

ETCETERA

Artist creates millennium stamp

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MEDICINE

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ket it is hard to keep them all straight. I don't know what Ginkgo Biloba does or really how to spell it. I know it is out there with Ginseng and the like to help people feel better.

The oldest form of alternative medicine, herbs are used for their therapeutic or medicinal value as an alternative treatment to conventional practices.

Many herbs produce and contain a variety of chemical substances that act beneficially upon the body.

For example, ephedra is an herb used in traditional Chinese medicine for more than 2000 years to treat asthma and other respiratory problems. And ephedrine, the active ingredient in the aforementioned plant, is used in commercial pharmaceutical preparations for relief of asthma symptoms and other respiratory problems.

On "The Daily Show," I saw a story on a man who had developed wrist bracelets that elongated the human life span. Granted, "The Daily Show" is not

a mainstream news show, but it does cover real stories with added humorous twists.

Nevertheless, this story, being the first such I had heard, opened my eyes to this subject.

Now, I see people wearing "prayer beads" and the like. These beaded bracelets hold characters representing money, success, happiness, and other symbols that help "the ignorant common mortals advance in their Buddhist practice," said Reverend Ido Miyahara, the assistant priest of the Myogyoji Temple.

But if it makes the masses happy, it can't be all that bad, right?

For more information on herbal alternatives to medicines, visit the Viable Herbal Solutions' Web site at www.herbal-solutions.com/herbdesc.htm for a listing of herbs and what their effects are. For the origin of prayer beads, see Rev. Ido Miyahara's online lecture at www.ce-bunet.com/nst/laimbeads.html.

CARLSBAD, CALIF. — Every day, millions of people see Carl Herrman's art work — and spit on it.

As a designer of at least 250 U.S. postage stamps, he expects it. Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean and Barbie — Herrman has created some of the U.S. Postal Service's most memorable stamps since the agency moved away from staid subjects such as flags and eagles.

But it is Herrman's commemorative millennium stamp that may stand the test of time.

"It's like a calling card for America," Herrman said. "Three hundred years from now, someone will see the millennium stamp. It is important that it be done nicely."

The stamp features a baby wearing a black top hat and blowing a horn, with streamers, confetti and a "2000" banner across the bottom. The design is based on a drawing by American illustrator J.C. Leyendecker, whose original appeared Jan. 2, 1937, on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*.

To entice collectors, the Postal Service is offering a Jan. 1, 2000, postmark through Jan. 26 to people who send self-addressed envelopes with the millennium stamp to a Washington, D.C., address.

Collectors, however, are divided on the stamp's attractiveness and whether it appropriately captures the new millennium.

"It very effectively uses the new year theme," said Peter Martin, editor of *Scott Stamp Monthly*. He likes the stamp's look but says some people find the baby too chubby.

Michael Schreiber, managing editor of *Linn's Stamp News*, doesn't like it at all. "It's a stamp a woman would buy rather than a man," he said. "It doesn't appeal to me. I don't think it appeals to most men."

The criticisms don't bother Herrman. His greatest challenge, he says, is finding something different and exciting for such a tiny medium.

Herrman, a graphic artist with extensive experience as a commercial designer, was approached by a friend in 1992 about a position with the Postal Service.

He designed a four-color Statue of Liberty stamp with a sunset in the background, and was hooked.

He wouldn't say how lucrative the stamp design business is, but it affords the Massapequa, N.Y., native a California home, which he shares with his wife, Sharon, and their 25-pound Scottish terrier, Squiggy, one block from the beach.

Each new stamp must first be approved by the Postal Service's citizens' stamp review committee. Sometimes Herrman is assigned a stamp to design; other times he offers his own ideas.

A computer chip stamp, for instance, was not his idea and was not "sexy or colorful" to create, Herrman said. But Marilyn Monroe was difficult because "how do you do justice" to someone who personifies sexy and colorful, he said.

For the Slinky, he took lots of pictures and played with the wiry toy, observing it in motion.

He was finally satisfied with a design showing it straddling a step. "Actually, it's an adorable stamp."

For a stamp celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first American submarine, he spoke with Edward Latimer Beach, who authored "Run Silent, Run Deep" and was a World War II submarine commander.

"Ideas were just flying off the wall," Herrman said. "Talking to Capt. Beach, it was like talking to Lindbergh or somebody."

Herrman's stamps featuring the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and a character from the Broadway show "Cats" were released this month.

They were chosen in nationwide balloting last year as two of 15 commemora-

tive stamps saluting the 1980s.

Of all the stamps Herrman has designed, the comics classics are his favorites. "I probably got into this business because of my admiration for Dick Tracy and Prince Valiant. Having a chance to do the comic classics was very fun," he said.

Given the limitless possibilities, there is still one very personal stamp Herrman longs to do.

"It'd be nice to have Squiggy on a stamp," he said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: To obtain the Jan. 1, 2000, postmark, send a self-addressed envelope with the Millennium stamp to: Year 2000 Stamp, 900 Brentwood Road NE, Washington, D.C. 20066-9991. All orders must be postmarked by Jan. 26.

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