

Did you ever wonder why big national magazines hire the best talent they can find to write and edit their publications, and then leave the more vital job of authoring subscription letters to some bookkeeper in the circulation department? Well, publishers ought to be thinking about this as more and more of their periodicals hover on the brink of bankruptcy, and more and more of their sales letters wind up in the nation's waste baskets. After all, why should a potential subscriber believe that a magazine is cleverly styled and interestingly written when its subscription pitch puts him to sleep midway through the first paragraph? And why should he think that the publication has its own individual character when the junk mail it sends out is like all the others? The solution to the problem is so obvious that even weak minded publishers are bound to take our hint, and MAD awaits the day

When Magazine Editors Write Their Own Subscription Letters

WRITER: TOM KOCH

MECHANIX Illustrated

7 R Square Plumber's Wrench, N.C.

Dear Fellow Craftsman,

With your current subscription to *Mechanix Illustrated* due to expire in three months, it's high time you were getting down to your basement shop to start work on a renewal application. A professional looking job can be done with a minimum of power tools merely by following these simple step-by-step directions:

1. Detach subscription coupon (A) from this letter (B) along perforated line (C). A linoleum knife or tinsmith shears will do the trick nicely, although any tool sharp enough to cut paper (such as a pair of No. 8 household scissors) may also be used.
2. With a strong, dependable marking instrument, such as a pencil (D) or pen (E), fill out subscription coupon (A) as follows: On blank line opposite the printed word "NAME" (F), print your name. Taking care not to smudge, follow similar procedure for inserting your address (G) and zip code (H).
3. Before returning marking instrument to its drawer or holder (I or J), utilize it to make out check for \$8.50 (K). Your local banker (L) probably can show you how to do this.
4. Place completed coupon (A) and signed check (K) inside envelope (M) and affix stamp (N) to upper right hand corner of outside of envelope. Making stamp adhere to envelope can be simplified by first wetting sticky side of stamp with a liquid-base compound, such as household water or spit.
5. Drop completed project in corner mailbox (O) after making sure you have not committed common error of placing stamp inside while leaving check and coupon outside. Should this mistake occur, it can easily be rectified merely by starting all over.

Anxiously waiting to receive your handiwork,

Phillips S. Driver
Phillips S. Driver, Editorial Putterer

COSMOPOLITAN

Susan B. Anthony Tower New Liberation, Conn.

Dear Downtrodden Housewife:

As I sit in this fashionable executive office inflating my ego by screaming at weak male underlings, I often wonder how you nonsubscribers can ever hope to

REALIZE YOUR FULL POTENTIAL AS A WOMAN without the latest issue of *Cosmopolitan* at hand to offer assurance that even lowly homemakers aren't too dumb to possess

THE BASIC RIGHTS OF THE SENSUOUS FEMALE. Most magazines are edited by male chauvinists who publish nothing to help

BUILD UP YOUR FEMININE SELF-ESTEEM. More often, those rags merely clutter up their pages with articles which hint that if you're desperate to find out how

YOUR SEX LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL, you probably should put yourself in the hands of a psychiatrist instead of following the hot tips presented by *Cosmopolitan*. Truly, these are perilous times for

THE ASSERTIVE WOMAN. Only yesterday, I forced our pimply faced, 17-year-old *Cosmopolitan* office boy,

THE ARISTOTLE ONASSIS NOBODY KNOWS, to confess that he secretly considers men to be "the stronger sex." Chances are that you get the same line of guff from your husband. So why not fight back and

EXERCISE YOUR FEMALE ECONOMIC POWER by drawing \$8.99 out of your joint bank account today and sending it to *Cosmopolitan's* Subscription Department, where you are truly appreciated as a person.

Aggressively yours,
Helen Churlish Broad
Helen Churlish Broad, Co-Editor

THE NEW YORKER

Dear Yokel,

Like so many of the culturally deprived natives of Iowa, Ohio and various other western regions, you apparently have failed to grasp the significance of the *New Yorker's* efforts to bring your appreciation of the finer things up to acceptable standards.

We realize that even the trifling amount charged for a yearly subscription may seem substantial to those of you out beyond the Hudson River who still rely chiefly on the barter system for survival. However, you people must be made to understand that the *New Yorker's* thorough coverage of the Broadway theater, Lincoln Center cultural events and Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibits is all designed to prepare you for a better life outside your native villages.

Remember, our democratic system makes it possible for any hayseed to dream of someday qualifying to live in New York. But first, you must expose yourself to the activities of the well bred, even if you are unable to comprehend them. This is why it is worth any sacrifice you may have to make to subscribe to the *New Yorker*. Send \$9.00 today.*

Your only real friend in the civilized world.

Seymour Glibberman

Seymour Glibberman

French Phrase Droppage Editor

*NOTE: That's \$9.00 cash! No produce or animal pelts, please!

Reader's Digest

1776 Flag & Mother Avenue Pleasantville, N.Y.

Dear Indomitable Citizen,

One sultry morning in August of 1969, Chronic Sinus Drip Sufferer Velma Updike stepped bravely out onto the porch of her modest cottage near Peotone, Illinois, to collect the day's mail. Moments later, she was wringing her hands in anguish as she confronted her husband, a 76-year-old retired bobsledder, with tragic news. "Our copy of *Reader's Digest* still didn't come," she wailed.

In the years that have followed Mrs. Updike's tearful discovery, a similar scene has been enacted in more than 2,000,000 patriotic, God-fearing American households as *Reader's Digest* subscriptions have negligently been allowed to expire. And, warns Digest Circulation Department Worker Vernon L. Vuggalufti, the situation is worsening!

"Most of our readers are honest people who would never let their subscriptions run out deliberately," explains Vuggalufti. "Their failure to renew is merely a symptom of the laziness and fearful hesitancy that is reaching epidemic proportions in a welfare state America."

For countless staunch anti-communists, including yourself, the peril of soon being deprived of the *Reader's Digest* is imminent. Your subscription expires with the current issue. Will you send us a check in time to prevent disaster, or will you, too, suffer the needless heartbreak that befell Mrs. Updike of Illinois? Only time will tell. The future is in your hands.

Alarmingly yours,

Gloria Bound

Gloria Bound
Wholesomeness Editor

TIME

Time-Life Bldg. Time-Life Square Timelife, N.Y.

Dear Possible Subscriber-of-the-Year,

All through the mounting Mid-East crisis of the past fortnight, a single office door on the 27th floor of Manhattan's lofty Time-Life Building remained tightly closed and locked from the inside. The faint sound of typing from within attracted scant attention from the daily swirl of rush hour crowds flowing up and down the prison grey, fluorescent lighted hallway.

By week's end, the gaunt figure seated at the small steel office desk cast a weary glance at the crumpled sheets of discarded paper that lay ankle deep on the floor beside him. Then, unmindful of the ominous reports emanating almost hourly from Cairo and Tel Aviv, the mystery man of the 27th floor turned back to his Olivetti electric.

Shortly before 5:08 P.M. (EST) last Friday, the long vigil came to an end as I staggered out, weak and unshaven, to tell my story: I had been trying to write a schmaltzy subscription appeal letter to shore up *Time's* circulation, and had failed again.

Hoping you will send in \$10.50 anyway,

Newport Y. Wafflinger III
Newport Y. Wafflinger III
Regional Affairs Editor

psychology today

Shrink Therapy Center Rorschach, New Jersey

Dear Neurotic:

Your case history of irrational behavior following receipt of our recent notice that your subscription ran out has now been turned over to me for diagnosis. Naturally, we had all hoped that your lack of response would prove temporary, and that you would pay up once you realized that hiding from the problem would not make it go away.

However, as your pouting refusal to communicate continues, it becomes obvious that your anti-social attitude has more deep seated causes. Having treated another subscriber (Mildred L.) for an almost identical condition, I feel sure that you sub-consciously look upon our magazine as a hated father figure. Hence, you are driven to act out your imaginary revenge by stubbornly refusing to send us the subscription renewal money that is rightfully ours.

Isn't it about time you grew up and examined your true motives for shutting *Psychology Today* out of your life? Think about it. Do you honestly believe that you are punishing us with your childish sulking? Oh, come now! You are only hurting yourself, and the sooner you adopt a more mature behavior pattern by getting your renewal check in the mail, the quicker you will be free of this obsessive drive to destroy yourself.

Wishing only the best for you, I remain,
Wolfgang Jungkraut
Wolfgang Jungkraut, Ph.D.
Chief Therapist & Paranoia Editor

JACK and JILL

Little People's Plaza
Far Away City, U.S.A.

1-2-3-4
Way Up On The Seventh Floor

Dear Impressionable Child,

This is a letter.
It is a special kind of letter just
for you from all the nice grown-ups at Jack
and Jill Magazine.

It is called a dunning subscription
letter. Aren't we having fun reading our
dunning subscription letter? Of course we
are.

But we may not be able to have fun
playing together like this ever, ever
again. Do you know why?

It is because you have not whined
and pleaded and thrown tantrums to make your
Mommy and Daddy send money to Jack and Jill
Magazine. Soon, we will become very angry
if we do not get our money. We will be so
angry that we will never, ever send you
another copy of Jack and Jill or even be
best friends with you any more.

Think how sad that will be. Think
how it will feel to lie in your little bed
at night knowing that lots of big, strong
grown-ups who are angry with you are out
there in the dark.

My! What a frightful thing!
Wouldn't it be better to hurry and make
Mommy and Daddy send money to Jack and Jill
while it is still light outdoors?

Love,
Gronk Wolfman
Gronk Wolfman, Night Editor

Business Week

"Sharing Your Wealth Since 1922"

Dear Brother Capitalist:

Your apparent poor judgment in failing to heed
our recent "buy" signal on Business Week's
under-priced three-year subscription offering
has caused our opinion of you to drop a full
5% points. In addition, our senior analysts
have re-evaluated computerized data on your
potential I.Q., which was once quoted as high
as 118, and now feel that a figure in the 85-
to-90 range probably is more realistic. Such
discouraging new appraisals are to be expected
when money managers like yourself pass up a
sure-fire magazine investment opportunity
merely to retain liquid capital. This is par-
ticularly true in a time of uncertain world
monetary conditions when the exchange of U.S.
dollars for copies of Business Week appears
most attractive.

Your stubborn policy of economic retrenchment
leads us to be bearish about your upswing po-
tential, and we see little hope for a dramatic
turnaround in this negative outlook until you
restore our confidence by mailing in a \$24
capital outlay.

Fiscally yours,
Shylock \$ Warbucks
Shylock \$ Warbucks, Asst. Editor

TV Guide Teletype: New York

WILTON DIMBURG REPORTS

Magazine Producer WILTON DIMBURG, who
placed high in the current season's
circulation race with his TV Guide,
1972-73, is assured of a fall spot for
his popular publication. Tentative
title of Dimburg's upcoming effort:
TV Guide, 1973-74. Subscribers already
booked for the new season include
WENDELL W. MONTGOMERY of Flint, Mich.,
MR. AND MRS. FURMAN HACKMEYER of
Rural Route 2, Provo, Utah and THE
BLUE MOON BAR AND GRILL of Elkhorn, Wis.

Add YOURSELF to the growing list of
TV Guide regulars who may not be around
next fall. BERNICE LOU RUMKUS, our
Circulation Department Assistant in
Charge of Readers Whose Names Begin
with the Letter "G", reports that your
chances of receiving the magazine be-
yond the summer re-run season are slim
unless your subscription renewal check
is mailed in pronto.

In an effort to bolster TV Guide
readership rolls for the big publish-
ing season ahead, Editor-Producer
WILTON DIMBURG has composed a sharply
worded form letter to 358,000 Dead-
beats whose subscriptions expire this
month. What YOU are currently reading
is one copy of that letter. Better
cough up \$3.88 now, or you're a cinch
to receive an even nastier follow-up
next month, tentatively entitled:
Final Notice.

NATIONAL REVIEW

"Countering Governmental Opacity with Editorial Obfuscation"

Dear Responsible Conservative,

Occluded as we are within the inner ma-
chinations of a latter day Neo-Machiavellian
nation-state, which has long relegated to the
nether world of obsolescence such inherent
prerogatives of Jeffersonianism as laissez
faire and, to a lesser extent, caveat emptor,
in favor of an imperiously structured federal
collectivism, replete with its self-perpetu-
ating and logistically indefensible Gargan-
tuan bureaucracy, not unlike that perceived
as being evolutionarily inescapable a half-
century ago by the Bernstein deviationists in
their denunciation of strict adherence to the
dogma of theoretical Marxism in the power
struggle which was part and parcel of anarchi-
cal internecine efforts to make viable a Lenin-
ist-Bolshevik socio-economic structure, it is
only to be pragmatically anticipated and, per-
chance, even greeted with a modicum of euphoria
by those bent on a statistical confirmation of
a gossamer hypothesis, however repugnant, that
the middle-income American ensconced irre-
trievably in the final third of the twentieth
century should face a mind boggling array of
computerized paperwork, which not only evokes
symptomatic emotional disorientation, but
also taxes the cerebrum beyond its intended
capacity.

This, in short, is why we must remind you
that your subscription has expired, and that
it is time to send us another check.

Fondly,
William F. Buckley, Jr.
William F. Buckley, Jr.
Editor