Editor's Handbook

Fourth Edition

(Draft Copy)

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Published under the auspices of the American Mensa Committee

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Fourth Edition revised July 2002

Editorial Comments

This edition of the *Editor's Handbook* is a rewrite of the Third Edition, to make it more up-to-date and easier to read. All of the Handbook editions are a result of input from many, too-many-to-mention Mensans — some professional editors, some not — all of whom share an interest in Mensa publications.

In this edition we have focused on present-day technology in producing newsletters. We have covered editorial rights and responsibilities. And, we have tried to describe a process that will result in the most reader satisfaction while offending as few readers as possible.

Part I focuses on defining the purpose of the newsletter, and the basic rules and regulations which must be followed.

Part II covers the questions of contents: what must be included, what should be included, and what shouldn't be included.

Part III deals with the important issues of Copyright and Libel.

Part IV gives an overview of putting together the newsletter: layout and desktop publishing.

Part V goes into the physical production of the newsletter.

Part VI provides information on sources of assistance on the National level.

And, finally, the Handbook ends with an Appendix for miscellaneous entries.

Table of Contents

Editorial Comments....3

Part I: The Basics....7

Introduction....8
Ground Rules....9
The Basics....9
The Law of the Land....9
The Constitution and Bylaws of American Mensa, Ltd....9
The Actions Still in Effect (ASIE) of the American Mensa Committee (AMC)....9
The Bylaws and standing orders of your local group....9
The Mensa Logo....9
Newsletter Purpose....10
Editorial Rights and Responsibilities....11
Scheduling....11
Help....12

Part II: Newsletter Content....13

Mandatory Elements....14
USPS Requirements....14
Location Of Identification....14
Components Of Identification....14
Mensa Requirements....15
Optional Contents....15
Editorial Policy....16
Sample Editorial Policy....16
Selecting Material....17
What to Avoid....17
Contributors....18
Editing....19
Copy Editing....19
Substantive Editing....19
Censorship....20
What to Include....20
What to Exclude....20
Proofreading....21
Advertising....21

Part III: Copyright and Libel **23**

Using Copyrighted Material 24
Obtaining Permission to Reprint 24
Courtesy Copies 24
Fair Use 24
Other Hints 25
Paraphrase 25
Limit Extractions 25
When In Doubt 25
Professional Advice 25
Registering Your Newsletter in the United States Copyright Office 25
Registering your newsletter in the U.S. 26
Copyright Ownership of Individual Contributors 26
Free Copyright Application Forms 26
Libel by Art Spikol 27
Publication 27
Identification 28
Harmful Effect 28
Reckless Disregard 28
Gossip 29
Secondhand Sources 29
Fair Comment 30
Truth 30
Reply and Consent 30
Responsibility 31

Part IV: Production **33**

Layout 34
Reproduction 34
Stapling 34
Folding 34
Desktop Publishing by Carol Mason 35
The Tools 35
Computer 35
Printer 35
Fonts 35
Other Software 35
Organization 36
Proofreading 36
What does the printer get? 36
Processing raw submissions 36
Layout 37
Proofing 37
Digital Prepress "Hygiene" 37
Imposition 37
Preparing for Output 38

Part V: Distribution **39**

A Step-by-Step Periodicals Mailing 40
Glossary: 40
Permit 40
Letters and Flats 40
Labels 41
USPS Form 3541 41
Record-keeping 41
Finances 42

Part VI: National Mensa Resources **43**

American Mensa, Ltd. 44
The American Mensa Committee 44
Regional Vice Chairman 44
Communications Officer 44
Publications Committee 44
Development Officer 44
Director Of Science And Education 44
AMC Meetings 45
AMC Actions Still in Effect (ASIE) 45
The American Mensa National Office 45
National Publications 46
InterLoc 46
Mensa Bulletin 46
Editor Workshops 46
You and Your Fellow Editors 46
Newsletter Awards 47

Appendix ..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Reference Books 48

Part I: The Basics

Introduction

There is one very important factor in being a newsletter editor that is more important than technical skill or procedural expertise. This is the editor's understanding of what the newsletter is really for.

The function of the Local Group newsletter is to provide the membership with a monthly calendar of events, to report local and national Mensa news, and to facilitate communication between and among the members and the Board of Directors. The newsletter is the lifeblood of the local group — the local group cannot function without it. Thus, collectively, newsletters are the lifeblood of American Mensa.

The Local Group newsletter is not a private vehicle for the editor's personal self-promotion, but a vehicle of service to Mensa. It represents Mensa to its members, and to anyone else who may happen to read it. The editor is therefore obligated to present a public image of the Local Group which will not embarrass Mensa.

The new editor who is not an experienced or professional editor already will need to learn a few things in order to do a good job for the Local Group. The best and most readily available source for this information is the previous editor. This Handbook can be used to augment the experiential knowledge of your predecessors and counterparts. The exchange and subscriptive newsletters that the editor receives can provide additional diverse, comprehensive information.

Another good resource for editors is the Editor's List. To subscribe, send a message to: Majordomo@lists.us.mensa.org, with "Subscribe Editors" in the body of the message.

The editor also needs to become familiar with Post Office regulations as they apply to newsletters.

Ground Rules

The Basics

The Law of the Land

Avoid violations of the copyright and libel laws (see Part III for more information on copyright and libel laws).

Observe the postal regulations for your mailings (covered under USPS Requirements, Part II).

The Constitution and Bylaws of American Mensa, Ltd.

Copies of the International Constitution of Mensa and the bylaws of American Mensa, Ltd. are available from the National Office. Be aware of and follow them as they pertain to the newsletter and to your membership responsibilities.

The Actions Still in Effect (ASIE) of the American Mensa Committee (AMC)

Conform to actions taken by the AMC that affect the publication you edit. New regulations are communicated to editors, but there may be old ASIEs which apply to your newsletter. Check the website (www.us.mensa.org) for further information.

The Bylaws and standing orders of your local group

See your Local Secretary for a copy of the local group bylaws and ask for any standing orders (or local ASIEs) that might affect your operation.

The Mensa Logo

Mensa's name and logo are registered and subject to certain restrictions in their use. The National Name and Logo Committee acts on requests for the use of either name or logo in local group fund-raising projects and by individual members. Permission is routinely given when name and logo are used for appropriate purposes and in reasonable designs.

An individual may use the logo on personal items such as stationery or business cards, if clearly identified as a "Mensa Member." Camera-ready logo sheets are available from the National Office. Digitized logos are also available from the Mensa International Web site. Mensa publications are welcome to use the name and logo. However, to comply with registration rules, the emblem may not be broken or altered in any way, and must not be used to replace the "M" in a word.

Newsletter Purpose

The main objective of the newsletter is to enhance the value of Mensa membership. Membership dues entitle the member access to activities, and Mensa publications constitute the primary avenue of that access. Thus, the main function of the newsletter is to further the goals for which Mensa exists. This objective can be reached through the following:

- Timely announcements of planned local events.
- Dissemination of local, national, and even international Mensa actions and activities.
- Publication of election and referenda ballots, and other official communications from the Board.

Editorial Rights and Responsibilities

All Mensa editors are unpaid volunteers. Their rewards must come from the satisfaction of doing a pleasurable job. Consequently, they must have certain rights in order to make their job pleasurable. These rights include:

- setting the design of the newsletter,
- setting the tone of the newsletter,
- choosing a substantial portion of the material to be published.

It is a privilege for the editor to be able to choose the newsletter content, however, the members have a right to receive quality communication for their dues. Editorial privilege should be used in such a way that respects the rights of the members.

Some of the newsletter contents are mandatory and some are optional. There should be no question about the traditional mandatory items, but optional items require some discretion.

The responsibility of an editor is to provide a newsletter that is informative without being boring. It should be inspiring without being annoying. It should be entertaining without being frivolous. It should have a good balance of serious intellectual stimulation and light-hearted fun.

The newsletter editor is in an excellent position to inspire the members to volunteer for various jobs but keep in mind that a notice in the newsletter is no substitute for a face-to-face invitation. Any editor who has tried to enlist volunteers the easy way – with a notice in the newsletter – will tell you that it brings few results. So when you are looking for an editorial assistant, a personal request works best.

Scheduling

Newsletters need to be in the mailbox of the readers before the end of the month preceding the issue date for them to take advantage of the various scheduled activities. Therefore it is essential to develop a rigid schedule.

Working backwards, scheduling starts with the delivery date: the date on which the member should receive the newsletter. Allow at least four days for postal delivery time. That's when the newsletter must be processed and mailed. Reproducing the newsletter can take a week if you use offset printing, usually a day for photocopying. Most of today's high-tech copy machines are not only fast, but they rival offset printing for print quality. In addition, most of them will collate the pages for you at no extra charge.

Before the printing process, allow yourself a reasonable time for production to arrive at the editorial deadline. As you become more experienced you will modify the schedule and eventually create a workable schedule that fulfills the objective of timely delivery.

Most editors have determined that, using proper scheduling, the editorial deadline will have to be early in the month before the issue date. Some Calendar Editors include a few items in the first part of the next month in case the following issue is delayed.

Help

A large percentage of editors knew very little about editing a newsletter when they started, but that did not keep them from developing into confident workers once they had grasped the basic requirements. Help is all around you! Here's how to find it:

- Look through other local groups' newsletters.
- Ask the outgoing editor to assist you with the first issue(s).
- Write to other, more experienced, editors with specific questions.
- Contact your RVC, the National Office, or the Communications Officer for help with a specific problem.

Help in another form can be obtained by appointing assistants such as:

- Calendar Editor
- Circulation Manager
- Art Director
- Publisher, Production Manager or Crew

Assistant editors make the work more bearable and provide prospects to replace you when you retire.

Part II: Newsletter Content

Mandatory Elements

USPS Requirements

To mail the newsletter as a Periodicals Publication, the USPS imposes certain specific identification requirements.

Location Of Identification

Title

The publication title must be shown on the front or cover page in a position and in a type style and size that distinguishes the title from the publisher's name or other items.

Identification Statement

An identification statement, in an easily read type, must be included in all copies of publications with authorized Periodicals mailing privileges and in all copies mailed pending approval of Periodicals mailing privileges.

Unbound Publications

In an unbound publication, the identification statement must be shown conspicuously in one of the following places:

a. On one of the first five pages.

b. On the table of contents page.

c. In the masthead on the editorial page, if the location of the editorial page is shown in the table of contents on the front page of the publication.

Bound Publications

In a bound publication (one secured with two or more staples, spiral binding, glue, stitching, or other permanent fastening), the identification statement must be shown conspicuously as described above for Unbound Publications or on one of the last three non-advertising pages inside the back cover.

Components Of Identification

- The issue date must be on the cover or in the Identification Statement.
- The issue number must be on the cover or in the Identification Statement.
- An Identification Statement, in an easily read type, must be included, located as described above. The ID Statement must contain:
  - The publication title, and publication number (if not placed on the cover).
  - A statement of frequency.

- The subscription price.
- The Known Office of Publication, including street number, street name, and the ZIP+4 or 5-digit ZIP code.
- The imprint: "Periodicals Postage Paid at (Entry Post Office)."
- The mailing address for change-of-address orders, in the normal text type of the publication: "POSTMASTER: Send address changes to (In Mensa we designate the address of the National Office)."
- The label position for automated, machine-read mail is between 5/8 to 2-3/4 inches from the spine, leaving at least ½ inch margin on either end. The spine is considered to be the bottom of the piece.

Mensa Requirements

American Mensa requires the editor to publish the following items:

- A Calendar listing of the group's activities
- Election information
- Treasurer's Reports
- Ombudsman's Findings

Optional Contents

The following are to be considered of **high priority** for inclusion into your newsletter:

- RVC column
- LocSec column
- Editorial policy
- Editorial remarks
- Other officer reports
- Letters to the editor

The following are of a **lower priority** for inclusion into your newsletter:

- Member profiles
- Member birthdays
- Activity reports
- Puzzles
- Articles
- Poetry
- Cartoons
- Reprints from other newsletters

Editorial Policy

First and foremost, an editor must maintain personal integrity—be consistent.

Editors traditionally have the right, and even the duty, to prepare material for publication by selecting and, if necessary, making minor revisions to an author's works. However, the editor must always be sure that the edited changes actually improve the material and are not just changes to suit a personal preference. Editors should realize that some contributors may be professional writers and would not like to have their material edited. Therefore, all writers should have the right to insist that their article be published "As is or not at all." Of course, in such cases, the editor always retains the authority to reject the submission.

The editor should not make any substantive revisions to an author's material without the permission of the author.

The editor may, but is not required to, write an editorial column. The contents of the column are discretionary but should be of general interest to the readers. The editor has a direct line of communication with the National Office so it is appropriate to report or comment upon any national information, if it is not already reported in the LocSec's column.

The local group Board of Directors is the official publisher of the newsletter. The Board budgets for the cost of the newsletter and generally determines its size, format and content but specifics are left up to the editor.

The Board may appoint a representative with the title of Publisher or Circulation Manager to act as its agent in decisions regarding the newsletter. The publisher's duties can be to arrange for the printing, schedule folding parties, administer the mailing, and keep postal records. The Publisher acts under the authority of the Board and all decisions regarding the newsletter are subject to Board review.

The Board may adopt an Editorial Policy statement. If they do not, it would be in the self-interest of the editor to write and publish one. Every editor can benefit from a well-written Policy. It is a tool as well as a defense. It can help in decision-making and promote equality in treatment of contributors. It can quickly diffuse a disappointed contributor's charge of censorship. And it can justify editing or rejecting submissions.

Don't be too broad or too narrow in forging the policy. Following is a brief sample Editorial Policy.

Sample Editorial Policy

All items for publication are subject to editing except those ordered to be printed by the Board of Directors, the time and date of calendar entries, and those articles designated "print as is or not at all." Editing will consist of correcting spelling and grammar, modifying for space, appropriateness and clarity, and determining if the material is in good taste.

Any submission that is edited will not have the general meaning changed unless approved by the author. If, after negotiation, the text is not approved by both the editor and the author, the submission will not be published.

Selecting Material

Responsible editing involves selecting material that benefits the readers, and rejecting that which does not. At times, the editor's deletion of undesirable material is called censorship. That is not the case. If material is offensive or boring, it is the editor's responsibility to reject it. Remember that the first consideration is the benefit of the readers.

It may be difficult to print submissions with which you disagree or which you dislike. But a responsible editor will look at the material objectively and try to evaluate it from the perspective of the readers.

When you select something for print, you are recommending it to your readers so you must determine what the readers want and will enjoy. These should be your objectives:

- Provide members with information they want and/or need.
- Contribute to members' enjoyment of Mensa.
- Represent the group's variety of interests, tastes and points of view.
- Encourage communication among members.

These objectives show that literary excellence alone cannot be the primary criterion for publication. That's one difference between a commercial magazine and a Mensa newsletter.

What to Avoid

- **Personal Attacks**

  Argumentum ad hominem is a Latin phrase that means, "an argument against the man". When an argument describes a person negatively, or puts a person to ridicule, that is a rhetorical tactic, appealing to feelings rather than intellect. It is directed against the person's character rather than the subject under discussion. *Argumentum ad hominem* is a logical fallacy and fails to prove a point by failing to address it. Even worse, a personal attack defames the person attacked and defamation in print is a definition of libel.

- **Offensive Material**

  This may be difficult to define but if the material will offend any rational person who is not super-sensitive, it should not be published. Keep in mind that your newsletter is sometimes read by non-members and children. Also remember that obscenities are generally the attempt of a weak mind to express itself forcibly.

- **Acrimonious Anonymous Contributions**

  Never print anonymous contributions that attack or criticize someone. If someone sends you a compliment or donation anonymously, it's up to your discretion whether to use it.

- **Scolding the Members**

  If you don't get enough participation, contributions, or help, you may have to try something new. Nagging members for any reason is usually counterproductive.

- **Attacks on Mensa**

  Constructive suggestions are always welcome but negative comments without a solution are inappropriate.

- **Cliquishness and Private Jokes**

  Keep in mind that most of your readers are inactive members and don't attend activities so are not in the loop.

- **Unexplained Abbreviations or Acronyms**

  Abbreviations and acronyms should be defined in a periodic glossary or in each issue.

Contributors

The best methods for obtaining contributions from members is to actually ask them, individually and personally. You can specify what type of writing you seek. Mentioning your requests at meetings, and publishing them in your editorials is another way to solicit contributions.

Let your members know that the newsletter belongs to the group. The articles published must be of interest to a significant number of members. Controversial articles can be interesting and may inspire others to respond but this is an area that requires a lot of editorial discretion.

Three approaches should be kept in mind for getting and keeping contributors:

- Adopt a personal, individual approach with contributors. Encourage people to write about something they know or that interests them and, at times, suggest specific topics.
- Make your newsletter neat and attractive, so contributors will be proud to participate.
- Thank the contributors, give them credit in the newsletter and make them feel good about their efforts.

Occasionally, a contributor takes it as a personal affront to have a submission rejected. The contributor might think that the editor MUST print all material submitted as long as it was written by a local member. This is not true. The editor has the right to reject any material, for any reason. This may not always be the most diplomatic course to take but the final decision must rest with the editor. A published Editorial Policy can make the editor's final decision less onerous to the contributor.

There comes a time when the editor must stand on his rights, but this should always be done with diplomacy and courtesy.

Reprints from other Mensa newsletters are a good source for material. You may freely reprint anything you find in the Mensa press, provided that the item does not have an individual copyright. It is very important to give credit to the author, the newsletter, and the editor of the newsletter where the article appeared. In addition, it is a courtesy to send a copy of the issue in which the material is published, to the editor of the originating publication.

A standard form for crediting reprints from other Mensa publications can be:

By (author or artist), Reprinted from (newsletter), (issue date), (editor's name), editor. Some editors also like to include the name and location of the local group.

You must apply for permission if you want to print copyrighted material. Write to the publisher asking for permission, identify exactly the extent of the material you seek to reprint, and support

your request with mention of your circulation and your not-for-profit status. See more about copyrights in the next section.

Editing

There are two types of editing: Copy Editing and Substantive Editing. You will have to be able to do both, to prepare your newsletter.

Copy Editing

Copy editing is a review for grammar, punctuation and spelling. To do a good copy editing job, the editor must be able to read slowly and see what is actually on paper rather than what is expected to be there. It is good practice to have reference books for checking grammar, punctuation and spelling. Many computer word processing programs will assist you in the process.

It is not good practice to use "sic" to indicate a writer's mistakes. Sic is a Latin word meaning "thus" and was originally intended to indicate that a surprising or paradoxical word, phrase or fact is not a mistake and is to be read as it stands. But modern usage by editors indicates an apparent misspelling or doubtful word used in a contribution. Among friends it is far better to consult with the writer to make the correction and don't put the mistake on display.

Substantive Editing

Substantive editing means shortening if necessary, improving the organization, clarity, or style. This should only be done with the consent of the writer. Keep in mind that your writers are Mensans also. Most Mensa editors are amateurs and some contributors may be professionals or at least accomplished writers. They have a right to have their material retain the flavor and content that was intended.

Following are areas which can be improved by substantive editing:

- Lack of focus
- Unnecessary repetition
- Disorganization
- Inconclusiveness

If you judge the submission to be less than what the writer is capable of producing, work with the writer to improve the article. Writers are your best resource for publishing a quality newsletter so treat them with respect.

There are some subtle strategies that can influence the way your material is received by the readers. Articles that start on the top of a page are more prominent than those that start in the middle of the page. The right hand page is better placement than the left hand page. Continuing on the next page is often unavoidable but continuing several pages later should be avoided as it makes reading straight through the newsletter awkward. Continuing on a previous page is annoying to many readers. When an article ends part way through a page, it leaves an excellent opportunity to use some of your fillers.

Every editor should have an "evergreen file" where filler, non-time-value material, is stored. These can be articles of any size, quotations, trivia facts, puzzles, art work and graphics. It is judicious to accumulate a large number of these fillers to help fill white space.

Correspondence criticizing something printed in a prior issue must be handled with care. If you are unsure of the validity of the criticism you should contact the original contributor and offer the opportunity of a correction or rebuttal immediately. Mistakes should not be left hanging for another month.

Election and campaign statements must not be edited, but here again, if there is a glaring error it is in everyone's best interest to investigate if the writer is aware of the error. The editor should change nothing in a campaign statement without the direction of the candidate. Some local groups specify in their standing orders what type of material must be left unedited. In other groups, the election committee makes similar rules.

Censorship

Censorship is a scare word and sometimes it is used by contributors (especially by those whose material has been rejected) solely to manipulate and alarm. It is important to know the difference between censorship and editing.

An editor cannot effectively censor anything. Censorship is preventing something from being published anywhere, usually done by a governmental entity. When the editor of a publication decides that a contribution is inappropriate for that publication, it is not censorship, it is editing.

Freedom of the press is the right to publish, not to be published. It is the right of the publisher, not of the writer. Or, as one cynic accurately put it, freedom of the press is a right only for the person who owns a press.

A caution: Do not reject material solely as a result of personal preference. Sometimes it is best to consult with your LocSec, for example, if you have doubts of a submission's appropriateness.

What to Include

An editor makes decisions on what to include by asking these questions:

- Is the material appropriate for use in the limited space of the publication?
- Does a piece advance the purpose of, or is appropriate for, the particular publication?
- Does a submission fit the editorial guidelines put in place by the publisher?

What to Exclude

Good editorial judgment may mean bringing in differing viewpoints, but it also means excluding articles at times. Here are some questions you can ask yourself:

- Is the material off-topic?
- Does it express an unsupported and/or unsupportable point of view on an appropriate topic?
- Does it just plain carry a debate on a given topic one issue too many?

- Does it appear unethical or inappropriate?

Proofreading

Every writer, and every editor, needs a proofreader. Sometimes even proofreaders need proofreaders. Intuitive writers and editors get into the habit of projecting what should be written instead of actually reading the material, word-for-word and letter-for-letter. In Mensa, especially, we should do our utmost to present our literary works in a light befitting the upper two percent of the population. It is difficult to take seriously something in which there is repeated errors.

Today's word processing computer programs spell check automatically, but frequently a misspelled word can inadvertently be a viable word, albeit with a different meaning. Thus, it is vital that the newsletter be carefully proofed by a discerning reader, not just a computer spell checker.

Advertising

Placing ads in the newsletter can be a source of additional income for the group. But keep in mind that advertisements increase the postage and complicate filling out the forms on Periodicals mailing. The Board, or Publisher, should set a price schedule for ads. Typically, doubling the size of an ad does not double the price. For example, a business card sized ad could have a price of $10 per month. Double that size could be $15. Every time you double the size the price should be less than twice as much. You could also have a discount for longer running ads and for member ads.

Part III: Copyright and Libel

Using Copyrighted Material

As an editor of a Mensa publication, you must respect the copyright of any material (created after 1923) that you wish to reprint. If an article, essay, story, poem, song, photo, artwork or cartoon is, or contains material that was, created by another party, DON'T publish it unless you obtain written permission to do so. Republishing a work without permission may subject you to legal action for copyright infringement. The fact that there is usually no profit motive involved in Mensa publications is not a legal defense, nor is the fact that you give credit to the original author, composer or artist.

Be aware that merely because an item is accessible on the Internet does not render it in the public domain. You will probably still need to obtain permission to reprint it.

Under the law, a court may award statutory damages to the person who sues you for copyright infringement. The damages are discretionary with the judge, but as of 1999, they range from $750 to $30,000 per incident, rising to $150,000 in the case of willful infringement. There is simply nothing you would want or need to reprint that would be worth taking the risk. Get permission.

Obtaining Permission to Reprint

In order to reprint a drawing, poem, story, or article from some other source, or to publish a contribution that contains quotations from such a source, you are strongly advised to obtain written permission from the copyright holder. To get it, write the publisher of the source you wish to quote, or ask your contributor to obtain such permission. Set forth exactly what you wish to quote or reproduce and enclose a recent issue of your newsletter so that the permissions officer can clearly see that you are not in the commercial publishing business. Whatever you do, do NOT rewrite text or modify images without the original author's/artist's permission. Permission, if granted, will usually be given without charge but with a prescribed credit line (usually the original copyright notice in the source), which must be printed EXACTLY AS GIVEN in your newsletter. Magazines often respond faster than book publishers, who may have to clear the request with the author.

An expected permission that has not arrived by your press date should be considered a refusal.

Courtesy Copies

Many editors consider it good practice to send copies of their newsletters to the authors of original material drawn upon in articles in the newsletter, to be sure that contributors are aware of this practice.

Fair Use

It is essential to obtain permission to reprint an illustration, an entire poem or article, or a complete chapter from a book. However, if the work is in the public domain (e.g., it was published before 1923), you are free to use some or all of it without permission. In the case of an article by one of your contributors that draws upon a source through quotations, you may be able to avoid going through the tedious permission process by having your contributor reduce the amount of material taken directly from the source to the point where it constitutes fair use. "Fair use" is perhaps the trickiest area of copyright. It permits a person to reprint portions of a work for review purposes, scientific study, education or scholarship, but not merely for entertainment.

Other Hints

Paraphrase

Copyright protects the particular expression of ideas, not the ideas themselves, even if they are novel. You may give an author full credit for created thoughts, but you may restate them in your own words.

As long as you are not creating a work that is a copy of the original or is derived from the original (a "derivative work"), you are not liable for copyright infringement. Caution: there is almost no way you can redraw a cartoon without infringing the copyright on it, since any redrawing would constitute a derivative work.

Limit Extractions

Sometimes you must quote from a piece; e.g., a critic may not be able to analyze a writer's prose without printing at least a few of the writer's lines. But the critic should use the minimum amount of extracted material to prove the point. Rule: the less copied, the better.

When In Doubt

When reviewing a contribution ask yourself: Does this, taken as a whole, come across as a work with some originality, or is it more or less a substitute for its source? If you have any hesitancy about the answer, work with the author to resolve the issue or refuse the contribution.

This brings us to the bottom line question to ask yourself: How much am I being paid to take chances? A copyright infringement suit is likely to name you personally, as well as your group. Resolve all doubts by having written permission in hand. Otherwise, refuse the contribution.

Professional Advice

To be (almost) certain that your actions do not constitute copyright infringement, consult a lawyer, preferably a helpful Mensan patent attorney.

Registering Your Newsletter in the United States Copyright Office

As of a 1998 revision to the Copyright Act, copyright protection lasts 70 years after the author's life or 95 years from the date of creation of the work, if an organization claims copyright. It is best to claim copyright on the contents of your newsletter. Nothing could be simpler. Just publish a proper notice of copyright on your masthead page or on the title page or first page of text, if you don't use a masthead. You do not need special permission from the Copyright Office to print this copyright notice. In fact, the Copyright Office encourages you to print the notice when your newsletter is published. Here is the form it should take:

© (Your Local Mensa Group, or Special Interest Group) 2003

Is copyright registration necessary? The chance that anyone outside the Mensa organization might want to copy anything appearing in your pages, let alone the possibility that it has any commercial value, is very slim at best. Many contributors to newsletters, as well as their editors and local group memberships, generally wish to receive proper credit as originators when items are picked up and

reprinted in other Mensa periodicals. A simple request to this effect, prominently printed on the masthead page, will usually be honored. If you wish to forego copyright registration but seek intra-Mensa credit, credit-request language might take this form:

> **"All material in this issue not copyrighted by others may be freely reprinted in Mensa publications. It is requested that full credit be given to the author or artist and to this newsletter."**

Registering your newsletter in the U.S.

Registering with the Copyright Office provides certain advantages, but is by no means required to bring suit under the law. If you ever wish to bring an action for copyright infringement against a party that has copied something from one of your issues, you will have to register that issue before suit can be commenced. Note that this can be done after the act of infringement has occurred.

Copyright Ownership of Individual Contributors

You might wish to acknowledge individual copyright ownership for only selected contributions if, for instance, the author of a single article in an issue expresses interest in having copyright protection. Separate registration may be advisable for any case in which an author requests a copyright notice. The author is generally responsible for such copyright registration. In such a case you would use the credit-request line form mentioned above, and a copyright notice would be printed with the contribution to be separately protected, as follows:

> **© John Doe 2003**

Free Copyright Application Forms

Application forms for an entire issue or for an individual contribution may be obtained free from the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave., S.E., Washington, DC 20559.

If you know the form you wish to use, you can call the.Copyright Forms Hotline: (202) 707-9100. An answering machine will answer your call. Leave your name and address and request up to five copies of the form (usually Form TX) with instructions.

Alternatively, you can access the Copyright Office web site, copyright.gov, to determine which form you need and to download the form itself. Be sure to copy or print the 2-page, downloaded form on both sides of a single sheet of paper. You can fill in the appropriate form and mail it to the Copyright Office, along with a check for $30 (that fee may change from time to time, so confirm it before mailing your application) and your newsletter (the so-called Deposit Material).

To be sure that the Copyright Office receives your material, send along a stamped, self-addressed postcard, and the Copyright Office will date stamp it and return it to you as a receipt.

Libel

by Art Spikol

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There is a difference between intentional and accidental lies, between deliberately misleading innuendo and statements, and simple, honest misunderstanding. True or not, it is thought to be better for the press to have the freedom to raise certain issues, and to express opinions on them freely, than to be restrained by virtue of being able to print only the truth, especially since the truth is only recognized as such after it is defended as such.

As a writer, you'd probably like somebody to give you a list of everything that's libelous. You could then look at the list and say, "Well, now I know what to write and what not to write, so I'm safe." Unfortunately, that's impossible. First, the libel laws vary from state to state (although all states generally agree on the formal requisites of libel); second, it is not always easy to distinguish between what is privileged — in other words, fair game for the press — and what may be the press sticking its nose in where it doesn't belong. However, you don't need a list. You need only a few guidelines. And the first guideline is simple. Don't automatically be afraid of libel.

Libel means injury to reputation. A libelous publication is one which exposes a person to hatred or contempt or ridicule, or which tends to cause any person, organization or group of persons to be shunned or avoided socially and/or professionally and/or in their business or occupation. That should give you the idea: Attack somebody's reputation in print and you'd better be ready to defend your right to have done it.

The mere fact that some uncomplimentary information has been published is not automatically a guarantee that someone can successfully sue you. There are defenses to a libel action. And while this [article] can't take the place of a course in libel law, we'll try to present guidelines sufficient to avoid basic libel problems. But because writers, like laws, vary, I leave you with that age-old warning: One who attempts to be one's own lawyer has a fool for a client. In other words: "when in doubt, check."

To create libel, you need three things:

- The libel must be published.
- The person being libeled mast be identified.
- And finally, there must be a harmful effect.

Publication

Let's say that I decide that I dislike you sufficiently to write you a letter about it, and in that letter I say that you are incompetent, not trustworthy, probably psychotic, a torturer of children [and so on]. Is that libelous?

You might say no, because it's only a letter. However, letters can be libelous — and this one could have been if I'd sent a copy of it to all our friends. That would constitute publication.

There was a case where a man sent a [suggestive] letter to a New York widow. The woman decided that she had been publicly insulted and sued for libel. She lost. The letter hadn't been published until she herself put it in front of the postal authorities.

In a 1964 case, a Texas newspaper raised a defense in a libel action, saying that although the paper had been distributed, there was no proof that anyone had actually read it. That defense didn't work. The court said that it could be presumed that the newspaper had been seen and the article read.

Identification

There are several ways in which you can identify someone. You can write the person's name — that'll do it for sure. But you can also provide a description so accurate and so revealing that the person about whom you're writing will be identified even though you have avoided the mention of any name, or have adopted a pseudonym.

My policy in using fictitious names to avoid accidentally selecting a real person's name is, first, check the phone book for the existence of such a name, and second, pick a name that has some personal significance so that you can prove you made it up and bore no malice in using it. Or, if that fails, third, you might use a name so common that no one could possibly claim it refers to him alone, such as John Smith.

How about groups? Can you say that the U.S. Army is riddled with drug abuse, or that some New York cabbies take "the long way" around? Sure, since both groups are too large for any individual to take such criticism personally or have it reflect on them personally. In smaller groups, it's best to use the word "some" or "a few". As a rule of thumb, when the number drops below 100, tread carefully.

Harmful Effect

If a person or group is identified, and if something negative is said about them, it stands to reason that their reputations could be damaged. If that's true, the libel could be complete, but there is no libel unless the effect of the printed reference is to make people think worse of someone, to damage a person or reputation, social acceptability, business or profession. The most dangerous kind of published reference would be one that would damage a person in all three areas, such as one that would charge crime or dishonor. But one cannot be libeled by being accused of doing what he has a perfect right to do.

However, journalists today must be more careful than ever with small details The country is in a litigious mood, everybody sues these days, and even if there are no real grounds, suits are expensive to defend. Also, the press has occasionally been a target in recent years, and court decisions have gone against it in some notable examples, so the general public is no longer as quick to consider the freedom of the press inviolable. In libel, not fulfilling the harmful effect requirement is what stops a lot of lawsuits.

Who decides the disposition of a libel suit? Often the attorney involved. Many such cases don't even get to court because the outcome is predictable. If the case does get to court, sometimes a judge will decide. If he can't, he'll call in a jury.

Reckless Disregard

You can't spend any appreciable amount of time around journalists without hearing about the famous New York Times vs. Sullivan case, which culminated in one of the most important decisions regarding press freedom in this century. The Supreme Court stated:

> "The constitutional guarantee requires, we think, a federal rule that prohibits a public official from recovering damages for a defamatory falsehood relating to his official conduct unless he

proves that the statement was made with 'actual malice', that is, with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not."

This paved the way for a new kind of journalism — a journalism that would conceivably enable anyone to make inaccurate libelous statements about a public official's conduct, so long as he referred to the official's public, and not purely private, conduct, and so long as the statements were not in reckless disregard of the truth.

In June of 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court extended the ruling to cover not only public officials but public figures as well, that is, those people in whose public conduct society and the press have a "legitimate and substantial interest", as the Court put it.

In another case, the Supreme Court reversed a jury's judgment, saying that private persons are entitled to no more protection than public persons in matters that involve public interest.

Gossip

Almost everything must be seen in the context of whom we're writing about. There are a lot of gray areas in libel. Is a public/private person, who may not be famous but who has had a few bylines in a few magazines, immune from press criticism? Hardly. In fact, because you help shape the opinions of people, you might be fair game for any media. But just how much depends upon you; how widely you're read and how much impact you have on how large a readership. Your readership need not be great. There's a good example in the case of the minister who was accused of seducing a housemaid. The court said that because ministers are leaders of the people and their influence is great, their behavior is a matter for public concern.

As for the purely private lives of public people, check any gossip column. Most of the items where actual names are used are relatively harmless, but where there is something sensitive enough to create an atmosphere for a lawsuit, there is usually an attempt on the columnist's part to disguise the person under discussion.

Secondhand Sources

If it's beginning to sound like the cards are stacked against the writer, they're not, far from it. In fact, there are plenty of defenses, and that may explain why most of the libel suits threatened never get off the ground.

Privilege is a public policy matter in the right of free speech. The idea is that you are granted immunity for liability or defamation that otherwise would be actionable if what you write is a matter of public or social interest. Privilege is a necessity in creating a climate of free-wheeling, thought-provoking argument. In this category are: judicial, legislative, public and official proceedings. However, when the press reports on the same situation, the privilege becomes qualified instead of absolute. It all depends upon how the situation is handled journalistically. In one libel suit, a newspaper responded that its report was an accurate account of the court proceedings The court found in favor of the executive because spatting marital partners often make unfounded charges.

Very little that a journalist reports is fact; most often — and this is especially true in the case of magazines — it is information obtained second-hand. As one who has dealt with magazine writers and is one himself, I can tell you that it's rare that a writer will be on the scene of an actual occurrence.

Fair Comment

There is a notable exception, and that is when the journalist or writer becomes the witness — reads a book and then reviews it, goes to a movie or play and then writes about it, or goes to a restaurant and passes judgment on it. The writer can condemn everything from architecture to zoos, and is at such times protected by the right to fair comment — or opinion. Opinions can almost never be proven, but nobody could write a column or article without them. Fair comment is a complete defense — that is, it wholly defeats a recovery on the part of the plaintiff no matter how defamatory or injurious the opinion may be — provided that there is no proof of actual malice. The premise here, as elsewhere in the libel laws, is that it is better for the reputation of one person to suffer, even unjustifiably, than to squelch free expression on matters of public interest. We live in an imperfect world.

You're fairly safe as long as you're stating an opinion that deals with a matter of public interest; as long as it is not presented as fact, but clearly as opinion; as long as the facts on which the opinions are based are truly stated; and as long as the opinion is fair and without malice.

Truth

Truth of the published matter is an absolute defense in a libel action. It is difficult to attempt to prove, particularly in view of the fact that the writer most often has no real knowledge of the truth, but only what he has learned secondhand. It is not enough to say that you have quoted someone accurately, either. If the utterance is libelous, the responsibility it always placed on the publisher. If there is any foolproof method of proving the truth, it is to have incontrovertible documentary evidence.

Reply and Consent

Two other common forms of defense against potential libel suits are reply and consent. Reply is, if someone attacks you in the press, you have a right to counter the attack. You could go to a newspaper or magazine and point out that the writer who attacked you had an ax to grind. You might further question his journalistic ability or fairness. A magazine under fire, especially one that feels that it may be in the wrong, may be willing to take some flack, even let someone reply in print if that will squelch any further action. Very often, regardless of whether there is a potential for action or not, the editor will publish a letter from the person who has been attacked in the letters-to-the-editor column.

Consent is a little different. It closes the barn door before the horse leaves. It's done this way: "My magazine is doing an article about you in which certain statements are made. We thought you would want an opportunity to respond to these statements before we go to press just to set the record straight." In cases like this, the person's response is tantamount to "consent", that is, the person has answered the charges and the piece achieves a certain balance through the implication/denial process. And if the person says "no comment," that's not consent, but at least it shows that the reporter attempted to give the subject an opportunity to reply. No magazine needs consent to publish material, of course. But it is a useful tactic in forestalling a libel action.

Becoming more and more prevalent is the idea that people have a right to privacy — "the right to be left alone," as Justice Brandeis once put it. However, when people become part of a news event or part of a situation related to the public interest, they forfeit some of the right to be left alone.

Responsibility

The libel laws exist to protect not only those who might be defamed by the press, but from the press itself. Only through the exercise of responsibility can the reliability and credibility of the press remain intact. There are magazines and newspapers in this country that are afraid to publish certain types of stories for fear of libel. However, the libel laws have enough flexibility built into them, and enough regard for the responsible operation of the press, to enable any legitimate journalistic organization to report candidly and without fear of reprisals on material that is in the public interest, so long as it reports in a responsible and fair manner, without malice and without invading anyone's purely private life.

[Editor's note: This article was excerpted from an article titled "The Libel Belt." Author Spikol wants Mensa editors to be advised that this is merely a guide, not the final word.]

Part IV: Production

Layout

Newsletter layout in Mensa publications is as diverse as the number of publications. Your best guidelines are to initially follow the layout developed by your previous editor, or emulate the layout of another newsletter, and then you can eventually develop a style of your own. More on layout can be found in the Desktop Publishing section.

Reproduction

Offset printing has always been the standard for good quality newsletter reproduction. Print shops can also fold, staple and label for you, but it all comes with a price. These prices can vary considerably so it is worth your while to shop around for the best price.

For smaller newsletters, photocopying is a viable alternative. The popular office supply stores have copy services that can compete favorably with print shops. The new digital machines read the original once and can print an unlimited number of copies from memory. They can include colored paper for the cover page, they can collate the pages of your newsletter and stagger each set, making them easy to pick up one at a time for stapling and folding.

Stapling

There are deep throat staplers available that can be adjusted to reach to the center of your newsletter for stapling. They work best if you can fabricate a wooden frame to hold the stapler and guide the collated newsletter accurately for stapling in the center.

Folding

An efficient way to fold a newsletter is by making a wooden jig the size of the unfolded newsletter, with a stop on two sides. The piece is positioned in the jig against the stops, one free end is lifted up, folded over the other and pushed against the stop. Then it can be creased by running a roller over it firmly. A good roller can be bought at a store that sells wallpaper supplies. These rollers are used for pressing down the wallpaper seams.

Desktop Publishing — by Carol Mason

Many editors now have computers, word processing and/or page layout software, printers for production or proofing, and access to digital output either via removable media such as floppy or Zip™ disks, recordable CDs, or direct file transfer via FTP or e-mail. Your local office supply shop (such as Kinko's) or quick printer may have several options available for output and bindery. Depending on the size of your membership and the size of your budget, you may want to have them do some of the tasks traditionally done by you and/or your volunteer staff.

This section provides help both for those editors who are already using computers to create their newsletters, and for those who are considering making the switch from manual paste-up.

The Tools

Computer

For newsletters, a computer does not have to be very new or fast and it does not need a lot of "bells and whistles." You will be happier, of course, with a monitor large enough to see comfortably — at least 15". A seventeen inch monitor is better and, if affordable, bigger is better still. Monitors are available that will show whole pages "life-sized" with room to spare. Make sure you have ample space on your hard disk to accommodate any pictures you put in your publication and to leave room for the print file. Removable storage is useful for file transfer, for extra space, and for backups.

Printer

Either laser or inkjet will do for newsletter proofing. At this writing, laser is still faster. If you cannot afford a PostScript printer, consider adding Adobe's PressReady® or other "software RIP" to your software toolkit. It works with a specific set of non-PostScript printers to allow them to print as if they were PostScript.

Fonts

You'll want a few nice, legible, font families, some serif and some sans serif. No one can resist an eye-catching display font. But be careful not to go overboard, too many fonts on a page can detract from its readability.

Other Software

You can use a plain text editor, a word processor, and a page layout program, often in that order. Your articles will come to you via e-mails (text), as attached Word or Word Perfect files, on floppy disks, or on paper which may be scanned and digitized into text. Clean these up in Notepad (Mac: Simple Text) or Word before you plop them into PageMaker and you will be happier.

Always keep, and back up, a copy of the original submission before you start to make changes.

If you want to print photos, a flatbed scanner and image editing software are useful. Sometimes your photographer can scan the photos in advance or have the film developed onto photo CDs, and submit images to you that are already digitized. Try to get high resolution and scale it down, rather than trying to get good print quality from a tiny file.

If you use clip art, you may need to alter it or convert file formats. Adobe PhotoShop and Corel PhotoPaint are two that accomplish this easily.

Organization

Keep a real and a virtual folder for each month's issue. The real (paper) folder holds notes, photos, RG ads, cover art, and anything else that needs to be scanned or referred to for that issue. The computer folder holds text copies of e-mail, submissions that are usually either text or Word files, and all other documents needed to assemble that issue. Try to follow the rule of putting these things into the appropriate folder the moment they are received. If you don't file them immediately, you may forget something at layout time.

Proofreading

One way to exchange files for proofing is through e-mail. You can utilize the "track changes" utility of Microsoft Word to view the "before" and "after" in the same submission. Alternatively, your proofers may simply send you a list of errors for correction, noting location. If there is time in the production schedule, you can also send an Adobe PDF file of the final layout to your proofers, to print, correct, and fax. Remember, your proofers are also volunteers who work behind the scenes and get very little credit. Thank and encourage them.

What does the printer get?

Discuss the options with your printer. Many printers will accept a high-resolution Adobe PDF file, which outputs to a Xerox DocuTech laser printer. There is no film, no plate, and each copy is an "original" 600 dpi laser print. A line screen of 85 lpi gives a good range of grays in the photos and other artwork. In prior years, we printed laser originals for submission as camera-ready for offset printing.

Processing raw submissions

Digital prepress can be very exacting. Sometimes the fonts or styles in a Word document can cause the PageMaker or Quark file to become corrupt. To keep your good file good, first place each submission in a "Free Parking" file, select all, apply "no style," and then copy and paste it into the newsletter.

Photos are scanned, cropped, cleaned up, and converted to grayscale in PhotoShop. If you have a web version of your newsletter, save the original color scan for use online. The grayscale file is saved at 170 dpi (twice the line screen) in EPS format. Then place the EPS pictures in the print version of the newsletter.

If you get submissions from non-standard drawing programs, like Word, you may have to handle them differently. There are two ways to handle the placement of this kind of art: Use Adobe Distiller or PDF Writer to make a PDF file of the picture(s), then edit them in Illustrator. Or ask

your contributor to send you a bitmap file. Bitmaps can be opened in PhotoShop and saved as EPS, then placed in the article.

Whenever possible, request digital versions of RG and other ads. Scanned files are often so large that they substantially slow down the layout program. If all you can get is hard copy, use a combination of scanning, OCR, and re-typing. Whatever is needed to get the thing "page-layout-ready." Often you can scan just for pictures, and reset the text. Setting the type gives you the freedom to alter the shape of the ad to fit your format.

Layout

Some parts of a newsletter always happen in the same place. The calendar grid, for example, may always be in the center spread. The cover, return address, and boilerplate is always in the same place. This simplifies the job of layout.

Then place the calendar. It is the one repeating item which varies in size every month. Then fit in any other submissions for the month. Finally, without totally obliterating white space, after you get all the stuff in that has to be in, choose and place clip art.

None of this is any different from what must be done for a manual layout, except that the scraps on the pasteboard do not get blown away if the fan is on.

Proofing

Try to proof as you go. Print the directory of the folder full of parts, and go through a preliminary print of the issue, and check things off. Here is where you may catch missing pieces and go back to the "drawing board" to fit them in. Here also is where you may catch some errors that are obvious on paper but seemed invisible on screen. Fix everything you've noticed, and (unless the issue is *very* late) send a new proof to your proofreaders. They'll *always* find more.

Digital Prepress "Hygiene"

Use *either* True Type *or* PostScript fonts, but do not mix both kinds in the same document. If you choose PostScript fonts, be sure to select the actual font family member (e.g., B Helvetica Bold) rather than applying the style to the base font (plain Helvetica, bolded in your application).

If you move or change artwork, be sure to update the link in the newsletter document.

Imposition

Just as you make a folding dummy before a manual paste-up, make one before rearranging your digital pages. It's a Real Good Idea to do the imposition on a duplicate of your file, not the original. In Quark, first make each page its own "section start," so that the folios (page numbers) do not change when you rearrange pages. Use the Document Palette, and drag each page to line up with its new mate. In PageMaker, try the "Build Booklet" plug-in. If your newsletter is not huge and complex, it might work. If Build Booklet does not work, you can use Sort Pages, but you will have to use page numbers that are not tied to any Master Page, or they will change when you move the pages.

Preparing for Output

Ask your printer what he needs. Some printers will work with native Quark files, with art and fonts, and most will use high-resolution PDF files. Both kinds output nicely. Ask if he outputs from Mac or PC. If it's not the platform you are using, then send a PDF file. Make the PDF using no compression of art or text, and embed all fonts. Even so, at this writing there are some fonts that will not embed. If you have doubts, ask for a proof from the printer before you go ahead with the whole print run. Sometimes a funky font can be replaced, and sometimes it can be ignored. And there are some fonts that almost everyone has activated all the time, such as the TrueType fonts that come with Windows, and common PostScript fonts such as Helvetica and Times.

Keep in mind that if you send a PageMaker or Quark file with art and fonts, legally your printer must also have a license to use each font in your document. If you choose exotic fonts, embedding them in a PDF is a legal way to output them from a printer who does not have them.

Ask your printer if he wants a printed proof of your imposed booklet with your file(s).

Part V: Distribution

A Step-by-Step Periodicals Mailing

USPS Periodicals mailing requirements are far more complicated than this brief outline but these guidelines should cover most Mensa applications.

Glossary:

Entry Post Office - The USPS branch where you mail your newsletter

Label - Name and address of recipient

Piece - One newsletter

Package - A bundle of six or more newsletters

Letters - Any mail Piece 6-1/8 inches or less in height, and 11-½ inches or less in width, and ¼ inch or less in thickness (there is also a minimum measurement of 3-½ by 5 inches)

Tray - The mailing container of Letters

Flats - Any mail Piece larger than any of the maximum measurements for Letters

Sack - The mailing container of Flats

Sack/Tray Labels - An attached label designating the destination, three-digit ZIP, and classification of mail

Sticker - A small label attached to a Package designating its sort class

Permit

The *Periodicals* mail class is designed so that when the mailer does a substantial part of the sorting, it saves the post office some work and saves the mailer some money. The first step is to buy a *Periodicals* permit. The *Periodicals* permit must designate a *Known Office of Publication*, a place where the records must be kept and where the occasional postal audit can be performed. The permit is specific to a particular *Entry Post Office*, or location of mailing, and has a one-time fee which is non-refundable.

The specified *Known Office of Publication, Entry Post Office*, or the title of the publication can be changed only by filing PS Form 3510, *Application for Additional Entry, Reentry, or Special Rate Request for Periodicals Publication*, and paying the current fee.

Letters and Flats

An 8-½ x 11 sheet folded once, booklet-style newsletter qualifies for "Letters" size, anything larger (8-½ x 14 or 11 x 17, folded once) is considered as "Flats." "Letters" must be mailed in trays and "Flats" must be sacked.

Labels

The mailing process starts after the newsletter is printed and the labels are received from the National Office. If you have local subscribers and prospects, you must generate labels forthem. They are not included in the list sent by the National Office. Be sure to make a copy of these self-generated labels for the mandatory postal records. You must also keep a record of the subscribers' payments. A photocopy of their checks is adequate.

The first step in preparing the labels is to remove the optional second-family labels, unless your group sends newsletter to the second members of families. These are optional because the second family member has paid reduced dues with the provision that they do not necessarily receive a second newsletter. These must be included, however, whenever there is a ballot included in the newsletter for a local election.

The remaining labels, including the subscribers and prospects, must be sorted according to ZIP code in what is called 3/5 categories, that is, the first three or the first five digits being unique. Six or more pieces constitute a *package* which must be banded separately. Labels can be sorted initially and placed in their respective trays, for Letters; or placed in envelopes, for Flats. Alternatively, they can be sorted while being applied to the newsletter. Five-digit packages are separated from a general three-digit category tray. In-County and Out-County must be tallied separately but can be mingled in the tray/sack.

Each *package* must have a label applied (which we'll call a "sticker" to distinguish it from the mailing label) to designate its category. The five-digit gets a red "D" and the three-digit gets a green "3". Out-of-area and out-of-state packages get a brown "MS" sticker. There are other sticker s but these are the primary ones.

The trays/sacks also get a label designating their destination, three-digit ZIP, and class of mailing.

USPS Form 3541

The Periodicals *Postage Statement* is mostly self-explanatory but requires some understanding. It is helpful to have a postage scale because the piece weight must be recorded in pounds to the fourth decimal place. The form changes as the rates increase and as the USPS fine-tunes the mailing requirements. Note that advertising complicates filling out the form and increases the postage a small amount. Meet with your local bulk mailing expert for complete instructions.

Record-keeping

Periodicals mail entry requires records that can support the information presented to obtain Periodicals mailing privileges. The records must show that the publication is distributed to a legitimate list of subscribers. These records must show:

- Print orders showing the total number of copies printed.
- Orders for subscriptions and non-subscriber copies. The alpha ZIP list from the National Office, including the *Circulation Statistics,* along with a copy of checks from local subscribers is adequate.
- Sample copies distributed free, both by mail and outside the mail, that is, for example, copies brought to RGs for free distribution.

- Records of copies destroyed.
- Every year on or before October 1, a *Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation* must be filed with the *Entry Post Office.* The forms will be mailed to the Publisher by the post office. The contents of this form must be published in the October newsletter.

Finances

The newsletter is the single largest expense of the local groups. As the editor, you should be fiscally responsible for the expenses you incur for the production and mailing of the newsletter. Plus, be aware of the costs of formatting. Sometimes a small change in font size, columniation, number of photos, number of pages, or size of the finished product, can mean the difference between operating within the subsidy from National, and putting your group in the red.

Financial matters are ultimately responsibility of the local group, as publisher. However, to publish a high quality newsletter, sometimes additional funding may be required. As editor, you should participate fully in fund-raising efforts. There are many ways a local group can augment the amount of money budgeted for the newsletter. These include:

- Holding a Regional Gathering.
- Collecting voluntary local dues.
- Charging admission to local group events.
- Having various public sales (e.g., garage sales, book sales).
- Selling advertising in the newsletter.

Another way to get more for your dollar is to shop around for printers. Frequently modern digital photocopying can be less expensive than offset printing and the average reader cannot tell the difference. In addition, photocopy machines will collate the pages at no extra cost.

Postage is a large part of newsletter expense. A Periodicals permit is expensive but will save money in the long run (the mailer does a significant amount of the sorting in exchange for a lower rate). See Part II for more information on USPS identification requirements for a Periodicals permit.

Part VI: National Mensa Resources

American Mensa, Ltd.

American Mensa, Limited (AML) is bound by its bylaws that were approved by the members. AML grants permission to form Local Groups which cannot exist apart from the national body. Yet, the Local Groups can demonstrate a wide variety of individual character and identity.

The American Mensa Committee

American Mensa, Ltd. is a not-for-profit corporation and its Board of Directors is the American Mensa Committee (AMC). The AMC is the governing body of AML and is elected by the members. Following are some of the positions on the AMC who can be resources for editors.

Regional Vice Chairman

The Regional Vice Chairman (RVC) is the Local Group's liaison to the AMC and is a good source of information for the editor. The RVC has discretionary funds that can help local groups when a financial problem arises or special projects are implemented.

Communications Officer

Just as the RVC is the liaison for the Local Group, the Communications Officer (CO) is the liaison for the editors. The CO coordinates the production of Mensa publications, answers questions dealing with the production of existing publications, and considers feasibility of proposed publications. He is also involved in contract negotiations and oversees the Publications Recognition Program.

Publications Committee

The AMC may appoint a Publications Committee (PubsCom) whose purpose is to discuss publication matters and advise the AMC, the CO, the national editors and the Local Group editors. This committee works mostly behind the scenes but the editor can contact the PubsCom Chairman regarding matters relating to the Local Group newsletter. The PubsCom panel of experts will discuss the matter and offer a recommendation.

Development Officer

The Development Officer serves as a resource to the AMC, the National Office, the local groups and to the outside public relations agency with the objective of developing publicity for the enhancement of Mensa's name and recruiting of new members.

Director Of Science And Education

This officer chairs the Research Review Committee that has the tasks of: (1) judging the MERF Awards for Excellence in research on giftedness and intelligence; (2) recommending the funding of research programs; and (3) screening requests for the use of Mensa subjects and the Mensa data base.

AMC Meetings

The AMC holds regularly scheduled meetings at least three times a year. One of these is at the American Mensa Annual Gathering (AG) and the others at various places around the country, usually in conjunction with regional gatherings. AMC meetings are open to all members who wish to attend but non-AMC members cannot speak unless invited to do so by an AMC member with the AMC's approval. Editors, local secretaries and others receive advance copies of the agenda, and minutes of the meetings are published in InterLoc and posted on the AML web site. The AMC mini-minutes, a brief synopsis of AMC actions, is sent to all editors. Publication of the mini-minutes is optional.

AMC Actions Still in Effect (ASIE)

The AMC can take actions that affect the local groups. These can be viewed on the web site and are available from the National Office.

The American Mensa National Office

The National Office (NO) of Mensa is staffed by employees whose functions include maintaining a membership data base, generating labels for local group newsletters, response to membership inquiries, processing new and renewal memberships, distributing communications among the various Mensa entities, handling financial transactions, and supporting the actions of the AMC administratively as required.

The NO staff is specialized in various aspects of running an organization. They are a vital resource for Local Group officers. Messages sent to the National Office will be forwarded to the appropriate staff member for response.

National Publications

InterLoc

InterLoc is a service publication and is sent free to all national officers and appointees, most local officers, and any other interested member who requests it. Published ten times a year, it carries the official minutes of all AMC meetings, funnels pertinent information and announcements from the national organization to group leaders, and contains other items of business such as listings of group sizes and group growth. It also carries how-to articles and serves as a vehicle of communication among local group officers, editors, and others.

InterLoc provides a forum that promotes interchange of practical ideas where readers can pose questions and generally receive a number of replies in subsequent issues.

The contents of *InterLoc* are generally of limited interest to the membership at large, but every editor should read it regularly. If you are not on the mailing list, send your name and address to the National Office requesting a subscription. Those not receiving it automatically need to renew annually.

Mensa Bulletin

The *Mensa Bulletin* goes to all members and some non-member subscribers. Included twice yearly in the national publication is the Directory of American Mensa, Ltd. Local group editors are listed in the local groups section. This directory is kept current by the National Office staff which must be kept informed of changes in editorship, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

Editor Workshops

AML sponsors Leadership Development Workshops (LDWs) around the country to provide leadership training for present and aspiring local group officers. At these workshops experienced Mensa leaders present a core curriculum of the essentials of editing a Mensa newsletter, and respond to the particular interests and concerns of the participants.

In addition, there is usually a meeting for editors at the Annual Gathering and even at some RGs. This is sometimes just an informal rap session led by the Communications Officer or a panel of experienced editors. This is an opportunity for new editors to learn from more experienced ones.

You and Your Fellow Editors

To many editors, the relationship with fellow editors is one of the important rewards of the work. Correspondence and often lasting friendships have grown out of requests for advice, helpful responses. commiseration, and mutual admiration. AGs and RGs offer opportunities to develop these relationships and the Editor's Discussion List provides yet another channel of communication among editors. Mensa editors also constitute a powerful voice in the society. The editor's ability to facilitate elections, to influence AMC actions, and to promote or deflate group morale should not be underestimated.

Newsletter Awards

The presentation of awards for outstanding local group newsletters has been a tradition for years. Awards are presented at the Annual Gathering with the objective of granting recognition to editors whose work represents superior achievement and to stimulate attention to quality among all Mensa editors. The method for adjudicating, and the basis on which value is assigned, have changed from time to time. Traditionally, a panel of past-editor judges receive successive issues of those newsletters whose editors are willing to participate in the program. Editors are notified of the steps they have to take to be included in the program.

Appendix

Reference Books

Following is a list of books which other editors have found useful. They deal with desktop publishing, style issues, grammar, graphics, and design; essentially all of the factors which go into the newsletter. They are presented in alphabetical order.

A Dictionary of Fowler's Modern English Usage, by H.W. Fowler

A good dictionary: *Webster's Third International* is an excellent one.

A Manual of Style prepared by the U.S. Government Printing Office. New York: Gramercy Publishing Co, 1986.

A thesaurus: *Roget's* is the standard; older editions are more complete

Editing Your Newsletter by Mark Beach

Fowler's Modern English Usage

Graphic Design for the Electronic Age: The manual for traditional and desktop publishing, by Jan V. White

Looking Good in Print (Fourth Edition), by Roger C. Parker

Publishing Newsletters, by Howard Penn Hudson

The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual, by Addison-Wesley

The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers (14th edition). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993.

The Elements of Editing, by Arthur Plotnik

The Elements of Grammar, by Margaret Shertzer

The Elements of Style, by Strunk and White

The Gregg Reference Manual, 7th Ed., William A. Sabin

The Non-Designer's Design Book: Design and Typographic Principles for the Visual Novice, by Robin Williams

Torn Wings and Faux Pas, by Karen Elizabeth Gordon

Use The Right Word, by S.I. Hayakawa

Wired Style: Principles of English Usage in the Digital Age, by Constance Hale and Jessie Scanlon

Write to be Read: A Practical Guide to Feature Writing, by Benton Rain Patterson