



An All American Club Yearbook

A Guide for Preparation

Prepared by John Washburn
AFMS Education - All American Committee Chair

Committee includes:

Dot Beachler, CFMS
Pat Pitkin, EFMS
J. C. Moore, MWF
Jim & Libby Spencer, NWF
Wayne Mouser, RMFMS
Mary Muller, SCFMS
Vacancy, SEFMS

ALL AMERICAN CLUB “Yearbook” AWARD

From John R. Washburn
Chairman, Education – All American Committee

It’s time again to polish up your club’s annual history in a yearbook and “strut your stuff!” Let’s get those ALL AMERICAN CLUB “Yearbooks” ready for entry in this year’s contest. We know you are doing a great job of promoting the hobby, so why not show off all you have done? Scrap-booking continues to be the rage, and it’s a good way to document your club’s activities and history. Two clubs that entered “scrap-book type” yearbooks last year won gold! An ALL AMERICAN yearbook on your membership table at your show is a proven device for spurring on new memberships. So, its usefulness is more than just a history, it’s a membership lure!

Entry forms for 2009 are included in the November 2009 issue of the *AFMS Newsletter*, and they are also available on the AFMS Web site (www.amfed.org) for clubs to download. Be sure that you have the proper set of requirements, as some changes have been made based on comments from the clubs and judges. The contest concentrates on six (6) areas of interest. These areas were chosen to give the judges a complete picture of what your club is doing, both internally and externally, to promote the hobby.

It is essential that each section have the **proper documentation** to show what was done by the club and/or members to warrant the points allotted. Examples of letters, flyers, newspaper articles, as well as club bulletin articles and pictures are some items that make for excellent documentation. Specific activities are listed in the various sections, and those activities should be reported in the appropriate section of the yearbook. The documents need not be originals, as copies will suffice.

Remember, the judges don’t necessarily know your club, so good, clear organization and documentation for each claim must be provided.

The yearbook is to cover the calendar year 2009. Entries are to be submitted to your **regional ALL AMERICAN Merit Awards Chair**. See your own regional federation newsletter for the deadline date set by your region.

All American Club “Yearbook” Entries – For 2000

Wait a minute – we just finished submitting our entries for 2009! We have to start working on one for 2009? Already?

I know that some of you are just breathing sighs of relief. You’ve finished a challenging task and, rightfully, want to rest on your laurels. But, it really is time to think about your 2009 entry. If you didn’t put together an entry for 2008, consider this. What’s the big deal? Why put together your club yearbook and enter it in the competition for an All American Club Award? There are several important reasons.

- ❖ First, the record you put together of the activities your club participated in for the year serves as an excellent club history. Your members can archive this history as a lasting memory and a guideline for the next generation of leaders.
- ❖ Secondly, your entry can take a prominent place on the Membership Table at your show – highlighting the activities of the past year for prospective members. Pictures of your members having a good time together speak volumes in an entertaining way.
- ❖ It can play a role in pulling your membership together. The “rah-rahs” and accolades over a job well done can work wonders in refurbishing the self-pride in your organization.

I’d like to help you go through the process of putting an entry together, but we have to start now, Download an Application Form from the Web site (www.amfed.org) and go to the end of the form, That’s right, the end of the form – **Section 6**. This is the section that deals with **Government Agencies and Legislative Relations**, and it is a section that some clubs have difficulty accomplishing. We’re going to start here because it will take some time to write letters to government leaders and get a response back.

Here are some things to do.

1. You can ask for volunteers in your club to write to legislators in opposition to the passage of Senate Bill S320 – the Paleontological Preservation Act that restricts the casual collecting of paleontological materials such as invertebrate fossils, plant fossils, and isolated and disarticulated vertebrate remains from Federal lands. Better yet, approach a few people and ask them directly. It’s easy to not volunteer, harder to say “no.”
2. Do your research first. Find the names of your senators and legislators – with the correct addresses. Check: <http://www.senate.gov/> for senators; check: <http://www.house.gov/house/MemberWWW.shtml> for legislators.
3. Talk to your club leadership about joining the American Lands Access Association – the lobbying arm of the AFMS to support land access/collecting lobbying. Check the following for more information: <http://www.amfed.org/ALAA.htm> and <http://www.amlands.org/>

Get into the right mind set and hold on. Next, we’ll tackle getting organized to distribute the work load and get members involved. Start making copies of you club bulletins to use for documentation. Put them in a safe place. Even if you decide not to enter the competition, but you put together a book, following our guidelines, you will have an excellent product. At my club’s show the “yearbook” draws members like flies to honey!

An All American Club Yearbook - Part II

Here we go. You've finished laying down the groundwork for Section 6 of the Application, "Government Agency and Legislative Relations." Now we're ready to tackle **Section 5, "Community Relations."** You can be a great club by concentrating on serving your membership and providing the best you can for them. To be an "All American" club, you need to take a step beyond. Let your community know of your existence and your willingness to support the community. How can you do that?

- Poll your membership to find out which members would be willing to give a talk or demonstration to school groups. Some clubs have a traveling display that can be taken to schools as a backdrop for a presentation. A box could be put together with samples of rocks and minerals of your area. Encourage retirees to participate. In the case of a large club, maybe there are those doing this already - just not "blowing their own horn" about it.
- Plan a talk about your club that can be given to other community groups that includes your purpose, your goals, and how you can benefit the community. Involve those who would be willing to give such a presentation in the planning.
- Plan and put together a display that could be mounted at public sites: at a local library; in a community bank; in a university or college display case; etc. Be sure information about the club is prominent.
- Plan for club members to man a booth or activity at a local event: a county or state fair; a camp for needy children; a community festival; etc. Again, advertise the club in these efforts.
- Plan to donate materials to schools, nursing homes, etc. Set up a "Donation" box at meetings where members can deposit material they are willing to donate - those "extras" from a recent field trip or items culled from basements or garages. Research those places where these items would be put to good use.
- Poll your membership to find out those who are active in local affairs.

This is work that needs to be planned in advance of putting together your yearbook. It's also a reason to have a committee dividing up the responsibilities. The more helpers you have, the easier the task.

Remember to collect supporting documentation for these activities: newspaper clippings, photos, thank-you notes, letters, certificates of appreciation, and reports from your club newsletter, etc.

Remember to keep it fun, make it funky (in scrapbooking terms), and create something you'll be proud to place on your Membership Table at your show!

An All American Club Yearbook - Part III

I hope you have been busy this summer getting organized! You should have a notebook or a set of file folders specifically set aside for your plans and materials for your club's All American Club Yearbook. You have last year's entry form, items and documentation to include for Sections 6 and 5 (including photos you've taken or solicited from club members), and copies of your club's bulletins or newsletters up through August of this year. If you haven't done so already, go through those bulletins and, using Post-Its, mark items that you may want to include in your yearbook. Take a field trip to the closest Staples and make copies of your bulletins that you can cut up and paste into your yearbook.

Now, we're going to take a look at **Section 4** of the application form - **"Support for Regional Federations, AFMS, and Other Clubs."**

- ✓ You will want to go through your list of members and make note of those who are currently serving your regional federation and those serving the AFMS. You can check your federation's directory for a list of officers and committee members if you're not sure and then check the AFMS Web site for information as to who is serving there.
- ✓ Next make a list of members who attended a federation convention and show this year - regional or AFMS. You might want to have a veteran club member, one who knows most of the club's members, who you can call on to help you.
- ✓ Poll your members to see who has supported the regional or AFMS scholarship and endowment funds. Check with the club treasurer to see what donations the club has made as a group to these funds.
- ✓ Find out which members have presented programs at other clubs' meetings and which members have attended other clubs' shows or swaps. Note the ones who demonstrated or displayed at these events. (In my home club, we gather this information on a regular basis to include in our bulletin as "Rockhound News.")
- ✓ Check with your Field Trip Chair: has he/she extended an invitation to other clubs to participate in your field trips?
- ✓ Check with your Bulletin Editor: does he/she exchange bulletins with other clubs? Have your Editor give you a list.

Gather your supporting documentation (lists, photos, items from your bulletin, thank-you notes, etc.) and file it away to be assembled when you're ready to put together your yearbook. Remember, you don't want to try this on your own! Ask, entice, or even beg someone in your club to help.

An All American Club Yearbook - Part IV

Well, do you have those file folders you put together filled with articles copied from your newsletter, photos taken on field trips, lists of shows members have visited, and copies of correspondence with legislators about concerns regarding pending legislation dealing with access to public lands? I hope your files are adequately filled, and that they will be bulging by the time we're through!

Now, we're going to take a look at **Section 3** of the application form - "**Publications and Publicity.**" In this section, we will be focusing on:

- A) Your club's newsletter or bulletin;
- B) How you publicize your membership meetings; and
- C) How, if you have a club Show, you get out the word about that Show.

Hopefully you've discovered, that the "glue" that holds a club together is communication with members in the form of a bulletin or newsletter. Your newsletter or bulletin doesn't need to be elaborate, it just needs to touch on those things your members feel are important; *i.e.*, when is the next meeting; where is the next field trip; what special workshop is coming up, etc. A Calendar of Events listing "rocky" things happening in the area, or an article about lapidary tips might also be important. A copy of your bulletin or newsletter belongs in your All American Yearbook.

How do you publicize your club's meetings to the community? Do you post a notice in the public library, or on a bulletin board at the community center? In a larger community, you may have to reach out to local newspapers. Does your paper have a Community Calendar section? Does your local television station have a calendar of events that they post each day? Explore your community and find out what's available for advertising your meetings. Then all you need to do is provide some dynamic programs to attract potential new members!

Does your club host a Show? If not, why not? If so, how do you get people to come? After the first few times, word-of-mouth is a powerful tool. Until the word spreads, your efforts need to be in advertising. Fliers or posters hung in public places are a great beginning. Members need to put up posters at their workplace, where they dine out, where they go for recreation, where they shop. Approaching television and radio about public service announcements is a good effort. Ask if you can distribute fliers to the schools to distribute to students, (A coupon for free admission for an adult with a child works well in this venue.) Be prepared to purchase some advertising as well. The cost will pay back in attendance at your Show.

Keep samples of all your posters, fliers, and ads to place in your yearbook. All of these serve as your documentation. Kick it up a notch! Go all out with your publicity.

An All American Club Yearbook - Part V

Well, we're almost there - to the end, I mean. If you've been following along, you know the only parts of the application left to deal with, are Section 1 - Club Information and **Section 2 - Service to Members or Guests**. Since Section 1 is simply a "fill-in-the-blank" format, for which there are zero points, we'll address Section 2.

The only section easier than Section 1 is this one. This is you - your club! It's time to brag about all the great things you do for your members and guests, who should, by the way, always be treated like prospective members! This is a section about numbers and lists, starting with your general meetings. Be sure to make a list of your monthly meetings: what was your program topic; who was the speaker; and what, if any, highlights you want to mention. If you do not have monthly programs, ask yourself, "Why not?" You need to do some brainstorming. What are the resources you have in your community to tap into for possible programs? Have you checked into the program library your federation maintains? It is a rich source of programs!

Next list your officers, directors, and special committees. Cite how often they meet. Are members encouraged to submit ideas to the board? Are members invited to attend the board's meetings?

Next, it's time to brag about your juniors. Explain how your club caters to junior members. Do you hold separate meetings for your juniors? If not, why not? With the AFMS program that has been developed for juniors, right down to specific lessons and award badges, all you need is someone to lead the group. Check out "Suggestions on Forming a New Youth Group in Your Club," by Jim Brace-Thompson, AFMS Jr. Activities Chair, at www.amfed.org.

How about Special Group meetings? Do your members get together for any special crafts or studies? List them. Do members gather for social events? List them.

Does your club sponsor a show? How about getting together with another club to host a show together? List all of the specifics of the show: how many dealers you invite; how many demonstrators work your show; and how many displays you have. All through these categories, be sure to provide pictures, printed programs, and other documentation.

Does your club sponsor field trips? List the places you go and how many folks attend. This is another great place to provide photos.

What remains in this section is to list special features such as: a club library; a club workshop; a Web site, or a travelling display that can be put up in public venues. **Document, document, document.**

Next month we look at putting it all together.

An All-American Yearbook - Part VI

Whew! You've gathered together all the material you need to finish Sections 1-6 of the Application Form. Now, you just need to put it all together. A group putting their heads together can garner all kinds of ideas and have fun doing it! Call some of your "rocky" friends in your club and plan a brainstorming session.

Your yearbook can take the form of a notebook, stuffed with lists, forms, pictures, newspaper articles, printed programs and brochures, etc. Or, as I've suggested before, **you can get creative** - go a step further and create a scrapbook. Every sizable city has a scrapbooking supply store these days. If you are living in a small town, there's the Internet, where the sites for supplies are almost limitless. Got a Walmart nearby? Most carry a descent supply of scrapbooking materials.

The basics:

- ✓ a scrapbook with enough filler pages to hold your material (**the limit is 100 pages**)
 - ✓ backing paper for the fillers to mount your articles and pictures (choose a style that doesn't overshadow your pictures)
 - ✓ frames for pictures are nice (paper ones, that is); some you can cut out yourself or simply use a plain colored paper backing
 - ✓ lettering is available, or you can draw your own
- You can go "nuts" with this stuff! There are tons of extras

like shapes and borders, rub-on phrases and images, stickers and fancy glitter, etc. You can spend a fortune. So, make a list before you go and stick to it. You can cut fanciful things from old magazines to decorate your pages. It's actually more creative that way.

Whatever you decide to do, whatever method you choose, do it with this in mind. Your club yearbook will be treasured by your club for years to come. It is an excellent prop to have on the Membership Table at your club's show to let visitors and potential members see the kinds of things your club is involved in doing throughout the year.

No matter what, **have fun!**



[Photos are courtesy of Scrapbook Your Story, Springfield, Illinois. Taken by Judith Washburn.]