AMERICAN
mensa
LTD.

Editor's Handbook

Revised, June 2003

The High IQ Society

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Fourth Edition revised June 2003

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 — who all share an interest in Mensa publications.

In this edition we focus on present day technology in producing newsletters. We cover editorial rights and responsibilities. And, we try 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 that must be followed.

Part II covers questions of content: 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 describes options for the physical production and distribution of the newsletter.

Part VI lists sources of National level assistance.

Appendices are provided for reference.

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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 the purpose of the newsletter.

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. 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 that 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. Other Mensa 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: Editors@lists.us.mensa.org with "Subscribe Editors" in the body of the message.

The editor also needs to become familiar with the United States Postal Service 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 that apply to your newsletter. Check the Web site (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 activities, including 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 the item clearly identifies the person as a Mensa Member and does not make the item appear to be related to the national organization. Digital logos are available from the National Office and on the AML 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.

Detailed specifications for logo use are available from the National Office or at http://www.us.mensa.org/member_resources/members/trademark.php3

Newsletter Purpose

The primary 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 local group editors are unpaid volunteers. Their rewards must come from the satisfaction of doing a pleasurable job. Consequently, they must have certain rights and in order to make their jobs pleasurable. These include:

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

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. The editor is responsible for rejecting inappropriate material. 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 backward, 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. In some areas, and/or when a postal permit is used, more time may be required. Subtract the delivery time from the required receipt date to determine 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

Keep in mind that contributors to your newsletter can be potential staff members or even replacement editors. 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 and 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
- Referenda and bylaws proposals
- Treasurer's Reports
- Ombudsman's official comments and findings

Optional Contents

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

- LocSec column
- Editorial policy
- Local Executive Committee names and contact information
- 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 and solutions
- Articles
- Poetry
- Cartoons
- Reprints from other newsletter

Editorial Policy

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

Editors 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." 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 on any national information, if it is not already reported in the LocSec's column.

The local group's Board of Directors, or Executive Committee, 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 ensure 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, appropriate-ness 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 editor and the author do not both approve the text, 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 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 children and nonmembers. Also remember that obscenities are generally considered to be 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.

- **Inappropriate Personal Information**
  Respect the members' privacy. Never print telephone numbers, email addresses or home addresses without permission. Do not announce travel plans.

- **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 they may not be in the loop. Use the full names of people. Nicknames and first-name-only may alienate new members.

- **Unexplained Abbreviations or Acronyms**
  Abbreviations and acronyms should be defined in a periodic glossary or in each issue. For the first use of Regional Gathering, e.g., spell it out. A new member may not understand the abbreviation RG.

Contributors

The best method for obtaining contributions from members is to 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 are other ways 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.

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. It is far better to consult with the writer to make the correction than to 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. They have a right to have their material retain the flavor and content that was intended.

Following are areas that can be improved by substantive editing:

- Lack of focus
- Unnecessary repetition
- Wordiness
- 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, artwork and graphics. It is judicious to accumulate a large number of these fillers to effectively use all your 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 to make 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 whether 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 about 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 it 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 contributions 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 are 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 a discerning reader proofread the newsletter, 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

Copyright

Copyright protection for a manuscript begins from the moment it is fixed in a tangible form, whether it is registered or not. When you do copyright your newsletter, you're copyrighting the entire publication: the way it looks, the order of the stories, the compilation of the work. You aren't copyrighting a contributor's words; you're copyrighting the way the contribution looks on the page. Contributors retain copyright of their words.

Copyright vests initially in the author. Each contributor owns the copyright to his contribution. As an editor of a Mensa publication, you must respect the copyright of any material (not in "public domain", see below) 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, your local group, or even American Mensa 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.

Under the law, a court may award statutory damages to the person who sues for copyright infringement. The damages are discretionary with the judge, but as of 1999, they ranged 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. Always get permission.

Public Domain

Anything published before 1923 is in the public domain. If it was published after that, the copyright must have run out for it to be in the public domain. Government works are also in the public domain. "Public domain" means anyone can print it. The next time something will fall into the public domain is 2019 (when the copyright of things created in 1923 expires). Some examples of works that are in the public domain are Shakespeare, the Bible, some political cartoons, etc.

For information on the public domain see information from the Center for the Public Domain at www.centerpd.org.

Reprinting from Other Mensa Newsletters

You may freely reprint anything you find in the Mensa press, provided that the newsletter contains the Contributor Copyright Agreement and Release (below), and the item itself is not a reprint with an exclusive permission statement appended, or the originator has appended a copyright notice, as follows: **© John Doe 2003.**

American Mensa strongly recommends the following text be included in the newsletters and on the Web sites of all local groups:

> CONTRIBUTOR COPYRIGHT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE
> By submitting an original item for publication in the [Newsletter Name], or [Website URL], the contributing writer, artist, or photographer indicates having read, and agreeing to, the following. The copyright to creative material belongs to the originator, even when the publication is copyrighted by the local group. The originator grants a one-time license to the local group to publish the contributed item in one issue of the [Newsletter Name]. The originator also grants a license to any other Mensa local group to republish the creative material, provided appropriate attribution is shown giving credit to both the originator and [Local Group]. The recommended format is "By [Originator Name], reproduced from the [Newsletter Name] or [Website URL] of [Local Group]". However, if a copyright notice for the originator appears with the item, specific permission to reproduce the item must be obtained directly from the originator. It is the policy of [Local Group] to publish items only when the original source of the creative material is known and rights to reproduce it have been granted to [Local Group].

It is common courtesy to send a copy of the issue in which the reprint appears to the originator of the item, and it ensures that contributors are aware of the use of their work.

Reprinting from the Internet

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.

The Internet is a medium, similar to the way television or newspapers are a medium. Just because something is published on the Internet and you can download it for free doesn't mean it is free for you to use any way you want to.

The same guidelines for obtaining copyright permission to use something apply to the Internet. Get permission from the author. Whether you want to reprint something from the *New York Times* or the New York Times Web site, call them and pay the nominal fee for a reprint. It's

a lot cheaper than paying for a lawsuit if they find out you've "borrowed" from them.

The best rule of thumb is, if you don't know where something originated, don't use it.

Obtaining Permission to Reprint

To reprint from an outside source, or to publish a contribution that quotes from such a source, you must get written permission from the copyright holder (or parent, if under 18). Write the publisher of the source or ask your contributor to obtain such permission. Cite exactly what you wish to quote or reproduce, enclose a recent issue of your newsletter, and mention its total circulation 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 specific 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.

Occasionally you may receive permission to reprint, without a request for a credit. Print the permission for reprint, anyway. If the permission is not printed, the Communications Officer, staff at the national office, and others who review your newsletter might assume that you did not get permission for reprint.

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

When publishing photographs of people who can easily be identified, you should get permission from the subjects. For minors under the age of 18, it is always necessary to get permission from the parents. A group photo in which no one is easily identifiable is generally okay to publish without permission.

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.

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.

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 on its copyright, 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, depending on when a work was created, copyright protection can last 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.

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.

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 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.

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.

Many commercial print shops welcome direct-to-plate work. The result is that each copy is an original laser print, with no loss of quality as was formerly associated with the copier method.

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.

Introduction to Desktop Publishing

"Desktop publishing" is producing a finished newsletter using a computer and software. The electronic media replaces typewriters or typesetting machines, layout boards and paste.

If your group still relies on manual paste-up, your predecessor will show you how to use them. This section of the book is for the person who has a computer but has never used it for desktop publishing. It assumes the reader understands basic computer terminology such as software, floppy disk, CD, hard drive, memory and so on.

Desktop Publishing Tools

Computer

For newsletters, a computer does not have to be very new or fast, nor does it need a lot of "bells and whistles." Following are some guidelines for choosing your computer.

- Check the programs you will be using for word processing, page layout, etc., to determine recommended CPU speed and memory requirements.
- For ease of use, you will want a monitor large enough to see comfortably — at least 15" diagonal measurement. A 17-inch monitor is better and, if affordable, bigger is better still. Large monitors are designed to 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.

Home Printer

You will want to have a printer available so you can print out the newsletter for proofing. Often errors that you don't notice on the computer screen are obvious in print. Since the printer is solely for your personal use, and either laser or inkjet will suffice, use whatever printer you are comfortable with.

Word Processing Software

The most commonly used word processing software at this time is Microsoft Word™. It is convenient to use, since many submissions are in Word's .doc format. However, any word processing software is acceptable as long as it can import text from a variety of formats. Submissions may arrive as text in emails, as email attachments of word processing files, on floppy disks,

or on paper which may be scanned and digitized into text or manually entered into your word processing program. Always save a copy of the original submission **before** you start to make changes.
The simplest way to clean up email text is to copy it, then paste it into your word processing program; replace all instances of **double** soft breaks (symbolized as **^l** in Word) with hard breaks (symbolized as **^p** in Word); then replace all remaining soft breaks with nothing, effectively deleting them. Proofread it carefully. The file is now ready to be saved and imported or copied into your page layout software.

Photo Processing Software
Photo processing software lets you crop pictures, change focus and contrast, and do many other functions that previously were only available to professional photo studios. It is not advisable to change photos dramatically. It is seldom advisable to add or delete individuals from a photo. These programs should only be used to edit photos for size and clarity of the picture.

Adobe PhotoShop™ and Corel PhotoPaint™ are two of the many photo editing applications. Photo editing programs, as well as page layout software, can be expensive. Ask the previous editor and the membership whether anyone has an older version they would be willing to donate. Usually an older version will serve newsletter needs quite satisfactorily.

Try to get high-resolution photo files and scale them down, rather than trying to get good print quality from a tiny file. You may wish to request that your photographers submit images to you that are already digitized. They may use a digital camera, scan the photos in advance, or have the film developed onto photo CDs or floppies.

If you want to include photos that were submitted in hard copy, a flatbed scanner and photo processing software are required. However, scanned images can be such large files that they overwhelm your page layout program. Experiment with your scanner to find the smallest file size that maintains the integrity of the photo.

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. For paid ads, it is essential to obtain consent from the advertiser for any changes. For reciprocal RG ads, it's also highly recommended.

Image Processing Software
Image processing, or drawing, software allows to you modify, and even make, clip art. Clip art obtained through the Internet is often copyrighted. Be sure to check before using it in your newsletter. However, if you substantially change copyrighted clip art, the copyright no longer applies. Adobe Illustrator™ and Corel Draw™ are two of many applications that will help you accomplish this.

Clip art is little sketches of all sorts of things that you can use to add visual interest. You can buy books of clip art at any store that carries books about art and graphics. Drawing programs often include a library of clip art. Even word processing programs often include some clip art.

If you don't have electronic clip art, you can cut out the piece and paste it onto the layout when you prepare it for the printer. If you have a scanner, you can scan photos, clip art or illustrations. Find out what kinds of graphic file formats your software recognizes, then create that kind of file when you scan. Popular formats that are recognized by most software include .jpg, .tif, and .gif.

Page Layout Software
Page layout software is where you put it all together. You place the submissions, photos, clipart and notices. You arrange them as you want them to appear. Adobe PageMaker™ and Quark XPress™ are two well-respected names in page layout software. PageMaker provides an excellent computer equivalent to manual paste-up. You can divide your articles into separate blocks of text that you can move around independently, and each one stays wherever you put it till you move it again. If you do decide to use PageMaker, be sure to check their Web site for plug-ins. Plug-ins add additional, useful features to the program, e.g., providing the ability to import Word documents flawlessly.

Starting Up

Organize
Keep a real and an electronic 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.

Template
You have probably inherited a basic newsletter layout from your predecessor. If you use the same software as your predecessor, you have probably also inherited a

template you can use. A template is the newsletter layout without copy. Many of us simply recycle the previous issue, by filling out a copy of it as the current issue and then editing the copy to make it the new issue. Either starting with a template or recycling the former issue works.

If you use different software than your predecessor did, you may have to create a new template in that program. Or you may be charged with developing a new design for the newsletter. It's important for you to learn how to use your software competently. It will make the editing job much more fun. If you are learning new software, it is a given that there is someone else in your group who knows that software well and will be able to help you. Ask for help if you need it. You may make a new friend.

Boilerplate
Boilerplate is the copy that changes little or not at all from one issue to the next. Your list of chapter Executive Committee members is an example. You can include that in the template if you use one. Some parts of a newsletter always occur in the same location. The calendar grid, for example, may always be in the center spread. The cover header, return address, and USPS information is always in the same place. This simplifies the job of layout.

Be sure to double-check the boilerplate of each issue to ensure that you have incorporated any changes.

Putting It All Together
After you've checked the boilerplate in your template (or verified from a previous issue), place the calendar in the designated location. 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 (see *Readability* below), choose and place clip art.

None of this is any different from what used to be done with a manual layout, except that the scraps on the pasteboard do not get blown away if the fan is on. However, they can disappear. Be sure to save your file regularly.

Try to proof as you go.

Checking
If you've kept all of the current month's files in a separate folder, print the directory of the folder. Then 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 then send the proof to your proofreaders. They'll *always* find more. (See *Final Proofreading*, under *Finishing Up*.)

Imposition
Just as you make a folding dummy before a manual paste-up, make one before rearranging your digital pages. It's advisable to do the imposition on a duplicate of your file, not the original. In QuarkXPress, 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.

There are various utilities and plug-ins available to do imposition. For example, a lowly apprentice production (ALAP) makes InBooklet, a plug-in for InDesign. If your newsletter has a lot of pages, you might want to invest in imposition software to save yourself time.

Making It Look Good

Readability
There's an old saw that says that if a cake is bad, you can't do much to fix it up with good frosting. But you can ruin a great cake by putting bad frosting on it. So it is with your newsletter. You can have great copy, but if the pages do not invite the member to read the newsletter, you lose a lot of readers.

White space makes a more inviting page. Be sure to leave reasonable space between paragraphs and lines (see *Leading* below). A densely packed page looks like a professional journal; too much work to read. However, too much white space can leave a page looking empty. Try for a pleasing balance.

Remember that many Mensans are "getting on in years." Older eyes don't see as well as they used to. If your space allows, avoid anything smaller than 11-point type, except for the "fine print." If you're crunched for space, don't go any lower than a 9-point font. Keep font sizes consistent throughout, except for emphasis or "fine print."

If your newsletter is full-page (8½ x 11"), two columns are better than one. Long lines are harder to read than short ones.

As a paragraph style, ragged right (that is, not justified) is easier to read than justified. This is true especially with longer line lengths. Just imagine how hard it would be for your eye to go from one line to the next in this book if it were not ragged right.
Keep paragraphs short. Short paragraphs are easier to read than long ones.

Leading
The term leading (pronounced "ledding") also comes from typesetting. It is the distance between the baseline of one line of type and the baseline of the line of type below. The baseline is where the bottoms of the letters sit. Thus you may see type set as 12 on 13. That means 12-point type with 13 points of leading. Typewriters had lines between paragraphs. Some word processing programs still use that terminology.

Modern word processing and desktop publishing programs automatically set the leading when you choose the point size for your type, however most of them let you modify it. You might want to add a point of "air" in your copy, or to take out a fraction of a point to tighten it up.

Typefaces and Fonts
There are hundreds of typefaces. A typeface is a set of letters, numbers and special characters that have a particular appearance. A typeface may have many fonts in its family, such as bold (called black in some faces), italic, expanded, narrow (also called condensed in some faces) and combinations of these. These allow you to vary the appearance of the type without cluttering up your page with many different typefaces.

You'll want a few nice, legible font families, some serif and some sans serif. Too many fonts active on your computer at the same time can cause it to be sluggish and possibly crash. If you love to collect fonts, use a font management utility, such as Suitcase™ or ATM™. There is a set of common typefaces that comes with most word processing programs and printers. If you stick to a combination of those typefaces that you have, you can avoid surprises when you print out the pages.

No one can resist an eye-catching display font, but don't get carried away. Too many fonts on a page can detract from its readability. Unless you are a professional graphic designer don't try to use more than a few typefaces in your newsletter. One for body copy (the text in the articles) and another for headlines is usually enough.

Rules
Rule is the term typesetting uses for lines above or below paragraphs. Often the judicious use of rules adds texture. Experiment with them to see how a line here or there adds character.

Headers and Footers
A header is copy in the top margin that repeats on every page. A footer is copy in the bottom margin that repeats on every page. Page numbers, date of issue and newsletter name are examples of things that can go in headers and footers.

Styles
A style is a set of instructions that tells the computer to make everything in this paragraph look a certain way. A paragraph is everything between one hard return and the next. A hard return is inserted when you hit the Enter key. The style information is stored in that hard return character. It's helpful to see all the codes, such as for tabs, paragraphs, spaces, column breaks so you can see what is affecting your copy.

You can establish the typeface, point size of the type, special leading if you want to use that, and how many points or lines before and/or after the paragraph. Most programs allow you to specify a first-line indent. If you want your paragraph to be indented from the page margin, that goes in the style. Some programs allow you to specify character styles, as well as paragraph styles. Character styles apply only to the characters that you select when you apply the style.

Once you establish a style, you can edit it if you want to change something. When you edit the style and apply it, everything tagged with that style will change. Magic!!

If you establish styles for your headlines, subheads, body copy, author names and other regular features in your newsletter you accomplish two important things:

- You save yourself a lot of time because all you have to do is place the cursor somewhere in the paragraph, apply the style and everything is the way you want it.
- You can be sure things are consistent throughout the newsletter. And consistency enhances readability.

Finishing the Newsletter

Final Proofreading
If you have the opportunity for multiple proofreaders, take advantage of it. Different eyes may find different errors. Never take your proofreaders' corrections as a personal slight. Their job is to find errors; no criticism of you is implied.

With multiple proofreaders there will be some overlap in the errors they locate. To keep them organized, try to input all of the changes at the same time into one master file. When you are reviewing and inputting the corrections, remember that yours is the final word. You have the final responsibility for your newsletter.

There are a number of ways to exchange files for proofing.

- Many editors hold proofing parties. If you do not hold it at your home, be sure to bring the electronic file with you for reference.
- You can email an Adobe .pdf file to your proofreaders. They will simply return you a list of errors for correction, noting locations. This is especially convenient if you already

submit the finished product to the printer via an Adobe .pdf file. (See *Sending to the Printer*, below.)
- If your proofreaders have the same software, you can email a copy of the original page layout file. In this case, it is especially important that they do not input the changes to the file. They must return you a list of errors for you to make the corrections.
- If you have fax capability, your proofreaders may print the file (from a .pdf or from the original page layout file), mark up the corrections and fax the result back to you. Many experienced proofreaders are familiar with working with hard copy and may prefer this method. If you are inexperienced with proofing marks, there are a number of good books and Internet sites available to teach you.

If you are using Microsoft Word for your page layout software, you can easily check proofing changes by using the "Track Changes: Compare Documents" utility to view the "before" and "after" files of your newsletter.

Remember, your proofreaders are also volunteers who work behind the scenes and get very little credit. Thank and encourage them.

Sending to the printer
Discuss the options with your printer.
- Many printers will accept a high-resolution Adobe PDF file, which outputs to a Xerox DocuTech or other high-speed laser printer. There is no film, no plate, and each copy is an "original" 600-dpi laser print. At this output resolution, a line screen of 85 lpi gives a good range of grays in the photos and other artwork.
- If you are using the same platform, i.e., PC or Mac, to have your final product be exactly what you expect, obtain and install the appropriate printer driver for the print shop's printer. If you are using different platforms, the .pdf file is the best method for getting the file to your print shop. For more information, see *Preparing for PDF Output*, below.
- Some print shops have Web sites and you can upload the file through FTP protocol.
- Some print shops use the same page layout software so they can work directly from your original file.

Preparing a PDF File
Make the Adobe .pdf file using no compression of art or text, and embed all fonts at 100 percent. 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.

Cross-platform note: Unless and until Open Type becomes the commonly used standard, expect slight differences in text flow between platforms. Also be aware that certain high ASCII characters differ between the Mac and PC character sets. Both are good reasons to include a laser proof with your package for the printer. 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.

Your Printer is Your Friend
A good printer will help you learn what is needed to produce good copy. Don't be afraid to tell the printer if you are new at this, and need help.

Problem Solving

Corrupted Files
Digital pre-press can be very exacting. Sometimes the fonts or styles in a Word document can corrupt a PageMaker or QuarkXPress file. To keep your good file uncorrupted, first place each submission in a "Free Parking" file, select all, apply "no style," and then copy and paste it into the newsletter.

Non-Standard Graphics
If you get graphics submissions which were created using non-standard drawing programs (for example, Word Art) 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. As a last resort, print the submission and scan the print.

Manually Organizing Pages
Most page layout programs will organize pages for you (see *Imposition*, under *Starting Up*). But if you don't have a page layout program that does this, it can be confusing at first.

The best way to understand the process is to take apart a previous copy of your newsletter so that you can see what the sheets of paper looked like before they were folded and stapled. Make sure that all of the pages are numbered before you take it apart. For a 12-page newsletter, you can see that pages 2 and 11 are on the back of pages 1 and 12, pages 3 and 10 are on the back of pages 4 and 9, and so on. The even numbered page is always on the left. And the total number of pages is always evenly divisible by 4.

A good trick to check yourself is to add the page numbers on the two pages that go together. They will always be one greater than the total number of pages, e.g., 12 plus 1 = 13, 4 + 9 = 13, etc.

Manually Laying Out Pages

If your computer software doesn't organize pages for you, you may have to fall back to a combined method of preparing your newsletter for the printer. Print out the pages individually, then paste each one down on a layout board, following the pattern explained above to determine where to put each page.

Good layout boards will have non-reproducible blue lines as guides so that you can get your pages pasted onto the boards uniformly. Your newsletter looks better if the tops of the columns are all the same distance from the top of the sheet of paper. Some people like to see the bottoms of all the columns also the same distance from the bottom of the page.

The blue lines are called non-reproducible, or "non-repro," because the camera that photographs your pages can't "see" them. This handy feature allows you to make marks or notes on your layout sheets that will not show up on the printed pages.

You should be able to get layout boards and non-repro pencils at a graphics supply store. Or you can use the non-repro pencils and a ruler to turn plain paper into layout boards.

Part V: Distribution

Mailing the Newsletter

Mailing Options

First Class
The simplest way to mail newsletters is by First Class mail, with a stamp. In a very small group this is usually the most practical option.

Standard Mail
Standard Mail (formerly Third Class) has a lower price per piece but requires an annual permit ($150 as of this writing) and a minimum of 200 pieces.

Periodicals
The most economical class for medium to large mailings is Periodicals. This requires a one-time permit ($375 as of this writing) and has no minimum number of pieces that must be mailed each month. However, keep in mind that the expensive permit fee must be recouped in a reasonable amount of time to make Periodicals mailing cost-effective. When calculating the cost-effectiveness, first deduct the out-county subscribers, since they will cost almost as much as First Class. The permit cost will have to be made up on in-county mailing. With Periodicals, in-county mailing costs less than one-third of First ClassIn a group where you have 100 in-county members it will take less than one year to recoup the permit fee.

The balance of this section will deal with USPS Periodicals mailing requirements, since Periodicals requirements are far more complicated than the other methods of mailing.

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

Periodicals 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.

Label Sorting for Periodicals

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 for them. 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 newsletters 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 stickers but these are the primary ones.

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

Periodicals Statement (USPS Form 3541)

The Periodicals *Postage Statement* is available on the AML Web site, as well as the USPS Web site. It 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.

Periodicals 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 code 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, number or arrangement of columns, number of photos, number of pages, or size of the finished product, can mean the difference between operating within the subsidy from the AML, and putting your group in the red.

Financial matters are ultimately the 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. 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 may save money if you mail a large enough quantity each month (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 that 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. The CO 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, and to the local groups with the objective of developing publicity for the enhancement of Mensa's name and recruiting 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. Advance copies of the agenda, and minutes of the meetings are published 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 of Mensa is staffed by professional employees whose functions include maintaining a membership database, 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 as required.

The National Office 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 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 of AML. 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. The Editor's Discussion E-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 participate 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: Grimace 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 Mac is Not a Typewriter, by Robin Williams (also *The PC is not a Typewriter*)

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

Real World Scanning and Halftones, 2nd Ed., by David Blattner, GlennFleishman, and Steve Roth

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