

APAS, AND WHY THEY WORK THAT WAY

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A year as OE of ANZAPA convinces me that there are a lot of folks around whose interpretation of what an apa is leads them to have awfully funny ideas about how an apa ought to be run. What follows constitutes some general purpose notes on the subject.

DEADLINES

When a group of people get together to save money on mailing their fanzines in a bunch, sometimes called a mailing, one of the first things they have to agree on is when the damned things will be mailed. It would be very frustrating to have your contribution mailed late because the mailer decided to send 'em out a day or two earlier than you expected. So the first thing to do is to name some days which will nominally be the deadlines - everything received by the OE/mailer by that day will be included in that mailing - stuff received later has to wait for the next agreed date.

So that's what a deadline is; it is, for example, the date on which everyone agrees to get their stuff to the OE to be included with the April-dated group of publications.

Then the OE mails the stuff to the members. Sometimes as soon as possible, sometimes not. The OE should mail quickly, but cannot do so before the day after the deadline. (Constitutions rarely specify a time of day, therefore one is bound to accept contributions up until the moment the next day starts. Then you work on the OO, etc....)

In the past OEs of ANZAPA have made a balls of this by declaring a deadline for receipt of contributions, well in advance of the constitutional 'deadline', to give time to prepare the mailing. What happened, and will always happen under this system, is that a few late contributions will be accepted, making the efforts of the other members to get their stuff in early a complete waste of time. If the OE then mails late, things get really tough. Why?

Because what makes life difficult for members, and makes the apa itself either a drag or a joy, is the amount of time you have to work on your contribution between mailings. If the OE mails late, and then sets an early date for receipt of the contribution, the interval between mailings which is useful is substantially reduced. If the deadline for receipt is ten days before the notional mailing date, and the mailing doesn't actually hit the PO until a week after the notional date, then the mailing interval has effectively been reduced by 17 out of a constitutional 61 days (say) by sitting dead in the OE's hands. Makes life tough.

MONEY

It costs money to run the apa. You pay for postage, and you pay for whatever wrapping charges there are. In some cases you pay for production of the OO (I don't charge for that).

Like everywhere else, there are people who try to freeload. The members probably feel that they can in general get along without freeloaders, so most constitutions call for freeloaders to be thrown out. They get thrown out when they become unfinancial. In ANZAPA, everyone's dues become payable at the same time. That makes life easy; everyone can be warned at the same time and in the same way that their money is due. When some ANZAPANS decided to freeload last year I threw them out. Ortlieb in particular was incensed; I should have warned them, he shouted in outrage. What he means, I suppose, is that I should have warned them again. Why only once? Why only the defaulters? Why do they get special treatment? Should we all then laugh at the suckers who paid on time, when they were asked both by the constitution and the OE?

No, I don't believe that some animals are more equal than others - so free-loaders have to go.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Apas exist for fanzine publishers, not fanzine readers. For this reason members are required to make contributions to mailings, as well as to pay dues, and these contributions have to be at a specified level and frequency. People who don't contribute are also regarded as free-loaders and get thrown out. Just what constitutes a contribution is sometimes hard to work out, and even the quantity is sometimes ambiguous. For example, ANZAPA requires 'a minimum of six quarto pages of self-written material every six months'. The usual gang of clotpolls from time to time reads this as defining the size of paper which must be used for contributions, rather than the amount of contribution one is intended to make.

All the time people make up excuses for not getting their contributions in in time, and it's very rare for an experienced OE to hear a new yarn. (Don't get off your bike, John Rowley, I believe you - or rather, I believe your mother...)

THE OE

All this means some organization, and every so often a new ninny is elected to look after the secretarial stuff. Those members who in their private lives are used to ordering the servants around can make life hell for an OE. Others are more considerate - and appreciated by an OE.

OVERALL

If one accepts a commonsense notion of what apas are meant to be doing, most apa practices turn out to have some logical basis. But, as is the case worldwide, every group always includes a few members who simply never grasp the blindingly obvious. Oh well.

Bangsund for DUFF.

AND SO MUCH FOR REGISTRATION.....

Them as publishes Australia-Post-recognized 'registered publications' will recently have received some lengthy documentation explaining how much more it will cost for less service from July 1981 onwards. That's if you are allowed to keep your registration.

For fans who publish quarterly, and with low circulations, the \$20 a year payment will make registration a dubious privilege. In my own case it is probably just okay. But it won't be possible for APPLESAUCE to continue to be registered, I am sure. I wonder how that will affect the non-Sydney component of the membership?

And finally, an apology for an anticipated delay in the despatch of this mailing; unfortunately the deadline coincides with a weekend and with me own, er, coming of age. I may not be in much shape for trotting to post offices until Tuesday.