

Why Exhibit?

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Why exhibit? you may ask an exhibitor - doesn't it involve a lot of work - a great amount of money and being subject to judge's personal bias?

I have exhibited over 30 years, 10 years in the traditional class (A Study of the 1 1/2¢ UN 1951 Definitive Issue) and 20 years in the thematic class (The Olympian Gods). Why? I enjoy sharing my stamp collections with other collectors and learning the opinions and evaluations of my efforts by the judges.

Having a date on which an exhibit has to be ready to participate in a show forces me to work on my collection in a goal oriented manner - looking through my stock and cover books to develop a story line - studying carefully each item to determine if it is in the best possible condition and where it will fit into my plan - learning what items I may be missing that would be useful to the thematic and philatelic presentation of my knowledge of my chosen topic. Yes - it is hard work - but well worth the time and effort when one sees the finished product in the exhibit frames.

A great deal of money? It depends on the level of competition one wishes to compete at. The first level one enters is the local or regional show. Many shows have thematic and one frame exhibit classes. The open class thematic section has a minimum of 2 or 3 frames (16 x 2 = 32 pages or 16 x 3 = 48 pages) up to 10 frames (16 x 10 = 160 pages). In general one needs 3 to 5 frames to earn an award. Therefore, the open class thematic exhibit at this level requires a moderate amount of money.

To compete at the national level in an APS Champion of Champions exhibition - the next higher level requires a greater amount of money than a local or regional show. The highest level is an FIP (International Federation of Philately) exhibition which requires at least a vermeil at the national level to apply. It requires the highest financial commitment as one is competing against the most demanding standards of one's philatelic and thematic knowledge.

In my opinion the easiest path for the beginner to take to find out if exhibiting is for you is to enter a one frame (16 pages) exhibit in the nearest local show which has this class. If no show is available then one may consider entering a national show such as the National Topical Stamp Show (NTSS, was Topex) or the nearest APS C of C exhibition in your area. I prefer the ATA Convention Show NTSS as one receives a written critique and a point count for one's exhibit, so that one can improve an exhibit. The APS national level show does not issue these helpful guidelines. Both NTSS and APS National level shows have Critique Sessions where one can question the judges on how to improve and thus earn a higher award. I strongly urge both exhibitors and non-exhibitors to attend these critiques to learn why one exhibit received a higher award than another. Many shows offer

sessions on how to judge the various classes - for aspiring judges. Again, these sessions are open to all who wish to attend and one can learn the thought processes of the judges.

Another way of learning how to exhibit is to attend a meeting of the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors (AAPE). Check the show's listing of activities to see if AAPE is present at the show. They are Present at some local regional shows but always at national level shows. If you want to become a member of AAPE contact: Paul E. Tyler, 1023 Rocky Point Court Northeast, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87123. Dues are \$18 per year which includes the journal *The Philatelic Exhibitor*. The journal has articles on exhibiting for every level from local to international and well worth the price of membership. AAPE offers members a Critique Service. Photocopies of a member's exhibit are sent to the Critique Service Chairman Harry Meier who then sends it on to an APS judge who is qualified to evaluate your level and class of exhibit. Some of the judges are accredited by both the APS and ATA in the thematic class. You receive your pages back with written comments on how to improve. A very helpful service.

Being subject to judge's bias? Not true as every judge is subject to the APS Code of Ethics which states that one must abide by predetermined standards not against each other. These standards are given in the Manual of Philatelic Judging (Third Edition). A fourth edition will be out shortly. The manual is written by the APS Judges Accreditation Committee. It is available from the American Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 8000, State College, Pennsylvania, 16803. They can give you the current price. This is a "must have" reference book for anyone who plans to exhibit at any level of competition. The ATA Accreditation Committee has worked with the APS on the thematic section. The NTSS, as an APS C of C Show, uses these guidelines.

I will gladly send the AmeriStamp Expo '93 (first national level One Frame Exhibition) official prospectus and *Topical Time* article by Ann Triggler covering One Frame Exhibiting published in the November/ December 1996 issue. Please send three mint US first class rate stamps to cover expenses. I will also answer your questions about this article. The address is P.O. Box 369, Palmyra, Virginia, 22963.

If you have read this far and your answer is "Yes, I would like to do an exhibit" then let me give you a page by page description on how I improved my one frame exhibit, "The Twelve Labors of Hercules", from a local show Honorable Mention to a National Level Gold award over the time span 1989 to 1998.

This thematic exhibit was shown twice in competition and one time noncompetitive as husband, Harry, was asked to judge a local show at the last minute.

The title page is the first page which the viewer or the judge sees but it is the last page that one types. That will become clear as we proceed. You have an idea and a description of your exhibit when you decide to apply to a show. The show announcement in the philatelic press will give the name and address of the exhibits chairperson who will send you the exhibit prospectus and entry form.

Read the prospectus carefully as it gives the rules and regulations governing exhibits. By signing the official entry form the exhibitor states that the exhibit is their bona-fide property and its preparation represents the owner's efforts. The exhibitor accepts the stated rules and regulations of the show. The entry form must include the exhibitor's name. A nom de plume may be used in the show program. I chose the nom de plume of Athena. My SPCA special house cat is named Athena after Hercules' patron goddess. Athena sits on the desk and oversees the preparation of my exhibit pages.

Also included is the exhibit title and a brief description of the exhibit for the official program, a photocopy of the title and plan page, the class one chooses to compete in and the number of frames needed. One also includes the appropriate frame fee and indicates how the exhibit will get to and from the show.

Applications are usually considered on a first come, first served basis. Failure to exhibit after an exhibit has been accepted usually means forfeiting the entry fee.

The NTSS being an all thematic show means that all the entries in the one frame class will be in the thematic class, while the one frame class at most shows is open to all types of exhibits including thematics.

Before you send your application in you will layout your 16 pages following a Plan which outlines your development of theme. When you have your rough draft, you will see if you have accomplished your goal - an entry which has indeed lived up to its title and description. If not you can either change your title and description or you can do a second draft in keeping with your original description. The application is sent to the show before the deadline in their prospectus. The show will notify you if your application has been accepted. An entry may be rejected if the number of frames has been filled before your application was received. Therefore, it is advisable to write for an application as soon as you see the show's notice of who the chairperson is. Also send the completed application back to the exhibits chairperson as soon as possible.

My first title page (see Page 11): "The Greek Hero Heracles (Hercules)" and the description: "Hercules is best known for his performance of the twelve labors and by his Roman name Hercules". I chose Syria's 1947 souvenir sheet (Scott C141a) for the title page. At that time, the title page wasn't judged and you could use a philatelic inspired item. The souvenir sheet was sold to the collector with the hope that it would not be used as postage. Its price was above the face value and money raised benefited the First Arab Archaeological Congress which was held at

Damascus, Syria. Under the souvenir sheet I noted that the 12.50p value shows Heracles and the Nemean Lion.

I received a written critique which pointed out that there were two 12.50p stamps in the sheet so the 12.50p vertical stamp looked like Heracles rather than the 12.50p horizontal stamp. I also used thematic and philatelic write-up in the same sentence. Usually the thematic information is placed above the item, while the philatelic information is placed under the item.

My title wasn't clear in its scope and the description did not indicate if I was giving a life story from birth to the death of Heracles or covering only the twelve labors. My next page did not give a plan but told the story of Heracles' birth. In this first exhibit I attempted to tell Heracles' entire life story - too much to cover in 16 pages!

The second Title Page (see Page 12) was much improved. Now the judges were including the title page in their evaluation of an exhibit. I used an Indian meter and an Austrian pictorial cancel to show philatelic knowledge of material other than stamps which fit into my theme. This made the point that countries geographically far apart knew of the Greek hero and his exploits. My Plan gave the road map of my story, that is Hercules' performance of the Twelve Labors. The footnote explained that today many figures from Greek mythology are known by their Roman names.

The third and most recent title page (see Page 13) has a more clear, concise thematic write-up plus philatelic items showing the Eleventh Labor that will get the judge's attention. All judges like to see interesting philatelic items in an exhibit that are hard to acquire like the meter from India and the early 20th century Greek trial color proof and the stamp issued in 1906 (Scott 189) depicting Atlas and Heracles. The Eleventh Labor will not appear again until the last row of my exhibit. Remember your title page may be compared to a book's cover. Its purpose is to get the viewer to want to read the entire book (exhibit) and it sets the philatelic tone of what is to come. The judges should be discreetly told to pay attention, look at me - you are going to see a terrific exhibit.

My most recent title is "The Twelve Labors of Hercules". My current description for the show program reads, "Mythological Greek hero Hercules' performance of his major labors including appropriate star tales."

Due to space limitations in a one frame exhibit, the title and plan pages are combined.

Your plan should act as a blueprint to your development of the theme, that is it acts like the table of contents page of a book. Coverage and development of theme account for 20 points maximum so your title and plan contribute greatly to this judging category. A good first impression (first page) will go a long way in earning

the necessary points to a high award while a bad first impression is hard to overcome.

My next article will explain thematic judging criteria and the scoring system and the use of philatelic elements appropriate to your chosen theme. I will provide you with ideas on how to do pages 2 to 16.