

‘Canadian Vintage Radios’: Guidelines for Authors – Gerry O’Hara

When I took on the role of Editor for the CVRS Newsletter in 2007, my vision was, along with providing news of upcoming and recent events within the CVRS, to develop a magazine type of format with content that would add value to being a member of the CVRS and live up to the ‘Canadian Vintage Radios’ (CVR) moniker. This would be done largely by receiving and soliciting articles from members on any topic that concerned vintage radios and other vintage electronic devices, as well as related topics such as the history of broadcasting and ‘human interest’ items. To the credit of our membership over the years there has rarely been a shortage of contributions, and these have touched on a wide range of topics and have always been interesting – I have learned a lot myself from them.

As Editor, one question that I am asked frequently by potential authors is what is required in terms of word count, photos, format, etc? I have often replied that any format will do and that no matter what, I can most likely make use of what I am given – maybe not quite a ‘silk purse from a sow’s ear’, but something intelligible and presentable. Indeed, over the years, I have been presented with the full spectrum, ranging from an envelope stuffed with handwritten notes and printed photos and sketches, through lengthy email texts with photos attached, to submissions that provide text in more than one format, eg. Word and text file, separate from photos, as well as a combined version to illustrate how the author would like the final article to look. All formats are welcome, however, keeping the following in mind when preparing materials for an article would help me as Editor:

General

Take a look at previous articles in the Newsletter, including how the subject matter was presented, ie. the approach the author took in introducing the topic(s) presented in the article, clarity and conciseness of the text and whether the accompanying photos and/or figures illustrated the text appropriately.

Word Count/Article Length

There are no real rules regarding length of an article. The typical longest article to be in one issue would be around 2000 to 2500 words, though this will depend on the number of photos and/or figures within the article. Of course much shorter articles are most welcome! Longer articles can be serialised over two or more issues (I would make that decision, depending on other content in a particular issue, as well as make the necessary edits to make that happen).

Photos and Figures

There are no specific file size requirements for photos as I can re-size them if needed, however, something in the 100KB to 500KB range is optimal, and try to limit each photo to a maximum of 5MB if possible.

The number of photos compared with volume of text should be considered. As a guide, a ratio of around 200 words (or more) to one photo or figure generally works well (its very hard to provide good layout for an article with three or four short text paragraphs and twenty photos!).

Separate captions can be provided for photos if needed, however, my preference is to reference photos (or figures) from within the main body of the text. If captions are to be used, it is helpful to

provide these as separate text excerpts that can be pasted into text boxes that I can place under the photos/figures.

All photos and figures must be numbered and their reference point(s) in the text clearly identified.

Format

The preferred submission format is a Word file ('docx') for the text only, with photos submitted separately – clearly numbered and referenced from within the text as noted above. A pdf of the article presented as the author would ideally like to see can be helpful with the final layout.

The fonts used in CVR are Lucida Sans 9.5pt for the main body text, bolded for sub-headings, and Georgia 18pt bold for headers. However, other fonts are acceptable for submissions as these can easily be changed.

Approach

For those new to writing articles, here is a suggestion of how to approach things:

- Decide on what 'angle' your article will take on the topic(s) being addressed;
- Organize the format of your article, starting with a series of sub-headings that will cover the topic(s) – these may end up simply being paragraphs without headings, but it's a good way of organizing your thoughts in a logical manner so the reader can follow along;
- If 'third party' material is being used, present such material in your article in a way that captures what you want to say but without using any of the third party's text directly unless as a referenced quote(s), and referencing/acknowledging the source(s) – see below.

References, Links and Acknowledgements

References should be provided to all source materials if appropriate, eg. the book titles(s) and authors(s), magazine article(s), web reference(s) and their hyperlinks. These can be provided within the text, following the main body of the text, or as footnotes. Due acknowledgement should be made to sources or others that have contributed in some way to the article.

Be mindful of copyrighted works of others – note: all original work is automatically the copyright of its author, whether specifically stated or not. If in doubt, please attempt to contact the author and/or publisher to obtain permission to use their work. **Do not copy blocks of text, photos, figures or other material into an article that may be subject to copyright without acknowledgement and/or appropriate reference.** Direct quotes may be included provided these are appropriately referenced, and clearly identifiable by the use of quotation marks, italicised and/or inset text and the like (I can do that in the final edit providing the author identifies the text as such). Failure to do this can be considered plagiarism and risks recourse from the copyright holder/original author or source against the author that is plagiarising and, possibly, the CVRS.

Editing

The Editor reserves the right to edit and/or modify text, layout, number of photos/figures and punctuation slightly of any article submitted for clarity and readability purposes.

Deadlines

CVR is normally issued five times a year in February ('Winter'), April ('Spring'), June ('Summer'), October ('Fall') and December ('Christmas) with a roughly mid-month issue date. Please bear in mind that I have usually finalized an issue's content a week or two before that date except for any last-minute Chapter and Network news items. A submitted article may or may not be included in the next scheduled issue of CVR depending on how much material has already been submitted, where I am in the preparation cycle, available space, ongoing serializations, etc. and will be held over to a subsequent issue(s) if that is the case.

I hope the above notes help. It's your contributions that make CVR what it is, so please keep those ideas flowing, put pen to paper, fingers to the keyboard, and camera lens pointing at your projects! As well as submitting articles, ideas for articles are also most welcome - if you feel that a subject matter has not been adequately covered within CVR and you would like to see something on that topic(s), let me know.

If in doubt about anything, or would like more information or assistance in preparing and submitting articles or suggestions, please contact me at newsletter@canadianvintageradio.com.