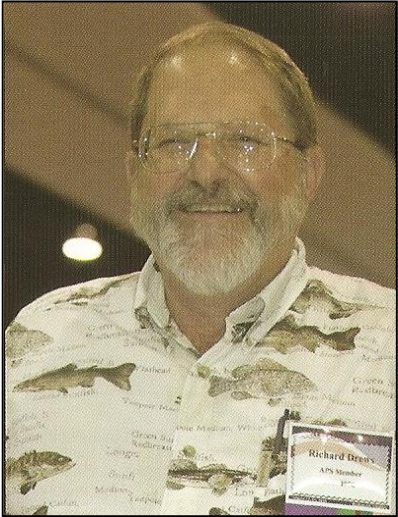


PREPARING AN EXHIBIT - PART I

RICH DREWS

Reprinted from the Aug. 28, 2009 issue of WE Expressions with permission of Women Exhibitors, whose STATEMENT OF PURPOSE is: To provide a vehicle through which women exhibitors can encourage each other through sharing information, ideas, experience, advice, problems, and solutions. For further information, go to www.aape.org and click on WE.



Richard Drews has offered to write an article on the ins and outs of preparing an exhibit, which should prove extremely helpful not only to first-time exhibitors but also to those with varying levels of experience. Below is the first installment. Thank you Rich!

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but an exhibit by another name may medal higher. Your title is the first thing every juror sees. They usually receive a list of exhibits via email before the title pages and synopses are sent. The title creates an expectation of what is to be shown. Consider these titles:

1. A Lot of Bull (actually used as a thematic exhibit title)
2. Bullfighting from Spain to the New World
3. The Bull from Mythology to Modern Day

Think about what reaction the judges may have to each title and what kind of preparation they will do for each one in the absence of a title page or synopsis. If the exhibitor still wants to use the first title, what about: A Lot of Bull: The Bull from Mythology to Modern Day? The Pig in the Post: A Study of Advertising Covers from 1855-1900 might work but Pigs I Have Mounted is unlikely to win favor.

If you have selected a title, how do you follow up with a concise statement of purpose? Can you tell a knowledgeable person just what your exhibit is about in 25 words? If you can't, perhaps your focus isn't as sharp as it should be. My traditional exhibit uses this as a title and subtitle:

U. S. ISSUES OF 1861-1868

Essays, proofs, specimens, stamps unused and used, multiples, varieties and usages

You don't need to be quite so telegraphic, but you want to communicate precisely, succinctly and accurately. Your title (and subtitle) set up the next stage of your title page, your Statement of Purpose. The latest quarterly of The Philatelic Exhibitor, July 2009, has an excellent article by John Hotchner on pages 14-15 entitled: Title and Synopsis Pages: Different Purposes – Different Content. This is exactly what we all need to strive for in a title. It tells the audience just what they are about to see. Read the article and take a new look at your title, your title page, and your synopsis. I like to use different terms than those employed by most people in philately, not to try to confuse, but to make people stop and think and question. After reading John's article, think about your title page as your public communication (to the widest possible audience), while your synopsis is your private communication (only to the judges). In both cases, the emphasis is on communication.

The most important and difficult task facing an exhibitor is that of looking at his or her exhibit with fresh eyes. Once you take the step from collecting to exhibiting you add the task of communicating. Up until then you only have to collect what you like in any way you wish and please only yourself. Exhibiting includes an audience and demands that the exhibitor make the material as accessible and understandable as possible to the widest possible audience. Always send a great title page and synopsis to every show. If you don't have enough respect for your material to do this, why should anyone else respect it?

Part II of Richard Drews' article next month:
How do the judges evaluate my exhibit and what does my medal level mean?