

Submitting Club News to The Advocate

Part of a presentation to FGBRCA by The Advocate's George Morris on February 13, 2014

What we print and where it appears

The Community column, which is published on Tuesdays and Fridays in the EatPlayLive section, accepts reports from social, community service, philanthropic or non-profit organizations about meetings or other events that have already taken place. The deadline is noon Friday of the previous week.

There is another column, called About Town, that publishes information about upcoming events that are open to the public. The column is published on Sundays in the People section. Deadline is noon Mondays.

How to get it to us

We accept submissions by email, postal mail or hand delivery. We prefer email because it decreases the chances of misspelling names through retyping and generally makes our job easier. Send submissions to **people@theadvocate.com**.

If submitting by postal mail or hand delivery, address the information to "Community" or "About Town" c/o EatPlayLive Section. The postal address is P.O. Box 588, Baton Rouge LA 70891. If you use postal mail or hand deliver your submissions, please DO NOT direct them to a particular Advocate employee by name (unless that employee has directed you to do so). When employees are sick or on vacation, submissions directed to their individual mailboxes may not reach the person who is editing the column in their absence.

It also is helpful that postal or hand-delivered submissions be typed. Even good handwriting sometimes blurs the differences between certain letters, which is particularly important when it comes to spelling people's names. Also, please DO NOT TYPE IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. Use upper and lower case lettering.

What to include

The **most important** item on a submission is the NAME and TELEPHONE NUMBER of the person submitting the news item so we can verify and clarify information. If there is another person who also can assist us if the submitter knows he or she will be unavailable, please include that name and number, too. This is true even for emailed submissions.

The Basics In submitting news to The Advocate, it helps us a great deal if you are careful to include these basic items.

Who?

What is your club's specific name? (Please, don't make us guess. Odds are, you won't like the result.)

Give first and last names of the relevant individuals. Please avoid identifying women by their husband's name. (Instead of Mrs. Sam Smith, identify her as Susan Smith.)

Naturally, make sure the spelling is correct. We often cannot easily verify spellings of names, especially of married women who are not listed by their given names in the telephone directory. We're relying on you.

When identifying a person's office or title in the organization, please spell out the title instead of abbreviating it, unless it is an easily recognizable abbreviation like CEO or VP.

What?

When reporting a club meeting, think about what happened that would be interesting to people who aren't members of your organization. If there was a speaker, give us the speaker's name, topic and the topic's key points.

Other items commonly reported include:

- Elections of officers (again, include name and title)
- Reports from officers of committees that include some specific information. Avoid sentences like: "Joyce Jackson gave the treasurer's report." This doesn't tell anyone anything except the name of the treasurer. But, for example, if her report informed members that the club's fund-raising activities increased by 45 percent from the previous year, that is worth reporting.
- Information shared in the meeting about upcoming events. (Example: "Event chairman Mike Mann said tickets to the jambalaya fundraiser will go on sale on April 1. The event will be held April 30 at the club hall.")
- Identifying persons who served as hosts or hostesses or were part of the committee that put on the meeting.

Because of space limitations, we cannot publish everything that happens at meetings.

Any submission longer than one double-spaced typed page probably has more information than we can use, so we'll have to exclude some of it. Also, many organizations have certain rituals that occur at every meeting (Example: "Commander Bill Budd led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Don Dodge called the meeting to order. Alice Alexander gave the invocation.") Generally, we do not publish such items.

When?

Tell us the date of the meeting you are reporting on. We do not need to know the time of day. (When referencing upcoming events, however, include time, date and location.)

Get your items to us promptly. We do not run items that are more than a month old. So, if your club met on the 15th of the month, we must receive your submission in time for it to run by the 15th of the next month. Waiting longer than three weeks to submit your news is pushing the limit.

Where?

Tell us the location where you met. If it is a business that has several locations, such as a chain restaurant, please include the address of the place where you met.

Photos

We recognize that most people submitting photos are not professional photographers, and that is OK. However, there are some suggestions that will help you submit photos that we can use.

Many photographs we receive are too dark, particularly when taken indoors. A common reason is because the photographer — even if using flash — is too far away from the subject. As a general rule, try to get close, filling most of the viewfinder with your subjects.

Even if there is enough light, other problems arise from taking photos from too far away. One is focus. Another is perspective. If there is someone between the camera and the intended subject, that person will actually appear larger than the subject. (This often happens when people take photos of speakers, and some of the audience is between the photographer and the speaker.) If it is impossible or inappropriate to move in front of the audience while the speaker is speaking, take a picture of the speaker before or after the meeting.

When posing someone for a photo, do not “stage” the photo by having them pretend to do something (such as a speech or craft demonstration that they gave the group). It is fine, however, to have them pose with something appropriate to the role they performed at the meeting. (Example: If the photo subject is someone who demonstrated how to make a certain flower arrangement, it is fine to have that person pose with the finished arrangement.)

Because of the popularity of the Community column, we permit **ONE PHOTO PER CLUB PER MONTH**. That does not mean that photos must run four weeks apart. For example, a club can have a photo the last week of February and the first week of March, but no more photos until April.

Thus, if at your event you are honoring more than one person or more than one group of persons, take a photo that has ALL of the honorees. It's either that or having to decide — or make us decide — which people's photos are published and which are left out.

If at all possible, no more than nine persons per photo. This is not a hard-and-fast rule (although it used to be), but is a good rule of thumb. When the number of people in a photo increases, they necessarily must be smaller in the photo to fit in the viewfinder. The smaller they get, the less identifiable they are when we reproduce them on newsprint. Certainly, if your organization is installing more than nine officers, or honoring a larger group, don't leave anyone out. But sometimes we get photos with so many people that it is impossible for us to reproduce them with quality that meets our standards, so we don't publish them.

Another suggestion: If your organization has a large number of officers and board members, take separate photographs of the officers and the other board members, submitting one photograph in one month, then send in the other photo in a subsequent month.

Identify everyone who is identifiable in the photograph. As a rule, we do not run photos of unidentified people. Provide their first and last names from left to right as they appear in the photo.

When lining people up for a photo, place them shoulder to shoulder facing the camera, with no large gaps between them. Whenever you are taking a photo of more than four persons, it is best to put them in two distinct rows. (Identify them from left to right on each row.) By doing so, the photographer can get closer to the subjects, which usually results in crisper, clearer photographs.

We do not run photos of check presentations. We have quit running this because it has become a cliché, and often the “check” in the photo is simply a piece of paper made to serve as a prop. Just take a picture of the relevant people.

Don’t make crop marks on the photo you turn in.

If one or more of the people you’d like in a photograph is not available, do not use someone else as a “stand-in.” We do not run photos of stand-ins.

Don’t alter photos by cutting and pasting people into the photo. We will not run such photos.

Emailing Photos

We gladly accept emailed photographs. They must be in JPG (“jpeg”) format, About 300KB in size. If that technical language means nothing to you, send the photos Maximum or Fine quality. If you have further technical questions, call (225) 383-1111 and ask for our Photo department.

Questions

If you have a question about a Community submission, call George Morris at The Advocate at (225) 388-0628 or EatPlayLive Editor Karen Martin at (225) 388-0378. (Again, for the reasons detailed above, please do not send your submissions for the column directly to either person.)

* * * * *