her three sons by running a milling business. In 1904, she married George Black. He was appointed Commissioner of the Yukon (1912-18) and held the Yukon seat in Parliament as a Conservative from 1921 until 1935. Because of ill health, he was unable to run again that year. Although Mrs. Black was nearing 70, she canvassed the large Yukon constituency, became the second woman elected to the Canadian Parliament and retained the seat for her husband while he was recuperating. And for her work with Yukon flora, the Royal Geographical Society named her a Fellow.

Miss LaMarsh (1924-80) — broadcaster, writer, lawyer and legislator — was a woman for all seasons. We know her best as the Liberal MP for Niagara Falls (1960-1968). Her stint as minister in Lester B. Pearson's cabinet brought her national recognition. As minister of health (1963-65), she was responsible for the adoption of Medicare and the Canada Pension Plan, and she was Secretary of State (1965-68) for Canada's Centennial (1967). She also established the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and wrote several books including her best-known, *Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage*.

Mr. Chevrier (1903-87), a lawyer, politician and diplomat, was a Cornwall native. He represented the federal ridings of Stormont (1935-57) and Laurier (1957-65). He was minister of transport (1945-54) and president of the Privy Council for a few months in 1957. He was president of the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority (1954-57). When the Liberals returned to power in 1963 he was appointed minister of justice and attorney general, resigning to become Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (1964-67).

Mr. Caouette (1917-1976) hailed from the Abitibi region of Quebec and, although elected in a byelection in 1946, was unable after 1948 to successfully stand for election in either the House of Commons or the Quebec Legislature. It wasn't until 1961 that he rose to



**New stamps honor Martha Black, Lionel Chevrier, Judy LaMarsh and Réal Caouette.**

prominence by merging his Ralliement des créditistes with the Social Credit Movement and becoming associate leader of the party. In the 1962 election, 26 of the 30 Social Credit members were followers of Mr. Caouette. He broke from the national party and recreated his Ralliement des créditistes in 1963. By 1971, he reunited the two and became national leader. Ill health caused him to resign in 1976. He was an ardent federalist who chose his economic views carefully to ensure his popularity with rural Quebec electors who feared the large power structures emerging from the Quiet Revolution.

Christie's has landed a major auction of Canadian archival material. In 1990, Christie's was instrumental in selling the archives of the American Bank Note Company of New York. Spink America, the Christie's affiliate that handles the sale of stamps and bank notes, is now selling the archives of the British American Bank Note Company of Ottawa. The catalogue for the Oct. 10 stamps sale can be obtained from Andy Kupersmit, Spink America, 55 East 59th St., New York, N.Y. 10022, U.S. The bank notes sale is Dec. 2.

Charles Vergé is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [verge@sympatico.ca](mailto:verge@sympatico.ca)

**NEXT WEEK: Coins**



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

## '72 hockey series commemorated

Canada Post is issuing a pair of 45-cent stamps today to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1972 Canada-U.S.S.R. hockey series.

Those of us who followed the eight-game series between two great hockey powers saw excellent hockey in two different styles that had evolved virtually in isolation from one other.

The teams played four games in Canada starting Sept. 2, 1972; the Soviet Union stunned Canadians by winning three.

Canada went on to win three of the four games in Moscow, tying the other. This was done thanks to players such as Phil Esposito, Yvan Cournoyer and the incomparable Paul Henderson, who scored three game-winning goals including the one that won the championship for Canada.

Canada Post is extensively marketing this issue. In March, it unveiled the design of one stamp showing the player with jersey No. 12. It has protected the other stamp design (jersey No. 6) until today, formally launching the stamps in Vancouver tonight at a regularly scheduled NHL game.

These stamp images are also found on many non-philatelic products including a black sweatshirt, a puck, a limited edition print and a \$5 telephone card.

I invite readers to identify at least four of the Canadian players on the No. 6 jersey stamp (illustrated above). Send guesses to my address below, postmarked no later than Oct. 1. I will draw a winner from the correct entries and he or she will receive an appropriate philatelic prize.

Some controversy will likely surround Canada Post's new \$8 stamp.



**Second stamp commemorating 25th anniversary of 1972 game.**

Featuring the grizzly bear, it will be available in sheets of four stamps, starting Oct. 15. Sources within Canada Post say this stamp begins a new series of definitives highlighting Canadian fauna.

The high-value stamps will be designed with steel engraving and printed by the intaglio process. The cost of producing stamps by this method is high, but the results are stunning.

One just has to look at Canada's most famous stamp, the 1929 Bluenose 50-cent definitive, to see the beauty of this printing process. The Bluenose was voted the world's most beautiful stamp for the first half of this century.

Collectors will applaud the re-introduction of steel engraving while they deplore the high value of this stamp.

Unfortunately for the collector, this high value meets postal needs; just ask many retail post office operators. Canada Post and members of the Stamp Advisory Committee did just that before deciding to go ahead with it.

Last week, I sent a registered business letter to India and the cost was \$10.65. There are many other examples

of high rates where an \$8 stamp would come in handy.

Jorge Peral, of the Canadian Bank Note Company, was the engraver for the \$8 grizzly bear stamp.

In the wake of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, there is a feeding frenzy for stamp issues featuring the princess by collectors and non-collectors alike.

I have seen some stamps, which were worth a few dollars before her death, being sold for 10 times that.

From her first appearance on the world scene, she has been the subject of stamps: the royal wedding, royal births and birthdays have all been commemorated.

Recently, Togo issued stamps showing the princess in nine of the gowns she auctioned in New York this summer to benefit her charities. The Marshall Islands have already announced three 60-cent memorial stamps and \$5 and \$50 memorial coins for Sept. 30.

Expect more from other countries. My only comment is buyer beware.

A new stamp club is holding its inaugural meeting Oct. 15 at 7 p.m. The Gloucester Stamp Club will meet in the Orléans branch of Gloucester Public Library, 1705 Orléans Blvd. For more information, call 824-1534.

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**NEXT WEEK: Coins**



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Lowe will be remembered for postal history work

**I**t's hard to cover the life of a man like Robson Lowe, when you think of the more than 80 years he spent in the hobby.

Mr. Lowe, who died Aug. 18 in England at age 92, was a member of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC), the Ottawa Philatelic Society and the Philatelic Specialists Society of Canada.

He is credited with being the person who single-handedly gave postal-history collecting prominence in philately; was expert in routing out forgers and fraud artists; and was a philatelic adviser to Kings George V and VI, Edward VIII and Queen Elizabeth.

Mr. Lowe — his friends called him Robbie — began collecting at age six and, at age 10, made his first large purchase of 1,000 British Empire stamps to begin his career in philately.

In 1920 he joined Fox & Co., a London firm of stamp dealers, explaining to his new employers that he wanted to learn how a good business was run so that he could start one of his own. Scared of potential competition, his boss promptly fired him.

Mr. Lowe's fascination with forgeries was kindled when he purchased a box of 10,000 stamps that proved to be forgeries made by the Spiro Brothers of Hamburg. Later, he was instrumental in purchasing and removing from the market the whole stock of another philatelic forger, Jean de Sperati.

When he married, he was able to furnish his flat by selling a wedding gift from the eminent American philatelist, Col. E.H.R. Green — a copy of the United States' most famous air-mail stamp, the 24-cent Inverted Jenny.

He owned several businesses in London and Bournemouth, turning to auctions in later years. Some auctions were world famous, such as the sale of the Burrus collection over a three-year period in the early '60s, which netted more than two million pounds. Another was the infamous 1966 auction on board the *Queen Mary*, which turned out to be a disaster as a result of adverse weather conditions and a telephone strike that affected radio links to bidders around the world.

His firm, Robson Lowe, International, was acquired by Christie's auction house in 1980.

Mr. Lowe was an avid researcher and philatelic writer. In addition to editing *The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain*, he will be remembered for his

six-volume *Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postage Stamps*. This monumental work appeared between 1948 and 1990. Only the stamps of the Empire in South America and Antarctica had not been covered. To mark the 1973 publication of volume five, *The Empire in North America*, he was guest of honour at an RPSC dinner and awarded the society's gold medal.

He retired in 1980, but continued writing, advising and communicating with philatelists all over the world. The hobby will miss his counsel, his bonhomie and his philatelic discoveries.

In my last column, I indicated the Marshall Islands would be issuing stamps to honour Diana, Princess of Wales, on Sept. 30. I should have mentioned that they were designed by Canadian artist and stamp designer Tom McNeely. The Caribbean island of Nevis was first to issue stamps for the princess; its nine-stamp sheetlet was available Sept. 16.

I'm pleased with response to my last column asking the names of players on one of two recently issued Canadian hockey stamps. The answers and winner will appear in the Nov. 1 column. Canada Post has donated one of its Series of the Century Collector Gift Sets, a \$40 value, as the prize.

A spectacular exhibit of Canadian pence and cents issues — Canada's first stamps (1851-1868) — appeared in August on the exhibition circuit. The Brigham Collection has won, in its first two outings, the Grand Award at North America's two most prestigious shows: STAMPSHOW '97 in Milwaukee, the exhibition held in conjunction with the convention of the American Philatelic Society, and ROYAL \* 1997 \* ROYALE, the Calgary convention show of the RPSC. It's probably the best exhibit of such material since that of the late Alfred Lichtenstein and his daughter, Louise Boyd Dale, in the '50s and '60s.

Charles Vergé is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For questions and comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on the Internet at: [vergecc@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergecc@sympatico.ca)

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Holiday gift ideas from books to CD-ROM

**T**his year's holiday shopping tips are a bit earlier than usual in light of the vagaries of the calendar and the tri-weekly appearance of the column.

At the time of writing, Canada Post's winter catalogue wasn't at hand; however, staff at Canada Post were kind enough to show me a copy of this year's *Collection of Canada Stamps*, which goes on sale Nov. 6.

Although the 76-page hardcover book is of the usual high quality, it suffers by comparison with last year on three counts. First, it seems to me that its pages are not as colourful as its predecessor. Second, three souvenir sheets were included last year. This year's only souvenir sheet, the fan-shaped Year of the Ox souvenir sheet, is not provided. Finally, the cost for the volume has sky-rocketed compared to its stamp content value. At \$44.95, it is \$5 more than last year's \$39.95 counter price. In 1996, the *Collection* contained \$34.16 worth of stamps; this year, there is only \$28.67 worth. After all these years of a small increase of 15 to 20 per cent over the face value of the stamps, Canada Post has probably decided to have *Collection* purchasers pay the full production costs of the book.

Another product I recommend is a CD-ROM called *Welcome to Stampville*, an interactive exploration of the amazing world of stamps. It includes interactive games, stories and activities for children starting from age eight. Adults could also be interested: I spent several hours playing with it. The \$34.95 CD-ROM was produced by the Canadian Postal Museum and is fully compatible with Windows and Mac platforms. It's on sale beginning today; you might want to wait to purchase it until receiving Canada Post's promotional flyer in mid-November. It has coupons worth \$35 in savings, including a \$5 one for the CD-ROM.

Both these products should be available at Canada Post outlets or through the National Philatelic Centre at 1-800-545-4362.

For those interested in literature, UNITRADE recently came out with its 1998 *Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*. French and English editions are available in either perfect bound (\$24.95) or spiral bound (\$26.95). Local stamp dealers should have copies of this catalogue for sale.

If you're interested in Canada's re-

cent definitive stamps (since 1972), you might want to purchase D. Robin Harris's five volumes covering Caricature and Landscape - 1972-78 (\$14.95); Environment - 1977-87 (\$18.95); Artifact and Parliament - 1982-89 (\$16.95), Wildlife and Architecture - 1987-96 (\$17.95) and Fruit and Flag - 1989-96 (\$19.95). These best-selling handbooks are well prepared and presented and have received high awards in North American literature competition since they came out in April. You can buy them individually or in sets (spiral bound or three-hole punched) for \$69.95 from Saskatoon Stamp Centre by calling 1-800-205-8814.

## Stamp notes

- Columnist Irving Whynot, in the last issue of *Canadian Stamp News*, wrote that Canada Post will issue a stamp in the fall of 1998 for the 150th anniversary of the University of Ottawa.
- The Ottawa Philatelic Society holds a floor auction Nov. 6 at 6:30 p.m. in Hintonburg Community Centre on Wellington Street, east of Parkdale Avenue.
- The annual BYPEX stamp show will be Nov. 8-9 at the Talisman Hotel, 1376 Carling Ave. at the Queensway. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The Canadian Stamp Dealers' Toronto fall show is at the Queen Elizabeth Building, Exhibition Place, from Nov. 14-16. It opens each day at 10 a.m. and closes at 7 p.m. on Friday, 6 p.m. on Saturday and 4 p.m. on Sunday.

The winner of this column's Sept. 27 hockey stamp quiz is Mike Carrocetto of Nepean. He will receive, courtesy of Canada Post, a *Series of the Century Collection* gift set. The contest asked for the names of some of the players portrayed on the stamps; they include Ron Ellis (No. 6), Bill White (No. 2), Yvan Cournoyer (No. 12), Serge Savard (No. 18), Paul Henderson (helmet visible), Frank Mahovlich and, perhaps, Ken Dryden (gloved hand). The referee (No. 15) was West German.

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**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Winner launches discussion on stamp theme mailing

When he sent in his winning entry in our hockey stamp quiz, Mike Carracetto asked if I could open the following question for discussion: "Why don't more people use theme stamps in their mailings?"

Mr. Carracetto's premise is that it doesn't cost any more to use "nice" stamps and, goes on to say, that if theme stamps are "used regularly, they can be matched (even remotely!) to the topic of the correspondence."

His question may have resulted from the hockey quiz since one of his examples is: "If you are writing to Aunt Marcie in Saskatchewan about junior's great year in peewee hockey, the hockey stamp would be a most excellent addition to the letter."

He gives other examples of '97 stamps that could be used for theme mailings, and some are quite humorous. He suggests we use the Gilles Villeneuve stamp to mail in our traffic ticket; the great white shark stamp for the monthly loan payment; the Highland games stamp on a letter to our tailor or seamstress; and the Law Society of Upper Canada stamp sent to somebody who owes us money.

He challenged me to find others to illustrate this article.

I would like to add the 1996 Labatt's truck to his 1986 John Molson stamp; we can send these to our college and party friends.

For those who want to keep family or friends in the dark — information wise — there are the four 1989 mushroom stamps. The 1990 weather observation sesquicentennial stamp could be added to a get well card for those "under the weather."

For the horticulturist, the flower-lover and the dog-fancier, there has been a plethora of stamps over the years showing these favourite subjects; however, no cats.

There are doctor and physician stamps for your health practitioner. Many people with the name John have been portrayed, so you could use these on your "Dear John" letters.

With the announcement in *Canadian Stamp News* of 1998 stamps for the 150th anniversary of the University of Ottawa, alumni should use those on their mail, and navy corvettes could adorn the correspondence of every sailor or retired naval officer. On and on it goes. I wonder what one could use the skunk stamp for?

Any reader wanting to add to these theme stamp examples can contact me at the address below.

It's not often that recently deceased individuals are honoured by their peers with a literary memorial. Allan Steinhart (1940-1996), the eminent Canadian postal historian, is one of these exceptions. Under the editorship of Dr. Gray Scrimgeour of Victoria and Dr. David Handelman of Ottawa, friends and colleagues have produced a book of postal history articles and anecdotes by and about Mr. Steinhart. It contains 20 of his articles showing his wide range of British North America (BNA) postal interests, photographs of Mr. Steinhart, written tributes and 15 postal history articles written by his clients on, "My Favourite Covers from Allan." Profits from the book go to the Postal History Society of Canada's Allan Steinhart Memorial Fund, which will be used for awards recognizing or supporting research in BNA postal history. Hard bound copies at \$44.69 (postpaid) and spiral bound at \$29.69 can be ordered from Dr. David Handelman, 287 Second Ave., Ottawa, K1S 2H8. Send e-mail enquiries to [dehsg@uottawa.ca](mailto:dehsg@uottawa.ca)

Is Canadian sovereignty being given up to speed the mail? *Linns Stamp News* reports that a new Canadian Priority Mail envelope mimicking the U.S. version is being piloted in Calgary, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. The copy I have seen is no different than the one offered at United States Postal Service outlets. The U.S. eagle is pre-eminent on the front, as well as the words Priority Mail/United States Postal Service in English only. The only reference to Canada is a small Product Prepaid by Canada Post Corporation notation on the back of the envelope. This type of two-to-three-day middle of the road service is needed between the first class letter rate and the expensive overnight service. Too bad there couldn't be, at least, a maple leaf on the envelope.

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca)

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



## STAMPS • CHARLES VERGE

# Ireland's first stamp hits 75th anniversary

**T**oday is the 75th anniversary of the Irish Free State's first postage stamp: a green two pence definitive showing the map of Ireland.

Stamps of Great Britain were used from 1840 until Feb. 17, 1922. On that date, the current British definitives were overprinted in Gaelic *Rialtar Sealadac na héireann*, which stood for Government Provisional of Ireland that had come into being Jan. 14, 1922.

Although the post office was nominally under the control of the provisional government, the use of British stamps was mandatory until Feb. 17. Full responsibility for the post office was not transferred until April 1, 1922.

Unoverprinted British stamps remained valid for use in Southern Ireland between Feb. 17 and March 31, 1922. On Dec. 6, 1922, the provisional government was to give way to the government of the Irish Free State. The arrival of such a momentous day could not go unnoticed postally.

The provisional government had a notice published on Feb. 1, 1922, in the *Irish Free Press* for a national competition for the design of a definitive series of postage stamps. However, with Ireland in the midst of a civil war, delays occurred and it looked highly unlikely that the series would be ready on time. The government managed to get one of the stamps in its new definitive series out on Dec. 6 by having officials concentrate their work on the 2d. stamp because it would be the most used (inland letter rate and to Great Britain).

This 2d. stamp, and the rest of the long definitive series, were to be in use, with a watermark change, for 46 years until replaced in 1968. Over its lifetime it would be available in sheet, booklet pane and coil formats. In fact, one of its coil versions, is Ireland's rarest stamp. The Dec. 6 original supply of the 2d. was quickly exhausted and British stamps continued to be overprinted. Now the overprint read *Saorstát Éireann* (Free State Ireland). These were issued on Dec. 11, 1922.

James Ingram of Glasnevin, a suburb of Dublin, prepared the design for the stamp. His design was also used for the one penny and 1½ penny stamps.

They appeared for sale on Feb. 23 and Feb. 2, 1923, respectively. The stamps were printed in sheets of 240

stamps consisting of two panes each containing 120 stamps (12 wide by 10 high). Until 1937, paper watermarked "se" with the letters intertwined and set diagonally in the paper was used. With the proclamation of a new Irish constitution that year, new stamp printings started to use a paper watermark with a series of diagonal "e"s.

Ireland has reproduced its first stamp mainly with stamp on stamp designs. In 1972, for the stamp's 50th anniversary, a single stamp and a souvenir sheet — Ireland's first — were issued. Again, in 1990, for the 150th anniversary of the world's first adhesive postage stamp, the Penny Black, Ireland's 1922 2d. stamp reappeared. It was part of a montage of different Irish definitives found on the 50-pence value. This year, it's again featured in a montage. It is silhouetted on a 32p. stamp against a photograph of the General Post Office.

This new representation of Ireland's first stamp was issued Aug. 27, 1997, as part of the four stamps "Post Office Service to the Nation" phase of a three-phase commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Irish State. Twelve stamps were issued in all celebrating, besides the Post Office, democracy and state institutions, sport, culture, commerce and the arts.

They were reissued together in a limited edition State Anniversary Souvenir Sheetlet available only between Dec. 6 and Dec. 31, 1997. If you are interested in obtaining the sheet or other Irish stamps, write to the Philatelic Bureau, An Post. General Post Office, Dublin 1, Ireland.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you all, as well as your families, my sincerest best wishes for the holidays and a successful, healthy and prosperous new year. At the start of my third year as your stamp columnist I would like to thank you for your letters, e-mail and general show of support. In addition, many thanks for helpful suggestions and unflagging good humour to my *Citizen* editor, Heather Bishop.

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. He can also be reached on Internet at: [verge@sympatico.ca](mailto:verge@sympatico.ca)



## STAMPS



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Six commemorative stamps are based on photos of life-sized sculptures of armoured warriors of the Qin Shi Huang dynasty of China.

## 2,000-year-old warriors featured on UN stamps

BY SYD KRONISH  
The Associated Press

One of the most amazing archeological discoveries of the 20th century — the Terra-cotta Warriors of the Qin Shi Huang dynasty — now comes alive on the last set of UN stamps for 1997.

The United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) set consists of six commemoratives based on photos of some 8,000 life-size sculptures of the armoured warriors of the Qin dynasty, which ruled China about 2,000 years ago.

In 1974 a group of farmers working at the foot of Mount Lishan accidentally discovered the site of a burial pit of the huge army of Qin Shi Huang, China's first feudal emperor.

After much digging, the pit revealed the Terra-cotta Warriors with their bronze horses and more than 100 bronze chariots.

According to the UNPA, the underground find is a true reproduction of the above-ground kingdom at that time and are true symbols of the elite army defending their emperor. The warriors are an ancient treasure house of splendid sculptural art.

Also issued by the UNPA is a prestige booklet containing 24 mint stamps based on the designs of the commemorative stamps on the theme of Terra-cotta Warriors.

The booklets consist of a die-cut

front cover with 12 pages of text and six pages of four stamps each. Included in the booklet are colourful photos and illustrations of the Qin Huang Mausoleum, its terra-cotta warriors and horses.

The Terra-cotta Warriors stamps and prestige booklets are available from the UNPA, P.O. Box 5900, Grand Central Station, New York, New York 10163-9992.

### Island of St. Vincent honours opera singers



**Jessye Norman among honoured opera singers.**

The island of St. Vincent, a former British colony in the eastern Caribbean, has issued a series of new stamps to honour famous opera singers of the 20th century.

One set pays tribute to female performers and the other to outstanding male singers.

The women depicted are Maria Callas, Beverly Sills, Jessye Norman and Lily Pons. The men are Enrico Caruso, Mario Lanza, Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti.

Each of the stars is portrayed in scenes from famous operas in which they had starring roles.

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins



STAMPS/ By Charles Verge

# Advisory body makes changes to '97 program

**T**im McGurrin, Canada Post's philatelic media spokesman, must be finding his job difficult these days.

In the last column, I wrote about the new issues for 1997. The information was largely based on a Nov. 15 news release prepared by McGurrin. I had intended to cover the remainder of the announced issues in this column. It is a good thing I waited since a lot of the announced information has become redundant.

It seems that the Stamp Advisory Committee (SAC), an appointed body of "representative Canadians," has finally flexed its muscles. Some issues were turfed out, many were changed and still others were added to the 1997 program at an SAC meeting Dec. 6.

For example, McGurrin's release talked about an issue of stamps commemorating 12 prominent Canadians for Canada Day including Judy LaMarsh, Réal Caouette and Joey Smallwood. The SAC has now changed the issue to commemorate 10 former provincial premiers including Smallwood (Newfoundland), Jean Lesage (Quebec), John Robarts (Ontario), John Bracken (Manitoba), Tommy Douglas (Saskatchewan), Ernest Manning (Alberta) and W. C. Bennett (British Columbia).

However, the worst debacle for Canadian philately is the cancellation of the Canadians in Hollywood issue because the SAC did not like the designs proposed.

McGurrin's release said John Candy would be the subject of one of three stamps honoring Canadians who made their mark in Hollywood. I learned later that the other two were Raymond Burr and Lorne Greene. These stamps were to be issued for PACIFIC '97, the World Stamp Exhibition in San Francisco May 28 to June 6.

(It was announced in a story in the *Citizen* a few days after the release that Candy's family had declined the honor.)

As a result of the demise of the Canadians in Hollywood stamps, the fish stamps series originally scheduled for last October will now be the Canadian issue for PACIFIC '97.

The disappearance of the Hollywood issue from the program must be a major blow to the Stamp Marketing group at Canada Post. They have been working diligently for two years on a well

structured marketing campaign that would have seen Canada make a major philatelic statement during PACIFIC '97, where 250,000 to 400,000 visitors are expected. The fish issue won't make the waves or, for that matter, the money the actors would have for Canada Post. Canadian philately is poorer for it.

Three days after the SAC meeting, Canada Post announced that a souvenir sheet will be issued for the late Gilles Villeneuve, the Canadian racing car champion. It is another issue that has been changed by the SAC, down to one souvenir sheet from three. What would have happened to Stamp Marketing's arrangements for this issue had the SAC cancelled it?

There is definitely a power struggle existing over next year's program. Stay tuned for more changes. The SAC will meet again in February; the fourth time since June — it used to meet twice a year.

Canada Post's marketing staff needs to do some homework before then if they want to re-establish some stability in the stamp program. Perhaps a good dose of openness with the SAC is needed. A well structured briefing on Stamp Marketing's strategic planning and marketing plans might be a good beginning.

As a pilot project, Canada Post prepared Christmas stickers for the greeting stamps. The availability of the 15 stickers depicting Santa Claus was not publicized and can only be found in selected outlets across the country. The Canada Post spokesman with whom I discussed them did not know if they were on sale (50 cents) in Ottawa. I will send a sheet of the stickers to the first four readers who send me a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Today's column marks the beginning of my second year of writing for the *Citizen*. I appreciate your letters and cards requesting help and information. I would also like to know what you like in the column and which subjects you feel need more attention. Thanks for your support. Happy holidays to all readers and their families.

Charles Verge is vice-president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. For questions and comments, write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa, K2C 3M4.

**NEXT WEEK:** Coins