

TOPICAL EXHIBITING (1953 VERSION)

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[*Ed. note: This article appeared in Biological Tid-bits, Vol. 2, No. 9, January 1953, written by Homer L. Jones. Jones was the founding father of the Biology Unit and was at that time serving as the Unit President and also as the Second Vice President of the American Topical Association. Given the publication earlier this year of the Manual of Philatelic Judging and Exhibiting, 7th edition, I thought it would be interesting to read about and compare the early stages of topical exhibiting as outlined in this article.*]

Topical exhibiting, while still in its early stages, is fast winning acclaim in the Philatelic Exhibition field. In the not too distant past, any thing Topical went under the Miscellaneous Division, but now more and more of the Exhibitions are having special classes for the Topicals; some are even going so far as to subdivide the classifications. Some of the local clubs have staged all Topical shows.

To date, only two International Topical Exhibitions have been held. The first held in the Saar last spring, but by invitation only, with three from the United States receiving invitations to exhibit. Then last June the American Topical Association sponsored the first "open" International Topical Exhibition, TOPEX, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

To show the importance of TOPEX, at least four local radio programs and a National hookup on the Columbia Broadcasting System were devoted in all or in part to TOPEX. The Exhibition was such a huge success that it will be an annual affair. [*Ed. note: This exhibition continues today as the National Topical Stamp Show.*]

What to exhibit. This is the first point to consider. The most popular subjects at the various Topical Exhibitions have been: Biological, Americana, Religion, and Famous Personages. So the competition in these fields will be keener than the others. Choose your subject wisely; you need not worry if someone else has the same subject, for no two people will exhibit the same subject in the same way.

How to mount. As in all Exhibitions, neatness is a large factor to consider. Use originality in your mounting, but remember that the most important items on the pages are the stamps. Make up your own pages. While there are many prepared pages on the market, they are too gaudy for exhibiting purposes. Do not let a lot of write-up or pictures take the eye. Keep the write-up concise and if you must use pictures or drawings, keep them small and toned down. Use the best stamps that you are able to find.

Completeness. This factor does not enter in as much as in general exhibiting. Each collector has his own ideas as to what goes under his subject, but it is a foregone conclusion that central design determines under what subject a stamp is listed. If there is more than one stamp of the same design in a set, it is not needful to have all of them. One stamp of each design is all that is required.

Judging. The following scoring has been set up by the American Topical Association for Topical Exhibitions and is now more or less standard for this field:

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| For Evidence of Philatelic Research and Knowledge | 40% |
| For Condition | 30% |
| Neatness and Originality in Arrangement | 30% |

[*Ed. note: The new manual on judging and exhibiting gives a much different set of standards. Presentation, equivalent to neatness of arrangement, is now only worth five points out of 100. Condition only rates ten points. Philatelic Knowledge and Research still ranks the highest with 35 points. See below for the point break down.*]

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| Treatment (title, plan, development, balance, comprehensiveness) | 20% |
| Importance (subject and philatelic importance) | 10% |
| Philatelic/Subject Knowledge (selection, correctness) | 25% |
| Personal Study/Research (analysis, evaluation, research) | 10% |
| Rarity (challenge, difficulty of acquisition) | 20% |
| Condition (physical condition and appearance) | 10% |
| Presentation (general layout) | 5% |