

How to properly submit things to most any publication

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With thanks to Tom Freeman for more ideas, proofing and general fun.

In order to have an outstandingly good publication, you must have participation from members of your group so far as the input into the publication goes.

A clan publication - or any "group" publication is only as good as the information submitted by members.

In a Scottish Clan your members are likely spread out all over the world.

If you count your members at any Scottish game or event you will see that only a tiny percentage are attending games.

What do all of the other people at home get from their dues dollars?

The newsletter.

Each member, officer or not, is a "reporter" for the group publication. It is true that most officers from the highest to the lowest, have specific responsibilities each issue. Their input in the publication is so valuable!

Deadlines are important both to the newsletter editor and to the recipients. If your publication is delivered to everyone after an event has happened - no matter how well planned, spectacular and wonderful, it does no good. People cannot plan to go to anything if they don't know about it.

Just so you know, it is perfectly proper for an editor to leave out information from anyone who submits material - without prior notice - which arrives after the deadline. That is the professional way that publications are done.

If it should work out date-wise, that something is happening right at deadline time, please contact your editor and make arrangements for your information to come in as soon as you can - and that means within a day past the deadline. Any later will have to wait until the next issue.

I've given seminars to editors of newsletters. I've

done newsletters myself since before dirt.

Most folks don't know it now, but your editor was in radio for many years, achieving the Certified Radio Marketing Consultant designation issued by the Radio Advertising Bureau in New York City.

There is only one surety in radio - which translates to everything else. The surety: What happens if you do not advertise?

The answer: **NOTHING.**

Advertising is sort of what we do when we publish a newsletter. We are letting the members of our group know - advertising to them - what is happening with our group.

What happens if you do not publish a newsletter that is timely and filled with interesting things?

The answer: **NOTHING.**

The suggestions, hints and rules included here are just as true for a letter to a friend as they are for *Life* magazine.

OK, here we go....

Articles: The easiest way to send an article to me is to simply copy what you have and paste it onto an email which saves a lot of time for your editor.

When you send a news article, please include the who, when, where, why and what. If it is an upcoming event or something the reader will need to explore further, please send contact information.

I always think if I were reading the article I am working on, could I make contact with someone for more information if I needed it?

If it is an article about a Scottish Games, please send the logo (emblem) of the games to the editor via jpeg.

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Please check your spelling and punctuation. If you have access to Grammarly, just run what you send through that program. (I get my Grammarly free from AOL.)

If someone's name is in the article/publication more than once, be sure you spell that person's name the same each time it is used.

If the games has something unique, be sure and tell about it and have a photo. (Estes Park shoots bowling balls all day trying to "bag" a model of Nessie!)

Look over your Guest Book and let the editor know of the clan members who have signed the book and where they are from.

If you go to more than one game in a newsletter time period, just write articles seperately for each game.

Other Articles: If you've heard that Suzie's mother is ill, please contact Suzie and ask how her mother is doing - and report on that. It's nice to give where everyone may send cards and letters, too.

Wedding articles are great as are engagements and graduations.

If you don't know how to write about weddings, just look in your local papers and use the same information they use. You'll always see parents of both the bride and the groom and where they are from. You'll always see full names of both bride and groom.

Wedding photos are wonderful so try to get some professionally taken pictures for the newsletter.

Please give all the necessary information with everything.

How are you going to know about an accident, an illness, an important milestone in our scattered-all-over-the-world members' lives if it is not written in your newsletter?

You do not wish to find that friends have been through any kind of crisis without you knowing - or, had happy things happen and you did not know.

Your newsletter is the answer to keeping in touch with your friends who most clans call "your cousins."

If you have to research to find a PO Box, email address, website, physical address, etc., you just do the research and double check what you have typed.

If you don't think you can write, just write as if you were speaking to a friend.

Flowers of the Forest: When you hear of a clan member passing away, please send a copy of the obituary to your editor. If you don't have the obituary, send the city, state and date where the person died so your editor can find the notice of death.

Many people do not publish obituaries in newspapers these days because the newspapers charge such ridiculously high prices. Clan newsletters publish Flowers of the Forest FREE.

Photos: Please send photos as a jpeg file. All photos need to be in focus. Your editor will edit the pictures to fit available space.

Try to have lots of folks in your pictures. If they brought a pet or Highland Coo with them, be sure to take their pictures for their newsletter.

Pictures of empty clan tents just don't work.

Identify people who are in your photos. You may simply pass a tablet and pencil through the group and ask them to PRINT their names clearly and in the order in which they are shown.

Deadlines: All of my current publications have deadlines pretty much the same. The 15th of the month preceding the publication is the cut-off date/deadline.

You may send information to me at anytime. I keep files on the AOL Cloud so that I cannot lose these files in case of a computer disaster.

When you accept the job of editor you accept deadlines no matter what. Contributing clan members need to respect those deadlines.

I start work on a publication before the deadline since it is not possible to do a complete publication in the time after the 15th of the month.

If you have something that is happening after the deadline, please contact me and let me know how much time you need and how much space you need for me to save. I need to know when your information will be in my hands. Call me at 706-839-3881 or email: <bethscribble@aol.com>.

Please, do not send me correspondence amongst clan officers. I only need what you want me to print.

Big deal things: If you have something that is a BIG DEAL like scholarship deadlines or anything that is important and has specific dates, you need to check

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when your publication is going out to members - and in most cases that is four times a year. Choose the date most convenient for your event.

Be sure you plan so that you are sure of having all of the needed information ready to go so it will come out to the members in a timely manner.

Send that information to me as soon as you can. If you can't and it's "front page news," let me know what is happening and how much space you need. Most importantly, WHEN that information, photos, etc., will be in your editor's hands.

Your responsibility: If you get an email or a phone call from your editor asking about a fact, PLEASE return that call or email asap.

Changing your mind: *Please don't.* Have your article or story complete before you submit it. Please do not change your mind about what you have already turned in.

Having to re-write submitted information after the article has been formatted and placed in the publication is exactly as if you are driving in the worst Atlanta rush hour traffic and receiving a call from your mechanic who says, "I decided not to fix your brakes as I said I would. I thought I could just fix them later. You don't need to drive your car do you?"

Egad!

Once the publication is done, you can't change much without changing everything, which results in a lot of wasted time and much chewing of table legs.

New Rules: Years are now, "1800s" with no apostrophe.

In the dark ages when I went to school, you never used a comma in "apples, oranges and pears."

I do not put a comma after "oranges" even today. My beloved Mrs. McCubbin told me "don't do that." So, I do not.

We are "G" rated: Be careful when you write for your clan publication. There have been times when I have called the president/high commissioner of a clan and said, "We can't put this in." We didn't.

Other publications: If you run across articles in other publications or hear/see something that is interesting on TV, jot down the basic information and send it in.

Note where/when you found it originally. Your editor will try to track it down, copyright notwithstanding,

we can pass on interesting information to everyone almost all of the time.

Copyright: In our situation in the Scottish community, if there is something in a clan newsletter and it says "copyright" please contact the editor of that publication and ask permission to use it. I've never had anyone say "No" to me.

Things on the Internet are pretty much fair game. It's always nice to thank whomever it is from when you use the information.

Never, never, never use anything from Disney, Coca Cola and others of their ilk.

Is fun ok? Fun is most certainly ok and very much desired. Most of us are volunteers and we all enjoy a giggle or two or a chuckle along the way.

A publication full of dry, boring information will not be read. It's as clear as that. It won't.

It is very much desired for folks to send along funnies for us to use.

Length of articles: Two pages is about as large as most newsletters have room for.

If you wish to gauge how much a page turns out to be, just set your computer to 12 point Times New Roman font and type your article.

There are exceptions to this such as Pete Hylton's wonderful photo travelogues.

From Beth: Please take all of this to heart.

It is always amazing to me what happens when folks work together. A clan publication is one of the most visible examples of this premise.

Please call me or email me if you have questions or ideas. Both of these are always welcomed.

To me, being an editor is really fun. There is something about taking a blank sheet of paper and making it into something attractive, easy to read and understand and perhaps have fun at the same time that makes me happy.

However, all of that pales in comparison when members of a group send me well-written, correct information in a recognizable form.

Being an editor is really fun and fulfilling. The very best part of the experience is getting to work with the members of the Scottish Community. I've made so many wonderful friends over the years.

Perhaps one day we'll all be able to enjoy going to a Scottish Games with hugging and laughing as we did for so long.