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# *The Prexie Era*

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***Inside this Issue:***

<b>Editor's Note</b>	2
<b>New Trends in Judging and the Decline of Exhibiting</b> Dickson Preston	2
<b><i>Postal Bulletin</i> through 2012 Now Online</b> Tony Wawrukiewicz	5
<b>1940 Mail to Germany, Released 1946</b> Jeffrey Shapiro	6
<b>Jumping the Gun to Czechoslovakia</b> Bob Hohertz	8
<b>Los Angeles Cover to Bolivia Missent to Albania</b> Louis Fiset	9

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### **Editor's Note**

The Prexie Group will hold a regional meeting at the APS Milwaukee Show on Friday August 9th, at 2 pm. Attendees should bring material for show and tell or trade.

### **New Trends in Judging and the Decline of Exhibiting**

by

Dickson Preston  
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The purpose of this article is to present an email exchange between Steve Reinhard, the Chairman of the Committee on Accreditation of National Exhibitions and Judges (CANEJ), and myself discussing some recent trends in judging and a perceived decline in the number of exhibits at WSP shows. Since part of the discussion involves the kinds of exhibits entered in WSP shows by members of the Prexie Era Committee, Jeffrey Shapiro, Committee Chairman, Louis Fiset, *Prexie Era* editor, and I thought it would be useful to reproduce the exchange in this newsletter. The text has not been altered from the original emails except that some parts are not relevant to the subject and have been omitted.

We would like to thank Steve Reinhard for considering our concerns and for allowing us to reprint the extracts from our email exchange here. Comments from the members of the Prexie Era Committee and other interested parties are welcome. Please send them either to me or to the editor.

#### **From Dickson Preston to Steve Reinhard 1 April 2013**

Hi, Steve,

Recently several people, including yourself at the Judges' Roundtable last year, have expressed concerns about a declining number of exhibits and exhibitors. Some of the decline stems from forces beyond our control, such as the cost of travel, and so forth. But I also think that there are some aspects of the Manual of Philatelic Judging which are causing some people to cut back on their exhibiting. These are, in my opinion, unintentional side effects of what is really a superb piece of work which has made a great contribution to both the clarity of judging and the excellence of the exhibits on display.

Let me first say that I am writing about the decline in the number of exhibits and exhibitors rather than any other related topics. Specifically, I am not writing about the award levels given to displays done in my own style of exhibiting. Good heavens, I have plenty of certificates, ribbons, medals, pins, clocks, propellers, and other significations of excellence already.

So here are some thoughts, which I hope will prove useful. They are presented in summary form only, although I have been thinking them through in detail for the last two or three years.

First, the Manual of Philatelic Judging is in danger of becoming a kind of rule book, which defines the only proper manner in which an exhibit can be prepared. I have heard quite a few remarks at feedback fora that have made me fearful that this trend is increasing. The basic problem with this approach, in my opinion, is that it offers the exhibitor two choices: Do it our

way or don't do it at all. Naturally some people, including myself, in part, are choosing the second option. In this way the Manual of Philatelic Judging indirectly discourages exhibitors, and results in fewer exhibits.

I think a lot of this effect stems from the tone in which much of the Manual of Philatelic Judging is written, which has a tendency to be overly directive and to talk down to its readership. In many places the points made are made as mandates, rather than suggestions. A phrase that pops into my mind often when reading the manual is "Streng verboten, mein Herrn!"

My second concern is about the inadvertent exclusiveness that is implied in the classification scheme for exhibits. I think this stems from the overly specific wording of these definitions within this classification scheme, which does not leave room for much flexibility. For example, there is a large group of exhibits which is not "allowable" in the current version of the manual. These exhibits, which I will for convenience call "Use of Issue Exhibits," show covers of a certain issue or group of stamps without showing the mint or used copies of the stamps themselves. In the subjects chosen, often mid-twentieth century ones, the stamps themselves are common, but many of the uses of the stamps are scarce or philatelically exciting. Hence only covers are shown. Some typical U.S. examples are exhibits of Transports, Prexies, Liberties, or a specific commemorative series. Cover exhibits of issues from foreign countries also fit in this group. In the past such exhibits have been very successful, winning many gold medals and specials, as well as several Grand Awards. The problem is that these exhibits do not fit into any of the Divisions as they are now defined in the Manual of Philatelic Judging. They are not traditional exhibits, because they do not show stamps or archival material. In the past they were considered Postal History, in its broader conception of covers which are not FDC's or event covers. But the new manual uses a narrower concept of Postal History, so the Use of Issue Exhibits do not fit here either. As a result judges have begun to question the viability of these kinds of exhibits at WSP feedback fora and in individual critiques. At one recent feedback forum a senior judge said an exhibit of this kind "falls between two stools."

There is a large group of exhibits that fit into this category, and I have personally observed exhibitors of this material cut back on showing existing exhibits, decide not to create new exhibits, or give up exhibiting altogether, because they perceive that their kinds of exhibits are no longer being given due consideration, in part because of the new trends they believe are set in the Manual of Philatelic Judging.

The larger problem is, I think, that the classification of exhibits is too rigid in the way the divisions are described, so that the wording weeds out existing groups of exhibits and discourages new kind of exhibits from being developed. I chose the Use of Issue Exhibits for my discussion, because I happen to be familiar with them and have watched a decline in exhibiting in this area. It may well be that other kinds of exhibits are affected also.

At any rate, these are my concerns. It has been suggested that I write an article, perhaps in TPE, about them, but having watched people back away from exhibiting just because of a couple of email exchanges and informal conversations on the subject, I was afraid the more publicity would just lead to more defections. So my rough drafts of articles on these topics have been shelved.

Steve, let me once again reiterate that my main focus here is the decline of exhibits. I am not writing in defense of certain topics or styles just because I or my friends happen to exhibit them.

Let me also once again thank you for taking time to address my ideas.

Dickson

**From Steve Reinhard to Dickson Preston**

**2 April 2013**

Hi Dickson,

Thank you for taking the time to draft such a detailed response. I really appreciate your interest in this and hope, going forward, we can address the issues. First, let me say that it was not clear from your first email that you were talking about “usage” exhibits. Rather, it appeared that you were lamenting that the rules seem to prohibit “modern” exhibits from getting a fair evaluation, which, as you must now understand, I am in disagreement with. Yes, “usage” exhibits do seem to fall outside the strict rules of any one class or division. Proper “usage” exhibits are really just a part of what has been come to be known as a “Traditional” exhibit. So the question then becomes “Where are the other parts?” The problem often is that the exhibitor is confused between what is “usage” and what is “postal history.” I have seen exhibit titles that include the term “usage” but are actually rate studies (Postal History) or have an actual postal history thread. CANEJ recognizes that there seems to be a growing trend to mix Postal History and Traditional in the same exhibit. It is often difficult for judges to determine whether an exhibit is Postal History (with some stamps) or Traditional (with a Postal History story). We have told judges that when in doubt they should just judge the exhibit using the UEEF and its categories. While I understand that you are opposed to the use of “points,” it would be a tremendous help when using the UEEF in these cases to actually point the exhibit. The points are the same for all FIP classes except Thematic and Youth. Perhaps it is time to add “usage” exhibits to those where the UEEF is used without regard to the strict rules of Traditional or Postal History??? A serious problem with some of the “usage” exhibits that I have seen is that the exhibitor thinks that just mounting all the wonderful “usages” that he has found for a particular issue makes for a great exhibit. The exhibitor will not score many Treatment “points” unless he comes up with a way to develop the exhibit from beginning to end. A “usage” exhibit is not a way to throw page after page of wonderful covers from a collection into the frames. Judges should be pointing this out to exhibitors when they come across this problem. I personally feel that there is a place for “usage” exhibits in our scheme of things. Please, not a separate class or division, though. Instead, let’s bring in points and use them in conjunction with the UEEF to truly make the judging of philatelic exhibits “uniform.” Best wishes, Steve.

**From Dickson Preston to Steve Reinhard**

**4 April 2013**

Hi, Steve,

Thanks for your detailed, thoughtful reply and for taking the time to dig into some of the issues involved.

Please remember that my main purpose in bringing these issues up was not related to the judging of certain kinds of exhibits but to my personal observation that WSP is losing exhibits and exhibitors because of issues relating to the current Manual of Philatelic Judging.

One area in which this is happening is what we who created them twenty years ago referred to as “rates and uses” or “issue” exhibits, of which *Prexie* exhibits and Transport exhibits are examples. Although the use of a single issue was often the scope, and frankings were important, the main informational and research elements which explain the material were the rates, routes, markings, and conditions of dispatch of the covers shown. That is why they were shown as postal history.

These exhibits were very successful for twenty years. They are not a new kind of exhibit and they were quite popular, but, for whatever reason, they were not considered when the new edition of the manual was created. Hence exhibitors of this group of exhibits are now left out in a kind of

philatelic wilderness and, as a natural result, the number of exhibits and exhibitors of this area is declining.

Is the loss of this group of exhibits a big deal for WSP? Perhaps, in the greater scheme of things, it does not matter so much. I am not writing to advocate any changes. It is really up to CANEJ to decide whether any of this is worth pursuing.

Dickson

**From Steve Reinhard to Dickson Preston**

**4 April 2013**

Dickson, One last thought! You mentioned your thoughts about writing articles on this topic for TPE. What would be very helpful for both “usage” exhibitors and judges alike would be an article that provides (1) ideas about how to organize such an exhibit to maximize “treatment” points and (2) what types of usages need to be included in a good exhibit of this material. Right now I doubt that there are many exhibitors or judges who truly understand what a “usage” exhibit is. Steve

**From Dickson Preston to Steve Reinhard**

**4 April 2013**

Hi, Steve,

Thanks for the additional thought. There are, as I see it, quite a few people who understand these kinds of exhibits very well, Steve Suffett, Jeff Shapiro, and myself, three WSP judges, Len Piszkiwicz and Tony Wawrukiewicz, two distinguished philatelists, plus several exhibitors. But I expect you may be right that there is not anyone at the CANEJ level who has much experience creating or working with these kinds of exhibits.

Dickson

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***Postal Bulletin* through 2012 Now Online**

by

Tony Wawrukiewicz

After over three years of concerted effort the entire *Postal Bulletin (PB)* of the United States exists as a fully searchable database. Every page of every issue from inception in 1880 to the last issue of 2012 has been scanned, OCR’ed and made fully searchable. The URL of the site is: <http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/>

For those who have not seen articles I have written on using the site, once you get to the site's home page, be sure to read the FAQ section (which explains in detail how to use the site) and browser information on the site that you need to follow if you are to have the site fully functional. Figure 2 shows the Browser information.

It may be of interest to readers to know that the *U.S. Postal Laws & Regulations* from 1794-1948 will exist as a similar fully searchable database by July of this year.

## 1940 Mail to Germany, Released 1946

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



Figure 1: Registered surface letter to Munich, held throughout the war and released in 1946.

The Tatham Stamp Company of Springfield, MA, in operation from the mid-1920s to the end of the Prexie Era, was a leader both in selling stamps and coins and promoting these hobbies. As an added bonus, the Tatham Company archives have provided postal historians with a wealth of material to collect and research.

In this example from the Tatham Archives, a registered letter was sent from Tatham in April 1940, ambiguously addressed to the "Munich Mint" in Munich, Germany. It is franked with two 10-cent Prexies, paying the 5 cents per ounce UPU surface rate plus 15 cents fee for international registration with maximum indemnity of US \$9.65.



Figure 2: Returned to sender "Unknown" 7 September 1946.

The Munich Mint was in fact the Bavarian Central Mint (*Bayerisches Hamptmunzamt*), founded in 1158. The Mint's forges were moved to larger quarters in 1809 to a former ducal stable, now known as the Old Mint Yard (*Alte Munze*). The building was extensively damaged during 71 British and American air raids on Munich carried out between 1940 and 1945.

The Tatham cover did not in fact reach Munich until after the end of World War II. Upon arrival by ship in England it was seized by British authorities and opened by Examiner 490 in London. Great Britain and Germany were at war at the time of the April 1940 posting, and examiners considered any registered mail to Germany as a possible source of financing for the Nazi Regime. Thus, it was subject to seizure, as was non-registered mail with contents to condemn.

The Tatham cover was ultimately released by postwar British officials and forwarded to the “Munich Mint” sometime in 1946. A label written in German was attached either by British censors at the Bonn censorship office or by German officials at the Railway Post Office at Cologne reminding the addressee that any reply to this correspondence had to conform to strict post-war regulations. The label reads, in full: “Detained mail released by censor. If a reply is to be sent, it must be in accordance with current regulations.” What these regulations might have been remains unclear. They may have referred to prohibition of any reference to the Third Reich.

The cover was eventually returned to Tatham in September 1946, marked “inconnu” or unknown.



Figure 3: Mail condemned at Bermuda, forwarded to UK for disposition and released in 1946.

The second example of mail with this post office advisory, shown here, illustrates mail condemned at Bermuda that was forwarded to England for disposition after the censor station’s closure on 1 May 1944. The wavy line **RELEASED** marking was applied in England.

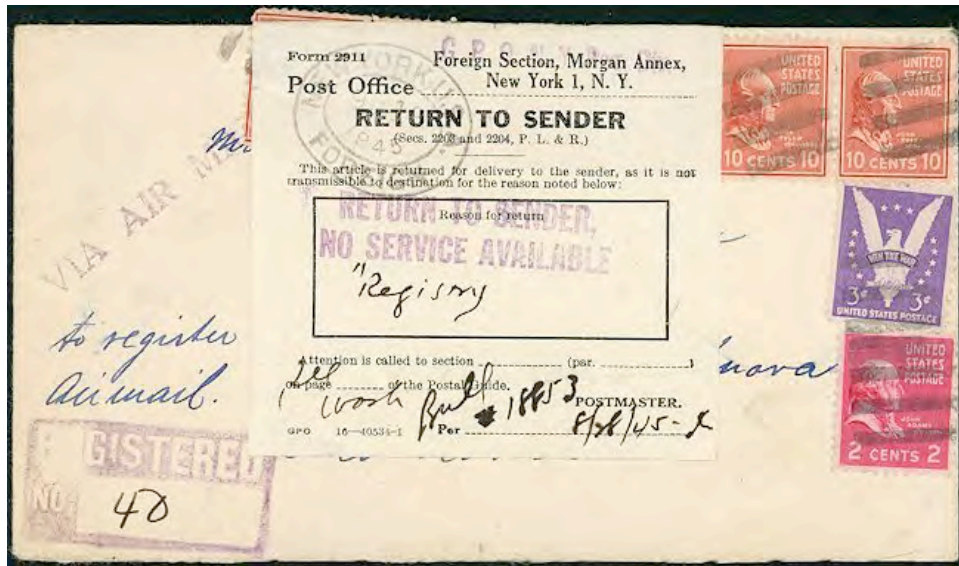
Although examples of mail with this particular post office advisory sticker are not frequently seen, considerable mail released to Germany in 1946 is known to have passed through the UK. One reference sites 80 bags of “Old Mail” being processed in June 1946 containing a significant amount of correspondence from Central and South America. Some of it was docketed upon arrival, indicating receipt in late August and early September 1946.

**Source:** Tony Brooks, “Detained Mail to Germany Released from Censorship in June 1946: More of the Story.” *Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin*, 37:1(January 2010), pp. 21-26.

### Jumping the Gun to Czechoslovakia

by

Bob Hohertz



Resumption of postal service to European countries liberated in World War II began with nonillustrated post cards to Sicily and the south of Italy on 16 February 1944 and concluded with special delivery service to Germany on 4 August 1948. According to *Postal Bulletin* #18853 (August 28, 1945): “Effective at once letters not exceeding two ounces and post cards shall be accepted for dispatch by air or by surface means to destinations in Czechoslovakia.” The Bulletin went on to say, however: “Registration, special-delivery, money-order and parcel-post services are not available.”

Nevertheless, the cover shown here was sent by registered airmail to an inhabitant of the Upper Silesian town of Krnova on 17 September 1945. It is franked with six 10-cent Prexies, one 2-cent, and a 3-cent Win the War stamp, apparently over paying by fifteen cents. Of particular interest is that it was returned two days later marked “**RETURN TO SENDER, NO SERVICE AVAILABLE,**” with an added manuscript “registry” and a reference to “Bull # 18853.” We are accustomed to seeing Form 2911 indicating that mail could not be delivered, but not that, literally, a service could not be provided.

While the sender’s return address was Brooklyn, it was posted at Effort, Pennsylvania, where the postal clerk probably should have known to not accept registered mail in the first place. However, with services to individual countries expanding every few days, it’s difficult to fault anyone for not knowing that the sender was jumping the gun.

According to *Postal Bulletin* #18872 (November 2, 1945), all classes of service to Czechoslovakia were restored as of 29 October 1945.







So, what became immediately evident to the Japanese language censor that was not clear to a casual viewer of this cover? Here's the other part of the story. On the back of the envelope three lines of Japanese manuscript writing may be found. The first line reads "16. 7. 21," indicating the date Showa 16 (1941), July, 21. The second line reads, *Heiyo Maru*; and the third, Katsuko Higa, writer and presumably the spouse of the addressee. Finally, the Japanese writing on the front of the cover indicates the true location of the addressee -- Potosi, Bolivia, South America.

The address, written in "plain English" before us, now makes perfect sense, for we see the Spanish language "Senor" and "Casilla" (post box), and the letters, "S A," straddling a 5-cent Prexie. And finally, the franking is 35 cents, the airmail rate to Bolivia in effect since 1 December 1937. What must have confused the original postal clerk was the phonetic spelling of the country, Bolivia, reflecting pronunciation by a writer unfamiliar with English and who may have had difficulty pronouncing "r"s and "l"s.

But there's more. On 26 July 1941 Japanese assets in the U.S. and Great Britain were frozen, leading almost 75 percent of Japan's foreign trade to a standstill. This fact brings the *Heiyo Maru* into play here. The N.Y.K. cargo-passenger vessel sailed from Yokohama reaching Los Angeles harbor, via San Francisco, on 19 July 1941. According to the *Los Angeles Times* it departed on 21 July at 3 pm for Valparaiso, via Manzanillo, Mexico. The ship carried a cargo of rayon destined for Mexico. Likely this was one of the last cargo laden Japanese ships to make the transpacific crossing until after the war.

The *Heiyo Maru*, which later served as a Japanese troop transport, was torpedoed near Truk on 17 January 1943 and sent to the bottom by the submarine, U.S.S. *Whale*.

And what about the diplomat, Ryotoku Higa? Not likely a consular employee, after all, but more likely an immigrant to landlocked Bolivia, whose wife was planning to join him after debarking *Heiyo Maru* at Valparaiso and venturing north by train to Potosi. The couple would be among the 600 or so aliens of Japanese ancestry living in Bolivia on the eve of World War II.