

## **WRITING ARTICLES FOR SCC COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT**

Don't wait for a flood, tornado or hurricane to find and report news. Look around at the many good things happening in your church at this very moment. Every church has its own story to tell. Write about church events and take action pictures as they happen. Interesting things often take place in churches that readers in other parts of South Central and/or Southern Union would like to hear about, but you will need to share them with the our Department in order to make this happen.

What is worth writing about? Share good news such as:

- A church member(s) reaching out to a neighbor in need.
- Members involved in a community project, such as clean-up, a feeding program, shelter for street people, tree planting in the part, visiting hospitals / nursing homes.
- Any unique experiences during outreach ministries (prison, women, youth, etc.)
- A kindergarten program that's attracting more young parents and their children to Sabbath School.
- A Sabbath School with an interesting approach to lesson study.
- Involvement in a county fair booth
- An effective visitation program to reach inactive members.
- Sabbath morning greeters with a ministry in the church foyer.
- An active small Bible study or prayer group.
- An exciting conversion story.

Any unique, newsworthy article on how God can be seen working in our lives and in our churches will be considered.

### **IMPORTANT FACTS TO CONSIDER**

- Be timely. When possible, prepare your material ahead of the event. Then fill in the last few details during or right after the event. This will ensure your news is "fresh" when you send it to us. Don't wait to send material in or it may not be used!
- Include all necessary facts to cover the Who? What? Why? When? Where? and How? of a story.
- Make sure all facts are accurate and that names are fully listed and spelled correctly. By writing objectively, you can keep your article free from an unrealistic slant or bias.

- Approach your story from a unique angle. Something that stands out from the ordinary will grab people's attention much easier than the same old story.
- Include strong photographs. They add life to the story.
- Give the complete reference when quoting from a book or manuscript. Quote material just as it is given. Do not add personal comments, italics, or capitalization unless mention of this is made.
- Editorial comments are not appropriate in stories. Editorializing means to make comments such as "Everyone had a great time at the picnic" or "He presented a beautiful sermon". Keep opinions out and stick with the hard facts.
- Will others want to read this? Is your article well-enough explained for the reader to comprehend? Approach your story with these questions in your mind, remembering that you are writing for an audience. You need to keep them interested.
- Good writing, like good public speaking, demands a well-defined purpose if it is to convey a meaningful message. If the writer can answer the question "What am I trying to accomplish when I write this piece?" then they have taken the first important step to coherent, cohesive composition.

### **HOW TO GO ABOUT WRITING**

- Randomly jot down all thoughts relating to the chosen subject.
- Group your thoughts in a logical manner and turn them into paragraphs, making sure to cover all pertinent facts, including all five W's and H.
- Write in the third person (she, he, they) rather than the first person (I, we, the writer).
- Do not write adversely of other religious denominations. When mentioning others in an article, use terms like "non-members" or "non-Adventist churches", only if that information is needed at all.
- When using names, spell them correctly. Give the first and last name (Mary Jones not Mrs. Jones) and give their position or title (head elder of \_\_\_\_ church or member of \_\_\_\_).

- When using the name of the church, use either the full name, Seventh-day Adventist or Adventist for short. DO NOT use SDA. It has no meaning to the general public and can be confused with a cult or LDS (Latter-day Saints).
- News stories must be current, fresh or just about to happen. Use active verbs and short words and sentences. Avoid jargon, unknown abbreviations, and Adventist terminology not understood by non-members. Follow the newspaper format giving the most important items in the opening paragraph.
- Reread your work, imagining you are someone who knows nothing about the event. OR have someone else read through it to add a different perspective. Add items that still seem to be missing and rewrite sentences that are not clear. A good writer often lays their work aside for a day and then may re-write the item or part of it to ensure clarity.

### **PREPARING THE FINAL COPY**

- Put your name, address and telephone number at the top right hand side of the page.
- Give the date of the release and double space it.
- Type "more" at the bottom of the page if the story goes onto a second page and type "page 2" on next page.
- At the end of the release put "####" at the bottom middle of the page so we know where it ends.
- Get your material to the South Conference Communication Office by the 10th of each month. If the 10th falls on a weekend, please have it in the Thursday prior to the 10th.
- Email is preferred - please email information to :

[communication@scc-adventist.org](mailto:communication@scc-adventist.org)

In the subject line, please state "News Article"

NOTE: please ATTACH all digital photos. Do NOT include them in the body of the email.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

- A good photograph increases the chances of your story making it into a newspaper or the Record. It also helps capture a reader's attention to a page or section they might otherwise just skim over. Your picture I made or broken the instant the shutter clicks. That moment doesn't last long, so plan for it:
- Know where you will stand to take the photo. Check the background to make sure nothing interferes with the composition of the photo, like a telephone pole growing out of someone's head.
- Have good lighting or a good flash on all pictures
- Fill the frame. Pictures with too much blank space are not close enough to the attraction. Don't be afraid to get up close and personal. This is especially true regarding pictures of baptisms - stand near the baptismal tank.
- Take pictures that tell a story, that show people in action. Take very few pictures of people just sitting or standing in front of the camera.
- Make sure your pictures has a center attraction, a main highlight that attracts the eye.
- Try to keep pictures clutter free.
- Over fifteen people in one pictures are too many. Group pictures are seldom attractive to people that aren't in the picture. Instead of taking a whole groups picture, take a close-up action picture of part of the group and explain that they are a few of those who participated in the function or activity.
- Shoot a number of photos of the same subject from different angles to find the best one for your story.
- Try to have a high contrast in your picture (Example: a dark-skinned person should not be in front of a dark background).
- Make sure your camera is ready so you don't miss that award-winning shot. Take your camera and extra batteries to all church-related events so you'll always be prepared.
- Don't use a Polaroid camera - its photos do NOT reproduce well for publication. Use color film, or if a digital camera is used, have it set on the highest resolution

and make sure you email the pictures. Pictures printed on copy paper don't work for publication purposes. Dark or fuzzy pictures are not acceptable for print media.

- Attach a caption with your photo, explaining what is happening.
- Give first and last names from left to right. This is very important, because few publications will use your photo or even your story if your photo doesn't include names.
- Avoid paper clipping your photos, unless paper is placed between the clip and the face of the pictures.
- Pictures will NOT be returned, unless you provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
- If you send digital pictures via email, *please send them as an attachment*, **NOT** in the body of the email. We can not extract them easily when they are imbedded in an email. Please include in the subject line "News Article Pictures" and include all names in the email, as well as which article they are for, if not sent at the same time. All News information should be sent to the South Central Conference Communication Department no later than the 10th of each month. If the 10th falls on a weekend, please have it in by the Thursday before.
- You may email your photos to:  
[communication@scc-adventist.org](mailto:communication@scc-adventist.org)