

NCRAL Newsletter Editor Award

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Purpose:

The newsletter editor of a club, society, or association performs the primary function of informing members about what is happening in their club and in the sky. Editors of astronomy club newsletters must often overcome considerable challenges to do so. They must be quite creative in filling the allotted space for each issue, especially when the call for articles from the membership does not produce sufficient material. They must have good ideas, be skilled writers, and work like graphic artists, traits which by themselves deserve recognition. They must have passion for communication, and all these qualities, when present, give their publications an unmistakable polish.

In acknowledgement of the time, effort, skill, and importance of the role of the newsletter editor within a club, society, or association, NCRAL hereby establishes the **NCRAL Newsletter Editor Award** to recognize these essential people for what is often a thankless task. In addition, the award recognizes the membership of the award-winning newsletter editor with a token honorarium acknowledging their contributions to the newsletter.

The Award:

- The first-place NCRAL Newsletter Editor Award consists of a suitable certificate presented at each year's Regional convention.
- The award includes a \$50 honorarium to the award recipient's club/society/association in recognition of the support the membership provides to the newsletter editor.
- The first-place winner also will be recognized on the Region's newsletter and website. This recognition will consist of a short biographical sketch and an image of the editor ideally in an astronomical setting.
- The competition is open to all AL/NCRAL-affiliated clubs and only AL-affiliated club/society/association editors are eligible for this award.
- The award program is chaired by the Vice Chair of the Region.
- Judges for this program include the Region's Executive Officers and past award recipients if any, provided the past award recipient(s) remain associated with the AL and by default NCRAL.

Submission Guidelines:

The president of the club/society/association should email an electronic copy of one designated issue of the associated newsletter in Adobe Acrobat pdf format to the NCRAL Vice Chair (currently Bill Davidson, rochesterskies@outlook.com), along with a cover letter of recommendation in the same file format. In addition, complete contact information of the editor must be included. A photo of the newsletter editor, preferably in an astronomical setting, should be sent electronically in jpg or png format to the same email address by March 31st.

Judging Guidelines:

The following guidelines (based in part on the Astronomical League's Mabel Sterns Newsletter Editor Award) are meant to help judge the quality of newsletter submissions. They also give newsletter editors a target for which to aim when they work to improve the quality of their work. These guidelines aren't necessarily inclusive of all judging parameters but represent what is expected of a high-quality publication.

1. Is the NCRAL logo prominently placed somewhere in the newsletter?
2. Does the newsletter promote NCRAL's newsletter *Northern Lights* newsletter and provide a way to either subscribe electronically (<https://goo.gl/gsS8SF>) or to retrieve from the NCRAL website (<https://ncral.wordpress.com/newsletter-archive/>)?
3. Does the newsletter promote the NCRAL Annual Convention on a timely basis (as appropriate to the time of year)?
4. Does the newsletter have an attractive masthead or does the cover page otherwise appear enticing?
5. Are there header of pages following the cover page used creatively to connect pages with masthead on the cover page?
6. Is the footer of pages following the cover page used effectively (page number, newsletter name, volume and/or issue designation, copyright notice if appropriate)?
7. Is there a creative use of letter formatting (font, size, text effects, word art, smart art, separators, etc.) in the body text?
8. Is there an effective use of "white space" and images throughout to break up the text to make the layout attractive?
9. Are article images positioned near the article text relating to them?
10. Are captions associated with pictures
11. Are images referenced in the article? (Not applicable to images included for decorative purposes.)
12. Is there an effective use of paragraph indents, blank line separators, and/or columns to ease the effort of reading?
13. Is the newsletter of an appropriate length? (If it is too short, it might not be much of a challenge to produce.)
14. If it is long enough for one, does the newsletter have a table of contents on the front page?
15. If it contains URLs, are the links interactive in an electronically distributed copy?
16. Is there a significant amount of member-contributed content?
17. Is the content newsworthy and pertinent to the club's membership?
18. Does it contain primarily astronomy-related content that is a pleasure to read?
19. Does it include meeting minutes (as appropriate), items of historical interest, and references to club or Regional resources?
20. Does it include astronomical resources such as star charts and monthly observing highlights?
21. Does it include the club's meeting schedule, public events, times and locations?
22. Does it include officer and/ or board member names and their contact information?
23. Does it greet, welcome, and/or encourage new members?
24. Is it free from spelling errors (demonstrating the effective use of spell check).
25. Is it free from grammatical errors (demonstrating editor's proofreading expertise)?