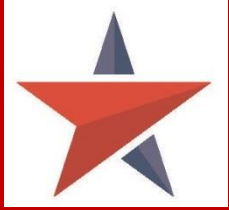# Leadership Training
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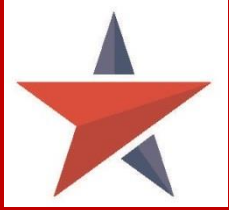
Website, Newsletter & Social Media

Website, Newsletter, Social Media

At any given time, depending on who you talk to, you will be advised that:

- **Websites are obsolete**

- **Newsletters are archaic**

- **All social media is dangerous, and, in addition can open you to embarrassment if and when your account is blocked.**
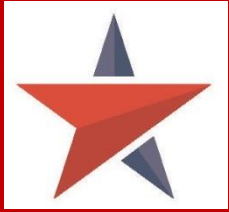
Hogwash!

Each has a purpose, and RWC clubs are strongly advised to use all of them.

Website, Newsletter, Social Media

Let's first address what they're designed to do.

- **Website:**
  - **Introduce your club to the world at large.**
  - **Announce items of immediate interest.**
  - **Provide immediate access to materials you wish to share.**
  - **Provide a platform for other things your might want to do.**

- **Newsletter:**
  - **Report on items of current interest.**
  - **Announce details concerning your next club's next meeting/event.**

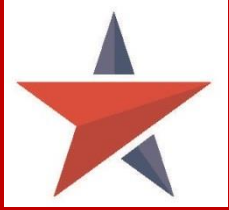- **Social Media: Communicate on items of immediate interest.**

Website, Newsletter, Social Media

You might note there's a time factor here.

- Websites should be viewed as *permanent* resource for communicating with your members and storing the info your members may need to retrieve. It can also be used for online payments for your meetings & fundraisers.

- Newsletters should be seen as a *temporary* resource to announce and report current events, each new volume replaced in toto by its successor.

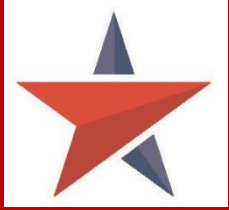- Social Media should be viewed as *ephemeral*, on-line commentary.

Despite this time factor, be warned: Once published on the web, these enter the public domain, and anything within them can come back to bite you or your club. Always publish with reasonable caution.

Website – Preparation

Before putting your website together, you'd be wise to:

1. Decide, generally, what you'd like to see on your website

2. Decide if you'd like to accept payments on your website

3. Find a webmaster – ideally someone with enough expertise to walk you through the rest of the process.
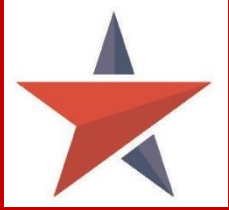
The Webmaster

Whether your website design is simple or complicated, it's best to set it up under the supervision of someone who knows what they're doing and can help you through the process of:
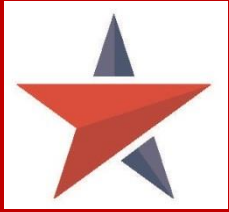
- Identifying your requirements
- Designing your site
- Selecting a provider
- Buying your domain
- Maintaining your site over the long term

That is the job of your webmaster.

Pre-Packaged Websites

A number of domain companies are now offering prepackaged websites that allow you to put together a basic website and maintain it. Some of these could be completely adequate to your club's purpose. Do be advised, some of these can be quite expensive if/when customer chooses to upgrade the basic "free" package.
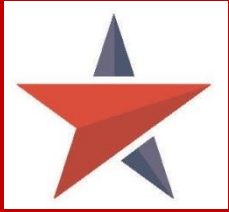
Selecting a Provider

If you are not going with a pre-packaged website (the company selling it is technically your provider), you must select an Internet Service Provider (ISP), also known as a host. The host stores your internet files and links those files to the Internet so the Internet can see your website.

This service is extremely technical, requires expert, 24/7 supervision and customer support. DO NOT attempt to do it yourself or let your club "techie" provide it for you. Your webmaster should already be working with a provider to host other sites under his/her supervision. Go with your webmaster's recommendation.
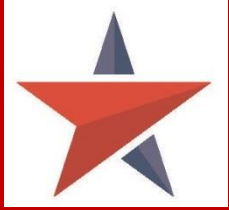
As a minimum, make sure your provider can support your pages, your unique domain, and email services. Your webmaster will need to verify that provider also supports the programming language(s) and/or databases your webmaster will use to create any unique programming for your site.

Your Domain

Your domain is the name/address used to find your site on the Internet. It is sometimes called an URL. To work, it must be registered with the international internet service agency and linked into the web. This process, called propagation, normally takes 24-48 hours. There's no rushing it, so don't demand it when setting up your site. Some other things:
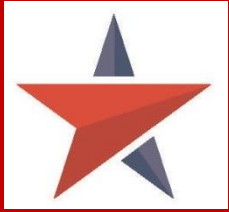
- Select a descriptive, easy to remember domain name. For your club, choose the .org extension. (Please do not use .com, as that is supposed to be reserved for commercial sites).

- Check with www.whois.com to make sure your domain's name is available.

- You will have to purchase your domain. Most providers sell them, sometimes at inflated prices; sometimes at a discount. Check GoDaddy.com for a price comparison, but preferably purchase from your provider if they're not gouging you. Otherwise you'll see a further delay in propagation when the domain is moved to your provider and some providers charge more for hosting your domain over and above their normal charges.

- Once you've got your domain, print it on all of your club's literature: business cards, pamphlets, newsletters, etc. This address is how the rest of the world finds you.

Maintaining Your Site

Once your club has a working website, your club will need to keep it relevant and timely. Usually this is a two-person process:

- **A club web manager who should:**
  - Regularly (preferably monthly) review your site to see it's fully operational and any and all obsolete materials have been removed
  - Obtain any e-ready documents (such as your club's monthly newsletter) or photos that need to be uploaded to the site
  - Consult with your club's president to identify any new or changing requirements.
  - Act as liaison with your club's webmaster
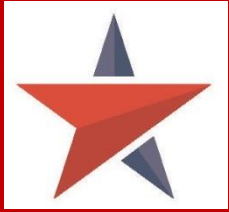- **The club webmaster who will make all physical changes to your site.**

Site Redesign

Like skirts and high heels, web designs fall in and out of fashion. Although your club's site may continue to meet your club's needs, remember it also serves as your club's "first impression" to the world and will, over time, become stale or simply old.
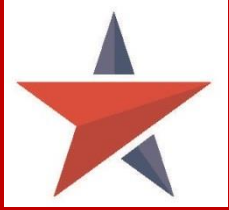
Don't fire your webmaster.

Any webmaster worth his/her salt can refashion your design to meet most of your requirements. If you've had a good relationship, discuss a redesign and, if possible, sit down with him/her to review other websites. Together you should be able finalize a new and exciting design without having to go through the entire startup process again.
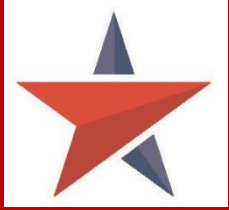
Website Summary

- **Websites are one of the most powerful and versatile tools available to your club. Every club should have one.**

- **When first setting up your site, consult with a qualified webmaster. Whether or not you choose to employ their services for the duration, he/she should advise you on how best to meet your own club's specific requirements.**

- **Do not attempt to host your club's website privately. You are unlikely to have the skill or resources necessary to do so successfully.**

- **Remember your website will be your club's first introduction to many of your prospective members. Keep it relative and timely.**

Newsletter

Once the only means for communicating with your club members, the club newsletter remains an important resource for your club and should be published at least monthly to maintain a strong connection with your club members.

Traditionally the newsletter was used to announce meetings, events and speakers and to report on other items of immediate interest to club members. These are still its most important functions.
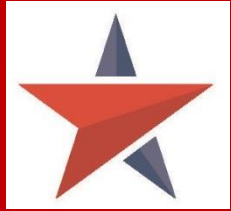
Newsletter – To Mail or Not

Traditionally a print medium, the club newsletter once was mailed every month to all club members. As email become commonplace and the postal service continued to raise its rates, clubs found the cost of mailing their newsletters prohibitive especially when they could be sent out for free via email.

For clubs still mailing newsletters: 4-5, 8-1/2x11" pages can be mailed with a single first-class stamp. Try to print on both sides to keep costs down.
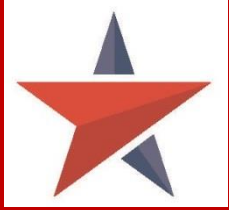
Except for those members who have no email services, we recommend clubs send out their newsletters via email and, for ease of reference, also publish them on your club's website.

Beware – Most Emailed Newsletters Are NEVER Opened

Mailchimp, a mass email marketer, tracks whether or not the emails and email attachments sent are opened by the recipients. Per two recent reports, only 7-9% of recipients bothered to click on a newsletter attachment. Only 10% even opened the email. Why?
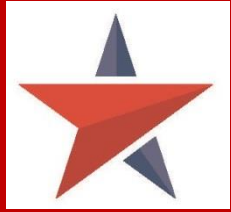
- No longer limited by mailing cost constraints, club newsletters have become bloated. Members simply don't have the time to read them.

- Content is repetitive. Monthly committee reports belong in executive board meetings unless there's something new and exciting to report to the club's membership at large.

- Information pages such as how to contact your city's elected officials more properly belong on the club's website where they can be easily accessed.

Newsletter Content
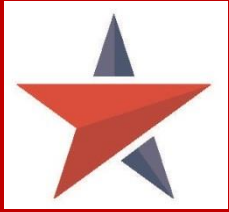
What properly belongs in a newsletter:

- **The monthly meeting notice**

- **A president's message announcing & encouraging participation in club activities**

- **Heads up notice regarding future events**

- **Human interest info on your club members – birthdays, short bios**

- **A calendar of recommended activities for the month...**

Newsletter Content (Continued)

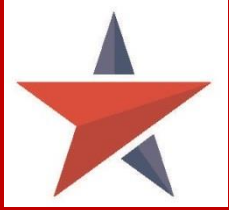What properly belongs in a newsletter (continued):

- An editorial on current events

- Officer & committee reports only if announcing something specific: e.g., voting registration opportunities/results; event registration deadlines; something new and concerning in our schools.

- Contact info for your club's executive committee.

- New member signup form (encourage your members to carry a copy with them at all times)
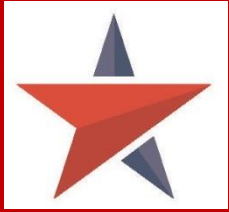
Newsletter Content

What NOT to include in your newsletter:

- **Unauthorized copyrighted material of any kind. Current law allows the award of up to $10,000/violation computed on number of people receiving the offending document. That would be $400,000 for a 40-member club's newsletter.**

- **Any content that is obscene or racist, sexist, homophobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, etc. (You know the list.) If you have any concerns regarding any particular reference, consult your club officers and/or RWCSDC's Newsletter Chair.**
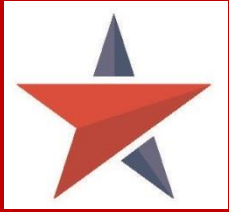
Newsletter Summary

- **Huge newsletters are counter-productive. Less than 1 in ten people even bother to open them.**

- **Limit your newsletter to report items of current interest to your members.**

- **Publish your newsletter via email and posting to your website. Mail only to your members who have no email.**

- **Never publish copyrighted or generally objectionable material.**

Social Media

Wikipedia.com currently lists approx. 185 social media platforms. Here are the ones you've probably heard about.

- **Facebook – by far the most popular, over 2.7 Billion members**
    - **Standard: Different privacy settings**
    - **Pages: A Facebook profile for your business. Only authorized individuals may post.**
    - **Groups: Max 250 Members**
        - **Public: Open to all.**
        - **Closed: Any can find group. Only members see posts**
        - **Secret: Only members can find groups and see posts.**
- **Instagram: Photo & video sharing. Owned by FB. 300M members.**
- **LinkedIn: Business & professional networking. 200M members.**
- **Twitter: Micro-blogging where users post and interact with messages known as "tweets." Approx. 650M followers.**
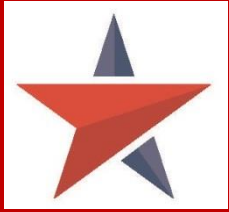
Social Media

Social media use some words assigned special meanings. Let's throw out some definitions here:

- Blog – once known as a bulletin board, blogs are programs that allow anyone who has signed up to join them to post comments and responses.
- Micro-blogging – blog comments limited by the host to a small number of words or characters.
- Network – people joined together via a social media site
- Networking – reaching out and communicating with people of like interests
- Sharing – uploading of documents and/or photos so that people within your network
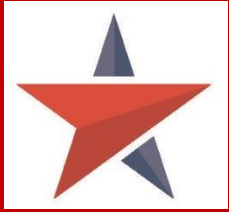- Social media – any internet site that allows people to network, share and blog.

If your website supports a blog, it is social media.

Social Media

Providers of social media have become exceptionally powerful. How so?

- **By exercising control over the content of user posts, they can restrict conversation on their networks to support only those beliefs they believe to be general and uncontroversial – i.e., helpful.**

- **By limiting political advertising to groups supporting their beliefs, they control what messages can be broadcast to their users**

- **Through complex algorithms they can identify persuadable voters and how best to persuade.**

- **They can share these lists with political operatives who share their beliefs.**
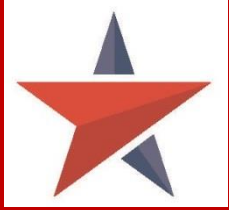
Social Media & Political Correctness

At the heart of all social media algorithms used to identify restricted comment and persuadability are specific words defined to be helpful or harmful to a specific position or interest group. User and advertising posts are reviewed to see if any of these words appear within the posts, and the posts are judged accordingly.

Political Correctness – a movement begun in liberal universities to control the use of language to support liberal causes – has set its stamp on what language is acceptable and what is not. Most social media programmers are graduates of these colleges and accept as unassailable the prejudices masked as Truth under this discipline. Understandably when they program their algorithms, the algorithms, too, reflect these prejudices.
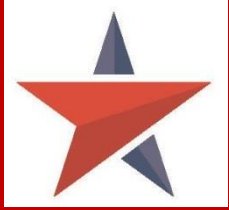
Consequently, conservative and Republican commentary is frequently censored and/or banned from social media that, when confronted, claim honestly that their algorithms are not biased in any way. They, frankly, do not and cannot recognize the bias.

Social Media – The "Big 3"

Sadly for us Republicans, the oldest and largest social media sites (Facebook and Twitter) are owned and run by extremely liberal individuals who not only fail to recognize their anti-conservative bias but also fail to recognize it as censorship as, until recently, they failed to recognize any problem in sharing their lists with their liberal friends (e.g., the Democratic Party). Added to this is the Google browser near-monopoly that recently equated "Republican" with "Nazi" in its search criteria and regularly puts liberal positions on any issue at the top of any search results.
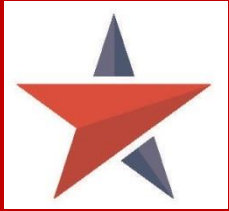
This "Big 3" – Google, Facebook & Twitter – currently maintain a stranglehold on conservative speech in social media.

Social Media – A RWC Response

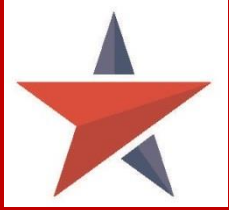How do we counteract the built-in bias in social media among the "Big 3?"

- Post regularly and often on Facebook and Twitter with the understanding that the site's algorithms are biased against you and that every post you make may be reviewed by people totally against you and looking for a reason to report you

- If you are banned, protest it -- first to the company hosting your posts; next to the press if the company refuses to reinstate you

- Constantly look for and use alternative social media sites to express our message. For instance, post a pattern promoting President Trump on a knitting site.

Setting Up Your Accounts

Unless and until some conservative companies are organized to compete with the "Big 3", we must use them for immediate messaging. Each social media site walks you through fairly simple procedures to set up your initial account. What you need to decide before you do so is how public you want to be.
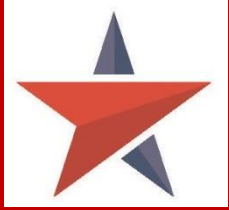
Most sites offer various privacy levels. Both Facebook & Twitter allow you to identify exactly who can read and respond to your posts by limiting access to your account to those you specifically invite to join it. This is, of course, helpful on one level – blocking out any hostile posts – but is counterproductive if you wish to reach out to larger community. A possible solution: set up two accounts – one secret and one public – to communicate among your own what you immediately need to communicate, and speak to the outside world what you'd like to make public.
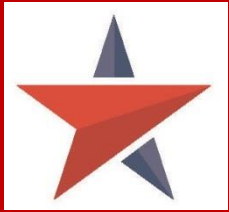
Social Media Content

It's tempting to use social media to comment on every facet of your personal life, much less your club's. It also can be irritating to those who receive your email alerts. Instead of glutting their email inboxes, please limit your posts to:

- **Publicizing your club's events and any other Republican event attended by your members**

- **Announcing your club's support of any particular position. (Be prepared to defend it.)**

- **Setting up a demonstration or protest in support or against any governmental policy**

- **Photos of your ladies at these events**

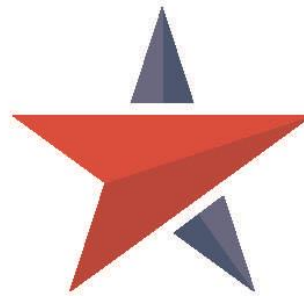- **Re-posts/re-tweets of items you find particularly compelling or insightful.**

Social Media Summary

- **Social media is currently controlled by the "Big 3" companies that have a strong progressive bias.**

- **Unless and until some conservative companies emerge to successfully compete against the "Big 3" we must use them to reach the largest audience.**

- **If banned from any of them, fight your expulsion.**

- **In the meantime, find alternative social media sites that can be used to promote your point of view and use them**

- **Preferably set up two accounts each on Facebook and Twitter: one public, and one as private as you can make it.**

- **Limit your content to Republican events and causes.**

Questions?