Department of Maine
Newsletter Writing Contest Guidelines

A post newsletter is a means for each post in the Department of Maine to get the word out to post membership, while adding to history of a Post. This will help keep members informed of post activities as well as important news and information from the post and the American Legion. In addition, a post newsletter can be used within the post's community, and surrounding area, to entice public participation in activities. A newsletter is a valuable recruiting source.

I – Basic Information

Use plain and unruled 8½ x 11 white and/or colored bond paper for your newsletter. The articles should be computer generated on both sides of the paper using black ribbon or printer. It is allowable to use a typewriter to produce a submission but not recommended. It is recommended that Microsoft Word be used for all typing and formatting. Margins are a must for neatness, readability and standardization.

Use single-spaced copy on pages with a three to six-space indention for new paragraphs and single-spaced lines for photograph identifications. If you have any doubt of the spelling of a word, use a dictionary. Also double-check the spelling of all names.

The information found in any form of newsletter is another link in the permanent record of a post and its history. This outline should be followed as closely as possible. It is to the editors advantage to check any submission against the guidelines suggested here. These guidelines will be used to score all newsletters submitted to the annual Department of Maine Newsletter Contest.

The History/Media Committee (HMC) will score all submissions fairly and with impartiality. If any judge on the committee has an entry in any competition they are judging, that judge cannot judge his/her own entry. Most categories will be judged on whole point awards for any category, except where noted in these guidelines. Those noted categories will be judged on .25 points for an error, up to the maximum amount of points allowed for the category.

All officer reports can be reported in the first person. Any duly elected officer can submit a report for inclusion in the newsletter. Not all Newsletter submissions need to contain all of the categories being judged in the competition. However, if only three issues of a Post Newsletter are submitted, all categories noted in these guidelines must be included across the submitted issues to score points for the category.

Follow this example. Post A submits three newsletters. A Message from the Commander is submitted in one of the issues submitted for the competition. Though no other post officer submitted anything to the newsletter the writer will still score points in the "Officer's Call" category. Any elected officer or chairperson can submit something to a newsletter.

The MCC has developed its own scoresheet for the Newsletter Contest. The scoresheet is based upon the one developed by National Headquarters for its Post Narrative History and Post Yearbook Contests.

II – Newsletter Format

The format of each newsletter will be as described in this section. The front page of each newsletter will be set up as follows. The placement of what goes where on the front page does not matter, as long as the page is readable and pleasing to the eye.

1) **Name of Publication:** The publication should have a name, called a "masthead." It can be as simple as "Monthly Newsletter" to an actual name such as "The Post-Gazette." The font used for the masthead should be the largest size on the front page, allowing the masthead to be easily read.

2) **Post Size Categories:** There are four categories that will be used in the scoring process for judging a newsletter. These are:
   a) Small Post - Post Membership of 1-100
   b) Medium Post - Post Membership of 101-200
   c) Large Post - Post Membership of 200+
   d) District

The newsletter contest will be held in four categories. Awards will be presented in each category. There will be three awards in each category, first, second, and third. An Honorable Mention award may be given at the discretion of the MMC judges. In the event of a place tie, the honorable mention will not be awarded. All other editors will receive a Certificate of Participation. If there are fewer submissions than three for any of the above categories, the awards will be presented accordingly.

3) **Frequency of Publication:**

   a) **Weekly:** Newsletter is published each week. At least ten copies of a weekly newsletter should be submitted to check issue content continuity. The copies should not be consecutive but spaced out over the year.
   b) **Monthly:** Newsletter is published monthly. At least six copies of a monthly newsletter should be submitted to check issue content continuity. The copies should not be consecutive but spaced out over the year.
   c) **Quarterly:** Newsletter is published quarterly. At least three copies of a quarterly newsletter should be submitted to check issue content continuity.
   d) **Bi-Annual:** Newsletter is published twice per year. Both copies of a bi-annual newsletter should be submitted to check issue content continuity.

III – Scoring
Cover/Title Page

1) Front Page: **18 Points**

The Cover must show the American Legion, and other affiliations such as the Auxiliary, emblem. These should be placed prominently but not detract from the overall look of the page. The cover should include the following information.

a)	Masthead	3 Points
b)	Name of Post/District	3 Points
c)	Volume and Issue	3 Points
d)	Date of Publication	3 Points
e)	Content Index	3 Points
f)	Editor Contact Information	3 Points

2) Page Continuity: **12 Points**

    a.   Continuity Throughout: 3 Points

The look, and continuity, of all pages must be kept in mind throughout the publication. Pages should look neat and easily readable. Remember that many Legion members have vision issues.

    b.   Pagination: 3 Points

Pages should flow 1 through 10, without breaks. Roman numerals should not be used as page numbers.

    c.   Fonts: 3 Points

A variety of fonts may be used but keep the font of major articles the same throughout the article. The author may use a font color to highlight article titles and other areas of interest.

    d.   Layout: 3 Points

Newsletters may utilize a variety of layouts within their pages. The use of color may be cost prohibitive for some posts. Submissions will not be graded on how much color is used. Be creative and original with what is produced. Newsletters may be single page format or be set up with columns, keeping overall continuity in mind. Once selected, keep the same page format throughout the newsletter.

3) Content: **50 Points**

Content should contain topics that are relevant to the Legion and the post. There are many topics that can be utilized within the content of a publication. There are several categories that should be included in every issue while others may be included as they occur.

Below is a list of content topics. Other topics may be used by the author and will be added to the guideline as they develop. New topics added to a newsletter can be used to "fill" a topic to obtain maximum points in the scoring.

a.	Officer's Call:	2 points
b.	Community Involvement:	4 points
c.	Recognition:	2 points
d.	Calendar of Events:	2 points
e.	Member in Spotlight:	2 points
f.	Post Everlasting:	2 points
g.	Post History:	2 points
h.	Officer Elections:	2 points
i.	List of Post Officers:	2 points
j.	Event Flyers and Articles:	3 points
k.	Committee Reports:	3 points
l.	Birthday Recognition:	2 Points
m.	Memorial Day:	3 points
n.	Four Chaplains:	3 points
o.	Veterans Day:	3 points
p.	Pearl Harbor Day:	3 points

4) Readability: 10 Points

Each newsletter should be easy to read and easily followed, if an article is continued on another page. Readers should not have to look through an entire publication to find a certain page. The following categories are important in publishing a newsletter that can be easily read and followed.

Compound sentences should not be used in the writing style. This does not mean that a two-sentence compound cannot be used, just do not overuse it. For scoring purposes, a compound sentence consist of three, or more, sentences joined in some way, such as "and," to make one sentence. This section will be graded in .25 points, up to category point maximum.

a)	Third Person Usage:	2 Points
b)	Correct Grammar Usage:	2 Points
c)	Check spelling	2 Points
e)	Check punctuation	2 Points
f)	Check that the correct acronyms are used	2 Points

5) Photographs: 20 Points

Photographs, whether color or black and white, should be used. Blurry and fuzzy photos are a distraction and will take away from the overall continuity and readability of a publication. When identifying individuals do so from left to the right. This section will be graded in .25 points, up to category point maximum. There is a total of 10 points to be awarded for this section. Identification of photos should use the following sequence of information and be consistent throughout the newsletter.

a.	Identification:		
	1) Name(s):	(Full proper name – no nicknames)	2 Points
	2) Occasion:		2 Points
	3) Location:		2 Points

4)	Date:	2 Points
5)	Photo Credit:	2 Points
6)	Photo Clarity:	10 Points

6) Judges Points:

Judges can award up to 10 additional points in this category. This is to reward something exceptional that draws the judge's eye and/or interest and does not fit in any of the judged categories. The judge will make a check mark for each item found but does not have to check all ten circles. An extra point will be added for each checked circle, up to ten (10).

7) Score Sheets: Besides their use for scoring in the Newsletter Contest, the annotated score sheets should be used as an education tool for each author to write an improved newsletter for the following competition year.

THESE GUIDELINES WERE LAST UPDATED ON DECEMBER 14, 2021