

# Submission Guidelines for *Focal Points* & Member Mail

## VPS Director of Communications

### Email Submission:

Please submit all inputs for *Focal Points* and requests for transmission of a VPS Member Mail to [editor@vps-va.org](mailto:editor@vps-va.org)

### Newsletter Submissions:

#### Timing:

- I try to publish the newsletter about 1 week before the first meeting of each month... i.e., the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday. I prefer to receive inputs with as much lead time as possible, but there is an **input cutoff date 10 days prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday**. The only exceptions are (a) the competition results (for months where the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month) and (b) late-breaking updates.
- I send the newsletters with recipients' email addresses in bcc so that their privacy is preserved.

Informative Content: VPS Board and Committee Chairs need to provide the following inputs each month to ensure that *Focal Points* is an informative, valuable newsletter:

- President: inspirational or informational message... no specific topic... writer's choice.
- Competitions:
  - If it is a themed competition, then give a statement that uniquely and completely defines the theme so that there is no confusion about what meets the theme criteria... should be the same definition that has been provided to the judge.
  - Competition Results... Class & category, winner name, award given, title of image. ( NOTE: Please contact me for a MS Word template in which to type the competition information. I need to fit it all in a standard 3.787" wide column and the reformatting can be a bear!)
- Judges: which month... judge's name and bio notes (if available)... his/her photo specialties or preferences... his/her statement of judging expectations, objectives, and criteria... URL of judge's web site
- Speaker: when... speaker name and bio notes (if available)... topic and any descriptive material on the presentation... his/her photo specialties or preferences... URL of speaker's web site

- Field Trip: when, where, subject matter, special opportunities, special equipment recommended, meeting/coordination/carpooling information, point-of-contact (phone and email), and other information that will “sell” the trip... URL of any related web sites
- Forums: when... topic(s), point-of-contact, etc.

Value-Added Content: Individual VPS members are encouraged to contribute their own work to *Focal Points*, including the following nice-to-haves & value-added items:

- Quality images for the monthly page 2-3 Member Gallery... see guidelines below.
- Reports on new shooting venues and your experiences while shooting there (if applicable)... hint, hint... images, too
- Your experience on recent field trips... hint, hint... images.
- Your experience with new equipment, software, printers, papers, web sites, etc.
- Your experience with new shooting or image-processing techniques... tips, hints, problem solutions, etc.
- Information you stumble upon regarding upcoming exhibits, workshops, meetings, etc. While I get a lot of this stuff directly from the various sources, you may just have one that I haven't seen, so send it along and let me sort out the duplicates.

Submission Guidelines:

- Documents
  - Please send inputs in the form of a **MS Word** file (.doc), preferably **Office 2003** version.
  - Alternatively, an .RTF or .TXT file will do nicely, too.
  - If you compose in MS Works, WordPerfect, or another word processor, please save the file as a DOC, RTF, or TXT.
  - Whatever word processor you use, PLEASE don't get clever with text boxes, embedded images, lists, or other special formatting... all your hard work only makes extra work for me as I have to undo it all before I paste your stuff down in the MS Publisher template for the newsletter.
  - I prefer to receive files in **11-point Arial** font... anything else will be converted before it is pasted down in the newsletter, which is extra work.
  - Single-space only... hit <Enter> an extra time to make an extra space between paragraphs... PLEASE do not build in space-and-a-

half or double spacing as it has a tendency to “hang around” in the Publisher document and messes things up when I least expect it.

- Use **bold** for emphasis (sparingly!) and/or *italics* for highlighting names of organizations, image titles, etc. ... no crazy underlining or “weird” fonts.
- Images
  - Send images as JPG files... **separate from and not pasted into your text**... if you want an image in a specific location in the text, put a placeholder at the appropriate place in the text, e.g., <crocodile\_eating\_tourist.jpg>
  - Member Gallery... 1200x800 for stand-alone images (0.5 - 2.0 Mb) for, e.g., the member gallery page or an image that you recently sold or won a prize in an exhibit... these are usually displayed in a larger size
  - Article Illustrations... 450x300 for illustrative images (100-250 Kb) that will be embedded with or connected to an article.
  - Err in favor of large images rather than small ones... reproduction quality counts!

## **VPS Member Mails:**

### Timing:

- Whenever I get enough content for a mailing... or... whenever there is time-value to the information to be distributed.
- Unless I am on the road, I check email frequently and will usually post information the day it is received.
- I send everything with members’ email addresses in bcc so that their privacy is preserved.

### Content:

- Club-related announcements that shouldn’t wait for the next newsletter.
- Information about exhibits, contests, workshops, classes, field trips, and the like... anything of value or potential interest to photographers.
  - I’m already on distribution for Joe Rossbach, Photoworks (Glen Echo), and Blue Ridge Workshops (Elliot Stern)... so you don’t need to forward their announcements.
  - Please give some thought to what you submit... make sure it has value to VPS members and, more importantly, that it is not “viral”.

- Submissions must have a web link, phone number, or email address for the point of contact for the event.
- Active links in the body of the email must have been verified as “safe” before you send it to me. I don’t want to be the one who forwards an evil link. I’ll reject anything that looks suspicious.
- Should not have attachments, especially large ones, unless it is absolutely necessary... PDFs preferred.
- The gist of the opportunity must be easily discerned from the body of the email. An email that says “see this” and contains a huge JPG attachment is not going to be passed on.

Format:

- No specific format... as-received is good... it’s about communication, not art.
- Prefer self-contained inputs that I can cut-and-paste into the email body.
- Prefer PDF attachments... other file types (a) might not be compatible with every member’s system and (b) can contain viral content.
- Please exercise some value added and don’t send me a link with a note to the effect, “You should look into this and bulk mail the membership.” If the value of the announcement isn’t apparent from the body of the email I receive, then it will probably be discarded.
- Will always contain “VPS MEMBER MAIL” in the subject line so you can set your spam filters to discern it from other bulk emails.