

HEADLINE: Get your story out there

As the newspaper industry struggles to find a successful business model to compete in the Internet age, the public service side of journalism is changing too. More than ever, newspapers are working to cover news in their core market. That has led to an interest in what is called hyperlocal journalism. You're likely to see fewer short pieces from the Associated Press and more stories about the local political party gathering or the newest Eagle Scout.

Weekly newspapers have long been purveyors of that kind of news. The chicken dinners and Paul Harris Fellowship presentations are welcome additions in those size newspapers.

The casual newspaper reader may believe that media types are only interested in the latest gotcha journalism they can produce. But good newspaper publishers and editors know that readers are also interested in the good news in their area.

Names and faces sell newspapers. If your club presents a scholarship, submit a short story and a picture to the newspaper. When that is published, the child's mother will buy four or five copies to give to aunts, uncles, grandparents and, of course, a copy for her own scrapbook.

That kind of refrigerator journalism is important to newspapers of all shapes and sizes because it's important to their readers.

Regardless of the size of your community's newspaper, there are a few things your club should consider when trying to gain publicity for your event or special occasion.

The most important rule to remember is actually an old cliché: The squeaky wheel gets the grease. It's important to task someone in the club to handle publicity so it gets done on a regular basis. Submitting news items a once a month or so gives you a better chance of getting coverage. Think about it this way. Who's likely to hit more home runs? A batter who's been to the plate once? Or a batter who's tried 100 times? Frequency matters.

In addition to frequency, it's also important to know what your local newspaper is interested in. If they can't use a weekly report on your program speaker, don't send it to them. If they are interested in your fundraisers and your recognitions, make sure your publicity chairman gets the information to them in a timely manner.

Remember that Rotary is a networking opportunity. Get to know your local newspaper editor. Invite him or her to join your club or at least visit. That can benefit not only the individual members, but the club as a whole – if you take advantage of it.

For a few more helpful hints on getting your club's news published in the newspaper, visit the District 7710 Web site at:

http://www.rotary7710.org/PDF/10_Tips_to_get_your_news_published.pdf

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