Smoky Mountain Signals
Journal of the Smoky Mountain Amateur Radio Club

Submission Guidelines

Smoky Mountain Signals is the newsletter of the Smoky Mountain Amateur Radio Club, based in Maryville, Tennessee. The publication is available to both members of the club and the general public via email direct or on the club website at w4olb.org.

We accept articles and photographs from both club members and non-members. It is not necessary either that you be a licensed amateur (ham) radio operator in order to submit. We do not accept material about computer technology unless it is directly related to ham radio application.

As a non-profit organization, the Smoky Mountain Amateur Radio Club does not pay for submissions, but writing for non-profits is a good way for beginning writers to build a portfolio of writing samples.

Please read through **ALL** of the guidelines on the pages that follow. If you have questions…**ask!**

Current Needs
Smoky Mountain Signals has immediate need for the following:

Feature Articles (500 – 1500 words)
    How-To:
- set up and operate *any* digital mode
- use good repeater etiquette
- set up and manage an LOTW account
- improve HF SSB operation
- work split-mode (and when and why)
- work as a net control station
- put together a portable/emergency station
- be an activator or chaser in POTA or SOTA
- operate amateur satellites
- any other how-to articles welcome

Feature Articles (200 – 800 words)
    Human Interest or Other:
- How and why you became a ham
- A project (underway or completed)
- Any accomplishment (WAS, DXCC, etc.)
- Operation/performance in a contest
- Equipment review
- Any other ideas are welcome

Club Shack Shorts (no word count)
- Shack photos
- Antenna farm photos
- Equipment for sale
- Upcoming events
- Any other short material welcome

We also have openings for monthly columnists:
    > VHF/UHF Operation
    > QRP Operation
    > EMCOMM
PLEASE EMAIL THE EDITOR IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

<Detailed Guidelines Are On the Following Pages>

Routing

All correspondence with and submissions to *Smoky Mountain Signals* should be direct email to the editor. Please use the email address at the top right of this document.

Rights

By submitting material to *Smoky Mountain Signals* for publication, you are assigning us either:

> **First North American Serial Rights** (also called First Rights) if your submission has never been published, including electronic publication.

OR

> **Second Serial Rights** (also called Reprint Rights) if the material has been published previously, including electronic publication. If you are assigning reprint rights, please include the name of the publication (or web address) and date when it was first published.

Queries & Acceptance

Although a query is *not required* for feature articles, it can be useful in helping the editor provide you some guidance before submission. A query should be brief, including an explanation of your article idea, an estimate of length, whether or not you will be able to provide photographs, and whether or not the material is time sensitive.

Alternately, feature articles may be submitted "on spec." In other words, just write it and send it in.

Material to be included in **The Club Shack** (see page 1) should just be sent directly to the editor.

Generally, anything submitted will be accepted for publication unless it is so egregiously bad as to defy improvement through editing. *Articles might be returned with suggestions for improvement*. You will be notified within one week that your query or article has been received and reviewed, along with a likely publication date. If you do not hear back within one week, please send a follow-up email.

Photographs & Graphics

(For graphics and photographs that accompany an article, please refer below under the section titled **Style Guide & Rules for Writing**).

Any digital format is acceptable, and we welcome photos of any and all kinds of ham radio related subjects.

Style Guide & Rules for Writing

Smoky Mountain Signals generally adheres to *The Associated Press Stylebook*.

Any word processing format supported by Microsoft Word™ is acceptable for text-based submissions.

Brief material such as that included in **The Club Shack** (announcements, awards earned, equipment for sale, etc.) can just be sent within the text of an email.

For feature articles, columns, etc., please **single-space** the article with no line breaks, page breaks, or special formatting. Preferred font is Times New Roman, 12-point. Use only **one** space after periods.

Do not include graphics or photographs in the text of your article. Send them as separate files. Use the file name of a graphic or photograph within the text of your article to indicate where it most appropriately fits. Example: [*insert: dipole3.jpg*]. However, the editor will make the final determination where graphics and photographs appear in the final publication.

Ten Hints & Tips...whether you are a writer or not

1: Make the Most of Your Time
Most people are pressed for time, and, especially if they have never written before for publication, tend to think of writing as a large, time consuming task. Yes, it can be time consuming, but it helps to treat it as a process rather than an event. Break it up into small chunks over several days. You will be amazed what you can produce in five days' worth of 20-minute sessions.

2: Organize it!
Begin with a basic outline. Not a formal outline like you were probably forced to do in school. Just make a list of points you would like to cover in your article. Then arrange those points in some sort of logical order.

3: Avoid the Worst Writing Advice Ever Given
Someone somewhere at some time in your life probably said to you, "Just write it like you would say it." No. Just no. And again, no. That advice is useful enough to get a reluctant 8-year-old to put pen to paper, but beyond that it is the writing equivalent of grabbing hold of the hot side of a 220V line. The results will be disastrous. Verbal language and written language are different creatures.

4: Pay Attention to the Best Writing Advice Ever Given
Read. Read everything you can get your hands on. Read every day. The result is that the patterns and rhythms of professional writing become ingrained in your mind so that when you write, what comes out on the screen bears more resemblance to what you have read than what you would speak.

5: Read What You Write…OR…Revise, Revise, Revise
The biggest problem by far with most writing is a lack of revision. First drafts are never acceptable. Never. You are probably not a professional writer, but the biggest difference between you and a professional is the amount of time spent on revision. That's the simple truth. Take the time to read your article several times; you will find something to improve every time. Then, when you think you have it perfect, set it aside for a time, then go back and try to read it as if you were someone else seeing it for the first time. This document that you are reading, for example, underwent seventeen revisions before publication.

6: Cut until it hurts
You rarely need as many words as you think. The result is leaner sentences and paragraphs…like this one.

7: Technology is Your Friend – Let it Help
If you write in a Microsoft Word ™ compatible program, you might notice blue, green, or red squiggly lines underneath words, phrases, or even entire sentences. They actually mean something, so pay attention to them. Place your cursor on the underlined portion and right-click to see what the problem is and make the suggested correction.

8: Remember Audience & Purpose
Audience and purpose are the twin towers of power in good writing. Who am I addressing, and why am I telling them this? Especially when writing technical and/or how-to material, remember that the primary audience of the newsletter is club members. Not all of them are Extra Class hams or have been hams for fifty years. You don't have to assume *total* ignorance on the reader's part; after all, there is no need to insult anyone's intelligence. However, it will serve you well to think about the lowest common denominator in terms of technical knowledge among club members on the topic you are addressing.

9: Begin It and End It
Everything you have ever read has an introduction and a conclusion. Historically, both – but especially conclusions – are problematic for inexperienced writers. Still, even though your article requires them, neither one need be lengthy or complex.

There is a <u>dangerous</u> piece of advice that might help here, but it <u>is</u> <u>dangerous</u>, so **pay attention**. You may have heard it before: "Tell them what you are going to tell them; tell them; then tell them what you told them."

That is a solid concept, but it is a *concept* – not the actual words you should write. So, unless you want to come across sounding like a sixth-grader, do not write, "In this article I am going to tell you about…" and then end with, "In this article I told you about…."

Consider these excerpts from the May, 2020 issue of *QST* titled "The Fountain Antenna," by Ted Coyle, AA4AZ:

From the introduction:
"I recently decided to build an HF antenna that would let me simulate emergency conditions during both the build process and operation of the antenna. As I created the design, I assumed that the operator had no access to an existing antenna and needed to create one."

From the conclusion:
"I have made hundreds of two-way contacts using the fountain antenna. It is fun and inexpensive and has become my go to antenna on the bands for which it was designed. Using 100W, I'm pleased with the performance and the signal reports I have received."

Coyle's complete introduction and conclusion were both actually longer than this, but these excerpts represent the heart of each. Notice that the introduction clearly spells out what he is going to explain and why. The conclusion ends the article neatly by stating the results of the experiment.

Everything in the middle of the article leads **from** the introduction **toward** the conclusion. And that is why you need both.

10: Ask for Help
If you really want to do this, but just cannot get started, or if you have something started and find yourself stuck, email the editor. He will gladly work with you to help you become a valued contributor to your club newsletter!