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USING WHITE SPACE EFFECTIVELY

'White space' is a term used to describe the area of an exhibit page that does not contain any philatelic elements, descriptive text or graphics. Starting with a completely blank exhibit page, effectively 100% white space, the page is then laid out and after all is said and done the residual areas remaining on the page become its white space.

How much white space remaining on our pages is a function of the amount of material and text on a page, and is dependent on the layout and design intentions of the exhibitor, as well as the sort of material being displayed.

But why should we worry about the spaces on our pages that do not contain philatelic material? Well, it is important as it affects the overall perceptions our viewers (and the judges) have as to whether we have a pleasing layout and design for our pages. This is an area where differences of opinion can emerge.

If a judge tells you your exhibit has 'too much' white space you

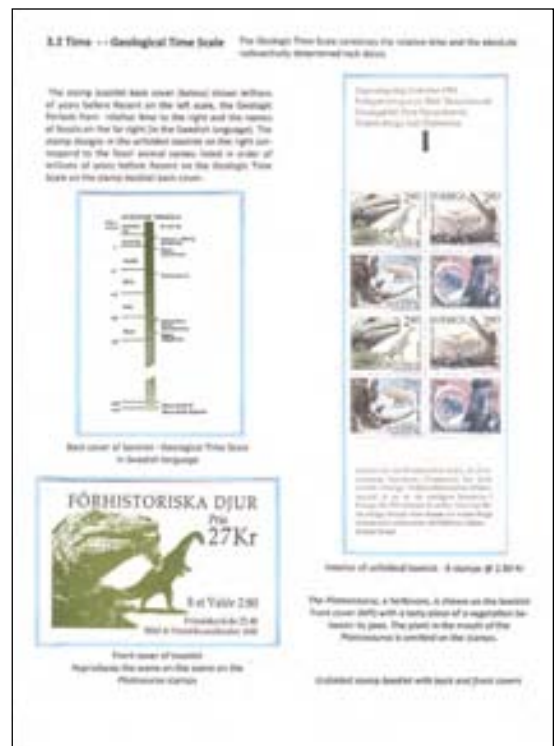
should probe further to find out exactly what he or she means, as subjectivity in all this may influence his or her opinion. The judge's opinion may be right or wrong, depending on how effectively the white space is balanced by the material and its text.

But 'effectively' also connotes a subjective opinion. We can probably readily agree on what is 'too much' or 'too little' white space, as either a page will appear to have vast areas of unused real estate, or items may appear much too crowded together on the page, but we may never agree on an optimal balance. It's important to remember that each exhibit page is a valuable piece of real estate and we should all strive to maximize the showcasing of our material: let it

stand out to its maximum benefit on each page without wasting space.

What we don't want is to leave an impression with the viewer that something is 'missing' on the page, because the white space seems to call

**Earth Science - Booklet
geo time scale.**



SPM 1st rare gutter blk.



a strategic and careful distribution of text.

The second example, from his Saint Pierre and Miquelon Airmail Migratory Birds Series exhibit, shows a rare gutter block example of a 1997 five-franc stamp depicting a peregrine falcon that was immediately recalled due to an error of colour - it was missing some of its yellow colouring. (Some copies nevertheless escaped the recall.)

Because of the rarity of the piece, Taylor has decided to showcase it all alone on a page, a practice that often can be used to effect, as it

His intention in designing this page was to show some stamps depicting the fossil record and how they correlate across our current continents, substantiating the theory of Continental Drift. (That is, our current continents have drifted away from their original mega-continent Gondwanaland, and the fossil record on different continents serves to confirm this.) The large area in the centre of the page, which would otherwise be white space, he uses instead to insert an important graphic of the early configuration of Gondwanaland and how the fossils for certain dinosaurs have been found to be distributed. This was his intention all along – it was part of how he decided to design this page.

This technique introduces an additional tip for exhibitors. Occasionally, a map (or a graph, table or similar illustration) may be used to effect on an exhibit page. The only cautions are that such graphics have to be directly related to the story line of the page, and cannot overwhelm or supercede the philatelic material.

In summary, pay attention to your white space as it may help decide the design of your pages and lead to some consistency in your style. ☒

out for something else to be placed there. Novice exhibitors sometimes get caught up in this, leaving spaces for additional material that they plan to acquire later, as if the exhibit space was an album page. Simply put, each page should be designed to suit the material one has, not what one does not have. New material will necessitate a later redesign of the necessary page or pages.

Enough theory. The illustrated pages come from two different exhibits by Calgary exhibitor, James Taylor, our RPSC international exhibiting liaison. The first example is a page from his Open Class exhibit Earth Sciences labelled 'Geological Time Scale' and shows an exploded Swedish booklet – its front cover, its back cover, and the unfolded booklet to display its full pane of stamps (previous page).

With only three items, plus his related text to place on the page, there is an obvious amount of white space remaining, but it is balanced relative to what he is displaying. Note that his text is evenly distributed throughout different areas of the white space - blank space that would otherwise be remaining without such

highlights, emphasizes or 'shows off' extreme rarities. So, there is a significant amount of white space surrounding the item on each side, but it is also mitigated by the text both above and below the important piece. Note he has also used a red matte behind the piece, used as a colour code to highlight rarity and to draw the viewer's attention to it on the page.

This second example is a quite acceptable use of white space, particularly at the international level where rarity and value come into play in exhibiting. But, unless you are showing world-class rarities, use this technique sparingly, lest you be accused of artificially creating more white space than is felt necessary.

The third example is also a page from Taylor's Earth Sciences exhibit, labelled "Drifting Continents through time – Fossil Correlations". There is minimal white space on this page, though it doesn't seem particularly crowded.

Earth Science – map fossils.

