

CALGARY PHILATELIST

Issue 129

August 2014



It's too bad that Head-Smashed-In doesn't have a post office. That would certainly attract people's attention if you could use it as a mailing address!

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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 15 for list of committee chairpersons

ALBERTA BOUND

by Elizabeth Saunaranta

2014 has provided more new stamps and postal cards from Canada Post relating to the province of Alberta. The most obvious was the UNESCO issue on May 16, which depicted Head-Smashed-In on the \$1.20 rate for mail to the USA (shown on front cover). If you’ve never been there, it is worth a visit. It is only about a 1.5 hour drive south of Calgary on Highway 2. Just before you get to the Crowsnest Pass highway, you’ll see the signs to the world-class museum and park, which is along the cliffs of the southeastern corner of the Porcupine Hills. The bison jump was used for centuries by local tribes before the coming of the horse. They chased the herds off the cliff to gain a year’s supply of meat and hides. The name is a translation of the Piikani name “Where He Got His Head Smashed In”, a reference to a foolish young brave who was removed from the gene pool because he was still standing at the bottom of the cliff when the bison came stampeding over it.

The museum is built into the side of the cliff. You enter at the bottom and ascend through the exhibits before exiting at the top of the cliff where you can stroll along the edge. The stamp and postal card show the view at the top looking south toward the pathway. The museum is not visible because it is embedded into the cliff. The museum docents are Piikani from the nearby Peigan Reserve. My guide had a sense of humour. He remarked that he was happy to buy his meat from a supermarket instead of having to cut up a bison with small stone-flake knives and then lug the carcass home.

Although the stamp came out as scheduled, Calgary post offices did not get the postal cards until several weeks later (shown below).





Earlier in the year, Canada Post issued a booklet of landscape stamps, one of which showed a climber standing on a mountain top. The description merely said that it was the Rocky Mountains of Alberta and British Columbia. I don't recognize the view, so I can't tell which side of the border the photo was taken.

Kathryn Dawn Lang, better known under her stage name k.d. lang, was honoured by Canada Post on July 31 in the country singers set.

She was born in Edmonton but the family moved to Consort when she was nine months old, and it was there she grew up. After high school, she attended Red Deer College. She was noticed as a tavern singer, and from there went on to fame and fortune.



On June 13, as part of the Haunted Canada set, there was a stamp for the Ghost Bride of Banff Springs Hotel. The young woman is said to have died in the 1920s as she was walking down the hotel stairs to the ceremony, tripped and fell, and broke her neck. Her ghost is said to have been seen from time to time waltzing about in a bridal dance she never had a chance to perform in life.

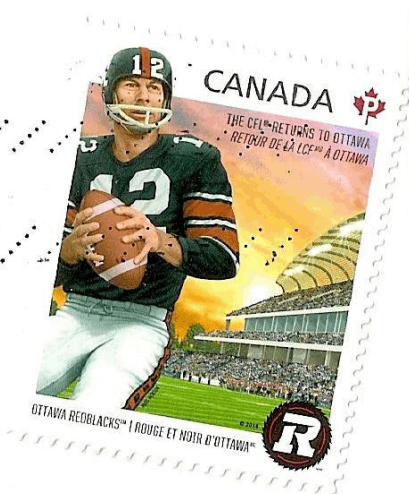
TOUGH COLLECTING

by Leanteri Polvikoski

Buying one of every new stamp and sticking them in an album is easy. But these days, try and find new commemoratives genuinely used on cover non-philatelically. You can send yourself such covers, but that's cheating. I try to get modern commemoratives mailed by non-philatelists, not an easy thing these days. In fact, almost impossible. Below are a few rarities, genuine non-philatelic, found on #10 envelopes. [Editor's note: Images are cropped just to show the postmarks because #10s would not show up well.]

1406211311

3881 H4T



An Ottawa RedBlacks stamp with an Ottawa spray-on cancel.

Lest We Forget 131104 20:30

N'oublions Pas 3805 M4L 1A5



Lest we forget that Superman was created by a Canadian, Joe Shuster of Toronto. This stamp is indeed cancelled by a Toronto spray-on. Because of licencing restrictions, Canada Post could not sell these Superman stamps to Americans, which no doubt caused additional frustration.

Try it yourself and see how difficult it is to find modern commemoratives on cover!

POSTAL HISTORY OF END-OF-TRACK, ALBERTA

by Dale Speirs

Mount Laggan, Alberta.

The village of Lake Louise, now inside Banff National Park, was originally called Holt City, then The Summit, then Laggan, and finally Lake Louise. Prior to its founding, there was a post office called Mount Laggan which lasted one year from July 1884 to July 1885, about where the village is today. There are two questions about this post office. Was it an end-of-track post office for the CPR navvies labouring in 1884 to get through the Kicking Horse Pass just around the corner from Lake Louise? And where was Mount Laggan?

Mount Laggan does not appear on any modern map nor any old map I have consulted for the 1880s era. It is not found in the Atlas of Canada [3]. The name Mount Laggan seems to have been an informal one for what is now Mount Fairview, the closest mountain to the village of Lake Louise and which is on the southeast corner of the lake. The only account of Mount Laggan I have found is an 1885 magazine article whose description of the mountain matches Mount Fairview [2]. Below is a photograph I took of Mount Fairview from Lake Louise village. It looms over the village and seems the only obvious candidate for the name Mount Laggan.



Today, Lake Louise is a world-class tourist attraction, with the Chateau Lake Louise looming over the lake. But construction on it did not begin until 1890, when it started life as a small wooden chalet and later grew by stages into the stately pile it is today. The Mount Laggan post office therefore was not established for the tourist trade.

Banff post office did not exist yet, although there was a mining camp with a post office called Silverton near to Laggan. Silverton inhabitants actually referred to their camp as Silver City, which at its peak had 3,000 inhabitants, of whom about a dozen were women [6]. There is no trace left today of Silverton but it was approximately west-southwest of Castle Mountain, near the Trans-Canada Highway and Highway 93 junction.

The Post Office.

Both the CPR navvies and the Silver City miners were using Mount Laggan as a supply point. Since the bulk of freight in the valley would have been for the CPR, contractors would have been reluctant to trans-ship goods at nearby Silver City. The miners might have grumbled, but in any event it wasn't a hardship to go the short distance to Laggan, which was only two stops down the line. Mount Laggan was therefore an end-of-track post office. There was a post office established a few months after Mount Laggan opened which was actually called End-of-Track, although it was located in British Columbia, where the railway work was very slow because of the time it took to blast through the mountains. No proof strikes of Mount Laggan postmarks exist but working strikes are known.



The only postmaster of Mount Laggan was Thomas A.W. Gordon, from 1884-07-01 until 1885-07-31 when the post office closed [1]. T.J.S. Skinner was a private mail contractor who carried the mails on pack horses forward along the track from Mount Laggan post office [5]. The gross revenues of Mount Laggan for Fiscal 1885 were \$1,275.55, compared to Silverton at \$29.65, based on the annual Postmaster-General reports [4]. Silverton had a population of 3,000 at the beginning of the year although it collapsed and died by the end of the year when the copper rush that created it failed. These figures are difficult to reconcile. Silverton's gross revenues were about what a ranch house post office out on the empty prairies would earn, and don't fit with 3,000 outlanders who would be writing home frequently. Mount Laggan's revenue was very good, about what a well-established town would earn.

The railroad construction basically stopped at Lake Louise when winter set in at the end of 1883. Some minor construction struggled on at the Kicking Horse Pass but Laggan was essentially the end of the line for trains.

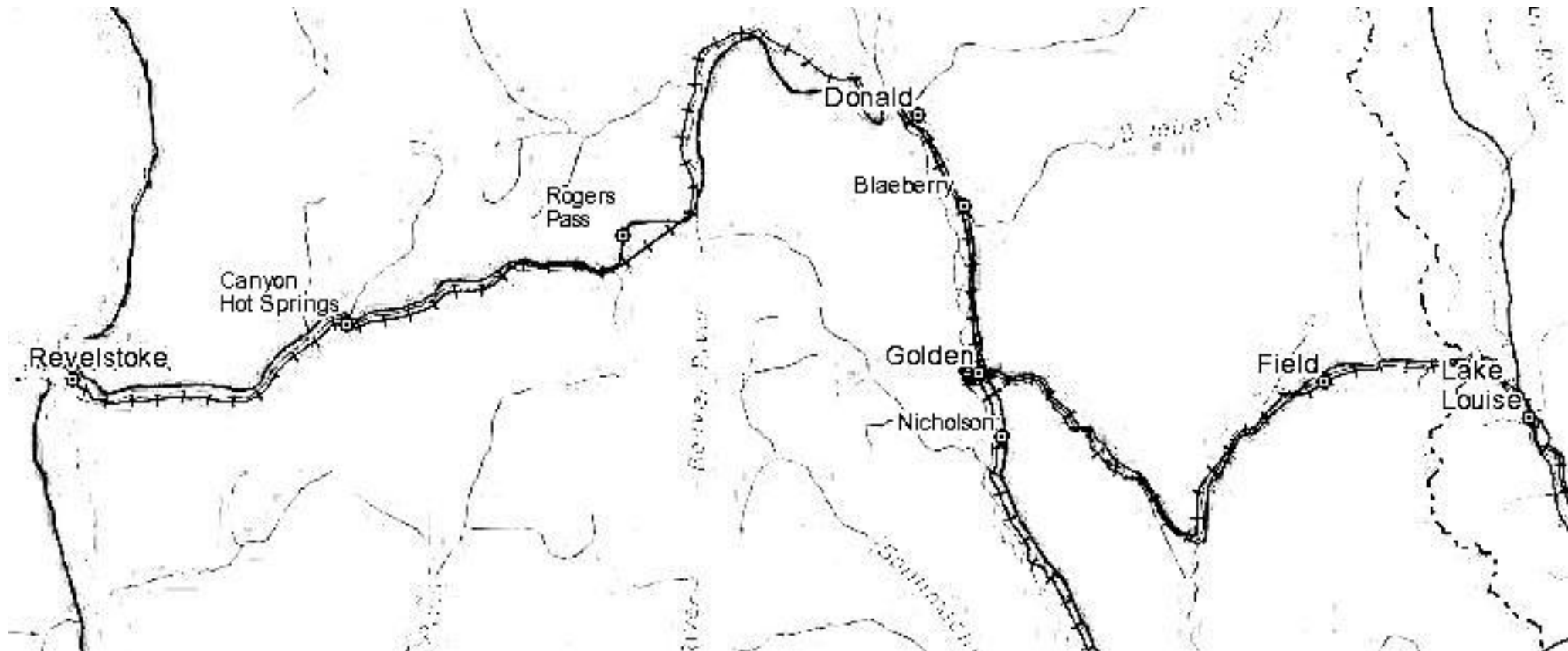
Mail couriers were hired to carry the mail to the various work camps and often along the line itself in the mountain valley section [7]. There was a late spring in 1884, and it wasn't until about May that construction began to gear up. Track laying was at a crawl as the navvies blasted their way through the Kicking Horse Pass, built bridges, tunnels, and avalanche sheds, and struggled their way over the pass. It was this time period when the Mount Laggan post office came into action, serving as an end-of-track post office at Lake Louise. It wasn't until the track laying finally began to move past Field, British Columbia, that the post office was closed in favour of a new one called End-Of-Track.

End-Of-Track, British Columbia.

This traveling post office only existed on the British Columbian side of the border, but it was quite close to Mount Laggan and Lake Louise. It opened on 1884-10-01 in a railway car fitted out as a post office and accommodation for the postmaster. As the transcontinental railroad slowly progressed through the mountains of Kicking Horse Pass, this post office was shuffled forward with the crews. It closed on 1886-01-31 when the major part of the railroad work was completed.

After the final spike was driven, most of the workers dispersed and the need for the post office concluded. Thomas A.W. Gordon was the only postmaster, as he was for Mount Laggan. That wasn't the end of him, however. On 1886-02-01, he opened a post office further down the line under the name Farwell, which four months later, on June 1, was changed to Revelstoke. Gordon served as postmaster until the end of 1888. At that same time, End-Of-Track post office reported \$902.28 in gross revenues for Fiscal 1885, and \$1,758.23 for Fiscal 1886. The fact that End-Of-Track and Mount Laggan were reported as separate line items in the annual PMG reports indicate that they must have had separate existence, even if the postmaster was the same man. Gordon could have and probably did delegate some of the work to a postal clerk.

Mount Laggan and End-Of-Track post offices were very heavily used by the navvies, to the point that the Postmaster-General made special mention of it in his Fiscal 1886 report. The navvies appreciated the service as a safe way to send money back home. The PMG reported that End-Of-Track sold \$65,304 worth of money orders in its brief existence, which was equivalent to a large city in Ontario or Quebec [4].



The gross revenues reported are postage stamp sales and postal fees such as registration. While the post office got a fee for money orders, the bulk of that money was, of course, not theirs and was for onward transmission to the recipients, thus not actual revenue. Once the railroad was completed, a number of other small post offices arose along the track in the British Columbia section between Lake Louise and Revelstoke. These were regular stationary post offices, not track post offices, and are beyond the scope of this article. For the record, and going west from the Alberta border, they included Field, Golden, Blaeberry (not a spelling error), Donald, Glacier/Rogers Pass, and Revelstoke. My remit is Alberta postal history so I leave it to someone else to cover the British Columbia side of the line.

References.

- 1] Library and Archives Canada (downloaded 2013-08-26) POST OFFICES AND POSTMASTERS. <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/post-offices/001001-100.01-e.php>
- 2] Ramsay, G.G. (1885) Over the Rocky Mountains by the Canadian Pacific line in 1884. MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE 51:123-124
- 3] Natural Resources Canada (downloaded 2013-08-26) THE ATLAS OF CANADA - TOPORAMA. www.atlasnrcan.gc.ca/site/english/toporama/index.html
- 4] Postmaster General of Canada (1884 to 1886) Report of the Postmaster General for the year ended March 31, 188x. SESSIONAL PAPERS DOMINION OF CANADA, Section 7.
- 5] Bone, P.T. (1947) WHEN THE STEEL WENT THROUGH. Published by Macmillan Co., Toronto. Pages 71, 74, and 91.
- 6] Speirs, Dale (2013) Postal history of Banff National Park. Part 2. CANADIAN PHILATELIST 64(4):224-230
- 7] Price, Alex (1987) End of Track and the C.P. Mail Co. BNA TOPICS 44(5):12-17

INVESTMENTS OF PASSION

by Gordon Demke

Collections of art, stamps, rare books, classic cars, fine wines, wrist watches, violins, dolls and other collectibles are sometimes referred to as "investments of passion", but they are more properly described as "treasured collections". Anecdotal evidence suggests that few individuals purchase collectibles solely to earn a financial return, rather the catalyst underlying a purchase decision is more often the emotional dividend derived from ownership of the prized possession.

In the case of philately, the collector chooses to purchase philatelic items because the prospect of enjoying the item (the aesthetic or psychic reward) plus the expected monetary return when the collection is eventually sold exceeds the benefit from the income that would be earned from the cash used to make the purchase plus the value of the cash itself at some future date.

The judgement of whether the purchase was a good investment or not rests on a combination of the price change over time and the dividend of being able to enjoy the treasured possession. Measuring financial return and performance of collectibles over the long term is difficult. In one study it was found that the average price increase of stamps over the period from 1900 to 2012 exceeded the investment return on cash and government bonds, but underperformed relative to the stock market [1]. This study used the Stanley Gibbons catalogues as the source for long-run pricing information.

However, the weaknesses of the price data include: prices are dealer's valuation estimates rather than transaction prices and are likely to lag behind market developments and be less volatile than actual prices; catalogue prices are difficult to reconcile with on line or public auction prices; and catalogue prices do not reflect the changes over time between selling prices and the price at which a dealer is willing to buy. Furthermore, stamps are extremely heterogeneous and their distinctive differences are central to a collector's expertise. Despite these shortcomings, catalogue prices for representative items over many years do provide information on broad movements in the overall level of the market. A market index does not attempt to reflect the idiosyncrasies of an individual item. The top end of the market for rare stamps is influenced by the incomes, wealth and perceptions of competing investment opportunities of the most affluent.

Although difficult to verify empirically, one would expect that the extraordinary easing of monetary conditions and interest rates at historical lows following the 2008 financial crisis strengthened the markets for investments of passion. The environment of low interest rates likely spurred increased spending and higher prices in these niche areas. This is because lower interest rates reduced the opportunity costs of indulging in collecting. Also, the increased demand for collectables occurred against the backdrop of the Internet. The Internet has facilitated price discovery, reduced transaction costs and increased liquidity for collectibles. Examples relevant to philately include eBay and the online auctions of philatelic dealers. The Internet *"should provide an enduring lift to demand for collectibles, well after the impact of ultra-low interest rates has passed."*

Investments of passion share a number of characteristics; these are well known to philatelists:

- i) The importance of "provenance", that is authentication and ownership history of the collectible. The item may be a forgery. Differences in qualitative assessment are risks that can affect the quality of the collection.
- ii) The asymmetry of information that exists between market insiders and most investors. The information advantage lies with the market professional as compared to the collector.
- iii) Transaction costs are higher than in more liquid securities markets, for example, buyer and seller commissions, cost of attending auctions, etc.

References.

[1] Dimson, E. and Spaenjers, C. (2011) "Ex-Post: The Investment Performance of Collectible Stamps", JOURNAL OF FINANCIAL ECONOMICS, Volume 100, No. 2

All of the ideas presented here are taken from: Peter Stanyer (2014) THE ECONOMIST GUIDE TO INVESTMENT STRATEGY, Third Edition, Public Affairs, New York, Chapter 12.

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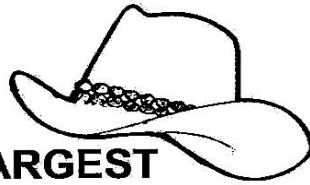
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NOTE: Unless stated otherwise, telephone numbers are area code 403. Alberta is on Mountain Time. Any advertiser can be reached through the CPS e-mail at calphilso@shaw.ca, but please allow time for forwarding to offline members.

FOR SALE: Fine used modern Canada and Australia. Please contact Michael Teekens at 805-4442 or michateekens@gmail.com

FOR SALE: Extensive collection of Alberta postmarks uniquely filed in 28 binders. Supplemented with historical data items of postal relevance. Contact Al at 282-1030 or dorandal@shaw.ca

WANTED: Used GB Machin Queen stamps with any selvage attached. Cash or trade (many countries). Call Georg at 547-0409.

WANTED: I volunteer at the Mennonite Community Centre store in Calgary. They raise money for worldwide disasters, and are looking for donations of old albums and pages, covers, and bulk stamps. To donate, please contact me, Greg Lang, at 282-1644.

FOR SALE: various QE2 Canada plate block sets between Scott #727 and #1070, various QV to KGV Canada VFNH singles and pairs between Scott #51 and #300. Contact Les at 278-3511.

FOR SALE: Large accumulation used off-paper, mostly pre-1990s commemoratives. Canada, USA, GB, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and kiloware. Phone Roland 243-1637 or decaenr@shaw.ca

FOR SALE: Major collections of many countries at liquidation prices. Call John at 474-1212.

WANTED: Canadian military covers and postcards with hospital ships (white with red crosses). Contact Jon Johnson at 253-8411 or jcjperfins@hotmail.com

CLUB NEWS

The July bulletin was mailed from the High River Shoppers Drug Mart outlet, called Highwood River. The clerk refused point blank to put a fresh ink pad into the canceller, so the postmark is faint.

The Kerby Centre hosted its annual Stampede breakfast on Friday, July 11, and a number of CPS members were able to attend. Seen were Donna Trathen, Don Wilson, Norma Nielson, Bill Manyluk, and Dale Speirs. Apologies to those not mentioned as we may have missed each other in the huge crowd. A good time was had by all. No stamps but we did talk about postcards while enjoying the free pancakes, sausage, watermelon slices, and beverages.

CPS members continue to have their articles appear in stamp magazines. Dale Speirs had his article "Postal History Of High River, Alberta" published in the Jul/Aug 2014 issue of CANADIAN PHILATELIST. Published in the Q3 issue of BNA TOPICS were Jon Johnson on "Canadian Military Hospitals At Sea 1914-1919" and Dave Bartlet on "WW1 War Savings Stamps And Promotions".

DUES ARE DUE!

Dues for the 2014-2015 season are now required. You can see Julius Szekrenyes at the September 3 general meeting with your \$15, but it would help him if you could remit a cheque during the summer. Payable to the Calgary Philatelic Society, c/o Membership Chairman, Box 1478, Calgary, T2P 2L6.

COMMITTEES

Archives	Dale Speirs	701-0174
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- silent	Jim Senecal	547-7681
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Circuit books	Larry Tweedale	282-9726
Library	Penny Borrowman	686-2662
Life Members	Gerry Vader	293-0158
Membership	Julius Szekrenyes	282-7982
Private Treaty books	Gerry Vader	293-0158
Programmes	vacant	
Webmaster	Dave Bartlet	829-3580

MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

2014

September	3	General meeting
	3	Deadline for October bulletin
	10	BNAPS Regional Group meeting
	13	Junior Club meeting
	17	Auction
	24	CAPE meeting
October	1	General meeting
	8	BNAPS Regional Group meeting
	15	Auction
	17 to 19	CALTAPEX 2014
	22	CAPE meeting
November	5	General meeting
	5	Deadline for December bulletin
	12	BNAPS Regional group meeting
	19	Auction
	26	CAPE meeting
December	3	Christmas social

2015

January	7	General meeting
	21	Auction
February	4	General meeting
	18	Auction

MEETINGS and AUCTIONS are at the Kerby Centre, Room 205 (Lecture Room), 1133 - 7 Avenue SW, at 19h30. Auction lots should be in before 19h30 to allow bidder viewing.

CALTAPEX 2014 is at the Kerby Centre. Information from Walter Herdzik at 238-7845.

CALGARY REGIONAL GROUP of the BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY meets second Wednesdays. For details about meeting places and times, contact Dave Bartlet at 829-3580.

JUNIOR CLUB meets monthly on Saturdays. Information from Jim Senecal at 547-7681.

CAPE (CALGARY ASSOCIATION OF PHILATELIC EXHIBITORS) meets fourth Wednesdays. For details, contact Jim Taylor at 238-3698.