

WHAT MAKES A GOOD CHAPTER NEWSLETTER EDITOR?

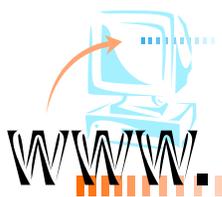
As a former editor myself and after reading over 175 chapter newsletters every month as the MAFCA Chapter Coordinator, I have a lot of insight into newsletters.

Certainly one thing that make an editor's life easier is being able to have a **computer** to compose and produce the newsletter. When I first started writing newsletters in 1976, all I had was a manual typewriter, an IBM Selectric that was the top of the line back then. The old cut and paste method was used for headings and graphics. We've come a long way since then!



The other thing that makes an editor's life easier is getting **contributions** for the newsletter. Now that your chapter has selected you to "edit" the newsletter, make sure they realize that they're STILL on the hook to contribute to the newsletter. Personal anecdotes, recipes, tech tips, tour news, fashion articles, etc. A good **mix** of those each month, plus national MAFCA news and info from neighboring chapters and coming events will make an informative newsletter that your members will enjoy.

If you're like most editors, you'll probably find that getting contributions from your members is like pulling teeth - you'll have to work at it and keep on urging them to do so. Another source of information is from newsletters of neighboring chapters in your area. Many chapters exchange newsletters, and from here, you can reprint interesting articles and news items. Make sure you acknowledge the "borrowing" of the information in two ways: an all-inclusive statement near the front of your newsletter along the lines, "some information contained in our newsletter has been reprinted from other newsletters; we thank and acknowledge them." Also, add a "byline" next to the article when you print it, such as "Reprinted from A-Club Newsletter".



Then there's the Internet. What a source of information! On the MAFCA web site, www.mafca.com, there are links to other MAFCA chapters who have their own web sites and to other car-related web pages. It's yours to harvest. Again, remember to acknowledge your sources.

Printing pictures in the newsletters is a whole lot easier these days too. With digital cameras so common, it's getting pretty easy to snap some photos at chapter events and insert them into your newsletter. The "trick" is to make sure that the digital photos are taken with a lot of "resolution". As you probably know, each camera is rated in "mega pixels". A 3 mega pixel camera that set at it's best resolution will give you outstanding digital images which you can insert in your newsletters. One word of caution though: digital images are generally not suitable for sending in to The Restorer, so keep the old 35 mm film camera handy so photos that you want to contribute can be of the print variety.

MAFCA honors Chapter newsletters and their editors each year for outstanding work. There's a MAFCA policy that the Chapter Coordinator follows to help score each newsletter and then to compare the results at the end of the year. If each editor incorporates each of the items from the policy into the newsletter and produces an attractive and easy-to-read publication, his newsletter will be a serious contender for those awards.

Here are the points the Chapter Coordinator looks for in chapter newsletters:

1. A cover page, which may include title, logo and return address etc.
2. A list of officers including the editor. Include phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses
3. Date, time and location for regular meetings.
4. Statement that MAFCA encourages national membership - include MAFCA's address and cost of National Dues
5. Acknowledgments for the authorized use of information from other sources
6. Summary of chapter meetings.
7. Model A technical information
8. Model A era fashion information
9. Tour and activity reports with periodic photographs of these events
10. Calendar of chapter events - include regional and national Model A activities
11. Include a MAFCA Membership Application form on occasion.
12. Excerpts from MAFCA National Board of Directors Meeting Highlights when available
13. Member ads as submitted. Help your members find and sell parts for their vehicles.

I hope that this helps you to understand the role that your newsletter has in your chapter. Its most important goal is to INFORM your members about current events, past events, and coming events. Another goal is to introduce HELP for your members, such as technical and fashion articles, and also to ENTERTAIN with recipes, birthday and anniversary notices, and personal anecdotes.

Wrap all this up in a neat package. Get the newsletter to them well before your chapter meetings on a regular basis and you'll be a hero. Only one negative side effect I can think of...they won't want to let you quit!

Rick Black