

Third District

Sons of Norway

2009 Newsletter Contest

	Large Lodge	Mid-sized Lodge	Small Lodge
First Place	Norumbega	Gateway to Florida	Southern Star
Second Place	Suncoast	Bernt Balchen	Space Coast
Third Place	Nansen	Henrik Ibsen	Fram

Background:

As stated in the newsletter contest guidelines the newsletter contest recognizes the merit and creativeness of the Lodge editors in the field of publication and journalism. Communications is the key to having well informed members that bind a lodge together in fraternalism while fostering culture and heritage of our Nordic roots.

Feedback

We believe that any lodge that makes the effort to prepare and distribute a newsletter is to be congratulated; it can be a creative and fun task but at the same time we recognize the time and thought that is required.

Participants in the newsletter contest (past and present) have asked for feedback regarding how their lodge newsletter could be improved. The judges made a thoughtful yet deliberate process in assigning points to participants. Judges discussed the rationale for their scoring especially when the scores were either very close or very far apart.

Thinking in terms of compulsory and freestyle components with the compulsory components including the basics such as newsletter name, date, contact information, lodge events and the freestyle components including such items as overall appearance and format and layout, the judges together with the publicity director, discussed the distinguishing characteristics of the winners.

Finally, your newsletter represents the unique personality of your lodge; above all, be yourself!

Distinguishing Characteristics

Sweat the small stuff - Compulsory or basic features – these features present an opportunity for all lodges to accumulate points in standard newsletter features. It is interesting to note that although the winning newsletters consistently scored high in these areas, not one lodge received the maximum number of points. This is an opportunity

lost for all lodges and in close races, points not accumulated in the compulsory area could be critical.

Think out of the box – it happens to all of us, we do something because that is the way it has always been done before. The winning newsletters shared knowledge, provided cultural enrichment and educational content. The aesthetics of the winning newsletter were appealing to the eye; placement of articles, use of graphics and pictures, white space, font size and readability invited the reader to continue reading.

As you read this you may be saying “but, I did all that, I had graphics, pictures, content” and you are probably right. We suggest you look at the winning newsletters and compare them to your newsletter; think about the following:

- In an effort to save mailing costs, did you shrink the font? Did you try to pack so much information in four pages that there was very little white space; little to no graphics or pictures? If yes, consider emailing your newsletter; many lodges are switching to email with black & white paper newsletter upon request. Emailing your newsletters may provide you with the room you need to enhance the overall appearance and add color to your newsletter.
- Look at your cultural/educational content and compare it to the winning newsletters; what’s different? Did the winning newsletter go “outside the box” and utilize resources and sources of information other than what was provided by the Sons of Norway? If you did, to what extent did you use other material when compared to the winning newsletter? Think about the content of one of your lodge meetings, report on it in your newsletter; better yet, add some pictures!
- The inherent nature of a newsletter is to attract and retain members. If you saw your newsletter lying in the public library, would your interest be piqued to read further? To go to a meeting?