

A Guide To Writing Press Releases*

Your goal should be to convey information to the reader as clearly and as quickly as possible. Put the most important things first. If you are announcing a coming event, be sure to say what it is and when and where it will be at the beginning of the article, though not necessarily all in one sentence. If you are reporting an important piece of news about your organization, put that right at the beginning.

- You might start the article by saying, “A community recycling project will be run in town next year by the Citizens for a Planetary Future, it was decided at the club’s regular meeting last Thursday.”
- Don’t start any article with “The Citizens for a Planetary Future (or whatever) held a meeting last Thursday,” or, even worse, “On Thursday, February 4, a meeting was held by the Citizens for a Planetary Future.”

There should be a fairly logical progression in your article from the most important material to the least important. If you submit a five paragraph story, keep in mind that we may have to eliminate two paragraphs to make it fit, therefore, you should put the things that you would mind least having cut out in the last two paragraphs.

The Lewis River Review strives for a unity of tone in its news columns, and this principle is applied even to the shortest items and press releases. It doesn’t mean that your submissions have to be uniformly dry and colorless; it simply means that we are going to apply our standards of objectivity and restraint to everything that appears in *The Review* as “news.”

Some publicity writers aspire in their press releases to the style of a carnival side-show barker: “Come One, Com All to the entertainment event of the year! Dance your hearts out to the rapturous sounds of the Norman Bonomo Quartet at next Saturday’s Winter Whoopie Dinner-Dance sponsored by the Benevolent Order of Moles.” This kind of pitch might be acceptable in an advertisement (and you are welcome to place one in the paper) but it is not acceptable in the guise of news.

Try to confine any flat statements in your article to demonstrable facts. If you want to say the dance is going to be a great success, that *opinion* should be attributed to someone: “ ‘This will be the entertainment event of the year,’ says Henry Fenster,



president of the Moles.” Avoid all exhortations to the reader, and look out for cliches and writing that is self-consciously “cute”.

Be conscious of the political implications of what you write. If a particular opinion or point of view is expressed in a newspaper article without being attributed to a specific person or group, readers will assume that the opinion expressed is that of the editors. If you are writing a report of a club meeting, for instance, try to quote people directly or else paraphrase their statements and add “So-and-So said,” or “she said,” rather than presenting those statements as if they were facts.

Long lists of names sometimes present a problem for publication. Please try to keep the size of the list under control by including only the more important persons/items.

You are welcome to suggest a possible headline for your article, but don’t be upset if we don’t use it. Sometimes it just won’t fit; or it might not be in the proper style dictated for newspaper headlines. Writing the headlines is both a chore and a privilege that is traditionally reserved for the editors.

Sample Press Release

Contact Person: *Your Name Here*
Company Name: *Your Organization Name Here*
Voice Phone Number: 555/555-1234
FAX Number: 555/555-5678
Email Address: *name@name.com*
Website URL: *www.yourwebsite.com*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE ALL IN UPPERCASE **Subtitle in upper and lowercase**

Body of the press release Body of the press release Body of the press release Body of the press release Body of the press release Body of the press release Body of the press release

ABOUT <COMPANY> - Include a brief description of your company along with the products and services it provides.

- END - *At the end of the release, you need to indicate that the release is ended. This lets the journalists know they have received the entire release. Type "End" on the first line after your text is completed. If your release goes over one page, type "MORE" at the bottom of the first page.*