

## **PODCAST: OPENING LETTER**

I'm Edith Wagner, editor of Reunions magazine. We are making these podcasts to provide additional information and resources for reunion organizers.

Who ever would have guessed you could get reunion information on your iPod or mp3 player and listen ... while you're driving home or to a reunion committee meeting. Well, now you can.

This podcast is inspired by requests from reunion organizers, just like you. In this case, they are trying to figure out how to initiate contact with family members about a reunion.

Jean Johnson of Venice, Florida, asked for ideas to begin a letter to family members about reunion locations, time of year and cost.

Ethel Epstein called it an "opening letter" in her request for help to notify her family about starting a family reunion project.

Let's say the question is: I would like to propose a reunion to my family. Where do I start?

First, I urge you to not do this alone. Start by talking to family members to determine a level of interest. If you're lucky, the idea will generate excitement. On the other hand, if you need to cajole people, you may need to call in help or re-think your approach.

Then, decide what kind of event you are willing to take on. A one-day affair? City, county or state park? Three-day weekend? Week-long stay? Urban? Rural? Resort? Hotel? Ranch? Cruise? Camping? Or a picnic in your backyard?

What would best get your family's attention? Something simple? Down to earth? Something personal? Or academic, clinical, serious or maybe something whimsical and a lot o' fun.

Send an explanation of what you have in mind, in whatever form you think your family will react to most favorably: On paper, by phone, by fax, by email, or posted at a website or blog.

Think about this. It's not unwise to start with a picnic or barbecue in someone's backyard or a nearby park. Just think through the details for a single day event that is lots of fun and makes many want to repeat it next year and the year after. Some reunions take off slowly and build.

Some groups opt for a longer reunion -- commonly a weekend, Friday through Sunday -- and include activities in more than one location. Longer reunions may also be some distance from home and more resemble a family vacation, but with a larger group. You may include tours with stops at family-related or local sites, or visits to attractions such as theme parks, museums or the zoo.

Also collect as many email addresses as you can to save on paper printing and postage.

To read more about reunion communications, go to "getting the word out" at [www.reunionismag.com](http://www.reunionismag.com).

If you have nailed down that all-important reunion date, do not waste a minute: get the message out as quickly as possible. One way is to use email, but another is a bright red, pops-off-the-fridge-door save-the-date card. To see what I mean, go to "subscribe and shop" at [www.reunionismag.com](http://www.reunionismag.com), and scroll down to "postcards." It's a fast, easy, tangible and clear message for everyone to see. Fill in your own and you can have them for 20¢ each of \$15 for 100, plus shipping. Order online at [www.reunionismag.com](http://www.reunionismag.com), click on subscribe and shop or call 800-373-7933, ext 4.

I encourage you to inspire more podcasts that speak to exactly what you need. Encourage your reunion committee members to listen to these podcasts and ask their own questions. Email your comments, questions and suggestions to [reunions@execpc.com](mailto:reunions@execpc.com).

I hope you've enjoyed this podcast and if you have, listen to others as well. If what you're looking for is not here, email your need to [reunions@execpc.com](mailto:reunions@execpc.com) and we'll deal with it. And be sure to explore [www.reunionismag.com](http://www.reunionismag.com) for more answers and lots of bright, new ideas

too. The most common comment I get from readers is: “I never thought of that until I read *Reunions magazine*” or until I went to reunionsmag.com.

Check out all the freebies to help your reunion at reunionsmag.com as well. Don't forget to list your upcoming reunion and post a picture of your reunion in Reunions Picture Gallery. Join the reunion chatter at our forum at <http://forums.reunionsmag.com>.

If you've never seen Reunions magazine, you can request a free copy at [www.reunionsmag.com](http://www.reunionsmag.com).

Thank you for downloading and listening to this podcast.