The Keynote Writer's Guide
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The KeyNote is the quarterly newsletter of the Americas Chapter of the FISTS CW Club (The International Morse Preservation Society). Nearly all articles in *The KeyNote* are written by FISTS members and the Amateur Radio community in general.

Since you're reading this, you probably have an interest in writing. The following information is meant to assist you as you prepare your article for publication in *The KeyNote*.

What to Write About

As you consider writing an article for *The KeyNote*, keep in mind that FISTS is a CW club. Therefore, your article should pertain, at least remotely, to Morse code. You could write about an experience, a review of equipment, a how-to, a . . . well, use your imagination. If you're not sure if your idea would work for *The KeyNote*, contact the editor who will be happy to discuss it with you. You're probably onto something good.

Preparing Your Manuscript

1. Manuscripts are preferred in either Microsoft Word or plain text format. Word is able to read a few other formats, but if it cannot read your document, then we will not be able to use your article. Hopefully, you'll be able to resubmit it soon.

2. Do not try to format your document like a magazine page. That type of formatting will take place on this end. Simply format your text as you might format a high school report. It may be single- or double-spaced.

3. Please do not embed pictures within your manuscript. Attach them to your email as separate image files.

4. Be sure to include captions for all your pictures. Put the captions at the end of the article and identify which picture goes with which caption.

5. Proper reference must be given to any material used from other sources. Even if you are the author, if your article was previously published, including on the Internet, you must receive written permission (email is sufficient) from the webmaster or publisher for it to be used in *The KeyNote*. A copy of the permission must be forwarded to the editor.

6. Include your name, call sign, and FISTS membership number in your manuscript.

7. Before you hit the sent button, it's always a good idea to read your document out loud to yourself. Better yet, read it to another person or have that person read it to you. You may be surprised at how awkward something sounds and wish to rephrase it.

Writing Tips

Through the years, I have had many of my professional and non-professional articles published. Without exception, editors have made changes to every article. Also, without exception, the published article was better than what I had submitted.

One of the goals of the editor of *The KeyNote* is to make your published article better than the one you submitted with as few changes as possible. But keep in mind that editorial changes are inevitable, including changes to punctuation, grammar, and spelling. What follows are a few tips that will make your submission less likely to be heavily edited. Some of the tips may be debatable, but the goal is for consistency.

1. *Alot* is not a word. It should be *a lot*.

2. Put just **one space** after punctuation at the end of a sentence. Never mind that your high school typing teacher 40 years ago told you to put two spaces. The advent of desktop publishing has brought about a few changes to the old rules.

3. Run a spell check with your word processor, but don't rely 100% on it, particularly with some of our ham radio jargon.

4. The abbreviation for gigahertz is GHz; megahertz is MHz; kilohertz is kHz (notice the lowercase letter *k*); and hertz is Hz.

5. The FCC assigned you a *call sign* (two words) **not** a callsign.

6. Because of common usage, we have chosen to use the word *website* as opposed to *Web site*. Also, we have chosen to go with *email* without the hyphen.

7. There are two voices in English grammar: active voice and passive voice. You may search the Internet and other sources for the difference. However, following are a couple of examples.

   Passive voice: "Mike's antenna was repaired by John."
   Active voice: "John repaired Mike's antenna."

   Passive voice: "We are going to be having a picnic on Friday."
   Active voice: "We will have a picnic on Friday."

   You get the idea. As much as possible, write in the active voice. Sentences in the active voice are less wordy, more energetic, and more captivating to the reader. The more unnecessary words you can cut from your article, the better it will be. There is definitely a place for the passive voice, but you should minimize its usage.

8. *Capitalization*

   - *Amateur Radio* – Used together, the words *Amateur Radio* generally are capitalized and the words *ham radio* are not. The FCC capitalizes Amateur Radio in their documents since it is the name of a radio service.

- *Morse code* – There is inconsistency in publications regarding the capitalization of *Morse code*. Some capitalize the word *code* while others do not. Although a good argument can be made for either way, for consistency in *The KeyNote* use the lowercase for the word *code*; hence, it is *Morse code*.

- *Internet* – The word *Internet* is capitalized.

9. *Job Titles* – Generally, job titles are capitalized only when they precede and are combined with the name of the person holding the title. Examples:

    CORRECT: Today Awards Chairman Carlos Smith broke his arm in a fall.
    NOT: Today awards chairman Carlos Smith broke his arm in a fall.

    CORRECT: Today Carlos Smith, awards chairman, broke his arm in a fall.
    NOT: Today Carlos Smith, Awards Chairman, broke his arm in a fall.

    CORRECT: Carlos is president of this organization.
    NOT: Carlos is President of this organization.

10. For those who may be interested in knowing, the guide I use for editing is the ninth edition of *The Gregg Reference Manual*.

Images

1. One or two pictures can help an article come alive in the mind of the reader. However, they must be good quality images. Therefore, all image files need to be high resolution JPGs or 300 dpi TIF files at least 5" wide.

2. Images captured from websites or other media (newspapers, magazines, club newsletters, etc.) cannot be used unless you have received written permission from the webmaster or publisher. A copy of the permission must be included with your article.

3. If your images are original with you and have not been published as indicated above, please include a statement to that effect.

Submitting Your Manuscript

1. *The KeyNote* is published in March, June, September, and December. The **deadline** for articles to be submitted is the 15th of the month prior to the publication month. For example, articles for the March issue must be in the editor's hands by February 15. There is no guarantee, however, that your article will be in the next issue. It depends on the space available for that issue.

2. Please email your manuscript email to **keynote@fistsna.org**.