

Preparing Your Manuscript for Publication in *The Local*

By Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Publisher

We have a great Regional publication that really provides a venue for all of our members to present their model railroading ideas, models, layouts, projects, etc. This is also critical to many in pursuit of their Achievement Program Author certificate. Publishing in *The Local* can very easily provide all of the points needed.

You might note that there are actually instructions in *The Local* on how to assemble your files for submission. Compose and submit your text in one of the following formats: .txt, .doc, or .docx. Few are writing in .txt format, but the other two are common in Word and work well. What is not noted here is the actual formatting with the Word document. You should do this as simply as possible. What is preferred is single spaced, with a space between paragraphs, with 1" margins all around. What is not needed is any other formatting! Why? Because it is all going to be taken out anyway. Do not insert text boxes, photos, footnotes, etc. Simple works best!

Next, we have to consider illustrations. The power and importance of photos, figures and what other graphics you might be using for your article manuscript cannot be overstated. Consider what photos, illustrations, or other graphics can go with the text very carefully. These are essential. The quality and size of your photos is critical. The higher the resolution, the better. They should be at least 2 megabytes in size with a minimum resolution of 300dpi. The problem with smaller, low resolution photos is that they cannot be made better or larger in *The Local*. Take lots of good, high resolution photos, when preparing your article. Then choose the best ones to send to us in a zip file. In this time of digital photography, taking 10 photos to get one good photo costs only a few electrons that are well spent in this effort.

DO NOT include or insert your photos into your text! Remember, simple works best. If you insert your photos into the text they are just going to be taken back out to process the text. Save yourself from the work and save that extraction work from everyone else involved with *The Local*. Submit the photos, figures, etc. separately with each one numbered to correspond with the captions. Formats that work for photos include .jpg, .gif, .tif, or .png. Others are possible but check with the Editor before assuming that some odd format that requires Adobe Illustrator to open is acceptable. DO put notations between paragraphs, such as "Insert Photo #1 here". Also, in the text, refer to the photo relating to that specific text by inserting a notation at the end of the sentence, like (Photo 1) or (Figure 1). DO NOT put the captions in the text! Those are just coming right back out to process the text. Put them in a separate Word file, numbered to correspond with the numbered photos or figures and save everyone unnecessary work. Incidentally, photos and figures are not the same thing, so if you have both, then there should be two sets of captions files – one set for the photo captions and one set for the figure captions.

Lastly, all of this should be your own work. Using photos or figures that do not belong to you or that you have no permission to use is copyright infringement. Just because you found it on the Internet does not give you permission to use it in your article. If it is not yours, you MUST get written permission to use it, and, if you cannot, you will not be able to use it. There are lawyers out there with nothing better to do than to search through model train forums and blogs looking

for photos that have been re-used without permission and they are pursuing the owners of those forums and blogs with legal action. It may be that *The Local* could start using a formal copyright release form to protect *The Local* and the MER in the future.