
Rare copper nickel found

An Ottawa man recently bought a roll of pennies from a downtown bank and discovered that one of the coins was worth a lot more than the amount stamped on it.

Ed McGibbon found a rare copper nickel in the roll of pennies purchased at the Royal Bank of Canada. The coin has the stampings of a nickel but it is the size and colour of a one-cent piece.

The manager of the Royal Canadian Mint's numismatics products branch Michelle Menard said McGibbon's coin was probably an old one-cent blank left in one of the Mint's coin machines when it was switched over to nickel production. The penny blank obviously fell free and was stamped as a nickel.

"It happens every so often," Menard said but added that it is rare that such coins ever get out of the mint since they are not considered legal tender. "The legal description of the nickel is quite clear. It has to be pure nickel," Menard said.

McGibbon said he has been told a similar coin stamped back in 1943 recently fetched \$7 000 at a rare coin auction. "Since mine is newer and in mint condition, it's worth a lot more," he claimed.

Books saved by freeze-drying

Freeze-drying, a drying process that is just starting to gain worldwide acceptance in libraries and museums — was used recently at the University of Calgary library to save a collection of rare Russian books.

The texts, mostly indexes to Russian literature before Communist rule, were soaked by thousands of gallons of hot water when a water pipe broke.

The books were so waterlogged that mould would have destroyed them if they were left to dry in the open air. With standard heat-drying processes, the old books would have become brittle and fallen apart.

Books placed in freezer first

Using the freeze-drying process, the books were placed in a standard home freezer to ensure that mould could not set in among the damp pages. Several books were placed inside a vacuum-sealed drying unit where they remained inside for five days at 58 degrees Celsius while the freeze-dryer slowly extracted the

moisture from them.

The results of the first batch and of about 80 books that followed were excellent.

Library staff at Concordia University in Montreal will also try the method to dry out about 1,500 boxes of water-damaged archive materials, soaked during efforts to extinguish a fire in January in the building. They are currently stored in standard freezers until freeze-dryers can be located.

The Canadian Conservation Institute, a federal agency dedicated to preserving and restoring museum and library materials has been able to provide staff at the library with a list of about 30 food-processing companies which have freeze-dryers.

The institute is attempting to compile similar lists of freeze-drying facilities elsewhere in Canada.

Exotic pest researched

A Canadian university researcher has spent the last ten years studying the tsetse fly with a view to curbing the reproductive capacity of the pest, reports the *Canadian Press*.

Ronald Gooding, a professor at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, keeps a colony of 2 000 tsetse flies for his research. The tsetse fly, not a problem in northern Alberta, is a potent carrier of sleeping sickness in Africa, where it has destroyed more than seven million square kilometres of prime ranch lands and infected thousands of humans with a slow-spreading and debilitating disease.

Goodman, who has what he believes is the only self-reproducing colony of tsetse flies in Canada, began his tsetse-fly study in 1972 when he abandoned the study of mosquitos, lice, bedbugs and kissing bugs after a trip to a tsetse research laboratory in Bristol, England.

Key to control

His colony includes 250 female tsetses carrying the mutation for salmon-coloured (as opposed to brown or black) eyes — the link to reproductive control of one of about 30 species of tsetse.

The mutant eye strain was first spotted by a lab assistant in 1977, just before the line almost died out because researchers had not realized the odd-eyed flies were failing to reproduce.

Research, Gooding said, has determined that "when a female tsetse with

salmon-coloured eyes mates with a male with salmon-coloured eyes she produces offspring which die before they can reproduce".

In separate lab experiments tsetse-fly populations bred with salmon-eyed carriers were wiped out in eight and 17 generations respectively, although more study is required.

Theoretically, said Gooding, the wild population of Africa's tsetses could be curtailed by inbreeding insects unable to reproduce, although actual field tests in Africa are at least three years away.

Canadian team wins silver broom

A Canadian team skipped by Al Hackner of Nipigon, Ontario, regained first place for Canada in men's curling in the fifteenth annual Air Canada Silver Broom championships in Garmisch, West Germany.

The team with third Rick Lang, second Bob Nicol and lead Bruce Kennedy defeated Jurg Tanner's team from Switzerland by a score of 9-7 in the finals of the world men's tournament.

Canada's last title in this ten-country event was won in 1980 by Rick Folk's rink from Saskatoon.

Exciting finish

In the final game of this year's championships, the Canadian team scored two in the first end and remained in the lead throughout the game. Excitement grew in the ninth end, however, when Tanner scored three to put Switzerland behind 8-7. As Hackner prepared to shoot his final rock the Swiss team had the counter in the eight-foot circle to set up a possible extra end, but Hackner calmly drew to the button with his shot.

Commenting after the game on this crucial shot, Hackner said he tried not to worry what it meant and the pressure of it all. "As soon as I let go, I knew I was close. It was great ice. You could trust it all the way," he added.

The team, from Thunder Bay in northern Ontario, finished first in the round-robin schedule earlier in the week with a 7-2 win-loss record and then defeated Soren Grahn of Sweden 5-3 in the semi-final game.

Other Canadian teams which have won the silver broom championships include Ron Northcott of Calgary in 1968 and 1969, Ron Duguid of Winnipeg in 1970 and 1971 and Orest Meleschuk of Winnipeg in 1972.