

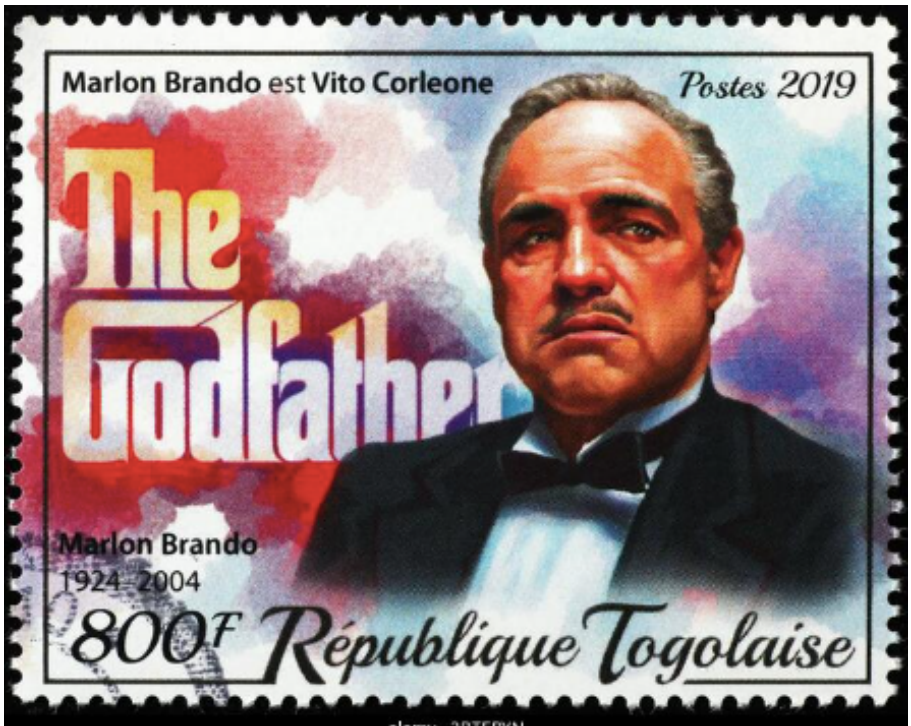
EDMONTON STAMP CLUB

BULLETIN

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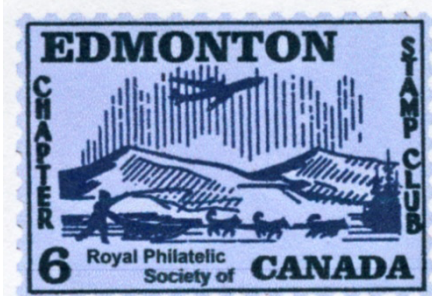
Website: <http://www.edmontonstampclub.ca>



Regular meetings

St. Joseph High School Cafeteria, 10830 - 109 Street, 6:00 pm

Check Page 20 for meeting dates



The Edmonton Stamp Club dates back to 1912. The Club is Life Chapter #6 of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada and Chapter #680 of the American Philatelic Society. **The editor welcomes communications of all kinds – letters, comments, and articles.**

These may be forwarded to John-Paul Himka, Edmonton Stamp Club, Box 399, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2J6, or click “contact” on our website (edmontonstampclub.ca) or email to jhimka@ualberta.ca.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Update on my journey to beat cancer. Week one is now over, and by the time this goes to print week two will also be over. By the time you read this, week three will be over. Do I overuse the word "over"? Good, get over it. So far so good, not feeling so bad.

What has this got to do with stamp collecting? Well, it could become a topical collection.

If you haven't had a chance yet to sign up for our Christmas meal to be held at the school, please sign up so we can

get a solid head count.

More work needs to be done in regards to our spring show. Pitter, patter, lets get at her.

At this point I would like to thank Diane Reid for taking over stuffing envelopes for the juniors, for mailing.

We always need more volunteers. Do what you can for yourself and others. Remember: a club is only as good as you can make it.

Be kind to one another.

—Barend



Mafia Island Stamps

Richard Barnes
(rtbarnes(at)shaw.ca)

I noticed a reference to Mafia Island stamps in a series of African continent World War I history papers from the University of Leiden. Where is this island? I had never read about this before.

Mafia Island is an island that is part of the Zanzibar Archipelago, south of Zanzibar and north of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Tanzania and close to the mouth of the Rufiji River [Fig 1].

In 1891 the Sultan of Zanzibar ceded title to land in Africa that became the imperial German colony of German East Africa (present-day Tanzania). Germany maintained this colony until it was invaded by the armies of Great Britain, Belgium and Portugal at the beginning of World War I.

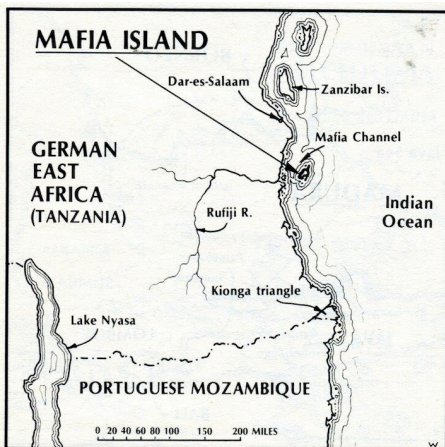


Figure 1



Figure 2

The fourth of August 1914 found the imperial German warship SMS Koeningsberg [Fig 2], a light cruiser armed with nine 100mm (4.1 inch) guns, off the east coast of Africa. The British Royal Navy brought up the "Cape of Good Hope Squadron" in response, blockading Dar es Salaam and cutting the Koeningsberg off

from coal and maintenance support. The Koeningsberg proceeded on 20 September 1914 to embarrass the Royal Navy by sinking the protected cruiser HMS Pegasus in the harbor of Zanzibar. The Koeningsberg continued her patrol but developed a problem in her main engine. She was also low on coal, so she retired up the Rufiji River to await parts and coal to be shipped overland from Dar es Salaam. As long as she was afloat, the Koeningsberg remained a threat to Suez Canal shipping and communications with India.

The Koeningsberg was located, then blockaded in the Rufiji River by British cruisers. This was followed by the British occupation of Mafia Island, which was near the mouth of the river, on 16 December 1914. The east side of the island has a good sheltered deep-water port and fine sandy beaches ideal for use by seaplanes.

Mafia Island had been a major trading location for centuries before the British occupied it. There was an immediate need for continued postal services, particularly to Zanzibar. Col. J.D. Mackay, Governor of Mafia Island, sometime in January 1915 made use of a hand-written overprint "GR/Mafia/JDM" on German East Africa Yacht stamps [Fig 3]. The first printed Mafia Island set of stamps was issued on 14 January, with more Yacht stamps overprinted with a handstamp created from an amateur printing set. The hand-stamped overprint "G.R./MAFIA" was issued in both violet and black [Fig 4-5].



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

The postal authorities in Zanzibar found the Mafia Island overprinted stamps unsatisfactory. They complained that the overprints were difficult to read. In addition, they felt the need to exert their authority over this independent post office. They sent

current Zanzibar stamps, 1c, 3c, 6c, and 15c that were overprinted at Mafia Island [Figure 6].

On the war front, an obsolete boat, the Newberry, was sunk in the channel of the Rufiji River to prevent the Koensigberg from attempting to sortie out into the Pacific Ocean. British forces on the mainland captured more German East Africa stamps that were sent to Mafia Island.

In May 1915 the Zanzibar post office supplied a die type that clamped together along with spare parts. It also sent instructions that all German East African stamps would be overprinted at 6 cents, even the rupee-valued stamps: "G.R./Post/6 Cents/MAFIA." The 1c and 6c Zanzibar stamps also received this overprint. The set was issued in July 1915 [Fig 7-9].



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

The initial reason for the occupation of Mafia Island ended on 11 July 1915. The two shallow draft monitors, HMS Mersey and HMS Severn, finally arrived with their 6-inch guns. Under the spotting direction of two sea planes, the monitors inflicted enough damage to SMS Koensigberg that it had to be abandoned. The Mafia Island post office continued to operate as part of the commercial and war effort until almost the end of the war, when on 6 August 1918 the Island became part of the Tanganyika Territory.

The supply of German East Africa stamps was exhausted by the end of July 1915. In September a small number of Zanzibar stamps were overprinted in two lines "O.H.B.M.S./MAFIA" [Fig 10]. A stash of German East Africa fiscal stamps was found. These fiscal stamps were overprinted in a circle "O.H.B.M.S./MAFIA" [Fig 11].

Finally, an organized and secure supply of stamps became available with an order of Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF) stamps in September 1915. At the same time the overprint was changed to “G. R./POST/MAFIA” [Fig 12-13]. All existing Zanzibar stamps and German East Africa fiscal stamps including those stamps previously overprinted with a Mafia overprint [Fig 14].



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

In September 1916 the Zanzibar government took over the administration of Mafia Island. They ordered the last change of the overprint on Mafia Island stamps to “G.R./Post/ MAFIA” [Fig 15].

Mafia Island stamps were overprinted in different colors – violet, black, and green. I cannot find any rhyme or reason in the selection of overprint colors. It appears that overprint color was selected by the clerk’s mood or what color pot was closest when the overprinting was done. A huge number of varieties and errors exist for such a small number of stamps produced. There was no effort made to have quality control of the overprinting. This was further exacerbated when individual stamps were overprinted. I suspect in the first year of overprinting Mafia Island stamps, different-value stamps were on the counter being overprinted at the same time. These stamps now have high catalogue values and suffer from a lack of printing quality, making them ideal for counterfeiting. The Mafia Island stamps are extensively forged.

I believe a Mafia Island overprint has been added to the German East Africa (GEA) stamps to enhance their value. Not only was there no reason for the GEA administration to cooperate with the Zanzibar administration, the overprints are catalogue-illustration perfect [Fig 16]. Fake Mafia Island overprints were used on IEF stamps. At first glance these overprints look like the overprints placed on GEA fiscal stamps [Fig 17]. This, of course, makes them



Figure 15



Figure 16

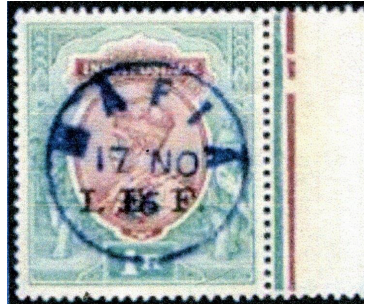


Figure 17

fantasies with a forged overprint. These examples were taken from a dealer's catalogue.

During my search for information on Mafia Island stamps I found gaps in the information available and conflicting information. The only publication I got to read was *The Provisional Issues of the Postage Stamps of Mafia* by C.H. Greenwood from 1930, republished in 2011.

In addition to stamps, postal stationery also received the Mafia Island overprints [Fig 18]. Forgeries of Mafia Island are not confined only to the stamps [Fig 19]. This postcard is a Great-Britain

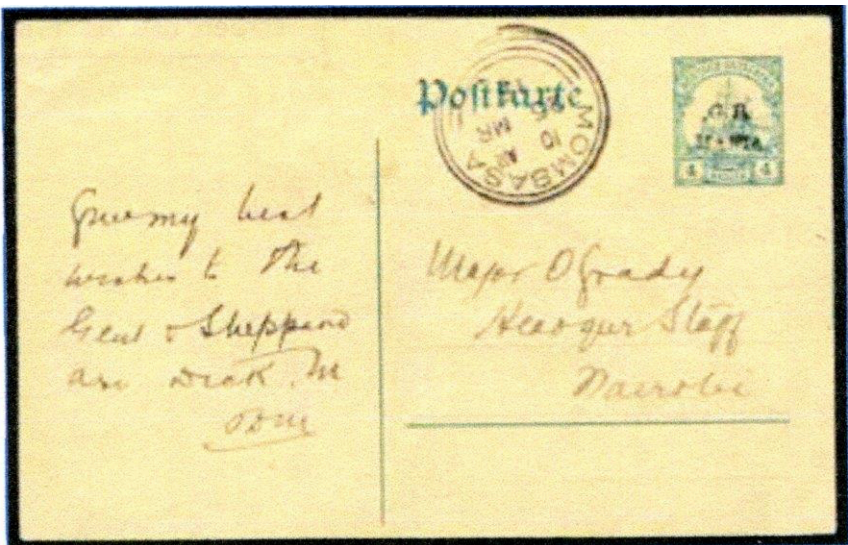


Figure 18



Figure 19

card that was never used by the British occupation administration of GEA and bears a forged Mafia overprint.

I could not find a definitive explanation of how the name Mafia Island was derived. Probably it is a European's corruption of either a lengthy Swahili or Arabic name.

This note is a synopsis of my wonderings for information. Please let me know of any errors, omissions, and/or misinterpretations.

Disclaimer: The Mafia (Cosa Nostra) never legally printed stamps or established a postal service.

A Jeff Pacey Infobit

A Canadian envelope with a British stamp. Coincidentally, father and daughter heads of empire. Too bad the cancel was torn, but I'm guessing Southampton.



My Greatest Adventure in Stamps

Ed Dykstra
eddykstra(at)shaw.ca

You may have heard of the CIA invert stamp, how employees working for the CIA discovered an inverted color printed on the \$1.00 Rush Lamp stamp (Scott Catalogue USA # 1610c). Because stamps of this size are printed in sheets of 400 and then cut into “panes” of 100, everybody wondered what ever happened to the three other panes from the sheet. Now someone has disclosed the existence of a second pane (or possibly another whole sheet). An article in *Linn’s Stamp News* has a great story of the error stamp and what was then a new find. Curiously, both examples of the invert show very clearly that the stamps were from the bottom right corners (Figures 1 and 2). All this is bringing me back to the first time I saw this invert up close and personal. It was in the mid-80s. It was a more carefree time, and the hobby was still huge, worldwide. I was going to have the greatest experience I ever had as a stamp collector.



Figure 1, from the first sheet discovered (1986), position 100 – bottom right corner of the sheet (pane); US Postal Museum website



Figure 2, from the recently discovered sheet, positions 89, 90, 99, 100 – bottom right corner of the sheet (pane); eBay

When I was only able to get seasonal work as a drafts person, I was very surprised to see an ad in the employment section of *Linn's Stamp News*: "New York area auctioneer seeking lot describer." I sent in an application right away. At the time I had been working in a stamp and coin shop full time/part time, for the The Mint, which perhaps some remember. I guess it was just enough experience, because I got a phone call interview to come and meet the owner at a stamp show called WESTPEX. This is a very large stamp show in San Francisco, held every April. This would be a preliminary interview. The interview seemed to look promising. The name of the auctioneer was Jacques C. Schiff Jr. (passed away 2017), a specialist in error stamps. He asked me some questions about stamps. I answered as best as I could. He told me that I had basic philatelic knowledge. I had never heard of "philatelic knowledge" in regards to stamp collecting before. He also told me that his company was involved in a new "invert error" stamp. This sure felt like an "inside scoop" for the hobby. Welcome to the world, the *really big world* of stamp collecting – I told myself.

The last time an invert stamp was discovered was the inverted color yellow on the Dag Hammarskjöld US stamp in 1962, Scott #1203. However, the Post Office reprinted this stamp later on with the inverted color yellow (Scott #1204) and thus devalued the original error stamp in the philatelic market; no money should be made at the Post Office's expense. The last invert error stamp before that is still very rare and valuable: the Inverted Jenny airmail stamp issued in 1919. This stamp (Scott #C3a) has an airplane that appears to be flying upside down. The new adventure was actually seeing the Rush Lamp invert, Scott #1610c. The stamp has several colors. Tan-colored paper, brown lamp stand and lettering, orange and yellow flame. The lamp stand and lettering is inverted compared to the other colored parts of the stamp. This stamp is the \$1.00 value of the beautiful Americana series, produced in the early 80s. There were two previous error varieties of this stamp. Scott #1610a is missing the brown lamp stand and lettering, and Scott #1610b is missing the orange and yellow candle and flame.

Then there was AMERIPEX! This was the world's largest stamp show ever held up to that date. The US has organized a large international stamp show every ten years, beginning in 1926, known as FIPEX in NYC. AMERIPEX was held in the O'Hare Exposition Center in Rosemount, a suburb of Chicago, from 22 May to 1 June 1986. I was hired to help staff Jaques Schiff's booth. I was a bit overwhelmed, but it was exciting. There were several dealers who also sold stamps in our booth. (Another event was Josef Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, quietly arriving at O'Hare Airport from the USSR a month before the show; the Iron Curtain was rattling.)

It was a pleasure to see Stampazine in the super booth as well. This New York dealer was a very good source of worldwide stamps and covers. For example, Stampazine had a complete set of Jubilees and the complete 1893 Columbus issue on display and for sale. On one of the days, I was alone in the booth briefly, and then a collector from Denmark came to see what we had. I found the book with Denmark stamps and it was full of pricey items to collect. He wanted to buy a cover with Denmark #1. I had never yet seen anybody throw down that much money over the counter for a stamp or cover while working at The Mint in Edmonton. Many people came to the booth to view the lots for sale in the auction. Especially the new invert. Every day was a great day at the show. The café was as big as the dealers' bourse at our annual show in Edmonton. The rarest and most expensive stamps and covers were there for sale or displayed in exhibits.

On exhibits: there were so many frames that it would take the whole ten-day show to spend just over one minute per frame. For example, there was an exhibit of early Canada that had several pages showing singles, pairs, and covers of Canada #3 (12 pence black). The court of honor had 109 frames! There were about four thousand frames altogether!! The world's rarest stamp was also there in an exhibit of early British Guiana. I was thrilled to see this famous stamp instead of just pictures! It had an armed guard standing in front of the stamp. It was not too hard to find the rarity – just look for the armed guard. The stamp was sold for one million dollars in 1980. The other stamps in the set are just wimps at

+/- \$250,000. Actually, all the frames in that exhibit were extremely rare and valuable. The owner, John du Pont, was arrested for murder in 1996 and died in prison. The British Guiana (Scott #13) was finally available again and sold for almost ten million dollars in 2014. Another dealer (the Weil brothers of New Orleans) had five blocks of the inverted Jenny (\$10 million USD) on display at their booth, a super booth. These booths were 20 feet by 20 feet and faced two aisles on either side. Jaques Schiff Auctions had a super booth as well, one of twenty-five. There were about four hundred dealers in total! Literally acres of stamps!

There were five auctions, including Jaques Schiff's (Figure 3). The auctions were all held after the show closed for the day. Lots of rare stamps were being sold in this particular auction. Another one of my duties was to be a bid spotter at the auction, in a room that held a hundred people. We were kept fairly busy to make sure no bids were overlooked. Part of the purpose of having the new invert stamp in the auction was to establish the value of the stamp. Many other invert stamps and missing color stamps were also in this auction. The auction included proofs and back-of-the-book revenues, all high valued stamps. Then came the lot that was the inverted Rush Lamp. We sprang into action, ready for some serious bidding. The opening bid was \$5000, and that's what it sold for. Upon close inspection this one had a few short perfs near the top left corner. It must be the best way to sell a stamp like that. We thought it should have sold for more. Getting paid to do all this was, in any case, sweet.

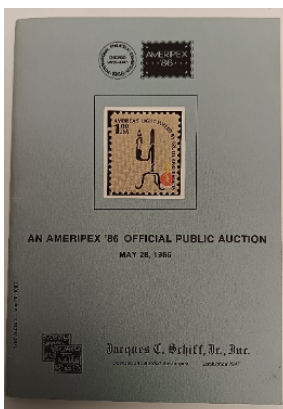


Figure 3, Schiff Auctions
AmeripeX Auction Catalogue

A special AMERIPEX stamp was issued just to commemorate the show held in the previous year: Scott #2145 (Figure 4). It also has four different missing color error varieties. Thirty-six new stamps were launched for the stamp show itself – four sheets of nine different stamps showing the US presidents from George Washington to Lyndon B. Johnson: Scott # 2216-19. This issue too has fifteen error varieties! (Figure 5). They were all drawn as caricatures, like the Prime Ministers definitive set Canada produced in the mid-1970s.



Figure 4, Ameripex commemorative stamp issued in 1985



Figure 5

A four-hundred-page show catalogue was also issued, listing the many exhibits, dealers, and postal administrations. It included a picture and a welcome address from then President Ronald Reagan. Mainland China really stood out by issuing a souvenir sheet that is an actual page in the show catalogue. Several postal cards and other items also appeared in the catalogue, which is a collectible in itself (Figures 6 and 7). Dominica issued Disney stamps (Scott ##3954-58) showing Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, and others, all collecting stamps for the show. Every day there was a free copy of *Linn's Stamp News* telling what went on the day before and containing, of course, many ads. Lighthouse brought five semitrucks

of supplies to sell at the show and only took one back. This is just another example that shows how strong the philatelic market was then.



Figure 6



Figure 7

However, all good things must come to an end. The show closed, and I did not get the job. I am sure there were more than a few who could have worked for this business. But I am so glad to have been initially considered. Besides, I also would have had to sell a house for the big move to Ridgefield Park, New Jersey.

Seeing people from Edmonton was great, as I briefly visited with Keith Spencer there as well as Hans Buchmueller (since passed away). Another wonderful result was meeting so many great people in the booth. At the booth I met Steve Datz, author of *A Catalogue of Errors on US Stamps*. I also met John Hotchner who has contributed greatly to the hobby, and still does. He writes a column in *Linn's Stamp News* called "US Stamp Notes" and another one on expertizing. He is a judge of exhibiting and co-founder of AAPE (American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors). He also was one of the co-founding members of the ISWSC (International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors). I am a member of that club as well. I joined just after the big show. We still write each other Christmas cards. I also joined the American Philatelic Society at the show. I am glad also to be a member of our Edmonton Stamp Club, where I have learned many things over the years. I look ahead with gratefulness.

E.S.C. Distinguished Service Award

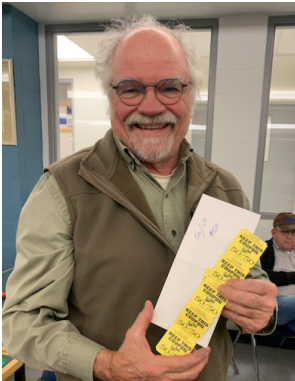
Our club’s highest award. Members are eligible on the basis of service for the benefit of philately and for service to the club.



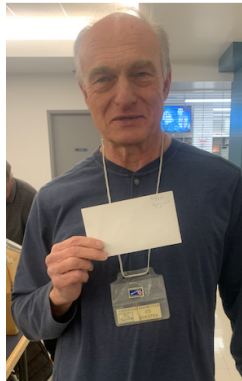
This year, our club secretary, Warren Stein, received the award.

2019 Jim Lockau	1999 Christopher Miller
2018 Kelly Liusz-Moser	1998 Maurice Hampson
2017 Fred Tauber	1997 Alan Meech
2016 Peter Kuester	1996 Edmund Harris
2015 Ken Kluchky	1995 John Powell
2014 Bill VanderStelt	1994 Deirdre McKay
2013 Ed Muxlow	1993 Edgar Mackay
2012 Carol Warren	1992 Roman Zrobok
2011 Richard Barnes	1991 Doris McKay
2010 Bob Hyodo	1990 Jan Roebroek
2009 Joe Liusz	1989 Michael Burrington
2008 Ed Dykstra	1988 Stewart Kenyon
2007 George (Bud) Cutler	1987 Siegfried Osterwoldt
2006 Patricia Bates	1986 Kim Frandsen
2005 John Attrell	1985 Doris Church
2004 Ernie Carlson	1984 Ian Paterson
2003 Roy Hauer	1983 Keith Spencer
2002 David Piercey	1982 Bert Huffman
2001 Jim Miller	1981 Clark Bolton
2000 Margaret Powell	1980 George Parkinson

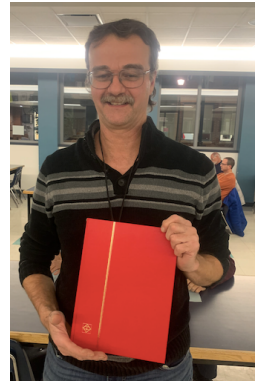
Who Got Lucky at the Edmonton Stamp Club?



Mark Boyce won the 50/50 on 16 October. He will probably spend his \$50 on stamps.



Ed Dykstra did even better on 30 October: he won \$51 dollars.



Also on 30 October, Dave Hetke won the door prize, but instead of a door, he got a stockbook.

Observed by Jeff Pacey

Bonds

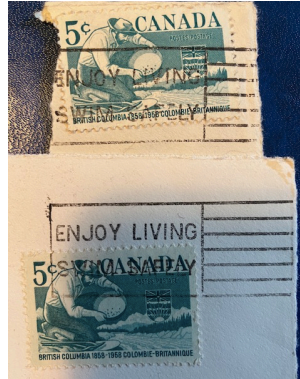
Both the US and Canadian governments co-opted the post office to advertise their savings bonds. As a kid I remember getting them from older relatives who wanted to invest in my future. Canada no longer sells them.





Gold

A golden box that surged up in a donation to the junior club. Your sweetie would be upset if she was expecting chocolates. A pound of stamps is pretty cool if you're a collector though. I have to ask what exactly a missionary mixture would contain. Wouldn't a missionary be as poor as a church mouse?



Water Safety

The same stamp with the same cancel surfed up in the same bag of kiloware. A water warning from our government about enjoying life by not drowning. This is the sort of big brother that I don't mind. It's much better than Mexico hotel ads on my phone after talking about going to the beach.

Step Up

Postal cancellations asking people to step up and help out.



Cancel Culture



Great penmanship! Almost admirable is the steady hand of the Sharpie-holder. All the lines are remarkably parallel and of the same length, approximately. This artist is almost good enough to be a draftsman (I can say that because I am one), but IS NOT HIRED. It is obvious enough that the stamps are already cancelled! Thanks anyway Sharpie-wielder. Your extra duty efforts are neither needed nor appreciated. OK: You're fired! – Ed Dykstra



I found this while clearing out files. This is what made me stop collecting modern Canada. I was trying to get everything with an in-period cancel on it by mailing parcels and lots of letters to family and friends. I was always explaining to the postal staff that I was a collector and wanted nice cancels so I could add the material to my collection. So much of the material was never cancelled despite my begging and their promises. When this showed up with the tracking sticker on the souvenir sheet, something finally snapped. I was done. Over. Kaput. Finished. – Jeff Pacey

Meeting Dates

The Edmonton Stamp Club meets Mondays at 6:00 p.m. in the cafeteria of St. Joseph High School, 10830-109 Street. Park to the north of the school and use the main entrance at the southeast corner of the school. For information about the club call 780-467-4825 or 780-437-1787.

2023-24

20 November	5 and 26 February
4 December	4 and 18 March
18 December (Christmas meeting)	8 and 22 April
8 and 22 January	6 and 27 May

Stompin' 'round the Stamp World

- The 7-20 November issue of *Canadian Stamp News* announced the passing of our club member, David Piercey, on the front page. His death is called “a devastating blow” to Canadian philately.
- Tired of Netflix? Have you ever explored the YouTube channel “Conversations with Philatelists”? It’s mission is to chat with philatelists around the world. Nearly a hundred episodes have appeared.
- On 1 November, *Canadian Stamp News* reported our club’s donations to the Edmonton Food Bank.

Matchbox



Joe Liusz showed me this matchbox with what is probably Ukraine’s most famous stamp on its cover.