

## STAMPS

# Successful bidders follow these rules

BY CHARLES VERGE

Are you able to take advantage of the opportunities available to you to outsmart, outlive and outlast the bidders you compete with at stamp auctions? Your chances are dramatically increased if you follow a few easy rules.

The first rule is to review carefully the regulations of the auction house as written in the catalogue. This can help you avoid some nasty situations. Don't take it for granted they are the same from one auction house to the other. This is doubly important if you are bidding in a foreign auction house.

The second is to check the bidding increments particularly where they switch from one level to another. If, for example, the increments go from \$5 to \$10 at the \$100 level then don't bid \$95 because an extra \$5 bid will force your opponent to bid \$10 more.

The third is to not bid an awkward amount outside the bid increments because all that does is reduce your bid to the lower level. So, if you bid \$105 for a lot in our mythical auction house, it will be recorded as \$100 not \$110.

The fourth is to total your bids and if the final amount exceeds your budget then indicate a total limit for all your bids. Don't reduce your bids across the board and don't delete lots because all that does is reduce your chances of getting any of the lots.

The fifth rule applies when there are duplicate or similar lots in the auction and you are interested in acquiring any one of them. All you have to do is put the word "or" between the numbers of the similar lots you are interested in. This way, the auctioneer will cancel all the bids you made once you acquired one of the lots. You may even vary the amount you wish to bid on these "or" bids.

The last rule is to not expect an auctioneer to sell you a lot you did not win after the auction by offering more money than the winning bid. An auctioneer taking away a lot from its successful bidder to give it to you would also, if given the chance, take lots away from you.

I would like to recommend two websites related to postal markings that you might find worth visiting. The first relates to United States auxiliary markings. It can be found at [www.postal-markings.org](http://www.postal-markings.org). This is the site of Auxiliary Markings Club and it brings together a diverse group of collectors who are interested in the movement of the mails especially mail that required an additional amount of effort to be delivered. The evidence of those efforts are the markings applied by the United States Postal Service to envelopes and packages as the mail was processed. They may have to do with inadequate postage, problems with the delivery address, accidents that occurred with planes, trains, ships or trucks carrying the mail, or literally hundreds of other reasons.

The other is an almost complete compendium of French postal markings from 1758 to 1990. The site is extensive and all the markings are illustrated either by scans, drawings or photographs and most of them have an interesting philatelic and historical description. The site can be found at [www.i-net.fr/marcophilie/](http://www.i-net.fr/marcophilie/).

*Charles Verge is 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. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).*

January 8, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen





Shown here, a detail of a stamp you can use to mail letters, underwater.

# Snorkel down to the mail box

BY CHARLES VERGE

The first permanent underwater post office is three metres under the ocean off the coast of Port-Vila, capital of Vanuatu. Vanuatu is also known by many collectors under its Anglo-French colonial name of the Condominium of the New Hebrides.

The underwater post office opened for business in May 2003 and is situated within a marine sanctuary off Hide-away Island. You can personally dive or snorkel to the post office to deliver mail or send it via the main post office to receive a special underwater cancellation.

Some of Vanuatu's postal employees are trained scuba divers who do this special mail run. More information can be found at the underwater post office website [www.underwaterpost.com](http://www.underwaterpost.com).

A number of African, Caribbean and Pacific Islands stamp-issuing entities have put together the first instalment in a series of stamps honouring National Basketball Association star players. Two of the 20 stamps issued feature players associated with the Toronto Raptors. Palau issued a stamp showing Chris Bosch while the Federated States of Micronesia feature a stamp of Vince Carter, now with the New Jersey Nets. In the margin of the stamp sheets of 12 you can see the Toronto Raptors logo, the players statistics and an action shot of each of the players. For more information on how to order, contact the Republic of Palau Postal Service, Philatelic Station, P.O. Box 1982, Koror, PW 96940-9998, Republic of Palau or by e-mail at [ROPPostalROR@palaunet.com](mailto:ROPPostalROR@palaunet.com). For Micronesia, it is the FSM Philatelic Bureau, P.O. Box 1376, Kolonia, Pohnpei, FM 96941, Federated States of Micronesia and the e-mail is [fsmps@mail.fm](mailto:fsmps@mail.fm). Neither has a website.

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If these postal codes seem familiar, it's because they use the United States zip code system. The first two digits in a U.S. zip code are unique to one of the U.S. states. The first digits 96 can cover quite a group of diverse destinations. The third digit in this series indicates where the mail should be directed. Zip codes beginning with 961 or 962 are in California; 962-966 are directed to hundreds of American Forces post offices in the Pacific; 967-968 are for Hawaii; and 969 covers Guam, Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Mariana Islands and the Marshall Islands.

An intriguing seminar on Exploring Burgundy Wines via postage stamps is being offered tomorrow at 2 p.m. in the Canadian Postal Museum within the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Sponsored by Canada Post as part of the exhibition Gift of the Gods: The Art of Wine from the Ancient World to Canadian Vineyards, Yvan Leduc will guide the seminar in French. Museum admission is half-price on Sundays.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



February 5, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS



PACIFIC EXPLORER 2005  
WORLD STAMP EXPO

Canada Post's Daffodil souvenir sheet will bear the emblem of Pacific Explorer 2005, the world stamp exhibition to be held in Sydney, Australia in April.

# Canada Post adds on a few more to 2005 list

BY CHARLES VERGE

Canada Post recently announced a number of changes to the 2005 program, adding three new 50-cent stamps and three souvenir sheets.

The first stamp, honouring Ellen Fairclough (1905-2004), is to be issued June 21. Mrs. Fairclough was the first woman to become a cabinet minister when she was sworn in with the first John Diefenbaker ministry in 1957. Although Diane Marleau was minister responsible for Canada Post in 1996-1997, Mrs. Fairclough is also Canada's first and, so far, only female postmaster general (1962-63). Mrs. Fairclough was a Companion of the Order of Canada. She died Nov. 13, 2004, and the 100th anniversary of her birth was Jan. 28.

On Sept. 2, a polio vaccination stamp will be issued to mark the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the widespread use of the polio vaccine discovered by Dr. Jonas Salk. Canada has been polio free since the end of the 1970s and is one of the leaders in helping eradicate the disease worldwide.

The third new stamp will feature a departure from past Christmas issues. In previous years, three stamps were issued at Christmas (domestic, U.S. and international rates). On any given year, the set of stamps could feature a religious or secular theme, but not both. From the 2005 issues, there will be four Christmas stamps. This year, a snowman will join the three crèche stamps already announced. In future years, if the series is secular, then the fourth stamp will be religious in nature and vice-versa.

The three souvenir sheets will be for the Daffodil issue (March 10), the Biospheres Reserve, a joint issue with Ireland (April 22) and the Big Cats, also a joint issue with China (Oct. 13). The Daffodil souvenir sheet will bear the emblem of Pacific Explorer 2005, the only World Stamp Exhibition scheduled for 2005.

On Oct. 4, 2004, the United States issued a sheet of 15 stamps depicting clouds. Four of these were based on photographs taken by Arjen and Jerrine Verkaik of Elmwood, Ontario. The Verkais are known for their photographs of skies, clouds, rainbows and tornadoes. Their company, Skyart Productions, produces stock weather photographs and educational material. Arranged according to altitude, nine of the 10 basic cloud genera are depicted. A brief text on the back of each stamp identifies and describes that particular cloud type.

Charles Verge is 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. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



February 19, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS



This new Marianne stamp issue will support French Red Cross efforts for tsunami relief in Asia.

# Marianne has arrived

BY CHARLES VERGE

The French Post Office issued its new Marianne series in January.

The changing image of Marianne, a symbol of France, graces virtually all of France's definitives. A competition is usually held to choose the new Marianne design and the post office and stamp catalogues have attributed the name of the designer to the series, such as the Marianne de Gandon or the Marianne de Luquet. In a previous column, I presumed the new Marianne was to be named the Marianne de Lamouche after its designer but, in fact, the new Marianne will be known as La Marianne des Français.

On Jan. 8, 11 engraved (intaglio) values were issued showing the new Marianne. They were — all in Euros — .01 (yellow), .10 (violet), .58 (olive green), .70 (dark grey), .75 (light blue), .90 (dark blue), 1.00 (orange), 1.11 (pink), 1.90 (brown) and two non-denominated first-class stamps (green and red). The first-class stamps (current rate is .50/.80CAD) were engraved by machine while the other values were done by hand.

In addition to the single stamps in sheets of 100, the red non-denominated value was issued in self-adhesive booklets of 10 and 20 as well as a sheet of 15 for personalized stamps. The green and red non-denominated stamps were also available in coil rolls of 500 stamps. All 11 values were overprinted St-Pierre et Miquelon for use in that French overseas territory south of Newfoundland.

On the same day, a semi-postal with the new Marianne was issued, although it was not available nationwide until Jan. 14. The additional .20 (.30 CAD) was destined to support the French Red Cross efforts in tsunami relief in Asia. Ten million semi-postal stamps were printed and the hope is to raise \$1 million. The French Post Office also has plans to raise money this way for UNICEF.

In my last column, I mentioned changes to Canada Post's 2005 program. At the time, I was not aware that two additional stamps had been announced. On March 18, there will be one domestic rate letter stamp for the 150th anniversary of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, and on Aug. 15, a 50-cent stamp celebrates the 80th anniversary of the birth of Oscar Peterson, the world renowned pianist and jazz musician.

The Peterson stamp will be a first for Canada. It will be the first time a stamp is being issued to celebrate a living Canadian. Although many other living Canadians have appeared on stamps like hockey players and astronauts, the stamps they were on were not issued to recognize them individually, but rather for an event they were associated with such as the All-Star Game or the Canadian Space Agency. On Nov. 19, 2003, Oscar Peterson appeared on an Austrian stamp celebrating his career.

MINI-EX, the Ottawa-Gatineau area annual stamps club meeting and exhibition is being held at 7 p.m. on Feb. 24 at the R.A. Centre, 2701 Riverside Dr. Admission is free and so is parking. I hope to see you there.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: vergec@sympatico.ca.



March 5, 2005

The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS



Alice Keppel and her daughter, Violet, were unnamed figures for this 1995 British stamp. Mrs. Keppel is Camilla Parker-Bowles' great-grandmother.

# Camilla on a stamp?

BY CHARLES VERGE

The announced marriage of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles prompts me to consider the possibility that, one day, Ms. Parker-Bowles might appear on a Canadian stamp.

Portraits of members of the Royal Family have graced Canadian and Newfoundland stamps since the first stamps were issued in 1851. Until the 1940s, most showed the reigning monarch, their spouses and some of their children. Since then, only our reigning monarchs, George VI and Elizabeth II, have been on our stamps with two exceptions. In 1957, Prince Philip joined the Queen on a five-cent stamp commemorating the Royal Visit of that year. The other was a 95-cent stamp issued in 2000 to celebrate the Queen Mother's 100th birthday.

No Canadian stamp shows the current Queen's children, although, should Charles become King, he will, without doubt, be portrayed on a stamp. At that time, Ms. Parker-Bowles — whether known as Queen or Princess Consort — would have more rights to be on a Canadian stamp than any previous member of the Royal Family.

After all, Ms. Parker-Bowles is a Canadian through her mother. She was born Camilla Shand. Her maternal great-grandmother, Alice Edmonstone Keppel, was mistress to Prince Charles' great-great-grandfather, King Edward VII. Her great-grandfather, Lt.-Col. George Keppel, was the second son of William Coutts Keppel, 7th Earl of Albemarle and of Sophia Mary McNabb. The Countess of Albemarle's father was Sir Allan Napier McNabb, prime minister of Upper Canada (1854-1856). If one goes back through the McNabb family line, one finds that Ms. Parker-Bowles is also related to two pop stars: Madonna via Zacharie Cloutier (1617-1708) and our own Céline Dion via Jean Guyon (1619-1694). The Gambia, Grenada, St-Vincent Burkina Fasso and Chad have issued stamps for Madonna while Céline Dion appears on stamps from Afghanistan and Touva. Ms. Dion also appears on labels issued by Russian republics whose stamps are not recognized: Mordovia, Abkhazia and Kalmykia.

Mrs. Keppel appears with her daughter, Violet, on a 1995 stamp of Great Britain. It was issued, with nine others, to be used on greeting cards. As the Queen is reputed to review all new stamp issues, it must have been interesting for her to approve this stamp.

Nearly 100 people attended MINI-EX 2005 on Feb. 24 where Canada Post's Jim Phillips introduced the 2005 Canadian Stamp Program. Competition winners were: Robert Smith (Canada/BNA); Richard Logan (Foreign); Jack Gray (Topical) and Steve Mulvey (Miscellaneous). Mr. Smith also won the most popular exhibit award. The MINI-EX Trophy for the club with the most winning entries went to the Ottawa Philatelic Society which has won the trophy 17 times in its 31-year history. Judges were: Ian Kimmerly, Hank Narbonne and Doug Lingard.

*Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: vergec@sympatico.ca.*



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The Ottawa Citizen



This year's U.S. black heritage series features Marian Anderson, a famous opera and concert singer. The stamp's designer is Canadian Albert Stark.

## Canadians lend talent to U.S. post

BY CHARLES VERGE

Each year, the United States Post Office issues a stamp featuring an African American. This year's honoree, the 28th, is Marian Anderson, a famous opera and concert singer. The model for the stamp was a black and white photograph believed to have been taken in 1934 in Stockholm by Moise Benkow. What makes the stamp interesting is the stamp designer is a Canadian — Albert Stark, from Ajax, Ontario, a well-known painter of glossy covers for romance, sci-fi, adventure, youth and western novels. Mr. Stark graduated from the Alberta College of Art in Calgary and uses photos or live models to create his works of art. His design for the 2004 Paul Robeson stamp, the 27th in the black heritage series, was originally selected as the final design for the stamp. At the last minute, the U.S. post office used a photograph of Mr. Robeson taken by another Canadian, Montreal photographer Basil Zarov. The post office has commissioned four more stamp portraits from Mr. Stark. Until officially announced, the subjects are secret.

Several other U.S. stamps feature Canadian designers or are based on photographs taken by Canadians. Yousuf Karsh's photographs of Winston Churchill, Harlan F. Stone, Robert Millikan, Ernest Hemingway and others are featured on U.S. stamps. Bernard Reinlander, a Canada Post staff artist, was responsible for the common engraved image found on the 1976 Benjamin Franklin joint Canada-U.S. issue celebrating the American Bicentennial. The background photo of the moon on an \$11.75 stamp of 2000, depicting the 1969 moon landing, was taken by Canadian astronomer Terrence Dickinson. Mark Summers of Waterdown, Ontario did the engraving of athlete Wilma Rudolph used on a 23-cent definitive of 2004. And recently, I mentioned four photographs of cloudscapes taken by Skyart of Elmwood, Ontario used on a recent U.S. stamp issue.

I must have been prescient. When I wrote my last column referring to the forthcoming marriage of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles, I did not know the British Post Office was intending to issue two stamps on April 8, the day of the wedding.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergecc@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergecc@sympatico.ca).



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## STAMPS CHARLES VERGE

# 2003 show sets record attendance

**O**RAPEX, Ottawa's National Stamp Exhibition, held at the RA Centre earlier this month was a resounding success. Ottawa is a collector town, with a particular interest in postal history. Dealers are always lining up to come to this show.

In fact, this is one of the few national-level exhibitions in North America that has a waiting list of interested dealers. It also is due to the unstinting efforts of Al Racicot, who has managed the bourse/dealer area of the show for almost 10 years. He has built a solid rapport with the hobby's commercial side. To be successful, dealers need customers. Dick Malott, the ORAPEX publicity officer, has also spent most of the last 10 years building up contacts in the media and, as a result, ORAPEX 2003 had record attendance.

In my view, it is the largest since the 65th convention of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC) was held in Ottawa in 1993. What is also encouraging was the time visitors spent perusing and studying the exhibits.

A gold medal and the Canada Post Grand Award went to Bernie Beston for his Postal History of Queensland, 1841-1891, one of three Australian exhibits at the show. Mr. Beston is a well-known international collector and judge. In addition, he is also responsible for Norfolk Island's philatelic bureau.

Other gold medals were awarded to professor David Handelman of Ottawa for Early Canadian Round Datestamps & their Manuscript Friends, and to George Fiala of the Lakeshore Stamp Club in Dorval, Que., for his thematic In Mozart's Footsteps. Mr. Handelman was also awarded the Reserve Grand Award.

Since 1995, the friends of Ralph D. Mitchener, my predecessor in writing this column, have provided an award in his name for the most innovative topical. The criteria for the award has been changed to include display exhibits (these include non-philatelic material). The winner was Kimber Wald of Maryland, who was awarded a Vermeil medal for his Where Have All the Covers Gone. This is a creative exhibit that looks at the addresses of Canadian special delivery letters, and illustrates them with a photograph of the building bearing that address.

For the sixth year in a row, the Youth Grand Award went to Danny Handelman of Ottawa.

The RPSC is holding its 75th annual convention in Hanover, Ont., from May 30 to June 1.

For the occasion, Canada Post has issued a special envelope showing the tools of our hobby on a watermarked background of the 1929 *Bluenose* stamp with the logo that the then Canadian Philatelic Society used on official business. Last year's stamp honouring the 50th anniversary of Canadian governors general was used to frank the envelope. The choice is judicious since all the governors general named on the stamp from Georges Vanier on have been patrons of the RPSC. The cancel shows the current logo of the RPSC.

Both the envelope and the Volunteer Firefighters 48-cent domestic letter rate stamp will have their first day of issue ceremonies at Hanover.

You can purchase both items via the National Philatelic Centre, 75 St. Ninian St., Antigonish, N.S., B2G 2R8, or call 1-800-565-4362, or visit online at [www.canadapost.ca](http://www.canadapost.ca). The Volunteer Firefighters stamp will be available at most post offices while quantities last.

*Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca)*



April 2, 2005

The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS



CZESLAW SLANIA

A self-engraved portrait of Czeslaw Slania at age 80.

# Engraver's work known for speed and beauty

BY CHARLES VERGE

Czeslaw Slania is considered the greatest of the world's stamp engravers with numerous awards attesting to the beauty, speed and proliferation of his work. His engravings, international in scope, with varied subjects, formats and media, are collected as works of art by many non-philatelists.

Slania, 83, died March 17.

Although he never engraved a stamp for Canada, Slania did produce the engravings of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Robert Borden for our current \$5 and \$100 bills.

His philatelic engravings are found in more than 35 countries including his native Poland, his adopted Sweden, as well as Denmark, Ireland, Jamaica, Monaco, Spain and Tunisia. He engraved eight stamps for the United States; two of which are joint issues with Sweden and one with Monaco.

The United Nations stamps showing the General Assembly Hall in New York, issued Feb. 11, 2005, are the last stamps he engraved before his death.

Many of his engravings will continue to be used on new stamps and I expect some stamp issuing authorities such as Sweden, Poland and Monaco will use his self-engraved portrait, shown above, to commemorate him on a stamp.

Slania's skill, accuracy and speed was amazing. He set a record for completing three Swedish stamp engravings. It typically takes four to six weeks to finish an engraving, but his memorial stamp of King Gustav Adolf released Oct. 24, 1973, was completed in 10 days. The wedding stamp of King Carl Gustav and Silvia Sommerlath was done in 6½ days while his portrait of assassinated Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme was completed in an amazing 5½ days.

He also held the world's record for the greatest number of fine engravings. Some, such as his portrait of Queen Margrethe II of Denmark, have been used on dozens of stamps and postal stationary items.

Slania was born Oct. 22, 1921, near Katowice in Poland. In 1945, he entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, recognized among Europe's most reputed graphic art centres. As a youth, Slania showed exceptional talents for miniatures and, still a student, he was offered employment with the Polish Stamp Printing House where he worked for six years. He engraved his first Polish stamp in 1951.

He moved to Sweden in 1956, engraved his first Swedish stamp in 1959, and formally joined the Swedish Postal Service as a full-time engraver in 1960. He was appointed Royal Court Engraver in Sweden, Denmark and Monaco.

For more information on Czeslaw Slania visit [www.xs4all.nl/~pkv/slania/](http://www.xs4all.nl/~pkv/slania/). There you will find an incredible 3,500 images of his art.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



## STAMPS

# Preparing a collection for disposal

BY CHARLES VERGE

As a stamps columnist, I am often asked, "How do I dispose of a stamp collection?" Usually, two reasons motivate this question: someone has inherited a collection, or a childhood collection has been rediscovered, and the individual doesn't want to continue with it.

I will deal with answers to these questions over several columns. However, let's first deal with what you can do to reduce the problems and frustrations of your heirs once you have closed your albums for the last time.

First, is your collection organized? Collections properly mounted and catalogued fetch more at sale. If you toss them in boxes, dealers or other collectors will think you didn't care for them and may jump to the conclusion there is little of importance in the "boxes."

Secondly, if your collection contains important material that you paid good money for, then catalogue these items. Even if it isn't computerized, the important elements of your listing should include the price paid, the condition of the item, the catalogue number and, if it is postal history, a little description of why the cover is important and of value. Make sure your spouse or one of your children knows where the inventory list is kept. It should be in a different place from the collection ... and, please, keep the listing up-to-date when you buy or sell items.

Thirdly, leave written instructions to your family on how you recommend they dispose of your collection. Suggest whether it should be by auction or directly to a dealer, selling one country or topic at a time, and so on.

Fourthly, if your collection is dear to your heart and you wish it treated properly after your death, consider appointing a philatelic executor separate from the one you have for your other belongings. Write the name of the individual and an alternate in your will (don't forget you might outlive your first nominee). At the same time, you can give instructions in your will on the disposal of the collection.

However, don't tie your executor's hands. Leave the executor room to negotiate for the best result possible for your estate. Make sure you introduce your executor to your family so they know the individual. Your choice of executor should be governed by a few things: knowledge of your collection, knowledge of where best to dispose of your type of collection, and your trust in that individual/collector friend.

Fifthly, make sure you state in your will what to do with the proceeds of the sale of your collection.

Sixthly, if you feel an executor is not required, suggest in your will your family contact the stamp club you belong to or a national organization such as The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada to seek help in the disposal.

Seventhly, get rid of material that doesn't interest you.

If you have reference material such as fakes and forgeries, identify them separately. They may be of special interest.

Finally, don't hide the real value of your collection from your family.

ORAPEX, Ottawa's National Stamp Exhibition, will be held April 30-May 1 at the RA Centre, 2701 Riverside Drive. I'll have more to say about it in my April 30 column.

Charles Verge is 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. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).

April 16, 2005

The Ottawa Citizen



April 30, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

# ORAPEX: Quality on both sides

BY CHARLES VERGE

Stamps dealers love to come to ORAPEX because of the very appreciative, knowledgeable and interested clientele. In addition, it seems Ottawa collectors like to spend some serious money on their collections, therefore attracting a high quality list of dealers.

More than 40 dealers will be showing their wares. Stamps, covers, postcards, supplies and literature can be found at the booths. After a year's absence, Canada Post is returning to the show and will have a fully stocked sales counter. There will be two special postal cancellations available to commemorate Ottawa's 150th anniversary.

I also recommend spending some time viewing the display of 200 frames of fine national and international collections, including the special youth exhibits put together by the students of Mutchmor, Hopewell and Woodroffe public schools.

Since 1991, ORAPEX has had special private-to-order commemorative envelopes prepared for the show. These celebrate famous Canadian philatelists.

They have included such famous Ottawa collectors and writers as John Reginald Hooper, founder of organized philately in Canada; Senator James Calder, a student of the first issues of this country; Dr. G. M. Geldert, a former president of The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (1959-1967); Sir William Mullock, Postmaster General of Canada (1896-1905); Colin H. Bailey, a student of the postal history of the Ottawa Valley; Rich Toop, the foremost Canadian military postal historian of his time; and Ralph Mitchener, my predecessor as writer of this column from 1983 to 1995 and general all-around walking philatelic encyclopaedia.



Postal historian Eric Manchee is featured on this year's ORAPEX envelope.

This year, the honoree will break with tradition. Ottawa and Bathurst District postal historian Eric Manchee will be the first to be honoured when still alive. We are pleased Mr. Manchee is around to receive this well-deserved honour. In addition to his interests in postal history, he has published the first atlas of post offices of Ontario, a labour of love that shows the location of all present and past post offices in every county of this province.

Commemorative envelopes are available at the show's reception desk.

Pacific Explorer 2005, the only world philatelic exhibition of the year, was held in Sydney Australia last weekend and there were 22 Canadian exhibits at the show including five from Ottawa. I'll have more to say about the show and its results in my next column.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: vergeg@sympatico.ca.

## ORAPEX

The 44th annual stamp exhibition is being held this weekend at the RA Centre, Curling Rink (2451 Riverside Dr.) The exhibit is open today from **10 a.m. to 6 p.m.** and tomorrow from **10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** Admission is free. Seminars are held in the Courtside 'A' room in the East Wing of the RA Centre. A list of seminars is posted at the entrance to the show and also in the show program.



## STAMPS

# Stamp collecting takes a jump in popularity

BY CHARLES VERGE

According to ORAPEX chairman Doug Lingard, Ottawa's 44th annual ORAPEX stamp exhibition held April 30 and May 1, was "the best ever."

One dealer reported sales of more than \$25,000 and that was his first visit to the show. Another dealer told me he believes the heydays of stamp collecting are back again. Other indicators seem to prove him right, including increased membership in clubs throughout the country and a record attendance at ORAPEX.

Another sign of vitality in the hobby is the number of new exhibits at the show. There were 27 multi-frame exhibits. Four received gold medals: **Herb McNaught's** 1908 Quebec Tercentenary; **Bob Anderson's** Brant County Postmarks and Cancellations to 1950, **David Handelman's** Canada & Maritimes' Money Letter Registration to 1875 and **James Taylor's** St Pierre & Miquelon, 1857-1937. Taylor of Calgary and Handelman of Ottawa respectively won ORAPEX's Grand and Reserve Grand Awards for their exhibits.

There were 10 Vermeil medals. One went to **Sue Sheffield** for her most interesting Inside Out German Prisoner of War Camp 20, Gravenhurst, Ontario. Sheffield was also presented with two awards named for former prominent Ottawa philatelists: The Rich Toop Best Military Postal History Award and The Ralph D. Mitchener Award for the most innovative, creative or humorous exhibit. Another Vermeil medal was given to Solomon Islands Underpaid Mail exhibited by Ottawa philatelist and longtime stamp dealer, **Ian Kimmerly**.

Seven exhibits received silver medals and six were awarded silver-bronze medals. **Anthony Fulmes** showed two frames of Sierra Leone Postal Services on Operation Reptile Roto 7 (June-Dec. 2003) for which he received a silver medal; proving the point that good results can be obtained with very modern material if one knows how to display it.

Also in competition were five one-frame exhibits. Three Vermeil and two silver medals were awarded to them. There is an art in making these up that renders them just as difficult to prepare as multi-frame exhibits. They also take as much time to judge. The Youth Class had four multi-frame and one one-frame exhibitors. The overall winner was **Kyle Miller** with Helicopters.

This year's only World Philatelic Exhibition, held in April in Sydney, Australia, had 22 Canadian exhibits in competition.

The top Canadian winner was **Ron Brigham** of Mississauga who received a large gold medal for his Small Queens. This is the first time a Small Queen exhibit has garnered such a high award. Mr. Brigham now has three different international large gold medal exhibits to his credit. The other two are Pence and Cents, 1851-1868 with which he won Canada's only World Championship and The Large Queens, 1868-1897.

Ottawa participants and their awards were "Bytown," Province of Canada (gold); **Madhukar Belkhode**, Admiral Issue of Canada (Large Vermeil plus Special Prize for presentation); and **David Handelman** with three entries. He received a silver-bronze for his editorship of BNA Topics, a silver for authorship of AR (avis de réception) and a large silver for his exhibit Worldwide AR from its UPU beginnings to 1930.

*Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: vergeg@sympatico.ca.*



May 28, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

SEDE VACANTE MMV

€ 0,80

CITTÀ DEL VATICANO



The crossed keys of St. Peter surmounted by a yellow and red striped ceremonial umbrella are shown on all sede vacante stamps.

## The Vatican's 'empty seat' issues

BY CHARLES VERGE

In Latin, *sede vacante* means empty seat, chair or throne. These are the words used when there is an interregnum between popes. This situation occurs most commonly at the death of a pope. However, the same would occur should a pope resign his office, which has not happened since Celestine V in 1294. He died two years later and was canonized in 1313.

The Cardinal Chamberlain, or Camerlengo, and the College of Cardinals govern the Church during the interregnum. During a *sede vacante*, the Chamberlain is empowered to strike medals and coins (since 1521) and issue stamps (since 1939) to reflect this authority. *Sede vacante* stamps were issued in 1939 at the death of Pius XI, 1958 (Pius XII), 1963 (John XXIII), twice in 1978 (Paul VI and John Paul I) and this year (John Paul II). The heraldic arms of the Cardinal Camerlengo — the crossed keys of St. Peter surmounted by a yellow and red striped ceremonial umbrella called the Pavilion — are shown on all *sede vacante* stamps. Three stamps were issued for all *sede vacante* issues except in 1939 when seven of the then current definitive stamps were overprinted with the Camerlengo's arms and the words *sede vacante* and MCMXXXIX.

The 1939 set is valued at \$100, but can be purchased for around \$75 or less depending on condition. The other sets are valued at a few dollars each. There is no rarity in these issues. It is simply the subject does not appear frequently.

For this year's interregnum, the Vatican printed 700,000 stamps of each of three values: 60, 62 and 80 euro cents. Printed by the French Government Printing Office in sheets of 10, they carry the words *Città del Vaticano* and *Sede Vacante MMV* in blue, red and green, respectively. They all show a reproduction of four angels holding a canopy shielding the symbolic papal keys against a background of white clouds. The original, an 18th-century fresco by artist Carlo Malli, is in the Apostolic Palace. The stamps went on sale April 12 and were sold out by April 16.

Francine Brousseau, former director of the Canadian Postal Museum, has been appointed interim vice-president, development, at the parent Canadian Museum of Civilization. Chantal Amyot takes the post of director of the postal museum. In 2004, there was an 11-per-cent increase in attendance at the postal museum over 2003, with more than a quarter of a million people viewing the national stamp collection and artifacts related to our postal heritage.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



## STAMPS



In 1957, Ellen Loucks Fairclough became the first woman appointed to the federal cabinet.

# Honouring a cabinet minister

BY CHARLES VERGE

In 1957, Ellen Loucks Fairclough (1905-2004) became the first woman appointed to the Canadian federal cabinet as Secretary of State. She later became minister of Citizenship and Immigration and postmaster general. In fact, she was the only woman to ever be postmaster general of Canada.

Ms. Fairclough will be honoured with a single domestic rate stamp (50 cents) to be issued June 21. An unveiling ceremony will be held June 27 at McMaster University in Hamilton, the riding she represented in the House of Commons and her home town where she was born Ellen Loucks Cook on Jan. 28, 1905.

She was elected to Parliament as a member of the Progressive Conservative party through a by-election in 1950 and she served until her defeat in 1963.

Ms. Fairclough was also the first woman to be acting prime minister of Canada (Feb. 19-20, 1958). In recognition of this, the Queen bestowed on Ms. Fairclough, in 1992, the title Right Honourable. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1972 and a Companion of the Order in 1994.

Originally, her stamp was to be the first in a series honouring outstanding living Canadians. Two were planned in 2006. This did not come to fruition, however, as Ms. Fairclough passed away short of her 100th birthday in November, 2004. (The second stamp is that of jazz pianist Oscar Peterson to be issued Aug. 15 for his 80th birthday.)

On Ms. Fairclough's stamp, there is a tiny replica of the "snowflake" medal of the Order of Canada (look for a small pen-and-ink drawing between the Parliament Buildings and the beginning of her name.) How it will appear next is not known; perhaps the individual selected might be wearing the Order or, perhaps it might appear in the margin or the stamp perforations might be shaped like the "snowflake."

This additional design element allows stamp collectors to start a new type of collection: members of the Order of Canada. In addition to those to be issued, other stamps with Order of Canada members include all deceased governor generals since Vincent Massey, former prime ministers Pearson and Trudeau, astronauts Marc Garneau and Roberta Bondar, hockey players Guy Lafleur and Wayne Gretzky, and authors Morley Callaghan and Anne Hébert.

Are you interested in reptiles on stamps or "creatures of the slime" as a recent Australia stamp issue calls them? Check [www.boysen-net.de](http://www.boysen-net.de). If you collect United Nations and its offices, visit [www.unpi.com](http://www.unpi.com), the site of the United Nations philatelists. Don't forget the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada's site at [www.rpsc.org](http://www.rpsc.org). It features a library of original articles and a listing of all Canadian stamps since 2001 identified by Scott and Darnell numbers.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).

June 11, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen



## STAMPS

# U.S. post office introduces 'customized postage'

BY CHARLES VERGE

Back in November, I reported on the U.S. trial period for personalized stamps and indicated the United States Post Office was to report back within 90 days of October 1, 2004, on whether the personalized stamp program would continue. In fact, the 90 days came and went and it was almost 180 days before the USPS pronounced itself.

On April 26, 2005, the USPS announced the resumption of the sale of personalized stamps for a one-year trial period with an odd proviso. It doesn't call them stamps. The new adhesives are described as "customized postage" in deference to the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee, which is not in favour of personalized stamps.

In fact, Nicholas Barranca of the USPS feels "personalized postage" is "really no different than what a postage meter (stamp) is." In addition, the USPS also issued rules prohibiting use of the new stamps by commercial entities and requiring a review process to ban photos deemed to be embarrassing to the Post Office.

Stamps.com, which had been involved in the first trial period, promptly started selling "customized postage" in panes of 20, calling them PhotoStamps, on May 17, 2005. The company apparently paid the USPS between \$200,000 and \$300,000 as a fee to be allowed to sell the stamps.

The American Philatelic Society, leading philatelic newspapers and the general public support these stamps. They are likely here to stay.

Simply put, they are just another step in the evolution of how postage is paid. It all started with manuscript, then hand-stamp markings indicating postage paid or due before proceeding to the postage label in 1840.

Since then, other forms of postage payment have come along to improve the postal service. Some examples of these are pre-paid postal stationery, postal meters, permit mail and self-adhesive stamps.

A sheet of 20 37-cent stamps from Stamps.com will cost \$16.99 U.S. This is \$9.59 U.S. above face value. If you order from two to nine sheets the price is \$14.99 U.S.

Another firm, Endicia Internet Postage ([www.pictureitpostage.com](http://www.pictureitpostage.com)), has joined the fray. Their price for a sheet of 20 is \$16.95, four cents cheaper a sheet than Stamps.com. They offer 18 different print colour selections for the stamp background while Stamps.com has 10 on offer. Both firms have a long list of restrictions and rules and regulations that is well worth reading. One is they will not ship stamps anywhere outside the U.S., its territories or Armed Forces Post Offices. If you have access to a U.S. address for delivery, I presume you can order these stamps.

When I was in college, one of the books on the curriculum was Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. Although it is still considered a must read for political scientists, I found it somewhat boring and stilted at the time. In any event, France issued a stamp on April 25 commemorating the 200th anniversary of de Tocqueville's birth (1805-1859). You can purchase this stamp and other French offerings through La Poste's website (<http://timbres.laposte.fr/eng/home.cgi?cmd=af-ficher#>) or by mail at La Poste, Service Philatélique de La Poste 28, rue de la Redoute, 92266 Fontenay-aux-Roses Cedex, France.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).

June 25, 2005

The Ottawa Citizen



# Polar Bear to be replaced in Canada Post 2006 lineup

BY CHARLES VERGE

Earlier this week, Canada Post announced its 2006 stamp program. New definitives will be issued in December 2005 to match the new postal rates coming into effect mid-January.

The popular Flowers and Flag over different Canadian scenes will return with a variety of new flowers and five new scenes. In addition, there will be a pair of \$2 stamps showing the Sable Island.

Horse and Peregrine Falcon will replace the current Polar Bear stamp. Earlier, on Oct. 20, two \$1 stamps will replace the \$1 Loon in use since 1998 and will feature the Atlantic Walrus and the White-tailed Deer. These high value stamps will continue to have engraving as a major part of their design.

Bryan Adams's photograph of the Queen will be replaced in 2006 by a special issue available all year long to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday. The new rates are 51 cents for domestic letters, 89 cents for letters to the U.S. and \$1.49 for those destined elsewhere.

Commemoratives proposed for 2006 are two stamps for the 10th series of the Lunar New Year, the year of the Dog (January); two for the Winter Olympic Games featuring Skeleton and team pursuit in Speed Skating (February); and four more for gardens on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Ontario Horticultural Association.

The second quarter of the year will see a single stamp, to be available until replaced, to be used for birthday cards (April); two stamps celebrating the art of Dorothy Knowles in the Art Canada series (April); singles stamps to celebrate the 100th anniversary of McClelland & Stewart and the Canadian Labour Congress (April); the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Museum of Civilization will be honoured by a single domestic rate stamp (May); and single stamps will be placed on sale for the 50th anniversary of the Vancouver Aquarium and the 100th anniversary of the Atlas of Canada (June).

July 9, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

Summer issues include the World Lacrosse Championships and Mountaineering on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the first meeting of the Alpine Club of Canada (July); four stamps calling attention to the art and sport of duck decoys and four more for the wine and cheese industries (August); Great Canadian Opera singers will be honoured on four stamps (September); and one stamp will be issued for Macdonald College of McGill University on the occasion of its centennial (September).

Stamp Month in October will feature four stamps on endangered species (Swift Fox, Blue Racer Snake, Tiger Salamander and Newfoundland Marten) and one stamp for the 50th anniversary of the Society of Graphic Designers of Canada. Most of Canada's stamp designers belong to this professional group.

In November, the year will close with the usual Christmas stamps. Three stamps will feature Christmas cards and one a Madonna and Child.

As in past years there are sure to be more additions to the program as the year goes on.

I'll try to report on these in future columns.

*Charles Verge is 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. E-mail: vergec@sympatico.ca.*



July 23, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen



Is the placement of the face value of the stamp an error, or by design?

## Don't be fooled by design

BY CHARLES VERGE

Do you see anything wrong with the picture above? Some stamps collectors and sellers on Internet auctions would lead you to believe that because the numeral 50 is not to the left or right, it is an error. This is far from the truth.

The stamp was designed this way. The straight line of the design elements was intentional. The designer, Réjean Myette, notes the stamps "give a strong sense of the graceful, fluid motions that occur in the water, conveying the strength and elegance of aquatic sports."

When the two silhouetted figures, representing a swimmer doing the butterfly stroke and a diver spinning in mid-air, are viewed from different angles, they call to mind other strokes and sports. The centrally oriented typography allows the stamps to be viewed vertically or horizontally. Each stamp is exactly twice as long as it is wide, making the pane of eight into a square. The deep black silhouettes were printed with two different inks to produce opacity. They are in sharp contrast to the bright background of dappled blue, pixelized to suggest light dancing on water.

The two stamps were issued July 5 in anticipation of the Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur's World Championship being held in Montreal this week and next. Three million self-adhesive stamps were produced by Lowe Martin using seven-colour lithography plus spot varnish on Tullis Russell Coatings paper. They seemed to be popular. I tried to buy some last week and found none in three post offices.

Canada Post, in a rare Saturday launch last week, issued the second stamp in its five-year program to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the founding of New France, which will culminate with the 400th anniversary of Quebec City in 2008. This year's offering celebrates the 400th anniversary of the founding of Port-Royal in the Bay of Fundy. The 50-cent domestic rate stamp features a drawing made by Samuel de Champlain of the Habitation at Port-Royal. This was the second settlement of New France. The first was at Ile Ste-Croix, set up in 1604 by Champlain and Pierre Dugua, Sieur de Mons (who was honoured in a joint-issue stamp with France last year). Half the settlers died of cold and scurvy. Port-Royal, on the other hand, was a success and was the site where the "order of the Good Cheer" was created, an order that exists in Nova Scotia to this day.

The U.S. stamp weekly, *Linn's Stamp News*, reported that the 2006 stamp in this series would be a joint issue with the United States. Neither Canada Post or the U.S. Postal Service has confirmed this and the stamp is not listed on Canada Post's 2006 program.

*Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: verges@sympatico.ca.*



# Competition adds fun to shows

BY CHARLES VERGE

I spent the last two weekends of July at U.S. national-level stamp shows.

First I was in Crystal City, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis-St. Paul, July 22-24, for the annual show. On July 29-31, I went to Tyson's Corner, a suburb of Washington, D.C., to attend the 50th convention of the American First Day Cover Society (AFDCS). In between, I visited the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum for an orientation session, having just recently been appointed for a two-year term to their Council of Philatelists. I will have more about the NPM and the Council in a further column.

The two shows could not have been more different. The Minnesota show, held annually in the same venue, is one of the less strong amongst the United States' 30+ annual national shows. The American Philatelic Society requires that a national-level show have at least 2,500 sheets of exhibits to retain its national status. Many shows scramble to meet that criterion. The Minnesota show this year had 3,200 sheets, half of which came from two teams who competed against each other.

These team challenges are the new thing in U.S. competitive philately. The Bittersweet, out of Hartford, Connecticut, are led by a very creative Tony Dewey, known as "Mother" among the members. About five years ago, the Bittersweet decided to select a show each year to attend and display the exhibits they have been building up throughout the year. They tend to choose a show that is struggling and in need of exhibits. Last year, the Bittersweet thought it might enliven things if they challenged other groups to meet them in the selected city. In 2004, they chose the Midnight Mavericks out of Houston, Texas, as their opponents in Indianapolis. The Bittersweet got trounced in the team competition. This year, they challenged the St. Louis Bears, and this time they won by a single point (73-72). Not only does team competition make the attendance at shows more fun, it helps build friendships and creates mentoring opportunities and exchanges of ideas between exhibitors and teams.

As a philatelic judge, I have the crazy idea that I should try to exhibit in all the different classes of philately. At this time there are 15. I have four done and three underway. One of these is a First Day Cover exhibit, which I showed for the first time in Minnesota and then in Washington.

Although the AFDCS show is a national-level show, it does not offer all the classes in its competition. It is a limited show based around covers and material produced for noting first days of issue of stamps and postal stationery and events such as presidential inaugurations.

The show is very much a family affair and more like a convention than a public show. AFDCS members come to exhibit, attend seminars, exchange ideas and honour the men and women who design the special envelopes and cachets used in this part of the hobby.

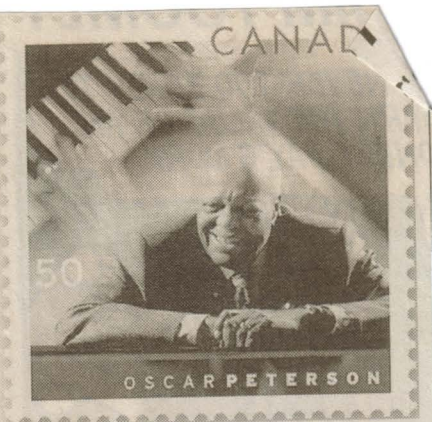
First day and event cover collecting is big in the U.S.. This is part of the U.S. hobby that is driven by private companies and individuals. It has died in Canada since the Post Office Department started issuing official first day covers for its stamp issues in 1973. These official Post Office covers drove the private cachet makers and designers out of business in Canada. The AFDCS would like to see first day cover collecting rise from the ashes in this country, but it is likely a tall order.

**CHARLES VERGE** is 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. E-mail: [verge@sympatico.ca](mailto:verge@sympatico.ca).

August 6, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen



August 20, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen



The stamp honouring Oscar Peterson marked a major change in practice.

## A notable double issue

BY CHARLES VERGE

Last Monday, Aug. 15, was a good day for stamps. Canada Post issued two on the same day celebrating two very different events.

The Oscar Peterson stamp on the occasion of his 80th birthday was a major change to stamp issuing practices in Canada. It was the first time that a stamp was issued to celebrate a living individual and his accomplishments. Previously, stamps showing live people were issued to celebrate specific events, not the individuals themselves. The unveiling of the Peterson stamp was held at HMV's Superstore in downtown Toronto in the presence of Mr. Peterson and his family, Diana Krall and her husband, Elvis Costello, and officials of Canada Post, Universal Music Canada and HMV as well as the general public.

There are certainly a number of Canadians and stamp collectors who will object to Canada Post's issuing stamps showing individuals still living. They will see this as a slap in the face to tradition; a break in the rule that no individual, except governors general and prime ministers, should be portrayed on a stamp until 10 years after his death; and opening the flood gates to less meritorious individuals. As for tradition, yes, this is the first time officially; however, many living Canadians have found their way onto Canadian stamps since the first one in 1958. Many, such as the secretary who portrayed a nurse on a stamp of that year, were used as models. As for the 10-year rule, it does not exist here, nor ever has. It is believed to exist by many people because our postal friends in the United States apply it religiously. As for the third point, I am sure the Stamp Advisory Committee (SAC) will now receive additional suggestions for stamp issues. As a member of the SAC, I can guarantee you that the committee has set stringent criteria to be met by any living Canadian before he can be seen on a stamp. By carefully examining the pane of 16 stamps issued for Mr. Peterson, you should find an indication of at least two of these criteria.

The second stamp issued that day was more traditional in nature. It commemorated a tragic event in our history, the 250th anniversary of the deportation of the Acadians in 1755. The two main features of the stamp are the Acadian flag and a 1930 stamp showing Grand-Pré, one of the evacuated Acadian villages and the site of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous epic poem *Evangeline*. The Acadian flag was chosen on Aug. 15, 1884, by Acadians meeting in Prince Edward Island. It is basically the French tricolour with a gold star representing the patron saint of Acadians, Stella Maris or the Virgin Mary, and the star that guides the mariner.

Charles Verge is 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. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



## STAMPS



Canada Post has issued a stamp to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the discovery and introduction of the Salk polio vaccine to Canada.

# Don't get unhinged — join a club

BY CHARLES VERGE

The deck chairs are set aside, the cottage has been closed for another season and you are going back to your stamp collection. Stamp clubs are starting up again. Are you a member? If not, why not? Across the country, hundreds of clubs meet regularly and there are many benefits to being a member.

Stamp clubs allow you to exchange ideas and stamps with fellow collectors. They often hold seminars, lectures and presentations. Many clubs have club circuit books or bring in those from The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. In these books, you can find the missing item you need to complete a series — sometimes at a low cost. Many clubs have silent or called auctions where you can find new and intriguing items. Other clubs sponsor stamp shows where you can hone your exhibiting skills. Some may also organize training sessions on how to prepare your exhibit. Although stamp collecting is considered a solitary hobby, it need not be. Go and visit your area stamp club and join.

The RA Stamp Club and the Ottawa Philatelic Society have a full and well structured program scheduled for the next few months. The RA Stamp Club meets Mondays at 8 p.m. starting Sept. 12 with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. at the RA Centre, 2451 Riverside Dr. (near the Billings Bridge Shopping Centre). Use the West entrance and go to the second floor. For more information contact the president, Brian Watson, at [brian150@sympatico.ca](mailto:brian150@sympatico.ca). The Ottawa Philatelic Society meets Thursdays at the Hintonburg Community Centre, 1064 Wellington St. (about three blocks east of Parkdale Avenue), starting Sept. 8. The room is open from 6:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7:45 p.m. For more information about the club contact the president at [dicklogan@rogers.com](mailto:dicklogan@rogers.com).

Across the river, the Amicale des philatélistes de l'Outaouais, founded in 1978, also meets Mondays at the Centre Communautaire Fontaine, 120 rue Charlevoix, Gatineau (Hull Sector) between 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. Their meetings also start Sept. 12. The president of the club, Ginette Simard-Krueger, is the contact person and can be reached at [simakrueger@rogers.com](mailto:simakrueger@rogers.com).

Yesterday, Canada Post issued a stamp to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the discovery and the introduction of the Salk polio vaccine to Canada and the courageous act of Paul Martin, Sr. who, despite setbacks in the U.S. caused by defective vaccines, overrode his health officials who were under pressure to suspend the vaccination program. It was Mr. Martin's sole responsibility, as minister of health, to determine the program's fate. Mr. Martin had battled polio as a child, as had his son, the current prime minister. He felt confident that vaccine from Canada's laboratories were sound and continued the program. Because of his historic decision, Canada led the world in using vaccines against polio.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



September 17, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS



Philatelic anniversaries in 2005 include the 1930 Grand-Pré stamp that formed part of the above commemorative, issued Aug. 15, marking 250 years since the Acadian Deportation. The 1930 stamp portrays the Acadian Church at Grand-Pré National Historic Site and the statue of Evangeline.

# A stamp on the past

BY CHARLES VERGE

Important philatelic anniversaries in Canada are being observed this year. Along with the 75th anniversary of the Grand-Pré stamp featured above:

- Simon Solomon was appointed postmaster of St. John's, Newfoundland, 200 years ago on April 18, 1805, and the first post office opened in that town;
- On Feb. 28, 1855, Western Canada's first post office was established at Winnipeg. In the same year, Prince Edward Island (April 1), then a separate colony, and the province of Canada (May 1) instituted a mail registration system;
- The British dirigible R-100 left its base in England on July 29, 1930, on a flight to Canada, arriving in Montreal Aug. 1, carrying official mail from politicians and dignitaries. The Canadian Aerophilatelic Society records only two covers currently in private hands.
- On June 8, 1955, Canadian Pacific Airlines made the first regular flight from Sydney, Australia, to Amsterdam via Vancouver and the north polar route. Mail was carried on the flight.

The Canadian Postal Museum has always shown a keen interest in mail-order by catalogue. In 2002, it opened its mail-order exhibition, "Satisfaction Guaranteed." Léon Robichaud, a historian and professor at the Université de Sherbrooke, featured the mail-order catalogue as a theme for his 2001 graduate history course on multimedia. Postal museum historian John Willis's website Before E-commerce ([www.civilization.ca/cpm/catalog](http://www.civilization.ca/cpm/catalog)) preserves information and data gathered by the students and the museum. From fashion to furnishings, the website captures customers, company histories, ordering and delivery. Browse through catalogues from 1880 to 1975, the heyday of mail-order. Through interactive activities, collectors can meet, view museum artifacts, and learn about care for collections; teachers can explore catalogues and other resources and learn about classroom use; and students can find homework help and catalogues to check out. There's not much philately, but if you enjoy nostalgia, history or are just interested in what people once wore, this is a fascinating site.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).

## THE EASTERN ONTARIO POSTCARD SHOW

Paper, postcard and stamp dealers are at today's show in Merrickville at the Community Centre from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free parking. Door prizes.



October 1, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS

# October is for stamp collectors

BY CHARLES VERGE

Today is the first day of Stamp Collecting Month. Stamp clubs and schools across the country will celebrate the "King of Hobbies" with various events. Philatelic newspapers and magazines will put out special editions. Today, Canada Post issues its 16th annual Stamp Collecting Month set. The 50-cent stamps, sold in self-adhesive booklets of eight, showcase the "youth" sports of skateboarding, snowboarding, mountain biking and wall-climbing.

At the Canadian Postal Museum, it's a fun-filled weekend of philately. Today and tomorrow, Normand Caron, a well-known Montreal philatelist, will introduce all ages to the fascinating world of stamp collecting. Young enthusiasts will have a chance to win a Stamp Quest Starter Kit. Bring in your own stamp collections and trade with other collectors. Stamp Fun runs today and tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is free with museum admission. The Canadian Postal Museum is housed in the Canadian Museum of Civilization. For more information call 776-7000 or 1 (800) 555-5621. On Sunday, Oct. 23, I will be at the museum for Coffee and Conversation at 2 p.m. (English) and 3 p.m. (French). I will be speaking on "organizing and presenting your stamp collection," but I will answer any questions the audience might have.

Archeologists excavating the Via Eugenia in Greece — in advance of the construction of a major new highway also to be called the Via Eugenia — have located an ancient post-road. It is open to conjecture whether mail was carried on this route but it is highly likely as the Via Eugenia was the most important and efficient route in the Greek peninsula at that time. Built between 146 and 120 BC, it is nine metres wide and stretches across Greece over 800 kilometres from modern Albania's Adriatic Sea coast to modern Turkey. It is a two-lane divided highway with a median and barriers on each side to keep the chariots on the road. Romans and Greeks drove on the left side of the road as the British, Irish and other countries still do. The reason was simple. They did not wish to whip other drivers coming in the opposite direction. Excavation has unearthed remains of safety features, inns and post-stations along the road. Post-stations were strategically placed every 11 to 22 kilometres while the inns were about 64 kilometres apart. It is believed post-stations were staffed with veterinarians, grooms and blacksmiths. Most of the road was pillaged for building stones but remarkably, three kilometres of the 2,000-year-old road are still usable and the Greek Ministry of Culture intends turning it into a tourist walk. It would be a great location for a post office.

*Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: vergeg@sympatico.ca.*



## STAMPS

G.



U.S. NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The plane that flew upside down due to a printing error is probably the most famous U.S. stamp among collectors.

# Inverted Jenny price still soaring

BY CHARLES VERGE

For most collectors of U.S. stamps, the most fabled stamp is neither the first two stamps of the country nor the famous one-cent 'Z' Grill issue of 1868 of which only one copy is known to be in private hands. In fact, it is not any 19th-century stamp. The 100 copies of the "Inverted Jenny" are the most talked about, written up, and sought after of U.S. stamps. The "normal" stamp of this classic of U.S. philately was issued on May 13, 1918, to pay the 24-cent rate for airmail service between Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. The rate included 10 cents for special delivery.

Collectors rushed to buy the stamps to prepare first flight covers and cards to be carried on the May 15 inaugural flight. One such collector, William Robey, was anxious to acquire a full sheet of the new stamp. As a philatelist he was aware the multi-coloured stamp required two passes in the Spider press and he remembered the uproar over the inverted errors in the bi-coloured 1901 Pan American Exhibition issue. On May 10, he wrote to fellow collector Malcolm H. Ganser, "I think it would pay to be on the lookout for inverts ..." It turns out Mr. Robey was right.

Although the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was careful in its quality control, one sheet of "Inverted Jenny" stamps was sold and eight other sheets were found and destroyed by postal officials. Mr. Robey purchased the sheet at the New York Avenue postal branch on May 14, 1918. He asked to see other sheets. The clerk became suspicious and closed his window. Mr. Robey tried to find more error sheets at other postal branches but no other sheet with the "Inverted Jenny" design was ever reported sold.

When officials became aware that a sheet with "planes flying upside down" was sold, they added the word TOP at one side of the sheet so printers would know which end to put into the press on the second pass of future printings. They also tried to bully Mr. Robey into returning his sheet of "inverts," but he was already doing the rounds of stamp dealers, unsuccessfully trying to get the best price for his sheet. He found them largely unmoved by the significance of the find, or greedy in their profit making. A week after purchasing the sheet, Mr. Robey sold it for \$15,000 to Eugene Klein, a respected stamp dealer and auctioneer, who told Mr. Robey to name his price. A day later, Mr. Klein sold it to Col. E.W.H. Green for \$20,000. It is under Col. Green's ownership that Mr. Klein divided the sheet up, but not before lightly numbering in pencil each stamp from 1 to 100.

The only plate block from the sheet, (Positions 87-88/97-98) is being offered for sale on Oct. 19 by Siegel Auction Galleries ([www.siegelauctions.com](http://www.siegelauctions.com)) with an estimated realization of \$2.5 to \$3 million U.S. I will continue the story of this fascinating stamp in my next column and let you know what it realized for its current anonymous owner.

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October 29, 2005

The Ottawa Citizen

OCTOBER 29, 2005

## STAMPS



This 'Inverted Jenny' block was worth a cool \$3,500,000 to its buyer.

# Upside down Jenny fetches millions

BY CHARLES VERGE

This week's column continues the story of the United States' most famous stamp, the 'Inverted Jenny'. I mentioned that the unique plate block from the sheet of 100 was to be auctioned Oct. 19. The price realized was \$2.97 million U.S., including buyer's premium or commission. The price paid was a new auction record for a U.S. stamp. The previous record was held by the rarest U.S. stamp, the 1867 one-cent 'Z' Grill stamp, which sold in 1998 for \$935,000 U.S.

Now, on with the story. Hettie Robinson Green, the most miserly, the most hated but also the richest woman in the U.S., left an estate of \$100 million when she died in 1916. Hettie Green lived as though she were poverty-stricken. She would eat cold oatmeal every day to save the expense of heating water. When her son suffered a severe leg injury, she took so long trying to find a free clinic to treat him that his leg had to be amputated because of advanced infection.

That son, Col. Ned Green, was the one-legged man who bought the full sheet of 'Inverted Jenny' stamps found by William Robey. Under Green's ownership, the sheet was broken up, and the colonel was said to have kept only 20 stamps in four blocks, including the bottom block of eight containing the plate number and the arrow guide. The arrow served as a guide for ensuring proper placement of the colours during the printing process. Later the block of eight was broken down further with the left block of four being separated into four singles. However, when Green's stamps were sold between 1942 and 1946 (he died in 1936), there were 38 'Inverted Jenny' stamps offered. It is likely that the additional 18 stamps had not sold when they were offered to the public in 1918.

Green encased a copy of the 'Inverted Jenny' in a locket along with a common copy of the 24-cent stamp and gave it to his wife Mabel, who kept it until she died in 1950. She willed it to a companion. It was offered at the Siegel Galleries' Rarities Auction in 2002 for \$170,000 U.S., at which time it did not sell. It apparently was sold privately later for an undisclosed amount.

The Philatelic Foundation of New York keeps track of this stamp and has a photographic reconstruction containing 93 of the 100 stamps in the sheet. Of the remaining seven stamps, four have never been on the market, one exists but no photo is known, and two are missing. The missing two were from a stolen block of four; two stamps have been retrieved.

Charles Verge is 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. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



November 12/2005

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## STAMPS



Bill Gross bought the Inverted Jenny plate block and traded it to Donald Sundman for his 1868 Z-Grill, above.

# Now, that was a trade!

BY CHARLES VERGE

There has never been a trade like it before. The U.S. Inverted Jenny plate block, which recently sold for \$2.97 million U.S., was swapped on Nov. 2, two weeks after being purchased. California collector Bill Gross, who bought the upside-down-planes plate block anonymously, swapped the block for the one-cent 1868 "Z-Grill" that belonged to Donald Sundman, president of the Mystic Stamp Company of Camden, New York.

It can only be described as a swap of mega proportion and good for Mr. Sundman. He purchased the "Z-Grill" stamp in the late 1990s for \$935,000 U.S. What Mr. Gross gets out of it is the ownership of the unique "Z-Grill" stamp to complete his collection of U.S. stamps. Another copy of the "Z-Grill" stamp exists, but it is in captivity at the New York Public Library.

Wow. It is not often one heaps praise on a specialized catalogue, but the 2006 edition of *The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps* is a wonder to behold.

The new editor, D. Robin Harris, has pulled all stops to create a truly specialized catalogue. Its first printing in September was an instant success with more than 50-per-cent pre-sold in anticipation of the work of the new editor. Harris is a well-known writer and compiler of extremely specialized handbooks on the definitive issues of the Elizabethan era of Canada.

In this catalogue, Harris has re-scanned 90 per cent of all illustrations. Each stamp now includes information about the method of printing and the name of the designer where available. Dozens of new constant plate varieties, modern definitive varieties and re-entries have been added. Booklet panes are now illustrated in colour and the entire pane is shown, some with pane varieties. Dozens of previously unlisted booklets are listed for the first time. Selected postal rates are included at the points where rates change. There are title bars for each year and index tabs on the side of the pages for each decade or series.

Harris has also transferred many of the techniques he uses in his handbooks to the catalogue, such as series-oriented tables to help identify varieties. He has also made an effort to show the "real thing," e.g., in the introduction he shows tagging illustrations as they really look under the UV light. Small additions add appeal, such as: unassigned Scott numbers and assigned numbers for stamps issued in a series but at different dates being mentioned in their respective location, and joint issues with other countries being illustrated.

The introduction has doubled in size (six to 12 pages) and a huge amount of new information has been included along with a full year of new issues added, but the catalogue is still only eight pages more in length. At 576 pages, the price remains the same as last year: \$42.95 Cdn. The catalogue is available from The Unitrade Press, 99 Floral Parkway, Toronto, ON, M6L 2C4 or by phone at 416-242-5900 or through your area stamp dealer.

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# Favourite festive gifts for a philatelist

November 26, 2008  
The Ottawa Citizen

BY CHARLES VERGE

The rage among collectors is Canada Post's coin-and-stamp sets. Two new products are wooden boxes containing the \$1 White-tailed Deer or the \$1 Atlantic Walrus stamp pairs (one mint, one cancelled) accompanied by matching \$5 coins (\$49.55 each). I recommend early purchase as they sell out quickly. The \$2 Sable Island Horse and \$2 Peregrine Falcon stamp-and-coin sets will be available after Dec. 19.

The 2005 edition of *Collection Canada* features a 13-page spread on world-renowned jazz pianist Oscar Peterson, for whom a stamp was issued Aug. 15, his 80th birthday. It was the first time a Canadian stamp was issued to celebrate the achievements of a living person. Purchasers will find a 15-minute three-track Oscar Peterson CD in the inside front cover, including one song never released before on CD (\$54.95).

Another new service of Canada Post is a whole year of first-day covers in a keepsake box (\$78.95). These are available at selected post offices, stamp dealers and the National Philatelic Centre, 75 St. Ninian's St., Antigonish, NS B2G 2R8 or by calling 1-800-565-4362.

In my last column, I praised the new 2006 edition of *The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*. For me, it is the best buy of the year. It's available at The Unitrade Press, 99 Floral Parkway, Toronto, ON, M6L 2C4, or by calling 1-416-242-5900, or through an area stamp dealer.

Ottawa dealer Ian Kimmerly (112 Sparks St., 235-9119) has the most extensive array of philatelic books, pamphlets, supplies, stamps and postal history items. His firm is the official publications distributor for the British North America Philatelic Society. For a list visit: [www.iankimmerly.com/boutique/bnaps\\_books.html](http://www.iankimmerly.com/boutique/bnaps_books.html) or at the BNAPS website: [www.bnaps.org/pubs.htm](http://www.bnaps.org/pubs.htm).

The National Philatelic Centre also offers a selection of Hong Kong, Macau, China, U.S.A., Taiwan, Dutch Antilles, Great Britain, Isle of Man and United Nations. Ask to be put on Canada Post's mailing list for free quarterly Details and Collections publications that list new offers and stories behind new issues.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



December 10, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS

While Canada Post has not yet issued the image of its 2006 joint stamp with the U.S., the U.S. post office has released images of both the U.S. and the Canadian stamps to be issued May 29.



# Joint release with U.S. sets sail

BY CHARLES VERGE

Although Canada Post has released the fact there is to be a joint stamp issue with the U.S. in 2006, it has not released the stamp image. The United States Post Office has, on the other hand, released its image and that of Canada's as well. These images are found above.

As a stamps columnist for the *Citizen*, I have found reporting on new Canadian issues can be tricky. As most readers know, I am a member of Canada Post's Stamp Advisory Committee, which gives me some prior information on coming releases, but my non-disclosure agreement with the post office means I must maintain a fine balance between what I know and what I can report.

This column's "scoop" announcement of the Oscar Peterson stamp was an example of this. While Canada Post had not yet made the issue public, the Universal Post Union's world numbering system website [www.wnsstamps.ch/en/](http://www.wnsstamps.ch/en/) mentioned the Peterson stamp and its date of issue. As far as I was concerned, the information was in the public domain and could be reported. However, Mr. Peterson's record company disagreed as they had planned an official announcement jointly with Canada Post.

The upcoming 2006 joint issue with the U.S. celebrates Champlain's mapping of the North American Eastern seaboard. Canada's stamp is part of a five-year series started in 2004 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of New France. The image of the Canadian stamp shown above has the wrong denomination. The stamp will be issued with the new domestic rate of 51 cents.

A souvenir sheet of four stamps with two from each country will be available. The stamps and souvenir sheets will be issued May 29 during the WASHINGTON 2006, the World Philatelic Exhibition, to be held at the Washington Convention Center, from May 27 to June 3.

Joint issues are defined as stamps from two or more countries celebrating the same event or personality. The stamps often show the same design and are normally issued on the same day in each of the issuing countries. More information on joint issue collecting can be found at the International Philatelic Society of Joint Stamp Issues Collectors through their website <http://rzimmerm.club.fr/index.htm>.

With this column, I begin my 11th year as stamps columnist for the *Citizen*. When I first started in December 1995, I had big shoes to fill. My predecessors, Ian Kimmerly and the late Ralph Mitchener, were astute collectors and seasoned writers. Mr. Mitchener even penned rules for how and what to write in a stamp column for a non-philatelic newspaper. In 1992, for his stamp column writing, he received the highest recognition, a Large Silver medal.

I have tried to follow the Mitchener rules as best I could, but at the same time have tried to infuse the column with my own approaches.

Charles Verge is president of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Write to him c/o The Citizen, 1101 Baxter Rd., Box 5020, Ottawa K2C 3M4. E-mail: [vergec@sympatico.ca](mailto:vergec@sympatico.ca).



December 24, 2005  
The Ottawa Citizen

## STAMPS



On Jan. 12, Canada Post issues this stamp for the Queen's 80th birthday.

# Her Majesty's 80th birthday

BY CHARLES VERGE

With 54 years on the throne, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II — our head of state since Feb. 2, 1952 — is Canada's fourth-longest reigning monarch after Louis XIV (72 years); Queen Victoria (63 years) and King George III (56 years).

On April 21, the Queen celebrates her 80th birthday. On Jan. 12, Canada Post will issue a 51-cent domestic letter-rate stamp, Canada's third definitive-commemorative. The first two also celebrated royal events: the 50th anniversaries of the accession in 2002 and the coronation in 2003.

Definitive-commemoratives are defined as definitive because they are available year-round and can be reprinted at will; and commemorative because they celebrate a particular event. Commemoratives are generally issued in small quantities, not reprinted and available for a short period.

The birthday stamp design is based on a photograph of the Queen taken during a 2002 visit to RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa. Designers Jeremy Linskill and Glenda Rissman of q30 design inc. "close-cropped the image" and "blurred the background of attending Mounties and drew colour from the traditional red RCMP tunic to brighten the background and make the image stand out."

The self-adhesive stamp will be available in booklets of 10 with 10 floral stickers. The booklet cover shows six photographs spanning the Queen's teenage years to today. On her birthday, April 21, Canada Post will use the same design on a souvenir sheet of two stamps, but at the international rate of \$1.49.

Her Majesty first appears on stamps as a six-year-old princess in 1932 with Newfoundland's definitive six-cent stamp. She appears on a Canadian stamp in 1935 in a Silver Jubilee series celebrating the accession to the throne of her grandfather, George V. She is shown on the one-cent stamp. This stamp has a major variety called the "weeping Princess." Although two printing plates were used, the "tear" under her right eye is found only on Plate 1 in position 21; i.e., the first stamp in the third row of the sheet of 100. The variety is best collected in an upper left corner block of six stamps. A later portrait of the princess (10 years old) was used on Newfoundland definitive issues of 1936 and 1941.

In 1939, the princess and her sister, Princess Margaret, appeared on a Canadian one-cent stamp commemorating the Royal Visit of their parents, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. For her 21st birthday, she appears on a 1947 Newfoundland stamp; alone on a 1948 Canadian stamp commemorating her marriage to Phillip Mountbatten (Nov. 11, 1947); and, finally, on an October 1951 Canadian stamp celebrating the Royal Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, her title after her marriage. Since 1952, as Queen, she has been on hundreds of Canadian stamps.

I wish all my readers a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Season's Greetings, as well as a happy and prosperous New Year.

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