
Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge



Help Papers Series
SUPPORT MATERIALS for Parent/Child Programs

TOPIC:

**Newsletters,
Website or Printed Media**



Great Lakes Region – Help Papers Series – Newsletters

NEWSLETTERS, Website or Printed Media:

Newsletters are one of the most important methods of communicating important information to all the members of the program. A printed newsletter provides a physical sense that the information of the program is being delivered personally, “getting something for your money”. A website newsletter provides more advanced creative possibilities. The newsletter will communicate information up and down the organization ladder from the Longhouse Chief, to the tribe member, to the son or daughter. The newsletter should be exciting and attention-grabbing, so that the reader is compelled to actually read all of the contents. Consideration should also be given to the creation of the newsletter to be attractive to the young children of the program, another method for parent and child to share time together.

RESPONSIBILITY:

The creation of the newsletter, which may have an official name, should be the responsibility of a separate person or officer of the program. There might even be a team approach, but one person should ultimately be in charge. This person may have a title such as Tally Keeper, Smoke Signals Chief, Drumbeater, etc Other leadership (possibly in your sponsoring organization) may wish (or require) to have some input or some form of responsibility over the creation and release of the newsletter. This is even more important when the newsletter is posted on a website.

SCHEDULE:

The release schedule for the newsletter(s) should be planned well in advance, at least 6 months for a year round program. A block of time should be planned to accomplish the following steps:

- Gathering of Information
- Creation and formatting
- Time period for duplication, assembly and mailing (printed) , or posting (website).

WEBSITE NEWSLETTERS and/or PRINTED MEDIA (MAILED) NEWSLETTERS:

In this ever-expanding age of electronic media, your program may have its own website and have a page just for a newsletter. Be aware of the fact that not all persons may have access to this. These members may need to have paper copies mailed to them. Even if the majority of your membership has access to the programs web newsletter, there is no guarantee they regularly read it. It may considered, to occasionally mail printed newsletters to all membership, especially when a new program year calendar is released.

PRODUCTION OF PRINTED NEWSLETTERS FOR MAILING:

Your program may or may not have charge over the actual duplication and mailing of the newsletter. Whoever is assigned this responsibility, make sure that the person is aware of the following:

- Mailing deadline because of date-sensitive information. This may require an additional advance deadline to have the material in the hands of the person in charge of duplication and mailing.
- Assembly details, including a sample of individual sheets stapled or assembled together as you wish for the finished newsletter to look like.

WHAT SHOULD GO INTO A NEWSLETTER

Listed in order of importance, these items are included or excluded as necessary

Critical Information: (High Importance)

This would be all news and schedule information that is date-sensitive, and imperative that all members have. This would include (but not limited to):

- Updated schedule of events
- Events information and directions
- Officer and program contacts
- Event sign-up forms
- Elections

Great Lakes Region – Help Papers Series – Newsletters

News: (Important)

This is generally what makes the newsletter interesting and exciting. It allows tribes and officers to share information. It allows children to feel an important part of the program. This would include (but not limited to):

- Minutes of the Longhouse Meeting
- Children’s Birthday listing for that period
 - Father & Child interviews
- Other news about special accomplishments
- Reviews of past events and the highlights
- “From the Chief” letter
- Awards that have been earned
- Upcoming events promotion
- Tribal Activity Reports

Informative Articles: (Not so important, but makes it attractive)

This would be of interest to most everyone and could possibly include:

- Crafts
- Songs
- Special Stories
- Indian Lore

Entertainment: (Pure fluff)

Purely for the enjoyment of all, this could include:

- Games & Puzzles, Contests
- Jokes
- Cartoons
- Funny Stories

FORMATTING AND CONTENT:

Newsletters can be as flashy or as simple as you prefer. A maximum number of pages may limit how much extra artwork; pictures, etc. can be added to each edition. Simple visual effects can really make plain text come alive such as outlining, shadowing and bordering. Graphics and pictures add obvious attractive qualities.

Tips, Suggestions and Important Items:

- **WEBSITE CONTENT:** The content that is presented, especially on a website, should be carefully examined before it is posted to insure that it is not offensive in nature or could be of legal consequence.
- **OBTAIN SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH RELEASE FORMS AS NECESSARY**
- Stay away from fonts that are hard to read or that don’t look good in proximity to each other.
- Keep type sizing somewhat uniform.
- Group the articles as necessary. Your newsletter may serve several programs. Group all of the program specific information in one area as best as possible. An example of this would be to group all of the upcoming campout information together or on successive pages.
- Many programs have their own logo or design for the front page of their newsletter.
- Embolden and (or) capitalize your headlines and titles.
- Add all of the print text as needed before adding graphics and clipart.
- Try to have a neat and organized finished product.
- When printing, consider how well will graphics and pictures reproduce on a colored (paper) background.
- Use good writing techniques. Construct sentences in an active voice. Avoid cliché’s.
- Write to your readers, not above them.
- Photograph masters should be as bright as possible. Dark photographs tend to darken even worse in duplication.
- If more than one person is contributing, try to work with common word processor software. Collect the files in one place for archive storage.

Other details for consideration in printed newsletterformatting:

- Maximum number of pages due to postage (funds) restrictions.
- Mailing format: Envelope, Folded and stapled, 2-fold.
- Does your mailing format require a cover page for address label? Include return address with program title.

Have Fun!