



PUBLISHING THE LITERARY MAGAZINE

ANN EDGERLY KLAIMAN

**PUBLISHING
THE LITERARY
MAGAZINE**

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EX-CEED YOUR EX-PECTATIONS

Xvxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works quitx wxll xxcpt for onx of thx kxys. I'vx wishxd many timxs that it workxd prfxctly. It is trux that thxrx arx forty-six kxys that function wxll xnough, but just onx kxy not working makxs a diffxrxncx.

Production of a litxrary magazinx could bx comparxd to my typxwritxr. You may say to yoursxlf, "Wxll, I am only onx pxrson, I won't makx or brxak thx program." But it doxs makx a diffxrxncx bxcausx a program, to bx xffxtivx, nxxds thx activx participation of vxvry mxmbxr.

So thx nxxt timx you think you arx only onx pxrson and that your xfforts arx not nxxdx, rxmxmbxr my typxwritxr and say to yoursxlf, "I am a kxy pxrson in our program and I am nxxdx vxry much."

—*Anonymous*

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS AND IS NOT IN THIS BOOK

This is a handbook for student production of a literary magazine. It is written directly to you, the student staff member. It contains information about critiquing, publicity, design, layout, and sales of a magazine containing artworks and creative writing.

This handbook covers publication of both literary magazines and literary-art magazines. Literary magazines have a slightly different emphasis than literary-art magazines, even though the term *literary magazine* is often used to refer to either. A literary magazine assumes the reader's interest and desire to dive into the literature offered. Other than the cover, a traditional literary magazine includes little artwork and uses simply designed pages. The purpose of such a magazine is to offer readers, without distraction, an intense, distilled interaction with the printed word.

A literary-art magazine does not assume the reader's interest in reading every item, which is also true of most magazines found on any newsstand. The literary-art magazine acknowledges the power of the visual arts and uses that power in two ways. First, artworks and graphics (artistic use of lines and type) can draw the reader into reading more of the magazine and toward the items most likely to interest him. A reader might not choose to read a story called "Gray Night," for example, but when he sees it is illustrated with a horse, he reads it because he likes horses. An outstanding artwork might even draw a reader into subjects or genres she might not normally choose.

Second, a literary-art magazine uses art to create another level of meaning in the magazine. Literary works stand side-by-side with artworks, thereby making a statement that creative ideas are something

humans express in many different forms or mediums. A successful interaction of artwork with printed work is a powerful statement of creative thought, and such an interaction tends to minimize the feeling that two-dimensional art or literature, especially poetry, is merely “pretty.”

This is not a handbook for either a school’s newsmagazine or general magazine. Such magazines do not emphasize creative writing, though they may include creative writing. These magazines are usually an extension of newspaper journalism. Literary magazines are often hybrids, however, and you may find that your literary magazine has some aspects of general or newsmagazines.

Finally, this book will not teach you about writing creatively. Good books already exist on that subject. This textbook picks up when creative work has already been produced and your job, as a literary magazine staff member, is to showcase that work in an exciting magazine and bring it to the widest audience you can.

Good luck with your next issue. Have a good time with it. May your magazine be successful for you, your entire staff, and your readers.

USING THIS TEXTBOOK

As a staff member, you will want to use this textbook to answer three basic questions. First, this book helps answer the question, “What options do we have for doing this?” Whether “this” is raising money to print your magazine or choosing cover art to capture your readers’ attention, you will want to find options. This book can teach you about some options available and how to act on them. The options presented in this book will probably inspire you to think of even more options that are good for your reading audience. The information, examples, forms, and procedures outlined in these pages are tools which you may use as given, alter, or discard and start from scratch. A literary magazine is, after all, one of the most flexible of journalistic forms.

Second, this book can answer the question, “What are the basic steps in the process of putting together a literary magazine?” You will function better as a staff member if you know how an entire magazine functions, not just the parts with which you work. Your understanding of the whole process will come from study of this textbook and from awareness of your magazine’s own process.

You will need to answer questions from the school and the community about your magazine’s functioning. You will feel pretty silly saying, “I’m mostly critiquing manuscripts right now. I don’t know how the publicity committee is contacting students.” Or, “I don’t know how many editors we have, but there’s a bunch of them.” (Sometimes, of course, “I don’t know” is appropriate.)

Third, this book can answer the question, “Is there a standard way this is done?” Some things have generally accepted procedures, which you will want to know. You should know standard procedures particularly if you decide not to follow them, so that you can make an informed decision. Sometimes procedures are dictated by your printer or school. It takes your integrity to know when to ask “What options do we have for doing this?” and when to ask “Is there a standard way this is done?”

Additionally, this book makes a fairly decent, if short-lived, umbrella when spread out roof-like. Rolled up, it is popular as a fly swatter. Got a minute? Exercise your creativity—it needs regular workouts, just like your body does. Make a list of ten uses for a paperback book other than as reading material.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INFORMATION

UNSAID BASICS

Much of the information in Chapter 1 is of the sort that every magazine staff deals with but rarely talks about. Without discussion, whether a magazine is new or one with a long tradition, staff members will make many assumptions about basics like staff goals, voting, and a magazine's name:

"Of course we know why we're doing a magazine."

"When we're ready to vote, we'll vote, ok?"

"A magazine's name is just one of those traditional things."

Take time now, as your staff is just getting together, to talk openly about such things as why you do a magazine, how you will fairly and efficiently conduct business, and what traditions you are building. These discussions will be a solid foundation for your entire production schedule.

THE STAFF'S GOALS

You may think your goal is to put out a magazine. On time. It is, but having published a magazine, what will you have accomplished? Is simply being able to complete the project your goal? It might be, particularly if you have never done such a project or your school has never had a literary magazine. More specifically, though, there are reasons why you and others on the staff want to see a magazine produced at all. Those reasons are philosophical goals, and whether you achieve them or not will determine how successful you feel when the magazine is printed. Here are four basic goals literary magazine staffs might choose:

1. To provide recognition, through publication in our magazine, of quality visual art and literary work done by our authors and artists.
2. To stimulate interest in and discussion of literature and art by producing the best magazine we can and by circulating it to the widest possible audience.
3. To learn the basics of magazine journalism in the areas of publicity, layout and design, and choice and editing of content.
4. To increase our own understanding and enjoyment of literature and the visual arts.

These goals may provide the reasons why you want to see a literary magazine published on your campus year after year. You may, however, disagree with them or have goals related to other concerns, such as funding your magazine or influencing students' views on current issues. You may also have very specific objectives that apply only to your next issue, such as lowering your cover price by 50 cents or reaching a total of 250 submitted manuscripts. You may want to list these objectives separately from your magazine's overall goals.



Literary magazine staffs attract a wide range of creative people. Setting goals focuses the staff's energy.

Whatever your goals, it is important that you compare yours with other staff members' and come to some agreement. To do so will focus your staff's energy and increase chances of genuine success.

Questions and Activities

1. What is the value of setting goals for your magazine?
2. Do any of the goals given need to be rewritten to fit your specific magazine and school environment?
3. Does your staff have goals that are not included here?
4. Make a complete listing of the goals you would like to see your staff adopt. Compare it with other staff members' listings.

THE NAMES OF LITERARY MAGAZINES

"Why would you call a magazine that?"

Such a question might come from the student body, faculty, advertisers, or community members. Answers such as "It sounds good" or "It's traditional" are only partial answers. Whether your magazine's name is new or old, each staff member should be able to answer these questions about it:

- What is the dictionary definition (denotation) of this name? Is there more than one definition that applies?
- What are the emotional overtones (connotations) of this name?
- Are there any famous literary references or traditions (national, cultural, religious, school) associated with this name?
- Why is it appropriate for a literary magazine to have this name?
- How long has your magazine had this name?

If your magazine has had the same name for years, you may be surprised at the interesting answers you find. If you do not like the answers you find, you may want to use them as evidence that it is time for a name change. If your magazine is new and trying new names, test them against these questions.

GENERATING A NEW NAME

Maybe you are starting a new magazine at your school, or you have decided that your existing magazine needs a new name to help establish a new image. In either case, you need to figure out a way to choose a new name. There are three basic methods: the staff might choose the new name; the staff might choose the new name after getting ideas from students; or the staff might organize a vote for the student body to choose the new name. If you decide to involve the student body, see the sample student survey in Figure 2.3.

Good Names

Methods aside, what makes a good name for a literary magazine? There are several guidelines. First, a good literary magazine title is concise. Bulky names get in the way on posters, in news releases, and in general conversation. If you should choose a bulky title, be prepared

Why is it appropriate for a literary magazine to have this name?

A good literary magazine title is concise.

Names that are too trendy will sound dated and stiff in a few years.

to live with or to cultivate a nickname for your publication. Someone, you can be sure, will pick a nickname if you do not, and it might not be to your liking.

Second, a good title is easily pronounceable. Potential advertisers, authors, artists, or readers who stumble over the pronunciation of your name will feel awkward and uncomfortable with your publication even before they get a chance to really know it.

Finally, a good magazine title will stand the test of time. Names that are too trendy will sound dated and stiff in a few years. You want a name, presumably, that will start a long tradition. The exception might be magazines that change their names every issue. Some do it, sometimes naming the issue after a piece of literature featured in it. If you use a new name each issue, be aware of the loss of identity and recognizability that your magazine may suffer.

Sources of Good Names

A good title will result from intensive brainstorming, mulling, and research. Your sources for new names might include:

1. Interesting words or phrases found while leafing through the dictionary or thesaurus. (THE CAULDRON, ENCLAVE, WINGSPAN)
2. Significant names, words, or phrases from favorite literary works. (FEARFUL SYMMETRY, CALLIOPE, GROK)
3. Titles of paintings, musical compositions, or other art forms. (RHAPSODY IN BLUE, ARRANGEMENT IN BLACK AND GRAY, PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY)
4. Memorable words or phrases culled from book, music, and movie reviews. (SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF, BACKWOODS BALLADEER, SNEAK PREVIEW)
5. Words or phrases pulled from glossaries for writers, printers, visual artists, or other related specialty areas. (COLLAGE, FOLIO, TEMPO, HOT LEAD, SURREAL, MOSAIC)
6. Traditional words or phrases associated with the songs and writings of your school or community. Such words would be easily pronounceable in a community where they are traditional. (GOLD NUGGET, SOFERIM, CHAUTAUQUA, EL TESORO)
7. Paraphrases of sayings or clichés. (MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD, MINDSIGHT, RIGHT WRITE, FIRE AND ICE, IN A NUTSHELL)

When you have chosen a new name, be sure you can answer all five questions at the beginning of this section. You might want to consider including information about the name in the introductory material of your magazine.

Questions and Activities

1. Suppose that you are approached by a new administrator in your school who asks, "Why would you call a magazine that?"
 - a. If you only have time for a short answer as you rush to class, what would you answer in a sentence or two?
 - b. If you have several minutes to stop and talk, what would you answer?