

## The Synopsis Page

### By Tim Bartshe

The synopsis is something created for the judges' eyes only. It is your opportunity to get 5 or 10 minutes of his/her time to explain why they will want to view your exhibit. It is your time to talk about things not necessarily suitable for the title page. The purpose of these one or two pages is to inform them of specific challenges related to your field, alert them to personal research, complexity and problems related to the subject, material highlights of your exhibit, difficulty of acquisition (not just dollar signs) and a way for them to further their general knowledge via a brief and important bibliographical listing of references.

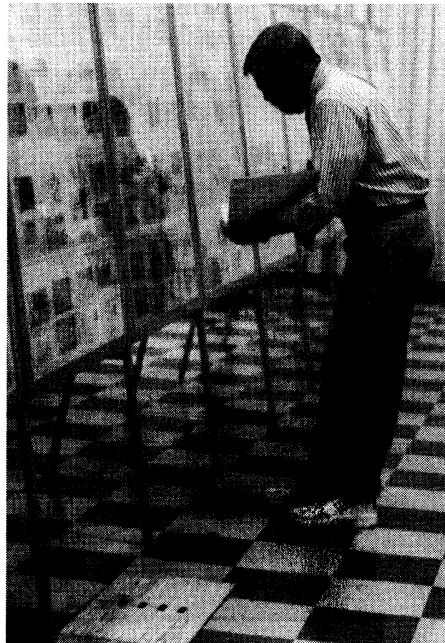
Sometimes repetition is a good thing particularly if you are trying to bring home a point that may not be obvious. Do NOT repeat everything you have said on the title page, but the most salient ideas/points may be expanded upon herein and repeated for emphasis. Repeat the purpose of your exhibit and what you are going to show and why, what the structure of it is and why, and why this exhibit is important. So many exhibits today are exploring new and obscure areas of philately. Even the most experienced judge may have no experience with the subject and may not understand its ranking in overall and/or regional importance.

This is your opportunity to discuss what is in your exhibit; what material will be shown, where the emphasis will be placed and what will NOT be shown and why. Sometimes this is a most important point. Never let a judge have an unanswered question, as you will probably not like the response he comes up with. If you are excluding a particular aspect, area or time period your wishes should be respected but you must have a good philatelic reason for the exclusion. Judges will understand your reasons for cutting off the most difficult or important time period and give you much lower score in the challenge factor area. However, if you don't have some rare items due to the fact that they are all in museums or the Queen's collection, tell them. It indicates knowledge of your field and a good judge will catch you on it if you try to sweep it under the pages.

Here also is your opportunity to show off your material. "He who tooteth not his own horn the same shall remain untooteth." Give them a brief listing or idea of the important material shown; particularly the existence of the material judges will expect to see.

This is also the time to alert them of what they may not know about but should notice because of its importance to the story you are showing. Such things as a census display knowledge and possibly personal research that may not be easily discerned at the frames.

Finally, of course judges will most likely not be experts in your field, nor can they or do they want to become one. That being said, it is up to you to give them direction as to where to get the most general sources of information for them to bone up on the generalities of the subject. List only the most salient sources and those that can be most easily accessed via the APRL, Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library, or other philatelic sources. Most judges do not read Czech or Mandarin, so try to keep the references in English. Finally, if you have been the leading publisher of new research or even updating old knowledge into a more modern form, use your own references. This will give them a feeling that you do know what you are talking about and will give more credence to your statements.



*Tim Bartshe consults his notebook full of synopsis pages frequently while judging. If he has had a good indication of what he will see and where he can go for further information, he will be optimally prepared to evaluate what is in the show frames.*