

JUDICIAL OPINIONS

by Diane Dare, July 1998

Speaking as an Advanced Articles judge: "Advanced" is the status of the AUTHOR. These articles do NOT have to be long, extremely technical detailed treatises, just educational (or fun).

A good Advanced Article will take a complex topic and make it easy to understand.

A good Advanced Article may take a familiar subject and shed new light on it. It might use a different or unusual approach to the subject.

A good Advanced Article can be deceptively 'simple': after you read it, you realize you learned something, that there was a LOT of information in it.

Don't lose points...because author is not identified. Editors, take credit for your own articles (full name, not just initials - if another editor wants to copy it, they need the author's name).

...for lack of references. Give sources of information, especially statistics.

...for copying. Books, magazines, newspapers - these are obvious. Taking credit for notes from a speaker/program is also copying - the SPEAKER did the research and writing.

PERSONAL PONDERINGS:

When I judge articles, the author gets penalized for typos/spelling errors. But who made them, the author, or the editor?

Footnote to one entry read "This article, originally released on the internet, is published for the first time here." Is it eligible as an Original Article? Rules specify articles "must be written expressly for the club bulletin" and "If an article has been published in a magazine...it is not eligible." Since copyright laws now extend to material sent over computers, TO ME it means this article was previously published, and therefore is NOT eligible.

Is the "I" in internet capitalized? Checked with grandkids, with son taking college computer courses, with library Information Center. No one was certain. So, called a nationally-known computer service office. After consulting others, the girl on the phone said "We THINK it should be, but don't use our name, 'cause we're not sure." Huh?

WORTH REPEATING:

"The judge weighs the arguments, and puts a brave face on the matter, and, since there must be a decision, decides as he can, and hopes he has done justice." So wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Samuel Johnson said it: "The two most engaging powers of an author are, to make new things familiar, and familiar things new."

A MURPHY'S LAW: By making something absolutely clear you will confuse somebody.