

# NOVA SCOTIA STAMP CLUB



No. 216

Newsletter

Vol. 26 #7

Meetings: Second Tuesday of the month at the Nova Scotia Museum, Summer Street, Halifax, N.S. at 8 p.m. No meetings July or August.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 12, 1991.

Newsletter Mailing Address: 831 Tower Road, Halifax, N.S. B3H 2Y1

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MINUTES: Tuesday, February 12, 1991

As this was the evening for the Giant Auction, there was no business meeting. Several announcements were made. The President asked for a few moments silence in memory of Mrs. Jean MacDonald, who recently passed away.

Dave Cole asked for volunteers for the Club Table.

Joe Weeks reminded members that the World Columbian Stamp Exhibition is being held in Chicago in 1992, and that he is organizing a group trip.

The president asked for volunteers to drive Connie Schwarz between the hotel and the exhibition site.

The executive meeting will be held on Feb. 25 at 7:15. The Giant Auction then proceeded with Stan Dunfield and Harry Steele in charge of the 190 lots. There were 44 members present.

Dave Harvey, Recording Secretary.

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PROGRAMME, March 12, 1991

World Columbian Exhibition: Joe Weeks and John Hall will present their proposal for a trip for Club Members to Chicago in May of 1992.

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QUESTIONNAIRES:- It has been pointed out that 160 - ODD people have not yet returned their forms - read that ODD as you will! Please complete the questionnaire and return it to the address given as soon as possible.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

By J.Doug Allen

The first commemorative postage stamps, questionably, were those issued in 1888 by the Australian state New South Wales to celebrate the Centennial of its settlement. In reality it was a definitive issue as it remained on sale for a long period. The next major issue was the United States Columbian set of 1892. This was a true commemorative set and, incidentally, the first evidence of the greed that has become pervasive since among the world's postal administrations as it went right up to a \$5 denomination. When it became Canada's turn to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria with a long set, sure enough it was evident the greed virus had migrated across the 49th parallel and the denominations also went up to \$5. From then on the number of commemorative stamps gradually increased. I continue to marvel at the restraint exercised by Great Britain which did not put out its first set until 1924 and right up to 1948 had only a few of them, while most of the rest of the world really went into high gear.

Now the situation has really got out of hand. It is fairly safe to say there are very few days that go by when there are no new commemorative stamps issued by countries from Albania to Zimbabwe. And collectors are getting fed up! I wonder how many of our NEWSLETTER readers actually add one or more mint copies of each of the commemorative issues Canada puts out with disgusting frequency? Certainly those who have done so over the past 40 years are now left with a large collection which now has a resale value considerably less than they paid for it. Canada, in my opinion, has done irreparable damage to its reputation in the stamp collecting world. I have relegated it to the unenviable category previously occupied only by such places as Ghana, Grenada and, to use Rob Matthews' appellation, "the burning sand dunes nations". Long ago I banished the United States to the same dismal abyss. Before some among our readers say, "But without the commemoratives where would the material for we thematic collectors come from?", I hasten to say you are certainly in no danger for postal administrations are exhibiting no sign they are going to change their policies, except perhaps for the worse. Eventually, however, they will realize they have been slowly killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Or is that too optimistic a wish? It certainly is hard enough to interest young people in our hobby and issuing more and more commemoratives, miniature sheets, "prestige booklets", etc. with ever higher denominations is one sure way to turn off even more potential long term collectors.

So commemoratives have risen and fallen in the last 113 years, risen and fallen in the esteem of the stamp collecting world. Definitive stamps, those issued largely for legitimate postal purposes, are far more interesting, worthy of study and have a much greater chance of rising in value. Oh sure, there is plenty of abuse in the field of definitives also but, for this collector at least, they still warrant collecting.

I am sure our NEWSLETTER Editor would be delighted to hear from any members who wish to refute the opinions I have put forth herein.

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### CLUB NEWS:

An invitation has been received from Anne-Marie Belliveau, Secretary of the Valley Stamp Club for all members of the Nova Scotia Stamp Club. The Annual Stamp Exhibition of the Valley Club will be held Saturday, April 27, 1991 at the Kentville Fire Hall from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an auction at 2 p.m. Admission is free, and coffee and sandwiches will be served. So mark this date on your calendar!

"LIFE'S" LOOK AT STAMPS by L. Robinson

At an antique show recently, my attention was sparked by a cover of a May 3, 1954 issue of Life Magazine whose entire area was covered with coloured stamps. I paid the \$2.00 listed and took my "Prize" home to see what I could glean from the article "First Time in Color, Eight Pages of World's Rarest Stamps",

As a recent "convert" to the fascinating world of stamp-collecting, I was exposed to some world-wide facts and anecdotes about stamps that I had not yet experienced. For instance, I learned that a single stamp upside down in relation to another on the same sheet is called a "tête-bêche"; and that the marks of the three owners of the British Guiana (the only one of its kind known to exist) are stamped on the back---the fleur-de-lis of Count Philippe von Ferrary, the clover of Arthur Hind, and the comet of the present owner (1954) who wished to remain anonymous. I also learned that the U.S. had restricted the reproduction of stamps in color until 1952 which then freed the publishers of LIFE to photograph and print the two-page spread of 53 of the world's rarest stamps. It took Life two years to make up this album of photos.

Following this, the next two pages illustrated, again in color, some of the world's most highly prized covers. These ranged in value from \$40,000 for a Mauritius, 1847, one and two pence, Post Office, to \$1,000 for a New Zealand, 1855, one shilling, bisected and used for the six-pence rate. Three of the eighteen covers illustrated were from the Maritimes: New Brunswick, 1851 valued at \$4,500; Nova Scotia, 1851 on a mourning cover valued at \$4000 (both of these are with overseas rates); and a Newfoundland, 1919 3-cent Caribou made into a Manuscript Air-Mail Provisional because the plane carrying this letter, attempting a transatlantic flight, crashed and the mail had to be transferred to a steamer, placed this cover at a value of \$5000. This item was the only one later than 1861, so you can see the "vintage" of the material covered.

As a relief from all this "heady" and costly collection, (one can only take so much "oohs" and "aahs" at a time), the article relates some lighter but equally fascinating accounts of "finds"---like the 1944, Philippine stamps which the Americans hand-stamped with the word "victory"; and the inverted errors of Mauretania, French West Africa. Fascinating, too, are the stories behind sets of stamps, three of which are recounted by LIFE for this issue, replete, of course, with color illustrations. The first is entitled, "Life of a King" and traces the main events, from birth to death, of King Boris III of Bulgaria, who according to the writers of this article, was the only one to have had all the outstanding events of his life depicted on stamps as they occurred. The second, titled, "Some Troublemakers", traces the events, all of which caused trouble, of five stamps---a 1900 stamp of the Dominican Republic showed the island of Hispaniola's Dominican boundary extending into Haitian territory, and thus helped cause an unofficial war between the two countries; ---a Nicaraguan stamp showing the smoking volcano, Monto-tombo, which in 1902 aggravated the dispute over the location of the Panama Canal;---a Spanish stamp picturing a nude Duchess of Alba in 1930 brought protests from all over the world, but did not cause the Spanish post office to withdraw it; ---Sicily's first stamp was held up for years because King Ferdinand II did not want his countenance marred by the postmark so the issue was delayed until a special mark that canceled only the frame of the stamp was made; ---a Falkland Islands' British-made stamp commemorating the 100th Anniversary of British rule in the Falklands was not recognized by Argentina who issued its own stamp for the occasion claiming dominion of the Islands. Today, we know that this "Battle of the Stamps" recently became a "Battle of Fact" and isn't over yet. The third, titled "Death of a Republic", tells the tragic story of the short-lived country of Latvia from its presence as a Russian province of Kurland to 1947 after the Communists had taken it over and it became part of Russia. Of special interest, philatelically, is the fact that some of the issues of Latvia were printed on the plain side of other-wised used paper, like maps and banknotes, patterns of which are seen on the backs of these issues, 1918-19.

From the stamps themselves, LIFE goes to the stamp collectors (and for the "feminists" it is to be noted that ONLY men's involvement with stamp-collecting is chronicled---but, then, the article was written in 1954 and not the '80's!!!) and relates the total obsession of two of the world's greatest collectors, Count Philippe von Ferrari and Colonel Edward Howland Robinson Green, an Italian and American respectively. The accounts of these two men's pursuits of stamps of the world supports the view that "stamps are an addiction for which there is no cure".

The marvelous deals which H.R. Harmer pursued, developed and finalized with heads of state worldwide as well as the numerous auctions he held are touched upon at the end of this capsule with just enough detail to make one realize the extent of this man's involvement with stamps and collections of the world.

So, what can I say? I may not have the time, money or inclination to buy ten car-loads of waste paper from the U.S. Treasury, as did one collector, and spend a year methodically searching through it for rare revenue stamps, but I can join with the countless others in the hobby who, like me, are drawn by the irresistible fascination of these bits of colored paper---the stamp.

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MILITARY COVER: Dave Cooper

ARMY P.O. 3  
 ON ACTIVE SERVICE.  
 COIN OR ARTICLES OF VALUE SHOULD NOT BE SENT IN THIS ENVELOPE.  
 THIS ENVELOPE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR REGISTRATION.  
 DEC 16 23 DEC

NOTE: Correspondence in this envelope need not be censored Regimentally. The Contents are liable to examination at the Base. The following Certificate must be signed by the writer: I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters.

Address: To Miss Mary Bain  
 (1) Glengyle Terrace  
 Edinburgh  
 Scotland

Signature (Name only): P. H. Green

This is a worn item from WWI. It is a deep olive green envelope addressed to Miss Mary Bain, (1) Glengyle ???, Edinburgh, Scotland. It was mailed on 23 DEC. 16 from Army P.O. 3 and was cancelled by a machine cancel with 5 wavy lines broken by the P.O. 3 Triangle 23 Dec 16. It is noted that this envelope shows at the upper right Crown Copyright Reserved. This envelope did not need to be censored as the soldier signed the declaration, "I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters."

P.E.I. STAMP CLUB:

The P.E.I. Stamp Club meets at the Colonel Gray High School Library at 7:30 p.m., the second Wednesday of each month. They send out a one page Newsletter monthly. The editor is R.L. Carson, P.O. Box 716, Cornwall, PEI, COA 1H0. They are planning an auction in April or May, and if any NSSC member has material for this auction, they can contact Cliff Abram, New London, R.R. 6, Kensington, PEI, COB 1M0.

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DICTATOR DEPOSED BY PHILATELIC FINAGLING: Cliff Abram

(Taken from a book by Douglas Collins, a British Army Sgt. captured at Dunkirk in 1940, who eventually emigrated to Canada. He made ten escape attempts during his period of captivity.)

Roumania's defection from the side of Germany was due to the long awaited Russian offensive in Bessarabia, which had started three days previously. King Michael and everyone else except the Iron Guard recognized that further resistance would be useless, and on the night of August 23 Antonescu was invited to attend on the King at his Palace. He expected he would be present at a council of war. Instead, he found Michael alone. The young man talked about his stamp collection, which ranked among the finest in the world, and the surprised dictator was too polite to cut the conversation short. Unsuspectingly he stepped into a small room to view the best stamps and as he did so the King banged the door shut and locked it and Antonescu's period of power was gone. Michael sent for General Gerstenberg, chief of the German forces in Roumania, and reached an agreement with him; Bucharest would be declared an open city and the Wehrmacht would be permitted to retreat unmolested while a Russian armistice offer was being considered.

(Collins had been recaptured only a short time before this happened, fortunately he was repatriated to England soon after).

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EXHIBITION WATCH: George MacKenzie

Nothing new to report since the last Newsletter, all Chairpeople are busily at work with their specific arrangements. The third meeting of the Exhibition Committee will be held on Tuesday, March 5, at the Nova Scotia Museum and an update will be given to members at the March 12 meeting.

Remember the following:

Senior Exhibits - Entry forms to Heinz Kircher

Club Table - Contact Dave Cole and donate an hour of your time either Saturday or Sunday.

Banquet - Saturday, April 13, Masonic Centre, 7 for 7:30 p.m., tickets \$14 and the contact person is Russ Saulnier.

Advertising - Contact George Lafontaine.

Dealers - Contact Ken MacDonald.

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The Exhibition Committee and Executive are very upbeat about Novapex '91 as the new location has great potential; the population base is certainly there so we could/should get a lot more new people than ever before. Let's continue to put on a top-flight Exhibition --- do what you can to help:

- a. Put in an entry
- b. Sit at the Club Table
- c. Attend the banquet
- d. All of the above.

~~2015~~ 2004  
1968 ~~2006~~  
1970 2007  
2011 2012 \*\*\* \*\*\* \*\*\*  
2044 2048  
ROYALE \* 1991 \* ROYAL: 2045

A reminder from the Lakeshore Stamp Club, Dorval, that they are hosting the 63rd Annual Convention of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, April 5,6,7, at the Dorval Community Centre, 1335 Lakeshore Drive, Dorval, Quebec. Contact Raymond W. Ireson, Exhibition Chairman, P.O. Box 1, Pointe Claire, Dorval, Quebec H9R 4N5. Air Canada is offering a Convention discount for visitors to the show.

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#### JUNIORS:

Anyone having material for the Junior auction on Saturday, April 13 at the Exhibition is asked to contact Marilyn Murphy.

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#### MEMBERSHIP:

Application has been received from:

Robert G. Nickerson, 485 Main Street, Yarmouth, N.S. B3A 1H4

Mr. Nickerson is a dealer.

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#### ADVERTISEMENT:

STAMP FAIR: March 9, 1991 (Saturday), at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, corner of Windsor and Allen Streets. Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Local dealers and a Trading Table - bring your traders.

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#### ADVERTISEMENT:

HARBOUR CITY STAMPS: Philatelic Supplies and Stamps. 10% discount to Club Members. Russell Saulnier - 865-6516.

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