Job Description: Email Manager (EMM)

1. The EMM is not an official position. At the time that the contract was negotiated with MailChimp (MC) I was the only person who was sending emails on behalf of the district. So I was the only one who learned how to use the service.
2. Detailed documentation of the EMM's tasks can be found at https://nebridge.org/pages/345/.
3. The service:
   (a) All email blasts are now sent out through MC. A contract for two million credits for emails was signed in 2015. It cost $2500. At the end of 2021 we have almost 1.2 million remaining. The current price for another two million is $2625.
   (b) The primary motivation for the contract was to provide a flexible environment for targeted emails that provided protections from blacklisting. Previously I had generated emails for the district's events using php programs that I had written and executed on my personal iPower account. Twice I was blacklisted by someone for spamming, and it was very difficult to get removed from the lists.
   (c) At the time that we signed the contract MC was a privately held company with one product, an email-generating server. That product was easy to use. Now it is owned by Intuit, and it has many products and interfaces. For years we were allowed to have as many lists (now called "audiences") and email messages (now called "campaigns") as we wanted. We now are no longer allowed to create new lists. So, I must employ a rather complicated process to reuse old ones. The interface is more complicated in other ways as well.
   (d) MC does not allow attachments. Embedded images must be downloaded by the recipient after the message is opened. Because the messages are rather small and contain only text, MC can send messages to a very large number of addresses in an amazingly small time.
   (e) MC keeps track of each email opening and click-through. This makes it possible to prove that someone opened a specific email. MC also provides terrific reporting tools.
   (f) MC has exceptionally good documentation through a thorough set of FAQs. The few times that I have needed to contact technical support were, with one exception, productive and rather painless. Whether this will continue with the new owners is a concern.
4. Formats for emails:
   (a) MC has many templates for emails. I have only used one, "Code your own."
   (b) I create HTML files in a text editor. For emails that I sign I use the same banner that is on NEBridge.org pages with a width of 600 pixels. When others request mailings I either extract HTML from the email that they designed and sent to me or copy and past the text into an HTML file with the usual banner and width.
5. Audiences:
   (a) Audiences that are associated with other authors–the I/N director, the president, the NAP/GNT chairman, etc.–persist. That is, they are not reused to promote events. Recipients who unsubscribe from that list are not automatically unsubscribed from other list.
   (b) Audiences that are created specifically for tournaments must replace older audiences that are no longer needed through a complicated process. Whenever anyone unsubscribes from one of these lists the Database Manager (DBM) must be notified to uncheck the "OK to email?" field on the player's record. A program has been written to do this for batches of records gleaned from downloadable MC reports.
   (c) Each audience file has four fields: first name (which is derived from the "Familiar Name" field on the database for players), last name, email, and name_town.

6. Preparing the audience requires the following steps if an existing audience must be repurposed.
   (a) Selecting of the audience.
   (b) Renaming.
   (c) Archiving of the existing records.
   (d) Populating the audience named "000 Do not delete. Should always be empty." by downloading the csv file prepared by the DBM.
   (e) Selecting all records.
   (f) Moving of selected records to the audience selected and renamed above.
   (g) Spot checking to make sure that the process worked.
7. Selections should be designated by the email writer and executed by the DBM. A file in csv format is used to populate the audience prepared in #5. Sometimes more than one selection is needed for the same audience.
8. It may be possible to design an audience with enough fields so that all the selections can be done in MC using segments. I have done this with audiences for a club, but I could not see how to do this with the more complex D25 database.
9. Reporting:
   (a) The Executive Committee should be apprised of the number of remaining credits at least once a year.
   (b) If there are complaints of abuse, they should be reported to someone. This has only happened once.
   (c) At one time I produced a report for the Communications Committee for all the emails generated since the last meeting. It had one line per campaign that showed the open rates, click rates, and other information. The last president decided that these meetings and the reports were unnecessary.
10. Skills and temperament required:
    (a) If the "Code your own" template is used, facility with HTML is required. Of course, previously used emails could be used as models.
    (b) Some experience with editing images will probably be useful
    (c) The manager must be willing and able to deal with an interface that changes disarmingly often.
    (d) The person whose email address is the "reply address" for the campaign (presumably, but not necessarily the EMM) must be willing and able to deal with all the replies.
    (e) The turnaround time between receipt of the source materials (csv file from the DMM and email text, links, and images from the email writer) and the delivery of the finished product usually must be a day or two. For tournament mailings there are strict deadlines.