

The One Stamp Exhibit: Change for Survival

by Charles J. G. Verge

"Change" is the buzzword of the last few decades. It applies not only to our family, to the political environment, to our work and to our way of life, but also to our leisure time and our hobbies. The **One Stamp Exhibit** is a good example of where change can help an area of philately survive -- if it is in fact in danger. I firmly believe that there is room in our hobby for all aspects of collecting and exhibiting: from traditional philately to maximaphily, and from aerophilately for astrophilately. **However**, like with any other change anywhere else, exhibitors and judges must be willing to accept change and be flexible on how, when and why our hobby adapts.

Single stamp exhibits are most uncommon in Canada. In fact we had not seen one in a national level exhibition, as far as I know, for many years, until Stephen Ekstrom showed his U.S. 1861-68 3-cent issue at ROYALE *1991* ROYAL, held in Montreal in April 1991. Since then three more have shown up, all at BNAPEX '91, held last August in Vancouver. These were *The 3-cent Small Queen - perforation 12.5x12.5; Canada's First Airmail Stamp: Rates, Routes, and Usages; and Canada - Queen Elizabeth: 1973-77 Definitive Issues*.

It is my premise that, although exhibitors should continue to show the type of exhibits of single stamps such as that shown by Stephen Ekstrom, those shown at BNAPEX pave the way for the survival of this area of exhibiting. The classical Ekstrom-type exhibit deals with the stamp, its development, production, printings, usages and rates, perforations, colours and papers, etc. Although BNAPEX-type exhibits in all cases used some of the same elements as found in the Ekstrom-type, they added to it elements of the **Special Philatelic Studies Exhibit** or extended the limits of the definition of a **Single Stamp Exhibit**. This, in my view, is where survival lies for this type of exhibit.

I will try to describe how each of the three BNAPEX exhibits treated their subject and the reader can see how three exhibitors proceeded, I am sure inadvertently, to extend the parameters of the **Single Stamp Exhibit** and possibly in some way those of the **Special Philatelic Studies Exhibit**.

The 3 cent Small Queen - perforation 12.5x12.5. Reading the title page of this exhibit, I was struck by the very classical approach to the study of what is probably the rarest major variety of this issue. However, the exhibitor gives clues in his introduction that he will be dealing with other points as well: *"In order to understand the background of the perf. 12.5..., it is necessary to study Canada's First Bill Issue... A point of controversy has long been the location of the first printing, Montreal or Ottawa... a wealth of opportunity for the study of 19th Century Canadian Postal History."*

The exhibit unfolds by first starting to explain the perf. 12.5 itself and its relationship to the Bill stamps. The exhibitor then goes on to jump into the controversy as to the location of the printing and perforation of the stamp by utilizing trade sample cards, the Bill stamps and other Large and Small Queen stamps. He also indicates his disagreement with both Boggs and Jarrett's theses on the printing and puts forward his own theories. He then proceeds through the classical elements of a single stamp exhibit to finish up his exhibit with a study of why most used copies on cover are found emanating from two correspondences. The exhibitor illustrates this section with photos, illustrated and advertising covers, post cards and other elements usually found in a special study exhibit.

Canada's First Airmail Stamp: Rates, Routes and Usages. In this instance the exhibitor has shunned the typical study of the stamp from production to printing including varieties. He concentrates on the reasons why the stamp and its surcharged version were issued (Airmail agreement with the United States on July 20, 1928 and rate increase of July 1, 1931); the commercial usages to illustrate the rates and, instead of FFC, he again uses valid commercial mail to illustrate routes. In reality this, as well as the following exhibit, is a **Two Stamp Exhibit**. Scott catalogue identifies these two airmail issues as C1 and C3. I believe however that this is an ingenious way to extend the definition of a **Single Stamp Exhibit** by joining traditional philately and postal history with aerophilately.

Canada - Queen Elizabeth II: 1973-77 Definitive issues. Of the three exhibits described here, this is probably the exhibit most within the parameters of the traditional **Single Stamp Exhibit** and the most modern. Its development is based on a study of varieties, including errors and usage, utilizing a wide range of philatelic elements including: two different printers; four papers, three printing processes, six levels of fluorescence and four perforation gauges. However, here again the exhibitor uses two stamps with the same design in the same series to illustrate what is, in effect, a single stamp printed in two different rates with two different denominations, but with everything else being virtually equal (Scott 593 and 593A).

The three exhibits described above may be a way to change the approach to **Single Stamp Exhibits** while at the same time increasing the flexibility that exhibitors have in getting their exhibits recognized. This may also be the way to improve the knowledge and interest of judges, exhibitors and show goers for what is now called **Special Philatelic Studies Exhibits**. I firmly believe that this type of exhibit is more popular with new exhibitors and show goers because it shows the interesting and human side of philately.

A seminar I just attended on international philatelic judging indicated that every other area of philatelic exhibiting stems from traditional philately. It is nice to see that traditional philately (**Single Stamp Exhibits**) is flexible and adaptable enough to be combined with other areas of philately and that traditional philately continues to diversify as it has in the past.



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small stretch between Auckland and Great Barrier Island in New Zealand. With a brief bit of text, I explained about the rarest of the Pigeon Post stamps, and mounted it between the two places it had serviced.

It won second prize for foreign specialized. I'd hate to think of what it would do today. Could it be that this is the ultimate "single" stamp exhibit?

The Philatelic Exhibitor