

# Synopsis & Title Pages - Purposes and Content

Tim Bartshe & Harvey Tilles

Having just returned from APS ST AMPSHOW 2000 in Providence, it was so heartening to have viewed over 70 gold-medal exhibits at a single venue. The quality of such a display could only be equaled at the finest international exhibitions. At that show, Harvey Tilles and I conducted a seminar entitled "How to Construct Exhibit Title Pages and Synopses." In our opinion, these two pages are the most important things in an exhibit; the former to tell the viewer (not just the judges) what it is he/she is about to see and the latter to have a "heart-to-heart" talk with the judges. Based upon the interaction and interest in the seminar, we have included below the self-explanatory outlines that we produced as handouts. We hope that maybe one point might help the reader.

## STAMPSHOW 2000 HOW TO CONSTRUCT A TITLE PAGE/SYNOPSIS

### TITLE PAGE

#### I. PURPOSE OF TITLE PAGE.

- A. INFORM VIEWER WHAT HE IS GOING TO SEE & TYPE OF EXHIBIT (e.g.: PH, SS, etc.)
- B. INFORM VIEWER OF SUBJECT/EXHIBIT BACKGROUND / HISTORICAL VIEWPOINT
  1. Fills possible gap necessary to understand exhibit subject.
  2. Informs viewer of little known information.
  3. Informs viewer purpose of the exhibit.
  4. Introduces viewer to complexity of subject.
- C. BE BRIEF, SHOULDN'T TAKE MORE THAN A MINUTE TO READ

#### II. STRUCTURE OF TITLE PAGE

- A. TITLE OF EXHIBIT
  1. Make sure viewer understands what the exhibit is about.
  2. Define the boundaries of exhibit as much as possible within title.

## B. BACKGROUND

1. Give the viewer enough historical information to understand what story of exhibit is.
2. Give viewer enough background to want to view exhibit.
3. Give subject life and charm, if possible (make story compelling)

## C. EXHIBIT PLAN

1. Structure of exhibit [in natural breakdown of subject(s)].
2. Explain keys to understanding exhibit (important items, etc.).
3. Items to look for (if appropriate).

## D. PHILATELIC ITEM/ILLUSTRATION

1. Use eye-catcher item that will not detract from continuity of main story or flow.
2. If appropriate, place map or illustration as aid to understand exhibit better.
3. No limit or boundaries to what is allowed, but use space wisely.

## III. SUBTITLE PAGES

### A. BREAK EXHIBIT INTO NATURAL CHAPTERS

1. Improves treatment of subject particularly in eyes of judges.
2. Assists in flow of story (you always know where you are in exhibit).
3. Makes viewing easier and more educational.

STAMPSHOW 2000  
HOW TO CONSTRUCT A TITLE PAGE/SYNOPSIS

## **SYNOPSIS PAGE**

### **I. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE SYNOPSIS?**

#### **A. INFORM JUDGES ABOUT THINGS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR TITLE PAGE**

1. Difficulty of material acquisition.
2. Challenge of collecting/exhibiting subject.
3. Research done by exhibit.
4. Material highlights.
5. Bibliography/suggested reading for judges.
6. Remember this is FOR the judges, not the public.
7. Be brief and concise in your points.

#### **B. MOST SALIENT IDEAS/POINTS CAN/SHOULD BE REPEATED FOR EMPHASIS**

### **II. STRUCTURE OF SYNOPSIS**

#### **A. PURPOSE OF EXHIBIT**

1. What are you going to show and why and what TYPE of exhibit (PH/Trad/SS).
2. Why is the structure of exhibit the way it is.
3. What is this exhibit's importance.

#### **B. CHALLENGE FACTOR**

- I. Explain condition difficulties.
2. Describe difficulty of acquisition/rarity factors.
3. Research necessary for cogent presentation.

#### **C. WHAT IS PRESENTED**

1. What is shown per A. above.
2. What is not shown and why (e.g.: only known example in Queen's collection).

#### **D. ORGANIZATION**

1. Show how exhibit is organized and why.
2. Utilize the running headings as logical breakdown/story flow.

#### E. MATERIAL HIGHLIGHTS

1. Here is chance to "toot" your own horn - loudly.
2. List what you think judges will expect to see, your best pieces and why they are.
3. List what you suspect judges will not know about but should notice.

#### F. INFORMATIONAL SOURCES

1. Help judges become educated in your own little corner of the philatelic world.
2. List only most important sources less than a handful.
3. List at least a few that are readily available and in English.
4. Don't expect judges to be an expert, but give them a reasonable background.