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Family Affairs Newsletter Poll Results 2007-08-26

Jean Vermette

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I promised someone I would do this poll and act accordingly.

The unofficial policy of The FAN is that items that are sent for posting get posted in the next regularly-scheduled issue. If someone misses the deadline by a day or two, I have not been sending it out as a special notice unless I had previously promised to post it and had somehow forgotten to put it in the appropriate issue. The only exception to that general policy is during election years. At that time I will forward special "election" notices (such as notices of quickly planned rallies) to the readership if putting that notice in the next regularly-scheduled issue will mean folks don't find out about it until it is too late.

Many times folks will send me notices for posting that are quite long and/or fancy. In those cases I will first edit them down to what I consider to be the essential information and contact info if folks want to pursue it further. At other times folks might send me info about a special event after the deadline and want me to forward it to the mailing list (e.g. a notice I got two days after the last issue went out telling me that The Indigo Girls were going to be in Freeport 2 days later).

The feeling has been expressed to me that when I edit postings (or refuse to forward notices outside the regularly-scheduled issues) that it makes those particular items "less interesting", less likely to grab the readers' attention, less likely to be noticed, and thus makes it less likely that folks will attend the event.

In some respects, those people certainly have a point. Since I'm the only newsletter in the area, it's not like they have other media venues they can go to to get the word out. On the other hand, The FAN has a deadline for a reason ... because I don't always have the time to "jump to" and forward bunches of notices all month long. As the sign in the old Pioneer Restaurant in Farmington once said: "If you're in that much of a hurry, you should have gotten here sooner."

Anyway, it has been suggested to me that (if I have time to do it) I should be willing to forward event notices ... in all their fancy, exciting, and interesting glory ... to the readership as they arrive in my mailbox so that folks might take more notice, be more interested, and be more likely to attend. If I did so, I would have a standard line in the "subject" box of the email header so that folks could have an idea what the email is about and decide whether they even want to open it or not (just as I do now with the special "election" emails); and I would still have the basic info in the appropriate FAN issues.

So the question for this poll is:

In addition to the notices that appear in The FAN, do you want me to forward to you the notices about events just as they are sent to me from the various GLBT organizations?

You have until September 9th to reply to this poll.

Yours,
Jean Vermette
megress@gwi.net

The greatest art is to lead an ordinary life
In an extraordinary manner.
— Buddhist Proverb —

Jean Vermette

From: "Jean Vermette" <megress@zwi.net>
To: "GEORGE BRISSETTE" <gbrissette@hughes.net>
Sent: Saturday, September 01, 2007 1:02 PM
Subject: results of FAN poll about forwarding event notices

I vote for your condensing as you have been doing thus far. Though the sender may find their presentation unique and "catchy" the readership may not agree. I know you are a busy person time is valuable for all of us. I prefer the facts and let the person interested do further inquiry and research if they find themselves inquisitive.

I would say no. PR should be the first step in planning any successful event. So if they really wanted to get the word out, then they "should have gotten it out sooner." And I think that editing down things actually increases the likelihood of people reading notices and then attending or contacting for more info. When I see a big block of text in my inbox, I usually delete it.

I think it would be wonderful to know of all Gay events that you know about. It is good to be aware of what is going on even if one cannot always attend.

I am happy with your posting in the FAN and would rather not receive a myriad e-mails about each individual event.

I appreciate receiving the FAN as it is currently constituted and really do not want to also be receiving additional "random" notices. I think folks taking advantage of the FAN should work harder at meeting the stated deadlines.

My response to the "Billboard" matter is that

1. I don't have time to read all of what is posted in my email from all who send me stuff now so keeping it simple grabs me better than a full description. (maybe a link sent by the original poster is a better idea than you having the whole thing in the FAN which is plenty long enough)

2. Those who want stuff included need to be timely in their postings to you!! Deadlines should be deadlines!

Yes or cut and past them directly into the fan...organizations spend a great deal of time creating flyers that are intended, from a marketing stand point, to attract attention. The FAN may be greatly enhanced by the visual appeal of these announcements. In any event it may also begin to address the idea that the community is not adequately informed of GLBT events even though they are, in fact, published in The FAN. Published...yes... and now they need to be noticed read and comprehended.

No. You are providing this service out of the goodness of your heart to benefit the GLBT community. It sounds like some aren't appreciating the time and effort that you put into this project. If they can't make the deadlines, that should be their problem, not yours. Keep up the good work. Thanks for what you do.

Yes

You have such patience. No is my answer. There is contact info that allows those interested in an event to get more information. The fan is short, sweet, and to the point thanks to its editor.

OMG! No!

I feel that the way you have been posting is adequate.... I appreciate all of the work you put into the newsletter and it seems an imposition to ask you to do more. Additionally, if folks saw a constant delivery of messages from FAN, it might diminish the importance of your main mission in producing/distributing the newsletter.

I would appreciate knowing about any GLBT related events that are happening, however, I empathize with you and with the amount of time it takes to compile, edit, and distribute all of the information that you routinely receive. In the events case, would it be most efficient to just forward the who, what, when, where data on the event and nothing more? Perhaps put it out there that people/orgs have to have this information in a standard format in no less than # words, for example. This would help you in turning the event notices out as you receive them with minimal editing needed.

NO. The Fan is Fine. Thank you

No

Jean, It is interesting when those "folks" don't have many in attendance for their function, it is YOUR fault.....I'm sorry, if they have such a wonderful function, then with all of their planning, then YOU being the ONLY source of media coverage, then YOU should be a priority in getting the NEWS to YOU!!? I would suggest don't enable those that will blame others for their own shortcomings. I think that you are doing a very good job and you have a life to....I respect and admire the fact that you do set boundaries of what you can do and can't do. There is a word in our vocabulary that can apply to this situation....NO. They know the deadlines and it is there responsibility to meet those deadlines....

As far as the length and language, it isn't your fault that they can't be concise and to the point in their postings. Again, you have only so much space and time. It isn't your fault if they need to have such flourish, maybe those folks need their own website to post their flourishing ads and then condense it down for your FAN letter. Again, it isn't your fault if they can't be professional and organized.

Just my two cents, don't let these folks drive you crazy. You produce a very informative newsletter and people should respect you for it not trying to changed you to what THEY think that it should be. Keep up the good work in keeping with YOUR boundaries, you have my support, for whatever it's worth.

No.

You do enough; you should not be everyone's solution for the random mailings; one email a month is plenty for me – and I much prefer a synopsis with a contact email or site perhaps mentioned where I can go for further info if I wish.

I thing it would be up to you as to how much work it takes to add all the special stuff or not I believe you should not send a two day notice out as most people know long in advance where there want to be in two day . If it is a special event or a concert or pow wow in my case..

NO!!!!!! I DO NOT WANT ALL THAT CRAP!!! If I wanted all that stuff, I'd be on those multiple mailing lists! I like the edited down version that you provide.

Event promoters ALWAYS think their event is the single most important, exciting thing on the calendar this year. They also ALWAYS miss deadlines. Too bad for them. Be professional, plan ahead, get your shit together or deal with the consequences. Lack of planning on their part (meeting newsletter deadlines) does not mean an emergency (re-working my schedule to take in an event on short notice) on my part.

Let's see . . . how about you check them over carefully, making sure the grammar and syntax will be to *my* liking. Colorful words; but none too long or ambiguous. Try to brighten up the stuff I am not so interested in so I will read it anyway. But don't make it too long; I have that attention sp

Where was I? Oh, yeah. Don't send anything on Tuesday. Tuesday I smoke all the weed that's left over from the weekend lest it get stale. So putting a whole bunch of words strung out in one of those sentence things kills my buzz. And if you have already sent an event notice to Sally, don't bother sending it to me. I would be caught dead at the same place she is. No ma'am!

And please send a Mapquest map to all the events just in case I want to go.

I think that would be up to you and if you had the time ... I'm sure people plan these events within the 2 weeks when the fan newsletter comes out or when the deadline of the next issue is due ...like the indigo girls coming to a town they probably have known that for awhile now .. That takes time to plan ...and the person in charge of letting people know should have let you know in an appropriate time .. Its not like the newsletter comes out once a month .. I would say if you have the time and wishes to put the extra time in go for it ...but you do an excellent job now I think and people should let you know about things in an appropriate time if they want it in the newsletter or in any newsletter

no. I don't want more email and I appreciate the edited version.

NO NO NO The Fan is enough work for you. You do a great job. The next thing they will be asking for is home delivery or worse.

As a "supplier of free gay news" here in Maine, I fully understand your predicament. I would follow your path and not change because of a few whiners who are going to find themselves "wronged" because you didn't use their descriptions verbatim. Make it clear that you do this for free AND that you publish twice a month AND that long winded descriptions may be subject to editing due to space consideration. You can always return the long pieces back to the sender and ask them to edited it down or you wont be able to publish it. Good luck Jean. You are doing a great service and letting a few run you ragged is not fair.

Yes you are our only resource thanks

No. Jean should have time to have a life in addition to providing a service to the community. Additional posts would create additional amount of traffic into our mailboxes. There might arise an emergency some day which might be an exception, but nothing from any political candidate would be an emergency.

I think that is a wonderful idea. The more information the better.

But, since you are doing this alone, my only concern is YOU. Would this be taxing too much of your time? Would that added responsibility take away from the wonderful newsletter you are already producing?

Yes

I think it's probably a good idea Jean - though you will probably still have to do some filtering/editing in order to stay within the parameters of FAN.

I think they should get their events in by the deadline if they want it published. That's the case with any publication. If they miss the deadline, it's too late. If you start forwarding every event that is mailed to you, you may be in for a lot more extra work. I say, "if it's not broke, don't fix it". Don't set yourself up for a whole lot of extra work,

I do not think you should feel under obligation to do an organization's promotion, nor do I really want to read extended, elaborate copy or receive constant email notices because someone thinks it is important. I would prefer being the judge of its importance to me just from reading a simple listing in your excellent newsletter.

Who are the Indigo Girls? (for example) Sorry, but it means nothing to me and I question whether anyone wants to be in the position of judging what is so important to the readership that it requires a special mailing.

My feeling is if they miss the deadline to announce something, they missed it. You should not have to take more of your time to do something for someone who can't meet a deadline. There has been a few times I missed your deadline and I did not have any trouble with it. I missed it and therefore, it didn't get in.

No.

Jean I think it is wonderful that you are doing what you are doing already and to ask you to do more is just plain tacky in my opinion. I say keep it the way it is. If something comes out after your deadline that people want circulated, they can call, write, post it on the gay net, use the newspapers, put up posters etc.. again, thanks for what you do

Hi Jean, sure it sounds good to me

Seems to me that you've very generously committed time to do a very useful community newsletter that allows a compendium of events. As I understand it you did not sign on to monitor a listserve which is effectively what is being sought. There are listserve out there that provide forwarding...perhaps not to all the same folks. I don't know the numbers of times this occurs, but I already get so many notices, many from GLBT organizations, that I simply don't have time to deal with them. All of which is to say, I like the Pioneer Restaurant choice (unless it's a real emergency of a political nature which allowed no advance notice...which I think you've forwarded in the past anyway).

No problem, no.

... yes. Should someone send in a day-late or two posting for the next newsletter, and it is of importance due to date constraints, perhaps those could be fired off via special email. I would welcome them nevertheless.

The current format is just fine by me.

I think if you have time to do that extra work, and someone out there wants the notices sent differently, then by all means do so. However, I think you have enough on your plate as it is, and I don't know that I would want the extra mail in my mailbox. So no, I don't think it's necessary for you to send notices outside of the twice-monthly newsletter. You work hard enough.

no, I think your work is more than adequate.

yes that would be great since you're right some things don't get in time and would be good to hear about them

No, don't send out the elaborate notices; but I suspect it is a lot of extra work for you to edit those down.

My answer is NO, People who read the FAN know you have a deadline. If you start forwarding things that comes in after the

deadline you'll be doing it all month long. You work hard at this and I want to thank you. Don't exrend yourself too far or people will take advantage and want more and more and more and feel totally justified in doing so.

No thank you!

I feel that you have enough to do and run the FAN too, if someone want's more info they can always contact the person or event. I personally look over the FAN and read what interests me, I do not read the whole thing, I scroll down and read the headers, if something catches my eye, I read it. Like you and most others we have a lot of other things we have to do, rummaging through e-mail is not one on my list, I get enough Spam mail for that. You will never be able to please everyone so please take care of you. my vote is No keep it as you do now.

no, they'd just junk up the screen. People need to take the time to read through the listings as you post them now..

I believe you have made the rules and there shouldn't be any preferential treatment. If you want to make an exception for an event that hadn't been finalized by the closing date for getting it on the Fan I think that would be fine. But to have an organized society there are rules that need to be followed or else you only have chaos.

In response to your latest poll, my two cents worth is "No."

Your newsletter, twice a month is already lengthy. It contains the essentials—anyone whose interest may be piqued is free to contact the submitters for additional information (aka the fancy or "more interesting" versions), which allows for those interested to expose themselves to additional persuasion and have the additional clutter in their inbox but leaves those who do not wish additional emails regarding subjects for which they may have no interest to be left free of them.

Social events or gatherings that are planned and executed at the drop of a hat (meaning no one could possibly submit the information to you fifteen days prior) tend to be poorly executed in my experience. It is presumptuous of the posters to blame their poor attendance on your not providing a venue for persuasive details or forwarding "bunches" of notices throughout the month at their leisure. While a very few might be able to change their plans for impromptu events, most of us make and keep commitments far in advance and our lives are such that it would be extremely rare for a last minute notice, no matter how seductively presented, to cause us to just drop everything and rearrange our schedules. Additionally, a good many of us, particularly those in rural areas, still must get by without broadband; as one of those, I know I would not appreciate additional bandwidth slowing my downloads in order for PLOP (for example, or or any other highly specialized organization in which I have no interest) to send me their latest creative effort to drum up interest in their events or membership. As you offer such things now, they are fine—they cause undetectable download burdens and as I peruse the FAN and come across organizations I'm not interested in, it's a simple matter to divert the eyes to the next entry. That will not be the case if intermittent emailings are done, since there will always be the temptation to add in an additional note (that forgot in the last regular FAN mailing) so they have to be downloaded and checked.

No., the purpose of this list is to concicely state the events for the region. Sending the event notices would likely result in my ceasing to read them all.

Your dedication to the GLBT community is incredible to say the least and very fortunate for all the rest of us. If I am understanding your polling issue correctly, my thoughts follow (my apologies if I am understanding incorrectly!):

(1) I am of the belief that deadlines are deadlines and serve a very important purpose. I, personally, do not believe you should be expected to serve the community whenever a "call" makes that demand.

(2) Hypothetically:

(A) A demand for more of your time in addition to the time you already spend (and my assumption is that it is quite a bit) could prove to be beyond what is possible—which could lead to "burn-out" and an eventual compromise of the publications you already manage.

(B) Deadlines would lose their value and could result in casual or no observance or respect for those deadlines (more work for you).

(3) It is understandable that some late notices/information is essential and would require your immediate attention and possible forwarding. Unless other people would dedicate themselves to this issue as you have dedicated yourself to the newsletters, info, etc., I believe the importance of the notice and whether the time is available for you to forward such notices, should be determined by you.

(4) Regarding your editing of notices, I think this is essential. But, I also understand everyone has their opinion of what should and should not be edited.....it's a tough spot. Again, unless someone else were to dedicate their time to this issue, I believe editing should be at your option, as you deem adequate.

Yes Jean, I think that would create an ongoing email event newsletter. Thank you for all you do.

Here's my \$.05... Guess I'm opinionated this morning.

1. Whoever asked you to take on more work should be slapped.
2. You are the editor; we are just lucky to have this newsletter around. You get to set policies that don't force you to "work" every day. I don't think you need to "act accordingly" to any poll.
3. People's 4-page descriptions of their events will be annoying. Edit away!
4. It might be time to start selling ads to pay for your time. I.e. Free basic info per usual, with paid ads for those who want special placement or editing.

Jean.....I say make it "easy" on yourself....you're doing a great service.....no need to be pressured into doing much more work than is already necessary....it's not like everyone was paying "big bucks" for your generosity.....

my vote is to be firm about your boundaries - unless there are seriously extenuating circumstances, or, as you said, it's an election year, if folks can't get the notice in on time, that's their problem, not yours. unless you feel like it, i don't think you should have to accommodate people who don't accommodate you.

This wouldn't bother me at all. Do what is best for you, of course. But I don't worry about too much mail in my inbox..that's what the *delete* key is for.

No thank you Jean. You have enough work to do. The fan is great as is.

Personally, I would not want all the extra mail hitting my inbox. As you said, there are deadlines for a reason and people just need to get their act together. If publicizing their event is important to them, then they need to be on the ball.

Unfortunately, I think that if you do start sending out these notices, then most people will tend to 'desensitize' to them over time and delete them without reading them, which then defeats the purpose of sending them in the first place.

Of course, important, time sensitive information, such as your election news/rally information, would be the kind of stuff that would be exempt from the deadline rule as they currently are. Vitally important information should be given out as needed.

My response is NO, do not forward anything except the newsletter....If people think that their event is important.... they will make the time to send it to you in a timely manner.

I think that if that is something you have time for or want to do then that is fine with me! I do totally agree with the sign In Farmington!

I think you are providing a good service to our community and should keep to your deadlines. I think it is too much to expect one person to be constantly forwarding things and it is your newsletter. Gee maybe someone else in the community could take on the role of "constant forwarder". You should edit as you have time and space. Some people are rather nervy.

Keep doing it just the way you are....Your doing a great job getting us the news and info that we need to know. All your work in volunteer right?

Jean, you need a personal life of your own. I would say that IF you felt like passing these notices along, then do so. Otherwise, stick to the guidelines already in place for the FAN. You perform a great service as it is, without having to take on extra work-load.

No because that may encourage folks to "forget" to get something in on time and the special email would focus more than if it had been included. The "forgetting" may become purposeful. I look forward to the FAN, read it faithfully but do not want any additional mail. People should get the notices in on time.