



BRITISH COLUMBIA
POSTAL HISTORY
RESEARCH GROUP

Volume 8 - Number 4

Whole number 32

JANUARY 2000

COUGAR ANNIE'S GARDEN

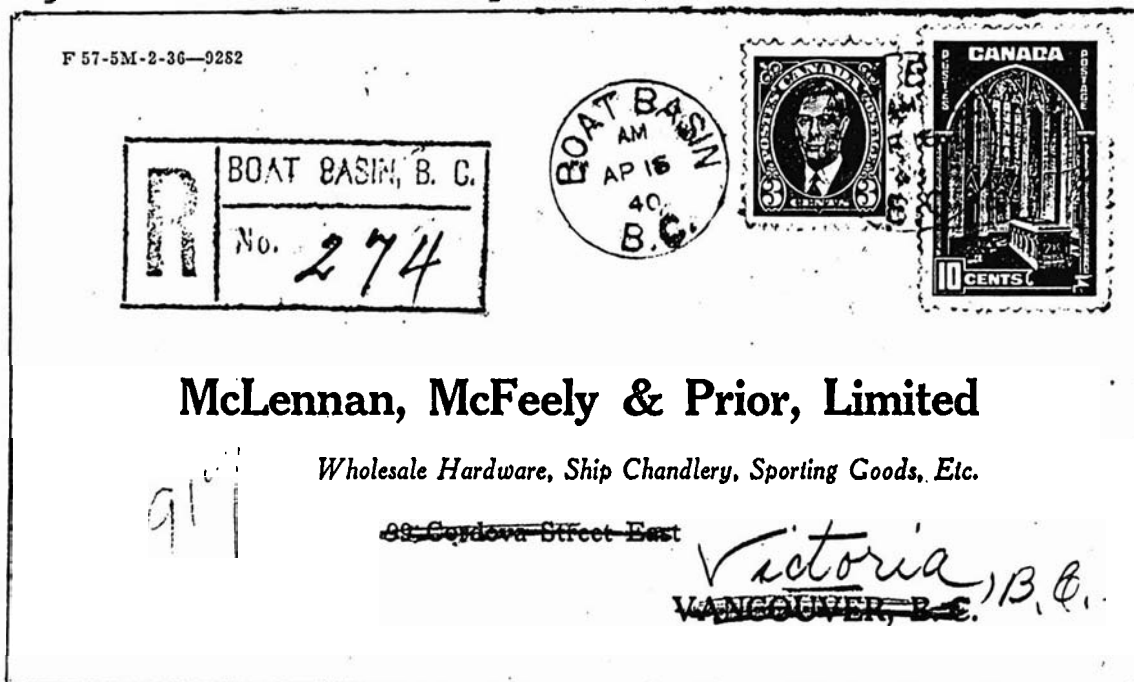
- The story of Boat Basin Post Office

A book entitled "Cougar Annie's Garden" seems an unlikely place to find any useful post office information but for those who enjoy local history, the story of the Boat Basin Post Office is well worth reading. "Cougar Annie" was postmistress at Boat Basin from the time the post office opened as Heaquiat (2) on April 10, 1936 until it officially closed shortly after March 2, 1982. The official records show Ada Annie Arthur as the first postmaster although the records should read "Ada Annie Rae-Arthur". "Cougar" Annie went through six husband and some, but not all, of these changes are recorded in the postal records. After 1970, the records show Annie's son Tom as postmaster, but Annie was still the defacto postmaster.



"Cougar" Annie

Registered cover from "Cougar" Annie to Victoria



COUGAR ANNIE'S GARDEN - continued
 The story of Boat Basin Post Office

Between 1912 and 1982 three post office served the Hesquiat Harbour region of the West Coast of Vancouver Island and the lack of wharf facilities in the region necessitated the dropping of mail from the coastal steamer into an indian canoe or row boat and in later days to a small power boat. Appart from the Indian reserve at Hesquiat the population rarely exceeded a dozen white settlers, which hardly justified the establishment of a post office.



The first post office to serve the area was established, on March 23, 1912 (officially April 1) by Father Charles Moser at the Hesquiat Indian Village near the mouth of the harbour. In June 1917, Father Moser was transferred to Kakawis and the Hesquiat post office closed. In theory, the Hesquiat post office was replaced by the Sidney Inlet post office some 10 miles to the south as the crow flies but the actual trip involved a voyage of close to 30 miles each way, mostly thru open water. In October 1923, a post office was established at the light house on Estevan Point located at the mouth of the harbour but this was equally inaccessible to most of the residents.

The Rae-Arthur's had arrived at Boat Basin, located at the head of Hesquite Harbour, in 1915 and Annie Rae-Arthur soon established a general store and mail order plant and bulb business. All goods, including Annie's parcels of bulbs, were delivered directly to the coastal steamer for mailing in Victoria. This involved rowing six miles to the Hesquiat anchorage and waiting for the arrival of the steamer, which was far from a satisfactory way to operate a business. By 1935 Ada Annie Rae-Arthur had had enough of this nonsense and decided to open a post office at Boat Basin.



To have a post office established it was necessary to submit an application together with a petition favouring the establishment of a post office at Hesquiat Harbour. In March 1935, Annie prepared a suitable petition which listed the names of 36 "permanent residents". The number appears to have been greatly over stated as Postal Inspector J.M. Murray statated in his report "that Rae-Arthur and his family are the only persons residing in the upper basin of Hesquiate Harbour". During the next year a battle between Annie and the Post Office Department raged and on April 16, 1936 Annie obtained a post office under the name of Hesquiat with Annie as postmaster.

1935 petition for Boat Basin Post Office.

Cougar Annie continued

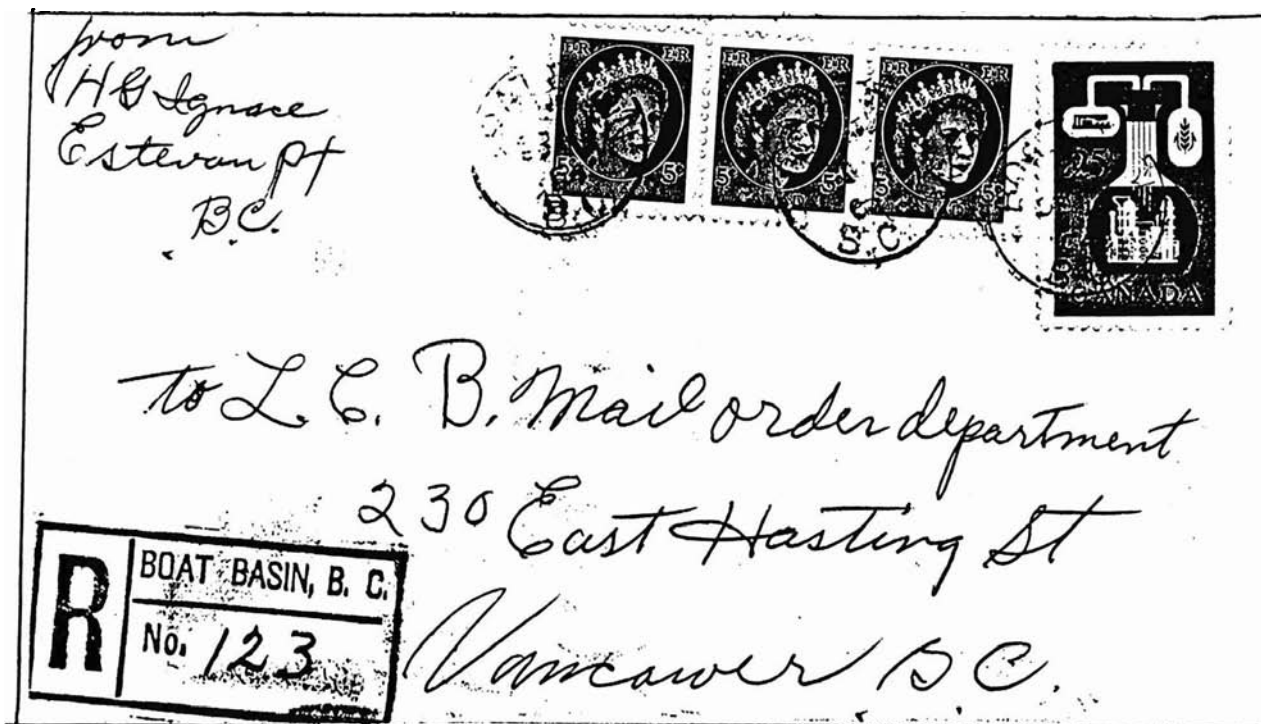
Annie had requested the name Boat Basin and following another battle involving the local Member of parliament, A.W. Neill, the name of the office was changed to Boat Basin. Appart from Annie's bulb business the post office did no business and as a result stamp sales were very low. To improve stamp sales Annie made arragments with her suppliers to accept postage stamps as payment for goods and at the same time she padded the list of Boat Basin residents reported in the B.C. Directory so that by 1942 the population was shown as 72 residents rather than the handfull that actual lived there.

Although Annie acted as postmaster, it was George Ignace, a Hesquiat Indian, who did the hard work. For more than thirty five years George met the mail steamer at the mouth of the harbour, often in towering waves, to pick up the mail and small freight and passengers. George then returned to the shore near Boat Basin and, after putting on suitable footware, waded ashore and then hike for a quarter of a mile to the Boat Basin post office where he was met by Annie.



"Cougar" Annie & George Ignace 1968

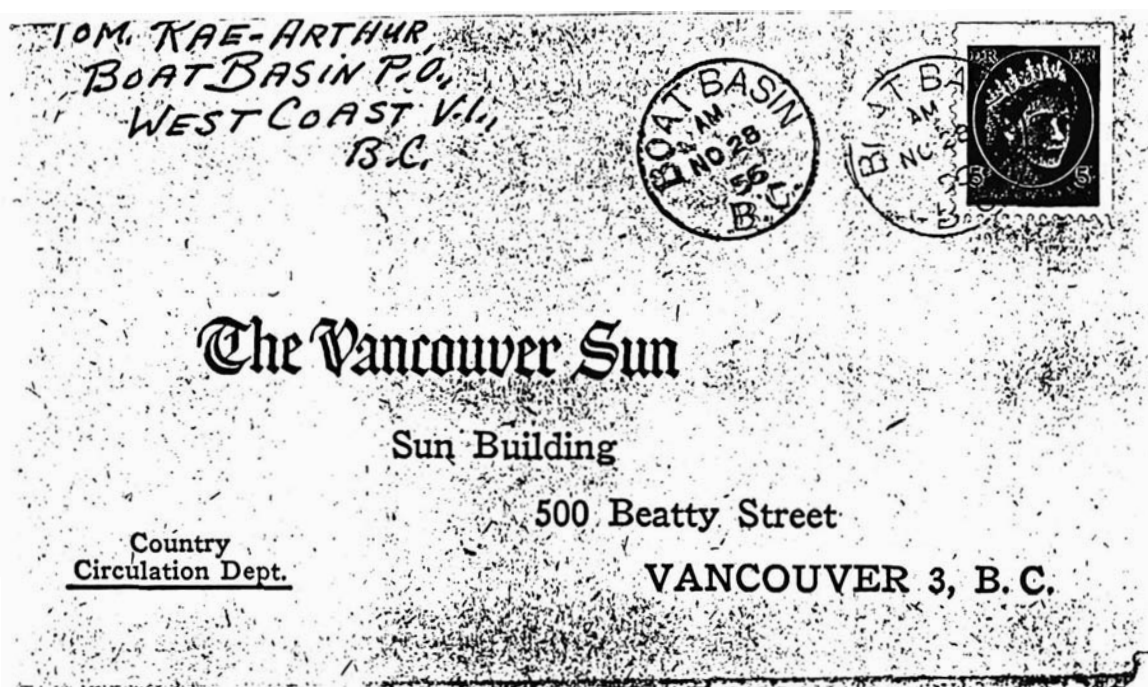
Registered letter from mail courier H. George Ignace - dated DE 11 / 64



Cougar Annie - continued

In July of 1970 the Post Office Department realised that Annie was now 83 years old, well over the age of retirement and as a result insisted she retire. This she did naming her son Tom as her successor and he continued in name only until Cougar Annie was taken to hospital in 1983 at the ripe old age of 96. The Vancouver records show that the Boat Basin Post Office was temporarily closed on March 30, 1980 as the postmaster had "abandoned the position" and that there were only four families at Boat Basin. It is not listed as reopening but it listed again as being temporarily closed on March 30, 1982, which is about the time Cougar Annie left Boat Basin to enter hospital in Port Alberni where she died April 28, 1985.

Letter to the Vancouver Sun from postmaster Tom Rae-Arthur



The full story of the exploits of "Cougar Annie" can be found in Cougar Annie's Garden by Margaret Horsfield and published by Salal Books, P.O. Box 1021, Station A, Nanaimo, V9R 5Z2. To order call 1-888-858-5455 - price \$40.00 CAN plus GST and \$5.00 postage.

Dear Sir:

The following changes have occurred in the B.C. & Yukon Postal District.

TEMPORARY CLOSURES

Boat Basin, B.C.	VOR 1EO	-	Closed	1982-03-30
Fireside, B.C.	VOC 1PO	-	"	1982-08-03

Video Encoding System - Code "Z"

Technology bridges the gap and goes the distance in VES remote link

The item at right appeared in the August / September issue of Performance and explains the reason for re-activation of the A.B. Dick Jet Spray, Video Encoding System (VES) equipment at Victoria MPP. The VES equipment was introduced about August 18, 1993 and remained in service, on an experimental basis, for about six months. The VES equipment was intended to replace the Group Desk Suites (GDS) coding equipment but the cost of installing Video Encoding Desks (VED) in Victoria was considered as too expensive for the amount of mail to be processed.

At first glance, it might seem improbable, if not impossible.

Sort mail in one city from a workstation in another.

But that's exactly what operators at the Vancouver Mail Processing Plant are doing as they sort up to 70,000 pieces of mail a day in Victoria, all thanks to a high-speed fiber-optic data link and more than a little creative thinking on the part of Engineering and Technology folks in Vancouver, reporting to Doug Childress, manager of Engineering Technology.

The issue revolves around the Video Encoding System, a "second chance" unit that takes a snapshot of a piece of mail, storing the image for later retrieval and operator-assisted coding. It's also expensive—perhaps \$1 million for the complete setup.

Victoria could use the help. Vancouver had more than enough room on its machine.

So why not "borrow" that excess capacity?

Indeed. Why not?

With that kind of thinking, it was inevitable that Engineering and Technology personnel came up with a way around the fact that Victoria is not, after all, in Vancouver.

A 1.5-second turnaround time, electronically co-ordinated between the two sites, makes for a flawless process, Childress says.

The solution is producing modest savings—perhaps \$10,000 a year in consumables and parts—but gives the smaller Victoria centre a capability it probably couldn't otherwise justify.

If the distance issues can be overcome, the innovation may be applied in other parts of the country where excess capacity is available in one city and the need exists in another.

Performance August/September 1999

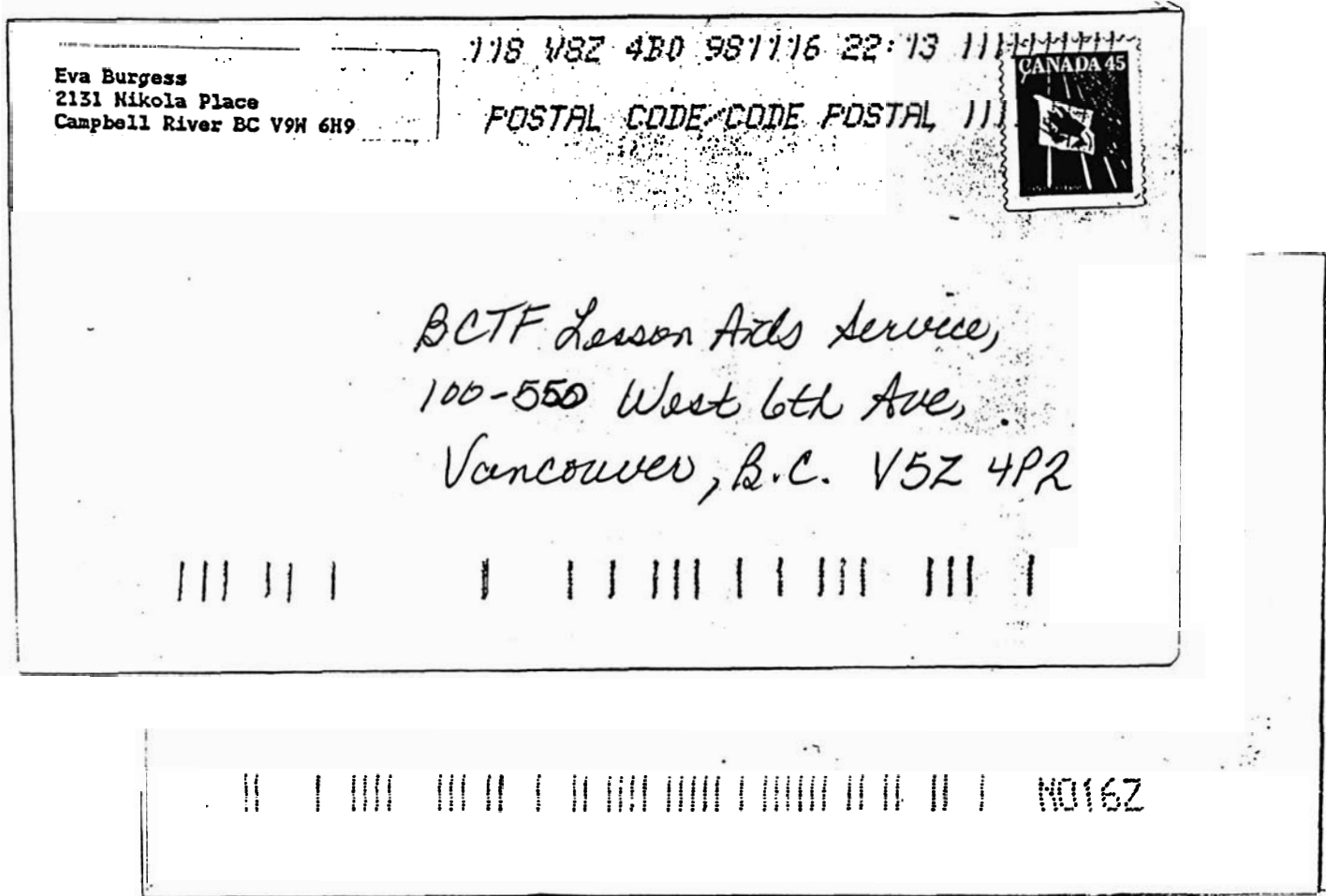
The Victoria VES equipment has been re-activated and is now hooked to the Vancouver Video Encoding Desks by a high-speed fiber-optic cable which transfers a video image of envelopes that could not be coded on the first run through the Optical Character Reader (OCR) at Victoria to the Vancouver VED equipment.

The VES equipment was re-introduced at Victoria on November 12, 1998 and replaced the yellow GDS marking that formerly appeared on the face of envelope. The Victoria GDS (code letter "K") equipment appears to have been withdrawn on December 12, 1998. The new VES markings appear as a series of orange/red bars on the back of the envelope, followed by date and the plant code letter "Z". The bar code, to the left of the date, identifies the four digit machine number (3718), the date, the time using a 48 hour clock, and the number assigned to the envelope.

The operation of the VES equipment is quite simple. If the OCR is unable to read the address on the envelope the image of the envelope is recorded by a video camera and a number code is applied to the back of the envelope. The image is then sent to the Vancouver VES section where coders encode the postal code information. The coding information is then sent back to Victoria where the envelopes are again sent through the OCR again where the JSP sprays the code on the face of the envelope for further sorting.

Video Encoding System - Code "Z" - page 2

The envelope below, was run through OCR 118 which applied the the two line Jet Spray (JSP) cancellation (118 ...) and the OCR equipment attempted to read the postal code. The hand addressed envelope was rejected by the OCR which activated the VSE camera which recorded the face of the envelope and at the same time applied a coded number to the back in orange. The video image was then sent to the Vancouver's VES section where an operator input the code information. Within an hour of the first run the envelope was run through OCR 118 again, and the coded OCR number and the postal code was applied in orange by the JSP. The envelope was then transferred to the ITT Letter Sorting Machine (LSM) where it was sorted into a bin of mail destined for shipment to Vancouver.



The British Columbia Postal History News Letter is published quarterly for the Pacific Northwest Regional Group of the British North America Philatelic Society. The annual membership fee is \$5.00 in Canadian or US funds. Bill Topping, FRPSC, Editor, 7430 Angus Drive, Vancouver, BC, V6P 5K2, Canada. (604) 261-1508



BNAPEX'99 - VERNON

The BNAPEX'99, held in Vernon from September 16 to 18, was highly successful and should serve as a model for other major shows. The one complaint, if you can call it that, was that there were too many study group meetings and as a result it was not possible to view the exhibits, visit the bourse, and attend study group meetings all at the same time.

Members of the B.C. Research Study Group were well represented in Competative Class and produced some outstanding exhibits of British Columbia postal history.

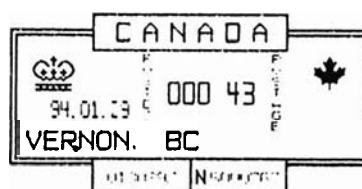
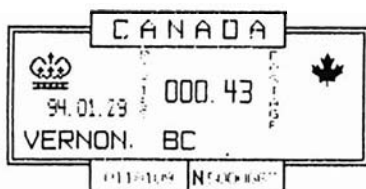
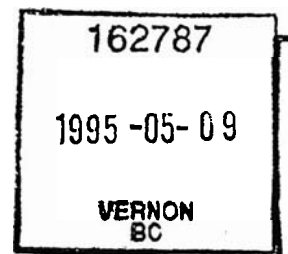
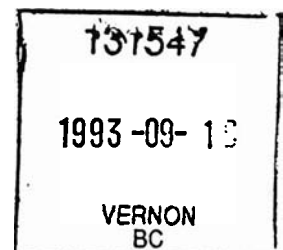
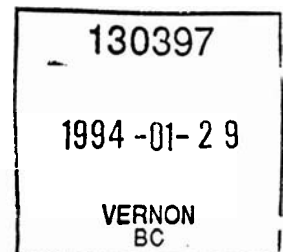
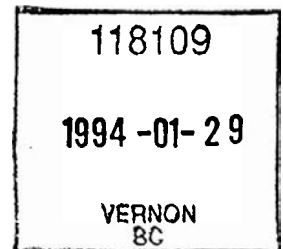
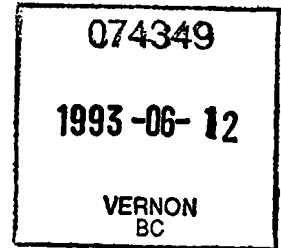
- Jack Wallace - British Columbia and Vancouver Island Gold, Reserve Grand, Meyerson Award
- Jim Brown - British Columbia Airways Ltd. Gold
- Peter Jacobie - Mining - B.C.'s Heritage Vermeil, Richardson Award
- Andrew Scott - Postal Markings of the Queen Charlotte Islands Silver

Other members who won awards outside the field of B.C. postal history were:

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Gold - | Vermeil - | Silver - | Silver-bronze - |
| Ken Ellison | Rob McGuinness | Joseph Smith | Earle Covert |
| Brian Plain | Robin Mowat | Bill Pekonen | |
| | Bill Robinson | | |
| | Joseph Smith | | |

There were 47 entries in the Literature Exhibits and many of these are of significance to British Columbia postal history. Contributors in this class included: Bill Bailey, Tracy Cooper, Cec Coutts, Ken Ellison, Pete Jacobie, Bill Robinson, and Gray Scrimgeour

Almost all titles in the Literature Exhibits are available from the Saskatoon Stamp Centre, the new supplier of books to BNAPS members at a 10% discount. Members should contact the Saskatoon Stamp Centre if they have not already received a catalogue.



FROM CANADA POST

Thanks to the assistance of John Gannon at Canada Post, here is the listing of British Columbia post office changes from July 1 to November 14, 1999. Without the continued assistance of John and other employees of Canada Post both in the British Columbia Regional Office and in the Vancouver Mail Processing Plant, it would be impossible to record accurately the many changes taking place in the mail processing system.

Readers will note that the reporting period is shorter than usual and that the format differs. As with most business, Canada Post has converted to the year 2000 and the new programme differs slightly, allowing for more information to be included but making it more difficult to see changes of RC numbers as the result of the sale or transfer of a business. Any comments regarding the new format would be appreciated.

LISTING OF OUTLETS CLOSED IN 1999

OUTLET NAME	RC	TOWN	POST CODE	GRADE	MAIL ADDR	DATE OPENED
DELAMONT RO	387142	VANCOUVER	V6J 1Z0	FA	1950 West Broadway	1999/11/15
WESTMINSTER RO	386650	PENTICTON	V2A 1J0	FA	187 Westminster Avenue West	1999/11/8
JAMES BAY RO	386545	VICTORIA	V8V 2G0	FA	2-455 Simcoe Street	1999/11/1
Sahali Mall RO	354759	KAMLOOPS	V2C 1L0	FA	14 - 945 Columbia Street	1999/10/5
LAKEVIEW HEIGHTS RO	386294	Kelowna BC V1Z 1K0	V1Z 1K0	FA	853 Anders Road	1999/10/4
LANSDOWNE RO	384925	Richmond BC V6X 2X0	V6X 2X0	FA	320-5300 No. 3 Road	1999/9/29
100 MILE HOUSE RO	385239	100 Mile House	V0K 2E0	GMO	145 South Birch Ave. (mailing PO Box 4	1999/9/28
CITY SQUARE RO	385115	Vancouver BC	V5Z 3X0	FA	19-555 West 12th Avenue	1999/9/23
GLENMORE RO	385107	Kelowna BC V1V 1Y0	V1V 1Y0	FA	101 - 437 Glenmore Road	1999/9/15
ROBSON STREET RO	384496	Vancouver	V6G 1C0	FA	1625 Robson Street	1999/9/9
Terminal Park RO	384364	NANAIMO	V9S 3Y0	FA	4B - 1533 Estevan Road	1999/8/18
GORGE PLAZA RO	355976	VICTORIA	V9A 2A0	FA	2947 TILlicum RD	1999/8/11
Main Street South RO	383880	VANCOUVER	V5X 3L0	FA	8165 Main Street	1999/8/10
150 Mile House RO	383244	150 Mile House BC V0K 2G0	V0K 2G0	FB	PO Box 619	1999/8/2
VICTORIA 2 RO	356263	VICTORIA	V8W 2E0	FA	1222 Douglas Street	1999/7/28
WILLINGTON HEIGHTS RO	382604	Vancouver	V5C 2H0	FA	4050 East Hastings Street	1999/7/22
LAGOON GROCERY	382930	Nanaimo	V9T 5A0	SC	4500 Hammond Bay Rd	1999/7/13
BOOKKEEPING UNLIMITED	382922	Nanaimo	V9T 4B0	SC	4176 A Departure Bay Rd	1999/7/13
WHITE ROCK RO	382132	White Rock	V4B 3E0	FA	15180 North Bluff Road	1999/7/2
WESTMINSTER RO	358789	Penticton	V2A 1J0	FA	187 Westminster Avenue W	1999/7/2
MOBERLY LAKE RO	359211	MOBERLY LAKE	V0C 1X0	FB	P.O. Box 201	1999/6/7

LISTING OF OUTLETS CLOSED IN 1999

OUTLET NAME	RC	TOWN	POST CODE	GRADE	PHYSICAL ADDR	DATE OPENED	DATE CLOSED
DELAMONT RO	630098	VANCOUVER	V6J 1Z0	FA	1996 W BROADWAY	1989/8/30	1999/11/14
WESTMINSTER RO	358789	Penticton	V2A 1J0	FA	187 Westminster Avenue W	1999/7/2	1999/11/6
CHILLIWACK RPO 6/GMO	653853	CHILLIWACK	V2P 1X0	GMO	46604 1ST AVE		1999/10/31
JAMES BAY RO	630993	VICTORIA	V8V 2G0	FA	455 SIMCOE ST UNIT 2	1989/4/25	1999/10/31
PITT MEADOWS	645583	PITT MEADOWS	V3Y 1A0	SS 6	12455 HARRIS RD		1999/10/28
VANCOUVER YALETOWN GMO	259608	VANCOUVER	V6Z 2R0	GMO	1165 Pacific Blvd	1996/10/29	1999/10/22
KAMLOOPS RPO 12/GMO	112437	KAMLOOPS	V2C 1L0	GMO	945 COLUMBIA ST UNIT 14	1993/5/7	1999/10/4
LAKEVIEW HEIGHTS RO	152641	KELOWNA	V1Z 1K0	FA	853 ANDERS RD	1993/10/19	1999/10/2
LOWER LONSDALE RO	252719	NORTH VANCOUVER	V7L 1C0	FA	121 E 1ST ST	1996/8/1	1999/10/2
BARKERVILLE	640468	BARKERVILLE	V0K 1B0	RV 2		1999/5/1	1999/9/30
LANSDOWNE MALL RO	168823	RICHMOND	V6X 2X0	FA	5300 NO 3 RD UNIT 320	1995/2/7	1999/9/28
100 MILE HOUSE GMO 3	247766	100 MILE HOUSE	V0K 2E0	GMO	HWY B97	1996/2/26	1999/9/27
CITY SQUARE RO	654590	VANCOUVER	V5Z 3X0	FA	555 W 12TH AVE	1989/1/17	1999/9/22
ROBSON STREET RO	17906	VANCOUVER	V6G 1C0	FA	1625 ROBSON ST	1990/9/25	1999/9/8
SAPPERTON RO	266256	NEW WESTMINSTER	V3L 3X0	FA	434A COLUMBIA ST	1997/4/1	1999/8/31
DOWNTOWN RO	342068	VERNON	V1T 5M0	FA	3202 32nd	1998/3/16	1999/8/18
NANAIMO GMO 4	267783	NANAIMO	V9S 3Y0	GMO	1533 Estevan Rd	1997/5/20	1999/8/17
MAIN SOUTH RO	83712	VANCOUVER	V5X 3L0	FA	8165 MAIN ST	1993/8/31	1999/8/9
CEDAR HILLS RO	59471	SURREY	V3V 6A0	FA	12874 96TH AVE	1991/5/30	1999/8/4
150 MILE HOUSE RO	68276	150 MILE HOUSE	V0K 2G0	FB	HWY 97	1991/10/3	1999/8/1
COURTENAY GMO NORTH	174599	COURTENAY	V9N 5M0	GMO	450 RYAN RD	1995/7/3	1999/7/31
VICTORIA RPO 2/GMO	652113	VICTORIA	V8W 2E0	GMO	1222 DOUGLAS ST		1999/7/28
WILLINGDON HEIGHTS RO	26751	BURNABY	V5C 5G0	FA	406 WILLINGDON AVE S	1991/10/8	1999/7/21
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA RO	134759	VICTORIA	V8P 5C0	FA	3800 FINNERTY RD	1993/10/26	1999/7/16
WHITE ROCK RO	655120	SURREY	V4A 4N0	FA	1711 JOHNSTON RD UNIT 116	1990/8/21	1999/6/30
WESTMINSTER AVE RO	59838	PENTICTON	V2A 1J0	FA	187 WESTMINSTER AVE W	1991/6/25	1999/6/30
MOBERLY LAKE RO	136409	MOBERLY LAKE	V0C 1X0	FB	PIONEER RD	1993/11/9	1999/6/6

RAPID CANCELLING MACHINES - still in use ?

More and more mail is being moved to Vancouver or Victoria for processing and as a result Staff and Semi-staff post offices are making less and less use of their rapid cancelling machines. The machines listed below have not reported as being used in 1999 but were reported in 1998 or 1997.

Please supply dates for 1999 if seen.

Klussendorf

	Last reported	In use	Date of last report
HOPE	1998 03 04		
KIMBERLEY	1998 01 25		
KITIMAT	1998 10 07		
LADYSMITH	1997 04 08		
OSOYOOS	1998 03 26		
QUESNEL	1998 03 17		
SALMON ARM	1997 11 10		
replaced by V1E 1A0			
WHISTLER	1997 01 03		

Other

CHEMAINUS	1998 01 21		
GREENWOOD	1998 02 03		
KELOWNA 1	1998 12 03		
LAZO	1998 10 11		
NANAIMO 2	1998 04 15		
ROSSLAND	1998 04 02		

If possible check with the post office to see if the machine is on site.

Name Forms should be mailed to -
 Bill Topping
 Address B.C. Postal History News Letter
 7430 Angus Drive
 Vancouver, B.C. V6P 5K2

"Almost new" helps to upgrade system.

By Brenda Brown

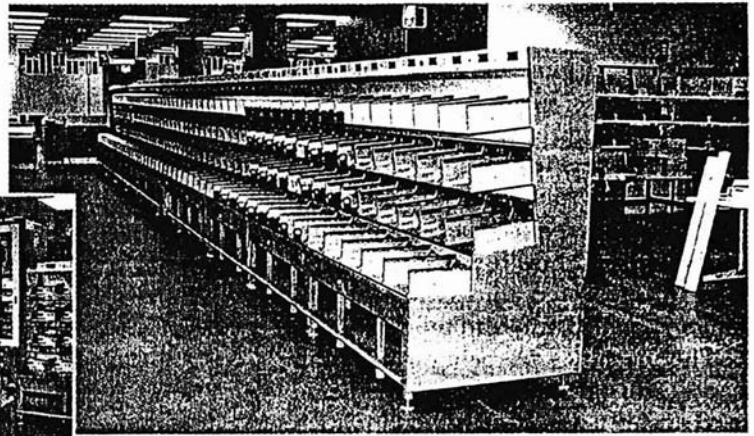
When it comes to getting a bargain, Canada Post is an expert.

As director of Lettermail Engineering, Roy Nias knew it was time to replace CPC's 30-year-old letter sorting equipment. But with money being tight, he knew it would be difficult to obtain the \$80 million needed to replace the 78 aging letter sorting machines (LSMs).

So when the Engineering Group learned USPS was upgrading their equipment, Nias proposed CPC buy their decommissioned Martin Marietta Delivery Bar Code Sorters—which are 20 years newer—at a substantially reduced cost.

"This purchase not only serves to strengthen the distribution and delivery side of our business, but also frees up needed capital to invest in areas such as the Electronic Post Office and eParcel. It's a winning deal for both sides of the business," Nias says.

Nias says two of the new sorting machines were tested at the Research and Development Centre in Ottawa to ensure they are the right fit



Decommissioned United States Postal Service Martin Marietta Delivery Bar Code Sorters like this one are being retrofitted for use in all major CPC plants.

for CPC. The tests showed the units are quiet and ergonomically sound. With some modifications to software and hardware, they are also more efficient, with a 50 per cent increase in processing capability.

"We are now retrofitting 65 of the 140 available units," says Nias. "We expect this to take about six months before the first installation begins, which means we should start installing

the sorters in all major plant facilities by the summer of 2000."

Although content and timing have not yet been determined, the change will require training for plant employees, as well as intensive training for Maintenance staff.

"The introduction of these sorters must be integrated into the network, which will require the input of all employees," Nias concludes. ■

28 Performance

January 2000

Superdog meets Super Postmaster Joel Dunnnett

When Reverend Lori Jacobson broke her ankle recently, she discovered just how important her daily ritual of visiting the post office with her dog Callie has been.

"Joel Dunnnett, the postmaster, always gives Callie dog biscuits, or feeds her things like pickled onions from his lunch," says Jacobson, a United Church minister in Red Bank, New Brunswick.

The fun part is that Callie, whose registered name and titles are "Hyflyer's Calypso Kid CD HIT," goes on ahead of Jacobson. "I open my back door—we live in the manse on church property—and tell her to go get the mail," says Jacobson. "She runs through our yard, through the cemetery beside us, around a fence, across the post office lot, and is always at the door, eager for her treat, long before I arrive."

But when Jacobson injured her ankle in

October, she was unable to make the 300-metre trip. "I badly needed to visit the post office," she explains. "So I dug out Callie's bag with MAIL printed across the front and hung it around her neck. I'd made it for her last year but never really used it because she didn't like it. I phoned Joel and asked him to be ready for her, then I put the mail plus \$20 in the bag and sent Callie out the door."

Dunnnett says the post office was busy that day, so two-and-a-half year-old Callie had to wait 15 minutes to be "served". At about half a metre tall, the orange Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever easily tucked herself under the sorting table, standing patiently and waving her long, sweeping tail until Dunnnett was able to help her mail three letters, buy stamps and a money order, and pick up Jacobson's mail.

Dunnnett didn't think twice when

Reverend Lori Jacobson with her "Mail Dog" Callie, who wears her special pouch to take to the Red Bank, New Brunswick post office.



"Would you like an Xpresspost envelope with that?" asks postmaster Joel Dunnnett of Callie as she waits to be served.

Jacobson called him with the unusual request, or when he let Callie out of the post office and watched her race for home with her purchases and letters tucked neatly into her mail bag. "After 22 years as postmaster, not much surprises me when it comes to the mail," he says. "And I knew Callie was up to it, because she is one smart dog." TW

34 Performance

January 2000