

Owen Sound Stamp Club
Chapter 191
Royal Philatelic Society of Canada

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 18th 2017 @ 7 PM

From the President...



Hopefully you are able to sit around the fireplace and enjoy sorting through the philatelic material accumulated over the last year. That is certainly a great way to start of the New Year basking in the warmth and perhaps a favourite beverage within arms reach. There might also be the chance to plan a visit to some of the upcoming shows listed further in the newsletter. One thing is for certain, at least to me, that this hobby is filled with ideas, plans and wishes.

Our meeting this month will feature a few administrative things for the club. The first item is the election of club officers. There is always need for fresh blood who may have creative ideas on how we can become more recognized in the community. Because the elections will be held, please do plan on coming. Bob Ford is the longest serving member as a club officer, I hesitate to say how many years he has been secretary treasurer, however, he may be seeking a retirement form that position. Looking through the number of President messages written during my time as President, it appears that I began in October or November of 2008. Larry Crane has been the Vice President for the last few years, thus he is relatively fresh as a club executive.

Further in the newsletter are two articles written by club members and they will be available for showing the suggested improvements on the club circuit books. I certainly look forward to how the computerized system will help make the annual pay out quicker, and more accurate than this past one. Neither of the two articles is with illustrations, so I have added a few scans that have nothing to do with the articles, but they do have a common theme. At the meeting I will ask those present on what the theme it might be about! This is something like on a certain radio station where a number of songs are played which hint at a headline that was in the past weeks news.

We will again have our “resident” dealer bring his stock to the meeting for us to look over and then an opportunity to buy more for our personal collections. Perhaps we can find something unique for the one page exhibit at the show coming up in October. Whatever, you are looking for; the key ingredient is bringing enough cash to make the purchases of those gems salted away in John’s stock. I am sure that there are a lot of stamps in our individual collections who would love to free our “relatives” from John’s “refugee camp” more commonly referred to as the dealers stock.

It is also a reminder to everyone that hasn’t paid their dues for 2017 to do so as soon as possible. If you are unable to attend the meeting on the 18th, Bob Ford’s address is on the last page of this newsletter if you need to mail the dues this year. I hope the weather will make travelling to our meeting reasonable but whatever, please do not take unnecessary risks.

Cheers.

Phil Visser
President
OSSC



Figure 2
Scott # 924

Coming or Going
By Chris Tschirhart

At the end of the year I decided to take stock of just what my hobby entailed for the past year. I have been asking myself over the last little while if the forces between the makers of Stamp Albums and the Canada Post Corporation have conspired to have us Coming and Going!

I am a collector of only used Canadian stamps. However as a lot of us have observed, this is becoming a bit of a geometric challenge in the past few years as it seems: the number of dealers diminish, privacy laws make used stamps harder to obtain, fewer corporations and individuals use stamps and if so just definitive and coils, while postal clerks increasingly wield pens with abandon instead of stamp cancels.

Some fellow members informed me that many collectors are resorting to just buying the years mint stamps and getting them cancelled. Many Collectors in Britain I am told have thrown up their hands and gone this route. I decided to go this route for 2016 as it has been a tumultuous work year and I could not get to as many shows as I would have liked. So I decided to take stock of what this set me back.



Figure 3
Unitrade # 654

This year Canada post decided to undertake a Star Trek Invasion with the 50th anniversary of the TV series and to which I confess I am a closet Trekkie! While a number of the actors have a Canadian connection I am left wondering if all this hype was just a device to hold us ransom. If you look at the Dec 27th 2016 issue of Canadian Stamp News you will find an article of how well the Star Trek series did at the International Philatelic Exhibition in New York last year. While a boon for Canada Post, I am left wondering how much the show actually has to do with Canada. And the Star Trek Book with extra sheets was \$ 19.95. So over the year I ordered the Souvenir Packages as follows: Package 1, \$27.28, Package 2, \$49.40, Package 3 \$39.40, Packable 4 \$9.95, and additional Souvenir sheets to have singles of the individual stamps \$32.54 for a total of \$178.52.

In addition, the pages for my album cost another \$34.82, the perpetrators of demanding singles for every souvenir sheet! As the reader may now observe that I don't have to collect the sheet singles; however the printers are tricky putting the individual sheet on a page with the singles so one is left with gaping holes in one's presentation. Total for the year \$213.34. This is just 2016, and does not include what I spent on filling holes in the Years between April 23, 1851, and present day. I am also left wondering why since we have progressed through the 12 years of the Chinese Calendar New Year's symbols we are starting it all over again. Perhaps there are more Canadian themes that should be celebrated by our Postal Service.

I will say that the Postal Clerks at Chatsworth and St. Jacobs were very kind letting me wield their cancellation stamps as I apply it with glee on my collection! If you have a chance, go into the St Jacobs Post Office ask to look at the cancellation stamp. It is the old hammer type and is one of very few left. Also, that Post Office is a designated Philatelic Postal Centre, so they are very accommodating to collectors! With Canada turning 150 this year we await the little additions to the years postage stamp output to boost the number of issues for the year.

I have heard from other members of the Club that Australia and the United States 2016 year's collection are very expensive, thus making Canada looking like a bargain in comparison! Tricks of duplication include three versions of the same stamp with differing perforations, and nuances like changing the colour in an individual window pane on the



Figure #4
Scott # 511b or 513
with unknown
overprint

stamp image to turn one stamp into six. We grumble that the hobby is dying or in decline. Perhaps it is the Postal Corporations that are killing the Goose instead of waiting for the Golden Eggs to be laid. It leaves one wondering if perhaps after 50 years as a Province, and 150 years of confederation that it may be a good time to decide that 200 years of Canadian stamps is a good place to cap a collection. Am I Coming or am I Going?

Circuit Books
By Randy Rogers

One of the primary benefits of membership in a stamp club is the opportunity to exchange surplus stamps with other members. This exchange is enabled through the use of circuit books. Members place their surplus stamps on predesigned pages indicating the catalogue number and value and the selling price. Members mark their purchases on the page when the stamp is removed and also record the page, catalogue number, and price on a Tally Sheet that is used to complete the purchase.



The circuit books are typically managed by one or two volunteers from the club membership. The circuit book manager brings the books to club meetings, accepts new pages from members, and inserts the pages into the appropriate circuit books. The circuit books may also be taken to other clubs to offer their members an opportunity to acquire material from our members.

At least once a year the circuit book manager must go through the circuit books to tally the purchases, pay the owners of the stamps that were sold, and indicate on the page that the owner has been paid. Typically there is also an audit done on a random sample of pages as an additional check before payment is made.

Figure 5
Unitrade # 155

Over the last year I have had the opportunity to create pages for and make purchases from our circuit books. I've also had a chance to go through the circuit books of at least one other club. During one of our summer meetings members received their payments for circuit book sales. As I watched the process unfold it occurred to me that managing the circuit books must be very time consuming and can only get worse as the volume of books and pages grows.

When I joined the club and introduced myself I told everyone that I was a retired computer programmer. In addition to stamp collecting, I still enjoy programming computers as a hobby. A program to automate the circuit book process seemed like a fun project for me and one that could benefit our club and perhaps others too.

I designed a database and small prototype program then approached our circuit book manager, Chris, and pitched the idea to him. Chris, maybe not entirely sold at the time, encouraged me to continue and loaned me one of our circuit books. This provided some real data to work with to fine tune the software and make sure it could accommodate our way of managing the circuit books.

Over the last couple of months Chris and I have met to review progress on the project and discuss new ideas. During this process we discovered that our pages often did not easily accommodate blocks, strips, or souvenir sheets. Additionally some pages have several stamps with the same catalogue number. In terms of the Tally Sheets that are submitted when paying for purchases, the catalogue number is not sufficient to uniquely identify which stamp was sold creating an accounting problem for the book manager.

To solve this problem I designed new circuit book pages in a variety of formats and added a small numbered box in the bottom right corner of each square. The price is right next to the number and there is a place to record the box number on our revised Tally Sheets. Using the new sheets will make it much easier for the circuit book manager to

know exactly which item has been sold. When making purchases from the existing pages members are asked to do their best to indicate which box contained the price for the items they purchase.

You are likely thinking that entering the data for a circuit book page might be quite time consuming. Having entered the information from all of our circuit book pages into the database (12 books, 668 pages, and 11,845 items), I can assure you that once the user is comfortable with the program it should take no more than 5 minutes (some pages can be completed in less than a minute) to enter the information for a circuit book page. The benefit of spending a bit of time up front is realized when it comes time to do the accounting. The amount of time it takes to tally and account for all the sales needs to be considered when thinking about the up-front time investment.

During the data capture process we discovered several pages that had the same (duplicate) page numbers as well as pages with numbers that did not correspond with the range of page numbers that had been assigned to the member who owned the page. Some pages in the circuit books were renumbered to make them conform to the numbering rules. Chris and I have done an audit of the database and are confident that it accurately reflects our physical circuit books.



Figure 6
Scott #890

Now that we have a complete database and working program, called Circuit Book Manager (CBM), it should be easy and much less time consuming to manage our circuit book sales. The new program automates much of the process, instantly produces sales reports that Chris can use for payment to members, offers a variety of searching capabilities, displays scanned images if available, and can print and even form fill circuit book pages.

There is also a bonus for the members themselves as I have created a stripped down version that I call Circuit Book Explorer (CBE). Our club meets only once a month so time with the circuit books is limited. With more members than books, a member might not even get a chance to look at a book of interest. CBE offers a solution to that problem by allowing you to search for items at home on your own computer to see if and where they might be available in our circuit books. CBE can also import and generate a list of books and pages that contain stamps on your want list. Having a pick list should make better use of the time you have with our circuit books. Of course, you can still just flip through the pages for a visual review.

Chris and I will be bringing examples of the new circuit book and tally sheets as well as a computer to show those who are interested how CBM and CBE work. We will also provide instructions on how to obtain CBE for your computer. The program is free and it is my hope that in the future other clubs will use the CBM/CBE software and share their circuit book data thereby enhancing their circuit book sales.

Coming Events...

- JAN 21st 68th Cathex
Grantham Lions Club, 732 Niagara Street, St. Catharines, ON, L2M 7W7
68th Cathex sponsored by the St. Catharines Stamp Club will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Exhibits, 12 dealers, youth area, club circuit books. Free admission and parking. Wheelchair accessible. A lunch counter is available. For more information contact David Hillier. Phone: (905) 641-2318 Email: fancycancelhillier@gmail.com Web: <http://stcatharinesstampclub.ca>
- JAN 21st Burloak Stamp Fair
Burlington Seniors Centre, 2285 New St., Burlington, ON, L7R 1J4
Hours: 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Twenty years of regular monthly shows on the third of Saturday of every month. Six to nine dealers, active buyers, and always something new. Phone: 905-575-2950 Email: bas6@bell.net

- FEB 4th Bramalea Stamp Show
 Judith Naiman Secondary School, 1305 Williams Pkwy., Brampton, ON, L6S 3J8
 Club show. 10 dealers, exhibits, kids table. Phone: 905-792-3526 Email: bobthorne79@gmail.com
- FEB 11th BURLPEX 2017 Stamp Show
 Burlington Seniors Centre, 2285 New St., Burlington, ON, L7P 3K5
 Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission, free parking, wheelchair accessible, 12 dealers, 2 silent auctions, club circuit books, etc. Phone: 905-336-8685 Email: macneall@cogeco.ca
- FEB 25th St. Thomas Stamp Club 31st Annual Stamp Show
 Community of Christ Church, 105 Fairview Ave., St. Thomas, ON, N5R 3X4
 10 dealers, exhibits, door prizes. Free admission, free parking. No stairs to climb. Phone: 519-631-8180
- FEB 26th 36th Annual Toronto Postcard Club Show
 Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, 6 Garamond Court, Toronto, ON, M3C1Z5
 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free parking, TTC accessible. 40 tables of vintage postcards Admission \$5.
 Email: info@torontopostcardclub.com Web: <http://torontopostcardclub.com/toronto-postcard-show/>
- MAR 11th North Toronto Stamp Club – Spring Bourse
 Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St., Toronto, ON, M4T1Z9
 Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Easy subway access at St. Clair subway station. Free admission. 22 dealers, over 100 sales circuit books including recent issues, over 100 ten cents books, members table, door prizes, snack bar, wheelchair access, parking at the Church and on nearby streets, families and children welcome.
 Phone: 647-990-4073 Email: ntsc.programchair@gmail.com Web: <http://www.northtorontostampclub.ca>
- MAR 18th OXPEX/OTEX2016
 Woodstock Christian School, 800 Juliana Dr., Woodstock, ON, N4S 8X3
 Exhibits, dealers, club circuit books, youth gift bags, prizes, draws, lunch/snack counter. Free admission, free parking. Everyone welcome. Phone: 519-529-5055 Email: viking37@rogers.com Web: <http://www.oxfordphilsoc.com>
- MAR 19th Post Card Memories Show & Sale — Volume VI
 Bingemans, 425 Bingeman Centre Dr., Kitchener, ON, N2B 3X7
 Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission \$5 – kids free with an adult. Postcards featuring an unlimited array of interests. Royalty to race cars – trains to toads and towns & real photo cards, breweriana, sports dogs & cats and more! 10,000's of cards all in one well-lighted location. Leading dealers, free parking, hourly door prizes, lunch counter. Phone: 519-885-3499 (DM) or 800-361-6631 (LH) Email: stamphogg@hotmail.com
 Web: <http://postcardshow.blogspot.com>
- MAR 25th National Postage Stamp & Coin Show
 March 25, 2017 to March 26, 2017
 Hilton Mississauga/Meadowvale, 6750 Mississauga Rd., Mississauga, ON, L5N 2L3
 Presented by Canadian Stamp News and Canadian Coin News, the spring edition of the National Postage Stamp & Coin Show will be held at a new venue for 2017: the Hilton Mississauga/Meadowvale at 6750 Mississauga Road, Mississauga, Ont. The Saturday (10 a.m. – 5 p.m.) and Sunday (10 a.m. – 4 p.m.) show will feature stamp and coin dealers from across Canada, who are selling, buying and appraising all kinds of philatelic and numismatic materials. Admission is only \$3 on Saturday and FREE on Sunday. Parking is also free. Special room rate available at the hotel. Check out our website for show updates and list of dealers.
 Phone: 1-800-408-0352 Ext 228 Email: mwalsh@trajan.ca Web: <http://www.stampandcoinshow.com>

From the Editor...

As some may have seen in the Canadian Philatelist, there is a new editor starting for that magazine. With the recent emailing of the December newsletter, this edition is now being sent electronically to the new editor, Mr. Herb Colling as well as the retired editor, Mr Tony Shaman. A newsletter is more than a tool of reminding members of the upcoming meeting, but also a means of keeping connected with those who are unable to attend regularly. If there are any new things observed, feel free to drop a line and there is good chance your "find" will be published. Good luck on thinking about the theme of the illustrations included on the previous pages. It will be interesting to hear the guesses. I would also remind you that the Owen Sound Stamp Club maintains a web page at www.owensoundstampclub.org and hope you take a few minutes to visit it.



During the school year, the Owen Sound Stamp Club meets at 7:00 pm on the third Wednesday of each month in the cafeteria of St Mary's High School, 555 15th Street East. Meeting agendas will vary between having visiting club circuit books, speakers and an auction. Guests and new members are always welcome. Annual membership fees: \$15.00

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