

HV Marsh Award for Scout Journalism

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment of printed newsletters and websites will be considered under the following equalvalued headings:

1. PLEASURE TO READ

How enjoyable is the publication to read? For the parents (the largest readership) who know only a little about Scouting, does the publication make them look forward to reading the next edition, or seeing the next website update? Is the content and style worth reading?

2. PLEASURE TO WRITE

Is there ample evidence that the Group has enjoyed creating the publication? Is there input from all departments of the Group (or is it padded out with borrowed articles and clipart?)

3. INFORMATION ACCESS

Does the reader get swift information on: Group activities and future dates? Names and phone numbers of key people in the Group? Badge progress of individual Scouts? Contact information for the Area, including website addresses? Is the information up-to-date and (for a website) updated regularly?

4. LAYOUT

Are the pages attractive to look at? Has thought been given to the cover? A mix of photos and locally drawn cartoons? Is there variation in typeface and heading?

5. SCOUT INVOLVEMENT

Is this a publication produced by a few keen adults, or are the Scouts themselves part of their own publication? How full/regular are the Patrol reports? Are reports on Jamborees or District events by participants themselves? In a lesser degree, what about Cub contributions?

The notes above should act as guidelines for your content planning. Here is a check list of vital ingredients:

- FORTHCOMING EVENTS with date/time/place
- KEY MEMBERS OF THE GROUP with phone numbers
- BADGE PROGRESS
- REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS in Group and District
- PATROL REPORTS
- HUMOUR

Don't worry overmuch about regular "Reports" from section leaders. They contribute enough of their spare time already. Just urge them to write when they have something worth saying. (And there should be more praise than grumbles!) The most valuable contribution from adults are often overviews on the Scouting spirit within the Group.

PRODUCTION METHODS

Group magazines, newsletters and websites are amongst our most valuable publicity methods. So Groups are urged to aim for the best presentation available, for the least financial outlay!

Printed publication

The actual legibility of the printed page is a high priority. Whether photocopied or printed on the very latest laser printer, a high quality of the original is vital. Clear, bold handwriting or drawing in black ink is often far better than a faded printout.

Access to a desktop publishing programme may well provide the step up in stylish presentation you are looking for, but you can still get excellent results with paper and glue. Try shifting your text and pictures and decorations around on the page until the best effect is achieved, and then paste them in position.

Where you have to do your sums carefully is in determining how many copies (of each publication) you need. Don't print too many! 'Back numbers' are dead- apart from the one needed for the group achieves.

Website

Information must be current, but beware of promising updates too frequently, in case you can't keep it up! Don't say things like "this weekend" or "next month", because you only know when it will be read, or how long till the next update.

Remember that everything on the website can be read by the public. Do not include full names or contact information of the Cubs or Scouts. This is vital for child protection. Don't include copyright material.

Avoid using too many technical tricks, as they might not work for everyone, and may distract the visitors and the designer from the real purpose of the site. And, admit it, not every group has a professional web designer who can get the technical stuff working properly!