

## WRITING FOR YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Seeking publicity in the newspaper fulfills the need for square dance clubs to promote the year around, not just at the time of new dancer sessions. The purpose is to maintain an awareness--a sort of "top of mind" familiarity with the dance club and its many events, highlighting the fun and laughter that square dancers enjoy. Thus, through the year, you are "cultivating" people toward getting involved in your recreation. The more you make people *aware* of the enjoyment you have with Square Dancing, the more inclined people are to want to come and see what it is like when your new dancer sessions start.

### **Some simple suggestions to help you get articles about square dancing and square dancers in your local paper.**

**First**, be sure you take out paid advertising sometimes. This helps establish your 'bona fides' so to speak and the paper is much more inclined to publish your news.

**Second**, do not expect the paper to accept articles that are just recruitment promotions. Newspapers want News and they want Human Interest stories.

**Third**, always ask to see any article written after an interview or if you have invited a reporter to come and visit a special dance before publication. This way, you can ensure that the information is accurate and that the reporter does not concentrate only on the 100-year-old who dances with you.

**Fourth**, Better yet, **write your own articles** and use your own photographs !

Again, Brian Elmer has some good guidelines on how to do this. See the document entitled “**An Informal Peek Into Press Releases**” on our Promoting, Recruiting & Retaining page at [http://www.r5ccda.squaredance.bc.ca/r5ccda\\_promotion.html](http://www.r5ccda.squaredance.bc.ca/r5ccda_promotion.html)

A properly written article is often accepted verbatim and can be emailed, along with accompanying photos, to the paper, so write the press release as if it were a reporter commenting. This way you get to say what you want in the way you want, rather than have an event reflected through the eyes of a non-dancing individual.

**Fifth**, make sure your article is a *newsy* item. Did you square dance by the lake and in the water to earn an Aquaduck badge? Did some of your dancers enjoy a cruise - always mention that they are square dancers. Did your club entertain at a Seniors' Center or dance in a Parade or at a public event such as a Pancake Breakfast. Don't forget your party nights and Jamborees.

**Sixth**, keep your article to 1 page. You have to try to put the most important material in the first half of your press release because editors might chop off the remainder if they have space issues.

**Seventh**, learn how to change the resolution settings in your camera. Photos that are a few kilobytes may look good on a web page but they will not print well in a newspaper. Photos need to be in a quality of resolution that's at least 300 dots-per-inch. Generally, most of today's digital cameras shoot in higher resolution and create photos that are about 1 megabyte in size or more. That's acceptable to a newspaper.

**Eighth**, include a separate information sheet to accompany the photos suggesting captions and generally explaining what's happening or who's in the picture. You should credit the photographer, such as "All photos taken by Jane Smith except #DSC-0084: Dancer doing handstand, by Jim Jones."