

Some nations let dealers decide on issues

Take heart, all you people who may question the subject matter of Canadian stamps: at least it's Canadian.

Shed a tear for the 7,000 residents of Tuvalu who, if a London-based stamp promotion wins the day, will be licking stamps showing hockey players, or U.S. baseball players, or snooker players, or Miss World finalists. The residents won't have a say: The subject matter is being decided through a poll of stamp dealers around the world, and especially in the U.K. and the U.S.

We have Canada Post, a Crown corporation. In the U.K., it's British Post, an equivalent. In the U.S., it's the United States Postal Service, also an equivalent of sorts. In many other places, particularly newly-emerging nations, postage stamp production is put in the

hands of private organizations.

In fact, there are well over 100 stamp-issuing entities in the world handled by a half-dozen agencies, far outnumbering governments that issue their own stamps, as Canada does.

One of these agencies is Philatelists Ltd., of Hampshire, England. It represents St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Nevis and Tuvalu, a relatively small number, considering that Crown Agents represents some 35 countries.

And that's the nub. Stamp issues are being multiplied by stamps from offshore islands. For example, St. Vincent is an island in the Windward Islands in the Caribbean. So is Grenada, of recent notoriety. In between are some microdot islands, called Grenadines, some

administered by St. Vincent, some by Grenada. Starting in 1973, stamps of Grenadines of Grenada were issued, and so were stamps of Grenadines of St. Vincent. Neither is Scott catalogue listed.

If this were not bad enough, now stamps are being issued for Bequia and Union, two islands of the Grenadines.

Then there's Tuvalu. It was once the Ellice of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands of the South Pacific. In 1976 that became Tuvalu and the Gilberts became Kirabati.

Both have become prolific issuers in their own right, but let's look at Tuvalu.

Tuvalu is a group of nine islands spread over 500,000 sq. mi. (1,295,000 sq. km.) of the South Pacific. Yet the total land area is 10 sq. mi. (25.9 sq. km.) Four of the nine are mere ocean

rocks and all but the main island, Funafuti, have small numbers of inhabitants.

Be that as it may, Tuvalu is part of an omnibus issue (an issue on a common theme by many countries, such as the Royal wedding), through Philatelists Ltd.

And so are five of the nine islands that makeup Tuvalu.

Tuvalu (and Kirabati) had something really going for them in North America. A dedicated band of collectors. A quarterly publication, "Maneapa", won awards for philatelic literature.

It's published by the Tuvalu and Kirabati Philatelic Society.

I know from experience how dedicated that society is to the cause. And now it's alarmed. It was, and is, militant.

The society wasn't even informed of the omnibus issue, probably because the Tuvalu postal officials made a deal on the basis of economics, not philatelics.

Subjects of the first of the omnibus issues are U.K. locomotives and old automobiles.

"Needless to say, there has never been, and there never will be, a railway in Tuvalu," said Michel Forand,

Maneapa editor.

Themes under production cover, in addition to trains and cars, are cricket, the military, soccer and racing cars. Being market-researched are such never-ending subjects as world record holders, pets, golf and religious leaders.

Dealers are asked to fill in a questionnaire: "Which subjects would best profit your business?" and return it

to Philatelists Ltd. Note that dealers are asked about subjects, not the people in whose name the stamps are issued.

The stamp collectors of the world, however, seem to be saying, "We're fed up and we're not going to take it any more."

LETTERS

Letters are invited. Please send enquiries to the writer at P.O. Box 40, Beauharnois, Que., J6N 3C1.

Inside Pages

Barbara Gordon's first novel, *I'm Dancing as Fast as I Can*, was stunning in its depiction of mental illness brought on by an addiction to valium. Her new book *Defects of the Heart* is much less hard hitting despite its expose of the drug industry. Jessica Lenhart is a director of socially-aware TV documentaries, this time focussing on a new drug about to come out on the market which purports to be a miracle worker in preventing miscarriage. Jessica finds out that it's

a "teratogen," a drug which produces babies born with massive defects, somewhat like thalidomide, but worse. It's been rushed and prodded past the FDA. This is tough material but author Gordon winds it in with two love stories, one of Jessica's affair with her married boss, her mentor, and the other with her story source, a handsome lawyer. Gordon softens the plot line too much and the intensity of Jessica's investigation declines in importance. Must heroines always find true love? (Dell, \$4.95)

Anne Tyler's look at the life of a very disturbed artistic man begins fabulously. *Celestial Navigation's* main character, Jeremy, has been isolated from the world by his mother. He can't cope with anything, can barely say hello. The novel begins with the death of his mother and introduces his sister Tyler's description of a fussy, sensitive spinster out to shake Jeremy to his senses is realistic and moving. Unfortunately this character soon disappears from the plot and we move on to Jeremy's inner world. He somehow manages to do what his sister wanted him to do: live life. He marries. Has children galore, but his grasp on reality deteriorates as the children multiply and he has to escape back to solitude. The characterization of Jeremy and his wife is shaky, manipulative, and so disappointing after such a charming opening (Berkley, \$3.95).

In *Disturbing the Peace*, author Richard Yates explores another kind of mind, the mind of an alcoholic businessman who erupts into fits of violence and soon finds his way to Belle Me psychiatric hospital. The story begins and ends at the hospital, and in between we peek in on his marriage. Not disturbing, just boring (Dell, \$10.50).

Where will the money go?

Midland has received money from the Ministry of Transportation and Communications to install a stoplight, but whether it will be placed at Hugel Avenue and Midland Avenue remains to be seen.

Alderman Ian Ross, in announcing the receipt

of the grant on Monday, told the council that the stoplight would be placed near the beer outlet, at Hugel Avenue and Midland Avenue.

After comments from Reeve Bev Day and Alderman Nancy Keefe, the alderman said that the decision was "not etched in stone".

Midland Library News



Thanks to Mitsubishi Electric Sales Canada Inc., the library has two video cassette recorders available for rent. You must have a library card in order to rent one and the rental fee will be \$10 overnight.

From now until September all departments of the library will open at 9 a.m. and close at 3 p.m., on Saturdays only. Our Monday to Friday hours will remain unchanged.

The following is a list of new books available at the Midland Public Library as of June 29.

FICTION

Centrifuge by J. C. Pollock, Valediction by Robert B. Parker, Demon by John Varley, Orion by Ben Bova, Looking Forward by Gillian Tindall, The Witches of Eastwick by John Updike.

NON-FICTION

Patrick: Sixteen Centuries With Ireland's Patron Saint by Alice-Boyd Proudfoot, Japan In The Passing Lane: An Insider's Account Of Life In A Japanese Auto Factory by Satoshi Kamata, Some Men Are More Perfect Than Others by Merle Shain, Margaret Atwood: Language, Text and System by Sherrill E. Grace, Kennedy: The New Generation by Frank Tetti, William Holden's Journey Through Kenya by Mohamed Amin.

The films scheduled for Wednesday afternoon, July 4, are Faces Ontario, Summer in Canada, Helicopter Canada.

Films begin at 1:30 p.m. in the children's library. Admission is free.

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