

CALGARY PHILATELIST

Issue 65

April 2004



In this issue: With both the secular and Chinese New Years just over, Patricia Prevey takes a look at stamps issued for these holidays. The postmarks illustrated above are for the most famous New Year's Day in history, the infamous Y2K.

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The CPS was founded in April 1922 by Dr. Edward George Mason. It is Chapter 66 of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, Chapter 1360 of the American Philatelic Society, and Chapter 91 of the American Topical Association.

A cumulative subject index from issue #1 to date for the CALGARY PHILATELIST exists but because of its length is too long to be published in this bulletin. A copy can be had for free from the editorial address at Box 6830.

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COMMITTEES - see page 13 for list of committee chairpersons

NEW YEAR STAMPS
by Patricia Prevey

Christmas has always been my favourite holiday and will continue to be long into the future. Still, it occurred to me while researching Christmas stamps that this winter holiday may be the one most widely celebrated on stamps, but not the only one so honoured. I'd like to tell a little about at least one other holiday which figures prominently on stamps.



Stamps issued to honour the start of each New Year have become very popular in the last few years, especially in countries that do not have a large population who celebrate Christmas or where, if they do, have added New Year's issues or switched from Christmas to only New Year's. Today many countries issue some form of a New Year's stamp, either to honour the holiday in the Gregorian calendar which dates back to the year 1583, or in the lunar calendar, which goes back much further. 2004 is the year 4701 of the lunar calendar.

Because of the difference in starting dates, New Year's stamps are issued at various times but usually late in December or early in January. The Gregorian calendar has origins based on the Earth's rotation around the sun, a time of roughly 365 days separated into twelve almost equal months. A lunar year is based on the phases of the Moon from new to full, repeated twelve times to complete a year. Because of the variances in the Moon's rotation during the twelve months, the first day in a lunar year is not on the same date every year. It is calculated according to the second new moon following the winter solstice.



The Gregorian months have names according to numbers in Latin, the lunar year from animal zodiac signs. Legend has it that before he departed from Earth, the Lord Buddha called on all the animals to report to him on the first day of the year. The twelve that came were rewarded with a year named for them.

The Chinese believe that the animal ruling the year in which a person is born has a profound affect on one's personality. The seventh day of the year is also considered to be everyone's birthday.



The Spring Festival celebrations which coincide with the start of a new year also have their beginnings in a legend. A village in China was ravaged by a monster one winter's eve. It returned a second winter to do the same thing. To prevent it happening a third time, the villagers scared it away with red banners (the colour that protects against evil) and used firecrackers, drums, and gongs to create loud noises. The plan worked and the villagers went on to celebrate for several days. Today those celebrations are both literal and symbolic.

Perhaps Japan was the first country to honour the lunar year, starting in 1935 with a stamp for New Year's 1936. Japan has issued a "Year of the ..." stamp continuously since then with only a short hiatus during World War Two. Starting again in 1948, the traditional custom of exchanging New Year's cards by mail was, and is, an essential way of celebrating. Stamps with lottery numbers were first issued in 1989, followed by a New Year's greeting stamp with a charity donation and a lottery number in 1991. This custom continues today.

The republic of China will, in 2004, begin their sixth series of lunar year stamps with the Year of the Monkey. Started with a single denomination stamp, it has grown into a set of four stamps of two designs and values, and a mini-sheet with the lower denomination. Although all are issued to commemorate the same New Year, they are often not issued on the same day. The time span can range from early January to mid-June, as was the case in 1972. Like Japan, their New Year's stamps come with a lottery number and the mini-sheet is given as a small gift. The People's Republic of China has issued New Year's stamps since the 1970s.

The USA began its series for the Chinese New Year with a single stamp on December 30, 1992, for the Year of the Rooster, and followed it through with the other animals in the cycle up to the Year of the Monkey on January 22, 2004. That

will be the last of the twelve characters associated with the Chinese cycle. It is unknown whether the series will be repeated or not.

Following the initial efforts of Jean Chen in the late 1980s to have a stamp honouring Chinese-Americans, years of intense lobbying resulted in the U.S. Stamp Advisory Committee (SAC) finally embracing the idea of issuing a Chinese Lunar Year stamp for 1993. Originally planned as a one-time issue, it proved so popular that it was decided to continue for the entire 12-year cycle. An instant moneymaker for the USPS, Chinese collectors (there are over 20 million in China alone) bought them by the millions to keep, not to use as postage.

Clarence Lee, a Honolulu graphic artist and a graduate of Yale University in Art, was offered the opportunity to submit an entry by Bradbury Thompson, his mentor at Yale and in 1992 a member of SAC. Lee's paper cut-out design of a rooster was the winner. Because of the strong acceptance of his first design, Lee was paid \$50,000 to do the next eleven stamps, also paper cut-outs of the animal figures. This series of stamps has made Lee so popular that his fans say he now could make far more by simply signing his signature on a piece of paper than he made creating the entire series.



Lee's third in the series, the Year of the Boar, was the USPS's last 29-cent stamp and the stamp with the shortest active life in the USA's history. It was officially first-class mail for only one day. Following two other rate increases, Lee's Year of the Snake stamp on January 6, 2000, was the first commemorative issued with a new increase. Originally printed as a 33-cent stamp, it had to be destroyed and reprinted at the last minute as a 34-cent stamp. In 2004, the USPS will issue, together with a single stamp for the Year of the Monkey, a souvenir sheet containing the previous eleven. They will all carry the current first-class rate of 37 cents.

Canada began its "Year of the ..." series on January 7, 1997, with the Ox. It was a fan-shaped souvenir of two domestic-rate stamps. The place of issue was Vancouver, home of Canada's largest Chinese community. "Year of the Tiger" was issued on January 8, 1998, in Toronto, the second largest Chinese community.

This issue was for two denominations, a single for the domestic rate, and a souvenir sheet for foreign mailings. There was also a lunar package which included issues from the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong. The third issue was in Calgary on January 8, 1999, at the Chinese Cultural Centre. As a CPS member, I received an invitation to the ceremony, where guests were feted to a demonstration of local New Year's celebration activities and a buffet of Chinese foods. It was one of the most pleasant First Day ceremonies I have ever attended. With the 1999 issue, the series continues in the same format of two denominations and issues from China and Hong Kong.

Several European countries have their own New Year stamps, some following the Gregorian date and others the lunar date. While Great Britain does not issue a New Year's stamp, the bailiwick of Jersey has done so since 1995, always as a single souvenir sheet depicting the animal in a humorous and striking fashion. Countries like Poland and Russia issue specific New Year's stamps while others include the holiday in the "Greetings" stamps.

References.

The author credits most of her information to Internet resources and would appreciate any additions and/or corrections.

PHILATELIC LITERATURE REVIEWS

by Leanteri Polvikoski

American Philatelist (2004 February) (Available for loan from the CPS Librarian at general meetings.) Full-colour glossy monthly, with articles on Columbia's airmail service, an FDC fake, Soviet postage stamps, West Indies postcards, free franking by a widowed American First Lady, and the Philippine War of 1899-1902, as well as lots of miscellaneous news and notes.

Gibbons Stamp Monthly (2004 January) (Sold at Chapters Chinook Centre, Indigo Signal Hill, and other news agents in Calgary) Full-colour monthly from the famous stamp dealer, covering international philately with an emphasis on the British Commonwealth. Articles in this month's magazine include Sarawak colonial stamps, Italy's castle definitives, windmills on stamps, Australian booklets, privately-carried covers from the 1870 siege of Paris, the latest on Machin printings, and of course the Gibbons new issues listing.

La Posta (2004 Feb/Mar) (US\$33 for six issues from La Posta, 33470 Chinook Plaza, Suite 216, Scappoose, Oregon 97056) Illustrated bimonthly for postal history of the USA. In this issue is included on-going series about the postal history of the Florida Keys (basically summarized as being every second decade all the post offices were blown away by a hurricane!), and the PMGs of the USA. Also are articles on pioneer forts of western USA, the green goods scam of the late 1800s (now replaced by the Nigerian scam), and a modern self-serve post office in Utah.

PHSC Journal #116 (2003 December) (Sample copy \$5 from Postal History Society of Canada, c/o Norm Wagner, #207 - 525 - 11 Avenue SW, Calgary, T2R 0C9) Postal history can be as old as stampless covers or as young as those new binary bar codes on your incoming mail. The PHSC covers all aspects of Canadian postal history. The issue at hand has articles on steamboat mail in Georgian Bay, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick registered mail, Newfoundland Caribou usage, and Saskatchewan's first mail stage robbery, as well as news and notes of the philatelic scene.

PMCC Bulletin (2004 February) (US\$32 per year from Post Mark Collectors Club, c/o Robert Milligan, 7014 Woodland Oaks Drive, Magnolia, Texas 77354-4898) Illustrated monthly for active traders and collectors of postmarks. Most of the info is about USA postmarks, but that is a matter of who sends in articles; they are interested in other countries. The PMCC has its own museum building, freehold yet! Besides club news and notes, there are articles on various postmarks and taking photos of post offices. The latter, incidently, is one method to add fun to your next vacation and encourage the kids in the hobby, by stopping at post offices along the way and not only getting postmarks but taking photos of the building.

Postcard Collector (2004 February) (Single copy US\$5.95 (Visa and Mastercard accepted) from Postcard Collector, Box 1050, Dubuque, Iowa 52004) Colour monthly from the Krause publishers, with lots of dealer ads and listings, as well as book reviews and new issues. Articles for this month include collecting linen postcards, how to date an unknown postcard, the definition of a pioneer postcard (in the USA, before 1898, when the Post Office legalized postcards), and topicals about leap years, movie theatres, and race suicide.

Topical Time (2004 Jan/Feb) (Available for loan from the CPS Librarian at general meetings.) For those who collect topicals, this bimonthly is a trove of dealer ads and checklists. This issue has articles on the topics of dams and levees, coconuts, United Europe precursors, and water.

LOTS OF INFORMATION FROM AN OLD POSTCARD
by Julius Szekrenyes

The postal card illustrated with this article was sent February 11, 1920. After 84 years, there is not much likelihood that the writer or recipient would protest my reading their mail or my comments on what they wrote. This is a postal card showing King George V on an Admiral issue (UX 33) of the 2-cent denomination, printed from 1919 to 1929. This gives an idea of our rate of inflation over eight decades. The card was sent from Blackie, Alberta, to Florenceville, New Brunswick. The cancel is a Blackie duplex, unfortunately only partial, but readable. There is no receiver cancel.

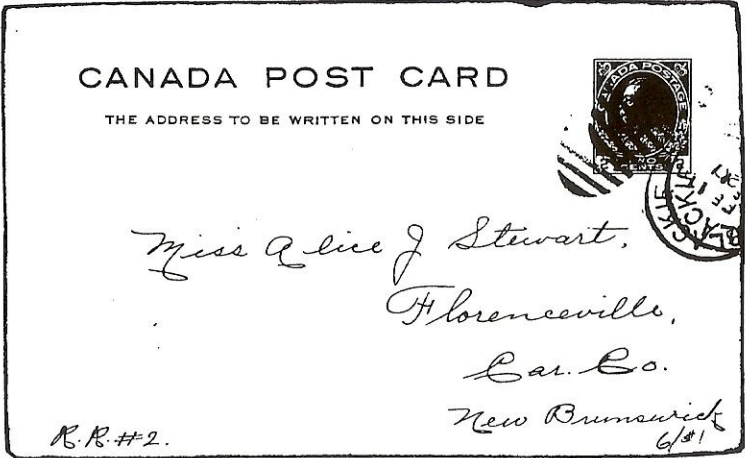
The message has three things of interest. The sender notes that she has received three Christmas presents in February, suggesting that the mails were slow that winter. One can only speculate why the long delay. (It still happens. Some years back, I received a Christmas package from the USA in April, a cheese collection that had dried out and was refused by the dog. But we can blame Customs for that, not Canada Post.)

The writer states that: "we are having lovely weather here now I believe we are all through with winter". Those good old chinooks. It is plain that optimism had an early beginning in Alberta, but we have enough experience now not to tempt the winter gods with rosy predictions. Now we expect a terrible March, questionable April, and one big snowfall in May.

The third comment is of more interest to me and more ominous: "I hope you won't have the flu again this winter. Are there many cases back there?". There had been a global influenza pandemic in 1918/19, at the end of the Great War, which infected more than a billion people (half the world's population at that time) and killed an estimated 21 million people. Canada, with a population of 8.8 million, had 50,000 deaths. The flu had the perverse tendency to kill the young and healthy, not the alcoholics or the old. The people who lived through this plague never forgot, and you can see from the writer's comments that flu remained an important concern in the following years. We should remember that the experts expect another severe flu or virus pandemic anytime now. Being a hard-nosed realist, I wonder who will get my stamp collection.

References.

- 1) THE CANADIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA
- 2) Pettigrew, Eileen THE SILENT ENEMY: CANADA AND THE DEADLY FLU OF 1918.
- 3) Collier, Richard THE PLAGUE OF THE SPANISH LADY



CALENDAR COVER EVENTS

There is a small group of philatelists who like to collect postmarks with symmetrical or palindromic calendar dates. The next one coming up will be Sunday, April 4, 2004, when you will be able to get 04-04-04 postmarks. The main post office will be closed but there should be lots of retail postal outlets at various drug stores or 7-Elevens that will be open and can provide handback cancels. If you have a computer, do up some cachets, stick on some stamps, and give it a whirl. You may have to explain yourself to the postal clerk, many of whom do not understand the ways of philately. May 6 will provide an ascending date of 04-05-06, but alas, you will have already missed the descending date of March 2, which gave 04-03-02.

Introduction.

In 1971, when Canada converted from Imperial to metric measurements, there was a considerable amount of moaning from those who didn't like change. It wasn't because they were opposed to the metric system per se, since Canada has had metric currency since Confederation and even the harshest opponents did not suggest going back to pounds sterling. My observation was that those who complained loudest about metric speed limit signs never paid attention to the old speed limits, so what we they on about for? But it could have been a lot worse, such as what happened with pre-Confederation Nova Scotia when there were multiple currencies and buying a postage stamp was like buying derivatives on today's stock market.

The Act Of January 1, 1860.

The trouble started with the Act to Establish the Decimal System of Accounting, which was passed into law on April, 15, 1859, and set to come into force on January 1 of the following year [1]. The problem was that there was no clean-cut transition from one currency to another because both continued to circulate. Paragraph 2 of the Act read as follows:

"2. All accounts to be rendered to the Provincial Government, or to any public officer or department by any officer or functionary, or by any party receiving aid from this province or otherwise accountable to the government or legislature thereof, shall be so rendered in dollars and cents; but any such accounts may have a second column containing sums in pounds, shillings, and pence, equivalent to the sums so stated in dollars and cents, if the accountant shall prefer to render his account in that form."

Paragraph 3 set out conversion rates as follow:

Gold sovereign = \$5
Silver crown = \$1.25
Silver half-crown = 62.5 cents
Silver florin = 50 cents
Silver shilling = 25 cents
Silver sixpence = 12.5 cents
Copper penny = 2 cents
Halfpenny = 1 cent

Fun With Postage Stamps.

Complaints appeared about the post offices playing loose and fancy with the conversion rates. A March 1860 newspaper article [2] complained that: *"A postage stamp is supposed to represent three pence, but according to our Decimal Currency Act, five cents (half-pence) will purchase one. If, however, one hands a seven pence halfpenny (6d sterling) in payment for a stamp, he receives in return with the stamp but seven cents (3 ½ d), by which means he pays fourpence instead of three pence, the true value. If, however, he presents a fifteen pence (1s sterling) he receives but twenty cents (10d), consequently he pays five pence for what is valued at five cents or 2 ½ d."*

Clear as mud, isn't it?

References.

- 1] Provincial Secretary's Office (1859-12-15) Notice. YARMOUTH HERALD (Yarmouth, Nova Scotia), page 4
- 2] Anonymous (1860-03-08) Our mongrel currency at the Post Office. YARMOUTH HERALD (Yarmouth, Nova Scotia), page 3

CPS ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUP

The CPS has an on-line discussion group where members can chat about philatelic matters, club business, or post news announcements. To join, send an e-mail to opuntia57@yahoo.ca with the subject heading "Subscribe CPS group". In the main body of the message, list your real name (no Internet alias, please) so we can verify your membership, and the e-mail address you want to subscribe under. If you are not a member of Yahoo Groups, you will have to register a name and password at their Website, but this is free and only has to be done once. Thereafter, you can go directly to the www.yahogroups.com and read archived messages or post new ones. You will also receive a daily digest of messages from the CPS group. We are not a high-traffic group, so you may not get messages every day. Messages will be picked out from time to time for the CALGARY PHILATELIST for the benefit of those not on-line and compiled.

ALBERTA POSTMASTERS OF PIONEER DAYS: CALGARY BEFORE IT GOT ITS POST OFFICE

by Dale Speirs

Calgary's first post office opened October 1, 1883, as the End of Track (and the locals of the time did capitalize that term) reached the town. William Bannerman was the first postmaster, but he had to leave town hastily in March 1885 after his bookkeeping methods were called into question [1].

Before the CPR tracks made it into Calgary and the post office was founded, the mails were handled by the Mounties. Just after Bannerman took over, the citizens of Calgary took up a collection for the NWMP officer who had handled the mail. A purse of \$155 was presented to Corporal Greet, big money in those days, and quite indicative of how Cowtowners appreciated his work. The presentation was made in early November 1883, and a newspaper report [2] tells of how the ceremony went:

"The presentation was but an indication of the very high esteem in which Corpl. G. was held by our citizens, for the courtesy and ability shown by him while acting in the capacity of postmaster at the fort, previous to the establishment of the daily mail. Corp. G. in a few well timed and happy remarks, expressed his thanks to the citizens for their recognition of his services, as indicated by the purse presented to him."

Before the CPR arrived in Calgary, mail reached the town via Fort Benton, Montana, passing through Fort Macleod in southern Alberta before it finally reached Calgary [3]. It travelled mostly by ox team, so one can guess how pleased Calgarians were when the train cut down mail travel to a few days. (Come to think of it, 125 years later, mail still takes a few days to get here from eastern Canada!)

I haven't been able to find out anything on Corporal Greet in the standard genealogical references at the Calgary Public Library or the University of Calgary Library, and a Google search was negative. His name may have been mis-spelt and could have been Greer or Green, but there was nothing on those names either.

References.

- 1] Speirs, Dale (2002) Alberta postmasters of pioneer days: Calgary. PHSC JOURNAL 109:36-37
- 2] Anonymous (1883-11-14) Calgary. WINNIPEG FREE PRESS, page 2
- 3] Seeker, Phil (2003) The Calgary cover page. CALGARY PHILATELIST 60:10

SHOW COMMITTEE REPORT

by Jan Brookes

Due to a number of dramatic changes in the last few weeks with regards to the stamp shows, I am staying on as Show Chairwoman to give continuity to our plans for the future.

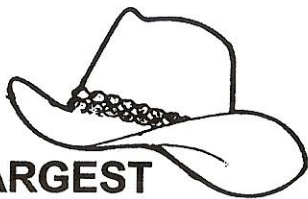
The Spring Bourse is April 24 and 25, and CALTAPEX 2004 will be October 16 to 18. Both events are at the Kerby Centre. Jumping ahead to 2006, Calgary will be hosting the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada national show from September 29 to October 1, at the Coast Plaza Hotel.

We are currently looking for volunteers for the Spring Bourse for reception, etcetera. Please talk to Marge Hunt. Marge will also be doing the publicity for the club and shows from now on. Due to business commitments, Ron Robertson has had to resign that job. Thank you Ron, for all your help. There will be some other Show Committee changes but we will announce them later.

We are planning a special event for CALTAPEX 2004 involving Canada Post and the SPCA. If you can help with Royal 2006 Royale or our other events, give me a call at 251-1769 or jlbrookes@telus.net

COMMITTEES

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NOTE TO INTERNET VIEWERS: Unless stated otherwise, telephone numbers are area code 403. Alberta is on Mountain Time. Any advertiser can be reached through the CPS e-mail at calphilso@shaw.ca, but please allow time for forwarding to offline members.

FOR SALE: Scott catalogues: 1997 Vol. 3 (D-I) \$4, Vol. 5 (R-Z) \$4, 1999 Vol. 2 (C-F) \$5, 2000 Vol. 1 (A-B) \$5, 2001 Vol. 3 (G-I) \$6 or all for \$20. Call Julius at 282-7982.

FREE: 3-ring binders of various sizes. Call Julius at 282-7982.

WANTED: Tanna Tuva, especially covers. I used to have a few and now starting over. Phone Keith at (780)437-1787 (Edmonton)

COLLECT Christmas or owls? I have just completed updated checklists for both topics. Willing to share for just the cost of photocopying and postage. Contact Pat at 238-3435.

WANTED: Owl stamps worldwide. Cash or trade. Call Pat at 238-3435.

WANTED: Stamp show catalogues, Canadian and international shows. The older the better. Please contact Ed at 274-0021 or harrise@shaw.ca

WANTED: Advanced collector of World Wildlife Fund (anything with the panda logo) stamps, postally-used covers, FDCs, postcards, maximum cards, even cookie cans. Top dollar paid! Phone Jan at 251-1769.

WANTED: Private collector pays cash for larger stamp collections. Phone Willi at 239-2273.

TRADE: Need automotive work done on your car? Let's trade my labour for your stamps that I need. I am a licenced mechanic with 20+ years experience. Phone Doug Kollar at 547-3838.

FOR SALE: Ukrainian and Russian stamps new and used. Also Ukrainian FDCs and special cancels from 1991 to date. Call Andy at 236-2037.

WANTED: Stamps and covers from China to 1949. Special interest in overprints. Prefer bulk lots. Call Penny at 686-2662.

WANTED: Calgary Stampede philatelic memorabilia. I collect all phases of this fascinating field. You may have just the cover or cancel I need. Cash or generous exchange. Call Ed at 274-0021 or harrise@shaw.ca

MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

2004

April	4	Sunday bourse
	7	General meeting
	21	Auction
	24 and 25	Spring Bourse
May	2	Sunday bourse
	5	General meeting
	5	Deadline for June bulletin
	19	Auction
June	2	General meeting and elections
	6	Sunday bourse
	16	Auction
August	6	Deadline for September bulletin
September	1	General meeting
	1	Deadline for October bulletin
	15	Auction
October	6	General meeting
	16 to 18	CALTAPEX
	20	Auction

MEETINGS and AUCTIONS are at the Kerby Centre, 2nd floor, 1133 - 7 Avenue SW, at 19h30. Auction lots should be in before 19h30 to allow bidder viewing

SPRING BOURSE and CALTAPEX will be held at the Kerby Centre, main floor, 1133 - 7 Avenue SW. Details from Janice Brookes at 251-1769.

SUNDAY BOURSE is at Palliser Community Centre, 2323 Palliser Drive SW, from 10h00 to 16h00. Details and table rentals from Bill Szaroz at 337-3260.

CALGARY REGIONAL GROUP OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY meets on the second Wednesday of the month except July and August. For details about meeting places and times, contact Ed Harris at 274-0021.