

TCA Publication Committee Report

August 2023

The TCA Publication Committee was formed in Mid-October of 2022 with the passing of *Advance Motion 5* as presented in the **2022 Annual Membership Meeting**. Shortly following the meeting, **Jeff French** returned as *Texas Knights* Editor and, upon request from President **Franc Guadalupe**, accepted the position of Publication Committee Chair. Jeff recommended that **Caleb Brown** (the author of *Advance Motion 5*), **Chris Wood** (the TCA Website Administrator), and the Facebook Administrator (at the time was also Chris Wood) be added as members to the committee. **Deborah Shafer** was later confirmed as TCA Facebook Administrator and joined the committee immediately following her post. Caleb Brown is no longer a member of the committee.

There were 4 items that were to be discussed, and recommendations to be provided, by the Publication Committee for the **2023 Annual Membership Meeting**. This report is provided as the document completing the requirement.

Below are the four primary items that were required considerations per *Advance Motion 5*.

(1) How the printing and distribution costs of Texas Knights may be economized, and if possible, how the extra revenue generated by Texas Knights may be aligned with its expenses.

Printing costs have increased significantly over the last few years due to a large increase in the price and distribution of wood pulp, which, of course, has a direct effect on the price of paper. Printers, of course, pass on those increases to the consumer. Unfortunately, economizing those costs requires decisions that can directly affect the publication. We have already moved to a lighter (i.e. less heavy) cover stock, which did provide some relief to the cost of printing. However, there are other ideas being considered, which include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of color from the printed publication
- Changing to a smaller overall page size
- Shrinking the overall page count
- Getting rid of the printed publication altogether

In regards to distribution costs, it is believed they have been minimized as far as they can be, at this time. TCA has taken the steps required to use Non-Profit postage rates provided by the United States Postal Service. The Non-Profit mailing speed is the same as provided by first-class postage rates and using the Non-Profit rates has cut distribution costs by almost 67% per mailed issue.

There are other considerations in regards to printing and distributions costs of *Texas Knights*. These include changing membership rates that cover more of these costs and even a possibility of moving printed *Texas Knights* to a subscription model that is an add-on to memberships and would be more in-line to what it costs to print and distribute the publication to members. The Publication Committee Chair has been tasked with meeting the Membership Committee Chair, and any combination of those committees, to create a recommendation. This discussion has not yet occurred.

(2) Whether electronic issues of Texas Knights should be reserved for members only, and if so, how.

While the Publication Committee has considered limiting who can access the electronic (digital) issues of *Texas Knights*, it has been decided that this is not reasonable at this time. There have been detailed discussions that have included changing the overall format and handling of *Texas Knights* and we are not ready to consider reserving *Texas Knights* for ‘members only’ until further discussions and decisions have been made.

There are other items on how we handle access on the website, etc. that needs additional, careful, consideration.

In addition, the aforementioned task and outcome of the recommendations from the collaboration between the Publication Committee and the Membership Committee could have a direct impact on this decision.

(3) How the quantity of submitted articles and other content to Texas Knights could be increased.

Some steps have already been taken to increase the quantity of articles (and other content) provided for *Texas Knights*:

- A *Texas Knights* availability email distribution is now occurring regularly. The primary purpose of the email is to notify members of the availability of a new *Texas Knights* issue on the website. However, requests for submissions, as-well-as details about providing submissions, is regularly included in the emails.
- A contest where the Editor provides an image of the upcoming *Texas Knights’* cover page to one author that has submitted an article that can be used on their Website or Social Media Page, and announced on the TCA Facebook Page. This provides an

opportunity of the winning author (as voted for by the Publication Committee members) to get some extra traffic on their page, since they are given exclusive right, up to the time the issue is available to members, to post the image. This only lasts for a couple of days.

- *Texas Knights* regularly includes a request for submissions on page 2 and even provides the deadline for the next issue. In addition the Editor's Letter generally provides the deadline information.
- The TCA Facebook Page regularly posts a request for submissions and includes the upcoming deadline for *Texas Knights*.
- You can also always find the upcoming deadline and status of the latest issue on the *Texas Knights* Editor's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/texasknightsed>

While further improvements are still desired, the quantity of submissions has improved since implementing the newer procedures.

Regular columns are always an option and would help improve the quantity of submissions (the editor writes some of these types of articles already, but it would be preferred to have other authors commit to managing and writing them):

- A Collegiate column
- A Club News column
- A formalized Regional News column.
- A National/International column (for tournaments that Texas Players attend away from Texas).
- An Educational/Training Column (this could be any Chess Training: Opening, Ending, Tactical, Strategic, Positional, Visualization, etc. and could focus on one or more topics for every issue ... and even change topics from issue to issue) ... in reality every example provided could be its own column ... although there probably isn't enough room. But, we are claiming to be an Educational Non-Profit

Organization ... any type of 'Chess Education and Training' should be something we regularly provide.

- A Product Review Column - Dr. Alexey Root keeps us 'in the know' for chess books. However, books aren't the only chess products that could be reviewed. There are applications (including mobile apps), videos, websites, hardware, equipment, magazines, etc. that could be regularly reviewed. Reviews sometimes provide an added benefit that when they are published, in that they can be reciprocated with advertising. You probably noticed the full-page Manga Book ad that we had in a recent issue. That was because a review was written about the book.

(4) What can be done to cut the time from the submission deadline until delivery.

At the time of writing Advance Motion 5, the author was unaware of Jeff's return as Editor. *Texas Knights* is now on a regular schedule where the time from submission deadline until website posting, and distribution to the printers, averages between two and three weeks. Therefore, it is believed this item no longer requires further consideration.

The publication committee also distributed a survey to members, related to *Texas Knights*, primarily to get further ideas about how to handle some of the aforementioned items. We had a very good response with some interesting ideas. The publication committee and *Texas Knights* Editor continues to consider and implement many of the ideas provided (a lot of the 'Regular Column' ideas listed above were based on recommendations from the survey as-well-as other direct communications with members).

Summary

Processes have been implemented to improve the quantity of submissions; we will be considering additional options. Steps have been taken to shrink the financial burden of printing and distributing *Texas Knights*. The Committee will continue to consider the impact of making the electronic access of *Texas Knights* a 'member's only' benefit. But, as noted, there is more to be considered before it could be recommended as a viable option.

Finally

While we are making efforts to implement ideas, **we don't have any specific recommendations at this point in time.**