

OREGON STATE BUTTON SOCIETY

GUIDE FOR COMPETITORS, CLERKS and JUDGES & OTHER MEMBERS WHO WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR HOBBY

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Comments specific to clerking duties are italicized for easy reference.

INTRODUCTION

This guide is for the beginning button collector, as well as those who are already competing, clerking or judging button competitions. It is full of practical information that will stand you in good stead if you study and apply it to your button experience. I strongly urge everyone who'll be involved in show competitions -- in any capacity -- to reread this guide before each show, especially as pertains to clerking and judging. This 2017 update replaces all previous versions of the OSBS Guide for Exhibitors/Competitors, Clerks & Judges.

FOR THE BEGINNER

Putting a tray of buttons together properly requires knowledge of almost everything in the "Official NBS Classification & Competition Guidelines" handbook (aka The Blue Book) -- or at least knowing what's in it and how to find it. There is an excellent Table of Contents in the front of the blue handbook that makes it very easy to find what you're looking for. In addition, the new Glossary of General Terms (page 73) refers you back to specific pages, so make generous use of this very helpful tool.

The classification handbook automatically comes with your membership in National Button Society, along with five excellent bulletins for ridiculously low dues. If you're not already a member of NBS, you are strongly urged to join. Contact the NBS Secretary/Membership Officer Susan Porter, 1564 Wilson Road, Ramona, CA 92065-3539, snoozin8@cox.net or go to the NBS website at nationalbuttonociety.org.

How to get started? Especially if you don't have a lot of buttons? Review what you do have and see what you have a good start on. It could be a material -- a color -- a subject, etc.

After you have decided what kind of button you want to use to make a nice tray, then decide what size you will concentrate on. Unless you have a lot of buttons to work with, you probably will need to start with "25 any size". That will allow you to get a tray together sooner than if you are restricted to any of the other size requirements. See the NBS handbook regarding sizes (Pages 3-4, 2017-2018 Edition). Some types of buttons don't come in all sizes, so that may be a factor in helping you decide what size groupings you will card together.

If you want to do all one material, for example, use the classification system to guide you as to what is required to completely represent that material. Sometimes more detailed classifications are available in past NBS bulletins. However, if you decide to use one of those more in-depth classifications, be sure that it conforms to the most recent NBS handbook, as some changes are made in every edition. Do as much research as you can on your choice. Most long-time collectors are more than willing to answer your questions, so feel free to ask for help.

Make yourself a checklist of all the different types of buttons you want to look for to complete your tray. Carry it with you when you go button shopping, especially at state events (show, workshops, picnic), and even at local club meetings.

Let's consider, for example, a topic like "Birds, Assorted Materials." What should you put on this tray? It tells you in our handbook under "Complete Representation" and "When do PICTORIALS take precedence over materials" (Pages 5 and Page 6, respectively, 2017-2018 Edition). This tells you to have a representative assortment of birds, which means as many different kinds as

possible, preferably identifiable, and best to label if known. Next most important is the variety of materials and techniques, according to the material sections 1-15.

After you have filled in your tray with the desired number of buttons, then you can start the almost never-ending process of upgrading it to your own satisfaction. As soon as you are far enough along in putting one or more special trays together, ask a more advanced collector to look them over -- give you suggestions -- look for errors, etc. Eventually when you are ready, have an award sponsored (either by your club, a friend, or even yourself) that matches what you are working on. But this is only possible if you start out following the national rules in The Blue Book. (All state button societies follow national rules.)

Even though I started collecting many years ago, I can still remember how overwhelmed I felt at first -- how everything seemed so foreign and strange, even the vocabulary. I can't tell you how many times I read and reread The Blue Book -- each time gleaning one or more new facts that stuck with me. I still don't know everything in it by heart, but I can find what I need. So keep the current "NBS Blue Book, Official NBS Classification and Competition Guidelines" booklet handy and refer to it often.

Mounting Your Buttons

You really should have all your buttons mounted on work cards in whatever categories make the most sense at your stage. This helps you see at a glance what you have to work with. It also shows off the buttons to a better advantage than when they are all piled in boxes. Even the more ordinary buttons can take on a more interesting allure when carded attractively with similar buttons.

You might want to pick a layout design, draw it on a card, and start mounting buttons as you find them. Templates are available through the mail or at National from various makers. Both Portland area button clubs have a variety of them to loan to their members through the club librarians. These make it really easy to get some nice patterns laid out on your mounting cards.

Pieces of scrap mat board in various sizes can be purchased fairly cheaply from picture frame shops. Trim to 9 x 12 size, but save the smaller pieces for miscellaneous button mountings. Artist supply stores sell poster board that makes great mounting cards. The poster board will need to be cut into the correct size, so ask your store if they will do that at no charge. Try to find out when their regular sales are held to get the best price.

For mounting the buttons, it's preferable to use plastic-coated copper wire from telephone or computer cables. It's recently come to my attention that this kind of wire is being replaced by extremely fine fiber optic wiring and some day may not be readily available to us collectors. So, if you're around when these changeovers are being made, try to get a good supply of the discarded wire to set aside for the future. Pipe cleaner is generally not recommended for many buttons that could be damaged by moisture absorbed by the pipe cleaner from the atmosphere, which may cause its inner wire to rust. However, modern pipe cleaner is available at craft stores that may not rust, and works best to anchor down some buttons that want to twist around or wobble.

To punch the holes, a **short** awl is best for good control. You can get these in hardware stores in a couple widths. You should back up your punching process with a Styrofoam board about an inch or more thick, or folded towels, or other protection against punching holes in yourself or other surfaces.

HOW TO WRITE (OR READ) AN AWARD

Judging is not a perfect science, but we are always trying to do better. Perhaps one of the most important ways to improve matters is to write better and more understandable awards. In order to do a good job of competing or judging, we need good awards to work with. Good award writing is a skill that comes with practice.

We usually have some awards with no entries because they are difficult or almost impossible to assemble. Sometimes the wording is ambiguous; i.e., "red, white and blue plastic." Does this mean red buttons, blue buttons and white buttons, or does it mean all three colors on each button? Does it mean that decorative finish or other material embellishment may serve for the color? Do the colors have to be on the back at the shank, or just on the top? How an award is worded can make all the difference.

How do you write an award to be exactly what you want it to be? How do you read an award to put the best possible tray together? Here are two similar, but quite different, awards:

Class # 6-0 Black glass, specialized to flowers, assorted

Class # 19-2 Flowers assorted, specialized to black glass

These are both for flowers on black glass, but how do they differ?

In example #1 the prime importance is placed on the selection of black glass. The greatest number of classes of black glass portraying flowers would be the first consideration. And, as our rules stand, such an award would have to be labeled as to class and mounted in numerical order by class number. The secondary consideration would be the selection of flower types. The best tray would be the one that used the greatest number of classes of black glass and then the best variety of flower types.

In example #2, according to the classification, you would want to select as many different varieties of flowers as possible, using both the whole number 19-2, as well as the decimal numbers 19-2.1 thru 19-2.6: chrysanthemums, iris, lilies of the valley, pansies, roses, and thistles. All flowers not having their own decimal number would fall under the whole number assorted class, and each different type of unlisted flower would count. "Flowers assorted" includes all identifiable flowers. Of course, stylized examples are not acceptable, because they are considered patterns and not pictorial. Of secondary importance in this award is the specialization to black glass, so after you have selected as many different types of flowers, then you should try to cover the black glass classes which haven't already been included, using duplicate flowers.

On Oregon judging sheets, we take into consideration the levels of importance of an award in the points allowed for the different items. In other words, we weight the different items according to how the award is written.

If your award is for specific subject matter and not specialized to a certain material, then one should use as wide an assortment of materials as possible, and as many different kinds of flowers as possible. See "Frequently Asked Competition Questions", page 5 of The Blue Book, paragraph titled "What Is COMPLETE REPRESENTATION?"

Whenever you write an award for competition, it is best if you have already tried to put that tray together. Firstly, you know that it is feasible; secondly, you have probably discovered the pitfalls of the award and can write it to help avoid many problems. Please don't submit awards that you create from your imagination, just because, for example, you think they would be pretty or fun to

see mounted. Have some practical working experience behind what you submit to help make your award as clear and unambiguous as possible. If you are not sure how to write your award correctly for what you want, ask for help before you submit it.

On any award that could be long and complicated to judge, consider requiring labeling, even though national rules don't. This is especially true for diminutive awards, and many of the black glass awards, especially size small, and particularly if all black.

COMPETITORS' TIPS AND POINTERS

Dispelling a Myth

Have you ever heard that if you don't have such-and-such a button on a certain tray, you don't stand a chance to win? For example, an 18th century button on a Div. IX award? This just is not true. One or even a few buttons cannot cause a tray to win a blue ribbon if the rest of the award's classes are not adequately covered. Here's an example of one of my past experiences in a national competition. I entered diminutives, materials assorted, but when I heard that one tray had three rarities that I had only dreamed of finding at that time -- a Wedgwood, a Satsuma, and a Tingue -- I figured I didn't stand a chance. Imagine my thrill when the showroom opened to see that I had the blue ribbon! Why? Because I covered the materials the best, and the other tray was lacking many materials. The judges did their job well, and of course, I did have some choice buttons on my tray amongst the more common ones. Do your homework -- study the award -- cover the classes as best you can, and you should do well.

Study the NBS Classification Book (aka The Blue Book)

Failing to study the glossary or the guidelines for competitors and judges continues to cause problems. It is absolutely necessary for all competitors to study the correct edition of the blue handbook before assembling trays for that year. Do not follow all that you read in various articles and books about buttons -- even those in the NBS bulletins, as that information can become outdated.

Read the Award Several Times

Read the award before starting your tray -- reread it while putting it together -- and again when it is finished. Verify section and class numbers and size and quantity before, during and after doing a tray. If it hasn't happened to you yet, it will -- that you get off on some tangent, forgetting some aspect of the award. Listen to this voice of experience here. Beware of any last minute changes on your tray, as that is the time you're most likely to forget to reread the award and make a mistake in size or other requirement of the award.

Understanding Decorative Finish and Other Material Embellishment

Confusion continues between decorative finish and other material embellishment. In the past we used the word "trim" rather loosely for either decorative finish or other material embellishment. That word "trim" has been banished and now we specify what we mean -- DF or OME. These two categories are well described in the glossary section of the NBS Blue Book (Pages 74 and 77, 2017-2018 Edition). Read and reread this whenever you are writing an award or starting to do a tray following an award that considers this aspect of our buttons. Briefly, the highlights are:

DF (decorative finish): A surface treatment or coating. Included are: stencil, transfer, lacquer, tole, enamel (when not the focus of the button, paint, dye, pearlized finish, frosted, plastic paint-like finish on modern glass, cold plastic enamel, gilding, wash, luster, tint, other finishing color, metalization, etc., applied in full, partial or in combination.

Note: Enamel buttons have their own material section, but to qualify as enamel, approximately 50% of the surface must be enameled, **or** the focal point of the button must be enameled. What do we mean "focal point"? The enameling could be in the center only, but less than 50% of the surface. But if this is the case, the enameled portion should have subject matter that creates the focal point -- not just be plain enamel. Or, in the case of the rare plique-a-jours, no matter how much is enameled or where it is found on the button, National accepts them as enamel buttons (Section 4, Class 4-1.7). So, if your metal button has, for example, just a band of enameling around the outside edge, it would be classed as a metal button (Section 10) with enamel decorative finish (DF).

OME (other material embellishment): A material, different from the base material, added onto or inlaid into the surface during or after formation of the button, used to enhance the face design. Examples are: rhinestones/pastes, cut steel or other metal pieces, shell/pearl, fabric including sequins, beads and thread, celluloid. Black glass OME on clear or colored glass is considered OME, and vice versa. Refer to the glossary (p.77) for OME in the NBS Blue Book for more information.

Labeling

Certain classes require labeling, per The Blue Book. On awards which do not require labeling per the Blue Book, be sure to check the award description to see if labeling *is required by the sponsor* in that specific award. Here are some other ideas to consider.

1. Certainly, if you are using a rare or unusual button that most judges might not be familiar with, label it. Often the owner of a button has done special research and has information not generally known -- so label it for the judges and other collectors alike.
2. Label your buttons for materials, even if not required, especially if not readily apparent. It helps the judges to determine what the material is, and it should aid you in winning points. Judges are all volunteers who do their best, but some are less informed than the person entering that particular competition and may not recognize some materials for what they are. Make every effort to be accurate, as mislabeling could be disadvantageous. For example, you label a button as, say, horn, but it actually is composition; however, you've already used a composition (labeled correctly), which results in a duplication of material and thus one less opportunity to earn material points. You probably will not have additional points deducted by the judges, but they should note such errors on the tray slip. These are not disqualifying errors. (However, errors in labeling when labeling *is* required will disqualify the tray.) See page 5 in the Blue Book.
3. Label anytime you think it can aid the judges. For example, if a tray of small buttons of black glass pictorials were labeled, even if not required, this might help the judges' tired eyes see something they could otherwise have missed -- and earn you more points.

4. Label on the front of the tray, not on the back, to aid not only the judges, but also to add educational value for viewers at the show. Labeling must be typed or printed legibly -- please be neat. If you feel it is necessary to include documentation for a button, you may place it in the back of the tray, and add a note to the front of the tray under the button to "See doc. in back". (See page 6 in the Blue Book.)
5. Do not label the same class more than one time: i.e., even if you have more than one moonglow on an assorted glass tray, label only one of them "moonglow". You can earn points only one time for each different thing, and it just hampers the judges' work to have to read through duplicate labeling and causes unnecessary confusion. Of course, if you're doing an award where labeling is required, you may have to use the same class number more than once. Another exception to this would be if you were using several variations of one number, e.g. Lusters Assorted, to show all the different lusters that do not have their own decimal number. You would duplicate class numbers, but use different wording.
6. Label any back interest (not visible from the front) for which the judges might award points, depending on the kind of award, such as: back marks, shank types, back types, etc. You cannot expect to receive credit for such buttons if they are not labeled.
7. **Just because something isn't listed in the judging criteria doesn't mean you can't or shouldn't use it.** It would be good to label it, though, to call attention to it, as some judges, particularly the newer ones, don't always catch points if not check-listed on the judging sheets. It's very difficult to know in advance every possible button that a competitor could use on a tray. So even though not shown on the judging criteria, your button may be more than just appropriate -- it may be rare or unusual, so call the judges' attention to it by labeling.

Making Your Labels

If you don't have a computer, type your labels on paper just as you want them to appear on the tray, then take them to a photocopier that can reduce the image to 50%. You don't have to reduce that much, but it is still very readable at 50%. Many people find the tiny labels less obtrusive on the tray. Make sure the photocopier is printing as dark as you need to clearly read the small print. If you have a computer, select the size of font and type style that will create the easiest-to-read labels and type and print the page. Now it's time to cut and paste, made much easier by the newer glue sticks on the market made of the removable "Post-It Note" type glue. No more worry if you get the label on crooked or want to change it to another place on the card -- or even to reuse it another time.

Labeling devices of various types are available on the market that can create self-sticking labels. Visit your office supply stores to see what they have. There are also ways to design your mounting card with preprinted labels, if you're computer savvy and clever.

Mounting Your Buttons for Competition

When mounting sew-throughs, it's good to use two small holes; otherwise, the button may twist around in one hole and not stay in the position you want. A corncob holder makes a handy 2-hole punch. If you want to call attention to the fact that it's a sew-through, use a contrasting colored wire. Otherwise, you might want to choose a wire color similar to that of the button.

Shank buttons usually need only one hole -- but make it no bigger than necessary to push the shank through so the button won't spin in the hole. However, do make the hole large enough so the button will come off fairly easily if the judges need to inspect it.

Some buttons are harder to mount and require special techniques such as:

- Larger or special shaped holes for those kinds of shanks
- A dab of "Fun-Tak" or similar product to hold in position, but use this mainly when displaying trays -- not for long-term mounting, as it can affect some materials.
- "Spiders" for fragile or broken shanks or pad or thread backs. Spiders of crossed wires with a shank are specially made for button collectors. They can be shaped and trimmed to fit a button, but are somewhat difficult to use on smaller buttons. Spiders can also be used to reverse mount buttons to show back interest.
- A small piece of clear plastic wrap (Saran, etc.) can be used to mount a fabric or any fragile shank button. Cover and form a twisted tail to poke through the hole in the card, and hold in place with a piece of tape on the back of the card. Not recommended for long-term storage, as the button can't "breathe" in the plastic wrap.
- Elastic thread may be used instead of wires when you want to be able to look at the backs without removing the button, such as when the back types or marks are important. You may also use acetate "cards" or designed cards with acetate openings in this case.

Spiders and prepunched acetate sheets are available from dealers at national conventions, and through mail order. Look for advertisements in various state and national bulletins.

Assembling Your Trays

Patterns

I recommend drawing patterns using prefab templates to fit regulation sizes. This helps avoid the problems of miscounting or mismeasuring, and it usually makes for a neater looking tray. Buttons mounted inside the circles can look better than if buttons are mounted somewhat haphazardly, giving the impression of "wandering" on the card. Circles help focus the eye on the buttons, and the patterns can add to the attractiveness of the tray. Do try to center your buttons in the circles. There are some who don't care for these patterns of circles for mounting, and that's okay too, as long as the buttons are well placed and neatly attached.

Punching Holes

How you punch your holes is important. Self-shank buttons, glass for example, need one larger hole so the button fits flatter against the card, or two little holes so that you can pull the wire through and twist it down tightly to keep the button from wobbling and tipping on the card. You don't want some of your buttons flopping down loosely when displayed.

Placement of Buttons

Of course, we judge only the buttons. But other factors such as neatness in mounting and labeling, positioning of buttons on the card, and how they are affixed can possibly have an effect on the outcome. Even the color of the mounting card can make a difference. For most buttons, white or cream is usually the best. Other colors may detract from the beauty and details of some buttons, and dull the overall effect.

Where you place the buttons is important too. You should strive for a balanced look. The size of the button may determine its placement on the card. For example, you're doing a tray of 42 small, but you have to use one or more small-smalls (3/8-5/8"). They probably should be

somewhere in the center, and if you have just one, it should be right in the center. Usually when you're doing smalls and you choose to include small-smalls, it's because they represent something unusual or rare or cover a class for which you have no "regular" small examples. You don't want your small-smalls to look as if they're skulking off to the corner somewhere. No, you want them to shout, "I'm small and proud of it!"

Regarding Balance

Sizes: Try to spread the biggest ones around equally -- not top or bottom heavy. This is one of the advantages of the prefab templates -- they've already taken such factors into consideration. However, if you're doing straight rows, you will probably want the smallest at the top, on down to the largest at the bottom (*unless required to mount in class order.*) Color: Don't put all one color together -- mix them up as evenly as possible, unless the award calls for grouping by color; i.e., if you have two yellows, put them opposite each other. Materials: Mix them up on an assorted tray. Don't put the same materials together if you have options.

Where to Mount Special Buttons

You should try to mount any rarities and other "counters" where they are most obvious to the judges -- and the viewing public -- in the middle of the card. Try not to mount a choice button where the tray slip (or a ribbon) can cover it up. In fact, when you are choosing layout designs, keep that in mind. If your tray is to enter in competition, you might want a design that does not go clear out to the corners and obliges you to hide one or more buttons under the tray slip and (hopefully) your ribbon.

Directional Impact

If you have buttons with directional impact -- facing right or left, for example, place the button so the eye is directed into the center of the card, and not to the outer edge; e.g., a person looking right should go on the left side of the card.

Some Additional Pointers

The latest classification handbook has combined some items into one class number that previously had their own classes. These items are separated by commas, which means that **each one of them can be counted**. An example of this would be Class # 7-4.12 Overlay Glass, including encrusted, salt, sheath, sheet, etc. Each different type of overlay counts separately, even though they have the same class number. But when you see one or more items separated by a slash (/) that means one or the other, and only one counts. An example of this would be Class# 7-5.1 Acid etched/frosted (matte). Although that DF technique is somewhat different, the result is similar enough that it would only count once. We have tried to follow that system on our OSBS judging criteria, as well. For further explanation, read page 7 of the "2017-2087 NBS Blue Book".

On the OSBS judging criteria when we say 1 or 2 points "if represented", we mean that you earn points just one time for that line item, no matter how many buttons on the tray might represent that item. In buttondom you are not supposed to get points more than once for each class represented, unless the award or judging sheet specifically calls for it. Complete representation is the goal, and duplicating classes hurts your chances for that.

OSBS GUIDE FOR JUDGES AND CLERKS

1. Pre-show preparation

Study carefully "The Blue Book and Competition" section in the correct year's edition of the NBS Blue Book (pages 3-9 of the 2017-2018 Edition). For every class you intend to represent on your tray, look in both the "Section and Class Appendix" (begins page 32) and the "Glossary of General Terms" (begins page 73.) There may be new, helpful information there to guide you in your choices.

- a. Review this OSBS Guide.
- b. All judges should have with them:
 - 1) the appropriate year of the NBS Blue Book
 - 2) this OSBS Guide
 - 3) the list of state awards to be judged
 - 4) button measures (preferably one of each style)
 - 5) magnifying glass
 - 6) pocket flashlight
 - 7) pencil and eraser
 - 8) magnet
- c. *Clerks might want to bring a pocket calculator for adding points.*

2. Judging Procedures.

Even though we indicate below the duties appropriate to clerks or judges, all members of the judging team should be aware of what needs to be done. Judges should not sit idle while various clerking duties are waiting to be done -- it's okay to help the clerk.

- a. Clerk: *When a stack of trays is delivered to the judging table, check that all trays are in the same competitive category (award number), and that they are all listed on the control card on the top of the stack.*
- b. Clerk: *Mark the total number of entries for that award on each tray slip in the proper space -- please don't forget! This seems to be easily overlooked, and it's such an important bit of information to the entrant.*
- c. Clerk: *Arrange trays in numerical order by entrant number and so list them on the judging sheets. The latest version of our judging sheets provides a gray column between each white column. Unless you have many entries for one award, which is not too likely at a state show, use just the white columns when listing the entrants' numbers at the top. This helps visually to keep each column separate and avoid errors in score keeping.*
- d. Clerk/judges: *Remember, never stack wood frames on top of plastic holders. If you have both types of trays in one award, you will need to make two stacks, one for each type. This is to prevent possible damage to fragile buttons in the plastic holders.*
- e. Clerk: *Write your name and the judges' names at bottom of judging sheets.*

- f. Clerk/judges: Verify that buttons on all trays have been counted and measured for size. In Oregon we try to have that done before judging starts, but sometimes run out of time to do all the trays. Look at the "C/M" box on the tray slips for the signature of the person who did C/M. If not there, count and measure each tray, according to the separate "Counting & Measure Procedure" on Page 20 of this guide. If any trays were measled during the C/M process, verify that the measle was correctly given.
- g. Judges: Before you begin judging, read the award thoroughly and verify that each tray fits the award.
- h. Judges: First scan all trays for obvious errors, such as wrong age (division), material, or class number. When in doubt, you may remove a button for checking type of shank, material, etc. **Caution**: Use the utmost care in removing buttons to avoid damage or breakage! Never remove more than one button from any tray at the same time. Also, never remove more than one card from its holder at the same time. If there is still some doubt, consult the Chair of Judges before disqualifying the tray. Give the exhibitor the benefit of the doubt! (More about that later.)
- i. Judges: Should the exhibitor's name appear anywhere on the tray, it must be disqualified.
- j. Clerk: Call off each of the judging criteria and wait for the judges to tell you "yes" or "no" before moving on.
- k. Judges: The judging sheets accompanying each group of trays list the criteria on which you are to judge the trays. You may add or delete items if deemed appropriate any time during the judging process. These criteria are just a guideline, and it's impossible to make them 100% complete in advance of doing the award or seeing the trays.
- l. Clerk: Return the judging sheets with the stack for later reference. The separate materials checklist, if used to supplement the judging sheets, should also stay with the judging sheets of the applicable awards.
- m. Clerk: When entering points on the judging sheets for a particular line item, record only the points for that item on that line; i.e., don't lump or group points for factors that could or should be included in another line item -- use the most appropriate line when recording points. For clarity, when you add a new item to the judging sheet, please write in specifically what it is. If you're careful here, you'll help avoid the need to go back to the judges during the spotting process, and we'll be able to explain exactly how the tray was judged if it's questioned.
- n. Clerk: Watch the number of points you write in. If a judge calls out four things worth 2 points each, be sure you write in 8, not 4. Reviewing past judging sheets revealed cases where an odd number of points was given when each item was worth 2 points. If noted correctly, that would not be possible. We purposely weight certain items as worth 2 or 3 points, as that is the main focus of the award. Other items may earn only 1 point each, so it's very important that the points are recorded accurately.
- o. Clerk: Don't use check marks on the judging sheets instead of number of points. When some items are worth 1 point, and others 2 or 3, it becomes confusing to add a long

column of check marks that have different point values – especially when under pressure, which can lead to errors in determining the correct winners. Double check your totals to make sure they are correct. Sounds obvious, but it is not unusual for the spotters to find incorrect addition, giving prizes to the wrong entrants.

- p. Clerk: If no point is awarded for the line item, put a “0” in the space to show you did consider that point for the tray, and not just miss it. It’s easy to overlook a few items here and there if good procedures aren’t followed. If a tray is eliminated, please draw a line all the way down the column. On that line, please write a few words to explain the disqualification.
- q. Clerk: When a mistake is found, put a “measle” on the front of the tray just at the right edge of the button, but not on top of it. If the tray is in a plastic holder where the card can move around inside, make sure the card is properly seated in place at the bottom of the holder before affixing the measle.
- r. Judges: Explain on the tray slip as thoroughly as possible the reason for the measle. If more than one kind of error occurs on one tray, use different corresponding colored measles on both the tray and the tray slip to tie your comments to the correct buttons; or you may number the measles and their corresponding comments. You may use the back side of the tray slip if necessary to complete your comments.
- s. Judges: Consistency in judging all trays within an award is very important. If you allow a point for something on one tray, it must be given on all trays entered for that award, if they have the same thing.
- t. Judges: After finding all the listed items of an award, look over the trays for buttons that did not get counted for anything to determine if possibly the judging sheet was lacking those items. Add whatever else seems appropriate.
- u. After initial judging is complete, the clerk should lay out the top 3-5 trays in order according to points scored. Judges should scrutinize the results carefully. If there is any chance that an error was made, check all criteria once more to make sure the original count was accurate.
- v. Clerk: After the final tally of points and laying out the top trays for the judges, be prepared to tell them where each tray fell down or excelled in comparison to the others. This information is readily available from your properly filled in judging sheets. This kind of assistance can help the judges review and analyze their work particularly on the tougher jobs. This information is also needed for the comments on tray slips.
- w. Judges: This is the time for the final assessment of your work. You may ask yourselves if there are any trays that, at first glance, might have placed higher than they did. If necessary, ask the clerk to tell you from the judging sheets why they didn't place higher -
- prove your work to your own satisfaction.
- x. Judges: At this point it may be appropriate to review all contending trays for the rare/unusual possible points. This should include all trays with close points -- even into 4th or 5th place if scores are close.

- y. Clerk: Circle 1st, 2nd, and 3rd awards on the appropriate tray slips. Circle "Judged" or "Disq." on all others. It is redundant to circle 1st and "Judged", for example. And it's inappropriate to circle "Judged" if the tray was disqualified anywhere along in the process, as it was not fully judged.
- z. Clerk: Complete the control card, example shown here. When it comes with the trays to be judged, it will be filled in with award #, description, \$ amount of prizes, etc. You just fill in the entrant numbers, how they placed or were disqualified.

Example of Control Card

C/M [pn] OSBS2017 #1

initial by clerk, or by helper
who counted and measured

1 [7] trays

in numerical order

Division IX: Class 23-7.5. 25 Any. Mosaics. Refer to page 63 of the NBS Spiral 2017-2018 Blue Book for description. Note: Do not include precision inlay such as Pietra Dura where pieces are cut to fit hole in base material. (Bryan Gilbert) OSBS

entrant	result	disq.reason	entrant	result	disq.reason	entrant	result	disq.reason
# 2	[3]rd		# 15	[d] too small		#	[]	
# 4	[✓]		# 16	[1]st		#	[]	
# 7	[2]nd		# 20	[✓]		#	[]	
# 11	[✓]		#	[]		#	[]	

[16] 1st (\$5)
[7] 2nd (\$3)
[2] 3rd (\$2)

Judg# Print Name Judg# Print name

- aa. Judges: Sign each tray slip and control card legibly with your **first initial and full last name**. Clerk: See that your judges sign everything required.
- bb. Judges: Write constructive comments on all tray slips to help the exhibitor understand why the judging went the way it did. Be as thoughtful and complete as you can within the time available. Use the back of the tray slip for additional space to write, if needed. Please write legibly. Avoid negative or frustrating comments.
- 1) Don't tell the entrant to "upgrade with" certain types of buttons, or just in general. We all know that we could upgrade, IF we could find the buttons, IF we could afford them, etc.
 - 2) For the same reasons, don't tell the entrant to "look for" certain buttons. Chances are we've been looking for them for a good while already. That comment just rubs salt in the "wounds".

- 3) Don't say "winners" had such and such buttons. Every entrant is a winner, whether they receive a ribbon or not. We are winners every time we enter a tray because of the new knowledge we have gained in the process.
- 4) Instead, on the 2nd place tray say, "1st place had....". On the 3rd place tray, say "1st and/or 2nd had...." to indicate why they placed higher in that particular competition. And make sure that the tray does not also have those buttons before making that comment.
- 5) On the 1st place tray find some appropriate comment to make also.
- 6) On all trays that don't place, tell them what the 1-2-3-place trays had that they didn't have. If everyone has done their job well, it is a simple matter for the clerk to review the judging sheets and easily tell the judges what appropriate comments to make about what the other trays had that placed them higher.
- 7) Advise entrant of all mislabeling, even when it did not affect the judging outcome. They can learn more that way.
- 8) Find at least one nice thing to say about each tray, even if it's only about one button.

cc. Clerk: Place the winning trays on top of the other trays in order of 1st, 2nd and 3rd with the judging sheets and the control card face down. Place disqualified trays on the bottom of the stack. Always be careful when handling the trays to avoid possible damage to the buttons. If there are any plastic trays in the stack, they must always be on the top, regardless of whether they placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd.

dd. Judges: Do not judge any award you have entered. Ask the Chair of Judges to assign another judge or give the award to another judging team. *Clerks may continue to clerk on awards they have entered, but must be very careful not to make any comments.* If a judge is entered in an award, and there is no other team who can judge it, possibly that judge can change places with the clerk for that award. In that case, of course, the judge should not reveal which tray is his/hers and should make no comments while that award is being judged.

ee. No drink or food is allowed on the judging tables when button trays are there.

3. Ribbons

- a. Duplicate ribbons may be awarded if a tie cannot be broken. Clerk: Be sure to indicate on the tray slip and control cards if there was a tie on 1st, 2nd or 3rd.
- b. If a single tray is entered and, in the opinion of the judges, it qualifies for a first, second or third, that award shall be given. If not, withhold the award. Generally, this would be done only if errors were made or a very poor representation was made of the type of buttons called for in the award. Otherwise, judge the tray as the best one entered that day and not against a dream tray.

4. Reminders

- a. Always use pencils -- no writing in ink is allowed at any time on tray slips, control cards or judging sheets.
- b. If in doubt about a button, consult the Chair(s) of Judging before disqualifying a tray. If a doubt still exists, do not disqualify the tray or deduct any points. Remember, the exhibitor receives the benefit of the doubt, and that means accepting the button as used. Do not rely on "it looks like" or "I think" for making a decision.
- c. Never judge trays on a subjective basis, eye appeal, glitz or glam. The beauty of the tray or the arrangement of buttons is not a consideration. Judge only the buttons, according to the judging criteria. Do not deduct points for damaged buttons (i.e., missing shanks, chipped, worn, etc.).
- d. If judging errors occur, all we can do is apologize and try to profit from the experience for the future. Remember, "To err is human -- to forgive, divine." And if you disagree with the considered decisions of the Chair(s) of Judging, remember that we are all doing our conscientious best, but no one knows everything, and there are always gray areas. Remember, this is not a killer process -- we are all still learning together -- and hopefully having a good time at it.

Spotting is not done to judge the judges nor to rejudge the trays, but to spot-check for errors and to enable the Chair(s) of Judging to answer any questions that may arise. Decisions will not be changed until those who originally judged the tray have been consulted, if at all possible. For this reason, **judges are requested to remain available until all spotting is completed. During this final phase of judging day, please respect the spotters by keeping your conversations in a low tone or elsewhere in the showroom. By that time of the day, they are very tired and need to be able to work without distraction.**

Example of the current style of judging sheet:

Div. I Class # 20-11 Various

Lovers/couples (human only), specialized to all-metal buttons. Decorative finish accepted.

Entrant #																				
3 Pts. if represented:																				
Heads only																				
Fops																				
Mythological couple																				
Egyptian couple																				
Oriental couple																				
Story couple																				
Religious couple																				
Children																				
One seated																				
Both seated																				
Indoors																				
Holding hands																				
Kissing																				
Other																				
Rare/unusual																				
2 Pts. if represented																				
Each different metal material																				
1 Pt. if represented																				
Back mark (if labeled)																				
Openwork																				
Sew-through																				
3 Shape types (3 pts. max.)																				
Total for this page:																				

0

JUDGING TIPS AND POINTERS

1. The use of more than one of each type of "counter" or each class on a tray is not a plus. One may use as many counters as possible when making up a tray, but the use of more than one of each type is a minus situation. The exception to this is for those classes which list more than one type, separated by commas, which means that each type counts. If separated by slashes, use only one.
2. The use of damaged buttons should not cause the judges to take away points from a tray. We don't all have equal access to buttons, and what is common in one area may be difficult to find in another. However, if the damaged button is a common one and could easily be upgraded, that suggestion might be made on the tray slip.
3. Remember to judge just the buttons that are on the trays -- and not on what possibly could be there. You are judging just the trays entered for that award and those buttons before you -- not what might be on a dream tray.
4. Re awards for Div. III glass with pastes: if it's necessary for you to pull a tray out of its frame, be extremely watchful of pastes coming loose and getting lost. This type of button is prone to this problem. If by chance, you find a loose paste in a tray you've opened, use a piece of scotch tape to secure it to the back side of the card (inside).
5. "Giving the benefit of the doubt" means exactly what it says. Let's not just give lip service to this rule -- when you really have a doubt, give the exhibitor the benefit. One year, for example, a tray was downgraded to second place because the judges weren't sure of the age of one of the buttons (as they so noted on the tray slip). If you aren't sure, you give the benefit of the doubt and accept the button as okay, but don't then downgrade an otherwise blue-ribbon tray to 2nd. Either it should be blue-ribboned -- or the offending button dotted if you are sure it's in error. Otherwise, it's accepted and judged as okay. In most cases judges should mention the questionable button on the tray slip, why it was questioned, and that it was given the benefit of the doubt.

Giving benefit of doubt is especially important when measuring size. Now, we have many different production runs of Linley measures differing slightly in size, which can definitely affect a button's hanging up or not. In addition, the room temperature when the exhibitor measured the button could make a difference. A very hot day -- or a very cold measure can cause measurable differences. If a button is still a hanger after trying 4-5 different measures, both the spoon and the flat types, but just barely, give the benefit of the doubt. Only an obvious hanger should be dotted.

6. Re "make-ups": Be very sure that what you're measuring is really a make-up. It's getting more difficult to be sure with all the new buttons that have various glued-on shanks now sold in fabric and yarn stores. If you're not sure, ask those who actively collect or work with these buttons -- don't guess! What looks like a "kitchen job" to you, may not be. Always give the benefit of the doubt to the exhibitor!
7. When judging shapes, if in doubt, whether it's round or something else, look at the back of the button. Sometimes the front design will give the impression of a different shape, but the back will be perfectly round, or square, or whatever. So before you judge a button as being

the wrong shape, look at the shank side. Occasionally it may be necessary to remove the button and draw an outline of the button on paper to see what shape it really is.

8. Sew-throughs (whistles, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. holes): Depending on what the award is for, points may be awarded for a representation of any one kind of sew-through; other times, for each different kind of sew-through. Most important is to be consistent with all trays entered in one award -- judge them all equally. A 1-hole sew-through is one that requires a bead to be sewn on over the hole to be able to affix the button to the garment; they are quite scarce and a counter.
9. If only one tray is entered in an award, it probably isn't necessary to count points per the judging sheet. However, you do need to review the tray carefully, first for errors, of course, but then to decide if this tray is worthy of a 1st, 2nd or 3rd ribbon. Referring to the criteria on the judging sheet can help you assess the tray, even though you don't tally points. See 3b above.
10. In the case of multiple errors of the same type on one tray, there are two schools of thought on measling: 1) Measle every error so the exhibitor can really learn and know which buttons not to use in that way again. 2) Measle only one or two errors and note on the tray slip that "these and other buttons on the tray were wrong because...". Some people don't like to see too many measles on a tray -- too demoralizing, they say. I personally want to know every single problem I had so I don't repeat the error with one of the "unmeasled" buttons. Oregon members have indicated they would like all errors measled.

SHAPING UP ON SHAPES

Some confusion still exists about shapes -- how to use them and how to count them in judging. In the past, each different shape was counted -- every linear and contour shape. That may have skewed final results, and we don't want to perpetuate that. Our Oregon judging criteria make it clear how to count shape points for each award. But that alone is not enough -- we need to understand more clearly the concept of shape in our buttons, how we look at shapes, and their importance on a tray. See the NBS Blue Book page 64, 2017-2018 edition.

It's true that some years back, button shapes were very highly regarded -- almost revered! Competitors loaded their trays with shapes to try to win more points, which worked for some time. However, thinking people today know and understand when the handbook says "complete representation", that means way more than every possible shape. In order to more completely represent whatever the award calls for, many times you will have to make choices between buttons. Do you go for a different linear shape, e.g., or for another technique not yet represented, which just happens to be on yet another round button?

In Oregon on most awards we figure one point for each different shape type represented, i.e., linear (other than round), contour and realistic types. To earn a point for a linear shape, you will usually need to represent at least one linear shape other than round. In addition to these three possible shape points, there is always the chance of rarity points being awarded in special cases where *any* shape is rare, such as for lacy glass, Satsumas, or Class # 8-4.1, Glass mounted in/on metal in one-piece mounting.

So, if you have one of any of the linear shapes, you will get one point. Linear shapes are those which, if you lay your button down on paper and draw a line around it, that line is either round, square, oval, rectangle, triangle, scalloped, heart, irregular, etc., which represents the linear shape.

For contour shapes, you need to look at your button from the third-dimensional point of view and from the side or cross-section. For example, do you have a ball, a cube, a cone (or pyramid), a dome, or some other geometrical form that has a dimension beyond flat or nearly flat that is significant in defining the button? If so, you have a contour shape. Other contour shapes would be: deeply concave (opposite of a dome); chunky or bulky looking buttons; or where the depth is similar to the width or length. You have to look at the whole button, not just what line you would draw on paper around it. For example, a ball shape would give you just a round line, right? But it is more than a round button -- it is a ball, and must be considered a ball contour shape. The only exception to this allowed by National is that you may count a cube contour as a square linear shape if you need or want to. However, you may not count it as both on the same tray -- it's one or the other.

Realistic shapes have given us their own kind of problems over the year. A realistic button has the shape of something found in the four pictorial sections. Realistic shapes cannot be made of the actual thing itself, such as a small shell, pinecone, nut, real coin, etc. -- those are real, not realistic. Another pitfall to avoid is if the subject matter is framed by another shape or item, such as "Elsie the Cow" head in a circle surrounding her head. If the ring were not there, it would be a realistic cow head. However, as it is, it's a round button with openwork mold design. The exception is the Circus Set, with different circus performers inside a ring. This ring is considered the circus ring and therefore still realistic.

Can we have a round realistic? Of course. Any depiction of something that is round in real life would be a realistic button. Examples: clock, orange, ball, full moon, coin, etc.

Shapes of patterns, such as paisley and heart, are linear shapes, and cannot be realistic, as they are not part of the pictorial sections. The exception approved by National is the astronomical pictorial class, which may now include crescents and stars, even in linear shapes, and may be used both in pictorial and in pattern awards.

As always, keep in mind that you may submit awards that specify more shapes, "with a minimum of so many linear, contour" or whatever you'd like. An attractive and interesting tray will usually have a variety of shapes represented.

OSBS COUNTING AND MEASURING PROCEDURE

(usually completed prior to start of judging)

1. Read the award description on the tray slip for number and size of buttons required.
2. Determine if the correct number of buttons was used.
3. Check sizes to see that they match award requirements. Sometimes you can do this without actually measuring, but if you have the slightest doubt, measure buttons using 3-5 different measures before you decide to measure a button. The slightest tendency to

hang up is not enough to measure a button, considering the discrepancy we have now in tolerances on the different production runs of our measures.

4. If you do find an error, affix the necessary measure at lower right side of the button, not directly on top. If in a plastic holder, make sure the card is seated at the bottom of the holder before placing the measure. Explain the error on the tray slip **in pencil**.
5. When you've finished a tray, mark the tray slip in the space provided with "C/M" and your legible signature to indicate it's been counted and measured. Your signature is especially important if you've had to measure a button.
6. Do not remove more than one tray at a time from its case while counting and measuring.

OBSERVERS' RULES AT OSBS STATE SHOWS

State members are permitted -- indeed, encouraged -- to observe the judging, as long as these rules are respected:

1. While an award is being judged, absolutely no talking -- to a member of the judging team or to anyone else within earshot.
2. Go to the team you want to observe, pull up a chair quietly, and be as unobtrusive as possible.
3. To benefit your learning process, you might ask questions of the judges -- between awards - - at the discretion of the judges.
4. Do not wander around the showroom, to avoid impeding the workers. You are especially requested to stay away from the rack area.
5. Get your special "OBSERVER" badge from the Chair(s) of Judging. Please wear it prominently while you are observing.
6. Oregon's official workers will receive lunch on judging day. Observers are not considered workers and are on their own for lunch. This is mentioned here to avoid any possible misunderstanding on judging day.

Observing judging can provide one of the most educational button experiences of the year. It can act as the first step to your entering, clerking and eventually judging button competition. We encourage those of you who are serious about learning more about buttons to observe.

OSBS EDUCATIONAL AWARDS

Goal: To educate about a particular aspect of button collecting. It may tell about usage, manufacturing, art styles, shank styles, clothing styles, politics, history, etc. -- infinite possibilities exist.

Rules: The educational goal must pertain to buttons, and not an indirect topic. For example, do not use buttons about Abraham Lincoln to educate about Lincoln, an indirect topic, and not directly related to buttons. However, the education might pertain to *buttons as they would relate to Lincoln's time*, for example. Use text to develop the educational theme. Title the entry, and the tray slip should state the title, the educational goal of the entry and how many trays are in your entry (1-3).

Judging Criteria for Educational Award

Content:

- Title and tray slip stating educational goal:
how well do they relate to the presentation 10 pts. max.
- Text: how well does it cover the subject in space available 10 pts. max.
- How well does entry meet the goal to educate about buttons 20 pts. max.
- How well do the buttons relate to and fulfill the goal 15 pts. max.
- How accurate is the information 15 pts. max.
- How easy is the message to absorb as presented 10 pts. max.
- Total maximum points this section - 80

- **Presentation:**
- How attractive and visually compelling is the entry 10 pts. max.
- Neatness 10 pts. max.
- Total maximum points this section - 20
- Total maximum points overall 100 pts. total
- Winners will be determined as follows:
First place - 86-100 points; Second place - 71-85 points; Third place - 55-70 points

- There may be multiple winners of 1st, 2nd or 3rd.
- Because this is a point-based award system, in some instances no trays may place first, but there may be second, and so on.
- The judging sheet will be posted with the tray.
- OSBS sponsors the awards at \$15-10-5 currently.
- An entry may consist of from one to three trays, depending on what the entrant feels is necessary to get his/her educational point across.
- One entry (1-3 trays) allowed per person.
- Entries will be assigned to a judging team and spotted by the co-chairs of judging, as are all other awards except creative mountings.