

Writing Tips for Grant/Scholarship Recipients

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Recently I was asked for direction regarding what a person is supposed to write for the magazine as repayment for a CBA grant or scholarship. Here are some tips which may be helpful when writing *any* article:

Be Prepared Before the Workshop

- Jot notes and sketches while taking the workshop (you will not remember everything) and add to them as thoughts and impressions come up later.
- Take some photos.
- Explanatory photos and/or sketches that illustrate techniques and results are VERY useful. (A picture is sometimes worth at least a few words, and some of our readers only look at the pictures.)
- Wait a few days for impressions to settle before you begin to write the article.

Getting Started

- In general, answering the questions who, what, why, when, where and how offers the most interest to readers. Your introductory paragraph might answer these questions: What was the workshop designed to teach? Who taught the workshop? Include a brief statement about the instructor's skills and experience. When and where did it take place? Use adjectives to describe the shop and the surroundings. How was the workshop structured? Who else participated? Make a personal statement about your own background and why you participated.

Let Your Thoughts Flow

- What lessons, tools or concepts impressed you.
- What one aspect of the class did you find most interesting or useful?
- Will your experience change how you do anything?
- Provide anecdotes and personal learning experiences. Describing what went wrong, why and how you corrected it can be beneficial to someone else.
- If something funny happened, tell about it. Humor adds interest.
- Offer your critique of the workshop. What went well, what didn't work for you. Tell what you would have liked that did not happen. Many potential

demonstrators read our magazines and can use pointers. Constructive criticism is healthy.

If You are Stuck

- Keep in mind that the article should benefit some segment of our membership. So decide what segment that would be and write for those folks: general membership, beginners, demonstrators, tool-collectors, blade aficionados, artists or...?
- "How-to" articles, with step-by-step photos (*see below for more on photos*) or illustrations are great.
- Go on the assumption that the magazine wants your input no matter what you think of it.
- You don't have to be a great photographer, artist or writer. The editor will make what you write read well in terms of spelling, grammar and flow, and the production staff will make selections from your photos (*see below for more on photos*) and sketches.

Finishing It Off

- The last paragraph of your article should tie in with the first paragraph (or the title) in some way.
- Give your overall impression of the workshop.
- This is where you say what you got out of the workshop and how much you appreciate having received the funding.
- Describe where you plan to go with blacksmithing as a result of your experience with the workshop.

When You Think You Are Done

- After I finish writing something, I wait a couple of days to read it as though I don't know anything about the topic. You can't un-know something that you know, but waiting a few days usually helps to determine if someone else might find it interesting or if an important aspect or poignant point was omitted.
- PHOTOS. Clear glossies, slides and full-sized, high-resolution digitals (300dpi or higher) on a CD are preferred. Please mail them. Photos can show us more than we want to know, like if someone was only half zipped. When you snap a shot, keep in mind that a busy background is distracting. And PLEASE do not resize photos. We'll do the cropping and sizing. "