

# SOME TIPS ABOUT PUBLISHER FOR NEWSLETTERS

By Jennifer Somerville

I've had to teach myself how to use Publisher, but like most computer programs, it has lots of options and a good Help section, so never be afraid to use it.

**Getting started:** You can call up a pre-designed publication, or make your own. In that case you start with a blank page. If you go to **Arrange**, and click on **Layout Guides**, you can reset the default margins, if you wish. Remember, if you set margins that then look odd, you can revert to what was there before by going to **Edit**, and clicking on **Undo**.

Once you have your first page margins sorted, then go to **Insert**, click on **Page** and decide how many you want to insert. Remember that newsletters are always a total of even numbers, so it might be a 2-page, 4-page, 8 page, 12-page, etc, as it's best to have multiples of four, otherwise you have a loose leaf of two pages in the middle somewhere.

**Text boxes:** The tool bar on the left has most of the things you need to set up a page. Hover over the icons with your mouse and they will announce themselves.

So click on the **Text Box** icon, then draw a box on your empty page. It doesn't have to be the perfect size as you can always adjust it by pulling on the handles (shown as a vertical tool) halfway along each side. Be careful you don't have the moving tool engaged (it is a funny sort of cross). With that, you can move the whole box...and sometimes the simplest way is to nudge it, using the directional arrows at the lower right side of your keyboard.

**Inserting pix or text:** This is simple. Just go to **Insert**, click on **Text File**, find the one you want in your computer files, and click **Insert**. It will convert it to a Publisher file and may ask if you want to use Autoflow if it's too big for the box already drawn. If you have another box ready for the overflow, click **Yes**, but if you click **No**, you can create your own extra box off to the side of the page, click the main box, then the tool above that looks like links in a chain, then click the overflow box...and the extra copy flows in there, ready for you to edit the whole thing to fit in the main box.

Inserting pix does not need a picture box drawn first. Just click **Insert**, then **Picture File**, find it, click **Insert**, and it will appear anywhere on the page. You can click and drag or nudge it into place, and if it's too big, always make smaller by dragging diagonally. If you then need to crop the pic, use the cropping tool above. That allows you to take bits off the top, bottom or side, without altering the aspect of the picture. Once you're finished, just click off the pic and the cropping tools disappear.

**Lining things up:** Nudging often does the deed, so your headline text box matches a pic beside it, but you can click on **Arrange** and **Ruler Guides** to insert a non-printable vertical and/or horizontal guideline.

**Design:** This is absolutely up to the individual. You can use some of the designs already in Publisher, or if creating your own, just remember some basic guidelines:

Lead story on Page 1.

Second lead on Page 3.

Every page needs at least one picture, and it should not be a postage stamp size. The lead pic may be associated with a story, or just carry its own caption as a separate entity. Other pictures could be used, either head pix or smaller illustrations.

If you're having a picture page, for an A4 page, use no more than 6.

To make sure text boxes for headlines match the story text box width, or caption text box matches the pic width, click on whichever one you wish to match, then go to **Format**, and either **Text Box** or **Picture**, click on **Size** tab and note the width. Make sure the same size applies to the box you are creating by going through the same routine.

A quick way of changing font size, for headings, is to type some words, remembering that headings should always have an implied or actual verb, otherwise they are 'jam labels', then highlight them either by dragging the mouse, or if they're in their own text box, Control A...then use **Shift+Control+>** to make the font bigger, or **Shift+Control+<** to make it smaller. If you need something in between the major point sizes, then go up to the top tool bar, highlight the final font size showing and change it to whatever you want, to one decimal point.

**Headings:** These can simply be written in the same text box as the story.... but only if it does not have more than one column. Once you have the size that looks right (and learn to trust your eyes in this regard), then you need to separate it just a little from the story. Highlight the first par, go to **Format**, then **Paragraph**, and in the field for space before the paragraph, make it about 4pt. See what it looks like, and you may want to make it more or less. Of course, if you've drawn a separate text box for the heading, write it in there, nudge the two boxes close together, and then go to **Format**, and **Text Box**, click on the **Text Box** tab and in the top field concerning the vertical alignment of the text, by default it says Top. Use the pulldown menu to make it Middle. It centres the heading in its box vertically. To place the heading to the left, centre or right, horizontally, use the usual tools in the bar across the top. That bar also includes the tool for setting the number of columns in a text box.

**Borders and lines:** Once you have either drawn a line, using a tool on the left-hand side, or just made a text box, go up to the lines tool above, and click on the style you want to use. Most lines are set at  $\frac{3}{4}$  point but if you want a big dramatic box around a story and pic, for instance, you could make it 2pt or even a multi-line effect. Whether you rule around every page is a personal choice. I like a rule top and bottom, if I'm not using a boxed story in either position. Vertical lines are good on a page to separate stories, but there are plenty of options from which to choose. If you have plenty of little stories, called fillers, pages can look good with a panel of them down the outer side, either ruled off with a line, or all in a box, and then the larger stories and pix in the rest of the page.

There are endless possibilities for designs and fonts, but a basic protocol is that newsletters look best in **11 pt Times Roman**, (a serif type, meaning it has fiddly bits on each letter, like the font for these notes) with headings in a sans serif type (meaning it has NO fiddly bits). Once you've chosen your basic body text type, don't be tempted to bump up the text in a particular box because the story is too short. That looks quite amateurish. It's best to make the box smaller, or write a bit more to fill it out, or maybe find some clip art or a pic concerning the topic to insert.

It's always safest to have some text written and filed to insert. You CAN just draw boxes and start writing but if something happens and you lose that page, and you hadn't saved it as you went, you've then lost all your words, without any backup.

There are masses of possibilities in Publisher and if you poke about in the program you'll find all kinds of fascinating effects you can use in a newsletter.

Enjoy!