

Guidelines for Submissions

for

AMICA Bulletins

and

AMICA On-Line Library

Guidelines for AMICA Bulletin

As I live in Canada, best to make good use of the magic and power of the internet to send Chapter Reports, Articles, News Clips, etc., to me, to avoid the high cost of postage. For those on dial-up internet connections, little option but to use the mail, but remember postage to Canada is slightly higher, so make sure there is enough so that it does not come back to you 3 weeks later for “insufficient postage”.

Chapter Reports

Feel free to use whatever word processing system you are comfortable, be it Microsoft Word, Open Office, Word Perfect, WordPro, etc. What I appreciate is that when comes time to save the file, please “Save As” in “text” format. The reason for this is that upon receipt, I must import the report into its original word processing system, then “Save As” in “text” format, for insertion into our desktop publishing software.

If there are pictures to accompany a Chapter Report, feel free to insert them into the report and include captions. However, if you do insert these pictures into the report, please also attach the same pictures within an email attachment. If there are pics imbedded within the report, obviously it can't be saved as “text”, as the pics will disappear. I can live with that.

If pictures started out in life from a digital camera, best to send them to me in their full size unedited format. Please do not resize them smaller for publication, for if you do, high risk that extreme pixilation will emerge, or at very least loss of clarity, from the publishing process.

If pictures emerge in hard printed copy, I suggest that they be scanned at a minimum of 400dpi, saved in JPG format with a minimum of compression. Such scans will emerge as large graphic files, but that's OK. It's much easier for me to work with large pics than small pics. Working with small pics is a bit like trying to turn a pig's ear into a silk purse, very difficult.

Even through Chapter event pictures ordinarily emerge in greyscale in final printed Bulletins, please do not assume this to be a requirement. From time to time, I will have the opportunity to publish Chapter events in color. So, as a rule of thumb, always leave Chapter events pics in color, so that I will always have that option.

My ISP limits my incoming email messages to a 10 megabyte maximum, Anything over this limit will be bounced back to you. In this case, break up the report into a series of emails, with each summing to less than 10 megs.

If possible, please avoid printed photographs. The reason for this is that printed photographs, after scanning, lose an element of their “edge”, not quite as crisp and clean as might be expected from digital photographs. If the pics emerged from film cameras, then of course no option, printed pics will be used.

If the source of chapter meeting photographs is different from the reporter, but are digital, arrange to have the photographer send the pics to me as email attachments. Ideally, please do not resize the pics. Even though the original untouched pics may be fairly large, they are much preferred in this manner.

Chapter Report format:

Founding Chapter Meeting
5 December 2009
President – John Ulrich
Reporter – Jack Edwards

Newspaper Clippings

If at all possible, send me a quick email as soon as the newspaper/magazine/journal, etc., is released. Newspaper stories are most vulnerable as they quickly disappear off the 'net. In your email, send me the web site address of the newspaper item, or at very least the name of that newspaper and the city in which it is published. I can then go to that newspaper's web site, extract the text and the pics quickly and easily, for best possible quality.

Good quality image is not always possible, as newspapers often use simple thumbnail pics, rather than full size pics. Nevertheless, what I can harvest off the newspaper's web site is about the best possible quality, even if marginal.

Scanning an actual newspaper clipping is not very helpful as the scanned image contains text that I cannot ordinarily extract. Much, much easier if I can access the actual news item on-line, at the newspaper's web site.

There will be times when, such as airline in-flight magazine articles, tourism brochures, etc., when a web site is simply not available. If at all possible, arrange to acquire an original and mail it to me. If you are not inclined to mail it, possibly fearing loss enroute, then read my guidelines for "Original Literature" following.

Articles for the AMICA Bulletin

Articles for use in our AMICA Bulletin generally follow the same guidelines as for Chapter Reports, with one notable exception. I include a head/shoulders image of the author if at all possible. And at the end of the article, I include contact information for those so inclined.

Chapter Reports, with pics attached, should have wherever possible, the names of the people in the pics, from left to right. If not known, then "guest" or "friend" will have to suffice. Group pic of all those in attendance will be very much appreciated.

I have no preconceived notions about overall article length. Extensive, well researched articles with many pics may require the article to be broken up over 2 or more consecutive issues. In which case, please include within the article, where it may be divided. Also, try to indicate in the article where certain pics should be inserted, along with captions for the pics.

Articles for our AMICA Bulletin are ordinarily a matter of mutual negotiations between the author and I, always preferred by email, rather than long distance phone calls.

I do not purport to know more about the subject than the author, so I will endeavor to limit editorial changes to spelling and punctuation only.

Please avoid criticisms of other members for whatever may have transpired in the past, in print or in conversation. As I stated 'way back in 1983:

“It takes courage to expose an idea or technique that may not be well defined and perhaps not yet defensible. But with a positive attitude, others can work on it and roll it back to us through these pages in its improved form. This process of reinforcement can only be beneficial to all. Let us never fall in the trap of continually preparing, just to get started! I accept there are those among us whose superior skill and knowledge put them in a unique position of viewing with dismay those techniques they feel to be imperfect or inappropriate. But what better opportunity than the Bulletin for them to respond and show us a better way. Those of us who have passed through the school of hard knocks have as much of a responsibility to educate as others have to learn.”

Ads for AMICA Bulletin

The objective of an ad is to provoke a response, whether it is to sell or seek something. The ad should be so worded as to make it exceedingly easy to make contact. Therefore, an ad should include a full name, address, phone number and email address.

Avoid placing an ad by phone, which imposes a high risk of introducing errors. Far better to place an ad by email. Do not feel compelled to send through advance payment in the form of a check or money order. Up here in Canada, I do not have the ability to make deposits into AMICA's US bank account. Checks that I do receive I must mail them to our Treasurer. Until such time as AMICA recruits a volunteer Advertising Manager, I will send through an invoice stating amount payable, with payment to be made to our Treasurer in the USA.

If an ad must be placed by mail, try to avoid handwritten ads, again for same reason of a high risk of introducing transcription errors. Typewritten far preferred, or off a computer printer, if possible.

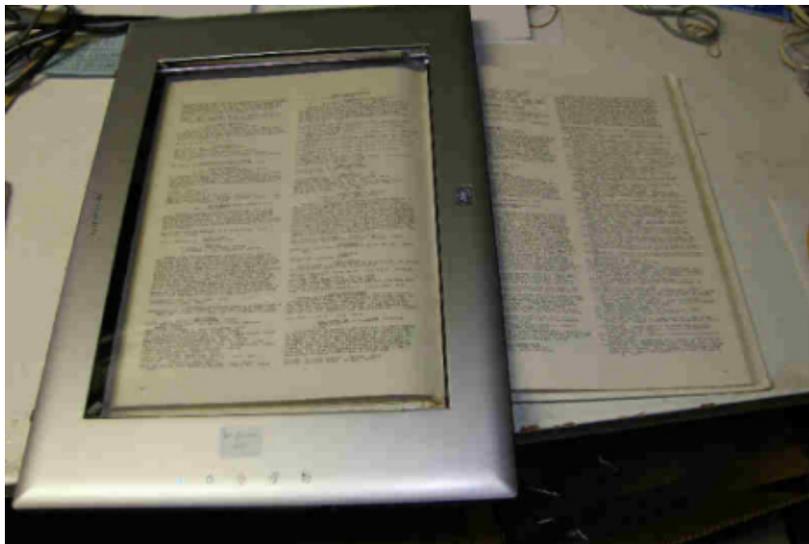
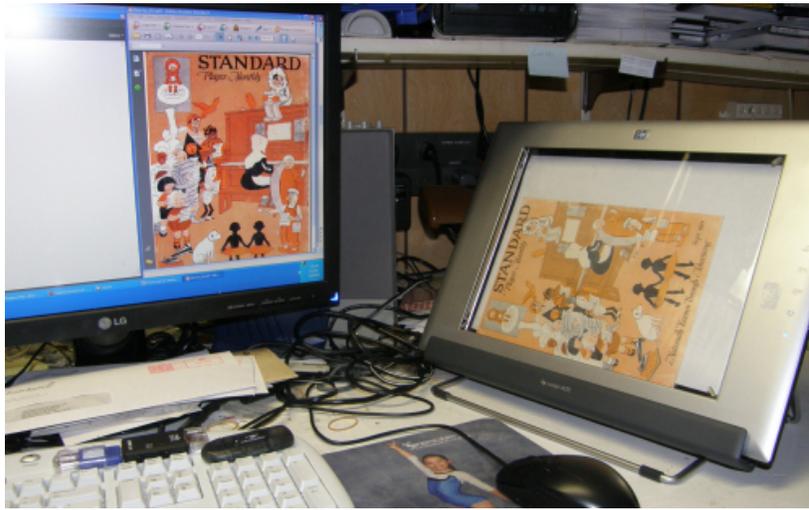
Guidelines For Our On-Line Library

Original Literature

Over the past 4-5 years, in recognition that my heirs will likely dispose of my collection of original literature into BlueBox recycling, lost forever, I have been scanning it all and making it freely available on our AMICA web site. It has been a great learning experience.

As a general rule of thumb, avoid the use of conventional flat bed scanners when scanning rare books. Because of the unavoidable excessive handling, rare books can easily be damaged.

There is equipment out there to handle such scanning, but typically very expensive in the range of \$12,000 to \$50,000. Only large institutions can afford such equipment. For our average member, an acceptable option is the HP 4670 "See Thru" scanner.



As can be seen in the 2nd pic, this scanner can be laid on an open book, requiring only page turning. Minimal, if any, damage will emerge. Regrettably, this excellent scanner has been removed from the HP product line and is no longer supported. However, they can still be found on eBay, Craigslist, Kijiji, etc., for a reasonable cost. Occasionally, New-In-The-Box units can be found. In recognition that these units will become scarce, I have acquired 4 of them, 1 was discarded when it died, 2 more are sitting on the shelf waiting to be put into service.

For oversized documents, such as centerfolds, or oversized magazines such as Etude, I have a Mustek A3 flat bed scanner, capable of handling documents up to 11" x 17". It is a conventional flat bed format, so handle original oversized literature with great care to minimize damage. It is the least costly A3 scanner on the market and does a decent job. New ones can be found on eBay, Craigslist and/or Kijiji for about \$160.



And for bundles of photocopies of original literature, such as catalog listings, I have scanner equipped with an Automatic Document Feeder (ADF). I don't use it very often, as it can inflict damage. I will absolutely never use it for original literature of any kind, too risky. But these bundles of photocopies are good candidates for such material through an ADF. Not original, replaceable, and in good physical condition.

If members are not inclined to loan their copies of original literature, and they do have a scanner, then I appeal that all scanning be done at a minimum of 400dpi. The reason for this is that our library of original literature is becoming an important research resource. We have no way of knowing what purpose someone will make of the material harvested out of the library. The assumption is therefore that all may one day emerge in a research book of some kind. Researchers should not have to go to extreme lengths to turn a poor scan into a high quality entry in a new book.

All scanners are equipped to handle Black & White/line drawings, grayscale, and color. Every document to be scanned presents a need for a judgment call. If the original is basically text, with occasional line drawings, then select B&W(text). If the original is still in B&W, but contains photographs, then select grayscale. If the original contains color of any kind, then obviously select color.

For B&W originals, the selection of B&W will hopefully present such options as B&W Threshold, Resolution, Sharpness. Threshold is critical as I have found that selecting what appears good on screen often ends up severely over-exposed, contributing to conversion errors. From scanning thousands of pages of catalog listings, I find that a Threshold selection whereby screen image is beginning to slightly break-up, will result in good quality image. Where offered, I always select "Extreme" sharpness. Experiment for best results.

For Grayscale originals, the selection will hopefully present adjustments for Brightness/Contrast, Resolution and Sharpness. Again, experiment with the Brightness/Contrast to achieve best possible balance of lights and darks to preserve as much detail as possible.

For color originals, the selection will likely offer similar adjustments as for Grayscale.

For resolution, always select a minimum of 400dpi. Some scanners do not offer a 400dpi selection, jumping from 300dpi to 600dpi, but in many cases, I have found that I can edit the 300dpi selection to read 400dpi, and it will be accepted at 400dpi.

Where offered, always select “Extreme” sharpness.

Software

If the original literature being scanned is aimed at our AMICA web site on-line library, aim for creating the scanning results into PDF format. The best software I have found for this is the full Acrobat, not the Acrobat Reader. The full Acrobat, current version 9, is pricey, as low as \$600, typically \$800.

However, version 9 is not needed. Version 7 Standard is a good start, often available off eBay, Craigslist or Kijiji for about \$30-\$40. Then a copy of version 8 Standard Upgrade can be found for a similar cost. A Version 8 disc will upgrade version 7 to version 8, then immediately calls home (Adobe) and automatically updates itself to version 8.1.3. Version 8.1.3 does almost everything we want for our purposes. This is what I have.

Scanning can be done directly into the full Acrobat 8.1.3. When first setting up to scan a new document, within the opening selection, choose first the scanner you are using, then click on “Scanner Options”, and within it, select “Show Scanner’s Native Interface”. The reason for this is to make possible best quality image, using the scanner’s controls, rather than Acrobat’s default settings which are not adequate.

Deselect “Make PDF/A compliant”. With the slider bar, select “High quality”. Select “Make Searchable (run OCR)”. Deselect “Make Accessible”. Deselect “Add Metadata”. There may come a time in the future whereby these settings may change, but for now, these settings provide very good quality images.

Acrobat has a shortcoming in that it does everything in memory. So, highly desirable that your document be saved with every image scanned. If for any reason your computer freezes or chokes, forcing a reboot, everything done since last “save” is lost.

Mac vs Windows

By chance I have both a Windows (XP Pro) and a Mac (Mac:Mini OS 10.6 Snow Leopard), so I can accept most anything from these computers.

Conclusion

These guidelines are a starting point. Experience will reveal better or shortcut procedures which should be shared, and will be appreciated. I will update this document accordingly.

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