

let's talk EXHIBITING

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENTATION

Although “Presentation” weighs in as only 5 per cent in the total determination of the merits of an exhibit, it often seems to come to the front in conversations that arise from questions around how to improve one’s exhibit. This is unfortunate, as

Presentation is less important than Treatment, Philatelic and Related Knowledge, and Condition/Rarity, which each weigh in at 30, 35 and 30 percent respectively. In theory, one could have an exhibit that scores high in each of these latter three categories, yet be very weak in Presentation, and still receive a very high medal award.



Presentation is not the big deal we try to make of it. But, as it may certainly influence one’s perceptions of our exhibits, it warrants our attention as we put our exhibits together. Presentation is really just all about the general layout and attractiveness of the exhibit and thus the impression of it that the viewer forms. That impression is subjective, and different viewers may form different impressions, as attractiveness is ultimately in the eye of each beholder. However, we may influence these impressions through ensuring that the material we place on each page appears in the most favourable light.

Although one could get into detailed nuance on how to accomplish this, there are in fact no hard and fast rules here. Instead, we must consider guidelines that have evolved, and are continuing to evolve, in the exhibiting world. Some of the guidelines to consider here include:

✓ Does the material on the page appear “balanced”, so that it seems pleasing in its arrangement? (Hint: ensure you don’t seem to “overcrowd” a page with too much material, or “weight” one part of the page over the rest.)

✓ Does each page follow a common formatting, so that consistency is ensured from page to page? (Hint: if you are using a page layout program, always take time to create a “master page,” which sets your margins consistently throughout the document.)



✓ Are your running headings, headers and sub-headers prominent and consistent from page to page, and can the viewer determine when you have begun a new chapter?

✓ Do you use different type faces, font sizes or font styles for different aspects of your written text, and have you done this consistently throughout the exhibit? (Hint: if you are using a page layout program, spend time to develop a “styles” inventory of typographic formats you will apply to different sections of your written material).

✓ Do you include collateral material (e.g., maps, newspaper clippings, graphics, etc.) sparingly, and so as not to be seen to assume greater prominence than your philatelic material?

✓ Is there enough variety from page to page to ensure the exhibit does not appear visually monotonous? (Hint: if you are going to be showing a lot of covers, mix it up a bit so that not every page shows the same number of covers, let some overlap for vari-

ety and move the textual information of the covers around a bit so that it doesn't always appear at the same location from page to page.)

✓ Does the philatelic material stand out on the page, and not become overwhelmed by your written text or collateral material? (Hint: if you are also using colour in your text or graphics, make sure it does not seem to predominate over the philatelic material.)

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The exhibit page illustrated herein may be taken as a reasonable example of “balance” within page layout. Note that even with six items and a variety of textual information, it does not appear overcrowded and the material predominates over the textual information presented. Also note that the margins are consistent

between the text blocks, adding to an impression of symmetry across the page.

In conclusion, your presentation is the style you have settled on in displaying your material. It is unique to you and your exhibit. As long as it does not detract from the appreciation of your philatelic material, you have a wide choice of how to showcase your material. Your goal in all this is to make each

page visually appealing so that the impression formed by the viewer is favourable, making him or her want to keep looking further through the exhibit. Then, the real meat of your exhibit, its Treatment, Philatelic and Related Knowledge, and Condition/Rarity can be fairly assessed and acknowledged. ☒