

(R) President's Page

**MATERIALS PREPARED FOR THE
ABA BAR LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2000

**THEY WON'T WRITE THEMSELVES: PLANNING
YOUR PRESIDENTS COLUMNS**

WORKSHOP #5A & 5B

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Your President's Page
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by
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1. **Time - it's the enemy.** It is extremely difficult to come up with good ideas and good prose at the last minute. Plan ahead. The staff really doesn't want to bug you.

2. **Entertainment.** Unless there is some information which you must convey, leave the education to the substantive articles. Make your articles interesting.

3. **Get the hook in early.** Members want to be enticed into your articles immediately or they will move on to the "Courtroom capers" article.

4. **No Lexobabble.** When I tell people what this means (a word of my own creation meaning those bar association type words and discussions which make your eyes glaze over) they all say "oh yea". DON'T DO IT!

5. **Don't confuse quantity with quality.** I believe this is a misconception picked up in church. It won't work.

6. **Write about what you know.** This is the very first writing rule. Otherwise, the reader may know more about the subject than you do.

7. **Beginning, middle and end.** This is the second writing rule. This will give you direction while reducing quantity and increasing quality.

8. **Encouragement.** Show leadership by encouraging your members to be proud, to act, to have lofty ideals.

9. **No preaching.** There's a big difference between encouragement and preaching. Remember that these are all professionals with doctorate degrees just like you.

10. **Sense of humor.** Members will read your articles if they think they may find a laugh or two in them.

11. **Timely.** Pick topics which the members want to hear about, something in the news, the courts, the legislature.

12. **No pride.** Avoid committing the first deadly sin. This is a common offense and members can smell it a mile off. It's not really about you.

13. **No pride of authorship.** Sometimes you need an audience to know if the thing works or not. I find it very beneficial to rely on others regarding syntax, structure, content, etc. We all just want the best product.

14. **Use quotations.** I like quotes – but that's me. It's amazing how often someone has expressed your exact sentiment or theme and done it better than you can.

15. **Start a list of topics.** You can make a list of topics now – this is something you can do early.

16. **Be brave.** You were elected by your readers – they trust you.

17. **Be careful.** Don't strive to be a lightening rod – especially if you're a unified bar. Always show gender, racial, area of practice, geographical, etc. sensitivity.
