

The Secret to Getting Publicity **By Marcia Passos Duffy**

The secret is this: You have to think like a journalist.

- Separate the real news about your organization from promotional fluff, hype or clichés.
- Deliver a sharp story angle that's interesting to readers.
- Send this in a professional courteous manner with a well-written press release.

The Press Release Format

Here is a formula you can follow to write your own press release. A well-written, professional, no-nonsense press release is the only way your event will get noticed by an editor.

Most publications now require that press releases be sent as an e-mail, but **do not** send your text as an attachment. Send it as the body of your email, with minimal formatting. If you want to submit a photo, make the digital photo file available on the Internet. Most editors will not open attachments due to concerns about viruses. Plan to send your press release at least two weeks before the event.

1. Keep it 1-2 pages in length.
2. At the top left hand margin type in all caps: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Note: Do not all-caps anything else in the press release)
3. On the next line, add your contact information under the heading "Media Contact." Include your name, organization name, telephone number, e-mail address and website.
4. Write a headline that summarizes your news. (No hype here. Just the facts!)
5. On the first line of your press release, type the town you're submitting from and the date followed by two dashes. The first paragraph immediately follows this.
6. Your first paragraph should answer at least five essential questions -- Who? What? When? Where? Why? It can also answer the question "How."
7. Make your point quickly (and answering these questions will help keep you on track) in the first paragraph using short sentences. Keep in mind that editors don't have a lot of time on their hands. They will read your press release along with a hundred more from other groups. Make it easy for them by giving them all the information they need in the first paragraph.
8. Your second paragraph may include a quote, or an explanation of any point in your first paragraph. Don't try to be humorous or creative. Wordy text will be edited or ignored.
9. In your last paragraph, add a "boilerplate" summary of your organization, including phone number, tag line, Web site, and number of years in existence. This will be the same for every press release you write.
10. Make your e-mail subject simple and clear. For example: "PRESS RELEASE: Contra Dance in Nelson NH April 9, 2011."

Remember, editors will not print anything that is sloppy, difficult to read or to understand...and they don't have time to decipher what you are trying to say. So before you hit the "send" button, have several friends read your press release and give you constructive feedback.

Do **not** call the editor to see if the newsroom has received the press release! There is nothing more annoying to a busy editor on deadline to get these did-you-get-my-press-release calls. If you provided all the necessary contact information, the editor or reporter will call **you**.

Have Patience

Just because you have written a great press release with (what you believe) is an exciting message about your event doesn't mean that an editor in the newsroom will agree with you or print your release word for word. The downside to publicity (versus advertising) is that there are no guarantees. Your release may not make it to print at all or can be reduced to a one-line mention.

Remember that sending a press release is never a waste of time. You can be sure that while your news may not make it in print, you have made an impression (hopefully a good one) on the editor. Your press release may actually be filed away for reference for a future story, or as a potential expert to quote, or to build a file on an organization. You are building a professional relationship with editors; you must be a resource -- not pushy or self-serving. The key is to be open and understanding about the way publicity works and not to give up! If you have a good story to tell about your event, and you are professional and persistent, you may get your story told -- which benefits the publication, and you.

Marcia Passos Duffy
Co-Publisher & Editorial Director
Monadnock Table magazine
The guide to the region's food, farms & community

www.monadnocktable.com

marcia@monadnocktable.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Arts and Events Calendar

Media Contact
Lisa Sieverts
[603-762-0235](tel:603-762-0235)
lisa@lisasieverts.com

Contra Dance in Nelson NH on Saturday April 9

Nelson, NH March 19, 2011 -- The Monadnock Folklore Society presents the Nelson Second Saturday Contra Dance on April 9th, featuring Dave Eisenstadter calling with Bo Bradham on fiddle and Gordon Peery on piano.

Fiddler Bo Bradham was one of the founding members of David Kaynor's Greenfield Dance Band. He has studied with Mark O'Connor, Natalie MacMaster, and Martin Hayes. With his roots in New England and his love of southern music, Bo succeeds at crossing of boundaries between different genres of music. Gordon Peery, of Nelson, NH, plays piano with gusto, appearing with bands such as Celticladda and Airdance. He has played for dances all over America as well as the Shetland Isles and England. When Dave Eisenstadter is not calling contra dances, he is a reporter for the Keene Sentinel.

Dancing begins at 8:00 PM, with a short workshop beforehand. Beginners and singles are welcome and all dances are taught throughout the evening. Admission is \$8 or \$6 for students and seniors. The dance takes place in the historic Town Hall in Nelson, NH. For more information call [603.762.0235](tel:603.762.0235) or visit www.monadnockfolk.org. The Monadnock Folklore Society has presented contra dances and concerts of traditional music since 1982.

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SUMMARY for CALENDAR

Event: Contra Dance

Venue: Nelson Town Hall
Location: Nelson, New Hampshire
Date: Saturday, April 9, 2011
Dave Eisenstadter calling with Bo Bradham and Gordon Peery
Time: 8:00 PM
Admission: \$8/\$6 students and seniors
Info Phone: [603-762-0235](tel:603-762-0235)
Info Email: lsievert@yahoo.com
Info URL: <http://www.monadnockfolk.org>
Photo URL:
<http://www.monadnockfolk.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/NSWC-portrait.jpg>