At some time in your exhibiting career you will encounter philatelic items that are simply too large to mount onto standard 8.5 by 11 inch pages. For example, you may have a particularly attractive number 10 (legal) sized cover, large wrapper, or a stamp pane or souvenir sheet that cannot be accommodated on such a standard sized page. Sometimes we struggle with this, and decide to mount the item on a standard page by placing it diagonally or otherwise forcing it to fit in some other manner, like letting the item overlap onto an adjacent page and then being very careful when the pages are placed in the frames. This is not a perfect solution as our mounting may then look awkward or will even expose the item to potential damage.

The solution here — once you overcome the preconceived notion that it is not possible -- is to produce an exhibit page in a larger size to accommodate the items that will still fit into the frames.

The most common oversize page is an 11 by 17 inch sheet of paper, which is exactly double the size of the standard page size, and which then fits easily into the necessary layout of the exhibit frames. Not only can you strategically insert your oversized pages into the rest of your exhibit (being sure you know exactly where it falls within the frame so that it will always fit,) you can even develop whole exhibits consisting of these double pages. In fact, certain material may look better on double pages in terms of layout, or be less monotonous to the viewer when displayed.

Most word processing and desktop publishing software allows you to specify the size of each exhibit page, whether through a...
‘layout,’ ‘page design,’ or other formatting command; so this part should be straightforward. The only problem may be finding the larger pages, and some printers may not be able to handle them, in which case you might have to invest in a large format or commercial printer. Most stationery stores that provide photocopy services (e.g., Staples) can also print larger size pages and even the heavier weight paper stock used in our exhibits. You only need to save your work as a ‘pdf’ file on a memory stick to take to the store. This still might be expensive, but certainly cheaper than buying a large format printer.

Let’s see how such pages look. Our example is an entire exhibit on 11 by 17 inch pages produced by Earle Covert of Alberta. His exhibit is called Religious Groups Using Illustrated Permits. It’s a comprehensive showing of modern illustrated mail covers that use colourful and customized designs in the permit indicia as a substitute for stamps. Canada Post’s marketing services indicate that illustrated permit mail is becoming increasingly common.

Covert’s exhibit, running to several frames on this specialized topic, consists entirely of double-sized pages. In this way, it accommodates more readily the wider variety of larger envelope sizes used on the permit mail of the various religious organizations, forming an attractive, and award-winning exhibit. This particular page shows three number 10 business window envelopes used by Samaritan’s Purse International Relief Canada, a religious organization that provides humanitarian relief worldwide to victims of disaster, war, poverty, famine or persecution. The three covers are overlapped, but each illustrated permit indicia is immediately visible to the viewer. Overlapping is acceptable as long as it does not interfere with the philatelic information – in this case, the permit indicias. The large pages also give Covert a chance to show the colourful illustrations used on other parts of the envelope.

Another 11 by 17 inch example is the title page of a new exhibit of mine: Early Tourism in Canada’s Rocky Mountain Parks. The larger page allows for a significant amount of text, as well as accommodating a larger picture post card that otherwise could not easily be shown in the introduction to the exhibit. The text is blocked and highlighted so as not to overwhelm the viewer with too much information.

In conclusion, exhibitors need not worry about double-sized pages. In fact, some of your material may demand it. Keep in mind that larger pages provide greater freedom and creativity in design, attractively distributing items across the page. Exhibit committees readily accept exhibits with larger pages, though they may expect the exhibitor to say so in advance, in case the show’s frames are in non-standard sizes. Our national shows, like the Royal*2018*Royale coming up in St. Catharines on June 22, can almost always accommodate, so why not give it a try?  

David Piercey is in the winner’s circle once again. He’s a co-winner of the 2017 Pratt award. He shares the honours with Brian Stalker of the U.K. The two men will split the award of one thousand dollars.

Piercey won for two notable articles on Newfoundland, which were published over the past year: Another Late Fee Cover from Newfoundland, Postal History Society of Canada PHSC Journal, No. 167, Fall 2016. The Neighbourhood and Suburban Post Offices of St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1877-1932, BNA Topics, Nos. 550 and 552, 1st and 3rd Quarter 2017.

As reported in the September-October edition of The Canadian Philatelist, Piercey also won the Pratt in 2016, and was a co-winner in 2015. His articles centred around the postal history of Newfoundland, including packet steamer services, and the St. John’s East post office.

Robert H. Pratt was a researcher and author, as well as a collector of Newfoundland stamp and postal history. The award was started in 1997 to recognize authors of philatelic books and articles about Newfoundland.