

# Phases and Stages

*by John Farrow*

When I learned that our newsletter had been named the mid-sized club Newsletter of the Year by the RRCA, I got out the very first one that I put together and leafed through it. It was an almost completely text issue with the same monotonous type-face throughout and with few exceptions, the same size type-face. The only graphics had been cut out and pasted in and then the whole thing copied at Kinko's and stapled together. Boring.

Looking at that first issue with so much text and a few cheesy cut-and-paste graphics made your eyes cross. All I could do was wonder, "What was I thinking?" And, of course, the club must have been thinking, "Well, you've been doing it long enough, you ought to have figured it out by now."

But I realized that there have been some rather distinct phases in the development of this newsletter. The first was clearly the Clueless Phase.

After a while came the Boxy Phase. By then I had discovered how to put everything - text, graphics, photos, you name it - in little boxes with different borders around them. Of course, the photos couldn't be any larger than a mug shot or my computer would tell me that I had committed an illegal act and shut down. But we had a lot of mug shots looking like Murderer's Row each month.

Of course, I thought it gave each

page a very neat, uncluttered look. My wife took one look at it and said, "Why can't you do that with your stuff around the house?"

Next came the Artsy-Fartsy Phase, when I discovered what my computer program calls Text Art. This is where you can make the captions loom over everything - remember Star Wars? - or arch across the page or start out small and get bigger, or vice versa - like a textual Doppler

effect. I even tried one with a lava lamp in it, but the computer said I had committed an illegal act and shut down. Of course, use of a lava lamp like that ought to be illegal anyway.

Those things had their place, I guess, back at college when everyone was lying around the apartment with the black lights on, listening to Hendrix or the Doors or Janis Joplin and consuming controlled substances.

Preparing a newsletter really is a labor of love. I've tried to make something that you will want to read and when you tell me that you do read it and enjoy it, that makes it all worthwhile.

I feel very fortunate to have had a lot of support and encouragement from all of you. Of course, that support and encouragement is the only true currency by which an editor really gets paid, and by that standard I know that I am very well paid indeed.□

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