**RGT Membership Letter Chronology** *(this timeline assumes a Monday-after-Thanksgiving mailing, if you change that date, change the timeline)*

June or July Board meeting on agenda:

Who is going to write the letter? (need to figure this out now)

What changes should be made to return-card

When should letter go out (if NOT the Monday after Thanksgiving, then adjust dates below accordingly)

September Board meeting on agenda: report from the writer about draft - any questions, general discussion of what to definitely include etc.

October Board meeting on agenda:

Final copy from the writer - ideally sent by email ahead of time, discussion of any problems, omissions etc.

Final copy of return card - again ideally sent ahead of time

Between October and November Board meetings.

Final-final proof by, at least, a second Board member

Contact the printer just so he will know it is coming (name below). Do this at least a month ahead.

Labels from town: You will need between 900 and 1,000 blank labels. Since they come 30 labels per page, take 33 label sheets ) Make sure they are labels for laser NOT dot matrix printer. Take them to Lisa (town clerk) so she can print the voter names (do now, don't wait until you actually need them). If it an election year, be sure to do at least a week before the election.

NOTE ABOUT LISA'S LIST:

a. she has NO control over what comes out. It is a household list based on the state's list of registered voters. It is arranged by street (P.O. Boxes are in the location of their street address- which is not shown). That's it. She can't do more.

b. We now make it a practice to keep the returned (can't deliver) mail so we can eliminate dead, moved, inappropriate. This is useful, but even more useful is having some knowledgeable folks go over the list and remove those they know are no longer it the area (put these labels on a piece of paper so you can do use it as a cheat sheet next time.)

Note: in the past, we have not been able to match our membership list to the street listing, because our street address is one column wide (20 Juggler Meadow Road). In 2015, that was changed to two columns (one with the number, one with the street name) so a **copy** of the membership can be sorted to match the town list. If the Board decides to use the RGT membership labels (with real names), it would then be possible to pull of duplicate addresses from the town list. If you don't understand why the word "copy" is in bold, stop reading this and think about it. And think of the mess you could create. . . .

Of course, if you are working on a copy of the original, you will have to decide where to make the changes. Whatever you decide, make sure that any changes in the RGT membership list is saved as the ACTIVE sheet.

Have whoever is keeping the membership list, print all the non-leverett zipcode labels (do before the moment you need them)

Call PO in Leverett to order 1,000 stamps (not all of last 100 will be used, but can be used during the year). May take a few days to get them - especially if you chose really good ones.

Submission to the printer, traditionally:

Christopher Smith, Hatfield Printing

19 Prospect St, Hatfield 01067

413-247-5362

hatfieldprint@comcast.net

1,000 letters on slightly faded stationery, arrives folded (hooray)

1,000 return cards

1,000 return envelopes with address printed

1,000 outside envelopes with return address printed

NOTE: although non-glue envelopes might seem like a good idea, the printer says they are twice as expensive and don't last if the extras are being saved for a later mailing.

Assume 2 week turn around (call a month ahead to check that out). All work at this point can be via email. He will help clean up the set-up.

Note: left-over outside envelopes are used for smaller mailings during the year. It is possible that the inside RGT-return envelopes will accumulate enough so that they will not have to be printed one year. All extras are kept in the archive filing cabinets.

It is, of course, possible to xerox (rather than print) these letters, because you only need 900 and printing requires 1,000 - but you would have to provide the stationery if you wanted color. Some careful cost-analysis would need to be done as well as comparing what the mailing would look like.

Pick-up from printer (and you can see their cool solar-powered print shop)

Organize production party or decide to watch lots of TV in order to:

When putting labels on the envelopes, you have your last chance to check for duplicates. In the past, we have alphabetized the labeled the envelopes. Given the ability now to compare the membership list and the town list, this may not longer be worth doing.

Put membership form/card under return envelope flap, add letter (it's origami time)

Put on labels if you haven't done ahead.

Note: a few of the folks deserve a personal note. If you happen to know they have just sent in a membership, just a note thanking them and saying you thought they might like to know what had been happening. This note also always goes on Lisa Kroeber's letter - and perhaps there are other notes (on the stationery or a sticky) that need to be added.

Glue down (use a mailing-tool with a water tube and sponge or just small sponges)

Put on stamps (do last in case you screw up the list above) Note: we did not follow this procedure in 2014 and ended up with some stamped envelopes which we put blank labels on and used.

Bring to the PO. They will NOT sort in Leverett because if they send to Springfield, they will come back in delivery-order - which is way easier for them when it is such a large mailing. Therefore, you don't need to separate out Leverett addresses.

Sit back and wait for:

the money to pour in

the invalid addresses to be returned. Keep these together, along with the bad labels pulled earlier. Check the membership list and change/correct. Keep this pile of stuff for the next mailing. (Can put in the archive - as long as it is well labeled.)

Almost final steps:

There will be some extras. Keep some so that they can be sent out when someone asks for them.

You can put some in a minor container that RGT maintains on a table beside the mailboxes at the town hall

Put the rest aside as something that might come in handy sometime during the year - the outside envelopes go into the stationery box since those are truly useful.

Last step:

Take a few minutes to update this document so that you (or someone else) can do the mailing next year without having to reinvent the membership-letter-wheel.

June, 2015, Mary Alice Wilson