

New OBSERVER e-Newsletter Will Officially Begin in January

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Russ Valentine, President of NEKAAL and expert in all things digital, has essentially completed writing the program that enables the generation of this new OBSERVER e-newsletter. There may be some bugs initially, so please report any problems or odd behavior. If you are not on the NEKAAL Yahoo Group and wish to be removed from the mailing list for this e-newsletter, let me know, and I will remove you. But if you are on the Yahoo Group, you will receive this e-newsletter.

Those members who do not have email will receive a mailed copy of this newsletter and all the articles contained in the links. But that is expensive, since the envelopes will be large, will contain ALL the articles in each issue, and may often require more than the usual postage. At some point, we might have to ask you to pay a surcharge on the standard dues to cover the postage costs, but we will tackle that problem later.

Most of you have received or already subscribe to other e-newsletters, so you know how they work. You receive the e-newsletter, and it has a header, date of the issue, volume number, etc. Below that is a list of the articles for that issue. Each article has a title and most often a brief description of what it is about. The article title will have an embedded link that you can click to download or view the article. That way, you view only those items that you want to read. After a period of time, all articles on the web server will be archived and still be accessible indefinitely. The articles will be in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format, including pictures, so you will need the free Adobe Reader or some other PDF viewer, which nearly everyone already has on their computer, to read the article. If not, you can easily download it from Adobe. The newsletter will come automatically in two different formats. There will be an HTML version for those who prefer the pretty graphics of these newsletters. But there will also be a plain text version for those whose email programs are by preference set for text only. The links, of course, will still work by clicking on them.

For each issue, I will receive the articles, notices, calendars, etc. in text or Word format and edit them for punctuation, spelling, grammar, formatting, etc. and, rarely, content. I will convert them to .pdf and upload them to the server. Once all the articles for an issue are complete, I will simply push the PUBLISH button, and, voila! an e-newsletter will be sent to you. The new Secretary of NEKAAL, who will be elected at the December Christmas meeting, will be responsible for printing the newsletter and articles and mailing them to the few of you who do not have computers or email.

One of the great benefits of this new newsletter will be giving the reader the choice of which articles he/she wishes to read and the ability to keep them separately in any way they want on their computer or merely delete them. The other great benefit for NEKAAL as an organization is that anyone who can operate a word processor and a computer and knows how to read and edit can serve as editor of the newsletter without any big hassle or great investment of time. This will insure that we have a good

newsletter and group communications for the foreseeable future. Obviously, it will not be as satisfying to those who grew to love the OBSERVER in the old format. We have to give Graham Bell our thanks and appreciation for making THE OBSERVER the very best club newsletter published anywhere. He put enormous time and energy into it, and it showed in the consistent quality. Thanks, Graham.

We hope that you all enjoy this. This will be as good as we all decide we want it, but it will be up to members to supply the news and information. Some months may be very sparse, and other issues may be packed. It is up to you all to make it whatever it is. Thanks for your patience these many months without a formal newsletter. Again, please send suggestions and notice of problems as you notice them.