

# **A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF A CLUB BULLETIN**

## **APPEARANCE (13%)**

1. Color (2%)
2. Pictures (1%)
3. Design (10%)

## **FORMAT (General Information) (12%)**

1. Name of Bulletin, Club and officers
2. List of make-up clubs
3. Name of District Governor and Editor
4. Four Way Test; Rotary Motto
5. Names of Board of Directors
6. Meeting Place, Time and Date
7. Issue date. Four Avenues of Service

## **CONTENT (75%)**

1. A Rotary article every week (25%)
2. Past, Present and Future Programs (15%)
3. Local and District events (15%)
4. Committee Reports (10%)
5. Brief biography of new Rotarians (10%)

(This information was provided to show how Club Bulletins are judged.)

Provided by District 6950

# Newsletter Guidelines

## BULLETIN/NEWSLETTER PUBLISHING GUIDELINES

Several studies have shown that an average person spends about seven seconds looking at a printed page. If, within that time, nothing is of interest, the document is pitched out (Keep it in mind when you are preparing a bulletin). Bulletins and newsletters should contain information that is of some use to the person receiving it. If it contains nothing of value, and is ugly to boot, chances are it will not be retained longer than it takes to throw it out.

The proliferation of computers and desktop publishing programs has spawned wide interest in "publishing" almost anything. Those who are relatively new to publishing and printing may not be aware of general publishing guidelines. I have been involved in advertising, publishing and printing for almost thirty years, and offer the following tips to those who are putting together newsletters and bulletins for service clubs.

### PAGE DESIGN

Fonts: Helvetica or Switzerland, Arial or any sans serif font family similar to Helvetica. Generally, most bulletins and newsletters are done on a page size measuring 8.5x11 inches. and it doesn't matter how many pages you may be doing. Each page has a design and that design should remain, more or less, fixed.

The front page contains the name of the club or group, a logo, and related information. It is a fixed design that does not change from issue to issue. Within this page goes headlines, subheads, pull quotes, body text, photos or illustrations, and captions for photos and illustrations.

The fixed portion of the page should be set in one type family. The name of the publication, for example, should be the largest type on the page, or, at least the largest size type on the fixed portion of the page. Everything else that is fixed or that doesn't change is set in the same type family, but in different sizes, weights and styles. For example: The name could be set in Helvetica at 28 points in bold. The name of the bulletin editor and similar information should be set in Helvetica (considerably smaller) about 10 points in normal (not bold). A club slogan could be set in bold italic at 14 to 16 points in Helvetica. This might be condensed form if space is limited on the line. You are not concerned about columns on this fixed page design. You are only concerned about making the design pleasing and useful, and, easy to read and understand.

The same fixed design concept should be created for all other pages. There are parts of every page of each newsletter or bulletin that never change, or, shouldn't change. These can be created and saved as templates too, or, you can do all pages at one time and save the whole thing as one template. Some desktop

publishing programs permit you to design a master page and save it as a template. Each time you open the program to create a new bulletin, you also open that template and reuse it again. Just be sure to open it and immediately save it -- "Save As" whatever name you choose. This prevents you from ruining the original template design.

### **THE GUTS IN THE PAGES**

Times or Times New Roman, Dutch, or any similar serif font family:

The largest font on the page will be the "Headline." On an 8.5x11 inch sheet, you should stay between 24 and 30 points set in bold. This depends upon the number of words in the headline, and more words usually mean smaller sizes. One or two words will appear in considerably larger sizes.

Usually either before or after the headline is a smaller line of type (pull head) that gives a bit more information about the story. This is often set in bold italic at 4 to 6 points smaller than the headline.

The body text is the type used in the story itself. It is the same type family as the headline and pull head. Normally, on an 8.5x11 inch sheet, 10-point type is large enough. Twelve points is just too large for such a small sheet of paper. This should be set in normal weight (neither bold nor italic). The body text can be justified (both margins even) or ragged (the right margin is uneven). If your publication is trying to convey a professional image or a formal image, justify the type. If it is informal then set it unjustified or ragged right.

Photographs should have captions that explain the picture. These are set below the picture flush with the left side of the picture or artwork, and then left ragged right. A caption should not extend beyond the margins of the photograph. Captions can be set in italic or regular style and weight at one or two points less than the body text.

### **ABOUT COLUMNS**

One, two or more columns: The page containing the stories is broken up into columns. An 8.5x11 inch sheet of paper can support three columns at 10-point type. More columns means there are fewer words per column line and each column will appear skimpy on content.

Three columns set in 10-point type can be chosen from the page setup dialog box in your program. You can also specify the gutter width. The gutter is the white space between columns. Generally, stay between 0.167 and 0.250 inches for gutter width.

If your story takes more than one column and flows from the first into the second or third columns, you can run the headline and pull head for the story across all of the columns. If it is complete within one column, then the headline will be

smaller and fall within that column. So, a headline that spans three columns may be set in 30 point bold. However, if the story is in one column, the headline will have to be reduced down to about 14 points set in bold. Otherwise, your proportions will all be wacky.

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

The jokes on us: If your bulletin or newsletter consists of two pages (an 8.5x11 inch sheet printed on both sides), or up to four pages (an 11x17 inch sheet folded and printed on four sides), you certainly do not need a table of contents on the first page. Someone started that on larger newsletters (more than four pages) and someone else saw it and adopted it, and we are forever amazed that one sees a table of contents on a one-page bulletin. Don't do it.

### **PHOTOS, ARTWORK, ILLUSTRATIONS AND COLOR**

A picture is still worth a thousand words: Photographs or artwork add a lot of interest to any publication. Some people only look at the photos and read the captions. It is true!

Photographs either in black and white, or color, can be scanned or put into your computer. You simply get the picture and place it in your bulletin where you want it. Most laser jet printers and ink jets and bubble jets all reproduce photos very well. If you have a color printer, use colored photos that you scan and crop and store in your computer. Then print them in color. But do not use dabs of color here and dabs there on headlines and other type. Restrict your color use to photos or perhaps an important headline.

Photos should be placed within the story and either occupies the column or part of it. If you have a large photo to use, it can span two columns like the headline, but this takes longer to print, uses more toner and can be a real problem in terms of time spent getting the bulletin done on time.

Abraham Lincoln, Director, Bulletin Editor, Brookville, Ohio Rotary Club.  
District 6670.

(This information was provided as a guide in write better Club Bulletins.)