Checklist for Writing and Editing a Newsletter

✔ Keep the stories short, the language conversational. The newsletter should be fun to read.
✔ Don’t use “filler.” When in doubt, leave it out.
✔ Triple-check all facts, dates, spellings, times, and especially names.
✔ Proofread carefully. Misspellings, typos, grammatical errors, and punctuation errors have no place in an Extension newsletter. Someone besides the writer should proof each issue before it goes to the printer.
✔ Use a particular style guide (such as AP, the newspaper style) for rules on what to capitalize, when to use numerals and when to spell out numbers, and other such matters. Be consistent in applying the rules.
✔ If more than one person writes the newsletter or you use articles from guest authors, edit everyone’s work according to the same standards. Check changes with authors before printing.
✔ Get written permission to use anything by another person. Don’t violate a copyright.

Design & Layout

✎ Organize.
✎ Keep text and art straight and clean.
✎ Emphasize the most newsworthy stories by placing them on the upper half of the page and giving them strong, bold headlines.
✎ Consider having departments or sections where types of stories may be grouped. The newsletters will be easier to produce and read.
✎ Try using cartoons, artwork, and photographs to add interest to your newsletter.
✎ Make sure they are done well (and are not copyrighted), or they will do more harm than good.

Always use cutlines or captions under photographs.
Choose papers that hold up well in the mail and colors that don’t distract the reader.
Be careful mixing type styles. One or two will usually do just fine.

Photo Tips

• Note the shots you need to take before you shoot them.
• Hold your camera steady.
• Properly focus each picture. Even automatic cameras have their limitations. Beware of distances too close or too far.
• Be wary of sunny backgrounds, cloudy days, and extreme distances or close-ups. Also be aware of the conditions surrounding your subject. Watch for brand names, trash, or other distracting elements.
• Compose your pictures. Zoom in on that part of the subject that conveys the most information. Center it. Shoot.
• Make sure your camera is on the proper setting. For use on the Web, a setting of 72 DPI (dots per inch) is appropriate; for use in print, a setting of 300 DPI is needed.
• Be sure your camera battery is charged—before you leave your office.
• Be aware of the conditions around your subject.
• Use a tripod when using manual camera settings and light is limited.
• Explore different points of view. Be creative.
• Keep the background simple so it won’t compete with the center of interest.
• Keep subjects looking forward or inward in the picture. Subjects looking or pointing outward can be distracting.
• Photograph people in action rather than standing in lines shaking hands (grip ‘n’ grin).