

HOW TO EDIT A LEAGUE BULLETIN

JOB DESCRIPTION: BULLETIN EDITOR

OBJECTIVES: To produce and distribute a newsletter which provides current, pertinent and stimulating information on League issues and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Propose to the board at the beginning of the year a mission statement for your bulletin, as well as plans for size, frequency, editorial policy, general contact and layout. Get cost estimates for printing and mailing, and arrange for a bulk mail permit, if needed.
2. Develop for each issue a proposed list of articles for approval by your board which reflects clearly and accurately the programs, activities and accomplishments of your League.
3. Write guidelines and set copy and mailing deadlines.
4. Discuss specific content of the next issue at each board meeting. Assign articles, with suggestions for contents, to board members or others. Write additional articles if needed.
5. Edit all copy and submit it to the president for approval.
6. Oversee typing, layout, proofreading, reproduction, collating, addressing and mailing.
7. Participate in the exchange of bulletin in other Leagues via posting on the local Leagues Bulletins section of the state League website. Please contact the office to participate in this process.
8. Make bulletin available for on-line publication at state and local levels.

Bulletins are the primary means Leagues use to communicate with their members. They keep members up to date with League activities, inform members on issues, stimulate member involvement and participation, and are a valuable historical record of League accomplishments.

League bulletins are an important public relations tool when distributed to newspapers, radio/TV stations, public officials, other organizations, major contributors and prospective members.

POLICY

Writing a mission statement helps the editor focus on the purpose and message of the bulletin. Doing so will help clarify your goals and will help produce a policy that can be taken to the board for its approval.

The mission statement should include:

- (1) the audience you wish to reach, including both the internal public (members) and the external public (others to whom the bulletin is mailed);
- (2) items or features which you wish to have in each bulletin (such as the president's message, calendar, etc.);
- (3) your goals for the publications (what you want the readers to know and do as a result of reading the bulletin; and
- (4) how you plan to achieve these goals.

Remember the local bulletins are mailed to and are read by members of the community and are thus a good PR tool. With this in mind, bulletins should reflect the many and varied activities of the local League in clear language, avoiding League "jargon" unless it is explained.

CONTENT

- Membership application

- League meeting announcements with dates, times, places, topics, speakers, etc.
- Calendar of Leagues events; include meetings of city/town/village council, school board and other organizations' meetings of interest to members.
- Program/study material from program item directors and from state and national board reports.
- Fact sheets, bibliographies, questions, outlines for pre-meeting reading.
- Voter service information and reports; when and where volunteers are needed.
- Message from the president, who may determine its frequency.
- Updates on League action items at all levels, including Calls to Action and anticipated future Calls to Action.
- Records of League activities, with acknowledgments and recognitions, and follow-up where appropriate.
- Proposed local program, by-law changes, slate of nominees, proposed budget (one month before the annual meeting).
- Cartoons, anecdotes, notable quotes - to pique reader interest.
- Profiles of League members, board members, new members; statistical profiles.
- Reviews of League publications, books/articles of League interest and how to obtain them. (Remember that copyrighted publications, other than League materials, may not be reproduced.)

STYLE

Use simple, direct and lively language to convey accurate, complete and nonpartisan information. Provide a variety of opportunities for members to respond.

Recheck each article by standard journalistic criteria: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW.

LAYOUT

Simple, attractive nameplate and address

-immediately identifies source and date

-Use League logo. Specifics of logo usage can be obtained at www.lwv.org under the member/presidents section through a publication entitled, "League Logo and Usage Guidelines."

First page, index, and all headlines grab attention

Regular features are easy to find-including membership form

Reproduction is clean and readable-type suitable for readers (font size and style)

Include [photos with quality reproduction

Design and presentation invites reader to keep turning the pages

SCHEDULE

Establish a publication schedule with the board (e.g., plan to mail bulletins one week after the board meeting and set an earlier deadline for copy).

Deadlines must leave ample and realistic time for editing and approving copy, typing, layout, duplicating, collating, stapling, addressing and mailing.

ADVERTISING

The latest postal regulations for Nonprofit Standard Mail rates can be obtained by ordering (through your local post office) or downloading Publication 417 from www.usps.com. If you are downloading from the website, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader to view the publication. You can obtain Acrobat Reader as a free download from www.adobe.com. At the USPS site, look for the search engine and type in "nonprofit standard mail" then go to "Nonprofit Standard Mail Eligibility Quick Service Guide." Additional and more detailed information may be obtained within Publication 417.

The newest regulations are dated March 2008. This publication is comprehensive and provides links for more detailed information on each topic.

In order to be judged a periodical, your bulletin must contain:

- 1) A title
- 2) Be formed of printed sheets (no sheets produced by stencil, mimeograph or hectograph processes)
- 3) An identification statement within the first five pages of the publication which includes:
 - the title;
 - the issue date, if this is not included on the front cover or cover page;
 - statement of frequency showing when issue are to be published (daily; weekly; monthly; monthly except June; four times a year in June, August, September, and December; annually, irregularly, etc.)
 - the name and address of the organization, including the street name and number, zip plus four digits or five-digit zip code;
 - the issue number, if not included on the front cover or cover page; and
 - international standard serial number if applicable.
 - subscription price, if applicable
- 4) AT LEAST 25 PERCENT NON-ADVERTISING MATTER IN EACH ISSUE

Product and advertising content restrictions are MORE SPECIFIC than these general requirements for a periodical, and are fully explained both in this publication and in Publication 417. You will also find regulations on how to credit sponsors and donors.

Ads accepted for state League publications should indicate support for the League and should not solicit or suggest support for a candidate or political party. If advertising is received from a candidate or political party, a statement should appear on the same page stating that the League does not support or oppose political parties or candidates. Such ads should not appear in the two-month period prior to election.

MAILING

Keep your League's mailing list up to date. Include prospective as well as current members. Send one hard copy to:

- the state League office at 62 Grand Street, Albany, NY 12207
- the state League President: see board list
- the state League Membership Vice President: see board list
- Membership Outreach Coordinator: see board list

Additionally an electronic copy should be forwarded to:

- Your liaison
- Patty MacLeish: pmacleish@verizon.net
- LWVUS:(MDuncan@lww.org)
- Manager of the local League bulletin section of the state League website: adam.gaus@IEEE.org

Use bulk mail to add contributors, elected officials, libraries and schools to your bulletin mailing list.

Costs: Annual permit fee, higher paper expenses, more preparation time for mailing.

Benefits: Lower per-piece mailing rate; your bulletin becomes a public relations instrument, your League's name and actions reach a wider audience with minimum cost and effort.

RESOURCES

- *League Basics (In League)* (LWVUS): An essential tool for League leaders. <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm>
- *Welcome to the League* (LWVNYS): Contains general information about the League.
<http://www.lwvny.org/localLeague/Welcome>
- *League Lingo*
<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm>
- *Newsletter Editor*
<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm>

- *League Logo and Usage Guidelines League Logo and Usage Guidelines*
<http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm>
- *State Board Report* (LWVNYS): September issue contains information on the bulletin exchange. All issues have articles on state league program which can be reprinted in local bulletins, often camera ready.
<http://www.lwvny.org/LLresources.html#news>
- A good dictionary
- *Elements of Style*: Strunk and White