How to write for *OTN* journal

Old Timers News (OTN) journal is the membership journal of the Radio Old Timers Club Australia Inc (RAOTC) and is published twice yearly, in March and September.

It can really only be as good as the members of the RAOTC make it as we are very much dependent upon members to have sufficient material for the journal.

OTN is a forum for members to publish an opinion, a letter, or an article. Of particular interest is an account of members' experiences in electronics and as a radio amateur, whether they occurred decades ago, or as recently as last month. Contributions can be as short as a hundred words, or as long as several thousand words. *OTN* readers all enjoy reading and hearing about other radio amateurs' experiences.

Contributions can be technical, an account of a first involvement with radio, an unusual radio experience, a humorous incident, or an opinion on a radio matter, past or current.

Also, we are always interested in reprinting suitable historical articles from the past. If you have read one that you think would be of interest to your fellow old timers, send a copy along to us.

The editors of *OTN* do not rewrite articles to any particular style, but try and retain the original style of the author while correcting, where necessary, spelling, grammar, punctuation and the accuracy of what is written.

It's easy to write for *OTN* journal. Dozens of amateurs have already done it. Few of them are professional writers. All get a lot of satisfaction out of hearing their fellow amateurs say they enjoyed reading their article in the latest issue of the RAOTC journal.

Just about anybody can write. Some can turn an elegant phrase, while others just explain what they have in mind and keep right to the point. Practice develops skill in writing, just like anything else you do. The more you write, the easier it gets and the better it is.

The Plan

Before you start to write the article, outline what you want to say. Remember the old rule: Tell them what you are go-ing to tell them; tell them; then tell them what you've told them. Or, in more formal language, introduction, body, summary.

The title and opening para-graph are particularly important, as are photographs. You win or lose most readers right at the beginning.

When writing, remember that *OTN* journal is an informal hobby journal and that you are writing for friends. Don't be a stuffed shirt. Go lightly on impersonal third-person terms, such as "the author". It's in order, however, to use the first per-son "I" without overdoing it.

Also use direct sentences whenever possible. They deliver your point more forcefully. "I fastened the nut" is better than "the nut was fastened". Write natur-ally, in short simple sentences, starting a new paragraph with each new thought. Avoid unnecessary abbreviations. Use sub-headings as signposts for the readers.

Misspelling is easily avoided. Most radio amateurs have word processors with spell checkers, and hard copy dictionaries are cheap. Look it up!

Avoid footnotes wherever possible. References in the text are easier to read.

Make sure you give credit when you borrow an idea or material from someone else. Quote the publication name and issue from which the information was gleaned if it has been previously published. This is important both ethically and legally.

Manuscript

Most authors use computers these days to write their articles and submit their manuscripts as an email attachment. However, you can submit your manuscript by post on a disk or as typewritten hard copy. We prefer not to receive handwritten manuscripts, but will not reject an article because it is handwritten, provided we can read what you have written.

The *OTN* editors work in IBM format Microsoft Word and do not accept MAC format files. However, we can read other popular word--processing formats apart from Word. If in doubt, submit your electronic copy as an .RTF or .TXT file as well as in your word-processor's native format.

When preparing your electronic manuscript for e-mailing (or for printing and submitting as hard copy), please observe the following:

Do not attempt to format the document to look like a magazine or journal page.

All indentations should be made with the TAB key and not the space bar.

Do not use the ENTER key (line returns) at the end of each line, only at the end of each paragraph.

Do not embed images, illustrations, diagrams, or lengthy lists or tables of figures within the manuscript. Send them as separate files or sheets. Tables and lists are best made using the 'Insert Table' command, or creating them as a separate Excel .XLS file.

Number all photographs and include explanatory captions at the foot of the article.

Ensure your name, call sign, postal address and e-mail address are included within the manuscript file.

When submitting hard copy, use regu-lar A4 typing paper and make sure the printer produces sharp, black text.

If you must submit a hand written manuscript, perhaps block printing may be best.

Abbreviations and Symbols

The editors of *OTN* journal use the abbreviations as detailed in the Australian Government Publishing

Service (AGPS) Style Manual, such as: Hz, kHz, MHz, GHz, ìF, pF, mH, H, W, mW, ìW, V, mV, kV, A, mA , ìA, dB, km, Ù, kÙ, and MÙ. Do not use full stops or pluralise the abbreviations. Separate them from the number: 10 MHz, not 10MHz. Modes of emission, and acronyms in general, are capitalised: AM, FM, CW, SSB, RTTY, ATV, RF, IF, DC, AC, RMS, VFO, AGC, etc. Though the text flow should be informal, keep away from 'hammy' abbreviations in your articles such as xtal, XYL, xmtr, xfmr, etc.

Greek letters such as ì and Ù can be created with most word processors. In Microsoft Word, use the 'Insert > Symbol' facility from the menu bar and select 'normal text' using Subset 'Basic Greek'.

Photographs

Good photographs can make all the difference in the appeal of an article. Photographs should be high contrast black and white photographs or colour prints with good contrast and bright colours. We are always in need of interesting photographs for the front cover.

If you send standard 10 x 15 cm size print photos through the post, please ensure they will not get bent. Also, do not write on the back of the photos; use a stick-on label. Label each photo clearly: Photo 1, Photo 2, etc. At the end of the article, list the photos along with captions describing each photo.

We can also accept digital images if the resolution is sufficient. Generally speaking, this means using at least a 5.0 megapixel (or greater) camera with the image resolution set at maximum. If you want your photo to be considered for the front cover of *OTN*, it should be taken with at least a 4.0 megapixel setting.

If you are going to scan a standard 10 x 15 cm size colour print in order to send us a digital file, use a 300 DPI setting. If you are going to scan a standard 10 x 15 cm size greyscale print, use 200 DPI.

If you are going to scan a black and white line drawing, please use 600 DPI.

High resolution .JPG, or standard or LZW compressed .TIF, files are preferred.

Submission

You can submit your article in several ways. We prefer it electronically as an attachment to an email message. If the attachments total greater than 15 Mbytes, please send your submission in two or more emails.

Please email your submission to:
raotc@raotc.org.au
or post hard copy or a computer disc to:
OTN Editor
PO Box 107
Mentone VIC 3194.

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Bill Roper VK3BR