

White Tops Policy Committee

Mort Gamble, Chair

Report submitted by Mort Gamble

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The committee has not met formally in several years; however, I have consulted regularly with the *White Tops* co-editors, John and Mardi Wells, on issues or ideas as suggested by various members of CFA.

These have included adding more historically themed articles to the publication, using “teaser” cover text, tying cover photos more directly to feature articles inside each edition, employing reader surveys, and increasing convention and Worldwide Summit coverage. I met specifically on several of these topics with the Wells last July in Massillon, Ohio, during that stand of the Kelly Miller Circus. They seemed open to further discussion, and there was general agreement that we could always fine tune the magazine to reflect reader interest and member concerns. For example, they seemed very comfortable with asking readers about what was desired in terms of content.

Overall, I am very pleased with the direction of the magazine. Its timely photos, circus coverage, CFA member updates, attention to animal issues, book reviews, and other features do, I feel, address well and professionally the general interest of the membership, and serve as a vital benefit to those who have joined CFA. Although tools of social media and integrated marketing are important to younger generations, the traditional magazine format remains viable and valuable to the current CFA members, at least for now and especially if they are not as comfortable with online publications.

Three years out, however, I would recommend that we have a fully integrated marketing and publication approach with special features specifically geared to younger members and potential members who are of the digital generation. This would require that we revisit completely our marketing and publications strategy, in all web, social media, and print formats, and that we poll the membership on where and how they wish to receive information about CFA and the circus industry as a whole.

Speaking for our committee, I am certainly open to receiving further ideas, suggestions, and comments about the magazine and its possible future direction.