



UPDATE

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Licking mailing problems

Last month, we started the discussion of stamps. To recap, you can use the government issued penalty mail stamps, USCG bulk mail permit, electronic distribution and finally, normal USPS postage. We covered the first three, but what about regular postage?

Why use **regular** stamps? When your unit (and DIRAUX) authorizes advertising in the publication. Why do this? To offset the cost of the publication but there are other considerations.

Do you have enough of a distribution to make this attractive to advertisers? Who sets the rates? Who "beats the bushes" for advertisers? Are you able to commit to a specific schedule to get the newsletter out to the membership?

These are questions that need to be researched and answered for the membership as well as potential advertisers.

Oh, one other thing – under NO circumstances do you provide the unit roster or mailing list to anyone outside of the USCG/USCGAUX. This information is covered under the Federal Privacy Act of 1974 as detailed in the Auxiliary Manual (5.D.3).

ON PUBLICATIONS

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There are addressing standards that we need to meet. All addresses are printed in capital letters, without punctuation. Each item mailed will have a return address in the upper left corner of the envelope, mailing slip or mailing block of a magazine or pamphlet.

While the "mail to" address appears in the visual center of the addressing area. You must leave enough room for the USPS to put a barcode for the zip+4 address in the bottom inch.

The USPS requires that when Government postage is used the mail must be identified with the department and/or organization that purchased the postage.

This is why the preprinted envelopes have "U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION", "U.S. COAST GUARD" and the words "OFFICIAL BUSINESS" in the return address.

We add our office, unit and district, street address, city, state and Zip+4 information. You NEVER put your name. For those members that do not currently hold office, they are authorized to put "FC (unit) (district)." Looking at my return address as an example, you would see:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
U.S. COAST GUARD
DSO-PB 5th SR
1900 CHEMIN ROAD
PETERSBURG VA 23805-7405
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

While we are not authorized to print this information on envelopes and mailers, I know some do so. If you print this information, you must include all the information that I have shown above - of course you put your address in place of mine!

The mailing address is done very much like the return, including capital letters, except it is placed near the lower center of the envelope or mailing block and you should use a slightly larger font from the return address. Again, please make sure to have the member's Zip+4 in every address.

Next month, I will finish stamps and attempt to answer some of your questions!

How do I write it?

“Write an article,” Nick says.

But I never wrote an article. I’ve read them but I have no idea how to write one.

Well, thank you for asking. It is really not that tough. After all if I can do it anyone can. But before I give you some clues on writing articles, let me tell you how you can get your message into print without writing an article.

Sometimes, regardless of what we do, the paper just isn’t interested. So, write your message in a letter to the editor. That usually works.

Now to the subject at hand. Newspaper articles are pyramid shaped. The point is at the top. The first sentence tells the whole story. It should cover: who, what, when, where.

An announcement for a safe boating course should start something like this: US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 48 of Lower Mongolia, announces the start of a Boating Safety Class, Fridays at 7 p.m., in the Catacombs of Rome.

After the first sentence, which can get fairly long sometimes, you start telling **why** and **how**, and adding more information to provide the broad base or the pyramid. When you state “why”



or “how,” follow that up with: who, what, when and where, as they apply.

Need an example? OK: Boating insurance premiums are usually reduced by most carriers for students who satisfactorily complete the Course. Just notify your carrier and show them your certificate.

The article should be constructed so that you could take a pair of scissors and cut it off anywhere down the page and it would still deliver the same message. The more important the segment is the closer it goes to the top.

Editors like this because they can put an article written like that almost anywhere. They can make it fit the space available. Don’t forget to put in your local contact phone number

USE ADVERTISING TECHNIQUES

In 1995 the Commandant gave us permission to use advertising techniques. That means we can make our article: ask a question

then provide an answer, define a need, then fill that need, pose a problem then offer a solution, state a feature and then tell how it benefits the customer. We are now allowed to **PUNCH UP** our material. People are interested in saving money, effort, time and life. If you can make your article address all of these, well, you have a great article that will be read and remembered.

THE HEADLINE should wake them up. The guy sitting at his breakfast table reading the morning paper over a bowl of soggy corn flakes needs to see something of interest or he will not read it. “Boating safety course offered” is dull. Even I won’t read it. “Local class offers life and money saving tips” will catch someone’s attention.

Try to use short simple sentences. Remember that most of us prefer to read on a sixth grade level or below. Try to use as few comas and semicolons as possible.

Make sure the folks understand our terminology. It is OK to use personal flotation device as long as we put (PFD) or, better yet, (life jacket) behind it.

Now, send me some of your thoughts and ideas that have worked for you so I can give others the benefit of your inspiration.