

*State the Facts -*

- WHO
- WHAT
- WHERE
- WHEN
- WHY



Don't let your reporter /contact feel that they did not get enough information and that they must get back to you.



Be polite - give as much detail, without drowning them in minutia, yet enough so that if they did not contact you, you feel the facts would be presented well. Remember that it is the editor's and often times, the reporter's prerogative to edit down what you have written, so stick to the facts.

**Always include contact information!**

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If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me:

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# Winning Words

## Tips, Hints, and Ideas to Get Your Club into the Media

*Lions clubs all perform remarkable feats for the communities that they serve. Whether it is simple as collecting and sorting glasses, or building parks, attending Camp Lions, gathering food baskets, visiting the needy, providing a ride to an appointment, going to conventions, laughing, loving and sharing. We just need to know how to take that simple act (what we consider as a simple act, something we would do every day), and in a way that does not glorify ourselves, but rather the result of our actions, publicize it to let people know of the good works and good people in Lions.*

*Sounds simple -- just write a story about something you just did. And, yes, it is simple, but there are a series of keys to help guide us in our effort to shine the light on our efforts for the blind, hearing impaired and needy we serve.*

**November 2010**

“Lions are the best kept secret around!”

How many times have you heard that? Don't let your club or club activities go unnoticed, or worse: become a statistic!

Most things you do, including:

Leadership Training  
Installation of Officers  
Induction of New Members  
Service Projects  
Fund Raisers  
Donations of Equipment  
Donations of Eyeglasses  
Recognition of Member Achievements  
Announcements of District and State Achievements  
are not only newsworthy, but are of interest to everyman. Do not let an opportunity escape you.



## Press Releases and Other Writing Tips:

### 1. Who are you writing to?

#### **Smaller Community Papers**

- Write a longer release.
- Submit releases frequently (smaller papers thrive on local events).
- Include more names of local people (club members, etc.) (a savvy community newspaper editor understands that the more names he gets in his paper, the more people in town will read it, thence more sales).

#### **Larger, Daily Papers**

- Write a shorter release.
- Submit releases less frequently than if it were the smaller paper lest the “editor relegate my press releases to the mental pile labeled “*Oh, it's just more junk from the XX organization.*”
- Use names sparingly - use quotes only from the big cheeses (presidents, vice presidents, governors, etc.).
- Focus on the event or accomplishment, versus the people who made it happen.
- Face it - most dailies don't like to work with articles that are too “homey.” Although there are exceptions, such as warm, human interest stories, but it must be pretty interesting to reel in the BIG fish editor.

### 2. How will you file it?

#### **ELECTRONICALLY - the modern choice of journalists, reporters and editors:**

Type directly onto an e-mail or submit as a WORD document attached to an e-mail. In addition, FAX the release, so you know that someone has been forced to at least look at an actual hard copy.

Editor →



- Electronic copies allow for easier cut and paste/edit functions that must be done by the paper. The less work a reporter has to do, the more likely he is to do it!
- Don't forget the deadline, especially with time sensitive material!

### The Basic B's for Good Publicity:

1. Be the One and Only person from your club to contact the news media; two members reporting will cause confusion.
2. Be sure to include every “W” in your notes of the event; train your memory, but don't rely on it, only or always.
3. Be Prompt in meeting every Deadline (write it down).
4. Be Legible - type news releases, and double or triple space; include contact information.
5. Be Accurate, make sure to double check all dates, names and places before you submit copy.
6. Be Brief: Newspaper and magazine space is costly and there is always more news than space.

For my sake, do it right and I'll get it in for you and your Club.





## Resources for Local Media Contacts:

### Local Library:

- Ask the librarian to direct you to the names and addresses of the local and larger daily papers.
- Internet Access: Most libraries now have internet access - look up your local publications.

### Internet Access:

- Most papers can be accessed by typing in "www.nameofpaper.com" (insert your local paper name) or by accessing one of the search engines and typing in the name of the targeted paper.
- The web page for the paper(s) will list all of the local and regional, and oftentimes larger coverage area, reporters, their e-mail addresses, their U.S. post addresses, telephone, fax, and other pertinent information.
- [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org): This invaluable website not only has sample press releases, but complete press releases for download, as well as a plethora of other media avenues and ideas.

### Community Access:

- Find out who edits the community newsletter; the county, township or village clerk should be able to give you this information and they are always looking for input.
- Put the village or community offices on your newsletter and press release distribution list - you never know when your information will be used or posted on the public access site, mostly in addition to what you already do.
- Attend community meetings as a Lion and voice your opinion or offer your information - oftentimes these public board meetings are covered by the local press. When you give information, make sure it is about Lions, their actions and services provided, and about issue that are relevant to the club.

### Public Service Announcements (PSAs):

- Contact your favorite radio station and ask them to play a pre-recorded (available from LCI) Lions message.

### Local and College Radio and Television:

- Ask if you can provide an interview on a local radio or television station. This is an exciting way to really get the word out about what you do.

### Community Access Channel:

- Many communities that have cable access offer community access channels and this is a fun and educational way to promote Lionism.

### Chamber of Commerce:

- See what your local chamber can do for your club. Do you need to be a member? Can you become a member as a non-profit or as civic members? Volunteer at a couple of the events - man a table, host an event or open house, etc. Ask for the business mailing list.



**Step 1: Deciding what is "newsworthy."** This is only a sampling of ideas; each club and community has a variety of specific ideas that would make newsworthy items and it is up to the members to recognize them. These ideas are aimed at getting word of your club out to the public.

- Celebrations and Charter Events:** Every year that your club is in existence is a remarkable feat, especially in today's fast-paced society where time given for others is at a premium. Celebrations should be broadcast widely, both before and after. Consider when your town or village holds its anniversary - it is likely in every publication for many months, culminating in a special big event that everyone is aware of and will probably attend. This build-up will lead to a successful, happy event. Most likely, in your town, it was the Lions who were one of the founding service clubs; should not your celebration be as marked?
- Fund Raisers:** Any event (flea market, car show, carnival, pop stand, raffle, LIF Candy Day, etc.) that the club holds to raise funds from the public, for the purpose of providing services or to subsidize the club's funds should be publicized. Talk about who, what, why, where, when, dollars raised, etc.
- Distinguished Visitors:** Did you hear of when the Queen came to visit the United States? How about when a sister city representative came to visit your town? Or even when a special relative of a friend came visiting? Lions, too, have special visitors ALL THE TIME. Special, distinguished guests, can be anyone from the recipient of a service or product from the Lions coming to talk at a meeting, the District Governor or Zone Chair coming to present awards or induct new members, a representative of Lions Clubs International, or even a neighboring club coming to share your meeting.
- New Members/Member Achievements:** A new member is a valued member of your community; the sponsor of that new member thought enough of him or her to invite them to become a Lion. Both the sponsor and new member should have their story told and that includes why he or she wanted to join the Lions, who they are (are they parents finally finding time for an extra service outlet, are they students, neighbors, politicians, community leaders, etc.?) and what their expectations are of Lions. Recognizing and telling the public about these remarkable men and women not only strengthens your club, seats your place in the community as a strong, attractive organization, but also welcomes the new members on a very high note. Sponsors, too, deserve the recognition, as these are the people on the lookout for high quality people in their community.

When members of your club reach remarkable achievement levels, both personal and dealing with club matters, it is a newsworthy event. These can include, but are not limited to graduation from school, promotion in a job, new baby/grandbaby/future Lion, marriage, years of continuous Lions service, successful project chairmanship, the bestowal of awards and medals, etc..

Make sure to explain the award or achievement in as full detail as you can - after all, it is important to the recipient that you get the story right, as well as to those who made the presentation.

- Conventions, Forums and Meetings:** Who attended and what did they learn? This is important to the community, as it shows that we are an organization that not only believes in educating our members on any variety of things that we as Lions hold dear, but also to focus on the camaraderie and fellowship that is inherent in Lions.
- Donations From/To:** If your club donates the money or equipment to help someone else - this is BIG news. If a local concern donates money or equipment to your club so that you can help someone else, this is BIG news. Remember that it is not necessarily the dollar amount or value donated, but the intent.