

1931

Tips for Bulletin Editors

League of Women Voters of the United States

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League Needs Its Bulletin

A bulletin or newsletter is one of the League member's most useful and effective tools. It is the chief means of communication among League members and between the Leagues and key citizens who are on the bulletin's mailing list. It is the Voice of the League.

A GOOD BULLETIN:

- Arouses the reader's interest — makes her want to do things.

- Keeps the reader well-informed — supplies her (or him!) with a complete calendar of coming events, fact sheets on program, suggested background reading, consensus questions coming up for consideration, actions and decisions of the board.

- Summarizes important recent events—League events and outside ones in which the League takes an interest.

- Praises individual and group endeavors — for work well done.



- Celebrates past successes and inspires new ones—builds the reader's morale.

- Welcomes new members—prints their names and a few words about each.

- Impresses nonleague members who read it with the variety and strength of League achievements —makes them think highly of the League.



IT CAN BE DONE

Many Leagues publish excellent bulletins, including those in small towns with extremely limited memberships and budgets.

The aim of *Tips for Bulletin Editors* is to convince each editor that she too can succeed, and to give her some pointers on how to do it. Many of the ideas come from other bulletin editors who have conquered their problems and are currently publishing excellent newsletters. At the end of *Tips* is a list of some of the better bulletins, with the addresses of the editors and some facts about reproduction and cost. Why not write for a few?

Time and Money In Short Supply

Bulletins are written by editors and contributors who have very limited amounts of *time* to spend on them.

They are published by Leagues which have a limited amount of *funds* for them.

They must compete with dozens of other publications for the reader's attention. This means they must be timely, accurate and readable.

Thus an editor must use all the techniques at her disposal in order to

SAVE TIME

SAVE MONEY

LAY OUT HER BULLETIN ATTRACTIVELY

MEET HER DEADLINE

GET HER FACTS RIGHT

HOW TO SAVE TIME

GET HELP!

Enlist the aid of as many contributors as possible. Many hands make light work.

Ask your president to write a regular column on matters she wishes to bring to the attention of the membership.

After consulting with the board and the program committee chairmen, decide what you want to get across in your bulletin: calendar of coming events, planned activities, past achievements, introduction of new members, special announcements, background on items for study or what have you. Then get as many of the items as possible written by members who are experts in each particular area. You won't get your entire bulletin written this way - but such contributions will certainly help.

Get some assistant writers and assign them particular tasks. Many members hesitate to take on the job of editor, but will write an article or two for each issue. Find two or three of these people.



TYPING

If possible, find a skilled typist with a good typewriter. Ask her to type the final pages, after you have edited them for spelling, grammar and accuracy. (See *Make Your Bulletin Attractive* and *Get Your Facts Right*.)



For those not using stencils but typing directly on bond paper to be photographed, there are a number of good erasure-tapes which make correcting mistakes much easier and neater.

JUSTIFYING THE RIGHT-HAND MARGIN

The ordinary typist is generally not called upon to justify the right-hand margins and may not have tried this technique, but it is simple and makes the bulletin columns look much neater. Here's how to do it in five easy steps:

First:

Decide how wide you want the line and set the margins accordingly:

/ /

Second:

Type until you realize you cannot get another word or syllable-plus-hyphen in, like this:

/Now is the time for all /

Stop there. The next word, "good," will not fit.

Third:

Fill in with x's until you come to the right-hand margin:

/Now is the time for allxx/

Type the entire column this way.

Fourth:

Go through the copy and place the left-over x's in spaces between words:

/Now xis the time xfor all/

Fifth:

Re-type, placing two spaces instead of one between words where x's are:

/Now is the time for all/

HOW TO \$AVE MONEY

PAPER

Buy in large quantities, preferably from a wholesale house. Get the cheapest grade of paper which reproduces clearly and cleanly on the type of reproduction equipment you use.

REPRODUCTION

If you have access to a do-it-yourself mimeograph, multilith, ditto or similar simple reproducing machine, fine. But be sure the finished product is readable. To put out a fuzzy product in the interest of saving money is a false economy; if people cannot or will not read it, you have wasted the money you did save. Better to put out fewer and better editions.

If you use the do-it-yourself method, be sure whoever "does it herself" knows what she is doing! Don't neglect details like proper inking and setting the proper pressure point.

When you can't get a good, clean, neat-looking product via the do-it-yourself method, look up "printers" in the yellow pages. Read the ads which usually accompany these pages, and find printers who do offset,

multilith, Xerox, Itek and duplicating. Avoid those who do only letter-press printing, as this is much more expensive.

Go and talk to two or three such firms, if you have that many in your town. You may be surprised at how inexpensively they will do your work for you, particularly if you type it yourself and only have it photographed and run off commercially. They also will probably have for sale sets of letters and cartoons which you can paste on your typed page to make it look livelier.

If you use this method, the printer will usually supply the paper, but he may permit you to bring your own. If not, ask him to show you several samples of paper with the printing on it, and choose the least expensive, best-looking kind.

MAILING

Most Leagues paste address labels right on the back of the bulletin, thus avoiding the cost of envelopes and the time required to stuff them. Inquire about bulk-mailing rates at your Post Office. (The nonprofit organization's "educational rate" is not available to the League, however.)

SOME TYPICAL PRICES

Place	Type of Repro.	Cost
Huntington, N. Y.	Photo Offset	\$16.00 for 300
Nashville, Tenn.	Multilith	\$16.50 for 400
Havertown, Pa.	Mimeo	\$ 9.00 for 200
Macomb, Ill.	Mimeo	\$10.00 for 100
San Diego, Calif.	Photo Offset	\$68.00 for 600
West Palm Beach, Fla.	Photo Offset	\$50.00 for 275
St. Louis Park, Minn.	Mimeo	\$24.00 for 150

MAKE YOUR BULLETIN ATTRACTIVE!

Remember your bulletin is the *Voice of the League*, one of its more important public images. The League has nearly 50 years of great respect and esteem behind it – don't let anyone, member or nonmember, look at your bulletin and say: "The League is slipping!"

It should be neat, uncluttered and easy to read! An attractive, well-designed letterhead for the first page helps immensely. Once quantities of this paper have been printed, you can use it for each issue at no additional expense.

The bulletin should be typed by a good typist who knows how to space and keep margins straight.

It should have plenty of white space to make it easier on the eye. But spread the white space around – don't just leave half the sheet blank.

Two columns per page are generally easier to read, but if this is too difficult to type, separate the items with other tricks, such as boxes (a square drawn around the item like the one below), asterisks, dots, dashes and varying indentations.



EDITORS' NOTES AND QUOTABLE QUOTES

"I clip and file any clever and easy-to-reproduce ideas I come across (mostly in advertisements). It is surprising how useful these can be—either for copying, adapting or providing a creative 'take-off point.'"

—Janice Westfall, Editor
Bulletin, Chatham, N.J.

* * *

"Set up a standard format that will include all sorts of eventualities, and be consistent in its use."

—Mrs. Albert Hanser, Editor
Voter, Nashville, Tenn.

* * *

"Use imaginative reporting, but avoid cuteness."

—Mrs. G. Chapman Peterson, Editor
Bulletin, Columbus, Ohio.

Use hand-lettered or paste-on letters here and there if possible to vary your headlines. Use drawings if you have someone who can draw or paste-ons if you can afford them. Even simple stickmen are effective and help give a little life to a page. (See box at left.)

Many Leagues use different colors for each bulletin page. This can improve its appearance, but be sure to use colors that are easy on the eye. Some colors are so garish they make reading harder: stick to soft pastels and avoid the bright golds, oranges and other deep shades. If you use only white, try to employ some colored ink, at least on page one.

Some League bulletin editors use 8½ by 13 inch (legal) size paper and fold it in half to make a booklet-type bulletin, easy to hold and neat in appearance.

If you use straight pages, as most editors do, an 8½ by 11 size is usually better than the longer legal size; it is easier to handle and less likely to make the reader feel she is receiving a weighty tome.

MEET YOUR DEADLINE

It is not necessary to come out exactly the same day of every month with the exactitude of a national news magazine. But it is necessary to get the information out while it is fresh! A calendar beginning April 1st which arrives in the reader's mailbox on April 10th makes you the April Fool! A background study sheet on a program item to be discussed April 5th, which arrives bright and early the morning of April 6th, is not much help to the discussion.

MORE EDITORS' NOTES AND QUOTABLE QUOTES

"When reporting on future meetings, give enough to whet the appetite but not so much that they stay away from the meeting."

—Ruth McGuire, Editor
Voter, Yorktown, N.Y.

* * *

"Remember the old adage about 'more flies with honey' and don't be afraid to use humor!"

* —Mrs. Ben Goldman, Editor
Voter, Hampton, Va.

* * *

"Our Publications Chairman does a Book Rack column each month, highlighting League publications that serve as background for the following month's presentation."

—Mrs. Robert Nordham, Editor
Bulletin, Columbus, Ohio

* * *

"Avoid great, gray areas of unrelieved type. Break them up by using your underline if you can't think of anything else."

—Henrietta Royce, Editor
Newsletter, Haverford Twp, Pa.

LATE ISSUES ARE INEFFECTIVE ISSUES!

They can be avoided if:

- You insist that contributors must meet deadlines. If you accept a late item once, that contributor will assume you don't really mean it when you give her a deadline, and she will continue to be late. This is a common hazard in publications.

- You schedule enough time for editing, re-writing, printing, folding, stapling, stamping and mailing. You can't do all this in a day! Set your contributors' deadlines well ahead of your own, so the late issue won't be your fault.



- You don't run short of material before your allotted number of pages are filled. To guard against this, have handy a few "for use any time" editorials by board members, or background items by resource chairmen, or similar fillers. The FYI's ("For Your Information" bulletins from the national office) also provide plenty of usable material.

- You don't suddenly find you have too much material.

If this happens and your budget does not allow for an extra sheet, cut out something that can be saved for next time without any damage done — and carry an announcement alerting your readers to look for it in the next issue. They'll think you planned it that way!



GET YOUR FACTS RIGHT!

ONE OF

DON'T TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT:

THE
PRIMARY
DUTIES

Someone's name is spelled right. Check it against your master list of members. If the name is not that of a member, check the phone book, the city directory or card index of leading local citizens all good editors keep. If necessary, telephone people and ask them how they spell their names!

OF THE
EDITOR

Every date is right! Check them all. A contributor can easily type 11 when she means 12, or absent-mindedly type Monday when she means Tuesday, or look at the wrong calendar and type Monday the 11th when there is no such date that month! If you suspect a date is wrong, follow your woman's intuition and double check with the person arranging the event. Same is true of times.

OF
ANYTHING

An address is correct or your readers know where a place is. If a contributor gives you an item about a meeting at the George Washington School, give the street address unless it's the only school in town. Same is true of other meeting places.

IS TO
CHECK OUT

AND ASSURE

THE
ACCURACY

OF WHAT

IS

BEING

PRINTED!

The president or someone she designates who is thoroughly familiar with all League affairs must check the bulletin over before it is run off. It might be well to ask someone else to check it for typos, spelling and grammar.

SOME HELPFUL REFERENCE WORKS

Local League Handbook	National Office	\$1.00
How to Plan and Publish A Mimeograph Newspaper	A. B. Dick Co. 5700 W. Touhy Chicago, Ill. 60648	Free
Bulletin Editor's Guide	LWV of New Jersey 400 Bloomfield Ave. Montclair, N. J. 07042	\$.50
Associated Press Stylebook	Traffic Dept. Associated Press 50 Rockefeller Plaza New York, New York 10020	\$1.00

DON'T FORGET POSTERITY!

Remember that all bulletins are of lasting value. Ten or 20 years from now, someone in the state or national office may want to look up the history of one of your League's important events, as it took place step by step. Keep stories alive until the final conclusion. It is frustrating to read the exciting accounts of the forthcoming bond issue in the October, November and December editions, and then not have subsequent editions ever mention how it came out!

DO'S AND DON'T'S

DO thoroughly read the chapter on bulletins in the *Local League Handbook* before you undertake your job, and read it again at intervals.

DO attend all board meetings; your bulletin is a bridge between the board and the other members.

DO use a *positive* tone—if things are going badly with a finance drive, for instance, try to inspire the members to do better; don't deplore their performance to date. Say: "We've already reached 20 per cent of our goal!" Not: "We still have 80 per cent to go — a long way!" Make people want to work; don't give them a "What's the use?" attitude.



DO put the name of your League, including the town and state, on the front page of every issue. Remember that some of your bulletins go far afield! Also include the full name and address of the editor, the name of the president, the date and a return address.

DO keep your list of addresses up to date and mail your issues promptly. See that the mailing list includes the *correctly spelled* and *properly titled* and *addressed* names of key citizens in your town, such as the mayor, city manager, city council members, other key officials, top business and professional people, influential organizations, your city's leaders and opinion makers, and of course all news media.

DO mail the required number of issues to state and national offices.

For national, three are required.

DON'T fill the bulletin with lengthy quotes from recent issues of *The National Voter*. Every League member gets one of her own.

DON'T take a negative attitude. Don't berate the members for not attending meetings or not participating, etc. Don't complain about internal League problems—the bulletin is not the place for this.

DON'T miss the FYI's ("For Your Information" bulletins) issued by the national office — they're a gold mine of tips and fillers.

DON'T run down other organizations. Don't say — as one bulletin did — "When Mrs. X joined the League she quit the (name of well-known organization) which she *loathed*." Like Charley Brown, we need all the friends we can get!

DON'T use abbreviations unless you're positive everyone knows what they stand for. "Everyone" includes the key citizens who get the bulletin but are not League members.

DON'T paste the address label over any printed information — put it on a blank space.

DON'T announce a speaker without giving any information about him.

DON'T announce a meeting or any event without giving time, date and place, and including street address, unless it's a very well-known place like the city hall.



DON'T use copyrighted material, including cartoons, without permission, and don't criticize or accuse people. Law suits can result!

SOME GOOD BULLETINS YOU MIGHT LIKE TO SEE

Bulletin	Editor	Type of Repro.	Cost per Copy
Huntington Voter	Mrs. G. F. Dunmire, [REDACTED]	Photo Offset	7¢
Newtown Bulletin	Mrs. J. Sullivan, Saw Mill [REDACTED]	Mimeo	Free
Northampton Bulletin	Mrs. Thomas Johnige, [REDACTED]	Mimeo	Free
Yorktown Voter	League of Women Voters of Yorktown [REDACTED]	Ditto	Free*
Columbus Bulletin	Mrs. Robert Nordham, [REDACTED]	Offset	10¢
League Letter	Mrs. G. Chapman Petersen [REDACTED]	Offset	Free*
Walpole Bulletin	Mrs. Philip H. Sanford, [REDACTED]	Mimeo	Free
Tarrant County Voter	Mrs. Robert S. Davie, [REDACTED]	Gestetner Mimeo	10¢
Chatham Bulletin	Mrs. Emery Westfall, [REDACTED]	Mimeo	Free
Franklin Voter	Mrs. John D. Limpitlaw, [REDACTED]	Mimeo	Free
League Lines	Mrs. A. G. W. Cameron, [REDACTED]	Offset	Free
Peninsula Voter	Mrs. Ben Goldman, [REDACTED]	Offset	35¢
Newsletter	Mrs. Robert R. Royce, [REDACTED]	Mimeo	Free*
The Beacon	Mrs. Glenn Wegener, [REDACTED]	Offset	Free
Grass Roots	Mrs. David R. Jones, [REDACTED]	Photo Offset	Free

*Send large stamped, self-addressed envelope.