

Fundamentals of Philatelic Judging Part II: Knowledge, Condition, Rarity & Presentation

APS Committee on Accreditation of National
Exhibitions and Judges



Workshop Objectives

Through Lecture, Discussion and Practice at the frames, at the end of the workshop each participant should be able to answer these questions about exhibits:

- How are Knowledge, Personal Study & Research demonstrated?
- What are Condition and Rarity?
- What are the key aspects of Presentation?

Knowledge

From the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging*, 6th Edition:

- Philatelic Knowledge: How, Why, When and Where a philatelic item was made or used
- Related Knowledge: All other knowledge about the subject
 - Thematic/Display
 - Social History
 - Geography
 - All other factual information in support of the exhibit's story line

Aspects of Philatelic Knowledge

- The correct selection of items to support the exhibit's story line
- The correct and concise description of the items FOR THE EXHIBIT TYPE*

*Descriptions of the significant characteristics of the item should match the purpose and scope of the exhibit

- A cover described by rate, route and/or marking is Postal History
- A cover described to illustrate the stamp(s) used is Usage (Traditional)
- A cover described for the subject matter of its stamp or postal marking is Thematic or Display

Aspects of Related Knowledge

- Correct factual information that supports the story line
- Collateral material supportive and subordinate to philatelic items

For Both

Philatelic and Related Knowledge

- Brevity in related text: concise but sufficient to make important points clear*
 - Text, Tables, Charts, Graphs
 - Illustrations, Drawings, Maps

*It is an **exhibit** – not a **handbook**, and the process of judging does not allow time to read a lot of text

- Evaluating Thematic and Display exhibits, give equal weight to
 - Philatelic Knowledge
 - Subject Knowledge

Correctness

- All information presented is factual and free from errors (exception: creative work with fictional story line)
- All conclusions are supported with sound analysis and supporting evidence

Judge's Checklist for Knowledge

- Items chosen for the exhibit are appropriate for the exhibit's purpose and scope
- Clear and concise descriptions of philatelic and non-philatelic items
- Correct factual information
- Text, Tables, Illustrations, etc. are appropriate to support the story line and subordinate to the philatelic material
- Conclusions are supported by sound analyses of evidence

Personal Study

From the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging*, 6th Edition:

- Evidence of Personal Study in the chosen subject is reflected in . . .
- . . . essential information that is provided
- . . . proper analyses of the items displayed
- Personal Study and Research are evaluated jointly

Research

From the *APS Manual of Philatelic Judging*, 6th Edition:

- Evidence of Research in the chosen subject is reflected in . . .
- . . . new information that is provided (new items, new usage, new census data), or
- . . . new conclusions are presented correcting previous studies

Subjects that have been extensively researched previously should show evidence of significant personal study to compensate

Judge's Checklist for Personal Study & Research

- Essential information is provided to achieve the exhibit's purpose and scope
- Proper analyses are presented of the items displayed
- New information or new conclusions are presented

Condition

- Physical Condition and Appearance
- Correct Rate

Physical Condition & Appearance

- Items are the best examples that exist for the subject and era
 - Condition of covers
 - Centering of stamps
 - Clarity of postal markings
 - Collateral material is included in assessing Condition
- No obvious damage or missing parts
- Repaired and restored items are properly identified

Correct Rate

- Properly rated covers are an important element of Condition
- Under- and over-franked covers are identified and explained
- Philatelically-inspired covers may be the only way to show some markings or usages
- Display, FDC and Illustrated Mail exhibits do not necessarily follow this criteria at all times

Judge's Checklist for Condition

- Items are the best examples that exist for the subject and era
- Repaired and restored items are properly identified
- Covers are correctly rated or properly identified and explained if not correctly rated (with certain exceptions)

Rarity

- **Rarity is a function of the numbers of items extant**, it does not necessarily equate to monetary value (“x” number recorded is a rarity statement)
- **Rarity is not the same thing as scarcity**. Scarcity is a function of demand, and demand directly relates to value (there is no statement describing scarcity)

Judge's Checklist for Rarity

- Difficult to acquire, unusual and elusive items should be present
- Key rare items within the exhibit's purpose and scope should be present

Presentation

- General Layout
- Attractiveness

Presentation is a minor (5%) factor in exhibit evaluation

General Layout

- Efficient use of space
- Visual interest using some variety in page layout
- Special techniques used to enhance use of space when appropriate
 - Windowing
 - Lapping
- Display exhibits may include items with special challenges to mount in the frames

Attractiveness

- The exhibit is free from distracting elements: paper color; matting color and size; font style, size and color
- The exhibit is neatly written and items are neatly mounted
- Presentation techniques are appropriate for the exhibit type

Judge's Checklist for Presentation

- The exhibit uses space efficiently
- There is visual interest without undue distraction
- The exhibit is neat and presentation techniques are appropriate for the exhibit type

Conclusions

- How are Knowledge, Personal Study & Research demonstrated?
- What are Condition & Rarity?
- What are the key aspects of Presentation?

Questions and Discussion

Adjourn to the Frames