

Tip 94 – Sometimes the extraordinary material outweighs traditional approaches and assumptions

I've said there are no firm 'rules' in exhibiting except for not using scotch tape or black exhibit pages. There recently was an exhibit on black pages that generated quite a bit of positive comment in an earlier issue of this magazine. But even in my somewhat cavalier treatment of exhibiting rules I assumed, as I imagine many of you do, that stamps are mounted in geometric formations: rows, boxes, squares, circles, or even ovals.

I was wrong. I could not envision, until very recently, a set of stamps in which each stamp is the same size being mounted so that no two stamps have their edges parallel to each other. As incredible as it may sound, this haphazard sounding mounting is enhanced by the exhibitor using a pen on the stamps themselves. Enhanced! Sounds incredible, doesn't it? It is incredible.

Figure 94-1, from NO Good's (a pseudonym) Gold Medal exhibit *A Message to the Enemy*, does all this. The stamps are not parallel and they are drawn upon. And it is a marvelous presentation. There is no other way this material could be shown in a meaningful fashion. As part of the Czechoslovakian resistance during the German occupation, patriotic Czech symbolism was included in the stamp designs: when the stamps were placed in the proper position, they showed the outline of an independent Czechoslovakia. The same stamps are shown arranged in a row on the same page. The two different presentations cannot even be compared in a meaningful fashion as it is impossible to appreciate the design characteristics of this issue with the stamps shown in a linear format. This is one of the most unusual – and engaging – exhibit pages I have ever seen.

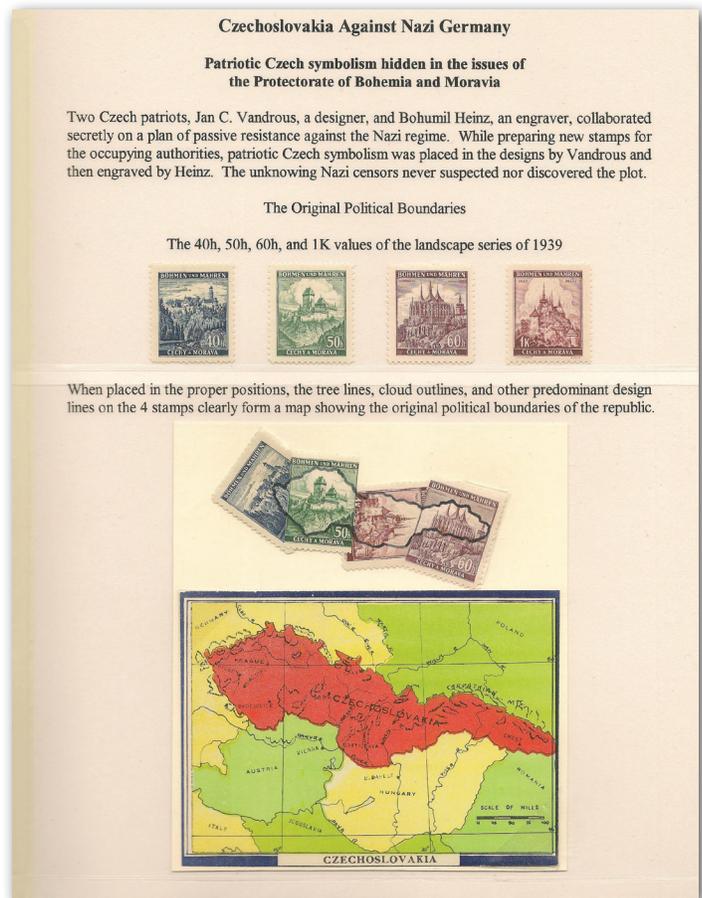


Figure 94-1. Czech symbolism highlighted by pen on stamps.

Tip 95 – Fill in the blanks: Provide information that would otherwise be missing

Frequently, there is a gulf between what the exhibitor knows about the philatelic material in an exhibit and what a viewer can discern based upon looking at the philatelic material. One of the goals of exhibiting is to communicate to the viewer (or judge) as much information as possible to help him or her understand the material in depth. It is not always easy. Raymond Ireson has done this communication job well. His Grand Award exhibit, *The Panama Canal Story*, makes it easy for the viewer to understand each item. On some pages he reproduced the handstamps in very legible print so the text of the handstamp would be immediately obvious. (See Figure 95-1)

One of the pages in his exhibit contains a stamp with a crowded or busy design; there is much information represented by the stamp but it is not communicated. The stamp shows 19 individuals without any information about who they are or why they are featured on the stamp (Raymond knows!). To communicate this knowledge to show why this stamp was an important element in his story, Raymond deconstructed the image, as shown in Figure 6, to let viewers know who each of the 19 individuals included on the stamp were. In the text above the stamp, Raymond provided the context to understand why the stamp was issued.

Figure 95-1.

