

CLUB PUBLICITY

Locally, publicity makes any organization a factor in the community; nationally, it gives the club a reputation of being a live and progressive group. Such a reputation is always healthy and, when the club sponsors an exhibition or special event, it will pay off in support.

With the club's name well-known, it will be easier to attract new members. All clubs need them because there is a constant turnover. Old members drop out for various reasons and replacements are necessary to keep the club in existence.

THE PERSON FOR THE JOB

The two simplest and most effective means of obtaining publicity for your club are through the use of specially prepared news releases and the distribution of a club publication.

It is important to select the right person for the job. The position need not be an elective one. It is often better to have the officers appoint a publicity chairperson. If you get the right person, keep him or her in the job for as long a time as the individual will serve rather than limit the term of office to a specific period. Discard the idea that publicity is something that can be handled in the Secretary's spare time. Try to make it an office by itself.

A good publicity chairperson must be a stickler for detail, be alert to all opportunities, have imagination and ideas, be willing to write many emails when necessary, answer all email promptly, and be slow to take offense.

THE EMAIL LIST

Don't rely on the telephone for publicity. A publicity email list is a must. Add the Publicity email list to the club's newsletter email list for a starter. Today electronic mail is now the preferred method for colleges, schools, art institutes, museums, and newspapers to receive information.

A publicity email list should include every newspaper and community publication in and around your area. If any of these have a photo news column, address material to the individual writer. Put photo magazines on this news release list. Include the editor of the camera club council or association publication serving your area.

The foregoing suggestions are obvious. Here are others you may not have thought of: local libraries may post your releases on their bulletin boards. Add camera stores and dealers to your list. This gives clerks an answer to the customer's inquiry, "When is there a camera club meeting in town?" They, too, may put your notices on display. Add other camera clubs in your area and any other outlets that come to mind, such as local colleges, schools, art institutes and museums, your PSA Region Director, etc. If your club is company or community sponsored, make arrangements to post notices on company or community bulletin boards.

CAUTIONS ON EMAILS

When compiling the list, make certain no one is omitted. Don't eliminate any publication or writer because of personal reasons. Disregard your own evaluation of a paper or magazine. Each has a following and offers your club an outlet for its publicity. Send the same news to all and at the same time. Don't play favorites. Never worry over a sour notice. If the club's name is mentioned, it must be considered positive for your club. No writer gets 100% agreement from the readers. Don't write to an editor and complain or tell the editor what to print.

Some newspaper and magazine editors claim that sending the club publications to them is a waste of effort. They say they haven't time to read through them in search of news. Despite this feeling in certain quarters, clubs are urged to send their publications to all names on their email publicity list.

True, some editors haven't the time to review each document. On the other hand, many club news reporters pick up items from them. In any case, sending publications to newspapers and magazines proves to their editors that you have their publications in mind and that your club is a going organization. Your newsletter may not do much for you in the way of advance notices, especially in magazines, but there is always a chance for an after-the-event story and that is excellent publicity, too.

PUBLICITY RELEASES

A formal News Release should cover one event only and it should be short, terse, and to the point. No unnecessary build-up; just stick to the facts. It should be formatted as a "news release." The club may develop a Word doc letterhead that can be used for all New Releases.

In the upper left hand corner, the words "IMMEDIATE RELEASE" and a specific date should appear. In the upper right, the name, address, and telephone number of the club's publicity director should appear. This way the editor can contact the club representative for more details.

Be certain about the spelling of all proper names and never use nicknames. A club member may be called "Butch" by friends but be formal in the release and use his given name.

In preparing any publicity material, it is important that all essential facts (event, speaker, club, meeting place, and time) be given in the first or second paragraphs. The balance of the release can be embellishment of the opening paragraphs.

Never make vague statements. Editors are at a loss when they receive an undated release containing information that "happened last week." Their reaction is "What week?" and it is not used!

Very often, out-of-town speakers and judges are considered more newsworthy than local celebrities. In preparing a press release play up how and what the visitor will do for members of the local community instead of a mere recital of the visitors past achievements.

A sample news release is provided at the end of this document.

SOME CLUBS USE POST CARDS

This is a good idea. It is inexpensive and entails little effort. Cards should be typed with appropriate graphics or photos and should furnish all the necessary information of the event. If printed at home by a volunteer, use black and white with strong graphics to catch someone's eye.

Postcards are especially handy to tack on bulletin boards in camera stores, YMCAs, libraries, schools, community centers, etc. They also hold enough data for spot news items in local newspapers.

CONSIDER THE DEADLINE

The deadline for material printed in monthly magazines is always far in advance of the date of issue. The camera club news you read in these photographic publications was written two to three months before it appeared in print. Unless your club's program is set up well in advance and your publicity director releases the news far enough ahead of time, it will not appear in these magazines. So, for special events for which you feel advance notice in magazines would be worthwhile, send the release to the editor early. If you are uncertain of a publication's deadline,

write or telephone the editor to find out.

The subject of deadlines must be stressed. A case in point is the *PSA Journal*. Sixty days before publication is the deadline for scheduled, regular material. For instance, information for the March issue must be received by January 1. All other material has no deadline and is used at the discretion of the Editor. Do not presume that sending material 60 days in advance regarding some event will mean your offering is published! Only regular scheduled material applies to the deadline. The Journal does list upcoming events of interest to PSA members in the Calendar of Events near the front of the Journal.

PHOTOGRAPHS WITH THE RELEASE

This is something for your publicity director to investigate. Some publications and writers welcome illustrations, while others never use them. It is simple to find out which and make notes for future reference.

When you do send photographs, candid pictures of club activities, be sure that they are good images of a type that will reproduce well. Most images used now are digital and sent via email. Publications usually want 300 dpi TIFF images, but some will accept JPG files. Don't crowd too many people into one picture. Those shown should be clear and sharp. Never use photos picturing members or guests in embarrassing poses. Type a short caption, naming the people, the event, the club, and attach this information with a credit line for the photographer.

PROMOTING THE CLUB'S PHOTO SCHOOL

Sometimes final arrangements with teachers are reached only a short time before classes begin; however, publicity can start as soon as the dates are set. Describe past courses, naming some of those who have served on the teaching staff and also some of the star pupils. State that the new courses will be "bigger and better" than ever and be certain to give the name and address of the person authorized to furnish additional information, so it pays to make sure that the people responsible for conducting the classes cooperate by lining up instruction and completing other details well before your publicity campaign starts.

RADIO AND TV

There is not much hope of planting publicity with the larger stations in major cities. In smaller areas, however, it is possible to get notices of special club meetings mentioned on daily announcements of local events. Put local radio and TV stations on your email lists.

In some instances, stations are looking for short interviews. Out-of-town celebrities coming to lecture or judge will be in this category. A club announcement of community interest may get "time" on the air. The Club Community Service activities may be covered.

Some of the smaller or newer stations, both radio and TV, are looking for short how-to-do-it photographic programs aimed at neophytes. It is quite possible that one of your more articulate members can qualify for this job. This is a fine method for publicizing your club. It would be wise to prepare an outline of the complete presentation before seeking an appointment with the station manager or program producer. You should offer TV stations a (horizontal) digital image with the release that should contain the basic facts needed to publicize the event.

LITTLE THINGS THAT HELP

Help keep the club's name in circulation. Any way you bring it before the public is a form of publicity. A member's lapel button or a pin is a suggestion.

Tie the club in with community activities, such as hospital and charity drives, traffic accident control, juvenile delinquency, and the like. Design an attractive letterhead and make it available to all club officials. Take advantage of the success of your members. When one accomplishes something of note, send out a press release prominently featuring your club.

Invite all editors to your annual banquet. Or ask them to participate in one of your club programs. Be certain they know they are welcome at all club meetings and events.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF GOOD PRESS NOTICES

Make your publicity do double-duty whenever possible. For instance, should your club receive a good story in some newspaper or magazine, and give it as wide distribution as possible. An E-Blast to club members with the notice attached is a good place to begin. Be sure to credit the publication (with date) and writer. Shorter press notices can be quoted in your club newsletter. These often impress prospective members who read them.

A "thank you" note from your publicity director to the author of any good notice is never amiss. It shows appreciation and further shows that you and your members are readers of the publication.

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

LIVEWIRE CAMERA CLUB
P.O. BOX 1
STAMFORD, CN 12345

For Immediate Release

Publicity Director, Wendy Smith
2 Hope Street, Bluebrook, CN 12345
Wsmith@yahoo.com, 808-233-7942

LIVEWIRE CAMERA CLUB TO FEATURE NATIONALLY KNOWN SPEAKER

The mid-month meeting of the Livewire Camera Club, to be held Wednesday evening, October 15, at 8:15 PM in the lecture hall of the Stamford Museum, will feature the nationally known portrait photographer, Jones J. Jones, APSA. Mr. Jones will show some of his outstanding images and demonstrate his techniques.

A recognized authority on the skills of posing and portrait lighting, Mr. Jones' programs are always of great help to all photographers. Of additional interest is the question period, during which he answers queries on photographic techniques.

Specializing in the photography of adults, Mr. Jones maintains a studio in New York City. He has made several lecture tours under the sponsorship of The Photographic Society of America (PSA), during which he appeared before camera clubs all over the country. Mr. Jones is an Associate of PSA and has had many articles published in the Society's monthly magazine, the PSA Journal.

This program is free of charge and open to the public.