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**Appointment**



Ian Proudfoot, publisher of York Region Newspaper Group, is pleased to announce the appointment of John Futhey as director of interactive media and technology. As director John will have responsibility for yorkregion.com, the community website of record within the communities of York Region, and technical services for our publishing and printing clients.

John has a B.A. in English from the University of Toronto and extensive background in technology, pre-press and newspaper production for media companies. Most recently he was director of newspaper production and creative services for the York Region Newspaper Group. This appointment speaks to the emergence of our online media offerings and opportunities for our clients and our readers. Those opportunities include banner and tile advertising, sponsorship, business directory and individual website initiatives.

John welcomes feedback on [www.yorkregion.com](http://www.yorkregion.com) at [jfuthey@yrng.com](mailto:jfuthey@yrng.com).

yorkregion.com is a member of the York Region Newspaper Group, a division of Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd. Area divisions include the Aurora-Newmarket Era-Banner, Georgina Advocate, Markham Economist & Sun, Richmond Hill/Thornhill Liberal, Stouffville Sun-Tribune, Today's Homes, Vaughan Citizen, York Region Business Times, and York Region Printing.



Customized stamps have been available since 2000 but Canada Post, the first in the world to offer the service, has seen sales jump after they were offered on the crown corporation's website in October.

Canadians first to mail with personalized postage

*Some custom stamps too personal*

BY LINDA JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

It's just as well Queen Victoria is not around to see the new trend in postage stamps.

She would not be amused.

Once the preserve of kings, queens and the otherwise high and mighty, stamps have lately been sporting photos of lesser known characters.

Complete unknowns, actually — newlyweds, babies, cute little animals and even logos and advertisements.

It's all because Canada Post will reproduce a photograph on a sheet or two of stamps for mail users to put on their personal or business mail.

While customized stamps have been available since 2000 — and Canada Post was the first in the world to offer the ser-

vice — in October, the crown corporation's website made it possible to order them online.

"We've seen huge growth since we launched the online capability," spokesperson Cindy Daoust said.

It's certainly a unique gift for people. That's shown in that the most popular images we have are babies, pets and wedding pictures," she added, noting many people use wedding stamps on their thank you cards.

"It makes a card a little more special when you're including an image from the wedding."

Though customized stamps are used mostly by individuals who want to add a personal touch, they have also proved popular with small businesses, which are responsible for about 15 per cent of orders.

"It's a great way for owners to brand their businesses and it's an economical way to make your business's mail stand out," Ms Daoust said.

Most of the images are photographs, but people have also submitted beautiful illustrations, Ms Daoust said. Still others have demonstrated an unusual

idea of what should go on a stamp — like the man who sent in a photo of his wife.

"Unfortunately, she didn't have any clothes on," Ms Daoust said with a chuckle, thus illustrating Canada Post can be amused.

"We obviously didn't process that one. And there have been some interesting ones of body parts that leave little to the imagination."

**'Unfortunately, she didn't have any clothes on.'**

Cindy Daoust of Canada Post on unusual custom stamp order

"But, for the most part, Canadians seem to be of good taste and we've had success with the program."

Since introducing the stamps, the post office has sold about 175,000 sheets, Ms Daoust said.

To order the stamps, go to [www.canadapost.ca](http://www.canadapost.ca) and click on Create your own stamp (under Personal). Then, click on Get Started to fill in a form, upload your photo and pay by credit card.

Your sheet of stamps should arrive in the mail in about 15 business days.

The program now also offers two options: For \$25, a person can order a keepsake version — a 5X7 enlargement of the stamp along with 20 stamps. Or, for \$40, you can simply buy a full sheet of 40 stamps. There are volume discounts.

All stamps are valued at the current domestic rate (51¢) and can be used to mail a standard-size envelope weighing up to 30 grams anywhere in Canada.

If you don't have a digital camera, you can mail a photograph to Canada Post. Order forms are available in post offices.

Until the most recent image of Queen Elizabeth, Ms Daoust added, the photo of the monarch appearing on the stamp was taken by Bryan Adams.

"So, if you can have your work featured on a postage stamp, it puts you in some pretty good company — even if it is only 20 stamps," she said.

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To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated January 27-February 2.  
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