

ARMAdilla EDITOR

Revised December 2016

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the ARMAdilla is to inform members about current events in ARMA and the field of information and records management, plus provide a forum for open exchange of ideas about those topics while reflecting and encouraging a variety of journalistic styles.

Since the ARMAdilla serves as the main public relations tool of the Houston Chapter, it has a significant secondary audience of prospective members, records management students, ARMA leadership, and the business community in general. The ARMAdilla will be sensitive to the needs and opinions of the secondary audience but not exclude the needs and free idea exchange of the members.

I. OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Publish the chapter newsletter (The ARMAdilla) for distribution to the chapter membership at minimum six (6) times a year
- Provide the membership with information regarding records management and ARMA from local, state, and international sources

II. ORGANIZATION

A manager appointed by the Vice President of Communications will head the ARMAdilla Committee. The committee manager reports directly to the vice president.

III. GUIDELINES

- Meet with the former manager to obtain records and discuss duties and responsibilities
- Read and become familiar with ARMA International's publication titled "Chapter Newsletter Guidelines" (Appendix I)
- Appoint additional committee members as necessary
- Prepare the objectives, goals and budget for the year
- Manage the functions of the committee
- Submit status reports and recommendations to the vice president for reporting to the Board of Directors meetings as necessary
- Read and become familiar with the Constitution and Bylaws

IV. PROCEDURES

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

- Solicit, follow up and receive photographs with captions
- Solicit, follow up and receive copy
- Markup original copy to include headlines and bylines
- Develop page layout for articles and use current page layout or develop new page layout for photos

- Input copy and apply standards for capitalization and emphasis
- Spell check for typographical errors
- Confirm all contributors have approval from primary sources
- Make copy changes and produce page layouts
- Make or edit table of contents and index
- Proof each page, make revisions as needed
- Add photos as appropriate

Read input copy against original copy and mark changes:

- a. Check spelling of individual's names
- b. Check use of possessives and contractions
- c. Split lengthy paragraphs and reorganize text when articles do not read easily
- d. Affirm use of the newsletter's style standards (Appendix II)
- e. Organize articles in order of presentation

Read copy to improve clarity of articles by:

- a. Eliminating unnecessary words or phrases
- b. Editing from passive to active voice
- c. Supplying ideas for headlines and captions
- d. Eliminate redundancy from article to article
- e. Adding references to related articles when appropriate

V. AWARD SUBMISSION

Annually submit four (4) issues for the Chapter Newsletter of the Year Award. VP of Communications will communicate award submission deadline.

VI. FINANCIALS

All funds received from an ARMA Houston Chapter-sponsored event or project should be turned in to the ARMA Houston Chapter Treasurer for handling. Under no circumstances are ARMA Houston VPs, Committee Managers, or Committee Members authorized to split, disburse, or retain monies for expenses incurred out of the funds collected from an ARMA Houston Chapter-sponsored event or project. The ARMA Houston Chapter Treasurer, upon the presentation of a completed check request form and receipt, should pay all expenses from an ARMA Houston Chapter-sponsored event or project.

VII. APPENDICES

Appendix I: Chapter Newsletter Guidelines for Chapter Newsletter of the Year Award

Appendix II: ARMA Adilla Newsletter Style Standards

Appendix III: ARMA Adilla Contributor Guidelines for writing and editing

Appendix I

Chapter Newsletter Guidelines for Chapter Newsletter of the Year Award

PURPOSE

The chapter newsletter is the basic medium of communication embracing the transfer of information throughout and beyond Association membership. A chapter newsletter should be a publication that recipients look forward to receiving, that is satisfying to read, and leaves the readers with a sense that they are privy to an information source as a benefit of belonging to the Association. The chapter's newsletter should be seen as a vehicle to educate the membership.

MEASUREMENT CRITERIA

Five factors are considered in evaluating a chapter newsletter as a possible award recipient. These are:

1. Quality and Relevance of Material – 25 points

- The amount of material is meaningless if it is not material that people want to read. Care should be taken not to sacrifice quality in the effort to increase quantity. Newsletter material should be well-written, easily understood, and free of grammatical or typographical errors.
- Focus on educational content and, when possible, original articles.
- Records management articles should be useful to the readers and related to their jobs or helpful to their professional development.
- Organizational announcements and news stories should be timely.
- In all articles, news stories, or editorial commentary, a clear distinction should be made between fact and opinion.
- Examples of quality material are: original articles on records management subjects, synopses of speaker presentations, news stories on chapter or Association activities, regular columns dealing with professional topics, and feature stories on chapter members.

2. Originality of Information – 25 points

- Preference should always be given to original pieces!
- By-lines and chapter affiliations should be used to identify authors.
- Material reproduced from other publications may be useful at times but should generally be avoided. Summaries, critiques, or references to published articles may be sufficient to convey the ideas or to entice the readers to go to the original source. When reproducing previously published material, written permission from the publisher (copyright holder) is required. Credit should always be given to the original publisher along with a specific statement acknowledging that permission to reprint has been received. Failure to state that permission has been received to reprint any article, poem, cartoon, or other type of material disqualifies the newsletter from competition.

3. Quality of Presentation – 20 points

Quality should not be confused with “slickness.” Fancy packaging can only make a product appear better initially. While every attempt should be made to produce a newsletter that is visually appealing, the important thing is the substance of the information it contains. There are certain techniques that can be used to improve the readability of a newsletter and thereby enhance its value to the recipient, such as:

- Select a readable type style that is appropriate to the size of the page and the number of columns.
- Colored paper is generally distracting, difficult to read, and is frequently not accepted for recycling. Two-color printing, on the other hand, can be an effective attention grabber.
- The overall format and layout of the publication should be consistent from page to page and issue to issue.

- White space and graphics should be used to enhance the layout and make the material more interesting.
- Placement of certain pieces, such as tables of contents, calendars of events, and meeting announcements, should be consistent from issue to issue.
- Advertisements should be dispersed throughout the publication and not all placed on one or two pages.

4. Quantity of Material – 20 points

This is deemed a valid measurement because of the time, effort, and expense involved in acquiring, compiling, editing, printing, and distributing a newsletter.

If the only information conveyed in newsletters is to announce chapter meetings, a newsletter may not be necessary. Meeting announcements can be effectively (and more economically) transmitted on a one-page, self-mailing flyer.

- In addition to containing meeting and other types of announcements, newsletters **should reflect the professionalism of the association and your chapter. It should feature only** articles and news stories that are relevant to the profession of records and information management or related to chapter or Association activities.

5. Frequency of Publication – 10 points

Chapters must produce a minimum of four issues per year to be considered for an award. Newsletters received after June 1 will not be considered for the competition. Newsletters that are mailed to the task force members throughout the year will not be considered for the competition.

LEGAL NOTICES AND PUBLISHER IDENTIFICATION

Each newsletter is to contain the following information:

- Name of the chapter
- Name and address of publisher
- Name, address and phone number of the editor

CHAPTER PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Chapters wishing to participate in the Newsletter of the Year competition **MUST** send to ARMA headquarters, to arrive by no later than June 1, a completed submission form along with one electronic copy or eight hard copies of each of the chapter’s four best newsletter issues. These issues must have been published between July 1 of the preceding year and May 31 of the current year.

Appendix II

ARMAdilla Newsletter Style Guidelines

I. PURPOSE

These style guidelines provide a reference for contributors to and editors of the ARMA Houston Chapter Newsletter so a consistent look and feel is maintained.

II. VISUAL IDENTITY

The official newsletter of the Houston Chapter of ARMA International is called “ARMAdilla”. The newsletter name is a registered trademark.

The diamond-shaped logo is used in the title banner on the front cover of the newsletter.

The volume, number and date period of the publication also appears at the top left of the title banner (see example below):

VOLUME 38, NUMBER 2—SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2016

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III. DICTIONARY AND THESAURUS

Use the free edition of Merriam Webster’s online dictionary as the reference when unsure how to spell a word which does not appear in the preferred word list in this style guide.

Use the free edition of the Thesaurus when looking for an alternative word to avoid excessive repetition of the same word. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

IV. STYLEBOOK REFERENCE

Consult The Associated Press Stylebook when unsure about capitalization, abbreviation, spelling, numerals and usage, as well as punctuation, hyphenation, copyright guidelines and other topics of media law.

Words:

For example, “Do I spell it whitepaper, white paper, or white-paper?”

white paper Two words, lowercase, when used to refer to a special report – AP Styleguide.

Numbers:

For all numbers under 10, spell out the number. For all numbers 10 and over, use the numeral, for example, “Respect is one of our values. There are 12 values.”

Frequently asked questions are available online: www.apstylebook.com. Ask a member of the Communications Committee for assistance if you do not have access to a recent AP Stylebook.

V. VOICE AND TONE

The ARMAdilla is a newsletter for current and future members of the Houston ARMA Chapter. Follow these guidelines to ensure the content fits the personality of the Chapter which is friendly, accomplished, and generous, with a passion for education.

- **Use the active voice** rather than the passive voice, to keep prose lively and interesting

For example,

The conference committee has finalized the agenda. (active)

The agenda has been finalized by the Committee. (passive)

The keynote speaker gave an interesting talk. (active)

An interesting talk was given by the keynote speaker. (passive)

- **Be concise.** While details are required for some reports and articles on professional disciplines, be mindful of length. When in doubt, use shorter sentences and more paragraph breaks to help the reader.
- **Be conversational.** Write like you’re telling a story and not issuing a press release.
- **Think like your audience** (newcomers and seasoned professionals, practitioners and service providers) to whom you are speaking. Be mindful of each group’s different needs and experience and demonstrate you care about them all.
- **Use caution with humor** because misunderstandings can easily occur and does not foster an inclusive membership of the chapter.

VI. WORD CHOICE AND TERMINOLOGY

- Avoid the use of business, technical or any jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
- Explain or define specific terms the first time they are used in the article, to level.

- Write out acronyms the first time they are referenced and include the acronym in parenthesis, for example “The Alice L. Haltom Education Fund (ALHEF) silent auction raised \$550 at the Spring Conference. The deadline for applying for an ALHEF scholarship is April 30th 2016.”
- Never use a long word when a short word will do.

For example,

He provided a concise explication.
He provided a concise answer.

VII. ARMAdilla PREFERRED WORDS

*Preferred words are frequently-used words in the field of records and information management. Check usage in a recent edition of the ARMA International publication "**Glossary of Records and Information Management Terms**" or use the **online glossary** provided by the Society of America Archivists: <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms>.*

VIII. SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

All major search engines like Google and Bing collect information about every page on the web. Words, titles, links and other content in the ARMAdilla published on the ARMA Houston website influence how well the pages are ranked by the search engines.

Think about this aspect of your writing when selecting the title and sub-titles in an article. Word choice will impact the ranking of the newsletter in search results.

IX. IMAGE SELECTION, SIZING AND CAPTIONS

- Provide photographs to the editor in the highest resolution available.
- Obtain permission to use the photograph from everyone included.
- Represent the racial, gender, age and professional diversity of the membership of ARMA Houston.
- Crop photos for the desired subject or detail. The editor will have final decision on what is included and how it is captioned

X. CUSTOMARY ARTICLES

- From the President’s Desk
- Conference or Committee report
- Workshop report
- Luncheon Meeting report
- Community outreach and fundraising
- Spotlight or recognition feature

Appendix III

ARMAdilla Contributor Guidelines

I. INTRODUCTION

Your contributions to the award-winning ARMAdilla newsletter of the ARMA Houston Chapter are much appreciated. Production of the final newsletter is a considerable time commitment for the volunteer editor. To maintain the writing standards for the newsletter, these guidelines are provided to simplify the roles and responsibilities during the editing process.

II. AUDIENCE

Write for an audience of educated non-specialists as the ARMAdilla is published in the open section of the ARMA Houston website and available to anyone. The newsletter is an excellent tool to recruit new members and content must be accessible to those with an elementary business knowledge, not a specialized records and information background.

III. VALIDATION GUIDELINES

1. Original written contributions must be reviewed by the writer and the primary source of the writer before submission to the ARMAdilla editor. For articles about a member, a speaker/presenter, or an event, the primary resource should be given time to review the article and provide feedback and validation of the content. If there are too many people involved in the article, ask the key contributor or a member of the ARMA committee to provide initial review.
2. Make corrections based on the feedback prior to submitting the article to the ARMAdilla editor.
3. Notate on the article that it has been checked by the primary source or a similarly knowledgeable member.

IV. LENGTH GUIDELINES

1. The ARMAdilla is a periodical designed to provide members with longer articles on topical and technical subjects, as well as reviews, commentaries, and shorter pieces on members, events, and current chapter news. Articles of 750-1000 words are not uncommon. Shorter features of 200-300 words in less formal style, photo stories and other "spotlight" sections provide a good variety of content in the newsletter.
2. ARMAdilla bi-weekly is a regular e-blast to keep members posted of all current and upcoming events. Lead copy is short, approximately 250 words, usually with a link to more information.

V. PROOF-READING

1. By requesting review of your written contribution to the ARMAdilla, you are also receiving an initial proof-reading of the piece. This helps you obtain validation for its content and clarity prior to submitting it to the ARMAdilla editor.

2. It is sometimes inevitable that a primary source is not available to assist with this step in the content production. When this happens, the contributor should obtain feedback from another ARMA member or trusted colleague before submitting it to the editor.

Thank you for volunteering to contribute to the ARMAdilla and for following these guidelines. The ARMAdilla editor reserves the right to cut, copy or revise for clarity as needed to create a professional publication in the space available.