

Boise Partners in Crime Newsletter: How-to and Style Guide

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Creating and Editing the *Crime Report*

The Boise Partners in Crime Newsletter is called the *Crime Report*. It is produced monthly and must be mailed out (postal and e-mail) so that it arrives by the Monday preceding the monthly meeting. It should also be posted online at the Boise Partners in Crime Yahoo Group. The monthly meeting is held the first Tuesday of each month.

Recently, we have been using Microsoft Publisher to create the newsletter layout since it is easily available and converts to web, PDF, and other formats as needed. Details on how to accomplish these tasks are listed below:

Getting Articles

Articles are usually supplied by member volunteers. You should pass around a sign-up list at the monthly meetings to generate support and this also helps as a reminder for the next month's contributors.

In addition to the member articles there will be:

- Monthly letter from the President
- Letter from the Editor (you)
- Information about the upcoming meeting (from the Vice-President)
- Member News
- Event Announcements
- Readers' Group Book/Meeting Review
- Writer Quotes

Static information that will be included in each newsletter includes:

- List of Officers
- Readers' Group Book List
- Meeting Information (time and place)

The President provides the Letter from the President. The Vice-President is responsible for providing the speaker information to you. Either you or someone else from the Readers' Group provides the Readers' Group Report.

Any member may submit member news or event announcements. It's up to the editor to decide which event announcements to use and which to omit. There may also be occasional serial articles that members like to submit. Feel free to include additional content; interests of the group and space in the newsletter are the determining factors.

Article Submission Guidelines

- Articles are due by the 21st of the month prior to the issue in which they will appear. For example, if an article is for the February issue, it is due to the editor by January 21st.
- Articles can be on any topic in the Mystery/Suspense genres.
- Articles should be 300-500 words in length. Series are also acceptable.
- Articles will be e-mailed to the editor (be sure to publish your e-mail address to all members).

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Note: Members who contribute to the newsletter during the year will be entered in a drawing for a \$20.00 gift card.

Reminder Notices

It's a good idea to send a reminder to the volunteer article writer(s) for that month. I suggest doing this at the beginning of the month, but no later than the 14th of the month preceding the newsletter.

You should also send reminders to the President and Vice-President if you haven't received their submissions by the 14th.

Preparing and Editing the Newsletter

1. Gather the articles to determine length. We try to keep it short enough to only need a single first-class postage stamp. Usually no more than six sheets provided you are using a printer/copy weight paper.

If you don't have enough to fill the newsletter, start mining for information. Ask people, mine the listserv, search the web, etc. You may want to have some articles on hand for just such an emergency.

2. Scan the articles for errors. Major errors go back to the writer for revision. Minor errors, or adjustments for space, may be corrected by the editor.
3. Arrange the articles in the newsletter template in a way that makes sense and leaves ample white space—to make it easier on the eyes. Always use at least a 12-point font for body text (see style guide) since many of the members have mentioned that smaller font sizes are difficult to read.

Layout Suggestions

1. Meeting information **always** goes on the front page. It makes it easier for people who want to get that info but don't have time to read the newsletter before the meeting.
2. Write the Editor's Note (or Letter from the Editor). You may choose to do this when everything else is done, so you can see how much space is available and also highlight any special information.
3. The Writer's Quotes section is one of the member favorites. Here are a couple of websites you can mine for those:
 - www.writersservices.com/mag/m_quotes_writers.htm
 - www.quotegarden.com/writing.html

Both are pretty good sources and there are others as well. Keep your ears open for quotes from other sources, including movies and TV episodes.

4. Once everything is in place, create the table of contents. Members say they like this feature.

Finalize the Newsletter

Once everything is laid out the way you want it, convert it to PDF for e-mailing, posting, and printing.

Mailing/Posting Newsletter

The first few months of the New Year are the trickiest as people pay dues or don't. Note: membership runs from January-December of each year. We usually send the newsletter for a few months with reminders to pay dues. Once all the dues are paid, you'll need to cull the lists and make sure no one is receiving the newsletter who shouldn't. The names often get left on the list from the Treasurer but should be marked by who paid and who didn't.

Printing

1. Currently we are using the Staples Copy Center for printing services for both the Partners in Crime and the Murder in the Grove. Locate the one closest to you and always remember to have it credited to the group's Rewards Card. I usually take both a PDF and a Publisher copy on a Flash thumb drive, just in case there are any problems.

Specify the number of copies needed and to print in black (color cost more), double-sided, stapled in booklet format, and folded. The entire process should take less than twenty minutes.

2. Print address labels. I use the Word mail merge function to pull addresses from an Excel file sent from the Treasurer.
3. Staple or tape the edge away from the address otherwise they occasionally get caught in the machines at the Post Office and damaged.
4. Place address labels and stamps on the newsletters.
5. Drop them in the mail.

E-mailing

E-mail a copy of the PDF document to those members on the *receive electronic-newsletter* list (this will be supplied by the Treasurer). It is easiest to set this up as a group in Outlook, Gmail, or whatever your preferred e-mail client is.

Address it to bpinc@gmail.com and add the group name (your electronic list) in the BCC field.

Posting

Upload a copy of the newsletter to Yahoo files:

1. Go to the yahoo group page: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bpinc>
2. Click on Files.
Note: the first time you will need to create a new folder called "[year] Crime Report"
3. Click on the correct year folder, ex. 2010 Crime Report
4. Click on Add File. Add the file using the Browse function.

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5. Title it the “[month] [year] Crime Report”, ex. January 2010 Crime Report.
6. Click to notify group.
7. Click on Upload File.

And you are done.

Style Guide

Refer to the accompanying newsletter as a layout example. The following listing of typefaces, font sizes, and other information has been created to make the monthly newsletter layout easier and to produce a consistent product.

Always use at least a 12-point font for body text (see below) since many of the members have mentioned that smaller font sizes are difficult to read. As long as the typeface is easy to read and consistent, it will be fine. Don't get fancy with different typefaces; this group doesn't care for that much.

Page Layout

The example template uses six master pages. You may need to create others as needs change.

The basic page layout settings are:

Page Size:	A5 Portrait width = 396 pt. height = 612 pt.
Margins:	Top/Bottom = 36 pt. Right/Left = 24 pt. Column Space = 20 pt.

Master Pages:

F(ront): contains header logo, newsletter name, date, table of contents.

P(ostage): editors mailing address, thumb-print logo, optional notices

A: two columns, footer: even page numbers, publication date

B: two columns, footer: website URL, odd page numbers

C: full page version of A

D: full page version of B

Styles and Typefaces

Times New Roman, 12pt, and Arial, 14pt, bold, are the standard typefaces and font sizes used for normal body and heading texts, respectively. Exceptions and other standards for specific sections are noted below.

Newsletter Title: Copperplate Gothic, 24.4pt,

CRIME REPORT

Front page date: Arial Black, 10pt,

January 2010

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Table of Contents, Title: Times New Roman, 10pt, Table of Contents

Table of Contents, Entry: Times New Roman, 9pt, Letter from the Editor

Headings:

Heading 1: Arial, 14pt, Bold

Heading 2: Arial, 12pt, Bold

Writer Quotes: Comic Sans, 14pt, Bold

Article Title: Times New Roman, 16pt, Bold,

Article, subtitle: TNR, 12pt, Bold,

Byline: Times New Roman, 11pt,

Body Text: Times New Roman, 12pt,

Writer Quotes, Body: TNR, 12pt, Italic,

Writer Quotes, Author: TNR, 12pt,

Copyright Notice: Arial, 9pt,

Criminal Pursuits

Errata

April Quotes

Self Editing

Reading Aloud

by Blane Holden

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur

“I love writing ...”

—James Michener

2010 © Partners in Crime

Graphics

Graphics will be located in separate files. Notable uses are for graphics include:

- Title Page Logo
- Letter from the Editor
- Tidbits from the President (President’s Letter)
- Member News (Member Blogs)
- Announcements: Events and Contests

Miscellaneous

Highlighting text blocks for static content or special announcements may be done using a light gray shading (RGB 228,228,228).