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**A STAMP FOR CANADA, & THE RPSC**



Andrés Cadena (left), Chief of the Philatelic Service of Ecuador, and Jim Taylor

*Jim Taylor*

When I look at the stamps in my album, I often marvel at how beautiful they are, and I wonder what it must be like to put pen to paper and actually design a stamp. Well, a couple of years ago, I got that chance. I was attending an international philatelic exhibition in Ecuador to mark 150 years of postage in that country. (1) Organizers were looking for stamps designs to commemorate the event, and I thought, “Why not?”.

Initially, the idea was to issue a sheet of stamps with all of the countries involved to publicize, and promote, the exhibition. Each of the 20 participating countries was asked to submit a design incorporating a scene from their homeland, and their flag. The job fell to me because of my connection, and involvement with the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Unlike many of the entrants, I threw myself fully into the job at hand, and created an ‘essay’, which is what a stamp in the design stage is called. My design included Canada’s flag, the RPSC logo, and a picture of a well-known Canadian stamp. I mean, who could resist the offer to design a postage stamp representing Canada and the Royal? I have many design ideas teeming in my brain, and this was just one of them.

I’ve always liked the two cent Canadian stamp, with an engraved polar bear, designed by John Crosby (1925-2016). The stamp shows the polar bear in its natural habitat, and is a noble representation of Canada, so I incorporated it into my stamp design. Crosby’s stamp was issued April 1, 1953, as part of a set of the three stamps coinciding with National Wildlife Week. I used the RPSC logo, with the Royal’s name spelled out in Spanish on one side, the exhibition name on the other, and CORREOS DEL ECUADOR, common on recent Ecuadorean stamps, to complete the design.



Jim's essay (left) and the essay of the Ecuadorian Philatelic Association

The 'essay' purposely lacked a face value. The credo 'keep it simple' describes my general appropriate considering the lack of space on a stamp. There isn't a lot of room for lot of detail. I used a computer graphic program to compose the design elements with rather pleasing results. I thought.

I submitted my entry, and waited with fingers crossed for the result. Shortly thereafter, I received an email from Juan Pablo Aguilar, the organizer of the exhibition, who announced that my stamp was the 'winning idea' for Canada's entry. My polar bear design was used as the model for the 'essay' that the exhibition organizers then developed. The idea was to standardize the design to create similar stamps from all of the 20 participants countries. A face value for the stamp of 50 cents U.S. was also assigned.



The ecuadorian sheet and the stamp for Canada

An actual sheet of 25 stamps was issued with the cost for the sheet at \$ 18.50 U.S. Each stamp had a face value of 75 cents. The final designs were revised, and it's interesting to note the evolution as all of the stamps had to have a similar design treatment. It's significant that the major elements of the original designs were retained. Five designs were added, with special recognition for the international, as well as the national philatelic associations in Ecuador. The day of issue was September 29, 2015, which coincided with the opening day of the IX National Exhibition, EXPO AFE, in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador. Four thousand sheets were printed in multi-colour offset by Instituto Geografico Militar (the Military Graphic Institute, or I.G.M.). The designer was Santiago Núñez, of the Correos del Ecuador. Total face value of the entire

printing was 75 thousand U.S. dollars, a tiny sum compared to the printings of Canadian commemorative stamps. One thousand of the sheets were sold on the first day at the post office stand in the exhibition hall.

My participation was announced in the official brochure at the launch. The English translation reads, “The design idea for these stamps was created by James Taylor of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, and the treasurer of the InterAmerican Philatelic Federation”. Being recognized as a philatelic celebrity was rather new to me, but a genuine highlight of my visit to Quito, and of my avocation of stamp collecting. I’d like to acknowledge the assistance of Juan Pablo Aguilar, Carlos Vergara, and Santiago Villagómez in contributing to this article, and salute all the philatelic friends I made in Quito.

I distributed specimen blocks, and pairs of my Canadian prototype essays as gifts to many of the Quito delegates. A cover also exists. International philately is fun, especially when you’re an active participant. Now, when ever I look at this stamp, it gives me a sense of pleasure that I had a hand in its creation.

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