

Welcome to the C.N.A. E-Bulletin Vol. 3, No. 16 – March 16, 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Are male collectors genuinely show-offs? "Colonial Homes" magazine did a survey revealing the differences of opinion between men and women when it comes to what they would want in their ideal home. (Eighty-eight percent of the total respondents were collectors.) Twenty-seven percent of the men said they wanted a separate room designed to showcase their collections, whereas only seven percent of the women wanted such a room. According to editor Annette Stramesi, "Women perhaps blend their collections into the overall interior design of their home. Men seem to want their own 'collectors' cabinets to show the results of their treasured hunts."

WE HAVE MAIL

From Nick Cowan: "I just finished reading the Friday E-Bulletin. Keep up the good writing. Now, in the "Toronto gets into the Penny Act," I must make a comment on this. It says that Mayor Miller states that he wants cents from the Fed's. My response is "Don't we all want some "cents" to come from the Feds for a change (pardon the intended pun)." - Sometimes we get sense and cents mixed up. One of them Miller might want, but the other we should always have lots of, whether we are politicians or not.

From Gar Travis: "It is my opinion, with this bit of insanity (the Million Dollar Coin) from the Canadian Mint, Canada is protected from any thoughts the United States government may consider in making Canada the 51st State; though it perhaps would be in the best interest of the United States to move that fence project from the border with Mexico just a little further north - hint, hint, nudge, nudge..." - Golly, people can get so emotional when it comes to their favorite hobby. Anyway, the only thing that has happened with the million dollar coin is that the government has approved it, but, as I understand it, there is no guarantee that it will become a reality.

IS IT UNDECAGON OR HENDECAGON?

In last Friday's E-Bulletin, we published a letter from Nick Cowan concerning the Royal Canadian Mint issuing post-dated coins. The set of uncirculated 12 quarters and two Loonies are mounted on collector cards and individually sealed in a protective plastic film. The collector cards are hendecagon in shape, which is the same as undecagon. So now you know, right?

According to the Webster Dictionary: "Eleven sided is called undecagon. Uni is one, deca is ten. It is a polygon with eleven sides. Eleven sided is also known as Hendecagon."

Wikipedia states: "In geometry, a hendecagon is an 11-sided [polygon](#). However, they also state that undecagon is incorrect - the prefix should be the Greek 'hen' and not the Latin 'un' (1). A regular hendecagon has internal angles of 147.272727... degrees. A regular hendecagon is not constructible with compass and straightedge. The Canadian dollar coin, the Loonie, is a hendecagon. The interior design of the (US coin) Susan B. Anthony dollar is also a hendecagon, as is the Indian two-rupee coin."

Okay, that's our lesson in English. I think I'll stick to simply calling it eleven-sided.

THE REAL SPY COIN

Gar Travis made me aware of the real spy coin of 54 years ago that made headlines around the world. Following are the highlights:

On the evening of Monday, June 22, 1953, a newspaper delivery boy dropped a nickel he had received in payment. It fell apart! Inside was a tiny photograph of 10 columns of typewritten numbers.

A detective of the New York City Police Department told a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Agent about the strange hollow nickel about which he had heard from another police officer whose daughter was acquainted with the newsboy. The coin was turned over to the FBI.

The face of the coin was a 1948 Jefferson nickel. The reverse side had been made from another nickel, one minted sometime during the period of 1942 to 1945. It was composed of copper-silver alloy, there being a shortage of nickel during World War II. From 1953 to 1957, continuing efforts were made to solve the mystery of the hollow coin. Several former intelligence agents who had defected could shed no light on the case.

The key to this mystery proved to be a 36-year-old Lieutenant Colonel of the Soviet State Security Service (KGB). Early in May, 1957, he advised the U.S. Embassy in Paris that for the past five years, he had been operating in the U.S. as a spy. This spy, Reino Hayhanen, stated that he had just been ordered to return to Moscow but wanted to defect. Following his arrival in New York on May 10, 1957, arrangements were made for him to be interviewed by FBI Agents. He advised them that to exchange messages and intelligence data, they used "dead drops" -- inconspicuous hiding places. They used hollow bolts, pens, pencils, screws, batteries, and coins -- in some instances magnetized so they would adhere to metal objects. FBI Agents examined a 50 Markka coin from Finland. It had been hollowed out, and noted that it bore a great similarity to the Jefferson nickel which the Brooklyn newsboy had discovered in 1953. Two separate coins obviously had been used in making this "trick" 50 Markkaa piece.

Although the FBI was convinced that it had finally identified the Soviet espionage apparatus which was responsible for the hollow Jefferson nickel, only one half of the mystery posed by this coin since its discovery in June, 1953, had been solved. The coded message which the nickel contained still had to be deciphered.

During the FBI's interviews with him, in May, 1957, Hayhanen was carefully questioned regarding the codes and cryptosystems which he had used in the various Soviet intelligence agencies he had served since 1939. The information which he provided was applied by FBI Laboratory experts to the microphotograph from the Jefferson nickel. With this data, the FBI Laboratory succeeded in breaking through the curtain of mystery which surrounded the coded message. By June 3, 1957, the full text of the microphotograph was known. The message apparently was intended for Hayhanen and had been sent from the Soviet Union shortly after his arrival in the United States.

Hayhanen also assisted the FBI in identifying two of his handlers in the U.S., as well as another spy, U.S. Army sergeant Roy Rhodes, who was recruited by the Soviet agents in January, 1952, who was sentenced to serve five years at hard labor. He also helped track down Emil R. Goldfus, a photographer, who was found to possess many false papers, including two American birth certificates. The first showed that he was Emil R. Goldfus, born August 2, 1902, in New York City, while the second one identified him as Martin Collins, born June 2, 1897, also in New York. Investigation established that the real Emil Goldfus had died in infancy. The certificate in

the name of Collins was a forgery. Goldfus admitted that he was a Russian citizen, Rudolf Ivanovich Abel, born July 2, 1902, in the Soviet Union. The photo studio and a hotel room which he occupied contained shortwave radios, cipher pads, cameras and film for producing microdots, a hollow shaving brush, cuff links, and numerous other "trick" containers.

Indicted as a Russian spy, Colonel Abel was tried in Federal court at New York City during October, 1957. Among the government witnesses to testify against him was his former trusted espionage assistant, Lieutenant Colonel Reino Hayhanen. On October 25, 1957, Abel was found guilty of conspiracy to transmit defense information to the Soviet Union (30 years imprisonment), conspiracy to obtain defense information (10 years imprisonment and \$2,000 fine) and conspiracy to act in the United States as an agent of a foreign government without notification to the Secretary of State (5 years imprisonment and \$1,000 fine).

Colonel Abel appealed his convictions, claiming that rights guaranteed to him under the Constitution and laws of the United States had been violated. By a five-to-four decision which was handed down on March 28, 1960, the Supreme Court upheld the conviction of this Russian spy.

An investigation which had started with a newsboy's hollow nickel ultimately resulted in the smashing of a Soviet spy ring. On February 10, 1962, Rudolf Abel was exchanged for the American U-2 pilot, Francis Gary Powers, who was a prisoner of the Soviet Union.

For the long version, go to www.fbi.gov/libref/historic/famcases/abel/abel.

MORE BAD NEWS FOR THE PENNY

Here is more proof that the cent is becoming useless. Now even fish and politicians don't want your pennies.

Taking my wife to Mandarin Chinese Buffet Restaurant the other day, I noticed a sign over the indoor fish pond in the reception area: "Please...I hate coppers!"

And in our usual twisted sense, here is another reason why we don't need the penny around: A letter in The Toronto Star from Adrian Harvey of Toronto states: "I have another solution to Toronto's CN Tower de-icing problem – make Toronto politicians hold their meetings outside, under the tower. Hot air rises. And it won't cost us a penny."

BANK WORKERS ARRESTED IN ROBBERY PROBE

Two Northern Ireland bank employees were arrested recently on suspicion of involvement in the robbery of their Belfast bank. Chris Ward, 24, and an unidentified woman were being held in Antrim.

The IRA is suspected of being behind the \$50 million (U.S.) robbery on December 20. Masked, armed gangs took hostage the families of two Northern Bank employees, including Ward, and threatened to kill those hostages unless both men co-operated.

BANDITS BYPASS CASH FOR BUBBLE-GUM

When I hear of a bandit robbing a store, I feel sorry for the victim and angry at the robber who expects something for nothing. And it makes me happy when I hear about stupid criminals getting caught. I don't know what to think about the following bandit.

Police advise that a gum bandit has been driving around the Greater Toronto Area and stealing chewing gum - \$5,000 worth so far. Stores in Durham and York Regions and the Kitchener-Waterloo area, all in Ontario, have been hit.

The woman enters big chain grocery stores and walks out with a shopping cart full of cases of gum. Police are also looking for a male accomplice.

When they eventually get caught with all those sticks of gum, I wonder if they will make the charges stick? (This is the proof-reader. That's corny!)

STARDUST CASINO CHIPS NO MORE

In case you have a few Stardust Casino chips lying around, we thought we should tell you that the Stardust is no more. It was imploded to make way for a mega-resort complex.

I don't know if that will increase the value of their chips. I am still waiting for the value of my chips from the Landmark Casino, which was imploded in 1995, to explode.

WAR MEDALS AWOL

Canada Post is investigating the possible theft of war medals that were being sent from Nova Scotia to California. At press time, I am not aware what medals are involved.

WORLD'S RICHEST PEOPLE

Hey, did you see the latest list of the World's Richest People? Didn't see your name on it. Nor mine, unfortunately.

How did Canada fare? Only two people were in the top 100: Number 93 was Galen Weston and family, worth an estimated \$7.9 billion, but he had to earn it himself. The top Canadian, David Thompson, in position number 10, got his \$22 billion the easy way: inheritance.

Working for it is out of the question for me. My only prospect appears to be that relative I didn't know I had that a lawyer in England has been writing to me about, or the widow or bank manager who want to get money out of Nigeria.

MORE ON THE CANADIAN CENT

I don't think that William Mellor, a letter write to The Toronto Star, really meant what he wrote. I am sure it was based on ignorance. His letter is more proof that you can get virtually anything published:

"The one-cent coin is a total waste of taxpayers' money and serves almost no purpose. The elimination of this coin that costs more to make than it is worth would create savings. The majority of people who would want to keep the penny are collectors, and they could pick up a supply at a coin dealer or the Canadian Mint at a price that would actually cover the costs of production. The savings from not producing one-cent coins could be used for more important things, such as health care or education."

Now let me analyze what Mellor wishes to do, if we are to take him at face value. He says it costs more than a cent to manufacture a cent, while the Mint's president says it costs less. Therefore, not only would there not be a saving, but it would actually eliminate the profit the Mint makes. He says that the cent serves almost no purpose, yet over 800 million a year are produced to fill the demand. Where is this demand coming from if it serves no purpose? If the mint stops producing them, as he suggests, how are the collectors supposed to "pick up a

supply at a coin dealer or the Canadian Mint? If we could obtain them “at a price that would actually cover the costs of production,” it would mean that they would cost us less than one cent. I’m all for it, but it makes his comment about supporting health care or education if they are no longer produced wrong.

Having the above letter published by The Toronto Star gives me an idea. With April 1 coming up soon, if you send us an e-mail at cnanews@look.ca about something that sounds plausible but isn’t true, maybe we can have a special April Fools edition.

PHYSIC MAKES MONEY DISAPPEAR

A man turned over \$32,000 to a physic and asked her to bless it. When he returned the following day, both the money and physic were gone. Jay Leno says he is surprised at the stupidity of the guy. No, not that he would entrust the money to a physic, but how the man ever got \$32,000 in the first place.

STUPID GREEDY CRIMINALS

Here are two perfect examples of stupid criminals just not knowing when to give up while they are ahead!

A Toronto man faces 378 charges (that is correct, 378!) after hundreds of people were defrauded by a door-to-door canvasser raising money for a fake charity, Violence Against Kids, police say. George Grdich, 40, faces fraud and related charges.

Two men have been charged after a seven-month spree of burglaries at businesses in Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax and Bowmanville, all in Ontario, that included cash and stamps. Thomas Harrison, 32, of Toronto and Marc David, 29, of Lindsay face over 100 charges.

WHY I LOVE ONTARIO

Ralph Trimble says you will not see him at upcoming coin shows in the U.S. because of our typical Canadian winter:

It's winter in Ontario
And the gentle breezes blow,
70 miles per hour at 52 below!
Oh, how I love Ontario
When the snow's up to your butt.
You take a breath of winter air
Your nose just freezes shut.
Yes, the weather here is wonderful,
I guess I'll hang around.
I could never leave Ontario,
'Cause I'm frozen to the ground.

NOW YOU CAN LEND MONEY LIKE THE BANK

Looking to replace the high yield you used to get from income trusts? Soon you may be able to enjoy annual returns as high as 20% by lending money, just like the bank does.

Prosper.com is a new U.S. website that hooks up would-be lenders directly with borrowers, a bit like a financial dating site. Borrowers such as “baldbishop1” – who wanted to borrow \$7,000 to buy breast augmentation surgery for his wife for Christmas – post their pleas on the site and lenders bid on the opportunity by pledging an amount and the interest rate they would lend at.

About 60 lenders agreed to lend baldbishop the money he wanted at 13.5%, in amounts ranging from \$50 to \$1,000, so it looks like the surgery is a go.

Lending money online sounds risky, but Prosper, which started up last February, already has more than 100,000 members and has facilitated loans totaling over \$20 million (U.S.).

The site helps mitigate the risk by counseling lenders on techniques such as diversification. Lending the whole \$7,000 to baldbishop or anyone else would be a crazy gamble, but splitting \$7,000 into \$50 loans for 140 borrowers reduced your risk considerably. Prosper obtains credit histories for all borrowers and rates them from AA to HR (high risk). The site even provides data such as the borrower's debt-to-income ratio, and some borrowers belong to groups that keep them in line with peer pressure.

For now, only Americans can use the site, but we hope the service expands to Canada. After all, some borrowers are willing to pay as much as 29% interest. Best of all, if you're the lead lender, you get to pick your own collection agency.

MONOPOLY OFFERS VARIETIES

In previous C.N.A E-Bulletins, we mentioned changes that have come about in the most capitalistic board game around, Monopoly, including the fact that the new version in England contains credit cards instead of the familiar Monopoly Money.

It might be surprising to learn that a Chinese version of the game is popular in Shanghai. There are some minor differences in this unauthorized imitation. All the tokens, for instance, are wheelbarrows. And in the Chinese game, you can't get out of jail by paying a fine. Lawbreakers must serve time. Some of the place names don't translate well either: Boardwalk is "the beach" and Park Place is "parking lot."

IMAGINE ALL THE ILLEGAL GOLD IN HIDING

Can you fathom for a moment the value of the gold that is in hiding around the world? We read that many people in the right positions in war-torn Europe hid gold bars in safety deposit boxes in banks in Switzerland or other safe havens...or in containers at the bottom of lakes.

Marcos was accused to smuggling hundreds of millions of valuables out of the Philippines, but why pick on one dictator when there were hundreds? For example, former dictator Augusto Pinochet, under investigation in Chile for hiding money in foreign accounts, may have a stockpile of gold in a bank overseas, the government recently stated. Chilean newspaper La Nacion said the gold ingots at a bank in Hong Kong may be worth more than US\$100 million.

AIRLINE FOOD

The last time I flew to a coin convention, I was stopped by some people in Air Canada uniforms and carrying a clipboard. I agreed to participate in the questionnaire.

I was told they were conducting a survey into no-frill air fares. "How would I feel about not having any meals served onboard for the duration of the flight?" I was asked, "in terms of hard cash?"

I answered: "I'd pay an extra 50 bucks!" I didn't even get a thank you.

THOSE DANGEROUS MAILBOXES HAVE TO GO!

Here is one for our philatelic friends:

An 81-year-old man says Canada Post's decision to suspend deliveries to his home because his mailbox has been deemed dangerous doesn't make sense. "There's no barking dog, no moat with crocodiles – just the same mailbox for 46 years," Roy Paterson said. "Now it's too high for health and safety reasons."

Paterson said he hasn't received any mail for two months because Canada Post said the mailbox is too high and therefore dangerous for carriers. But Paterson said if Canada Post won't deliver his mail anymore, then good riddance. "I just say keep your damn mail," he said. "We've got e-mail, we've got telephone, and we pay our bills through the Internet. I don't need Canada Post anymore."

Patterson said the government agency told him he'll receive mail again if he changes his mailbox. Canada Post spokesman Tom Creech said almost everyone in Paterson's neighborhood was told to get a new mailbox because most were too low.

EVEN OUR BUSES TAKE THOSE LOONIES

I was using a transit bus the other day. It stopped to pick up a passenger. The lady hesitated at the doorway before boarding and, with a look of concern, asked the driver, "Do you take loonies?" "No problem, lady," he replied, "I take anyone!"

CONCLUSION

Under the guidance and direction of Charles "Chuck" Moore, we have a pretty darn good volunteer team looking after things at the C.N.A. If you are not already involved with the Association beyond receiving these bulletins, maybe it's time to consider joining. Why not take a minute and go to www.canadian-numismatic.org to sign up? It's as simple as clicking on a few buttons and providing credit card information over the secure Paypal connection. Note that you don't have to be "signed up" with PayPal to pay this easy way.

John Regitko
Your C.N.A. E-Bulletin Editor
Canadian Numismatic Association

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