Responsibilities of the Newsletter Editor

Estimated time: 16-20 hours/issue

Overview

The BIFHS–USA Newsletter Editor shall be responsible for publishing six issues of the society’s newsletter per year — in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Each issue shall be mailed via first class mail in sufficient time for local members to receive the newsletter at least one week before the next meeting.

Position Qualifications

To carry out the duties of Newsletter Editor, the incumbent must

- have the ability to type,
- be able to use a professional-grade word processing program,
- have a fair command of the English language, spelling, and grammar,
- have good writing skills, and
- on a regular basis, have access to computer equipment, an Internet service provider (ISP), and email.

Procedures

1. Collect material for each issue of the newsletter (see “Content and Format”).

2. Obtain permission before reprinting previously published (copyrighted) material, and note in the newsletter that permission was obtained and from whom.

3. Using a professional-grade word processor, prepare the newsletter from the collected materials:
   - Format (see “Content and Format”),
   - Edit (to correct grammatical and spelling mistakes, for example), and
   - Print a master copy from which copies may be duplicated (or copy the file to CD for the printer to use).

4. Email a copy of the newsletter file to the President for final review.

5. Upon approval by the President, proceed with duplicating and mailing the newsletter.

6. Two months following each publication, make sure a (PDF) copy is posted on the society’s website (e.g., send a word processing file to the webmaster for conversion and uploading).

Content and Format

A typical edition of the newsletter shall be comprised of 8-12 pages (12 is the maximum for sending first class) and shall contain BIFHS–USA meeting announcements; a president’s message; society business and activities; notices of other societies’ meetings, seminars, or genealogical trips; and other material of British and Irish genealogical interest. The editor relies on submissions from board members and others by established deadlines.
The format of the newsletter is left largely to the editor’s discretion but must include the following items.

Front page (see “Sample Front Page”):
- Title banner that includes the black and white version of the society’s official logo (as shown at the top of this position description).
- Meeting announcements for the next two society meetings.

Back page (see “Sample Back Page”):
- Contact information for the Board of Directors, Study Group Leaders, and Committee Chairs.
- Return address, mailing address block, and membership renewal information.

An issue of the newsletter might be organized as follows:

Front Page:  Banner and meeting announcements.
Pages 2-5:  Messages from the Editor (optional) and the President and other society business (announcements, activities, committee reports).
Pages 6-10:  Research information/resources from Study Group Leaders and others.
Page 11:  Calendar of Events (from other societies).
Back Page:  Address, membership, and contact information.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Unless otherwise specified, BIFHS–USA meetings are held at the Los Angeles Regional Family History Center, 10741 Santa Monica Blvd. (enter from Eastbourne at Manning), Los Angeles, CA 90025; (310) 474-9990. There is plenty of free parking. All meetings and workshops are offered free of charge and are open to the public.

SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2008

GENERAL MEETING (1:00–3:00PM)

Genetics, Migration and Family Lines

Speaker: Norma Storrs Keating, RN, BSN

Genealogists are adding a new tool to their already bulging toolbox — genetics. They will be using DNA to track and prove family lines and relationships, to trace the movement of people, and in One Name Studies. Norma will discuss what DNA is and how it is inherited, as well as how genetics can be useful in proving family relationships. What the genealogist needs to know to participate in, or even start, a family surname project will also be covered.

Norma Storrs Keating, has been a professional genealogist for 12 years with a special interest in genetics and genealogy. She maintains her RN license in NJ and CA and continually reviews literature to keep abreast of the rapid changes in the medical/genetics field. She is the President of Genes & Things, Inc., creators of GeneWeaver, computer software for creating and maintaining individual and family medical health histories. Norma is Treasurer of the Southern California Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists, Orange County Regional Director for the California State Genealogical Alliance, and President of the North Orange County California Genealogical Society.

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IRISH STUDY GROUP (3:30–5:00PM)

Workshop Leader: Nancy Bier

Nancy will present two case studies of Scotch-Irish research that will demonstrate the importance of reading the records before your “known” ancestors arrive in a locale and after they are known to be gone.

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2008

GENERAL MEETING (1:00–3:00PM)

Timelines: A Tool for British & Scottish Researchers

Speaker: Kay Ronald Devonshire

Kay Ronald Devonshire has been involved in Scottish research for almost 40 years. A member of BIFHS–USA since 1988, she has served as both Program Chair and leader of the Scottish Study Group. She is an annual lecturer for our society and a frequent contributor to our journal. While Kay learned about Scotland at her father’s knee and on her many trips to Scotland, she earned a master’s degree in modern European history and another in Teaching English as a Second Language. She will draw on those studies and on her experience researching in Great Britain for this talk.

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ENGLISH STUDY GROUP (3:30–5:00PM)

Workshop Leader: Donald L. Hirst

Topics: Procedure for obtaining early 1911 census data under the £45 procedure. Also, finding the second party to a marriage (primarily the wife’s maiden surname) 1837–1901, without buying the marriage certificate.

Questions? Please contact a board member (email addresses on back page).

Visit the BIFHS–USA website at www.rootsweb.com/~bifhsusa
See membership expiration date on mailing label. Please renew promptly. Individual membership $35; family $40; individual life $350; family life $400. Visa and Mastercard accepted.
Put Your Best Foot Forward:  
How Small Societies Get Noticed  
by Jana Sloan Broglin

THE NEWSLETTER

The newsletter might be the first time someone “meets" your society. It should be thoughtfully designed so as to be pleasing to the eye. Headlines should capture the reader's attention. Articles should be interesting and informative and the author's name clearly stated. Features, columns, or sections that appear regularly could include some biographical information about the writer. The content needs to be informative and useful and should address issues of importance to the reader.

Many small societies publish stunning newsletters. They know that the time and effort required to create great pages is often not much more than what is expended on plain ones. Here are some easy changes that could turn a satisfactory society newsletter into an award-winning publication:

- Have an attractive banner stating the name of the newsletter, the name of the society and its location, and the volume and issue numbers.
- Have a footer on each page that gives the newsletter name, volume and issue numbers, and page number.
- Add a table of contents to draw the reader into the rest of the newsletter.
- Include helpful information on the same page in each issue (this page is usually called the masthead): editor's name and how to contact, the names of associates (who help with proofing or mailing), and publishing deadlines.
- Publish details about the society: the area served, the meeting dates and location, the workshop or seminar date (as soon as it is known) and dues and instructions for joining. If the society has a library tell where it is located.
- Show officers' names and contact information, the society address, and the Web site address if applicable.
- Don't forget to include a list of the society's publications, prices, and the address for purchasing the items.

Society members who do not live in the area depend on the society newsletter to furnish information. Ideas for items to be published may be announcements of indexes or transcripts the society or others have published, a discussion of helpful Web sites for those with internet access, articles about families by society members, pioneer obituaries, pedigree charts, additions to the society library, program schedule for the year, and new member listings with name, address, e-mail address.

Two more popular features are listings of surnames being researched by members and queries. Even with the advent of the Internet, surnames and queries should be included.

Articles about the county or area served by the society are also needed in the newsletter. If your society does not have a quarterly, consider previously unpublished records, be they court, or diaries. Keep in mind, however, that most readers and repositories consider newsletters to contain current information. They tend not to retain newsletters as they would a quarterly or semi-annual magazine.

Do consider the appearance of the newsletter. Is the type used easy-to-read? Do format and layout reflect care and an eye for detail? Do graphics enhance the appearance of the newsletter? Are grammar, spelling, and terminology accurate and consistent throughout the newsletter?