

# Horses and dragons and birds, oh my!



**The Best in Show winners:** Christy Robb of Morning Sun, IA (above) and Sherri A. Trial of Carlisle, PA (top right). Other winners are displayed on the opposite page.



**"Put a Stamp on It,"** the theme of the 25th annual Graceful Envelope Contest—a tribute to the 125th anniversary of the commemorative stamp—drew entries with subjects as wild, colorful and varied as the collectibles themselves.

There were some common threads, though: a deft hand with the calligrapher's pen, unusual access to loosey-goosey right-brain creativity and, of course, a love of letters and lettering.

Entrants were asked to send an envelope to the address of the Washington Calligraphers Guild. Entries were judged on "artistic hand lettering, creative interpretation of the theme and effective use of color and design, including incorporation of postage stamps," according to Erin Cassidy, a judge and professional calligrapher. It's not necessarily based on calligraphy, Cassidy explained: "In some cases the lettering on the envelopes is not 'calligraphy' and can still win."

A Best in Show in the adult category, Sherri Trial of Carlisle, PA, chose commemorative stamps of carousel horses making a spirited semi-circle around the beautifully rendered address of the Guild.

The other adult Best in Show, by Christy Robb of Morning Sun, IA, is a playful take on "sealed with a kiss," or SWAK. (Those of a certain age will remember writing that acronym on the back of envelopes to teen crushes and BFFs.) Hershey's kiss stamps and a lipstick-red napkin-kiss imprint are the finishing touches.

Flight and moon exploration were frequent subjects, as were Asian and dragon motifs, such as adult winner Sally Penley's Chinese New Year-stamped envelope with the words "Put Your Chop on It" prominently displayed. The entry is covered with such "chops," which she defines on the envelope's border as "a seal or stamp used in lieu of a signature. It carries a name or phrase meaningful to the owner." Birds, too, flitted throughout, a testament to the artistry of USPS's avian designs.

Grade 9-12 winner Aviva Tabarzia of Tarzana, CA, may have summed up the entries best with the message on her animal-track-themed design: "Every creature leaves their own unique mark." **PR**





The contest includes one adult category and three for students grades 1-4, 5-8 and 9-12. About 100 entries were sent in for the adult category and about 400 for all student categories.

Adult entries were juried by retired White House Chief Calligrapher Pat Blair and professional calligraphers Sammy Little and Erin Cassidy. The three student divisions were judged by professional calligraphers and art educators Kacie-Linn Engle, Susan Easton and Nahid Tootoonchi.

The winners will be displayed on a rotating basis at Jenni Bick Custom Journals, located at 1300 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

