

# **THE SCHOOL PAPER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649193714

The school paper by Charles B. Gleason & George I. Lynn

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**CHARLES B. GLEASON & GEORGE I. LYNN**

# **THE SCHOOL PAPER**



# THE SCHOOL PAPER

BY

CHARLES B. GLEASON

Vice Principal San Jose High School

AND

GEORGE I. LYNN

Santa Clara University

---

San Jose, California  
Press of Eaton & Company  
1912

914  
G554

914  
G554

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

(Copyright, 1912, by Charles B. Gleason.)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

## PREFACE

---

Like most teachers who are concerned with the School Paper, the writer did not take up the work because of his interest in it—that came later,—but partly because students came to him for help of one sort or another, partly because he was one of those to whom happened to be assigned a task somebody had to do, and nobody wanted. The pages that follow are the result of a dozen years' observation of the workings of the writer's own school, and of other as he has become acquainted with them through professional literature, discussions at educational gatherings, and private inquiry. Perhaps what more than anything else led him to write it out was the inquiry of the editor of an Ohio school paper, whose letter ended, in capitals, HOW DO YOU DO IT?

No attempt is made at academic discussion. The Educator will look in vain for profundity of thought or brilliancy of expression. The practical teacher may say in criticism that he knew it all before. Very likely he did. The title might have been "What a Young Editor Ought to Know;" and if *he* finds here indeed what he needs to know and no one has told him; if he finds anything to help him in his difficult and perplexing endeavors; the purpose of the writer will be fulfilled.

The senior author is solely responsible for Part I. To Part II he has contributed only editorially, this portion being the work of Mr. Lynn, whose experience as editor of student publications of various types enables him to speak of the matters under discussion from the point of view of the student.

CHARLES B. GLEASON.

San Jose, Cal., September 1, 1912.

## PART I—ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION.

### I.

#### TO BE OR NOT TO BE.

To many Principals the school paper stands as one of the vexations of his position—a "problem" along with fraternities, the cigarette habit, social excesses, and social vices, to be wrestled with, to be tolerated under protest, but as hopeless and as inevitable as poverty and sin. I recall the triumphant satisfaction with which one prominent Principal announced that he had eliminated the paper from his school, and substituted an arrangement for space in a local weekly; and more than one other who, while not openly opposing, saw to it that no possible obstacle failed to be placed in the paper's path. One must freely admit that the history of school journalism is not pleasant reading; that the course is strewn with unsightly wrecks; that too often the school paper has added nothing to the reputation of the school, its management, or the cause of public education. Owing its inception to its claims to recognition as a stimulus to literary interest, it has fallen far short of these high endeavors:—utterly failed as a literary essay, fostered the frivolous and vulgar, and not the serious and elevated things of school life, weakened rather than strengthened true school spirit, and, especially in its financial management, been a scandal and a disgrace in the community. Too often dragging out a miserable existence, fitful spurts of energy followed by heart-failure, it has caused the long-suffering teacher to echo the Autocrat, "I wish it would get well, *or something!*"

Yet all this is not really an indictment of the school paper in itself, but of the paper as often conducted. The school that has no school journal may, like the country that has no history, be a happy one, but it is with the happiness of stagnation. Journalism seems as natural expression of intellectual vigor in young people as athletics of physical vigor; and the one and the other are almost essential to healthful development, and deserve encouragement as much as do activities distinctively scholastic. The school paper has become a necessary part of every progressive school, and the interest of the school journalist and of the school alike demand that it be the best possible, and conducted in the best manner.

### II.

#### STARTING OF THE PAPER.

Possibly many of the failures and weaknesses of school papers are due to the fact that these have "done growed," and not been ushered into existence by any wise direction, or as the result of any forethought or careful design.



There are several questions to be carefully considered and definitely answered before the paper should be launched. First of all the kind or character.

In the small school, the sole publication will very likely be the annual. This is, I suppose, something handed down from the college; at any rate it is closely modeled after the maturer production, and offers the same temptation to extravagance of outlay and of expression. It is of a form and content almost stereotyped, and needs little description here.

Most schools of any size support a monthly, as a rule a magazine, in which literary matter—fiction, sketch, or essay—predominates. The final issue of the year, perhaps the midyear or holiday number, is a "Souvenir" number, hardly differing at all from the annual in a majority of cases. Humorous or artistic periodicals are not unknown, but so exceptional are they in the school that for practical purposes they may be disregarded.

In a few schools the magazine is a weekly, apt to be a feeble imitation of the monthly, and differing chiefly in its cheaper and less attractive get-up. Of late a new type has appeared, in my opinion destined to prove a popular and valuable addition to school journalism. This has the form and general character of a newspaper, similar to the best type of college daily.

### III.

#### THE ORGANIZATION.

The kind of the paper settled, the next question is naturally the organization—a matter of prime importance. We shall find papers handled by a class, by the school as a whole, with editors chosen in various ways by the students alone, by the teachers, or by the students subject to faculty confirmation—by a club or society in the school, or by one or more students or outsiders, as a private enterprise.

All these plans have good and bad features. Students tend to support most loyally the paper that they think represents them best; and are lukewarm in their support of an enterprise that will profit only some individual; and a paper run as a school paper in the fullest sense is likely to be the best in quality, as well as in its reflection of the interests of the school. Again and again the editors must choose between a surplus in the treasury (with a possible deficit to face later on) and some special feature in the issue; and it is hard for a manager to decide against his own pocket-book. I remember a manager who found that it was for his financial advantage to restrict the amount of typographical composition in his magazine; so that his issues abounded in half-pages of blank paper, while the articles and stories carefully arranged by his indignant and helpless editor found their way to

the waste-basket. Then, too, there is a pretty general agreement among thinking students that service on the school paper, like work on an athletic team, should have loyalty for its motive, not personal profit. On the other hand, it is quite true that a boy who is working for himself can afford to devote time and effort to the work that one who has only honor to gain cannot; and true, too, that the business end of the paper abounds in hard, time-consuming, and often disagreeable work, of undoubted commercial value, which receives from the school very little in the way of sympathy or glory.

There is no question that the ultimate success of any periodical will depend upon the general support it receives from the school. And in deciding upon the organization, local conditions and to some extent traditions must be reckoned with. In the smaller school, with the closer acquaintanceship and relationship that generally characterize it, the school as a whole may be depended on to conduct its paper; the writer's experience is, that when the number of students gets much above a hundred, pure democracy begins to fail of effectiveness, and any management nominally of the whole school tends to become the management of a clique, a faction, or at least of a few aggressive spirits. It is not so much that so large number is unwieldy, as the necessary condition that the members of the lower classes, though numerically strong, are at a great disadvantage because of their lesser maturity. Nowhere in the whole school period does a seniority of two or three years mean so great a disparity in this respect. The case is the same, of course, with all student activities, but in none, I believe, does this produce such disastrous results as in connection with the student publications. For this works lack of interest, and lack of interest which may be counteracted by extraneous aids in case of athletics or debating, is fatal to the publication.

Much better is management by a class, as this class is apt to be the Senior class, older and maturer students, who will as a matter of class pride and spirit use every effort to make the publication a success, by their influence and backing make it stand for the school, and actually or virtually assuming the financial responsibility, ensure a sound management, or at least relieve school and teachers of any burden of unpaid bills.

Club management is open to the objections of private management, and has others of its own. It is less amenable to control, its membership is apt to consist of students who will be prominent in other activities; and in the legitimate rivalries and contests of school politics, these tend to consolidate into a clique, with unhappy results for the enterprise for which they were originally organized. The best results require some sort of co-operation between students and teachers, and I believe the best results will be had when the control of student publications is vested jointly in teachers and students.

In the San Jose High School the student publication was for years a monthly magazine which issued at first an annual, afterward, a semi-annual Souvenir number. Almost every variety of management and organization was tried, and the paper passed through all sorts of vicissitudes. Later a number of students interested in newspaper work organized, under the direction of an experienced newspaper man on the faculty, a club for the issuing of a weekly sheet. They found their task at first an easy one. Advertisements came in, more than they had space for. They were able to distribute the paper gratis to 900 students, and then have a comfortable surplus. Finding that the management of the monthly assumed a decidedly hostile attitude—which, by the way, was accentuated by the candidacy of the editor of the new paper for student President—and that they had indeed practically drawn away from the monthly all its advertisers except those who considered their advertisements a donation, the club brought forward, at the opening of the school year, a plan by which the monthly became a purely literary magazine, without advertisements; and the club paid over for its maintenance a sum which, added to the subscriptions, was sufficient to run the regular issues, and pay part of the cost of the Souvenir numbers. Lack of hearty support from the students, who perhaps valued less what cost them nothing, contentions between the editorial boards of the two publications thus unequally yoked together, and errors of judgment of a business manager, contributed to the failure of this arrangement; by consent the affairs of both papers were placed in charge of a committee of teachers, who endeavored, in conference with the representatives of the two periodicals, to liquidate the indebtedness, and rehabilitate the papers if possible. They formulated the following plan, which was adopted by the student organization, and has proved workable and, thus far, satisfactory.

All student publications are supervised by a committee consisting of three teachers, appointed by the Principal, three students, chosen by the executive board of the Associated Students, and the editors of the two publications, one of whom is elected by the Senior Class, one by the committee itself. The editors choose their own staffs, subject to approval of the committee, which also appoints from its student-members an auditor, who receives all money collected by the business managers, and pays all bills allowed by the committee. The advantages of such an organization are that it brings the faculty into close touch with the school papers, thus avoiding many misunderstandings, and gives to the editors the advice and support of representative students not directly interested in the publications, and of those who from their greater maturity and wider experience can be of great service to them, especially in their relations with outside parties. It helps, too, in maintaining all departments of the