

Postal News Press

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

Volume 53, Issue 5

ISSN 0090-1190

November-December, 2021

What should I write about?

By Tony Carobine, President

Did you ever find yourself, as editor, pondering this question; what should I write about for the next issue of the paper? No matter how hard you try, you can't come up with a topic that you think is worthy of spending time to develop into an article. I'm sure all of us could admit to being in that frame of mind at one time or another. But when you think about it, we should never suffer from a lack of subject matter to address in our publications.

From our union or postal service to the communities in which we live, there is always something newsworthy happening that could be addressed in the various forms of writing available to us as editors.

Today, one of the most neglected forms of writing in organizational publications is the editorial, wherein the editor expresses his or her personal views. Every one of us has an opinion on just about every subject. In today's world there are events happening on a daily basis that affect us as postal workers, consumers and citizens, not to mention our families as well. Why not delve into some of these important happenings on a regular basis by addressing them in the form of editorials in your publication?

By doing so you may just generate discussion on important issues of the day and prompt members to participate by expressing their opinions in the form of Letters to the Editor. Discussion on such issues, whatever they may be, projects "life" in an organization and may very well increase readership of the paper.

Editorials should contain logical arguments that are reasonable and honest. Using analogies and humor can also make an



editorial more effective. A well-written, thought-provoking editorial is an asset as it will work to increase the stature and credibility of a publication and the organization it serves as a result.

Opinion/editorial columns should, of course, be labeled as such with the writer's byline to ensure the reader understands these are the personal views of the writer.

Getting started

Once you've decided on a topic, the next step is to sit yourself down in front of the writing tools of choice (keyboard or pen and paper) and get to work. There are various techniques writers employ to get started. It's best to experiment and find out which method is best for you.

First, you should avoid attempting to write the perfect piece on the first try. The result of this technique is usually complete frustration and a waste of valuable time. I've found that the easiest and most productive method is to just write as thoughts for the ar-

ticle come to mind. (Others find that drafting an outline listing key points before actually beginning to write is helpful. A combination of both methods also works well.)

Don't worry about complete sentences, grammar, whether it makes sense or if it's in the proper order. The objective on the first draft is to get all your thoughts and ideas written. Oh, what an accomplishment this is! After letting it sit a while (preferably 24 hours), go back and rewrite the article. You'll be surprised at the fresh ideas that come to mind and how easily everything falls into place.

There are times, however, when the words just won't come no matter how hard we try. There are a few things that can be attempted to overcome this problem, known as "writer's block."

One is to just keep on writing even if it's "Help I'm stuck and I don't know what to

*Please see **What should I write about?**, page 2*

A look ahead

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to continue as president of this great organization for the August 2021 - August 2023 term. It has been a privilege to serve as president for the past 34 years. However, I am now of the age to enter the next phase of my life. Also, I firmly believe there comes a time when one should step aside so someone else can have an opportunity to step up and lead. Therefore, I will be retiring at the end of this term.

—Tony Carobine

APWU National Postal Press Association

PO Box 888

Iron Mountain MI 49801

Phone/Fax: 906-774-9599

E-mail: ppa@apwupostalpress.org

Website: www.apwupostalpress.org

Advisory Council

Anthony "Tony" Carobine
President

PO Box 888
Iron Mountain MI 49801

Jenny Gust
Secretary-Treasurer
PO Box 587
Walbridge OH 43465

Cathy Hanson
Editor-at-Large
4620 Bloomington Avenue
Minneapolis MN 55407

Diane North
Editor-at-Large
3773 Woodbriar Drive
Orange Park FL 32073

Terry Danek
Editor-at-Large
4261 Knox Street
Lincoln NE 68504

Lance Coles
Editor-at-Large
PO Box 539
Des Moines IA 50302

Hank Greenberg
Honorary Member
2800 Black Oak Drive
Rocklin CA 95765

Statement of purpose: Published by the American Postal Workers Union National Postal Press Association, the *PPA Newsletter* is an educational tool designed to assist PPA members with the performance of their duties as communicators and to help promote the goals and objectives of the APWU.

This publication is 100% union printer produced: Union typeset, Union layout, Union printed.



What should I write about?

Continued from page 1

write next." This may eventually "jump-start" your creative juices and help you get going again. Some find that reviewing material similar to the subject they are writing about is helpful. Others find that taking a walk helps.

You should always have a pen and paper or recording device with you so that ideas for an article can be "captured" as they come to mind. Otherwise, it's likely they will be lost. Case in point. I can recall several times over the years waking up in the middle of the night (or day when working Tour One) and start thinking about an article I was working on. Like magic, all of these wonderful ideas would flow through my head at great speed. And oh, how many times I was mad at myself that I couldn't remember any of them the next day. Like a dream, vividly clear one minute and gone the next. Eventually, I got into the habit of keeping a pad and paper or recorder nearby so that I could capture these ideas.

Finding a place to write that is free from distractions and temptations to pursue other tasks is helpful. By getting away from distractions that will interrupt your thoughts, you are free to totally concentrate on your work at hand – no excuses. It's also helpful to set goals and then reward yourself. When

writing you may want to reward yourself by taking a break after reaching a certain point. This also gives your brain a rest and allows you to refocus your thoughts and start over refreshed.

Another option – include the members

When considering the inclusion of opinions in the paper, we should not overlook opportunities to include the opinions of our members. People like to read about people; themselves first and others second. In this regard, consider a column in each issue whereby randomly selected members are asked the same question on a particular subject. Publish their responses (and if possible, a photo of each member). The topics for such questions are endless; from union issues to management actions to community and national issues.

Plan ahead

Instead of waiting until it's time to put the paper together, try to get into the habit of always being on the lookout for subject matter for editorial and member opinion columns. In doing so, you will have time to formulate your thoughts and decide on what you want to say, therefore making your task much easier.

Reminder: Posting of member publications

In addition to the practice of exchanging publications among PPA members, a section is available on the PPA website for the posting of publications. The Member Publications section is reserved for PPA members who submit copies of their newsletters for posting in this section of the website located under Member Resources.

By submitting a newsletter for posting, the editor is granting permission to fellow editors to reprint any article that originates in the paper as long as credit is given to the original source.

To submit a publication for posting, e-mail it as a pdf to ppa@apwupostalpress.org. A publication will be posted for 30 days.



Podcasts: another way to communicate with your members

By Lance Coles, Editor-at-Large

As editors, we are communicators.

Not all communication is by the printed word.

Podcasts are a great way to communicate with our members, no matter where they are.

Doing a podcast is really pretty easy.

There are several free programs that you can use. I use Podbean. It is easy and they help push your podcast out on several platforms. Most formats will let you create a podcast page, where all your podcasts are stored and people can pick from your library what they want to listen to.

You do not need a lot of fancy and expensive equipment to do a podcast. You can do an interview over the phone, through Zoom, or in person with a digital recorder. If this is something you might want to get serious about and use better equipment, I suggest you contact John McKerley at the University of Iowa Labor Center.

Editing your podcast and preparing it for sharing is pretty easy as well. I use Audacity, a free program.

Keep the podcast to 30 or 45 minutes.

Doing a podcast is just a recorded interview. Just like an interview you would do for a printed publication. You don't always have to have a guest; your podcast can be like an editorial, just your comments. Slow down your talking.

Start your podcast with a welcome to the show, and tell them the name of your program. Give them an introduction, who are you, what the show is about. Tell them where they can find more of your podcasts and your planned release schedule. Remember to thank them for listening, and end with a goodbye.

Plan ahead. Have a topic. Have a script. Have specific questions. Try to stay on topic, but be prepared to go off topic if the interviewee takes you somewhere interesting. Talk about things that are interesting to you. Listen to your guests and have a conversation. Don't just ask a question, have them answer, and move on to the next question. Focus on your target audience. Who do you want to listen?

Tell stories. People love stories. Don't just talk to your audience, **ask people to do something.**

Your podcast should be interesting, but it



should also be a format to get people to do something.

If you have the capability to accept calls

or comments, do that. If you do this live, then let your audience know that you will address these issues during another podcast. Remember this is being recorded, so try to avoid verbal gestures like Um, or like, but you can use ones to encourage the interviewee to continue or that you are listening. Use pauses and emphasis.

Since editing is easy, if there is an interruption or the interviewee wants to start over, let them. Keep them comfortable and at ease.

Test the recording device to make sure everyone can be heard clearly.

Try to record in a place that is free of background

noise, like a furnace kicking on, tapping of a pen, office noise, etc.

Have a schedule, and try to stick with it.

Getting the new folks involved

By Cathy Hanson, Editor-at-Large

If your locals are like mine, you've got a lot of new members. We've gotten 109 just since July. How do you bring these new members into the fold?

Invite them to a union meeting. That's



where it all happens – in order to be involved, you have to participate. Nothing happens without the membership. Our union leadership is aging out. The people being hired today are young, like we were when we started! It's imperative to get them involved if we want a strong union.

There are other ways to be involved besides being a steward or officer working with members to keep things fair. How about being the editor for your publication? In our local the editor is an appointed officer but there are many locals where the editor is elected with additional responsibilities.

If you have someone in your local who can draw, how about a cartoon? People always like to see themselves and their coworkers in the paper and it gives your paper some authenticity nobody else has. "One of our members draws this cartoon."

It shows pride in your newsletter and makes you unique.

If you have a website – do you track how many people visit it? Our local has a drawing for \$25 a month among the members who visit the website.

Once there is some incentive it seems to make people come back. Everyone likes a few extra dollars once in a while.

Does your local have an entertainment chairperson? We need someone to light the grill at picnics, bring food to the local general membership meetings and in general, be in charge of the things that need to be brought to meetings and fun events.

And above all? Talk to our new members. Let them know how important their union is and what they're paying dues for. Make sure they get their newsletters, talk about the articles your officers write. Include them. We're all in this together!

Steal away – but give proper credit

By Jenny Gust,
Secretary-Treasurer

One of the lovely options we have as members of the PPA is to steal! Yes, you got that right, steal! What I am referring to, of course, is reprinting articles from each other's publications.

Don't you love it when you have space to fill that you can look at other papers and perhaps find the perfect article/artwork/cartoon that says just what you wish you or one of your officers had? Someone with more knowledge on a certain subject or a different take on something has done the work for you!

Yeah! We are here to educate our members. And if it takes stealing to get

to that goal – go for it!

But here's the deal – you knew there was a catch, right? **You must always give proper credit for someone else's work.** There is nothing more irritating than printing a great article that you or one of your members wrote and then seeing it repeated in another publication and there is no credit, or just as bad, improper credit listed with the article.

How do you do it correctly? I am "stealing" it from the *APWU National Postal Press Association Constitution and Ready Reference Guide*. Yes I am stealing it and giving proper credit! Please take the time to read this policy and save it for future reference.

PPA Reprint Policy

Reprinting material that **originates** in APWU local, state or national publications (including cartoons and photographs) is an acceptable and common practice. However it is especially important that proper credit is given.

Always give credit to the publication that **originally** published the material, along with the name of the author. The credit should be placed at the beginning of the piece.

Improprieties tend to occur when material is reprinted from a paper that reprinted the material from another publication. Credit should be given to the publication that **originally** published the article not to the publication(s) that reprinted the material.

For example, publication A publishes an article which is then reprinted in publication B. The editor of publication C reads publication B and also decides to reprint the article. The editor of publication C should give credit to publication A because the article **originated** in and belongs to publication A.

Also, when reprinting material from another publication, it is improper to use the term "PPA reprint." This incorrectly gives the impression that the material came from the Postal Press Association. Instead give credit to the publication that **originally** published the material.

Before reprinting material that includes contract language, arbitration decisions, policies or regulations; verify it for accuracy, as these items tend to change over time. A well-written article that was correct last year may not be pertinent today.

All editors take great pride in their accomplishments, as do individual writers. There is nothing more unfair than to see someone lift material – not include a credit line – and in some instances imply they are the original writer. This is contrary to ethical journalism and most unfair to fellow members.

Living a positive life

It's a simple philosophy, but one that can have vast repercussions. Research shows that most illnesses, including headaches, backaches, heart disease, and digestive ailments, can be caused or influenced by our feelings. A positive attitude will help you work better, too. Optimism gives you energy and enthusiasm.

Next time you're ready to give in to the blues, try these tips.

4. Use positive people as role models.

Focus on someone who seems to make the best of any situation. This person can show you how he or she maintains that attitude.

5. Learn to accept situations over which you have no control. It can be frustrating to see a problem that needs fixing, but sometimes it is either inappropriate or simply impossible for you to help.

6. Be satisfied with results once you've done your best. You can't do any better, so don't focus on your limitations.

7. Be part of the solution. It's more challenging-and inspiring-to try to fix problems than just to point them out and dwell on them.

8. Take time to reward yourself. You deserve appreciation, from yourself, as well as from others.

9. Expect the best, not the worst both of people and situations.

10. Appreciate the good things that happen. Stop focusing on what is lacking in your life. Count your blessings, not your troubles.

It's not always easy to maintain a positive attitude. Like most things, it requires work. But the results are worth it!

**"DON'T LET
YESTERDAY TAKE
UP TOO MUCH
OF TODAY."**

WILL ROGERS

1. Don't take everything so seriously. There are few problems that have truly monumental consequences.

2. Try to see the positive aspects of problems. You can find a bright side in almost every situation – if you look hard enough.

3. Smile. It's easier than frowning, which requires 78 muscles. A smile uses only 14.

Are you a good listener?

Why do we listen and not hear correctly? Why is such a basic and important skill so difficult for so many of us to acquire?

Any of us who have children or who have occasion to work with children know that poor listening habits develop very early. We

“The single biggest cause of poor listening is the failure to concentrate on the other person’s point of view and ideas.”

spend five minutes explaining clearly (we think) the instructions for some simple task and when we are done the child will ask a question from which we know that he or she wasn’t listening to us. Is the problem with the listener or with the speaker? Or both?

It’s easy to get annoyed with people who don’t listen and who get directions wrong. And isn’t it frustrating when we explain something clearly to the doctor and he or she seems not to hear us at all. We go to the garage and the mechanic ignores our description of the problem with our car. And of course, it is more frustrating when our telephone messages are given to us with the wrong name or the wrong information. It makes you wonder sometimes how many so-called rumors got started because someone just didn’t listen correctly.

The single biggest cause of poor listening is the failure to concentrate on the other person’s point of view and ideas. There are many outside distractions to listening as well. If we are in pain or feeling ill, if we’ve just had a fight with our spouse, or such a simple distraction as loud background conversations or other noise, obviously we are going to have difficulty concentrating on what someone is saying.

Following are some common characteristics of poor listeners:

- Always interrupt.
- Jump to conclusions.

• Finish the speaker's sentences.
• Inattentive – have wandering eyes and or posture.

- Change the subject.
- Write everything down.
- Don't give any response.
- Impatient.
- Lose temper easily.
- Fidget nervously with pen, pencil or paperclip.

Conversely, here are some characteristics of good listeners:

- Look at speaker while he or she is talking.
- Question speaker to clarify what was said.
- Show concern by asking questions about speaker's feelings.
- Repeat some of the things said.
- Don't rush the speaker.
- Posed and emotionally controlled.
- React positively with a nod of the head, a smile, or a frown.
- Pay close attention.
- Don't interrupt speaker.
- Keep on subject until speaker has finished thoughts.

Most of us can find some characteristics in each of these lists, but for many of us, unfortunately, we see ourselves more in the first group than in the second.

We must remember that the burden of listening and understanding is on the listener – not the speaker.

Here are some suggestions for improved listening:

Write down important facts, particularly during phone conversations. We think we will remember what was said but our minds are so crowded with information we may forget or remember incorrectly. Taking notes is sometimes difficult, especially if the speaker is not well organized and the speech is long. However, we can learn to organize the speaker's thoughts if we listen carefully and make a written outline.

Stamp out distractions! Try to remove or curtail any extraneous sounds from inside or outside the room.

The next time you are listening to someone try to keep an open mind and empathize with the speaker – even if a topic which normally causes the pulse to quicken and the ears to close is brought up.

Finally, let's ask ourselves these questions:

- Do I listen to understand rather than spending the time preparing my next remark?
- Before agreeing or disagreeing, do I check to make sure I do understand what others mean?
- Do I try to summarize points of agreement/disagreement?
- Do I try to ask questions that result in a more informative answer than “yes” or “no?”
- Do I try to encourage others to participate in the discussion?
- Do I guard against assuming I know what others mean or how others feel by asking them questions to assure understanding?
- When another's feelings are hurt, do I respond in such a way that I show sympathy?

Nameplates: elements of identity

Every publication benefits from a distinctive nameplate (also called banner or flag) announcing with vigor the name of the publication. Therefore, it should stand out and grab the readers’ attention.

It also gives the organization identity as owner of the publication. Along with the name of the paper in big, bold print, the nameplate should include, in smaller print: who the paper belongs to, such as “Official Publication of the Any town Local, American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO.” Volume and Number. (The volume is used to record how many years the paper has been published. The number would indicate what issue it is for the current year. For example: Volume 5, Number 9 means this is the fifth year the paper is being published and the ninth issue of the current year.)



Article submissions during election period

With the beginning of a new year, many local organizations will be holding elections for their officers. The following explanation addresses the commonly-asked question of publishing articles in a local publication just prior to an election authored by members who are not regular contributors or have not previously submitted articles.

Section 401(g) of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) states:

"No moneys received by any labor organization by way of dues, assessment, or similar levy, and no moneys of an employer shall be contributed or applied to promote the candidacy of any person in any election subject to the provisions of this title. Such moneys of a labor organization may be utilized for notices, factual statements of issues not involving candidates, and other expenses necessary for the holding of an election."

Under this provision, union newspapers that are funded by the union cannot be used to promote the candidacy of any person in a union election. The purpose of this regulation is to ensure fair and impartial elections for all candidates.

It has been argued that the appearance of articles in a union publication during the election period from a candidate who has never or rarely before submitted articles in that union publication is a promotion of that individual's candidacy through the union publication in violation of the LMRDA.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Labor-Management Standards which is responsible for administering provisions of the LMRDA: *"Generally, a six month period prior to an election can be considered as time when the newsletter may be construed as a campaign tool. Placement of articles, changes in format, blunt campaigning and letters from members or candidates to the editor could be considered as campaigning."*

Therefore, in an effort to avoid the appearance of impropriety and to thwart efforts to overturn elections, the AWU National Postal Press Association recommends that local editors do not permit members to publish articles in the union's publication six months prior to an election, unless the member is a regular contributor. This policy will protect the local from an allegation the

local unfairly allowed particular candidates to use the union-paid for newsletter in support of his or her candidacy.

The determination of a regular contributor must be made on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the number of times that the union publication is published every year. Anyone who is deemed a regular contributor should therefore be allowed to continue to contribute articles to the paper throughout the election period.

Because some members may have already announced their candidacy while others have not, the safest course for the local to take is to adopt a policy prohibiting all non-regular contributors from submitting articles to the union publication during the election period.

There are no hard and fast rules with respect to when the election period begins. The six month rule is a general guideline that seeks to avoid the appearance of im-

propriety as the election nears. Certainly, once members announce their candidacy for office the election period should be deemed to have begun. (A candidate is announced when it is common knowledge that he or she is going to be running for office, either as an incumbent or challenger. Under election regulations, an individual does not have to be formally nominated to be considered a candidate for office. An expressed intention to run is sufficient for the individual to be considered a candidate.)

Finally, no one who writes for a union publication, whether a regular contributor or not, can advocate for the election or defeat of a particular candidate for union office, him or herself or others. The exception is a local-sponsored forum whereby all candidates for a particular office are given an equal opportunity to submit a statement in the union publication in support of their candidacy.



Editor's toolbox: suggestions for improved communication

Organization's past helps point the way to its future

Most organizations have a rich history from which you can draw ideas to help define new goals and strength. The history will point to values on which an organization was built and how those same values can apply to the future.

Who can you rely upon to obtain such information? In every organization there are a few people who've been around for long enough to tell you how things used to be. If you draw out their stories, they'll open your eyes as to how the organization has progressed and came to embrace certain beliefs. Such stories reveal a past that can strengthen the organization today.

Names make news

People like to read about people they know. Has any local union member made community (or national) headlines? Been chosen for outstanding accomplishments? Or has been recognized by a civic group for special community contributions?

Do any members have unusual hobbies? Or has anyone faced an unpleasant or dramatic work situation that was resolved in a way that other members ought to hear about?

Are there any new volunteers in the organization who should be recognized in the local union newsletter? What about recognizing longtime members?

Has any local union member made an outstanding contribution by bringing more members into union activities?

These are just a few of the many ways to use members' names in the newsletter. In doing so, you will be on your way to increasing the readership level of the publication and bringing about a greater awareness of the union as an organization made up of real people!

Write killer copy for your website

If you write copy for your organization's website you need to take into account the reading habits of the typical Internet surfer. Most people don't actually read – they scan. Research indicates that 79% of surfers scan the page instead of reading it word for word. If you don't adopt your copy to this scanning style – you're just a mouse click away from

cyber extinction. When you write for the web make sure the copy is:

Concise. Web content should have 50% fewer words than its paper equivalent, and no single chunk of text should run more than 75 words. To write concise text you must tighten your language and avoid overly detailed information.

Scannable. To write scannable text add tables of contents, section summaries, bullets, numbered lists, highlighted key words, headings and short paragraphs with well-developed topic sentences.

Back page: shining star or afterthought?

Be honest: Do you plan the last page of your publication, or do you let it happen?

Many editors concentrate on page one, do wonders with their second first page (usually page three), put effort into a center spread, and then dump their jumps and leftovers onto the back page of the newsletter. What a waste!

Just think about how you handle any newsletter or brochure. Chances are you read page one, glance through the rest of the publication, then refold it and put it away, back page up. And that's what the eye catches whenever you subsequently glance at the publication. So why not make your final page worthy of catching and holding the eye?

The point is this: Because your back page is not hidden from sight, you should take a little time to make it spectacular and definitely read.

In search of that captivating headline

People glance at the headlines to see what the articles are about. If headlines or pictures don't grab them, many will turn away, without reading another word.

Coming up with good, simple headlines is one of your biggest challenges. Don't just top each article with a label. Take the time to write headlines that lure people into eagerly reading one article after another.

Don't get your heart set on a particular headline right away. Let your imagination go, writing down all the possibilities you can think of, even if many turn out awful. Then pick the best and see if you can improve

them further; or combine the better two so-so headlines to get one great headline.

Tips for proofreading

If you're proofreading publications, you might want to:

- Reread all headlines and subheads.
- Reread all sentences following headlines and font changes.
- Cross-check the table of contents against the text.
- Proof corrections and also the area surrounding corrections.
- Check pages where stories are continued to be sure the story "restarted" at the right place.

Make written materials easier to read

Don't use all capital letters; that slows readers by more than 13%. And don't use reverse type on a dark background; that decreases reading speed by 11%.

Time-saving tips

If you find yourself daunted as you start from scratch to map out your publication, try designating a special folder for future story ideas – and contributing to it on a regular basis.

Planning ahead isn't easy, especially when you're struggling to keep up with current deadlines. But once you get in the habit, you'll find that the time you devote to clipping and filing ideas pales in comparison to the time you save when it comes to researching and planning future issues.

A little advance work is especially helpful to prepare for events within your organization that will demand coverage down the road. Start gathering information as these stories take shape in your mind and you'll find yourself with far fewer headaches when you actually write the article.

It's important that you not limit yourself to full-blown projects, however, include any nugget of information that might come in handy next month, or even next year. If you put your publication to bed in advance of the issue date, or if you publish bi-monthly or quarterly, you may come across some great story ideas too late to be used. Don't waste that inspiration, file it away.

More than just a smile

It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words, and in a publication's limited space that can be an important plus. But, if the photos that you print are blurred, cropped wrong or just downright dull, your effort may be wasted. And you may even lose some readers.

Photos also serve other functions. They break up blocks of type, they add a "face" to the story and they improve the publication's appearance. A picture of a new building, a new piece of equipment or the people involved in a project adds interest and helps readers relate to the words.

Here are a few simple, common-sense approaches for the use of photos:

Photo opportunities: They're the pre-arranged award ceremonies or planned events. And those pictures are important to your readers.

"Spur-of-the-moment" or candid shots: These make your newsletter really stand out. Be alert for possibilities in unusual and even routine situations, then shoot quickly before the chance vanishes.

A simple axiom to remember about photos – and stories – is that if the subject interests you, it will probably interest your readers.

A word about people shots. Try to avoid the usual standing-face-front-and-displaying-a-plaque-type pose. Smiling people looking straight at the camera make for a boring shot. Put action in the picture if you possibly can. Photograph the recipient showing the plaque to someone or hanging it on a wall, for example.

The right choice

Typically you'll be able to choose from several usable pictures of the same subject. Make sure the shot you pick is not blurred, that people aren't caught in unflattering po-



sitions and that shadows or sunlight don't distort the subjects.

Cropping and sizing

Once you have the picture, you have to decide how much of it you want to use. To keep your photos clean, sharp and to the point, crop out people or things not necessary to the intent of the picture.

Next, how large or small should the photo be? That calls for a delicate balance. In addition to the question of space available, you'll want to be sure the photo isn't so small that you'll have your readers squinting – or so large that the photo overwhelms

the story. Remember, the photo is there to complement the story, not overshadow it.

Photo layout

Photos positioned on a page in vertical and horizontal rows are deadly dull. If you want to run several photos on a page, arrange them to break up the type in an asymmetrical but eye-pleasing way. For guidance, study how newspapers and magazines display their pictures.

For a stand-alone photo – one that tells the story in the caption – keep the writing lively and to the point. If the photo was composed well and interestingly, it should convey the thrust of the story at a glance.

Credits

Somewhere in your publication, usually in small type under (or alongside) the photo, credit should be given to the photographer.

Photo files

How often at the last minute have you wanted a photo to make a story stronger or to fill a "hole" but found that it was too late for a shoot? You can eliminate that last minute scramble by keeping a photo file that can yield a suitable shot at a moment's notice.

If you haven't the time to take pictures yourself, ask for help from amateur photographers in your organization. You can usually get willing helpers whose work will add that extra pictorial dimension to your newsletter.