

EXHIBITING 101

By Robert R. Henak

What follows is a series of articles I wrote for the Across the Fence Post, the newsletter of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs, as an introduction to philatelic exhibiting. Although I intended to continue the series to address each of the categories of exhibits appropriate for national competition, the obligations of my family, my law practice, and my initiation into the ranks of APS accredited philatelic judges interfered.

The series ran from October, 2009 through September, 2011, and primarily covered thematic exhibiting. Hopefully, at some point I will be able to get back to work on the series. In the mean time, however, I thought these might be helpful to others who may be interested in taking the plunge into philatelic exhibiting.

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Exhibiting 101: Introduction

Robert R. Henak

This is the first of what hopefully will be a series of articles on the basics of philatelic exhibiting. I plan to cover the what, why, where, and perhaps most importantly, the hows of transforming your collection or accumulation of stamps, postal history, postcards and other philatelic material into a display that will not only share your love and knowledge of these particular bits of paper, but perhaps win you some awards as well.

Over the past number of years, several of us involved in organized philately in Wisconsin have noted with dismay the decrease in both the number of local stamp shows featuring exhibits and the number of exhibitors and exhibits displayed at these shows. We are at the point now that – in the past year – only Wiscopex/Rockpex and Milcopex, Wisconsin's national-level stamp show, had any competitive exhibits.

This series of articles and additional efforts by Milcopex, the Wisconsin Federation of

Stamp Clubs and others, represent an attempt to change this. Milcopex and the WFSC, for instance, have initiated a program allowing four-page exhibits, along with mentoring and support from experienced exhibitors, to help novice exhibitors learn the ropes. The organizers of Triplex plan to open the show to exhibits next June.

You may wonder what credentials I have to write on this topic. While I still have a lot to learn myself, I have exhibited at the local and national level for more than 12 years. I have been an accredited WFSC philatelic judge for eight years or so, and have been the Milcopex Exhibits Chair since 2001. I have shown nine different exhibits competitively over the years, with five of them currently active and two new exhibits under development. With those exhibits, I have earned or been awarded (not always the same thing) every award from a certificate to best in show at the local level, and every medal from bronze to gold at the national level.

What is a Philatelic Exhibit?

A philatelic or stamp exhibit is more than just an assortment of favorite pages pulled from an album or stock book. Rather, an exhibit should be a coherent showing of stamps, covers and other philatelic materials organized with some writeup to tell a story. The story may cover the development and usages of a particular stamp, the postal history of a town, county, or stamp, or the life of some person or animal.

The possible subjects for a philatelic exhibit are virtually endless. Like any good story, however, it should have a logical flow, with a beginning, a middle that develops the story and an ending that ties the story together.

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In future articles, I will discuss why a collector may want to become an exhibitor, the various types of exhibits and exhibitions, and the nitty-gritty of putting together an exhibit.

Illustrated Encyclopedia of Stamps & Terms®

Aerogramme, or Aerogram.

This is the official Universal Postal Union name for lightweight airmail lettersheets created specifically for international use. Such lettersheets are usually made from very thin paper stock to minimize bulk, and enclosures of any kind are not permitted. Historically, aerogrammes have frequently enjoyed reduced postal rates. Aerogrammes are known to have been used as early as 1933 (in Iran). Their widespread use came after World War II, although their use is all but obsolete today. Aerogrammes may be pre-stamped or have adhesive stamps added.

Airmail. Simply put, any and all postal matter carried by air is airmail, although not all of it is acknowledged as such.

Excluding pigeons, the use of airmail began with the 1859 *Jupiter* balloon flight, which marked the first government-sponsored airmail, and continued with the 1870 siege of Paris (France) balloon mail. The first actual airmail carried by powered aircraft, however, wasn't until about 1908. Regular airmail flights in the United States did not begin until 1918.

For modern collecting purposes, use of the term "airmail" narrows somewhat to designated airmail,



An aerogramme from Denmark.

since most modern mail travels by air routinely, with no special designation.

Bulk Mail. This is the type, or class of mail commonly referred to by many as "junk mail." Bulk mail is sorted, bundled and processed at various levels by the mailer in exchange for reduced postage rates. The classification encompasses numerous forms, including several mail classes, different levels of presorting and non-profit status. Although all bulk mailers receive discounted postage rates, they earn those discounts. Many of these different rates are represented by fractional-denomination postage stamps. Many collectors save bulk mail stamps and study

the postal history connected with them. Some covers showing specific bulk rates are rare.

False Franking. This is a practice connected with bulk mailing, whereby a stamp represents only a portion of the postage paid per piece. For example, a bulk mailing may consist of several thousand pieces of mail for which the cost is 21.1 cents each. A 15c stamp may be affixed to represent the rate, with the remaining 6.1 paid by the mailer at the time of posting.

Fractional-Denomination stamps. This term refers to stamps issued in decimal or fractional denominations, such as 3.4c or 1/2c, for use by major mass mailers to take advantage of the various

automation sorting discounts available to large-volume postal customers and bulk mailers. Although earlier stamps can be found as fractional-denomination types, virtually all these stamps of the past 30 years have been issued in decimal-denominated coil format only, since only coil stamps can be used in the high-speed stamp-affixing equipment that mass mailers use.

Teeth. These are the projecting parts of perforations along the edge of a stamp, formed by what was the bridge of paper between unsevered stamps. Each individual tooth gives a stamp its own personality and can be used much like a fingerprint for identification of a specific stamp or even perforation type.

Underfranked. This term refers to a cover that has an insufficient amount of postage affixed to it to prepay the service requested or implied. When they are detected, underfranked covers are assessed postage due and marked as such. They may either be held for postage or forwarded, with the recipient responsible for the additional amount.

Unpaid-Letter Stamps. This is simply the original name used to describe what we now refer to as postage due issues.

— © 2009, *Youngblood Ink*

Exhibiting 101: Why Exhibit?

Robert R. Henak

In my first article (October *Across the Fence Post*), we learned that a philatelic exhibit is more than just an assortment of album pages thrown into exhibit frames. Rather, an exhibit is an organized showing of philatelic and related material and explanatory writing that tells a coherent story.

Like most worthwhile pursuits, preparing an exhibit you can be proud of takes effort. Having your work judged, moreover, can be an intimidating experience. Why, then, would a collector choose to put in the time and effort to exhibit? I have found a number of reasons, whether it is the challenge of putting together a quality exhibit, the thrill of competing against other collectors and yourself, the desire to share what you enjoy and what you have learned in your time as a collector, or a desire to finally organize your collection.

Most exhibits are shown competitively, meaning that they are judged for an appropriate award level by either accredited philatelic judges or knowledgeable collectors. I will discuss the types of competitive exhibits and how they are judged in a later article.

However, many exhibitors choose to enter their exhibits as non-competitive. Some collectors want to share their collections but are uncomfortable having their efforts officially judged by others. That is fully acceptable. Exhibiting, like collecting, is supposed to be fun, not stressful. Other exhibits are shown just

WHO'S WHO IN THE HALL OF FAME

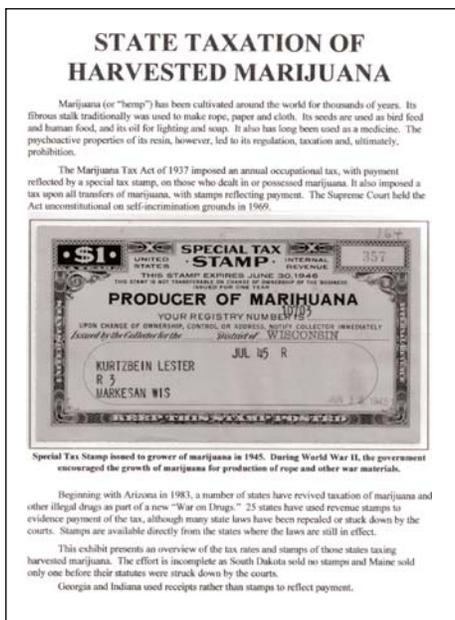
The Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame was established to recognize prominent Wisconsin philatelists for contributions to the hobby in the state of Wisconsin and beyond.

This series of short columns will familiarize *Across the Fence Post* readers with some of the individuals who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame since 1976, as well as some of the interesting details about them.

Which individual most closely matches the following statements? The correct answer appears elsewhere in this issue of *ATFP*:

This month's HOF member is an authority on first-day covers and served a four-year term as president of the now-defunct First-day Cover Collectors of Wisconsin. Former WFSC VP. He worked at the Winnebago Mental Health Institute. He collects U.S. mint singles and anything that hits his fancy. He has made cacheted FDCs under the "Art Coy" signature. He also does some photography but no photo lab work.

- (a) Dan Undersander
- (b) Henry J. Schmidt
- (c) Art Schmitz
- (d) Ray Vedder



The title page of the author's exhibit dealing with marijuana tax stamps.

for fun or educational purpose, with the knowledge that they do not meet the standards required for a competitive award.

Although many exhibitors thrive on the competitive aspect of exhibiting, working to increase their medal level or to best their friend's exhibit of Lower Slobovia, others find enjoyment merely in the opportunity to exercise their creativity and sharing their collections. We collect stamps for a reason; we enjoy them. We enjoy learning from them, and we enjoy learning about them. It is only natural that we would want to share our enjoyment with others. Rather than subject our long-suffering loved ones to yet another tour through that cherished shoebox full of Upper Slobovia covers, why not share them with others who have shown enough interest to attend a stamp show?

Exhibiting also helps to share an exhibitor's knowledge, gained over years – if not decades – of research and focus on his or her area of philatelic interest. If you have put together a nice collection of Anytown, Wis., postal history, exhibit-

ing that collection (and perhaps sending a scan or photocopy of the exhibit to the Wisconsin Postal History Society) can give a head start to others who may have similar interests.

At the same time, your exhibit may encourage others to pursue similar philatelic interests. Both novice and experienced collectors sometimes look for new and interesting areas to collect. It is one thing for them to search through disorganized dealer stockbooks waiting for inspiration to strike. It is much more helpful wandering through the frames of fully formed collections to see what options are available to expand one's philatelic horizons.

Of course, philatelic exhibiting is not a purely philanthropic exercise. Developing a reputation in philatelic circles as the exhibitor of Upper Slobovia often means that, when new material comes on the market, dealers and other collectors know to contact you. My exhibit and website on state marijuana tax stamps have resulted in a number of contacts from those with similar interests, as well as offers of material I had been searching for for years.

And finally, exhibiting allows (forces?) the exhibitor to structure and organize his or her collection. We all have disorganized stockbooks of stamps or shoeboxes of covers sitting in closets or on shelves, awaiting our attention. How many times have we told ourselves that we will someday get around to dealing with the clutter, never to do so? Exhibiting forces you to do that organization. It forces you to figure out what you have, where you have it, and what you still need to tell a complete story.

So, there are many reasons to exhibit. Some may not apply to you, or may not make the work of creating an exhibit worthwhile to you, but you should at least consider it. Many other collectors have enhanced their enjoyment of the hobby, while helping enhance the enjoyment of still others, by adding exhibiting to their collecting pursuits.

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In future articles, I will discuss the various types of exhibits and exhibitions, and the nitty-gritty of putting together an exhibit.

Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame nominations are due

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame. The deadline is Dec. 31, 2009. Qualifications required of nominees are: (1) Contributions of purely local club nature shall not be the sole reason for selection to the Hall of Fame; and (2) A deceased philatelist may not be nominated or considered for selection until three years after his/her death.

Please send your nomination(s), together with a statement identifying the nominee, a short philatelic biography, and the reasons why that person should be selected for the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame to: Chairman Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame Committee Verna Shackleton, 425 N. Linwood Ave., #110, Appleton, WI 54914. Questions may be answered by e-mail: corosec@sbcglobal.net.

Only WFSC member clubs may submit nominations, and each nomination must be seconded by two other member clubs. The nominating club is responsible for making arrangements with the seconding clubs to provide those seconds. The nomination and seconds should be sent to the Chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee in one mailing.

Exhibiting 101: Types of Exhibitions

Robert R. Henak

In my prior articles, we addressed what a philatelic exhibit is and why a collector might want to try his or her hand at exhibiting. This month, we focus on the different types of stamp exhibitions where you can actually show your exhibit and why an exhibitor might choose one type over the others.

All stamp shows are not created equal. First, a stamp exhibition differs from a stamp bourse. A bourse consists merely of a variety of stamp dealers selling their wares. This is great if you want to fill holes in your want list, but not if you wish to show or see a stamp exhibit. For the latter, you need a stamp exhibition, a show that includes not only a bourse, but also competitive exhibits and, usually, educational programs as well.

Few stamp shows in Wisconsin have competitive exhibits these days. The “pex” suffix so often appended to stamp show names stands for “philatelic exhibition,” and thus technically would not apply to a bourse such as Tosapex. However, Wiscopex and Milcopex always have exhibits, and Danepex at least tries to do so.

Danepex is a local show. Although a statewide show, Wiscopex is essentially one as well. Milcopex, on the other hand, is a national-level show. The difference consists of the area from which the show generally attracts dealers and exhibitors, the exhibiting rules to be applied and, often – but not always – the quality of the exhibits and the experience of the exhibitors and judges who participate.

Local or statewide shows generally draw their dealers and exhibitors from the same state or perhaps nearby states. National shows such as Milcopex, however, draw dealers and exhibitors from across the nation, and sometimes internationally. Although there are international shows, we can assume that anyone considering exhibiting at such a show already knows more about them than the author does.

Although exhibits at local shows in other states often will be judged simply by one or more experienced collectors or exhibitors, local exhibitions in Wisconsin are sponsored by clubs that are members of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs, and therefore must use judges accredited by the WFSC to judge their exhibits. The accreditation process seeks to insure that the judge is competent in assigning an appropriate award level to a particular exhibit. Perhaps more importantly, that process seeks to inculcate in our judges the ability to guide and encourage an exhibitor toward improving his or her exhibit.

Given some problems in the past, efforts are under way to improve the WFSC philatelic judges accreditation process to make judges more helpful, and competitive exhibiting on the local level more user friendly. The limited number of local shows with competitive exhibits is

so small as to make the traditional process requiring a prospective judge to apprentice at three shows unworkable. We therefore are extending accreditation to established exhibitors with comparable experience. Some also have suggested (and I agree) that WFSC judges participate in continuing education courses to address such issues as current judging standards, new exhibiting divisions and the importance of communication between the judge and exhibitors.

Unlike Danepex and Wiscopex, Milcopex is an example of a national-level stamp exhibition. Although sponsored by the Milwaukee Philatelic Society, Milcopex is one of the American Philatelic Society’s (APS) 31 World Series of Philately (WSP) shows from across the country. These shows must meet strict criteria concerning their location, show dates and other factors. They are required to have a certain number of 16-page frames consisting of competitive (judged) multi-frame exhibits (125 for a three-day show and 100 for a two-day show). Competitive exhibits at WSP shows such as Milcopex must be judged by philatelic judges accredited by the APS. In return, the grand award winner for the top exhibit at these shows is invited to compete against other grand award winners at the annual WSP Champion of Champions competition at the annual APS Stampshow held in August.

So, why would an exhibitor choose one type of show over another? Local shows often are viewed as training grounds for exhibitors or exhibits. Assuming they are well judged, local shows are a great place to get one’s exhibiting feet wet. Exhibits at local shows are judged by a less-exacting standard, focusing more on presentation and aimed at encouragement than the rarity of the philatelic material shown. Local shows at their best also reduce the risk of discouragement or frustration borne of comparing one’s initial efforts with the type of high-level exhibits of advanced collectors so often shown at national exhibitions.

Because the shows are smaller than national level shows and have far fewer exhibits, a well-judged local show also can provide the exhibitor with more personalized feedback. Even experienced exhibitors often will show new exhibits or “works in progress” at a local show for the feedback and suggestions before taking it to the next level of competition.

The lower cost of exhibiting at a local show also is important, especially for a novice exhibitor. The entry fee is much lower than for national shows and the local exhibitor usually can hand-deliver the exhibit, thereby saving the cost of travel or shipping an exhibit.

A local show also is a wonderful venue to display exhibits that are either just fun or somehow do not meet the higher standards for competitive exhibits at a national show.

A national-level show such as Milcopex, on the other hand, is prime time for the serious philatelic exhibitor. The overall quality of the exhibits at such shows generally is superb. Indeed, this is one of the problems faced by national-level shows and those, like me, who seek to expand exhibiting beyond the realm of well-heeled collectors who have been at it for decades. It can be discouraging, if not frightening, for a novice exhibitor to see his or her efforts right next to the work of a long-time collector with a big wallet and numerous high awards to his or her credit. The stricter standards for judging exhibits at a national level show also can leave a novice exhibitor frustrated at not receiving an award level commensurate with the time and effort put into the exhibit.

Although these factors underline the importance of starting an exhibiting career at local shows if possible, then moving up to the national scene after gaining some experience, the limited availability of local exhibitions in Wisconsin makes that route difficult. Keep in mind, however, that many exhibitors have plunged right in at the national level and ultimately found success.

The important point to remember is to keep your expectations down and learn from the experience. Although judges on both the national and local levels are only human, they are there not just to judge the exhibit but also to help an exhibitor improve it. If the exhibitor truly is serious about perfecting his or her exhibit, there is nothing better than subjecting it to the scrutiny of judges at a variety of national-level shows.

Also, while the standards and expectations at a national-level show can be quite high, the purposes of exhibiting, as I discussed in my earlier articles, are not solely to attain the highest possible award. The enjoyment of sharing your collection with others, and any number of other reasons people choose to exhibit, can be as powerful as the drive to earn a high award.

Finally, this article assumes that an exhibitor wishes to show his or her exhibit competitively; that is, to have it judged for a possible award or medal. If an exhibitor wishes to exhibit non-competitively and is happy merely to see his or her work in the frames and to share it with others at the show, either a local or a national show would be equally appropriate. Because stamp shows are often grateful for exhibits of any kind, they frequently will not charge a frame fee for non-competitive exhibits.

So, whether the you are just getting started or feel ready to take on the challenge of a more competitive national-level show, there is a place for you.

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In future articles, I will discuss the the nitty-gritty of putting together an exhibit.

Exhibiting 101: Types of Exhibits

By Robert R. Henak

In deciding whether and what to exhibit, it might help to know what types of exhibits are deemed acceptable for competition. Philatelic exhibiting has come a long way from the early days when exhibits consisted of little more than selected pages of stamps or covers from exhibitors' albums. In addition to (hopefully) telling a more cohesive and complete story about the subject presented, today's exhibits also span a much greater range of exhibiting classes or types.

No longer limited to traditional stamp or postal history subjects, exhibits today range from such traditional types to those encompassing revenue stamps, thematic exhibits, and even those focusing on apparently non-philatelic material such as cinderellas, illustrated mail and, most recently, picture postcards.

Of course, each stage of this expansion faced resistance from the stick-in-the-muds of the age. Yet, each gradually gained acceptance as it produced new exhibitors and new exhibits.

Thus, proponents of thematic exhibits, in which the subject reflected on the philatelic material is emphasized rather than the country or type of service, had to battle the fogies before achieving the legitimacy they now have. Despite the American Philatelic Society's recognition of first-day covers and illustrated mail exhibits, there are still some old time judges who chafe at considering such exhibits as "real philately." Display class exhibits and, most recently, picture postcard exhibits sometimes face the same prejudice, despite official acceptance by the APS.

Although the exhibitor should be aware that this bias exists, do not be discouraged by the occasional judge stubbornly stuck in the past. Progress rarely comes easily, but the vast majority of judges do follow the rules of modern exhibiting, even if some do not like them.

What follows are brief descriptions of the most common types of competitive exhibits accepted by the APS, and thus by the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs. I will discuss each in more detail in future articles. Keep in mind that non-competitive exhibits can be whatever an exhibitor wants them to be and need not fall within the accepted categories.

A **traditional exhibit** is one that focuses on the design, production and use of stamps. Thus, an exhibit on a particular stamp or series, showing production materials, essays, proofs, specimens and postal usages would be a traditional exhibit.

A **postal history exhibit** focuses more on documents that have passed through the mails and showing the development of postal routes, rates or markings. Examples would be exhibits that show the postal history of a specific time

in a country's history or of a particular area, such as that of a town or county.

As noted before, a **thematic exhibit** focuses on the design elements of the philatelic material, rather than its rate or country of origin, to tell a story. Examples would be exhibits of wolves, bald eagles, bald men or love. Thematic exhibits are limited to the use of philatelic material itself (such as the design of the stamp, postal stationery or postal markings themselves) to tell the story.

A newer relative of the thematic exhibit is the **display exhibit**. Like the thematic exhibit, the display exhibit often – but not always – tells a thematic story, focusing on the design elements of the material presented. Unlike the thematic exhibit, however, the display exhibit can also use some non-philatelic material such as maps, letters and newspaper clippings to help tell the story.

Illustrated mail exhibits include those showing advertising covers, patriotic covers or cacheted envelopes such as first-day covers or event covers. Unlike most other types of exhibits, illustrated mail exhibits focus on the non-philatelic aspects of the material shown, such as the cachet or advertisement, rather than the stamps or postal markings.

The most recent addition to the APS stable of exhibit types is the **picture postcard exhibit**. Like the illustrated mail exhibit, postcard exhibits focus on the non-philatelic element of the material shown, using the picture side of the postcard to tell the story.

Other types of competitive exhibits recognized by the APS include postal stationery, aerophilatelic, astrophilatelic, revenue, and cinderella exhibits.

So, whatever your philatelic interests, there is an exhibiting class for you.

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In future articles, I will discuss the various types exhibitions and the nitty-gritty of putting together an exhibit.

Out of the closet, into the frame

Non-Competitive 4- and 8-page exhibits wanted for Wiscopex '10

Wiscopex 2010, to be held in Oshkosh April 10th, invites *all* collectors to dig through their collections and accumulations to find philatelic material to share with the collecting public at the WFSC's annual convention and exhibition. The goal is to get the material out of the darkness of our closets and shoeboxes and into the light of frames where more people can enjoy the depth and breadth of our collecting interests. Whether a topic, a country, a set of stamps, or even a mini-exhibit on one stamp design – your participation is welcomed and encouraged.

The WFSC recognizes that not all collectors have the time, material or even the desire to jump right into competitive exhibiting with 16 pages. Wiscopex 2010, therefore, will have a special class of non-competitive 4- and 8-page exhibits. This is a way to share your love of the hobby and attract attention to the many facets of philately.

Each 8½- by 11-inch page should be mounted in a page protector and the exhibitor's name and address should be on the back of each page. Applications are due by March 15, 2010, unless prior arrangements have been made with Exhibits Chair, Robert Henak.

For further information, including an application, contact Robert Henak, P.O. Box 170832, Milwaukee, WI 53217, 414-351-1519, or at henak8010@sbcglobal.net.

WHO'S WHO IN THE HALL OF FAME

The Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame was established to recognize prominent Wisconsin philatelists for contributions to the hobby in the state of Wisconsin and beyond.

This series of short columns will familiarize *Across the Fence Post* readers with some of the individuals who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame since 1976, as well as some of the interesting details about them.

Which individual most closely matches the following statements? The correct answer appears elsewhere in this issue of *ATFP*:

This month's HOF member is a former educator, collects education on stamps and started and led the stamp club at the Milwaukee YMCA Boys Department from 1946-51. He has been in 48 of our 50 states.

- (a) Vern Witt
- (b) Art Schmitz
- (c) Tom Sanford
- (d) Mike Lenard

Across the Fence Post Ad Rates (revised 1/06)

Type Size	Commercial Rate	Club Rate
A Full page (7 ¼"x(9 ½")	\$42.00	\$33.75
B Half page (7 ¼" x 4 ¾")	\$26.25	\$21.00
C Large ¼ page (4 ¾"x 6")	\$20.50	\$16.50
D Medium ¼ page (4 ¾" x 3 ¾")	\$14.75	\$11.75
E 1/8 page (2 ¼" x 3 ¾")	\$7.50	\$6.00
F Econo Ad (2 ¼" x 2 ¾")	\$3.75	\$3.00
G Reduced Business Card (2 ¼" x 1 ¼")	\$2.75	\$2.25
H Back page (7 ¼" x 9 ½")	\$57.75	N/A

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Exhibiting 101: Choosing Your Subject

By Robert R. Henak

In this article, we start addressing the nitty-gritty of putting together a philatelic exhibit.

Choosing what you want to exhibit would seem to be an easy decision. After all, you know what you collect, and how hard can it be to mount those items onto pages and slap them into the frames.

Not so fast! Keep in mind that an exhibit is supposed to be an organized showing of philatelic (and other) material that tells a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Your award level will depend on how well and how completely your exhibit succeeds in telling the story you have chosen to tell. Thus, choosing your subject can have a significant impact on the success of your exhibit and its award level.

First and foremost, therefore, choose a subject for your exhibit that truly interests you. If you choose to exhibit a subject simply because you happen to have a lot of philatelic material in that area, but you have no real interest in it, that will come through in the exhibit. If you are bored with the material in your exhibit, the judges and the public likely will be as well. Since an exhibit takes a lot of work in researching the exhibit, locating the material and mounting it, it should at least be on a subject that you enjoy learning about.

Second, you should choose a subject for which you have, or can get, sufficient philatelic material to tell the story. For instance, if you choose to exhibit the postal history of Smalltown, Wis., but you neither own, nor have any reasonable prospects of obtaining, any covers from its first 50 years of existence, it would



"Animals on stamps" is too broad of a topic to tackle for even the most experienced of exhibitors!

be difficult to tell that story and likely would result in a lower award level.

This does not mean that you should not try that exhibit. Award level is not everything. As discussed in an earlier article, moreover, exhibiting is a good way to help you find the more elusive items needed for your collection. As you gain a reputation as the exhibitor of Smalltown, Wis., dealers and other collectors will be on the lookout for items that may fit into your exhibit.

Third, in choosing a subject for your exhibit, you must consider its scope. That is, you must have both enough material to fill the frames and tell your story, while not being such a broad subject as to be unworkable.

The standard philatelic exhibit frame holds 16 normal-sized (8½- by 11-inch) pages of material in four rows of four pages each. Some local shows still use older frames holding four, six or, in the case of the Rockford Stamp Club, almost nine pages with substantial overlap. The Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs is intro-

ducing the concept of four- and eight-page non-competitive exhibits to Wiscopex this year, and Milcopex likely will allow them in September, along with locally judged, full-frame exhibits. Although it is not always possible to totally fill the frame, judges frown upon exhibits that suddenly end early, leaving a row or two of blank space at the bottom of the frame.

At the same time, the subject cannot be so huge that the exhibitor cannot adequately tell the story in the frames available. For instance, the story of an exhibit on Animals likely could not be told adequately in 50 or more frames, let alone in the 10-frame maximum allowed in a WSP show (eight-frames at Wiscopex). More workable would be an exhibit on cougars or wolves, although Fred Ziemann's national gold-medal exhibit on wolves shows how much there is to tell even on a more limited subject. Similarly, an exhibit on Iowa R.F.D. (Rural Free Delivery) cancels would be unworkable, with hundreds of different handstamp cancellations documented, without even taking into account the manuscript cancellations. Better would be an exhibit focusing on the R.F.D. cancels of a particular county or region, or on a particular type of hand cancel.

In short, it is often necessary to find some natural or logical boundaries for the exhibit so it is neither too broad as to be superficial nor so narrow as to be meaningless.

Finally, although it may seem obvious, the title of your exhibit is very important in defining the story you present. Exhibitors, however, often miss this fact. The judges will take your title as reflecting the intended scope of your exhibit and will assess how well the material and writeup meet that standard. Precision in your title, accordingly, is critical.

For instance, the judges will expect an exhibit titled "Bears" to cover all types of bears, not just grizzly bears. Similarly, "Smalltown, Wisconsin Postal History" suggests that the exhibit will cover the entire existence of the Smalltown post office. Thus, the judges would penalize an exhibit with that title showing only early 20th-century covers unless, of course, the Smalltown post office was only open during that time frame. If you simply do not have the earlier covers, adjust your title accordingly, perhaps to something like "Smalltown, Wisconsin: the Transition Years, 1900-1940."

In the end, however, keep in mind that your first exhibit will not be perfect. If you wait to start exhibiting until you have every possible cover from Smalltown, Wis., or every stamp variety from (insert small African country here), you will never exhibit and, as a result, may miss your chance to obtain those elusive covers or stamps. Exhibiting, like everything else in life, is a work in progress. You cannot progress without starting.



DANEPLEX '10

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WISCONSIN
on stamps

Sunday, April 18

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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04.10

Exhibiting 101: BASIC PRESENTATION

By Robert R. Henak

My last couple of articles provided an overview of the types of exhibiting categories that are available and discussed considerations in choosing an appropriate subject for your exhibit. This article will begin addressing general issues of presentation applicable, regardless of the type of exhibit or topic chosen.

Presentation consists of the clarity and overall aesthetic balance or appearance of your exhibit in the frames. Presentation is but one factor considered by the judges in assessing an exhibit's medal level. I will address the others – plan, treatment, knowledge, research, condition and rarity – in future articles.

Presentation is not supposed to count for much in assessing the final medal level. Although presentation is given greater weight in youth exhibits, it is only supposed to represent 20% of the adult medal level in Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Club shows such as Wiscopex. On the national level, presentation is supposed to account for a mere 5% of the final award. Still, if an exhibit is unattractive, neither the judges nor the public will want to spend much time trying to discover whatever positive attributes it may have, and that could have a significant impact on the award.

On the other hand, these should be the easiest points to earn. Nearly everyone has a computer today, and word processing programs make putting together a neat, attractive exhibit a cinch. There is little excuse for a sloppy exhibit that looks like it was lettered and mounted by a three-year-old with Elmer's glue, unless, of course, the exhibitor is a three-year-old. (But even then, glue should come nowhere

near the exhibit or your philatelic material).

No matter what category it falls within, a philatelic exhibit physically is made up of three parts: the philatelic material (stamps, covers and other items), the writeup or explanation of the material and the stuff that holds it all together the paper, mounts and sleeves).

Presentation in regards to philatelic material concerns how it is mounted on the page, not the appearance of the item itself. Evaluation of the intrinsic appearance of the material falls within a different criteria. Thus, concerns about how well centered a stamp may be, how blurred the cancel or how ratty a cover is are issues for consideration under the condition criteria rather than presentation.

Under presentation, judges are to consider such things as whether items are mounted straight, and whether the page (and the exhibit as a whole) has an attractive balance between philatelic material, writeup and "white space."

The writeup should be the minimum necessary to explain what the items show, to move the story along and to demonstrate the exhibitor's own research and philatelic knowledge. This is an exhibit, not an academic treatise. The emphasis must be on the philatelic material.

If you find that your writeup consistently consumes more space than your material, there is too much writeup. Proper sentences are not necessary, and most adjectives should be avoided. As Sgt. Joe Friday used to say on *Dragnet*, "just the facts."

Although it is the writeup and philatelic material that tells an exhibit's story, do not feel the need to cover every square inch of the

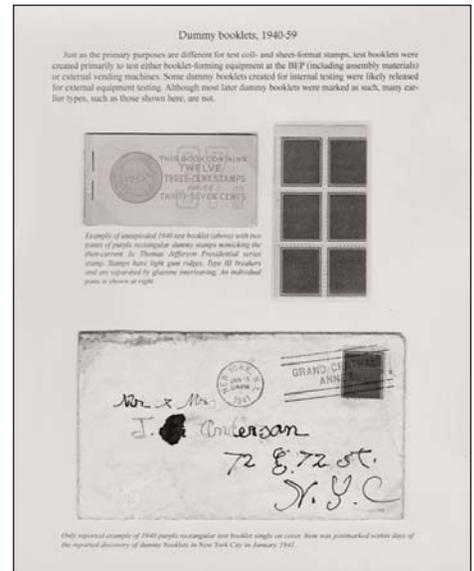


Exhibit pages should feature a balance between items and writeup, with not too much of either.

exhibit page. White space is necessary to provide your material some breathing room. While exhibitors debate European vs. American styles of exhibiting, with European exhibitors tending to fill much more of the page, too much material just creates an unattractive, cluttered look that distracts from your material and story line.

At the same time, too much white space is no good either. Unless it is of extreme importance, mounting a single small-size cover – or worse, a single stamp – on a page rarely is justified. Regular No. 6 covers, such as modern first-day covers, generally can be mounted two to a page with writeup, although smaller covers sometimes can fit three to a page with no overlap.

If only part of a cover is important to your story, covers or other material can be overlapped or even "windowed," where the exhibit page is slit and the cover inserted so that only part of the cover shows, with the remainder behind the page. This technique often is used when only the stamp and cancel or the meter strip are necessary to the exhibit. It also works where the rest of the cover is either so ugly or clearly philatelic in origin that the exhibitor would lose points by showing the whole thing. In either event, do not just cut the important parts off of the cover!

Including some overlap, windowing, tripling up on a page, or the occasional No. 10 cover mounted diagonally helps avoid the "railroad track" appearance of multiple pages, each with two covers mounted one directly above the other. Although some old-time judges object to diagonal mounting of larger covers to fit onto a 8½- by 11-inch page, it is fully acceptable by modern standards, and much preferable to mounting them vertically.

Next month, more on presentation.



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04.10

Exhibiting 101: Basic Presentation, Part II

By Robert R. Henak

Last month, we discussed presentation basics in terms of the philatelic material, writeup and white space. This month, we address presentation in terms of the physical stuff that holds the exhibit together.

Paper

The most common-sized paper in exhibiting, as in real life, is regular 8½- by 11-inch paper. The basic “Ameripex” exhibit frame used by Milcopex (and all national level shows), as well as by Danepex and Wiscopex, holds 16 regular-sized pages in four rows of four pages each. Some shows, such as Rockpex in Rockford, Ill., use nine-page frames (with extensive overlap of pages), while Cerapex in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, uses six-page frames (two rows of three pages across each). There are even some really old-fashioned four-page exhibit frames still around.

In the standard 16-page frames, pages can be as much as 11½ inches high without overlapping and, rather than four pages in a row, you can substitute three pages up to 11¼ inches wide without overlap. The larger pages can be used for larger documents or to mount business sized (sizes 9 or 10) envelopes or similar materials horizontally rather than at an angle.

Larger pages are more difficult to find, although you can use 11- by 11-inch scrapbook pages available from Michael’s or similar hobby shops. However, you would need a printer that can handle the larger pages.

Whatever pages you use for your exhibit, make sure that they are acid free and archival quality. Business quality or resume paper available at most office supply stores usually meets this standard, but check the labeling to make sure. Although more expensive than standard copy paper, it is well worth it to protect your philatelic material.

Make sure you buy a large enough package of paper for your entire exhibit, including any anticipated (and unanticipated) future revisions. Paper, even from the same company and with the same label, can be slightly different colors, which can distract from your exhibit if they are combined.

Whatever size paper you choose to use for your exhibit, avoid anything about the paper that would distract from the philatelic material. No decorative borders and no preprinted album pages. Stick with a neutral color: white, cream, light parchment or light gray. Even-toned paper is preferable to mottled toning.

Finally, on this point, use paper that is heavy enough to handle your mounted material without sagging. If your printer will handle it, you can use 90- or 110-pound card stock (as long as it is acid free). Otherwise, you can print on quality, 25 lb. paper and use heavy cardstock as a stiffener (detailed later in this article).

Mounts

You can mount the philatelic material in your exhibit using basically the same mounts you would use in your album. That means acid free stamp mounts and corner mounts – no tape, glue or old black photo mounts.

The one difference – and it is an important one – is that you should use clear stamp mounts rather than those with a black backing. Mounting everything with a black frame from the mount gets overwhelming, detracts from the philatelic material and makes every cover look like a mourning cover. Any stamp dealer carrying regular mounts should have a supply of clear mounts as well. They generally do not display them, however, so you have to ask. You also can buy clear mounts directly from dealers who advertise in *Linn’s* or *Scott Stamp Monthly*.

It is acceptable to use hinges for used stamps, but you get more protection from mounts. Mounts also do a better job keeping the items exactly where you want them.

When mounting covers, souvenir sheets or other larger items, you can use larger-sized stamp mounts if they are large enough to fit the item comfortably. As in your album, never cram philatelic material into too small a mount.

A less-expensive, though less-protective, option is to use clear corner mounts. Smaller, self-adhesive corner mounts work well for postal cards or smaller covers in good condition. One- or two-inch gummed corner mounts are better for larger or more fragile covers and souvenir sheets. Just be very careful with gummed corner mounts that liquid does not

migrate onto the pristine backside of gummed stamp or souvenir sheet.

Page protectors and stiffeners

Every page of your exhibit should be placed into a heavy-duty page protector, both to protect the material and because most shows require them. Again, these must be acid free and archival to make sure they do not damage your material. Top-loading page protectors generally work better than side loading because they prevent the contents from falling out.

Regular Wilson/Jones, Avery or an office supply store’s own brand of page protectors are fine – again – as long as they are marked acid free and archival. Also, it does not matter that they have the hole-punched tabs extending off the left side. These can be hidden behind the adjacent page when the exhibit is placed into the frames and also allows you to store the exhibit upright in a three-ring binder, which is better for the material anyway.

As noted before, if you use a lighter-weight paper for your exhibit, you will need a stiffener to prevent the pages from falling forward in the frames and to help the exhibit page handle the weight of the philatelic material. This can be accomplished by inserting a page of 90- or 110-pound cover stock (preferably the same color as the exhibit page) inside the page protector and behind the exhibit page. This trick also allows you to put your contact information and the page number of the exhibit on the stiffener rather than on the back of the exhibit page itself.

“Meet the Press”es

Youngblood to Present Course at Milcopex 2010

Noted philatelist and Wisconsin collector, Wayne Youngblood, will present a four-hour seminar over two days as a part of the “Innovations in Philately” theme of Milcopex. The workshop will introduce participants to the four basic forms of printing that have been used to produce United States stamps: line engraving, photogravure, lithography and typography (now known as letterpress). The classes will be similar to parts of those offered by Youngblood during the APS Summer Seminar on Philately and at other WSP shows as a pre-course prior to the opening of the show.

At Milcopex, the class will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 11 a.m. on both Friday, Sept. 24, and Saturday, Sept. 25. This will allow participants plenty of time to enjoy the show’s bourse, exhibits, and other educational offerings.

The fee for the class is \$35 if paid before July 31, 2010. After July 31, the fee will be \$50. Course materials will be distributed, and those completing the four-hour event will also receive several items, including a pair of the Stylized Eagle self-adhesive linerless test coil stamps (Scott TD123), currently valued in the *Scott Standard Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* at \$30. That item is shown nearby.

Reservations for the class, accompanied by the fee, should be mailed to MaryAnn Bowman, P.O. Box 11451, Waukesha, WI 53187.



Exhibiting 101: Basic Presentation, Part III

By Robert R. Henak

You may wonder why I am including yet another article on basic presentation. After all, as noted in a prior article, presentation technically accounts for only 20% of the adult medal level in Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Club shows such as Wiscopex, and a mere 5% of the final award in a national-level show such as Milcopex.

The answer is that, despite the technicalities, poor presentation easily can drop a quality exhibit a level or two simply because it makes the exhibit so difficult to judge. Poor presentation can distract the viewer from both the quality and importance of the material exhibited and the story the exhibitor is attempting to tell. Good presentation, combined with quality philatelic material, draws the viewer through the story.

In previous articles, we discussed the writeup and white space and the stuff that holds the exhibit together, including paper, mounts and page protectors. This month, we will go into a few more specifics of attaching the philatelic material to the page.

Although some collectors prefer keeping their collections in stock books or glassine envelopes, most of us prefer albums with a framed space for each item we wish to mount. Exhibitors face a similar choice, although it is never appropriate to just place pre-printed album pages, stock pages or Vario-type pages in the frames, at least for a competitive exhibit.

Some exhibitors choose to mount their covers or stamps on the page. Many, however, prefer some kind of frame or border around each item. Others prefer to use mattes behind each item. The decision is up to the exhibitor regarding what best emphasizes the philatelic material. A few factors should be considered, however.

Frames

I tend to use frames for those exhibits that have stamps or windowing, while I go without in my postal history exhibit. I find that frames help with correct placement of the material, as it is a lot easier centering the stamp within the frame lines than it is within a blank space on the page. Modern word-processing programs such as WordPerfect also allow you to set the size and position of the frame or box so you have a good idea of the appearance of the page even before you mount the philatelic material on it.

Although it is important that the frames allow breathing space for the material, it is important that each frame or box in the exhibit is larger than the philatelic material by approximately the same ratio. Few things are as distracting as an exhibit page where the frame around one stamp is much larger than the stamp while another barely gives room for the perforation tips.

I tend to use frames or boxes that are about .15 (15/100ths) of an inch wider and taller than the stamp (measured perforation tip to perforation tip) and about .2 (2/10ths) of an inch for covers, souvenir pages and other larger material. You can decide what you like best.

It also is important that the frame lines not be so thick as to be distracting. I tend to use the step just above "hairline" in WordPerfect.

As for color, with one exception, all frame lines should be the same color as the text, usually black. The exception is that you can use a colored frame line, such as red, to draw attention to especially important items in the exhibit. Use discretion, however. Usually no more than two or three items per frame should have colored frames. Your identification of what is "important" reflects on your philatelic knowledge. Splashing red frames around half the items in an exhibit suggests the exhibitor really does not know what is important and can negatively impact the medal level.

Finally, although many album pages have printed borders around the outer edges of the page, avoid these in a competitive exhibit, as they seriously detract from both the material and the story presented.

No Frames

As previously noted, I tend not to use frames in my postal history exhibit. This is a personal preference and many postal historians use frames. I choose not to do it in part because covers come in different sizes. Larger, business-size covers often have to be mounted diagonally on a page and my word processing program cannot handle diagonal boxes. Perhaps more importantly, older covers rarely have square corners, and mounting them inside a frame merely emphasizes that they are lopsided or were roughly or unevenly opened.

When mounting items without using a printed frame to help with placement, I use a standard T-square from an office supply store or a craft shop such as Michaels. Place the exhibit page on top of a stack of 20 or so pages so the top of the T will fit firmly against the side of the page, with the leg of the T going across the page at a right angle. A philatelic item such as a cover or souvenir sheet placed on the page above (or below) and flush against the leg of the T will be straight on the page.

If the leg of the T is a ruler, you also can use these measurements to align the item horizontally. For instance, if you wish to center a cover on the page, you would measure its width, subtract that measurement from the width of a standard exhibit page and divide the result by two to determine the width of the margin on each side of the cover. Thus, because a standard first-day cover is 6½ inches wide, you would mount the cover with 1 inch on either side to center it on the page. (8½ minus 6½ equals 2, divided by 2 equals 1 inch margins).

Another trick for helping with placement of the material on the page when not using visible frames is to use a frame that is slightly smaller than the philatelic item. For instance, with the same FDC, you could use a box that is slightly smaller than the item. When you mount the FDC on the page, if the entire frame is covered, then the FDC is in the proper position. Even with this technique, however, I still would use the T-square to make sure the item is straight on the page.

Matting

Matting the items in your exhibit is similar to matting a photograph. The philatelic item is mounted on a piece of appropriately colored paper, and the matted item then is mounted on the exhibit page.

Although matting is much more time consuming, at least initially, it can make for a very attractive exhibit if done properly.

I currently am working on assembling a display class postal history exhibit upon which I plan to use matting. Perhaps it is the prospect of having to matte five or more frames-worth of material that is causing me to procrastinate on that project. However, I know that once I have the items matted I will not have to rematte them when the inevitable revisions and remounting take place.

There are a number of considerations to keep in mind if you choose to matte your exhibit. First, just as your exhibit pages, mounts and page protectors should be archival and acid free to protect your philatelic material, so should the paper used to matte the items. Second, since you likely will be revising your exhibit over time and will not wish to go through the hassle of rematting the items, use card stock (90 or 110 lb paper) for the mattes. It will hold up better than standard paper. You can find different-colored card stock at craft stores that sell scrap booking supplies.

Third, as with the frame lines, be sure that the philatelic material is well centered on the mattes and that each matte is larger than the corresponding philatelic material by the same amount. To help make sure the mattes are straight and square, use a rotary cutter available from a craft supply store.

Fourth, use the same color mattes throughout the exhibit. A variety of colors will detract from your philatelic material. The one exception is that you can use a different color matte for the few, really important pieces in the collection. Like colored frame-lines, however, do not overdo it.

Fifth, when choosing a matte color, use something light, sufficient to set off the philatelic material while not detracting from it. If possible, use a color appropriate to the theme of the exhibit. Bob Mather, for instance, uses a light gray matte for his *Donkey in Man's World* exhibit, reminiscent of a color common for donkeys. As I recall, Roland Essig used a light blue in his *Man Beneath the Sea* exhibit.

Finally, unless you want your entire exhibit to look like every piece is a mourning cover, do not use black matting or black mounts.

* * *

Obviously, there is much more to know about presentation in an exhibit, and the exhibitor will learn more of the rules, guidelines and useful techniques over time. Those presented in the past three articles should be enough to get a new exhibitor started, however, while avoiding some of the more common mistakes.

Please remember: Milcopex this year has a section on locally judged competitive exhibits, as well as a section of non-competitive exhibits, including four- and eight-page non-competitive exhibits. Milcopex also will feature larger non-competitive exhibits. It is never too late to try your hand at exhibiting! See the Milcopex website, www.MilwaukeePhilatelic.org, for an exhibitor's application, or contact me for information. henak8010@sbcglobal.net.

Exhibiting 101: The Title Page

Robert R. Henak

Regardless whether you exhibit thematics, postal history or postcards, your title page could be the most important page of your exhibit. Yet far too many exhibitors simply dash off the title page without a second thought.

The title page is not simply a piece of paper containing nothing but the title of the exhibit. Rather, as Randy Neil explains in his *Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook* (3rd Ed.) at 129-30, the title page is best used to explain the exhibit's significance and to "draw a clear, easily-understood roadmap for the judge." The well-done title page also can note particularly important items in the exhibit, or new discoveries or research by the exhibitor. Depending on how well these purposes are fulfilled, the title page can have a major impact on the ultimate award level at both local and national exhibitions.

Given the importance of the title page, it often is the first page written and the last one finalized. It is quite common for an exhibitor to revise the title page multiple times during the process of designing and mounting the exhibit.

Much like the introductory paragraph to an essay, the title page should define as exactly as possible what the exhibit will show. A judge or member of the public reading the title page should be able to understand both the scope and content of the exhibit, expecting neither more nor less than the exhibit ultimately delivers.

Indeed, the title itself should define the scope of the exhibit. If the title suggests a broader or narrower scope than the exhibit delivers, the award level will suffer accordingly. Using "Shakespeare" as a title suggests that the exhibit will cover Shakespeare's life, sonnets and the impact of his works, as well as his

plays. One would expect "Shakespeare's Comedies," on the other hand, to be limited to the creation, plot, staging and impact of that subset of his plays.

A well-designed title page also will summarize the story of your exhibit. Remember, a quality exhibit has a beginning, a middle and a logical ending. The title page will help explain why your story starts where it does, how the exhibit develops that story and why you have chosen the particular ending. This can be done in words or outline form. Although a plan or outline of the exhibit is required for thematic exhibits, either can be useful in other types of exhibits as well, especially where the exhibit is long and the story complex.

Finally, the title page can explain the exhibit's significance or highlight important items. Why should anyone care about the postal history of some small Iowa county that did not even exist until shortly before the Civil War? Perhaps because the postal development of that county reflects or represents the similar development of any number of similar counties throughout the Midwest. Why should we care about hoot owls? Maybe because of their impact on the broader environment and sustainability of a given ecosystem. The judge or others viewing the exhibit may not know if you do not tell them and may not be willing to wait until the second row of the third frame to find out.

As for important items, some exhibitors choose to identify the most important items or groups of items right up front on the title page. While not required, such a tactic reduces the risk that the judge and other viewers will miss your best material. Indeed, exhibitors often place one of the very best items on the title page

as a kind of teaser of things to come.

Of course, there is no rule that you must place a philatelic item on the title page. Anything that draws the viewer into the exhibit's story can be placed on the title page, be it a map, a photograph, a picture postcard or – as with a transformational exhibit from the 1980s called *Gold Fever* – a real gold nugget.

In the end, the importance of your title page rests in two factors. First, the title page often is your best – and usually only – chance to catch the attention of the viewing public. Especially where there are a number of exhibits to see, a boring, uninformative title page or uncreative title will lose the audience to your story no matter how impressive the philatelic material actually shown in the rest of the exhibit.

Second, with very limited exceptions, the title page alone, from among all the pages of your exhibit, goes to the judges before the show. The title page, sometimes joined by the plan page in thematic exhibits and a synopsis page (to be discussed in a later article but which is not actually part of the exhibit), is the only page of your exhibit that the judges must read. Again, a boring or pedestrian title page will lead the jury to expect more at the frames, while a well-done title page will leave the judges enthusiastic to see the rest of the exhibit.

At the next show you attend, take the time to read several of the title pages of the exhibits presented. Indeed, reviewing other exhibits is a great way to get new ideas for your own exhibits, regardless of the level of the show and the overall quality of the exhibits. See what you like about them and what you decide just does not work for you. Then feel free to incorporate the ideas you like into your own exhibit.

Hall of Fame Nominations Due

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2011 Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame, which recognizes prominent Wisconsin philatelists for their contributions to the hobby. The deadline for nominations is Dec. 31, 2010.

Qualifications required of nominees are: (1) Contributions of a purely local club nature shall not be the sole reason for selection to the Hall of Fame; and (2) A deceased philatelist may not be nominated or considered for selection until three years after his/her death.

Send your nominations(s), together with a statement identifying the nominee, a short philatelic biography and the reasons why that person should be selected for the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame to Karen Weigt, Chair, Hall of Fame Committee, 4184 Rose Ct., Middleton, WI 53562-4339 or kweigt@tds.net.

Only WFSC member clubs may submit nominations, and each nomination must be seconded by two other member clubs. The nominating club is responsible for making arrangements with the seconding clubs to provide those seconds. The nomination and seconds should be sent to chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee in one mailing.

Letter... Chilean Miners stamp coming soon?

Just out of curiosity, am I the only one wondering if, when and who's going to issue a stamp commemorating the miracle of the rescue of the 33 Chilean miners?

— Art Schmitz
via email

Art, you're definitely not the only one wondering this.

In fact, there already have been several different custom-printed stamps, including the one illustrated nearby, created by zazzle.com



to honor the rescue. Several of these designs can be ordered by anyone visiting the website.

I'd also be willing to bet that Chile will release a stamp or souvenir sheet within the next few months, although it has not been announced

I'm sure the usual gang of suspects also will release loads of stamps and sets in the coming months, but Zazzle appears to be the first.

— Wayne

**Share your interests
with fellow
Wisconsin collectors
Write about
a favorite item
for the next ATFP!**

Exhibiting 101: Easy Entry – Non-competitive Exhibiting

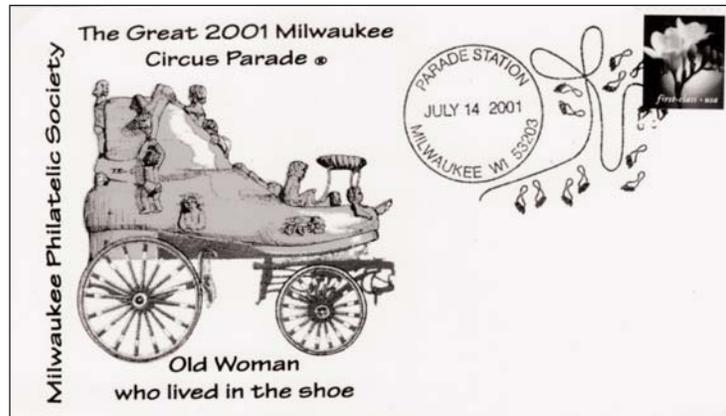
Robert R. Henak

For those of you who have considered exhibiting but are concerned about the work involved or afraid of what the judges might say, there is a simple and easy alternative: noncompetitive exhibiting. What's more, with Wiscopex coming up in April, you will have a prime opportunity to show noncompetitively and plenty of time to get your exhibit together over the long winter months ahead.

There are a number of benefits to noncompetitive exhibiting.

In a noncompetitive exhibit, you display whatever it is that you want to show, whether it is your collection of Mickey Mouse on C.T.O. (cancelled to order) stamps, early Wisconsin territorial covers or local stamp show ephemera. Quite often, our interests do not fit easily into established categories for competitive exhibits.

For instance, I have an exhibit of Milwaukee Philatelic Society Circus and Circus Parade covers. Although it clearly would qualify as an Illustrated Mail exhibit, the judges either did not know that the one time when I showed it compet-



One of the author's collecting areas includes Milwaukee Society Circus and Circus Parade covers. Although shown competitively once, this subject lends itself quite well to non-competitive exhibiting.

itively or I just did not do a very good job with it. In any event, it received a certificate. While I eventually plan to merge this into a comprehensive exhibit of MPS cachets and cancellations, I have higher exhibiting priorities right now, so I will show it non-competitively for the near future.

Exhibiting on a non-competitive basis also can be attractive to those who simply do not wish to be bothered with – or constrained by – the

technical rules for competitive exhibits. Even with the looser rules for Display exhibits, in terms of using some non-philatelic material, some exhibitors prefer to use more than the 35% permissible for Display exhibits. An example would be the stamp show ephemera exhibit I mentioned earlier. Likewise, some exhibitors wish to focus more on the writeup, with a story line overshadowing the philatelic material used to illustrate it. In competitive exhibits, of course, it is the philatelic material that must be preeminent, with the writeup in a supporting role. Non-competitive exhibitors need not follow those rules.

Non-competitive exhibiting also allows the exhibitor to tell his or her story to the world without fear of being judged. While competitive exhibiting certainly has its benefits, not everyone who likes sharing their particular love of philately publicly enjoys having a judge looking over their shoulder and critiquing their work.

Nor is there any reason why they should. Many of those attending stamp shows enjoy the exhibits without concern for the rules or the medal level. If an exhibit is on a subject they find interesting, they will enjoy it, and often marvel at the effort, appearance and content of even those exhibits that philatelic judges may be less than enthusiastic about.

At the same time, a non-competitive exhibitor can request comments and suggestions from judges and other exhibitors regarding how to improve the exhibit. While the non-competitive exhibitor may not

receive the formalized critique generally given to competitive exhibits, it is rare that a judge is unwilling to spend some time with the non-competitive exhibitor. As such, the non-competitive showing of an exhibit may be a good trial run for an exhibit that is intended ultimately to be shown competitively.

Finally, size can be a significant benefit to non-competitive exhibiting. Outside of youth exhibiting on a local level, adult competitive exhibits generally are limited to multiples of 16 8½- by 11-inch pages, that being the size of a standard exhibit frame. However, the major Wisconsin local shows (Wiscopex and Danepex), as well as Milcopex, allow for non-competitive exhibits of four or eight pages, along with those in multiples of 16 pages.

Some stories do not require a full 16-page frame of material to tell. For some, there simply is not the material available – or at least available to the collector – to fill an entire frame. An example is a non-competitive exhibit I plan to have at Wiscopex 2011 of Milwaukee Philatelic Society corner cards (pre-printed sender's address in the upper-left corner of the envelope). It likely would fill only four pages. I may eventually get it up to eight pages, but doubt it would fill a frame even if I could imagine ever showing it competitively. Of course, I may merge it eventually into my future MPS covers, cachets and cancellations exhibit.

So, even if you have not yet been bitten by the exhibiting bug to the extent of trying a competitive exhibit, I would encourage you to at least try testing the water with a non-competitive exhibit. You may find, as I did, that it permanently changes how you practice and enjoy your hobby.

Wiscopex exhibit applications will be available in January. If you have interest in this exciting but less stressful form of exhibiting, let me know and I will send you an application when they are available. Robert R. Henak, P.O. Box 170832, Milwaukee, WI 53217, 414-351-1519, henak8010@sb-global.net.

R U WISCONSCIOUS ?

Wisconsin (wis-kon'shes) Having an awareness of the existence of the many places of interest, highlights, and activities that the state of Wisconsin has to offer.



The phrase "Are You Wisconsin?" is the catch phrase that we are using to publicize the upcoming National Topical Stamp Show 2011 (NTSS '11) which will be held right here in the Milwaukee area. The show will be held on June 24, 25, and 26, 2011 at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel, located at 175 S. Moorland Road, in Brookfield, Wisconsin, adjacent to interstate highway I-94.

Our goal is to show the visitors to the show from all across this nation just what the state of Wisconsin has to offer and we have numerous activities scheduled to do just that.

Exhibiting 101: Thematic Exhibiting

Robert R. Henak

Having gone about as far as I can for now with general exhibiting concepts, it is time to dig into the nitty-gritty of putting together a particular type of exhibit. I decided to start with thematic exhibits, because most people I know on the verge of taking the plunge into exhibiting are topical collectors. Also, the American Topical Association's National Topical Stamp Show will be held in Milwaukee (actually, Brookfield) June 24-26, 2011, making the subject a timely one.

What is a Thematic Exhibit?

The American Philatelic Society's *Manual of Philatelic Judging*, available for free download at www.stamps.org/directories/JudgingManual.pdf, states that "a thematic exhibit develops a non-philatelic subject by illustrating it with a wide variety of philatelic material."

While every exhibit must tell a story, a thematic exhibit focuses on something other than the development of stamps, rates, routes and usages. Examples would be exhibits about clowns, mermaids, owls or a particular person.

Unlike most other types of exhibits, the thematic exhibit focuses primarily on the subject matter of the philatelic material exhibited. Thus, the 3¢ U.S. pictorial issue of 1869 (Scott 114) would be important in a railway thematic

exhibit because it shows a steam engine, not because it paid the first-class letter rate at the time for up to ½ ounce, because it was printed by the National Bank Note Company or because it might be on a cover between two discontinued post offices in Indiana.

The same holds true for a cover. The cancel could fit into a thematic exhibit because the date or post office name illustrates some aspect of the theme, or the stamp could do so. As I will explain in a future article, this does not mean that other non-thematic aspects of the material are irrelevant. It merely means that the central focus is on how it illustrates and furthers the thematic development of the exhibit.

Thematic versus Topical

Although often used interchangeably, there is a difference between a thematic exhibit and a topical exhibit. As explained in the *Manual of Philatelic Judging*, a topical collection or exhibit is limited to philatelic material directly related to the subject. Thus, a topical collection of horses generally will be limited to stamps, postal stationery, cancellations and the like that portray horses.

A thematic exhibit, on the other hand, should tell a well-developed story by illustrating relevant points related to the theme or subject of the exhibit. Accordingly, a thematic exhibit about

John F. Kennedy likely would touch upon World War II, the Democratic and Republican Parties of the 1950s, Richard Nixon, Cuba, the Civil Rights Movement and the like, as well as Kennedy's family and direct personal experiences and influences.

Straight topical exhibits tend to be frowned upon any more – at least for adults. While most thematic exhibitors will start with a topical collection, judges will expect them to expand into related areas so they can tell a more complete story in their exhibits.

My *Horsing Around* exhibit, for instance, suffers from the fact that it is necessarily a topical exhibit with thematic aspects. It basically illustrates a number of different non-equine horses divided into general categories, such as plants, animals, people and actions, with many examples shown thematically, but with little overall thematic story development. The exhibit suffers accordingly when it comes to national-level judging.

For excellent examples of thematic exhibits, see Bob Mather's *Donkey in Man's World*, Fred Zieman's *Wolf*, and Roland Essig's *Man Beneath the Sea*. Also, be sure to attend the National Topical Stamp Show in June and view the many fine thematic exhibits there. I will be paying particularly close attention to them as I have taken the plunge into national-level judging and will be an Apprentice Judge at the show.

Wisconsin Youth Winners in TPA Contest

MaryAnn Bowman

Wisconsin youth were big winners in the 22nd annual Youth Holiday Design Contest sponsored by the Texas Philatelic Association. There were 94 entries, and three of the top prize-winning entries in each age group were from our state. To the best of my knowledge, there are only three youth clubs in our state. Interestingly, each of the three known youth clubs produced one winner. Pictured are the Wisconsin entries. Seven-year-old Thomas Devine won first prize for his age group and is a member of the Janesville youth club.

Lower left: Thomas Devine, Below: Grace Zinkgraf, Lower right: Alex Gill.
www.texasphilatelic.org

Congratulations to the winners and to their club leaders, who continue to offer interesting activities and make stamp collecting fun for their members.

If you would like to show your support for youth philately, donations can be sent to the WFSC Youth Vice-President, MaryAnn Bowman, P.O. Box 1451, Waukesha WI 53187.



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Grace Zinkgraf took first place in the nine-year-old category and is a member of the ATA #5 youth group in Milwaukee. Sixteen-year-old Alex Gill, a member of the Ben Franklin Stamp Club in West Bend was a second place winner. Alex has competed in previous years and has had his winning entries featured on the cover of *The Texas Philatelist*.

Across the Fence Post



February 2011

Exhibiting 101: Thematic Exhibiting, Part II

Robert R. Henak

In my last article, I explained what a thematic exhibit is and how thematic exhibits differ from other types. To summarize, a thematic exhibit tells its story by focusing on the subject matter of the philatelic material rather than on the country that released it or the rate paid.

This article begins the focus on what philatelic material can and should be used in a thematic exhibit to illustrate the thematic story line. Future articles will address additional permissible material, the storyline and write up of the exhibit, the technical requirements and, finally, what judges look for in a thematic exhibit.

Like any organized competitive endeavor, competitive thematic exhibits are expected to follow certain rules. One of the rules central to competitive thematic exhibits concerns the type of material that can be used to illustrate the story. Specifically, such material is limited to items that would be appropriate for postal or revenue exhibits, plus maximum cards.

A quality thematic exhibit uses a wide variety of philatelic "elements" to illustrate the story. An element is a particular type of philatelic material, whether it is a mint commemorative stamp, a stamped cover, a cancellation or a piece of postal stationery. As a general rule, each page of the thematic exhibit should have at least two different elements.

While I cannot describe here every type of philatelic material falling within these categories, and thus permissible for thematic exhibits, I will try to address the most common. An extensive list of permissible thematic elements is available at <http://www.americantopicalassn.org/exhibits.htm>.

The first category of materials appropriate for thematic exhibits is that appropriate for postal exhibits.

The most obvious type of philatelic material appropriate for thematic exhibits, therefore, is postage stamps. Mint stamps are better than used because the subject of the stamp is more easily seen when not covered by a cancel. CTOs (canceled-to-order stamps) should not be used at all if possible.

Keep in mind that different types of stamps comprise different "elements" in thematic exhibiting. Thus, a commemorative stamp is one element, a definitive another and an airmail stamp yet another.



Philatelic material (stamps, covers and cancels) take center stage in a thematic exhibit.

Semi-postal stamps (where part of the purchase price goes to charity), special stamps (such as Christmas stamps), official stamps, or even postage due stamps can provide additional elements, as can overprinted or precanceled stamps or those with perfins (perforated initials used to prevent theft and misuse of postage).

However, an exhibit illustrated solely with stamps would be quite boring and, by failing to reflect broad philatelic knowledge, would not merit a high award. Accordingly, thematic exhibits should include other philatelic items as well.



Appropriate town-named cancels can add greatly to tell a story.

First, any thematic point that can be illustrated by a stamp likewise can be illustrated by the same stamp properly used on cover (such as a mailed envelope or card). Of course, it is best if the stamp in question is the only one on the cover (colorful philatelically inspired covers with multiple stamps and overpaying the applicable rate are discouraged), or at least where it pays a separate part of the rate (as by paying the first-class portion of the total rate on a registered letter).

Second, markings provided by the post office or mail carriers also can provide thematic elements to illustrate the storyline. The cancellation, for instance, can do so through the post office name, the date or even the killer. Fancy cancels, often carved from wood or cork by

small-town postmasters with too much time on their hands in the late 1800s and the 1920s and 1930s, can provide an impressive contribution to a thematic exhibit.

More recently, pictorial cancellations have been popular, commemorating any number of anniversaries, institutions, people and events. Although philatelically inspired cachets on first-day covers or event covers are not appropriate for thematic exhibits, many first-day cancellations over the past 50 years have thematic elements and also would fit in such an exhibit.

Auxiliary labels or markings, whether the ubiquitous pointing fingers or others, also can further the thematic storyline.

Third, postage meters have long contained thematic elements, such as the eagle in U.S. meters or the horse in those of Venezuela. Postage meters also have long permitted advertising slugs to be added to the indicia of postage. These also are permitted in thematic exhibits.

A fourth type of non-stamp postal item to help illustrate a thematic exhibit is postal stationery. The imprinted indicia reflecting payment can have thematic aspects. Likewise, such stationery, whether aerogrammes, envelopes or postal cards, may be illustrated in a way that can further a thematic storyline.

However, it is only the illustrations on the mint stationery as sold by the post office that may be used. Postal cards (those with preprinted postage) are in; the picture side of privately printed postcards is not. Illustrated postal stationery is in; post-production, philatelically inspired cachets, whether on FDCs or event covers, are out, even if sold by the post office (Remember the Rose Bowl event covers from a few years back?). Of course, while a cachet on an FDC or the picture side of a private postcard is not appropriate to illustrate a thematic exhibit, other aspects of those items can be, such as the postmark, the stamp or auxiliary markings.

Finally, although less common, production materials for stamps and postal stationery also are permissible in thematic exhibits. Thus, proofs, essays, artists drawings and the like can both add to the philatelic interest in a thematic exhibit and contribute substantially to a higher award level by demonstrating increased difficulty and greater philatelic knowledge.

Next month, I will address revenue materials and maximum cards in thematic exhibits.



Fancy cancels, such as this 1930 pictorial Chile pepper registered example, can be an impressive addition to a thematic exhibit.

Exhibiting 101: Thematic Exhibiting, Part 3

Robert R. Henak

In my past couple of articles, I have discussed what a thematic exhibit is and the more common types of philatelic material that an exhibitor can use to illustrate the thematic storyline. In this article, we discuss less-common categories of material that are nonetheless permissible in a thematic exhibit.

As noted previously, a thematic exhibit uses philatelic material to tell a non-philatelic story; that is, a story about something other than rates and routes, the development of postal systems or the payment of postal services.

As discussed in my last article, the thematic exhibitor can tell the story using philatelic material appropriate in the Postal Division, such as postage stamps, covers or postal stationery. However, the rules for thematic exhibiting also allow the exhibitor to use material appropriate for the Revenue Division as well a maximum cards.

Revenue Division Materials

Although most philatelists could tell you that the first adhesive postage stamp used in a public postal system was Great Britain's Penny Black, released May 1, 1840, they don't know that revenue stamps long preceded that date. For instance, the infamous "Stamp Act of 1765," which contributed to the American Revolution required that many printed materials in the colonies be produced on paper produced in London that carried an embossed revenue stamp.

While postage stamps are used to reflect prepayment of postage, revenue stamps can reflect the payment of a wide variety of taxes or fees. In effect, therefore, postage stamps are a specialized form of revenue stamp, although most philatelists prefer to separate the two.

As with traditional and postal history exhibits in the Postal Division, the APS' *Manual of Philatelic Judging*, available free at www.stamps.org/directories/JudgingManual.pdf, divides Revenue Division exhibits into Traditional and Fiscal History. Any material

qualifying for either type of revenue exhibit may be used in a thematic exhibit.

A Traditional Revenue exhibit focuses on revenue stamps and can include pre-production material, varieties and examples of usage, as well as the revenue stamps themselves. Such an exhibit may include stamped documents or even three-dimensional objects, government savings cards, revenue stamped paper, lock seals, hydrometer labels and any other items that have been initiated by a government agency responsible for collecting fees, monies and taxes.

A Fiscal History exhibit contains material related to the government activity of collecting revenue. The *Manual of Philatelic Judging* notes that this may include, in addition to material appropriate for a Traditional Revenue exhibit, "material related to tax exemption or tax-not-yet-paid, documents showing that a person or corporation has monetary credit with a government agency, documents related to the payment of a fee for government service, [and] stamp-like material used to guarantee that the proper taxes will be paid at a later date."

Revenue stamps permissible for use in a thematic exhibit are not limited to those listed in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps*, and can include foreign, state or local revenue stamps and federal special tax stamps as well. Also, the stamps need not be adhesives. The "stamps" required by the Stamp Act of 1765 were embossed into the paper, while another type of revenue stamped paper has the revenue stamp preprinted on it. An interesting article on one type of revenue stamped paper is "United States Two-Cent Revenue Stamped Paper - The Civil War Designs," found online at: www.rdhinstl.com/rn/rn.htm

Maximum Cards

The *Manual of Philatelic Judging* defines Maximum cards (or maxicards) as "picture postcards or 19th-century illustrated postal stationery with a stamp affixed to the view side



To be permissible, a proper maximum card must have concordance between stamp, design and cancel.

that is tied with a related postmark."

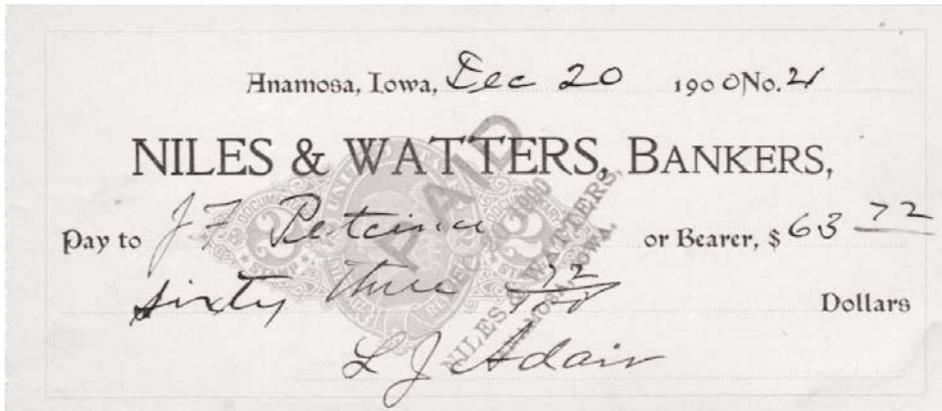
The rule allowing Maximum cards in a thematic exhibit is a limited exception to the general requirement, discussed in my last article, barring the use of illustrated mail in such exhibits. Maximum cards can add color and interest to the thematic exhibit, and may be useful to fill in the thematic holes where more traditional philatelic may be unavailable. Still, the rules for using Maximum cards are rather exacting.

The *Manual of Philatelic Judging* requires something called "concordance;" that is, the card, the stamp and the postmark must all work together. Thus, if the postcard pictures a baby cougar, the stamp should not picture a whale.

Perhaps most difficult is tying the postmark in thematically with the stamp and the postcard photo. Quite often, the cancel is not pictorial, providing instead only the usual date, place and killer. While such items would be acceptable in local or state level exhibits, and a few probably would not hurt the thematic exhibit in a national level show, the exhibitor should not go overboard and should seek out a more appropriate item for that thematic point.

Another requirement for Maximum cards is that they must not merely reproduce the postage stamps as issued. Thus, using a stamp on a postcard picturing the same stamp does not a proper maximum card make. The card also should not have been produced especially for the release of the stamp.

Additional requirements are just common sense. Thus, the postage stamp must be postally valid and should be contemporaneously issued with the date of use, and the cancel must be made by an authorized postal authority.



This 1900 check is an example if fiscal paper, or revenue stamped paper.

Exhibiting 101: Upcoming National Shows

Robert R. Henak

I am taking a short break from the specific how-tos of thematic exhibiting in this article to encourage current exhibitors, wannabe exhibitors and those who might want to try exhibiting in the future to take advantage of a tremendous opportunity coming up soon.

Since we have been discussing thematic exhibiting in the past few articles, it is important to note that this year's National Topical Stamp Show is fast approaching. The NTSS is a national stamp show, equivalent to Milcopex, sponsored by the American Topical Association. However, while Milcopex features all types of exhibits, from traditional to postcards, NTSS focuses specifically on topical collecting and thematic exhibits.

Each year, NTSS is held in a different location. NTSS this year will be held June 24-26, 2011, at the Sheraton Milwaukee Brookfield Hotel, 375 Moorland Rd, Brookfield, WI. Details are available at the ATA website: www.americantopicalassn.org.

Like all national-level shows, NTSS will feature a number of stamp dealers carrying collecting supplies and a wide range of philatelic material (not just topicals), and a variety of programs and educational seminars will be presented as well.

NTSS will be of special interest to thematic exhibitors or potential exhibitors. First, like all national-level shows, NTSS will feature at least 125 16-page frames of thematic exhibits, covering everything from single-frame exhibits on narrow topics to in-depth, 10-frame exhibits. NTSS exhibits are limited to thematic, but that still covers a number of different exhibit types. In addition to traditional thematic exhibits, NTSS allows display, postcard, cinderella and illustrated mail exhibits, so long as the exhibit is thematically focused.

While most U.S. national-level shows have some thematic exhibits, none other has this single-minded focus on various types of thematic exhibits. NTSS, in short, provides the best opportunity for a current or potential thematic exhibitor to view thematic exhibits and to learn from them. Whether you are in the process of creating a thematic exhibit or are merely contemplating the possibility in the future, this is your chance for a crash course in how to do a thematic exhibit correctly. Don't miss it!

You may ask how best to take advantage of this opportunity. Of course, there is no single answer to that question. Each of us learns differently and a national-level show can be intimidating for those who have not experienced one before.

What I find helpful is to check the show website beforehand for a list of the exhibits. Alternatively, you can wait until the show and peruse the program or attend the NTSS "Tour of Exhibits" planned for 10:00 a.m. on Saturday.

Given the number of exhibits, it is very diffi-

cult to examine all of them closely, even over the course of a three-day show. Pick out a few exhibits that look especially promising or similar to your own interests and focus on them first. Locate them in the frames and stand back to take in the appearance of the whole exhibit. Is there anything you especially like or dislike about the layout of the exhibit? Are the pages too full, too sparse, or too inconsistent? Does the writeup overwhelm the philatelic material? Does the mounting or paper color choice distract from or enhance the appearance of the exhibit? Take notes of anything you might want to incorporate into your own exhibit – or what you want to avoid.

Then, read through the exhibit carefully from beginning to end, again keeping in mind and noting anything in particular that you feel enhances or distracts from the exhibit. What mounting techniques, font, or organization does the exhibitor use that you might want to copy or avoid? How does the exhibitor demonstrate philatelic knowledge in the context of his or her thematic exhibit? Does the exhibitor tell the story in a creative way or use particular philatelic elements that you had not previously considered for your own exhibit?

It is often fun to conduct this personal review on the first day of the show. Then, you can compare your opinions on particular exhibits with judges' results that will be posted on Saturday. You can also then pay particular attention to the exhibits earning the higher awards and comparing them to those that did not do as well.

A second benefit of NTSS to current or potential thematic exhibitors is the judges' critique, to be held at 4:00 p.m. Saturday afternoon. The critique is open to everyone, not just the exhibitors.

During the critique, judges provide feedback to exhibitors and suggestions on how they might improve their exhibits. This feedback can be extremely helpful, and not just for the particular exhibitor. You may learn that the particular shade of paper or mounting technique that you

thought so attractive is, in fact, deemed inappropriate by the judges. The judges also will discuss what works well (or does not work well) and will direct people to exhibits or techniques that they deem especially noteworthy. They also may suggest solutions to problems that you have been struggling with in your own exhibit.

Judges often invite the exhibitors to a more detailed critique of particular exhibits "at the frames"; that is, in front of the actual exhibit. Anyone generally is welcome to listen in on such critiques, providing a way to obtain even more detailed information on what works or does not work in a particular situation.

Third, like most national-level shows, NTSS will have an open forum presented by the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors. AAPE works hard to encourage current and potential exhibitors and help them improve their exhibits. The open forum will be on Saturday at 3:00 p.m., just before the judges' critique. They usually are hosted by one of the judges. The discussion is free flowing, and can cover anything from the benefits of AAPE membership to judging techniques and exhibiting styles.

Finally, NTSS this year plans two seminars directly focused on thematic exhibiting. The first is a seminar on Postcard Exhibiting at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. Since postcard exhibits are quite new, that seminar should be helpful to anyone interested in trying that new specialty.

The second is a Thematic Judging seminar at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday. You need not be a judge or even considering being a judge to attend the judging seminar. Just as reviewing the judging manual is a must for any serious exhibitor, attending a judging seminar to see what the judges are being taught to look for will help the exhibitor to focus on what is appropriate while avoiding that which is not.

I will be learning something about thematic exhibiting myself at NTSS. I have taken the plunge into national-level philatelic judging and NTSS will be my first apprenticeship. I look forward to seeing all of you there!

New Types of Exhibits Welcome at NTSS

Two new categories of exhibits will be welcome at this year's NTSS for the first time:

- Thematic Cinderella exhibits – composed of items unrelated to the movement of the mail, including bogus and phantom issues, forgeries, charity labels, poster stamps and promotional labels
- Thematic Illustrated Mail exhibits – maximum cards; cacheted first-day covers; advertising, patriotic and event covers

These exhibits, like Thematic Display exhibits and Thematic Picture Postcard exhibits (both relatively recently accepted in NTSS), must meet the definition of a thematic exhibit.

The American Topical Association (ATA) defines a thematic exhibit as one that develops a theme or story based on the image or wording of the material shown. These exhibits will be judged according to the standards of their own division or class, rather than by the standards of traditional thematic exhibits. All of these types of exhibits will be eligible to receive gold, vermeil, silver, silver-bronze and bronze awards. All multi-frame exhibits, except those in the Picture Postcard Class, will also be eligible for the Grand and Reserve Grand awards.

WFSC Website Expanding

Steve Kluskens, WFSC Webmaster

The primary purpose of the Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs internet website (wfscestamps.org, wisconsinstamps.org) is to bring collectors and prospective collectors to clubs. That's why visitors to the site are greeted with a large map of Wisconsin showing where each club is located.

This spring, however, the site has expanded in two directions, inward and outward. Outwardly, a new page of links has been added, connecting the site to other philatelic organizations. The website has long had a dealers page, whose rank among the most-visited pages on the site varies annually between third and fourth. In fact, if you search for "Wisconsin stamp dealers" using Google, the most popular search engine, the WFSC site ranks second.

The dealers page is a service for dealer-members of the WFSC, and is complemented by an advertisers' page for non-members. The new links page is specifically for non-profit philatelic organizations, whether regional, national or local. The page has been a long time coming, due to the daunting number of philatelic groups. Right now there is just a start of a list on the links page; please send any suggestions you have to webmaster@wfscestamps.org. The inward expansion of the website is within the growing realm of the Wisconsin Postal History Society (WPHS). WPHS is a statewide club that meets annually at Wiscopex, and occasionally at other shows. Under Darren Mueller's guidance, the society has begun using the WFSC website as a virtual clubhouse, bridging the distance between WPHS's far-flung mem-

bers. At the core is an online forum, where members converse much as if they were in the same room. Additionally, the society's archive of past bulletins and publications are stored and linked within the forum. The forum and archive are protected for WPHS members' use by a password. Though not quite as impressive as a sliding peephole and a burly doorman, the password keeps out the spammers, spiders and trolls that often plague more open online forums.

For more information about the Wisconsin Postal History Society, contact William Robinson, Box 12492, Green Bay, WI 54307-2492, or wbrob@hotmail.com. If you have questions about – or updates for – the WFSC website, please contact Steve Kluskens, 1370 Canton Av, Milton MA 02186, or by email at: webmaster@wfscestamps.org.

Exhibiting 101: Upcoming National Shows II

Robert R. Henak

I hope that everyone was able to take advantage of everything that the National Topical Stamp Show in Brookfield had to offer in June. A focused show such as the NTSS provides a rare opportunity to totally immerse oneself in a particular area of philately, in this case topical/thematic collecting and exhibiting.

The American First Day Cover Society's Americover 2011 provides a similar opportunity to focus on collecting and exhibiting first-day covers (FDCs) and illustrated mail. Americover will be held Aug. 5-7, 2011, at the Wyndham West Indianapolis Hotel, 2544 Executive Dr., Indianapolis, Ind.

Like Milcopex and NTSS, Americover is a national-level, World Series of Philately show. As such, it will have at least 125 frames of competitive, multiframe exhibits – again, with the primary focus on FDCs. The grand award winner will be eligible to compete in the American Philatelic Society's Champion of Champions competition at Stampshow 2012.

Outside of Americover, few shows have more than a couple of FDC exhibits. Americover, therefore, is the place to go if you want to compare FDC exhibiting styles and learn how to put together such an exhibit. For more information on Americover 2011, see www.afdcs.org/amercover/amercover.html.

Another special opportunity within driving distance in the next few months is the APS Stampshow 2011, Aug. 11-14, 2011, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, 400 North High St., Columbus, Ohio. Stampshow is the annual convention and exhibition of the American Philatelic Society, and is the largest annual stampshow in the United States. Stampshow provides by far the greatest learning opportunities for prospective exhibitors. While a show like Milcopex or NTSS usually has around 150 frames of competitive exhibits to study and enjoy, Stampshow can have three or four times that many. Stampshow also will have meetings of many different philatelic societies and study groups and one of the largest courses you will see in the United States.

You can find more information on Stampshow 2011 at the following APS website: www.stamps.org/stampshow/index.htm.

Of course, it also is time to get your applications in to exhibit at Milcopex, Sept. 16-18, 2011. As I noted previously, Milcopex is Wisconsin's own national-level stamp exhibition. Accordingly, competitive exhibits entered in the national-level classes are judged by APS standards and qualify for Milcopex medals and national-level awards. The grand award winner qualifies to compete in the APS Champion of Champion competition at Stampshow 2012.

Applications to exhibit competitively in the national classes at Milcopex are available at www.MilwaukeePhilatelic.org/Milcopex/Milcopex.html, and should be submitted by July 15,

2011, although later entries will be accepted if frame space allows.

However, Milcopex also encourages newer exhibitors and competitive exhibits with a local-class subject to less restrictive local judging standards and judged by Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs-accredited judges. This is a great way to try out exhibiting or to test a new type of presentation without being bound by national-level APS standards. As in any local Wisconsin exhibition, locally judged competitive exhibits compete for First, Second and Third place ribbons, and one exhibit will be awarded the Milcopex Local Best in Show.

Finally, Milcopex offers the opportunity to exhibit non-competitively for those who wish to share their material and love for philately but do not want their efforts to be judged. Non-competitive exhibits can be four or eight pages long, or one or more full frames of 16 pages each. Locally judged youth exhibits, likewise, can be four, six, 16, 32 or 48 pages long.

Applications for locally judged adult and youth competitive exhibits and for non-competitive exhibits are available at the Milcopex website, www.MilwaukeePhilatelic.org/Milcopex/Milcopex.html, and should be submitted by Aug. 15.

Across the Fence Post Ad Rates (revised 1/06)

Type Size	Commercial Rate	Club Rate
A Full page (7 1/4"x(9 1/2"))	\$42.00	\$33.75
B Half page (7 1/4" x 4 3/4")	\$26.25	\$21.00
C Large 1/4 page (4 3/4"x 6")	\$20.50	\$16.50
D Medium 1/4 page (2 3/4" x 3 3/4")	\$14.75	\$11.75
E 1/8 page (2 1/4" x 3 3/4")	\$7.50	\$6.00
F Econo Ad (2 1/4" x 2 3/4")	\$3.75	\$3.00
G Reduced Business Card (2 1/4" x 1 1/4")	\$2.75	\$2.25
H Back page (7 1/4" x 9 1/2")	\$57.75	N/A

Please make checks payable to: W.F.S.C.

Call for Materials

Your input to *Across the Fence Post* is urgently needed. Please consider writing a letter to the editor, a feature or even a caption for your favorite cover or philatelic item. We'd even like to see an ongoing column, such as Rob Henak's popular series on exhibiting (found on this page).

Please send submissions to Editor Wayne Youngblood (wystamps@gmail.com) or P.O. Box 111, Scandinavia WI 54977-0111.

Exhibiting 101: Thematic Exhibiting Part IV: The Plan

Robert R. Henak

Prior to our slight detour discussing upcoming exhibitions over the past few months, we were talking about thematic exhibiting. A thematic exhibit, once again, develops a non-philatelic storyline by illustrating it with a wide variety of philatelic material.

Special rules apply to a thematic exhibit concerning, for instance, the type of material permitted for illustrating the storyline. We addressed that in the previous two thematic exhibiting articles.

Another special requirement of the thematic exhibit is "the plan." The plan is the written outline of the thematic storyline told by the exhibit. It gives the judge or other viewer a summary or roadmap of what to expect in the exhibit and where to find important parts of the storyline.

Normally, the plan is set forth on the second, or "Plan Page," of the exhibit. However, an exhibitor can include the plan on the title page instead if it can be done without overly crowding that page. Including the plan on the title page is especially helpful in a single-frame exhibit where space is at a premium.

Keep in mind that all philatelic exhibits should have a logical beginning, middle and end. Therefore, although the plan (either on the title page or as a separate page) is required for a thematic exhibit, it can help in just about any kind of exhibit.

Whether the exhibitor is showing a thematic exhibit of wolves or a traditional display of the 1869 pictorial issues, it is always worthwhile to help the judges understand the particular exhibit's storyline. This is especially true if the exhibitor seeks to tell the story in a creative or unusual way. There are few things more intimidating (or frustrating) to a philatelic judge than the prospect of judging 10 frames of philatelic material based on only a vague title or general title page description of what the exhibitor intends to show.

The outline or plan also helps the exhibitor to fully define and develop the exhibit. There is a reason why our high school English teachers recommended outlining our papers or essays. Just as with writing a paper, it is all too easy in the course of designing page after page of the

exhibit to miss the forest for the trees. That is, by focusing on individual pages and favorite philatelic items, the exhibitor can overlook conceptual holes in the storyline. Creating a rational, overall plan or outline for the exhibit – and then following through on that plan or outline when developing the exhibit – helps the exhibitor to avoid those conceptual holes.

Of course, the plan or outline only serves its purpose if the exhibitor actually follows it. Randy Neil's *Philatelic Exhibitors Handbook* also notes that it is helpful to use a bold headline to mark the first page of each main section and subsection of the exhibit. He also suggests using traditional outline numbering (such as capital Roman numerals, capital letters, arabic numbers, small letters and then small Roman numerals) to reflect the various levels of the plan or outline (as illustrated in the following text):

- I. *First Main Section*
- A. *First Major Subsection*
1. *First minor subsection*
- a. *First minor sub-subsection*
- i. *First minor sub-sub-subsection*
2. *Second minor subsection*
- B. *Second Major Subsection*
- II. *Second Main Section*

Finally, whether for a thematic exhibit or some other kind of exhibit, nothing prevents the exhibitor from including one or more appropriate philatelic items on the same page. Indeed, Neil recommends including such an item on the plan page. Depending on the item or items chosen, it is a good way to whet the viewer's appetite for what is to come in the exhibit.

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Do not forget that there will be a number of interesting exhibits at Milcopex, Sept. 16-18, 2011. See the Milcopex website, www.MilwaukeePhilatelic.org, the accompanying article or the full-page Milcopex ad on

the back page of this edition of *Across the Fence Post* for more information.

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If you have specific questions about exhibiting, whether locally or nationally, please let me know. I will do my best to find the answer for you. I also would appreciate hearing comments or suggestions regarding this series of articles, or on exhibiting in general. Rob Henak, P.O. Box 170832, Milwaukee WI 53217, or henak8010@sbcglobal.net.

Milcopex:

Wisconsin's Largest Stamp Show

Milcopex 2011 will be held Sept. 16-18. The Milwaukee, Wis., show will be held at the Wyndham Milwaukee Airport and Convention Center, 4747 South Howell Ave. It is Wisconsin's largest postage stamp show. The public is invited. Admission and parking are free.

The exhibition is located in the Baton Rouge Ballroom. Hours will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

There will be a First Day of Sale ceremony for the Barbara Jordan "Forever" stamp.

The theme of this year's show is "Uniquely Milwaukee." Meetings of the Wisconsin Postal History Society, Plate Number Coil Collectors Club and the Mobile Post Office Society (regional meeting) are planned, as well as an AAPE seminar and judges' critique. New this year are daily collector stamp trading sessions.

Special activities are planned to celebrate Owey's visit to Milwaukee.

Dealers, exhibits, representatives from local clubs and societies, as well as the United States Postal Service will be in attendance. Youth and beginners will find an area ready and willing to answer their questions and help them get started in collecting.

For further information, please visit the web site: www.milwaukeephilatelic.org.

Call for Materials

Your input to *Across the Fence Post* is urgently needed. Please consider writing a letter to the editor, a feature or even a caption for your favorite cover or philatelic item. We'd even like to see an ongoing column, such as Rob Henak's popular series on exhibiting (found on this page).

Please send submissions to Editor Wayne Youngblood (wystamps@gmail.com) or P.O. Box 111, Scandinavia WI 54977-0111.

Call for WFSC Hall of Fame Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2012 Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame, which recognizes prominent Wisconsin philatelists for their contributions to the hobby. The deadline is Dec. 31, 2011.

Qualifications required of nominees are: (1) Contributions of a purely local club nature shall not be the sole reason for selection to the Hall of Fame; and (2) A deceased philatelist may not be nominated or considered for selection until three years after his/her death.

Send your nomination(s), together with a statement identifying the nominee, a short

philatelic biography and the reasons why that person should be selected for the Wisconsin Philatelic Hall of Fame to: Darren Mueller, Chairman, Hall of Fame Committee, P.O. Box 343, Oak Creek WI 53154, or by email to darren.mueller@juno.com.

Only WFSC member clubs may submit nominations, and each nomination must be seconded by two other member clubs. The nominating club is responsible for making arrangements with the seconding clubs to provide those seconds. The nomination and seconds should be sent to the chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee in one mailing.