



Growing a JGS: PLANNING A NEWSLETTER

by Susan Weinberg, [Minnesota Jewish Genealogical Society \(MNJGS\)](#) (2023)

Before you begin a newsletter, you need to do some planning. You will want to consider the purpose, the audience, the software, and the contents. The following captures the questions that were raised in a planning discussion at MNJGS prior to creating a newsletter.

Who is our audience?

- Number of members locally and outside of area
- Any distribution beyond membership?

Do you see the newsletter as a way of getting word out to those who may not know about the society and joining?

- Is it a member perk and/or a marketing vehicle to those not yet involved.
- Some groups don't put the newer issues out but provide access to older ones on their website.
- One option is to provide it selectively to prospective members.
- If you have your calendar set up early in the year, you may choose to provide only that issue with the calendar.

What will it do that the website won't?

- Informational tool on upcoming sessions and past sessions
- Create a sense of community - if people are willing to share a little bit about their research, to introduce people to each other, when a new member comes in, to learn a little bit about them, perhaps mention one of their most memorable discoveries.

Purposes of Newsletter

- Publicize the website.
 - Heighten awareness of resources
 - Heighten awareness of member page recordings of presentations
 - Pull out highlights of presentation. Have we piqued your interest? If so, become a member to go to the member page where you can watch the video.
- Create more sense of community.

Components of Newsletter

- Meet a Members section. Interview board, long-time members, and new members. Have a photo or maybe an old family photo.
- Pre-Event Publicity
- Post-event recaps – refer them to recording for more.
- Local Community News -publicize things of interest to members -events of history museums, Holocaust studies, Jewish historical societies.

- Publicize genealogy talks elsewhere.
- DNA
- President's message- summary of what's in the issue.
- Book reviews on family history, genealogy topics
- Resource Spotlight on how to use resources– expansion on Resource page.
- Ask members to contribute writing.
- Solicit renewals.
- Focus on new – new resources, new speakers.
- Need pictures and graphics to break it up. Don't be too text heavy.

Length of Articles

- A few paragraphs with links to more copy if an email newsletter (incorporated into email)
- On paginated newsletter, usually no more than one page
- 400-word limit for most, seldom more than a page (700 words), leave room for images

Frequency

- Most JGSs do it quarterly, some groups publish three issues a year.
- Some monthly, promotes next event.

Publication Methods

- **Newsletter email Software**
 - E-mail vehicle where it comes up when opened, easy to scroll through.
- **Pages, a Mac product, or similar software- turned into PDF, embedded in email.**
 - In Pages can pick a box for an article or photo
 - Do a layout with boxes before adding text.
 - Lots of capabilities for pictures, to drop out background or include an image within a shape.

- **A Pages tutorial for newsletters**

You may involve several people in creating a newsletter in roles of layout, editing, writing and review. To that end, we created a tutorial on using Pages for layout that you can access [here](#).

The initial steps not addressed within this tutorial were to select a newsletter template, determine a name and create a header with that name.