
Joe's Notebook

Welcome to the new look; name the new *Pike* contest

BY NORMAN "JOE" OLIVER

It's been increasingly apparent that the print-oriented version of the *News Along the Pike* was taking too much time to edit and format.

Consequently, when other projects came up that couldn't be put off, editing the *Pike* took second place. A major project, like the *CDER Report to the Nation*, put the *Pike* on a six-month or longer hiatus.

Well, that's all going to change. There's a new print layout that makes it easier to accommodate your stories with a minimum of formatting and editing.

We are returning to a monthly publication cycle. Deadline for you to submit your articles is the 15th of each month. That gives us a few days to edit and a few days for the center director's office to clear the newsletter for publication.

As you can see from the new layout, we will cut and paste your articles into the layout program as we get them. The new format also provides an easier to read document for those who prefer the print version to the online version. If you read the online version, you'll notice the similarity. It will speed up the conversion process for us.

Name the new *Pike* contest

With most of you at White Oak, the name of the newsletter is overdue for a change. So think of a name and e-mail it to me. Dr. Galson and friends will pick the winner. We have an assortment of prizes for the winner and runners-up. Win or lose, the first 10 entrants will get their very own *News Along the Pike* coffee cup.

What we look for in *Pike* articles

We like to see articles from you that explain your programs, problems and solutions. How does what you do help your colleagues in the Center do their work better? What is the public health problem you are addressing? How does your program help solve that problem?

The *Pike* and the *Report to the Nation* are mutually supporting. Most entries in the *Report* began at some point as *Pike* articles.

Who is the audience?

We assume that our readers are well-educated and interested in the Center's work. We don't assume, however, that they share the same technical, regulatory, medical or scientific background that our authors have. When editing, we try to make sure that folks with different backgrounds can understand the article, without resorting to a medical dictionary or the *Code of Federal Regulations*.

How to write for the *Pike*

It's always best to write the way you would if you were writing a letter to a friend or relative explaining what you do. The editors will take care of polishing it up for either *News Along the Pike* or the *Report to the Nation*.

Some of the things we will do when we get your story are:

- Find the main point and make sure it's stated up front.
- Edit for style and grammar using the *Associated Press Stylebook*.
- Make use of Plain Language techniques such as bulleting lists and clumping related information together.
- Ensure that technical, medical and scientific terms are adequately explained.
- Eliminate the use of most abbreviations and acronyms. We are OK with FDA and CDER. Beyond that, we think you need to justify using them. We think many of our readers are not familiar with our organizational structure and the abbreviations of our structural units. You should mention your division or office once and then use common nouns such as "division" or "office."

When to write for the *Pike*

Right now! We are no longer going to pad the *Pike* out with rehashed news releases and talk papers. We think you have adequate access to those in this electronic age. We want to know what YOU are doing.