An Exhibit Primer

A Presentation for the Rochester Philatelic Association

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By Tom Fortunato
To first timers, exhibiting may seem like a nearly impossible task. But if you break it down into simple steps it’s a fairly easy process.
Once you’ve decided to take the plunge, you have a few decisions to make.

1. What kind of material will you be displaying?
2. How much material do you have?
3. How many pages do you plan to put together?
Start simple with a One Page exhibit...

• Get an 8 ½ by 11 inch piece of paper, preferably white, placing it vertically (rather than horizontally).

• Select your philatelic material, whether it be stamps, a cover, or combination of both.

• Arrange the items in a pleasing, symmetrical way. Try to place larger items towards the bottom whenever possible.

• Leave room for your brief and concise text that can be hand printed or computer generated.
Here are a few examples...

Junk Mail from the Edge

Starting in the early 1950's, drug manufacturers came up with a novel way to grab the attention of their potential customers—doctors. It had a "worldly" and philatelic angle.

Some marketing guru decided to send doctors on their mailing list postcards from far-flung locations, touting the benefits of a particular drug. Entire region wide fictitious "tours" were arranged with the targeted doctor receiving a postcard from each stop along the way. Often the first in the series of cards featured a map of the trip. Later cards depicted native scenes, indigenous people, or famous landmarks. Cards were usually printed in the USA, shipped to the appropriate locale where appropriate postage was paid for and applied to each card and mailed. The gimmick must have worked. Several companies copied the idea, among them Winthrop-Stearns, Squibb, Burroughs-Wellcome and Abbott. Today they are souvenirs of a time before TV and the Internet civilized and united the planet.

POST CARD

Dear Doctor:

Living conditions like these in Southwest Africa are naturally conducive to amebic dysentary. However, you will find none of this disease in the United States. I have suspected malaria and amoebic dysentary. Since the outstanding drugs for the therapy of these illnesses are:

Regarded!

Your friend, Mr. Brainman
This letter was sent in reply to a birthday greeting to President Warren G. Harding, who was age 56 on Nov. 2. It was his first birthday as President.

Joseph Hopley may have known Harding, who was also from Ohio, born in the town of Blooming Grove.

Bucyrus, Ohio is about 20 miles west of Mansfield. Its population was 12,276 in 1966.

Harding died in office on August 2, 1923 from apoplexy, serving only two years and 51 days of his only term.

Mail From The White House

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
November 4, 1922.

My dear Mr. Hopley:

The President has received your friendly telegram of birthday greetings and he asks me to thank you warmly for it. He deeply appreciates your kind thought of him.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Secretary to the President.

Mr. Joseph W. Hopley,
Bucyrus, Ohio.

THE WHITE HOUSE
OFFICIAL BUSINESS
REGULAR FOR PRIVATE USE 35c

[Stamp]

Mail Early for Christmas

[Stamp]
Framas & Klussendorf Vending Machine Labels

Around since 1976, these labels which look like meter strips have gained widespread use and popularity in countries throughout the world. The larger ones are known as Framas, for the Swiss company which introduced them. The smaller ones are Klussendorfs, a rival German manufacturer. Framas uniformly are 40 mm by 32.5 mm and are produced from rolled tape, allowing 1500 labels per roll. Klussendorfs measure 43 mm by 25.5 mm, with 2000 labels being generated per roll. Both versions are cut on demand from an assortment of either preset or variable denominations.
Once you’ve graduated with your first one page exhibit, it’s time to think about putting together one frame or multi-frame exhibits.

These are the types of exhibits displayed competitively at regional, national and international exhibitions.

That’s what sets an exhibition apart from a stamp show. Exhibitions have exhibits!
The guidelines for exhibiting at the national level are governed by the American Philatelic Society and explained in the 6th edition of the “Manual of Philatelic Judging,” last updated on September 26, 2012.
Although written for judges, this information is valuable for all exhibitors. There are no formal “rules” that need to be followed, but the recommendations in the manual are considered guidelines and expectations.

Every exhibit is categorized by Class and Division that help explain the material they present. These can be confusing at first and continue to change here in the U.S. and internationally as the hobby evolves.

Let’s take a look at them.
**General Class: Postal Division**
- **Traditional** – design, production and varieties of a single stamp or set
- **Postal History** – routes, postal rates, postal markings
- **Aerophilately** – air mail routes, rates
- **Astrophilately** – philatelic items dealing with space
- **Postal Stationery** – envelopes, postal cards, wrappers and related paper products bearing a printed paid indicia
- **First Day Covers** – covers that concentrate on the stamp and/or markings found on FDCs

**General Class: Revenue Division**
- **Traditional Revenue** – tax stamps like Traditional above
- **Fiscal** – uses of tax stamps on documents
General Class: Illustrated Mail Division

• Cacheted First Day Covers – study of the designs on FDC envelopes
• Advertising, Patriotic and Event Covers – envelopes produced for special purposes
• Maximaphily- postcards bearing stamps and cancels relating to a subject or theme

• General Class: Display Division – philatelic exhibit that includes a lesser degree of non-philatelic items
• General Class: Cinderella Division – stamp-like labels without any postal franking value
• General Class: Thematic Division – an exhibit telling a story with a variety of philatelic elements displayed

_Picture Postcard Class_ – presentation exclusively dealing with the image side of a post card

_One Frame Class_ – an exhibit of any type within 16 pages

_Youth Class_ – exhibits of any type presented by young adults under the age of 21
At one time each Division and Class had its own score sheet designed to “level the playing field” among them. This was a nightmare for exhibitors and judges alike. The judging team of 5 had sole discretion to move an exhibit from one Division and/or Class to another if they felt it would score higher in another classification.

The current “Uniform Exhibit Evaluation Form” is the standard score sheet used for judging U.S. national exhibitions. The percentages given are an approximate value for an ideal exhibit. It has four sections:
1. Title and Treatment

• **Title/Title Page:** Subject title, scope, limitations, fit (included in Treatment)

• **Treatment:** Development, clarity, balance, relevance, subject completeness (20%)

• **Importance:** Subject importance, philatelic importance and completeness (10%)
2. Knowledge, Study and Research

• *Philatelic/General Knowledge:* Selection and application, brevity, correctness (25%)

• *Personal Study and Research:* Analysis and evaluation, original and secondary research (10%)
3. Rarity and Condition

• **Rarity**: Challenge, difficulty of acquisition (20%)

• **Condition**: Physical condition and appearance in light of quality obtainable (10%)

4. Presentation

• **Presentation**: General layout, attractiveness (5%)
In Summary...

1. Title and Treatment (30%)

2. Knowledge, Study and Research (35%)

3. Rarity and Condition (30%)

4. Presentation (5%)

The bottom section is for comments.
The Structure of an Exhibit

Single or multi-frame exhibits are prepared and presented in multiples of 16 8.5x11 inch pages, in a 4x4 matrix that fit into either type of exhibit frame, the international style or American A frame.
The Title Page

All exhibits have a title page. This defines the scope of the presentation and acts as an introduction to what will be shown. With the exception of the Display Class, it is the only place were non-philatelic material is allowed. You will want to put an eye-catchig item on the title page to draw everyone’s attention you your presentation.
Plan Page

Thematic and Display Division exhibits require that a Plan Page follow the introduction. This is an outline that looks like chapters in a book. A typical numbering scheme is shown here. Other exhibit types may also have an outline of some sort.
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In preparing for their assignments, judges are sent a copy of each exhibit’s title page and either Plan Page or Synopsis a few months before the show explaining the goals of the exhibit. A Synopsis can be several pages long extolling the virtues of the exhibit, including material highlights, original research, awards won, etc.

The Plan or Synopsis is scrutinized to determine if the scope of what the exhibitor is showing can indeed be done in the number of frames presented. The balance of number of pages of each section is reviewed to make sure no one section dominates another.
A well-balanced jury is a must for any exhibition. No one judge can be a specialist or expert in all areas of philately. So the person in charge of selecting the team of judges should look for those with backgrounds in a wide range of Divisions and Classes.

Bottom line…

Exhibiting is nothing more than show and tell. The exhibitor is the expert in his or her area and must convey that knowledge through their presentation, which should have a beginning, middle and end.
Exhibit Tips and Tricks

• An exhibit does not need to be typed or made on a computer! Handwritten pages are perfectly acceptable as long as they are neat and readable.

• If you print pages, use a standard 10 or 12 point font. Use italics to separate story and philatelic text.

• Keep text as brief but complete as possible.

• Use white or light colored paper, preferably 85 pound weight or greater. 110 pound card stock is especially good to support covers that don’t flop down when mounting in exhibit frames.
• Use clear mounts and not black ones.

• Use windowing techniques to hide non-important aspects of a philatelic item.

• Highlight your better items in some way to make them stand out. Mounting with a background subtle color is a standard way of doing this.
Now start your exhibiting adventure!