

## Newspaper/Newsletter Writing: More Effective Communications An Outline

PDG Clark Van Scyoc (13H)

1. **PURPOSE:** Determine if article is to inform, educate, honor someone/group, seek support for fundraiser or project.
2. **TARGET:** Who do you want to inform? What market do you want to reach? Whose support do you seek?
3. **OUTCOMES DESIRED:** Understanding of goals of project. Response to project, support for fundraising. Inform public how they can assist (how, where, when, why).
4. **FORMAT:**
  - A. **ARTICLE TO INFORM:** Prepare public for method of response; location, time, and means of support (prior ticket sales, pay at entrance to event, cost breakdown, part of larger event, type of event).
    1. Need to submit articles early enough to fit into editorial timelines.
    2. Use of pictures to reinforce articles are favored by newspapers. Label correctly.
    3. Have follow-up colorful posters placed around strategically to reinforce article and project appeal.
  - B. **ARTICLE TO HONOR OTHERS:**
    1. Student achievements; how the Lions honor service; academic efforts, Leo Club work.
      - a. Highlight scholarships, plaques of honor, etc.
    2. Community leaders recognized
      - a. Honors of Lions in service, community achievements.
      - b. Police or firefighter achievements. Lions support for individuals or departments.
  - C. **ARTICLES TO EDUCATE:** Lions need to keep the public educated as to the scope of Lions work, focus on care and research and how their work benefits the community.
    1. Eyeglass collections.
    2. Diabetes testing—value of detection and prevention.
    3. Hearing tests, care.
    4. Youth program value—Quest, Leos leadership development, service projects.
    5. Reports on Lions support of community projects, services, and how they network with other organizations.
    6. Schedule of Lions events, with names and phone numbers for information.
    7. Provide public/Lions with results of their projects AND give an expression of thanks for both workers and public support.
5. **STRUCTURE OF ARTICLE**
  - A. Introduction or lead paragraph — Informative headline
    1. Begin with main facts:
      - a. WHAT happened or is expected to happen?
      - b. WHY is the event held?
      - c. WHEN will the event happen?
      - d. HOW will it be carried out?
      - e. WHERE will it happen?
      - f. WHO will be involved?
    2. Assemble the information (the six facts above) according to their importance.

(Continued on page 2)

## Newspaper/Newsletter Writing

PDG Clark Van Scyoc (13H)

Page 2

3. Different types of leads:
    - a. "A Summary"—Example: "More than 3,500 Lions attended the USA/Canada Forum held in Birmingham, Alabama on September 23-25, 1999, to learn information about Lion programs, for use in enhancing the effectiveness of their local Lions Club projects and services."
    - b. "A Quotation Start"—Example: "'The decisions we make at the local level of our Lions Club will have an important impact upon the lives of our citizens, our young people,' stated District Governor Guy Willdo in his May 20, 1999 address to the delegates of the Ohio Lions District 13F Convention, held in Columbus, Ohio."
    - c. "A Short Statement"—Example: "Lion delegates from 185 countries and geographical areas voted on the International Lions dues increase proposal while attending the recent International Lions Convention in San Diego, California on June 29 to July 2, 1999."
    - d. "A Question"—Example: "If you are charged with the responsibility of providing information on a number of Lions programs this coming year, what would you do?"
  4. Recheck the lead sentence. Does it address the identity of the speaker or the object of the sentence? Does it correctly identify the location, time and setting of the topic? Are spelling and grammar correct?
- B. BODY: The body of news articles expands and provides added information about the facts written in the lead. News is writing in a concise manner. The fewer words, the better. Use words that your readers understand.
1. Keep sentences short, simple and direct to the subject. Don't ramble or use run-on sentences. Keep paragraphs brief and develop one main idea in each paragraph.
  2. Organize the paragraphs to highlight and define the information outlined in the lead.
- C. SUMMARY: Effectively summarize the importance of the information provided in your lead. This helps the reader to connect with the purpose of the writer.
6. PREPARATION AND CHECKLIST:
- A. PROOFING
1. Avoid your personal comments in the article.
  2. Use third-person pronouns (he, she, they).
  3. Is the first word in each paragraph different?
  4. Check for grammar, spelling, date errors.
- B. PREPARING FINAL COPY:
1. A news article should be written on a standard size sheet of paper, use one side, type double space with wide margins on each side and top and bottom.
  2. Place your name, phone number, date and topic in the top right hand corner of the first page.
  3. Use photographs of Lions "doing activities" as opposed to "posing" for a picture. Describe the people and their involvement in the activity accurately.
  4. Don't begin sentences with numbers except when they are written out in word form (Example: "Three")
  5. Don't use abbreviations or initials or organizations without writing the full name in your article.
  6. Quote people accurately. Keep the quotes in the context of your topic.



**PUBLIC RELATIONS RESOURCES**

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Newspaper/Newsletter Writing**  
**PDG Clark Van Scyoc (13H)**  
**Page 3**

7. PRESS RELATIONS:

- A. Get acquainted with your local news reporters and editors.
  - 1. Invite them to speak to your club.
  - 2. Invite them to take pictures of your club during projects or service events, and write a report based on information you provide.
  - 3. Keep a calendar of events and meetings listed in your local paper.
  - 4. Use paid advertising to supplement your news articles. This is a business relationship also!

8. CLUB NEWSLETTERS:

- A. Use the same guidelines for information structure, paragraph structure, and make the language spirited and complimentary.
- B. Ask for articles and information from various committees to involve others and to provide variety.
- C. Provide a calendar of events and future business items as Lions need to schedule their time and be prepared for meetings.
- D. Make your newsletters enjoyable and informative.