NEWSLETTER GUIDELINES

The objective of your chapter newsletter is to keep members up-to-date, in touch with each other, and informed of the chapter’s goals, progress and future plans. The newsletter editor can be anyone who is willing to put in a little effort to compile the information.

GIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER ITS OWN IDENTITY - In other words, give your newsletter its own name. A few outstanding examples are as follows: California Pacers chapter dubbed its newsletter “Pacer Press;” Carolina Cruisers chapter chose the name “In Cruiser News” and the Pen-Ny Mixers newsletter is called “Penny’s Worth.”

PRESENT A NEAT APPEARANCE – Neatness and accuracy are vitally important! Once the newsletter editor establishes a format for the newsletter, it should be maintained for future issues so members know where to look for items. Even though most software versions have spell check, it’s always a good idea to read it again before printing.

TELL THE CHAPTER’S STORY – When and where is your next rally? What happened at the last rally? Was it interesting, fun and one that those not in attendance are sorry they missed? What other rallies are planned for the next few months? (Some folks have to make their plans early and knowing the dates of rallies well in advance helps rally attendance!) What is the chapter doing? Does it have a “special project?” If so, what is the present status of that project? Was there a business meeting at the last rally? If so, what took place? Is the chapter going to hold a business meeting soon? If so, try to bring out some of the points that might be discussed or decided upon at that meeting. Give the members information about what is going on at the national level (get your National Director to give you data from time to time that can be used in the newsletter). If your chapter is a special interest group, include information relative to that special interest in each newsletter.

KEEP YOUR NEWSLETTER FRESH AND EXCITING – The newsletter should give members information in such a way that they will want to read it and attend rallies that are planned. Having a different person write a report on a rally is a good way to instill a little variation of style in the newsletter and at the same time, gets members involved in helping with the newsletter.

SPREAD A LITTLE SUNSHINE – Pay tribute to a lost member and extend sympathy to the surviving family members. It lets the membership know of the bereavement. Similarly, remember those who are or have been ill. (Skip the details of the illness.) After all, your chapter has become your FMCA family and families share the good and bad together.

INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING RALLIES – Include information about the rally such as theme, directions/map, special events, potluck dinners, activities, games, and items they will need to bring to the rally. Be sure to include a registration form if possible, and the address and/or GPS coordinates for the facility if available. Don’t forget to list activities in the area that are nearby.

INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION – Include your contact information so members can contact you if they have information for the newsletter or an article they would like to include. Be sure to include chapter officer contact information so they can be reached by anyone with questions or anyone that may need assistance.

FMCA Honors
FMCA honors one person yearly with the Robert L. Richter Award. This award winner is nominated and chosen by committee, and is awarded to the individuals who are responsible for chapter newsletters, publications or communications to and about an FMCA chapter. You can find out details about this award through FMCA’s Governance Web site – governance.fmca.com.

Use your newsletter as a means of keeping members’ interest high and for recruiting new members.
WEBSITE GUIDELINES

Starting a web site can be a little difficult but once it’s up and running you will find that it’s a great resource for your chapter.

WEBMASTER
Creating a web site from scratch or managing an already existing web page can be time consuming, so be sure to choose someone that has the skill and time to invest in your chapter’s web page. If the job is too big for one person, choose two webmasters, two heads can be better than one.

TYPE OF WEB SITE
Your chapter’s needs should be taken into consideration when deciding which type of web site will work best for your chapter. Some chapters will use their websites for simple things like pictures and general announcements, perhaps a blog or social media page would work best. Some chapters will have pictures, rally registration forms, membership applications, newsletters officer information, etc. Will you be taking rally fees or chapter dues online? These types of chapters would be best suited with a traditional website.

CHOOSE YOUR HOST
Do your research before choosing a host site and consult with your chapter to see how much the chapter can afford in monthly fees. Some hosting companies will host for next to nothing as long as they can run banner ads on your page. Some companies will require you to purchase a domain name or use special software. You will need to check with your webmaster to see if he is experienced with the software or can easily navigate it. You may also want to see if the host provides tech support if the webmaster needs assistance.

BE CREATIVE
Once you have chosen your host it’s time to get creative. Some software will come with page templates that can make it easier to develop your page or you can customize by setting up your own page. You will want to add things like newsletters, pictures, rally announcements, officer listings, bylaws, standing rules, and/or membership applications. Be sure to test your web site once you have completed it to be sure it all works.

Once your chapter’s web site is up and running, don’t forget to submit your web address to the FMCA’s National Office so it can be linked to FMCA.com. If it’s not linked, you are not covered by Media Liability Insurance.