The holidays are the time to reconnect and get back in touch with friends and family. While phone calls, cards, letters, and e-mails are all good ways to wish others well, some people prefer to send out one of those infamous holiday newsletters. Ever since someone had the brilliant idea of cranking off a couple dozen copies of this mass mailed, tell-all annual update on the mimeograph, the holiday newsletter has become a staple of the December greeting frenzy.

An Emily Post Institute survery showed that people have mixed feelings about these newsletters: 53% like them and 47% do not. It's a good bet that the 47% receive obnoxious brag sheets every holiday season.

With Facebook keeping everyone up to date from Kansas City to Ouagadougou, the holiday letter may become obsolete.

For those whose social network still relies on the annual recount, here are some tips to keep it welcome:

- Stick to the highlights—most people will be happy to know that you survived knee surgery and are back on the court, but they won't want to know the details of your grueling rehab.

- Send newsletters *only* to those you think will be interested.
- Share news that's positive and not too personal.
- Keep your letter to one page or less.
- A personal salutation—"Dear Karen and Phil"—is warmer than the printed "Dear friends," and signing each letter individually personalizes it more.

- If your newsletter is enclosed in a card, write a one- or two-sentence personal message in the card that accompanies the letter.
- Don't turn your letter into a brag sheet.
- If e-mailing your news, send it in an attachment of 1MB or less, and don't reveal recipients' names in the "To" line. Keep their info private by using the Bcc feature.

"IT'S BEEN A GREAT YEAR…"

 When writing your holiday letter, say…

 Not…

Scott was accepted at LSU.

Scott scored 1500 on his SATs.

Melissa loves competing on her horse, Star.

Melissa got blue ribbons at 16 out of 17 horse shows.

Buddy was promoted to senior vice president.

Buddy got a 75K raise and a company BMW.