



Nova Scotia Stamp Club Newsletter

January 2007
Volume 36, Issue 5
Number 368

Up and Coming

Every Saturday 4pm Auction
Seaside Book and Stamp

January 6 Moncton Stamp Fair

January 9 Club Meeting
40 years of the Stamp Club
Newsletter, Circuit books

January 12 Stamp Fair & Auction
Burnside Motel, Dartmouth, NS

January 17 Friends of Philately

February 3 Moncton Stamp Fair

February 9 Stamp Fair & Auction
Burnside Motel, Dartmouth, NS

February 13 Club Meeting
Centennial Stamps, Auction

February 21 Friends of Philately

March 13 Club Meeting
Birds on Stamps, Circuit Books



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Railway Post Offices and their Cancellations

by Dennis Bedley

As early as 1836 with the opening of the first railway - Champlain & St. Lawrence - mail has been handled aboard trains. The first proof of cancel on rail handled mail was in October 1853 on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic from Montreal, QC to Portland, ME.

The idea of "traveling" post offices was suggested to the Governor General by then Postmaster General James Morris in a letter dated August 12, 1853, with service subsequently starting January 1854 on the Great Western Railway between Niagara Falls and London, Ontario. Postal Conductors first accompanied the mail to its destination but Railway Mail Clerks who sorted and cancelled the mail en route soon took their place.

The cover shown here was mailed from the Albion Terrace Hotel (built in 1876, the building is now part of the Wetsern Hospital) in Alberton, PE to Moncton NB. The cover is canceled with "Charlottetown & Tignish RPO PEI" postmark dated E Feb 5 17. The three one cent green "war tax" stamps on the cover were issued in 1915 to help finance the war effort with a one cent tax being imposed on all first class mail.

As the volume of mail grew, only letters mailed at railway stations, and all Registered mail, was cancelled in with "R.P.O.". Sorting of mail en route saved time, and a network of these "travelling post offices" soon covered all of Canada.

Railway Mail Clerks were the elite of the postal service, their training, knowledge and dexterity, all in cramped quarters that moved beneath their feet set them apart from all others. Mail was sorted to towns on route and connections to other trains, a very

complex matter. Mail for cities was sorted right down to the Letter Carrier's walk. Busy R.P.O. runs involved men sorting one piece of mail every 2 seconds! The annual test involved a rigorous 1000 pieces in one hour! 90% accuracy was demanded. All classes of mail were handled by the Railway Mail Service, but not all of it was in R.P.O.'s, much was carried as "through" mail in closed cars especially parcels. There was even a letter slot in the side of the mail car where letters could be posted at station stops! Regularly scheduled passenger trains were used to ensure dependable movement.

Mail was picked up on the fly using a catch arm on the side of the car swung out by a Railway Mail Clerk who at the same time kicked off a sack of mail for that place. This was a tricky manoeuvre especially at night or in bad weather and with high speed. Although the engineer was supposed to slow up, if the train was running late and he was making up time, it was just theory. The engineer was to whistle the Mail Car approaching the pickup point, likely this was just the normal one long blast at one mile when approaching a station. Rules 31, and 14 (m) applied. Not much warning, less than a minute at 60 mph, which is a mile a minute. One thing's for sure, if the catch was missed, the train didn't stop. Mail Cars on the heaviest main line runs had 72-foot interiors staffed by up to 10 men, while others had a 60-foot interior, worked by 5 men. Secondary runs involved a Mail & Express car with a 30-foot mail section staffed by 3 men, the other 30 feet being for Express. The men lived on these cars for long runs and thus they were equipped with stoves, toilet, sink,

Continued on Page 2

RPOs... Continued

cooking facilities etc. Men received a travel allowance (15 cents per mile in 1955), to cover their meals and hotel expenses. Access to the Mail Car was restricted to Postal employees, not even the train Conductor was permitted inside it. The system grew until in 1950 there were 192 R.P.O.'s staffed by 1,385 men, covering some 40,000 miles of route and 834 "through" cars. A national rail strike in 1950 (the first ever), gave trucks the mail and the Post Office saw the flexibility that permitted. It was all down hill from there on. Loss of the mail contract often resulted in discontinuance of passenger service, especially on branch lines. The last R.P.O. ended its run April 24, 1971 returning from Campbellton, New Brunswick to Levis, Quebec. Mail was still carried by rail until 1987, when it was finally turned over entirely to trucks and planes. A very efficient system of delivering mail was lost with the ending of the Railway Mail Service and the R.P.O.

Lunenburg Post Office Moving

Lunenburg Post Office Centre where Canada Post is located

**NOVA PEX
2007**

September 15-16, 2007

**Nova Scotia Stamp Club
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada**

<http://www.nsstampclub.ca/>

Nova Scotia Stamp Club meets at 7:30 p.m. on every second Tuesday of the month (except July and August) at the Nova Scotia Museum, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, N.S. The club publishes a monthly newsletter (except summer) which is released on the first week of the month.

Dues are C\$15 per person (US\$20 US, US\$25 International) or C\$22.50 per couple payable to :

Nova Scotia Stamp Club
102 Birch Bear Run
Lewis Lake, NS B3Z 4B8

webnews@nsstampclub.ca
Newsletter address as above.

Advertising rate for the newsletter or website is \$25 (CDN) per year.

After 51 years in its current building and 101 years on the same lot, the Lunenburg Post Office is moving up the road. Canada Post announced in December that after much general speculation the office will be moving to Lincoln Street in the building formerly occupied by Lunenburg Pro Hardware.

The current building (opened August 1955) replaced the old post office and except for a brief period during the construction in 1954-55, the office has occupied the same site since 1895.

The Post Office building once housed Customs, Fisheries & Oceans and several other federal government departments, however new facilities were built in Bridgewater, the building was sold to a US

interest in 2003 and the renamed the Post Office Centre. Canada Post says that their lease was up for renewal in March 31, 2007 and they were exploring their options. Hints of their move started when the building's owner started advertising the space for rent in October.

The office will be moving later this winter once renovations to the old hardware store are complete. The Lincoln Street site is only a half a block from the current King Street location and Canada Post hopes that the nearest of the two sites will minimize disruption of service to their clients. For more information on the "History of the Lunenburg Post Office" by John Creighton see NSSC Newsletter April 2006, Vol 35, Issue 8, No 351.



Lunenburg PO
circa 1905.



Outside of the post office located on Lincoln Street., circa 1880. The building later became part of the Steadman's Store up the street from the proposed Lincoln Street location. Source: Lunenburg Academy Seagull Yearbook 1956

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Year of the Pig

Canada Post Press Release (Dec 20, 2006) On February 18, 2007 it is the pig's turn to rule the Chinese zodiac. Canada Post will issue the Year of the Pig stamp and a special souvenir sheet on January 5, 2007. The single 52 cent domestic rate International rate \$1.55 souvenir sheet will reflect changes to the postage rate effective January 15, 2007.

Aside from being a food source, pigs were also used for barter and were seen as a symbol of stable living. The Chinese character for family is composed of a pig under a roof, and the pig figure plays a role in both the protection of children and in burial rituals. The pig is the most generous and honourable sign of the zodiac, and it heralds a year of contentment, security and optimism. People born in the Year of the Pig (1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007) are said to be kind and caring in nature, with a jovial and easygoing character that belies their resilience and tenacity. At the same time social and self-reliant, they are honest, dependable, extremely determined and perfect friends. But pigs love luxury and can be susceptible to excesses of pleasure.



The domestic rate stamp features the pig in traditional pink against a bright and festive orange background and the international rate stamp features the pig in a festive red against a deep emerald green background. What makes these stamps stand out is the creative use of printing techniques and styles, including lithography in eight and nine colours, plus two foils and embossing, which produces a cloisonné effect.

The Year of the Pig stamps are the work of Signals Design creative duo Kosta Tsetsekas and John Belisle. Earlier this year, the Vancouver studio produced the four stamps in the Canadians in Hollywood series.

Canada Post Line up for 2007

January: Lunar New Year, Year of the Pig; Celebration

February: International Polar Year.

March: Lilacs; HEC Montreal Centennial;

March: Arts Canada - Mary Pratt.

April: University of Saskatchewan Centennial; Endangered Species



May: Ottawa - Canada's capital city

June: Terra Nova National Park;

Capt. George Vancouver; FIFA World Youth Championships.

July: Jasper National Park Centennial; Chief Membertou



August: Scouting in Canada Centennial

September: Law Societies of Saskatchewan and Alberta Centennials;

October: Low-value definitives: Beneficial Insects;

Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

November: Christmas



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A Proposal for a Team Exhibits Competition – Novapex 2007

By J.A. Forbes, Jr.

Earlier this year, Toronto hosted *AmeriStamp Expo*, the annual stamp exhibition of the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE). The Greater Toronto Area Philatelic Alliance (GTAPA) – an umbrella group of the various stamp clubs in that geographic region - one of the show hosts, introduced a new form of exhibiting to Canada which might be called a Team Approach to exhibiting. Apparently this concept has been used at some European and Australian exhibitions, but this was a first for a Canadian venue.

This innovation called for groups of five exhibitors to band together and present five individual 1 Frame exhibits, with the group receiving the best total medal results being declared the winner. The Toronto show had nine teams entered, and the winners garnered four golds and a vermeil to lead the way.

The rules for the Toronto competition contained various provisions which may, or may not, be suitable for a Novapex experiment. In brief they were:

1. Teams consist of five individual members;
2. Of the Exhibits entered by each team, three of the five must be "new" efforts; i.e. not having been shown nationally;
3. Each of the five Exhibits would have to come from a different exhibiting classification; i.e. Thematic, Postal History, Traditional, Postal Stationery, Display, Cinderella, Post Cards, etc..

If this idea was to be embraced by the Nova Scotia Stamp Club, a few suggestions in response to these above points may give a more regional approach.

1. Five team members, but stipulate that one must be a first-time exhibitor or a Junior collector;
2. Potentially revise to two of the five be "new" efforts to set the limit to allow three "established" exhibits per team. This provision is probably not of as much concern locally.
3. To maintain some flexibility, maybe we could go with having no more than two exhibits per team from each of the exhibiting classifications.

Additionally, to encourage other Stamp Clubs/Groups in our region to take on this challenge, I would further suggest that individual collectors could join in two (or more) of these groups, entering a separate exhibit with each Team. For example, Michael Peach might consider going in with a group from the Kentville club, while also joining a group from the NSSC. Similarly, Dave Cooper might encourage the Friends of Philately group to enter the competition, with Dave exhibiting one frame in their Team, and maybe another with the British Collectors group. Hugh Rathbun may enter one exhibit with the Nova Scotia Postal History Study Group Team, and another with a BNAPS Team, etc.. In other words, we would encourage as many Team entries as possible, and recognizing that there are limits to the number of active exhibitors, the cross-matching of individuals could increase the total number of Teams in the competition.

If this proposal is accepted, I would be prepared to offer up a trophy to be used for this competition.

Let's have some comments as soon as possible, so that we might be able to set this idea in motion for the up-coming exhibition in September.

NOVAPEX 2007 September 15-16, 2007

Novapex 2006 is behind us and now we are looking forward to Novapex 2007 which will be held in September. This will be a Regional show only. Planning is in the works and more details will be provided as they become available. If you are interested in being on the Novapex Committee let us know.

Annual Member Dues

The membership renewal campaign has ended for this year. People who were still in arrears in December will be contacted personally to confirm their continued involvement as a member. There have been two resignations and two deaths to date this year.



Another amazing mailbox that gives new meaning to where to stick the mail!!

Cover Box

Covers are available at the monthly meetings. In our "Worldwide Covers" box - a bargain can be found at 50 cents each, or 5 for \$2. The Canada and the USA covers are a real deal at 3 for a loonie (\$1)!! All proceeds from cover sales go directly to the club.

Newsletter Articles

If you have an item (article, cover, show & tell) for the newsletter please contact Jeff for details at:

webnews@nsstampclub.ca

Unless of a timely nature, items will be printed on a first come basis. **The deadline for the February issue is Jan. 31, 2007.**

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