

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices #016: Chapter Newsletters

Heading: Chapter Communications



The following is a general guideline that can be used to set-up and maintain a chapter newsletter to ensure it provides the necessary information for its members. All of these can be expanded upon and the newsletter will take on the character of the editor(s) to a degree.

CONTENT

1. Meeting Information – both upcoming and past meetings. A review of the most recent meeting is helpful to those members that couldn't attend and is a good way to highlight other members' contributions (show & tell projects, technique discussion, demonstration, etc.) Listing the upcoming meeting and mentioning the date, time, topic and other information is a good way to remind members and keep this in front of them. It's also important to give directions to the meeting site for any new members that might have joined in between meetings or for anyone unfamiliar with your meeting location. Don't assume everyone is like you and will track down all the information on their own. They probably won't. This newsletter is a way of keeping the more casual members connected to the club.
2. Calendar of Events. This will allow members to plan on other club events that fall outside of the regularly slotted meeting times, and is also a place to list topics and demonstrations for upcoming meetings. Items might include a club demonstration at the state fair or a showing of members' work at a local gallery or a workshop with a visiting turner.
3. Officer Information. Have a list of who the club officers are and their contact information – phone number, email address and street address. Make it easy for people to get a hold of these folks. If your club has a mentoring program, list these people and their contact info as well.
4. Tip & Tricks. Someone in the club is always coming up with a better mouse trap. Acknowledge them and their ideas and other members will benefit from the tip as well as letting an individual shine a bit. This is also a good way for members to get to know others in their club.

SOFTWARE

We'll assume this is going to be done on a computer of some sort. Both a Mac or PC will work, and the simplest of programs come with most computers. Just a basic word processing program is all that's needed to get started, or choose from a variety of desktop publishing programs available. The newsletter editor will become the expert in the club for using this software and should be able to pass their knowledge along. I am familiar with Microsoft Publisher and that is what our club uses. It provides templates for newsletters

and will import almost any format of text or picture to make it very versatile.

PRINTING

Take advantage of your club's diverse membership to help solve this issue. Someone in the club is connected with a print shop in some way or another. They might own one, or work at one, or get other things printed at one, or whatever. Shop around and you'll find something that works best for you and the club and the budget. Several black and white pages mailed out to the members should not break the bank. This can be as big or as small as you want and can be monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or whatever works best for your club. Make it fun for everyone.

Submitted by: Pete Kekel, Ohio Valley Woodturners Guild 2ndnature@fuse.net
Issued: 9/27/04