

# A Good Council Newsletter

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Just having sat with a committee, analyzing a record sixty-five councils newsletters that were entered into the 2009-2010 New York State Council Newsletter Contest, I knew that now was the opportune time to fulfill a promise made last year to publish a set of guidelines for councils to use as reference when creating their council newsletters. These guidelines are regardless if your council enters the State Council contest or not. I have broken the references into two categories:

## **Things that benefit a Council Newsletter that are used in judging**

### **Things that benefit a Council Newsletter, but are not judged for**

Also added for each category that is used in judging is a recommended or desired frequency of how often this information should appear in a councils newsletter. Again, this is only reference and guideline material, but if followed to the letter, your council will be long on its way to "A Good Council Newsletter."

## **Things that benefit a Council Newsletter that are used in judging**

**Editing and Formatting:** When judging newsletters in these two categories, points, are rarely subtracted. There are situations and occurrences however, where points are deducted. Some of the most common reasons are:

- The editors name does not appear in the newsletter.
- The council's district number is not displayed anywhere in the newsletter.
- Having to find council news on a page that is completely surround by advertising from outside the council.

One might ask why is it important to display the District Number of the Council. Besides your own council family, being a fraternal organization you are also part of a larger family. Look at this way. From a fraternal aspect, the other councils in your district are your Aunt's, Uncle's and 1st cousins.

**Desired frequency:** *Anytime the newsletter is published.*

**State Council News:** The New York State Council through its website, the Empire State Bulletin, and the use of email is constantly providing information and direction on its programs and initiatives. This information is important because it may contain directives from Supreme Council or exhibit how individual councils can expand their programs that are at the very heart of our core principles.

**Desired frequency:** *Anytime the newsletter is published.*

**Supreme Council News:** Supreme Council also, through its websites and leadership communications; i.e. Knightline, District Deputy Reminder, Columbia Magazine, constantly communicate topics of interest, issues and situations, that are for or against, our order. It is acceptable to copy as paste information or articles from [www.kofc.org](http://www.kofc.org) as long as it is stated in your newsletter this is where the information originated.

**Desired frequency:** *Anytime the newsletter is published.*

**Insurance News:** Since our founding in 1882, the primary mission of the Knights of Columbus has been to protect families from the financial ruin caused by the death of the breadwinner. In the beginning, Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney and his fellow Knights "passed the hat" to benefit widows and orphans. From that humble start, the Order has grown to include top-rated life

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insurance, long-term care insurance and retirement products. By allowing your insurance agent to provide articles or materials for your newsletter, you are allowing our founders vision to continue in today's world. You ask "But currently our council is not assigned an agent, what do I do?" Contact your General Agent, every council has one, and he will be more than happy to provide you with material for publication.

**Desired frequency:** *Anytime the newsletter is published.*

**Membership** (Drives, member profiles, members names in the news, etc) Name recognition is a wonderful tool with retention of a member. Points are awarded in this category for the following:

- Information concerning membership drives and degrees being held
- Listing names of new members
- Listing the names of the council members when they take their 2nd, 3rd and 4th degrees
- Publishing profiles of different members each month
- Publishing members names when they are seen else where for good deeds such as a town newspaper or your church bulletin
- Publishing the month and day of members birthdays. A fellow member may want to send a card!
- Publishing the names of members, immediate family members or widows that may be in need of prayer.

**Desired frequency:** *Some form of the seven categories above should be included anytime the newsletter is published.*

**Chapter/Conference News:** Chapters and Conferences sponsor many wonderful events and programs that afford Knights additional opportunities to "Seek The Knight Within." Promotion of meetings and events sponsored by Chapters and Conferences is a good way to provide your council's membership with means of expanding their horizons as a Knight.

**Desired frequency:** *Every other month minimum.*

**Council Committee Reports:** Many council newsletters are entirely written by one person. If someone submits an article, give them credit for it! A good example is the Empire State Bulletin. Anyone who submits an article or picture is given credit for it. Articles will have the author's name and pictures will have who they are submitted by if it is known. When someone's name is seen in any publication it gives the person a sense of ownership as to why it is there. If you are promoting a particular event, at minimum, state who the information is submitted by. The points awarded for Council Committee Reports is for the information by officers, Surge Directors and committees chairpersons that submit information to an editor and it is clearly identified in the newsletter who submitted or wrote the material provided.

**Desired frequency:** *Anytime the newsletter is published.*

**Council News:** This is all of the current news about your council. Promotion of upcoming events in written or flyer form, calendar of events, etc.

**Desired frequency:** *Anytime the newsletter is published.*

**Fourth Degree:** Promotion of the Fourth Degree is important to the order. Fourth Degree Knights are far less likely than others to allow their membership to lapse and maintaining a close relationship between council and assembly helps keep both elements strong. Councils should not hesitate to call on the assembly that serves them for a Fourth Degree Honor Guard for significant council events. The image of the tuxedos, capes, chapeaux and swords, which make up the official Fourth Degree regalia, is a lasting and impressive one that helps to recruit new members into the Order. Therefore it is to the advantage of local councils to promote membership in the Fourth Degree among their members.

**Desired frequency:** *Every other month minimum.*

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**Fr. McGivney:** Telling the world who the venerable Fr. McGivney is during and after the canonization process must come from the membership within. Many councils send their newsletters to the local papers, parishes and other fraternal organizations. This is a good way to communicate the life of our founder. Promoting the Fr. McGivney Guild is another wonderful way to have the membership be in touch with the stories of the life of our founder.

**Desired frequency:** *Every other month minimum.*

## **Things that benefit a Council Newsletter but are not judged for**

### **What is the most important thing about Council Committee Reports and Council News?**

The after story. So many newsletters have become a collection of advertising flyers for upcoming events. What about the follow up reports? How many attended? How much money was raised? Were there any good human interest or funny stories that evolved from the events? Were any special guests present? The list of questions to be answered goes on and on. Anyone wanting to write council history who only has the council newsletters to rely on, would have a very difficult time if your council events are only advertised ahead of time and never written about after they occurred.

**Articles from your District Deputy.** The District Deputy is the representative of the supreme knight and the state deputy and is responsible for the supervision, growth and expansion, and general care and well-being of the councils assigned to his district. If he is willing to provide material or articles for your council's newsletter, it could only benefit your council and the knights as a whole.

**Articles from your Chaplain or Associate Chaplain.** A good spirited word or two from our church leadership is always a plus.

Best of luck to all in next year's contest