

INTRODUCTION

A club newsletter is essential to successful club operations. They come in various shapes, sizes, styles, and content. The club newsletter is a "picture" of the club and reflects on the club operations. To produce a newsletter, an editor must understand the design, goals, writing techniques, assembly procedures, printing and distribution concepts. This Information Sheet will provide a thumbnail sketch of a club newsletter.

PURPOSE: The club newsletter is a communications tool of the club and is used to disseminate information to the club members. It serves to bond all club members together into a family unit and keeps the members informed of all planned club activities and functions. The club newsletter builds interest in the club and its activities. It also can be of great assistance in obtaining membership involvement in club functions.

WHAT IS A NEWSLETTER?

A newsletter is a document that informs, announces, reminds, advises, instructs, advertises, and communicates. The club newsletter is a short publication that contains specific information about the club and the related dance community. It must be attractive to catch the eye of the club member and make the member want to read it without laying it down. The newsletter should report on the recent club activities in a newsy fashion that will make absentee dancers wish they had not missed any club function. The newsletter should be written in a manner that the readers want to attend and participate in all future club sessions and activities. The contents must be

accurate, factual, brief and impartial. The editor or writer must use good judgement in preparing a club newsletter and highlight the long range plans, short range plans, financial status, and other business activities of the club. The newsletter should contain a schedule of future club, area, state and national events and report the status of club/class membership as to sickness, absentees, etc. The newsletter should also reflect praise to members, caller, cuer, workers, etc. that have provided support to the club. Avoid using the newsletter to voice personal criticism of the club.

WHY A NEWSLETTER? A club newsletter is needed to COMMUNICATE with the active, inactive, and absent club members. The newsletter will assure that "all" club members are aware of club plans and actions. It also provides advance schedules of club events so that the members can plan other family, work or home activities "around" existing scheduled dance events.

WHO PREPARES THE NEWSLETTER?

A club officer or designated club editor is suggested. The editor must have access to club planning sessions and meetings to properly obtain factual data to convey to the club members.

HOW IS THE NEWSLETTER PREPARED?

The design of a club newsletter is accomplished in advance and is given serious thought. First impressions are critical in a printed document. If the document does not impress a reader at first glance, the reader ignores the document. The design of a newsletter is worthless if the content is poor. The newsletter design and content should complement each other.

Most newsletters are prepared on a typewriter or computer using club stationary or on a special developed club newsletter format. It may contain the club logo to make it eye appealing to the club members. The nameplate of the newsletter is one of the most important design features. It is placed on the top of the newsletter, in large conspicuous bold print and is the first and most often thing observed by the reader. The date and issue number is normally placed under the nameplate. The size of a newsletter is optional. The standard 8½" X 11" size paper provides for ease in preparation and printing. The smaller 5½" X 8" requires folding and stapling with a special stapler. One, two or three column format can be successfully used in the newsletter design. The size of type should be sufficient so as not to make the reader uncomfortable in reading the entire newsletter. The newsletter may be one to several pages in length.



The writer or editor must continuously think "What do they want to read about and what should they read about?" Use the 5 W's Story Form for each article that is written. Every newsletter article or story should answer these five questions -- Who, What, When, Where, Why.

Readers enjoy seeing their name or photos in print, so use names and photos of your club members and visitors. Most photographs will appear as dark blobs without special processing. You cannot run a photo through a copy machine and come up with a copy that can be used in a newsletter. The photo should have a

halftone made by a print shop or by use of an art screen. A halftone makes the photo appear as several thousand little dots which will provide the required contrast in the photo. Clip art used in newsletters is illustrations or drawings that have been clipped out of special clip art pamphlets, magazines or books that can be purchased at art stores, print shops, school supplies or from dance magazines or shops. The best source comes from other newsletters.

After all the articles, ads, fliers, etc. have been prepared for the newsletter, the document should be assembled and may require using the cut and paste method.

Review and proofreading is of prime importance in the preparation of a newsletter. People who are good editors or writers are not necessarily good proofreaders. Individuals that write articles also read them like they want them to be read - not necessarily like they are written. Be your worst critic! Check factual details. Correct typographical and grammatical errors. If in doubt about a word or phrase, check it out! Does the article inform you and attract your attention? If it doesn't - rework it. Make the reader proud of you and the club.

WHEN IS THE NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED? A club newsletter issued once a month should be adequate. More often is too much and quarterly would not be sufficient to provide the desired club news and schedule of club events. They should be published on a standard schedule, such as the first of the month or the 15th of the month. It is very important to maintain a firm publishing schedule. Club members will be expecting the newsletter on

schedule! Production is normally accomplished by the use of photocopy machines at quick-print shops.

HOW IS THE NEWSLETTER

DISTRIBUTED? The most economical method is to pass the newsletter out at the next club function. You must be careful not to interrupt the dancing. You don't want the dancers sitting around reading when they are needed to fill a square. The newsletters that are not distributed at the club event should be mailed the next day. It is very important that the newsletters are delivered without delay. "News" becomes history if the newsletters are not delivered immediately.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION: The best source of information is from the Publications Display at every National Square Dance Convention. There are many sample copies of newsletters and magazines that can provide a lot of ideas, articles and clip art. Ads in the national dance magazines also provide numerous sources for information that an editor may need. Other editors are a good source for information and guidance.

For additional information about USDA or any of its programs, please visit our web site www.usda.org or Email the Education/Publications Committee at usda.education.publications@usda.org

See web site www.usda.org Officers & Committees for Current Officers and Committee Chairs mailing address and phone.

CLUB NEWSLETTER



This information sheet was developed by the Education Committee of the UNITED SQUARE DANCERS OF AMERICA, INC. and will provide a brief discussion of a club newsletter designed for a square, round, contra, clogging, or folk dance club. For additional information about Club Newsletters, see USDA Pamphlet P-025.

Leadership Education material can also be printed directly from USDA web site at www.usda.org

Live Lively -



Square Dance!

IS-025

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