



The Blazon

The newsletter of the British Columbia/Yukon Branch of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada

SPRING 2019

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 2018-2019 winter has been a very stormy season so far with lots of wet and windy weather. While the sun has not pushed very much heat through the cloudy skies we can enjoy some heraldic warmth.

The prominent item for our branch is the kind acceptance of our new Lieutenant Governor, Her Honour, The Honourable Janet Austin, O.B.C., to become our Honorary Patron. The BC/Yukon Branch of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada has enjoyed Vice Regal patronage since 1988 commencing with His Honour, The Honourable David Lam, O.C., C.V.O., O.B.C.

In the Spring issue, number 2 of volume 13, of the BC Blazon, I had shown Her Honour's arms along with the blazon and details of the heraldic symbolism of Her Honour's achievement. If you glance at Her Honour's arms in that issue of the BC Blazon you will notice one significant feature – there are no supporters as yet. With Her Honour's Vice Regal appointment in March of 2018, the arms can now be modified to

include supporters. Once Her Honour's arms have supporters the details will be advised to all members.

With the start of 2019 it is time to put together the 2018 Annual Report. I will be working with our Treasurer, Don Mayers of Courtenay BC, to complete the report with its financial details. Once the completed report is approved by the branch board members, copies will be e-mailed to all branch members as well as copies sent to our new Honorary Patron.



Her Honour, The Honourable Janet Austin, O.B.C., Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and Honorary Patron of the BC/Yukon Branch.

Photo credit: Itgov.bc.ca

Our branch Annual General Meeting is planned for Saturday 9 March. Notices will be sent out with details on the location and guest speaker. Members are encouraged to consider assisting with the branch board in our promotional activities.

The national Annual General Meeting of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada will be held this year in Calgary AB from Friday 3 May to Sunday 5 May, 2019. All members are welcome to attend and you will be receiving the AGM notice and details directly from the RHSC Secretary.

Steve Cowan, Branch President.



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

While it feels like Christmas was months ago, it was only last month in December 2018 to we had the Yuletide holidays. Here are images of cards received by our branch.

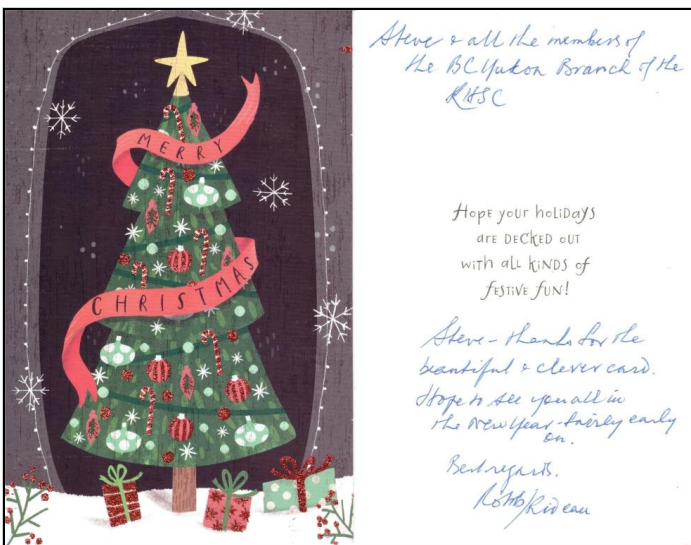
Our BC/Yukon branch Christmas card is enjoying a wider audience. The card was mailed to all members as well as friends including the Canadian Heraldic Authority. A few weeks ago the card was included in a Facebook post by the CHA of the various heraldic Christmas cards they had received.

The salient image was the seasonal heraldic arms from our friends of the Vancouver branch of the RHSC. No blazon of these arms was included so suggestions are welcome.

Ideas for our 2019 card are welcome. If you plan for your own heraldic Christmas card you are encouraged to send a copy to the CHA



Card from the Canadian Heraldic Authority signed by the Chief Herald of Canada, Dr. Claire Boudreau and the Heralds of Arms at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.



Card from Rideau Herald Emeritus, our branch member and first branch president, Robb Watt of North Vancouver BC. Robb also became the first Chief Herald of Canada in 1988 when the Canadian Heraldic Authority was created.



Screen capture of the Facebook post by the Canadian Heraldic Authority.



SIR CONRAD SWAN
K.C.V.O., F.S.A., F.R.H.S.C.

Gary Mitchell

On the 10 January 2019, a titan of Canadian heraldry was elevated to the heavenly College of Arms; Conrad Marshall John Fisher Swan, a native of Duncan, British Columbia, died in London. Born on May 13, 1924, Sir Conrad was descended from the noble Polish family Świącicki; the surname "Swan" being adopted by his father upon their arrival in Canada.



The arms of Duncan BC, the birthplace of Sir Conrad Swan. The Arms were granted by the College of Arms 16 January 1968.

proper English gentleman with a touch of Canadian daring and little if any Canadian accent. It remains one of my great heraldry moments!

It is difficult for us today to imagine the Cowichan Valley being viewed as an enclave of genteel English society with its lawn tennis and cricket pitches. That is the world Sir Conrad was raised in and Canada was viewed as an integral part of the Empire (soon to be Commonwealth). He was daring! Off to London for an education at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; then commissioning into the Madras Regiment to see out the remainder of the Second World War. With Indian independence on the horizon, he retired from the British Indian Army as a captain. Back to Canada for a BA and MA at the Universi-

Sir Conrad was guest presenter at one of our Black-tie dinners in the mid 2000s and I was fortunate enough to be his driver from Victoria to our Cowichan location. We spoke of growing up in rural British Columbia, the Cowichan Valley post Great War, our mutual Polish ancestry and, of course, heraldry and the other symbols of nationhood. He was a

ty of Western Ontario and then back to the UK for his doctorate from Cambridge University in 1955.

Swan was appointed Rouge Dragon Pursuivant of Arms in Ordinary in 1962 thus becoming the first Canadian to work at the College of Arms; six years later he became York Herald of Arms in Ordinary.

In 1992 he became the Garter King of Arms, unfortunately, in 1995 he was stricken with cancer and retired from the College.

I said he was a titan in Canadian heraldry, he was an advocate for Canadian heraldry and Canadian identity long before it was fashionable. He advised the Pearson government on the creation of a Canadian honours system and a unique national flag, both of which came into being, and are now accepted and respected elements of our identity. He supported and assisted the Saskatchewan government in the development of their own honour, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, in the 1980s. If these were not enough, Swan was a strong supporter of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada and a mighty advocate for the establishment of a Canadian heraldic authority. He continued in his advocacy for national honours throughout his career by assisting Antigua, Rwanda, Tonga, etc. Can one imagine where the establishment of our own standalone heraldic authority would be without the push and advocacy of Sir Conrad?

After his retirement from the College, he wrote his 2005 autobiography *A King From Canada*, (ISBN 978-1841040721), a reference to his office as Garter King of Arms.

Her Majesty appointed him to the Royal Victorian Order, Lieutenant in 1984, Commander in 1986 and was knighted as a Knight Commander in 1994.



Above are his personal arms that were confirmed through distant Polish ancestors and matriculated by the then department of heraldry in St Petersburg in 1811, and then ultimately within the College of Arms.



CRAIGDARROCH CASTLE HERALDRY LUNCHEON

Our most recent branch gathering was the luncheon on Saturday 24 November 2018. This was held at a new venue for us, Craigdarroch Castle in Victoria. We lucked out on a fine day of clear skies and no wind; this was a perfect day for our luncheon and exploration of the 129 year old structure.

There were twenty of us gathered including our guest speaker. We began with a luncheon in the new meeting room, admission and gift shop facility adjacent to the castle.

Our guest speaker that day was Citizenship Judge (retired) Gerry Pash and the topic of our featured Shirley Greenwood Lecture was Symbols of Cana-

da. Gerry gave a very interesting talk on how he includes Canadian symbolism into his citizenship ceremonies he conducts for new Canadians. Many of the familiar symbols we see everyday that reflect our nation are based on heraldry and its various artistic mediums from flags to currency.



The current Craigdarroch Castle logo. The castle would be an ideal venue to display arms. Image credit: www.thecastle.ca



Citizenship Judge Gerry Pash, of Victoria BC, was the Shirley Greenwood Heraldry Lecture guest speaker. The topic was Symbols of Canada.

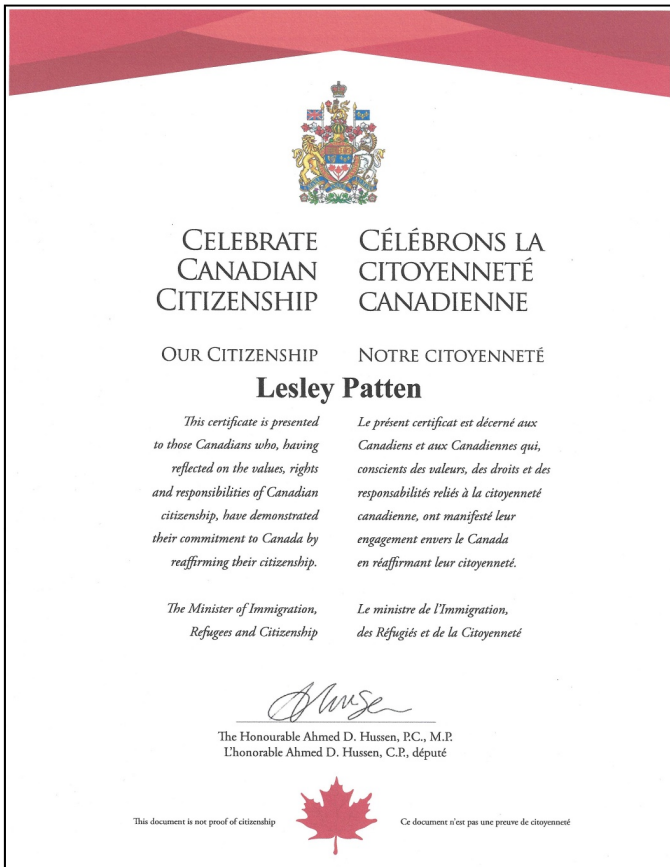
Photo credit: Lee Van Horne

Continued on page 5



Jerry also added a very special aspect to his presentation. He surprised everyone by, first, donning his robes of a Citizenship Judge and then leading us all through a ceremony where we reaffirmed our Canadian citizenship. And to mark this unique event we were all presented with a personalized certificate as shown below.

An interesting heraldic aspect of the ceremony was the badge Gerry had on his judicial robes. The badge, shown below, was designed by branch member Robb Watt, Rideau Herald Emeritus and former Chief Herald of Canada from 1988 to 2007. Robb also served as a Citizenship Judge and Gerry Pash took over this appointment when Robb retired in 2015.



Badge of a Citizenship Judge of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration as granted by the CHA on 15 March 2011 in Volume VI, page 34 of



Citizenship Judge Gerry Pash conducting the reaffirmation of citizenship with branch members and guests.

Photo credit: Steve Cowan



Citizenship reaffirmation certificate obverse (above) and reverse, reduced in scale (below).

Continued on page 6



Members and guests display their certificates.
Photo credit: Steve Cowan



Branch president Steve Cowan presenting Judge Jerry Pash with an appreciation plaque (below) that includes the Citizenship Judge badge.
Photo credit: Lee Van Horne



Following the luncheon and heraldry lecture, the members and guests were given a tour of Craigdarroch Castle. Our host was Toby Stubbs, Operations and Development Manager.

Everyone had an opportunity to visit the different floors in the castle and to explore the various exhibition rooms.

In an letter to Mr. Stubbs after our enjoyable day he was provided a copy of the new heraldry booklet published by the Canadian Heraldic Authority. This was given to Mr. Stubbs to encourage the Board of Directors of Craigdarroch Castle to petition for a grant of arms. Seems like an ideal institution to have arms and to help the RHSC towards its aim of promoting heraldry to Canadians. And in this case to overseas tourists as well.



Various display rooms of Craigdarroch Castle.
Photo credit: www.thecastle.ca

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

With the start of the new year it is time to renew your annual RHSC membership. An e-mail reminder has been sent by our national RHSC Secretary.

If you haven't seen the notice, the details and the renewal form can be found on our national RHSC website at

www.heraldry.ca



BRANCH ON PUBLIC DISPLAY

Over the past few months our branch display unit and material has been used at a few different events.

On 23 June 2018 our booth was set up at Branch 160 Comox of the Royal Canadian Legion. The occasion was the Legion Information Fair. We were invited as this was open to various service clubs and community organizations. As our aim is to promote heraldry to all Canadians it was an ideal situation to spend a day promoting heraldry, Canada's best kept secret.

Another Comox Valley event we participated in was the Nautical Days at the Comox Marina. This was done in conjunction with the Comox Archives and Museum Society (CAMS). As a Town of Comox sponsored organization, CAMS was given full use of one of the new community activity buildings at the Comox Marina. We were invited to participate with CAMS for this popular event held from Friday 3 August to Monday 6 August.



The Branch RHSC display set up at the Comox Legion Information Fair held 23 June 2018. Photo credit: Steve Cowan

The Branch RHSC display set up at the Comox Marina 3 to 6 August 2018 for the Comox Nautical Days as part of the community outreach with the Comox Archives and Museum Society. Photo credit: Steve Cowan

Continued on page 8



On Thursday 1 November branch members John Neill and Steve Cowan attended the meeting of the Campbell River Genealogy Society. At this monthly meeting we were invited to make our heraldry presentation to the 46 members in attendance. This presentation was the first time we had the opportunity to hand out copies of the new heraldry booklets recently published by the Canadian Heraldic Authority. Images and information from the booklets were incorporated into our heraldry presentation.



A RECURSIVE CHRISTMAS

Lee Van Horne

As last Christmas approached, members were likely immersing themselves in Christmas heraldry, perhaps by cruising the Internet or making up designs themselves. And those that engage in the latter may well have found themselves trying new or unusual ideas.

It was in this spirit that I found myself designing a shield for Santa Claus. The project was driven more by frustration than inspiration. The search for existing attributed arms kept leading to heraldically dreadful renditions. And those that were somewhat passable, could hardly be identified with Santa Claus unless there was a label nearby. All of this led to the conclusion that Santa Claus needed attractive, heraldically correct arms that shouted out, "These are Santa's arms!".

Work progressed and the main charge quickly became a snow sleigh. As the finishing touches were being added, the thought came flying in that if Santa was armigerous, he would probably want his arms displayed on his sleigh, so that he could be distinguished from all the other red-coated drivers of magic sleighs flying around the North Pole. Yes, definitely, the sleigh needed a coat-of-arms. And at that moment, another thought came flying in, "That's recursion!"

Perhaps a small explanation of recursion is in order. Artists have a good term for it, *mise en abyme*, which means 'placed into the abyss', which is a very good description of what is going on. Imagine an artist painting a portrait of himself painting a portrait. It becomes an image placed in an image of itself, which is placed in an image of itself, *ad infinitum*. Or, imagine standing between two mirrors, looking at a reflection of a reflection. Both of these situations are examples of recursion. And recursion goes well beyond the world of art. Software writers often use recursive subroutines, which are subroutines that can call themselves.

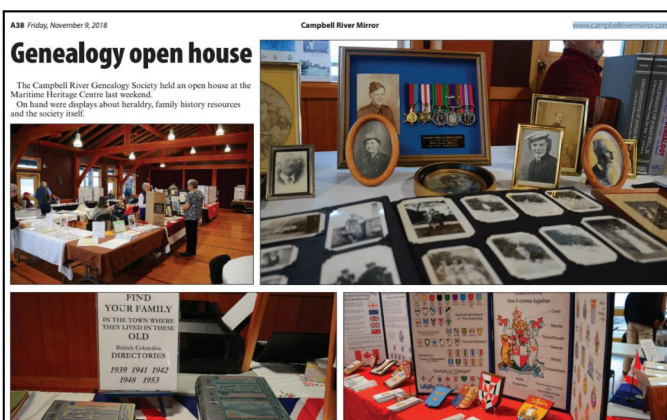
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Covers of the two new heraldry booklets recently developed by the Canadian Heraldic Authority.

Images courtesy of Chief Herald of Canada

On the following Saturday 3 November we also had our booth set up at an all day genealogy open house on invitation of the Campbell River Genealogy Society.



Our booth (in sinister base) included in a newspaper article about the genealogy open house 3 November 2018.

Photo credit: The Campbell River Mirror page A38 of Friday November 9, 2018.



Whatever the field, recursion can be an intriguing, and sometimes powerful, technique.

What about the field of heraldry? Surely, there are examples of recursive heraldry out there. Well, apparently not. At least, not any obvious ones. What follows are some non-obvious examples.



Coat of arms of the Russian Federation
Image source: Wikimedia

The first example is the Russian coat of arms. It is derived from the Imperial arms, which is a bit ironic considering that the current Russian government is quite anti-monarchistic. But, then again, why let politics get in the way of good heraldry?

The reader might well be asking, where is the recursion? One might think maybe it is in the escutcheon; maybe the horse rider is bearing the arms of Russia. Well, the rider is St. George and if he was carrying a shield, it would be displaying the cross of St. George! So, no recursion there.

Well then, where is it?

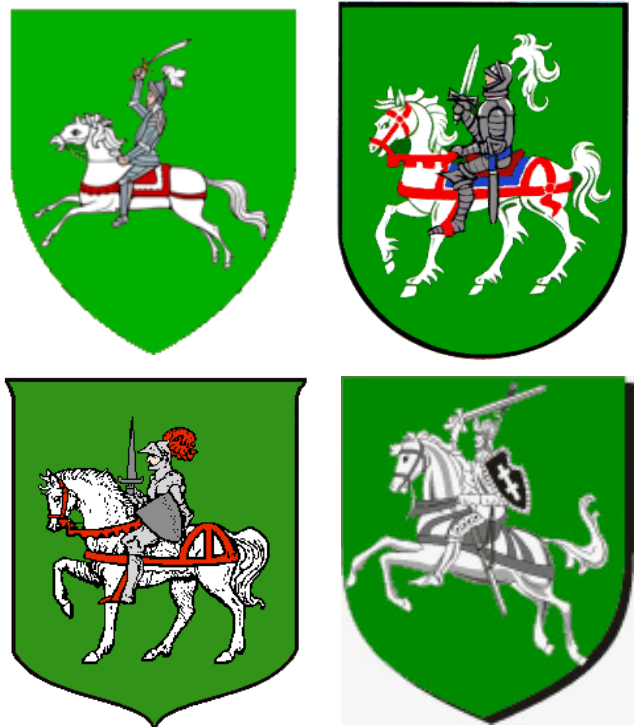
Please direct your attention to the sceptre. It is hard to discern in the image but the sceptre is topped with an imperial eagle. And that eagle is holding an imperial sceptre, which is topped by an imperial eagle, and so on. Definitely a case of recursion.

Not only is the recursion subtle within the image, but also in the blazon. The blazon just describes the sceptre as “an imperial sceptre”. Of course, they meant a Russian imperial sceptre, which just happens to have a Russian imperial eagle on top. Once you have the descriptions of the sceptre and eagle, along with the blazon of the arms, recursion will be a necessary result.

The next example is quite different. The Maguires held the Fermanagh (Ireland) throne for about three centuries starting about 1300 and, of course, were armigerous. Their arms were:

Vert a white horse fully caparisoned, thereon a knight in complete armour, on his helmet a plume of ostrich feathers, and his right hand brandishing a sword all proper.

Over the centuries, there have been many paintings of these arms. Some show the knight holding no shield, others show a blank shield, and still others show a shield with a generic design, each expressing the style of the heraldic artist and each complying with the blazon.



Variations of the arms of the Maguires of Ireland

Continued on page 10



None of the four shields on the previous page show any sign of recursion. But one enterprising artist decided otherwise, and it just jumps out at you—see the shield below. So, while this particular rendition of the arms is clearly recursive, there is no implied recursion within the blazon. In this case, it is totally at the discretion of the heraldic artist.



The recursive arms of Maguire

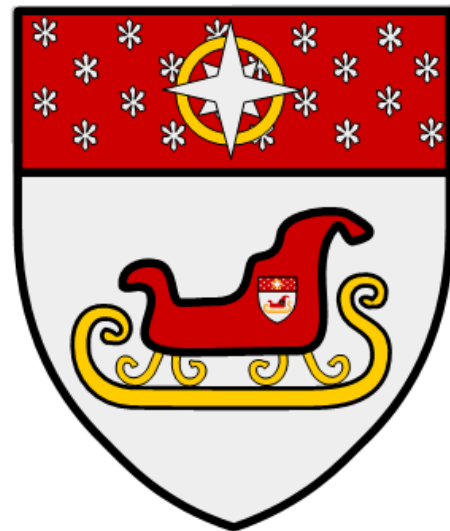
So, now we come back to Santa’s sleigh and, specifically, how to blazon it. After searching through the various heraldic dictionaries and glossaries, no reference to recursion was found. Elvin’s Dictionary of Heraldry lists ‘abyss’ but defines it as “the centre of an escutcheon”, i.e. the fess point. Parker’s glossary defines *en abisme* as ‘in the middle fess point’.

So, the two listings are consistent with each other, and yet, troublesome. It seems probable that the word abyss (or abyme or abisme or however you want to spell it) would enter the heraldic lexicon via the art world’s *mise en abyme*, a term very clearly defined in terms of recursion. The art world’s definition makes complete sense while the heraldic definition makes no sense at all. Why use ‘abyss’ to refer to the fess point?

Well, more research is needed here, but that will have to wait. In the meantime, why let a little ignorance stall a project? Let us barge on! Let’s redefine the heraldic abyss!

Here is the proposed blazon for Santa Claus’ arms:

Argent a snow sleigh Gules railed and suspended Or on the side of which an escutcheon thrown into the abyss, on a chief Gules semé of snowflakes a compass rose Argent ringed Or.



The proposed arms of Santa Claus

Comments to the editor are much encouraged. To all members, I hope you had a Merry Heraldic Christmas and an equally heraldic New Year!



The armorial bearings of Lee Van Horne granted by the Canadian Heraldic Authority August 15, 2007
Vol. V, p. 165 of the Public Registry



MANUSCRIPT ACQUISITIONS MAKE HISTORY TANGIBLE

Lesley Patten



“It was like an epiphany,” University of Victoria PhD student Brian Pollick says about a trip to Italy to study art. “I wanted to provide ways to give materiality to a bygone age.” Brian and his wife Heather Lindstedt worked closely with UVic Libraries to establish the Medieval Manuscript Fund, which has helped build one of the most extensive collections of medieval manuscripts west of Toronto. “We encourage people to touch them and turn the pages,” says Brian.

One of the manuscripts acquired through the Medieval Manuscript Fund is an Italian Book of Hours (*Codex Pollick*) from the 15th century. The illuminated manuscript brings thoughts, beliefs, and rituals of Medieval Europe to life for students. “On every page, there are oily and dirty marks. When they hold it in their hands, students almost immediately see that the marks are where their thumbs settle naturally, so you suddenly feel like you can go through time,” says Dr. Adrienne Williams Boyarin, associate professor in the Department of English.

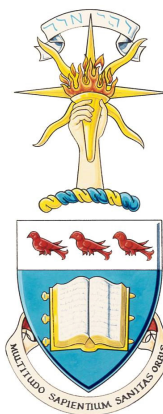
Dr. Williams Boyarin’s students spend each semester transcribing and translating manuscripts that UVic has purchased.

A textbook can’t offer you that type of learning,” says Williams Boyarin. Once a student project is complete, it is posted online for readers worldwide to access. “It creates this sense of community and cross-course collaboration when the donor gives to us,” says Williams Boyarin. “The library lets the students use it and access it, and in return, we give back to the library and community by making these texts more accessible.”



Brian’s donations to help enrich UVic Libraries’ collection of medieval manuscripts has also enhanced his own studies. After retiring, Brian came to UVic to complete a master’s degree and is now pursuing his doctorate in Art History and Visual Studies, at the age of 72. “It gives me a sense of purpose,” says Brian. “Donations can be one tool to help you achieve a legacy that is very important to you.”

This article first appeared in the September 24, 2018 edition of *UVic News*.



The arms of the University of Victoria, College of Arms grant Feb. 20, 1961



THE BLAZON

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT

Don't forget, the RHSC has adjusted the membership fees for students; it is \$35 for full-time students - with no age restriction!



All you need is to provide a copy of your International Student Identification Card as issued by a Canadian educational institution.

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<http://bc-yukon.heraldry.ca>



Articles are welcome for submission
to the Blazon Editor

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