



So, I layout the pages fitting all of the text into the 'two pages' as requested. I had to use eight point type. For you not in the trade I'll explain that for a newsletter or magazine or newspaper that's known, technically, as pretty damn small. But I'm done. I do the schedule and my good deed is done for this month.

Until the phone rings today.

It's this self same BZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ lady asking how many pages the newsletter was. My response, as a seasoned pro was, 'Huh?'

I went on to say that she said she wanted it on 'two pages' so that is what I did. 'Of course, I had to go to eight point type but it's all exactly on 'two pages' like you requested.'

'Eight point type's small, isn't it?'

'Pretty damn small, technically. But that's the only way I could do it on 'two pages' like you wanted.'

'Oh.' Sounding more confused than she actually should. I have been laying this stuff out for the company for many years now and, I'm sorry, but 'two pages' isn't a concept that should baffle.

But it sure do seem to.

She continues in her oh so proper and eloquent manner, 'Ummm, oh, ahhhhh, so, uhhhhh, what's in the middle?'

I, on the other hand, under no preconceived notions of proper deportment or eloquent behavior responded, 'What the hell are you talking about? Nothing is in between one and two unless you're one of them math dudes with decimal points and letters and shit.'

'Well, I thought. . .'

'. . .First mistake.' Didn't mean to do it, but you know what they say: Don't trust Chris to keep his mouth shut. Words to live by actually.

'Ummm, what? Ahhh, well, I thought the middle pages. . .'

And this is when it all made sense to me. Even after many years of working with this person on the fine points of layout one thing is still perfectly clear: This person is a fucking idiot. If she didn't luck into this job she'd be working at McDonalds and she wouldn't be the manager.

'Listen to me carefully.' I demand after I've regained my composure. Thankfully I don't have much so it never takes that long to get it back. 'You are talking four pages, huh?'

'Well, I thought,' She's at it again, 'one side is one and the other is two.'

'Technically, you have a point. But, what you said to me was 'two pages' and you showed me a sample of what you wanted. You held up an 8 1/2 x 11 piece of paper and said 'two pages.' It was not a folded piece of paper because, if it was, that magically would turn it into what you desire which is four pages.

'Well, I guess that was confusing.'

'No, it wasn't. You showed a two page sample. Said the magic words 'two pages' and you got 'two pages.' Seems pretty simple to me.'

'Oh well, we can't have it, umm, isn't eight point type tiny?'

'We've already done this joke.'

'Huh? What? Well, is this going to be a problem to. . .'

'. . .not for you. I will, on the other hand, sit here a tad pissed and redo a job that I did correctly to your specs of 'two pages' the first time. I live for moments like this.'

'Oh, thanks. I'm sorry to have confused you.'

At this moment, if she was in front of me, you would have heard a killer rendition of 'Wipeout.'

'Whatever. Don't worry about it. I'll drop it off tonight.'

'Oh, ummm, well, goodb. . .'

That's all I heard because I hung up the phone.

Now, boys and girls, here's what your uncle Chris wants you to bring away from this little moment of oligophrenia that you just read.

- 1) don't give of your time to non-profits. Give them the damn cash and take a nap.
- 2) the postage mark is called an indicia. But you, being readers of stuff Zell, probably already knew that.
- 3) oligophrenia is feeble-mindedness and something to avoid (like you couldn't tell that because of the word itself).
- 4) And this is of utmost importance. There is nothing between 1 and 2 (and you math dudes, don't get snippy and make me break out my drum sticks) so never, never, never ask your layout person if there's something in between there. Or you may be the figure of ridicule for the layout person.

You have been warned.