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SYNOPSIS TIP OF THE MONTH

Using Your Synopsis to Discuss What's Not in the Exhibit

Bartonsville, PA – June 2021 -- The philatelic synopsis is the short document given to the philatelic judges in advance of a stamp show to help them prepare to judge the exhibit. This often misunderstood and underrated document can dramatically shape how an exhibit is received by the judges and can have a big effect on an exhibitor's medal level.

"Exhibitors often struggle with what they should include in their synopsis and many forget to add one important section – what's not in the exhibit." according to Andrew McFarlane, author of *Creating the Philatelic Exhibit Synopsis: A Master Class*. "It may seem counter-intuitive to point out what's missing from an exhibit, but if done correctly, it will be appreciated by the Judges."

McFarlane recommends adding a section to the synopsis explaining any missing items, or items that are outside the scope of the exhibit, and the reasons as to why they're not a part of the exhibit. Sometimes Judges are expecting to see items that don't exist, such as an essay, a die proof, or an example of a service that wasn't available during the time period. A large part of the exhibit's medal level is determined by the philatelic knowledge by demonstrated by the exhibitor. Explaining that an item doesn't exist, or isn't available to the public, helps demonstrate knowledge in a way that's difficult to do within the exhibit frames.

McFarlane's book offers these tips for exhibitors when creating this "What's Not Here" section:

- As a starting point, think about Judges' comments during the feedback sessions or written on their evaluation forms.
- Does explaining why an item isn't included help demonstrate philatelic knowledge?
- If the item genuinely belongs in the exhibit, don't just state that you don't have the item. Explain that you understand why the Judges are looking for it.
- Be honest.



However, McFarlane warns exhibitors that mentioning an item in this section may not let them off the hook with the Judges. Just because an item is difficult or expensive to obtain doesn't mean that the Jury is wrong in wanting to see it in the frames. Says McFarlane, "If your exhibit is about the 1918 24¢ Jenny Airmail Stamp, it's expected that you will include an inverted Jenny. Remember, you the exhibitor, chose the subject." He continues that while Judges don't want to hear that you were the underbidder for an item at auction, at least you can show that you are aware of the item.

Creating the Philatelic Exhibit Synopsis: A Master Class is available by visiting www.ExhibitSynopsis.com.