

EDITING: WHAT IS IT?

Editing refers to reading and seeing if material is clear, gets and holds your attention, doesn't offend, makes its point. It also involves, for local union newsletter editors, choosing headlines, suggesting or creating internal headlines, looking for and coming up with good leads for the article, and making sure paragraphs are short and readable. Nancy Brigham has come up with some clear guidelines for editing in her classic *How to do Leaflets, Newsletters and Newspapers*, 1982. (borrowed and used with permission).

Editing guidelines

Ask yourself some questions while reading....

- 1) **Did you understand it all the way through?**
- 2) **Can you tell what the main point of the story is?**
- 3) **Do you find yourself reading a sentence twice?**
- 4) **Does the story put you in the mood the writer intends?**
- 5) **Are there words you don't understand? Ask the writer to replace them.**
- 6) **Does the writing sound as natural as someone talking to you?**
- 7) **Does the article raise questions that are left hanging?**

Editing helps make your paper a group effort. If everyone is concerned only with his or her own article, it's more like writing a letter to the editor of someone else's paper than putting out a group publication. People work alone and don't get to know each other. Editing raises issues that should be discussed and keeps members of the group in touch with each other.

One important rule of editing: never, ever make major changes behind the writer's back. If you're really too busy to go over changed with the writer, don't change anything.