[GRAPHIC]

Passport 101

BY STACY LEE KONG

WITH NEW U.S. travel restrictions about to come into effect due to recommendations from the 9-11 Commission, Canadian passports this past Christmas season were hotter than the Nintendo Wii. The travel documents were issued in record numbers leading up to the January deadline, and people lined up for hours to get them. Whether you're a new passport holder or an old pro, there's more to know about your passport than its ability to get you into the States.

ABC12345
Disappointingly, this mysterious barcode doesn't contain all your travel secrets—just a stock number that will help reunite you with your passport, should you lose it, which is still pretty good.

SECURITY
In 2002, Canada adopted new security measures for its passports, such as holograms, ink that changes colour under different lighting and use of a "ghost photo" that appears only under ultraviolet light. Interpol estimates there are as many as 10 million fraudulent passports in circulation around the world. Canadian ones are among the most popular, and typically go for $5,000 to $10,000 on the black market, but can fetch hundreds of thousands, depending on who is buying.

TYPE
There are six types of passports issued to Canadians: the regular; frequent traveller; diplomatic; special; emergency and temporary. Most of those issued (98 percent) are the regular variety. About 44 percent of all Canadians have passports. In December 2006, Passport Canada received 322,085 passport applications, up 31 percent from December 2005.

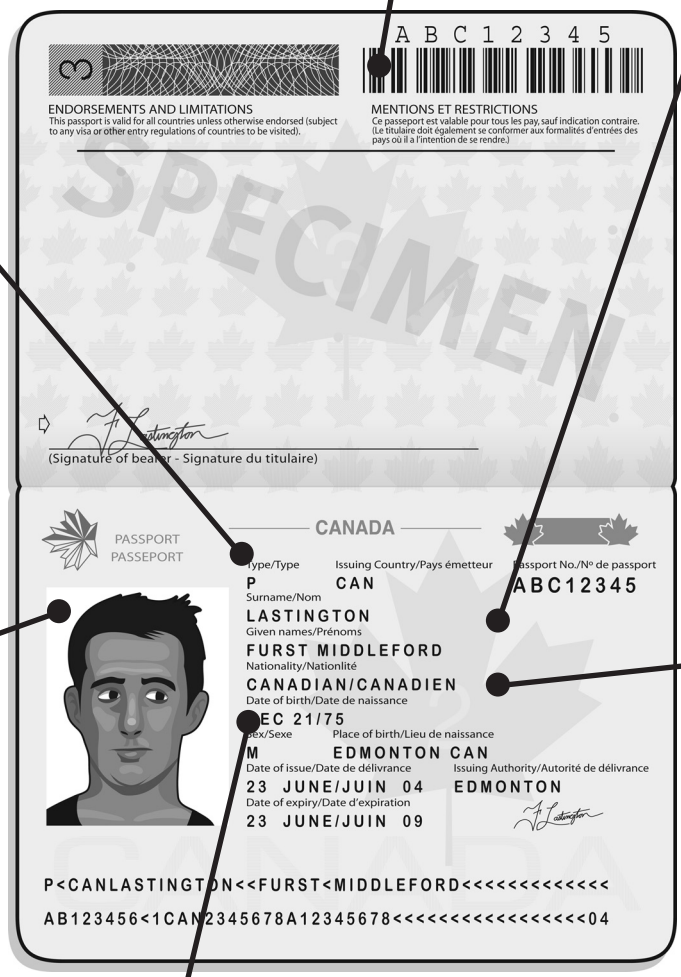

PHOTO
As anyone who's gotten to the front of the passport line only to be sent back to the photographer knows, there's no smiling allowed. Apparently saying "cheese" at photo time alters the position of your eyes and nose, making you more difficult to identify.

NATIONALITY
According to the 2001 census, there are 691,300 people living in Canada who hold dual citizenship. While there are no precise figures, thousands of Canadian passport holders reside abroad, and membership can have its privileges. In July 2006, Canada staged its largest-ever evacuation effort, removing 15,000 of the 50,000 Canadians living in Lebanon—at a cost of $63 million.

DATE OF BIRTH
This isn't the first time the U.S. has become security conscious and asked for more paperwork. During the American Civil War, U.S. authorities wanted more reliable certification than the naturalization certificate Canadians travelled on, which is how Canadian passports—at the time just a letter signed by the Governor General—were born.

STEVE MURRAY