Preparation:

The purpose of this outline is to provide a method for advising the lodge publication chairman and directly related lodge leaders on:

- The content of the lodge publication
- Goals and a plan to achieve them
- The role of the publication in achieving the Order's purpose
- The mechanics of publication of the bulletin and other documents

Obtain and review:

- The past year's publications
- The report of the past editor
- Past and current budget and financial reports
- Current copies of the Order of the Arrow National Bulletin
- Council and lodge procedures for handling mailings

Review the material in the Order of the Arrow Handbook and the Guide for Officers and Advisers on lodge newsletters and ask the editor to do so. (The Handbook tells new members to expect a newsletter.)

ADVISING METHODS

1. Review editor's motivation for accepting job. Ask 'Why did you accept the job of? What do you hope to accomplish? How do you expect to do this?'

2. Review the fundamentals of the lodge bulletin
   a. It is the only way the lodge maintains regular contact with all its members
   b. It inspires the member to live his Obligation in his own thus staying an active member of the Order
   c. It provides information on lodge and chapter activities

3. Review the mechanics of the lodge bulletin and other publications
   a. Publication dates & deadlines
      i. Publish at least quarterly
   b. Expected contributors
      i. Lodge key three
      ii. Chapter secretaries
      iii. Other -council camping committee, talented members
   c. Who must approve - lodge key three
d. Production
   i. Who types and lays it out
   ii. Who prints, collates, folds and staples it
   iii. Who labels it and who provides the labels
   iv. Mailing through council service center
   v. Special requirements of bulk rate mailing

4. Discuss special mailings
   a. Advantages and disadvantages: Highlights an event, adds additional cost, is information clutter
   b. Who must approve having the mailing
   c. Who prepares and approves copy
   d. Who handles production?

5. Review content of lodge bulletin
   a. Masthead
      i. Contains: bulletin, lodge and council names, ‘Order of the Arrow and “Boy Scouts of America’, volume and number, date
      ii. Why masthead contents are important
   b. Standard Articles
      i. Table of contents
      ii. Lodge calendar
      iii. List of lodge officers & phone numbers
      iv. News from the chapters (if you have chapters)
      v. Articles from key three members
      vi. Help wanted announcements
      vii. Feature article(s)
   c. Special Articles
      i. Upcoming events
         (1) Lodge, section, national
         (2) Who, what, where, when, why, and how much
         (3) How to obtain more information
         (4) Provide registration form including return address
      ii. Past events
         (1) Names of participants and what they did, including cleanup afterwards
         (2) What was positive, what people got out of the event
         (3) Pictures
      iii. Recognition of Members
         (1) New Ordeal members
         (2) Recent Brotherhood members
         (3) New Vigil Honor members
         (4) Eagle Award recipients
         (5) Other awards and recognitions
   d. Editing the copy
      i. Accurate and timely information
      ii. Point of view - positive and upbeat
      iii. Consider audience

6. Review Rules of Style Usage
   a. Order of the Arrow National Bulletin Author Guide (See page A03-4)
7. Review
   a. The contents of past lodge bulletins for completeness and effectiveness
   b. The previous year's costs of mailings and the current state of the budget
   c. Current and future commitments for mailings

8. Set goals for the coming year
   a. Review the goals of the key three and lodge executive committee for the bulletin, if any.
   b. On time publication
   c. Error free
   d. Every lodge leader providing articles and information

9. Develop strategy for achieving goals
   a. Recruiting and training additional committee members
   b. Developing final goals and plans including budget and calendar
   c. Securing approval of goals and plans including budget and calendar
   d. Implementation of the plan
   e. Recognitions and reports

APPENDIX: SOURCE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Order of the Arrow Handbook  #34996C, Revised 2002*

Guide for Officers and Advisers  #34997B, Revised 2002*

*Available from the BSA National Supply Division, must be ordered through your local council.
Order of the Arrow National Bulletin Author Guide
Version 2.2
6/7/00

Introduction
Welcome to the National Bulletin staff! We are glad to have you on our team for this issue. Thank you for your time. As a writer, you will be responsible for getting information from various sources, drafting articles in an easy-to-read format for readers and submitting your work to your editor. Don't forget that you will also be responsible for a piece of artwork -- a photograph, picture of a patch, etc, to go with each article!

This author guide will help you compose an outstanding article written to fit the style of the National Bulletin. Let's do it!

Before You Begin to Write
Writing for the Bulletin sounds easy enough, huh? Here are some pointers to remember as you write.

1. **Length.** One of the first questions asked by all new writers is, "How long should I make my article?" All articles in the National Bulletin fit into one of four categories:
   - 1) Story -- 400 words
   - 2) Brief -- 250 words
   - 3) Tag -- 150 words
   - 4) Box -- 30-40 words

   By working within one of the above categories assigned to you by your editor you are helping the Bulletin layout team to manage space.

2. **Gather accurate information.** You might be the only person on the Bulletin staff who has researched your topic, so you must get the facts straight. Not only will your sources know that your article is incorrect, but your readers will not get the right information. An inaccurate article is worse than no article. We build trust with our sources and our readers by reporting accurately.

3. **Build your article around ideas.** Many people think that good writing is all about words and word choice. If only I could get that perfect adjective or that perfect verb, they say to themselves. Actually, the most important foundation to good writing is good ideas. As you write the article, make sure that the reader can come away with the point you are trying to make.

4. **Write in short, punchy paragraphs.** Since most articles will be laid out in columns, like newspapers, it's important to keep your paragraphs short. A long paragraph looks even longer in column form, and readers won't read your story.

5. **Construct your article in a logical fashion.** A key concept in journalism is the inverted pyramid, in which the most important information is at the top of the article, followed by the secondary information, with the lesser information at the end. Why is this important? First, it helps you organize the article. Creativity has a place in journalism, but you need to get the meat of the article at the beginning. If you can't answer the questions who, what, when, where, why and how by the end of your fourth paragraph, then you need to reorganize. Second, the inverted pyramid tells the editors what parts can be cut in case of space restraints. The editors might not necessarily know what is the most important part of the article, so this style helps them out.

6. **Bring the reader up to speed.** Most readers won't know the topic's background. You need to include, somewhere in the first five or six paragraphs, a paragraph that gives the reader some background. Journalists call this a "nut graf." It basically gives the reader the nuts and bolts of the issue so that the current article can be understood more easily. The nut graf doesn't need to be long – just enough to give the reader some context for the article.
7. Remember your audience. This is a publication that goes from coast to coast, covering readers from ages 16 to 70. Leave out slang and other terms that people from other regions and age groups might not understand.

8. Meet (or beat) your deadline. In journalism, timeliness is next to godliness. A late article is just as bad as no article. If your article is late, that slows down the entire process, as your editor waits for you, his editor waits for him, the layout personnel wait for him, etc. We have a lot of people who would like to write for the Bulletin, and we will not tolerate lateness. We will look for a replacement for you if you turn your article in late. And, by all means, turn your article in early if at all possible.

Now that you know the basics of good journalistic writing, you're probably wondering how you can be creative. First, write in your own natural style. Even if this isn’t English class, you still can personalize your articles. And good editors (whom we have at the Bulletin) can edit stories without taking away from that personalized style – as long as the style doesn’t become your focus. Your style should not interfere with conveying facts as efficiently as possible – that’s your first responsibility.

Second, use good verbs. Next to ideas, vivid verbs are the most important ingredient in fresh writing. Try to avoid forms of verbs such as be, have, do and get. But, with all words, don’t simply sit down with a thesaurus and find flashy-sounding words. A thesaurus is best used to remind you of words that you already know, not to show you new words.

After You Have Written Your Article

To ensure continuity from issue to issue, each article that appears in the National Bulletin conforms to a specific style. Read your article one last time and check off each box to signal that you have written your article to conform to our style. Your attention to detail here will greatly help the editorial process.

General
- Much of our audience is youth. Do not use large words or write too formally.
- The most important information should appear early in the article.
- Use active verbs and descriptive adverbs and adjectives.
- If your word processing program has grammar check capabilities, please use it.
- Do not use an excessive amount of passive tense verbs.
- Always include information on "who, what, when, where, how and why."
- Lodge numbers will not appear with lodge names.
- HTTP addresses for lodge web pages will be footnoted at the end of articles that a particular lodge is mentioned in, if such a web page exists.
- Do not include a comma before the last item in a series. However, it is okay to use that last comma if the sentence contains a series of phrases.
- Include suggested headline(s) with your article.

Pictures & Artwork
- Headshots should be shot in full uniform. If pictures are staged, ensure that the background is light, simple and not busy so that it does not take away from the picture but instead contrasts the person.
- People pictures (any picture that has people in it) should include clear shots of each person’s face and complete uniforms. If the picture is a posed picture (one that has several people standing still in a line as the picture is taken), use a light, simple background and get as close to the people as possible. If the picture is an action picture, get close, show faces, and provide a description of the activity. Backs of heads and/or pictures that are too far away from the action are not usable.
- Landscape pictures (any picture that is a view of a stationary object and does not contain people) are generally not exciting so the pictures need to be really good to use. Good means that the lighting is good and provides good contrast so that the image is unquestionably distinguishable. Remember that when greens and reds are converted to black and white, they both come out gray. In other words, if pictures are largely red and green in a color photo there will be little contrast in the black and white version.
Lodge Leadership Development

Adviser's Guide to Advising
the Publications Chairman

You must provide names and lodges of all individuals in photographs. Identify the people from left to right, starting with the front row if there are multiple rows.

Include a return address with all artwork.

Terminology

“Order of the Arrow” can be abbreviated as "OA."

"Boy Scouts of America" should be abbreviated as follows: “BSA” when used as an adjective, but “the BSA” when used as a noun.

When referring to an adviser in the OA, spell adviser with an "e." Use “Advisor” (cap and w/ the "o") only in reference to an Exploring Advisor.

The word "Web" should be capitalized when referring to a "Web page" or "Web site." There should be a space between the words.

Electronic mail should be abbreviated as "e-mail."

When starting a sentence with a number, spell out the number.

Spell out all numbers with a value of ten and under.

Do not hyphenate the words "Vice Chief."

Do not hyphenate or capitalize the word "planbook."

Do not use contractions

Text Formatting

Always capitalize the first letter of the words "Arrowmen" and "Scout."

Capitalize positions of responsibility as follows: Tiger Cub, Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Explorer, Cubmaster (assistant Cubmaster), Scoutmaster (assistant Scoutmaster), Coach (Varsity Scout Coach only; assistant Coach), Advisor (Explorer Advisor only; associate Advisor), Skipper, Scouter, Chief Scout Executive. We cap other titles and positions of responsibility only when they precede a name, i.e., "Assistant Scout Executive Jack Gray," "District Executive Cathy Green," and "Vice Chief Mark Brown." But, "Jack Gray, assistant Scout executive of St. Louis, Mo., . . ." and "Cathy Green, district executive of the Longhorn Council" and "Mark Brown, Order of the Arrow vice chief."

Do not capitalize the words "national office."

The words "brothers" and "spirit" should not be capitalized.

The words "National Bulletin" should always be italicized.

Italicize titles of publications such as books and newsletters.

Lodge names and personal names will appear in red.

In headlines, capitalize the first and last words and all others except the infinitive “to;” articles (a, an, the); coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, for); and sometimes “so” or “yet;” and prepositions of four or fewer letters (at, by, from, in, near, of, off, on, over, per, to, up, via, with). However, capitalize subordinating conjunctions (As, If, When). However, due to consistency, you may need to capitalize something that should ordinarily be lower case, i.e., “Scouts Go With or Without Maps.”

Conclusion

Thank you again for volunteering to write for the National Bulletin! The effort and outstanding ability of contributors such as you are the driving force behind the constant improvement in the quality of the National Bulletin. This is something in which we call all take pride.

As you begin typing, remember that although many Arrowmen may regard writing for us as an honor, it is first an important responsibility. By successfully completing your article you are making the greatest contribution of all to our Order -- inspiring others through leadership in service.