

## WRITING UP THE TOPICAL EXHIBIT

Alan Hanks, President Emeritus, BU698

[Ed. note: Our condolences to Alan Hanks and his wife Barbara on the recent unexpected death of their daughter Cathy. He has provided this short article that has appeared previously, but remains a subject of interest.]

Writing up a traditional exhibit might be considered straightforward, since it is based mainly on factual data about the stamps and covers that will be included. Postal History exhibits are more complex, because a great deal of research probably goes into the exhibit in order to describe rates and routes.

Writing up a true thematic exhibit is in many ways more difficult as the depth of study that is to be illustrated rests with the exhibitor and his or her skill in telling the story. In some ways, it is akin to writing a book with many chapters containing different facets of the study, each dealt with in depth.

The first thing to consider is, “**what shall I exhibit?**” And here the potential for a good exhibit might rest with picking a familiar subject. For example, a civil engineer might elect to deal with “Bridges” while a medical practitioner might choose some part of the science of medicine. In my case, I chose insects because it has been a long-term interest of mine and I already possessed a large library of entomological books and reference material.

The **Title and Plan** usually follow the initial selection of a subject in order to develop an approach to the write-up that will result in success, and that implies a full depth of study. The title is important because it may set some kind of parameter for the exhibit, As an example, title “Ships” would seem to imply that the exhibit will consist of material showing just ships, whereas the title “Navigation” implies much greater range of content. One should remember that the thematic scoring sheet has 45 points awarded for the “thematic elements” in (a) originality, (b) the plan, and (c) research and development of the theme.

The write-up should be fairly comprehensive, but not too lengthy and it is important to remember that you must “**show what you write about**” and “**write about what you show.**” In other words, there should be no philatelic item that is not described in the write-up and there should not be anything in the write-up that is not supported by a philatelic item.

One font style should be chosen for the descriptive text and a different font for the “philatelic” text in which the distinctive items in the display are described.

Ideally each chapter in the story should be of similar length to give balance to the presentation and there should be a “**final page**” or conclusion to bring the display to a close. Finally, the blocks of text can actually be used as a design element together with the stamps and other material to help in the “presentation” points for the exhibit.

I urge thematic exhibitors to consider showing at the annual National Topical Stamp Show in order to benefit from the observations of the thematic judges and improve the exhibit.




---

## SEAPEX SEEKS EXHIBITS

The Seattle Philatelic Exhibition (SEAPEX), a World Series of Philately (WSP) national-level show, is seeking philatelic exhibits. The exhibition will take place 14–16 September 2018, at the Tukwila Community Center located between SeaTac International Airport and downtown Seattle. The show expects to have 30 dealers including several who carry topical material.

The 200 exhibit frames all filled up quickly last year these. The winner of the Grand awards for both single and multiple frame exhibits will be eligible to compete for the Champion of Champions award against the winners from the other WSP shows. Visit the SEAPEX website ([www.seapexshow.org](http://www.seapexshow.org)) for a prospectus and entry forms.