

Notes on the 2008 Membership Mailing and Thoughts for Next Year

Schedule: The President usually sends out the membership letter early in May. Betty and Betsy worked on the letter during April and had a good draft ready to go by mid April.

This year we scheduled the letter to go out Monday, May 5th. Working backward from that date, we set up a schedule for printing the letters and envelopes, having the President sign the letters, having board members and officers personalize the letters and stuffing the envelopes.

The group that has always stuffed the envelopes is part of the Thursday “Ladies Lunch” group. They are not flexible about the schedule and need to assemble the mailing on a Thursday. We accommodated this by shortening the time for the President and board members to sign letters. Next year, we should take the Thursday requirement into account and allow more time for signatures and personalizing. A week might be good.

Volunteers: A list of volunteers who usually work on stuffing the envelopes is attached.

Mailing List: We asked Board members to give us names that should be added to the mailing list. One board member reviewed the mailing list to check for omissions. It is unclear whether this is the most productive way to expand the list. Betsy and the library staff know that certain people are not on the list because they have declined to contribute in the past. It may be just as effective to have board members suggest new names after they have reviewed and personalized the letters, and then ask the staff to weed out past noncontributors. We should give this more thought before next year.

We also plan to do a targeted mailing later in the year to selected new library card holders. We will keep track of the responses from that group separately and evaluate the results. We can easily add contributors to the mailing list.

We discovered a software problem. Our data base does not recognize zip codes that begin with a zero. Betsy came up with a way to correct this and we hope we have weeded out all the problems. We should remember to check this before we print letters and envelopes or labels next year.

Mechanics of Mailing: We produced about 700 letters this year. We found a number of errors in letters after the President signed them, and had to have them re-done. It might make sense for someone to review all the letters before the President signs them. It is hard to spot errors when signing hundreds of letters.

Our printer is not capable of processing envelopes for the entire mailing list at once. We had to pull up each address and print each envelope individually. This was slow, but workable. The printer also wrinkled the envelopes and printed some out crooked. We should consider printing out labels instead. That would increase the work of the envelope

stuffers but decrease the work at the printing stage. We may want to experiment and see what labels would look like before we decide.

Marilyn Riotto, expert envelope stuffer, suggests that we could speed up the process if we have someone fold the contribution envelopes before we assemble the mailing. She suggests that the kids who work at the desk could do it during their shifts.

We did not include any extra items, like bookmarks or brochures, in the mailing this year. We did not want to incur extra postage. We should think about whether we want to make something inexpensive like a bookmark or a schedule of programs to include in the mailing next year.

Although we had a smaller group than usual, it took us just one morning (10-12) and about another hour in the afternoon to assemble the mailing. I checked the envelopes the next day and found a few that lacked stamps or had other problems. I separated the 12983 from the other zip codes while I was checking and this helped me find a last few zip code errors. I think this last check is a good idea.

Envelope Stuffing Team

Traditional members:

Marilyn Riotto 891-5550

Barb Koerner 891-4791

Lee Hayes 891-0426

Eleanor Munn 891-1635

Others Who Helped This Year:

Jeanne DeMattos

Gloria Drucker

Linda Beairsto

Pat Wiley