

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE/CLUB ARTICLE

Deadlines

- These are deadlines to run in the following Wednesday's issue:
 - Columns are due by noon on Tuesdays.
 - Articles for religious news, club trips, movies and food are due by noon Wednesdays.
 - Articles for health and bridge and listings for Mutual and RWC meetings are due by 3 p.m. Wednesday.
 - All other club news articles are due by 9 a.m. on Thursdays.
- Photos must be taken by end of day Wednesday, except by special arrangement.
- Residents Forum Letters to the Editor are due by Thursday at noon, but the earlier the better.
- It is the responsibility of the correspondent to check the News weekly for notification of early deadlines, particularly as holidays approach. Correspondents also can request that their email address be included on email reminders sent out by the News before holiday deadlines. Please email that request to news@rossmoor.com.

Submitting articles

The top of each article must have the following information:

- Correspondent's name (and name of writer, if different from submitter)
- Phone number
- Dates the article should run
- Captions for any photos submitted with the article (including the names, listed from left to right, of any people clearly identifiable in the photos).
- Suggested headline (the editor may need to change this to fit the layout)
- Preferred byline (either writer's name or name of the club)
- Use Times LT Std font if submitting a Microsoft Word document (this is our preference). Please do not submit articles in pages (Apple) format or as PDF files. If unable to use Word, it is best to copy and paste the article into the body of the email.

Articles may run a maximum of three times unless it is a special event and has been OK'd by the managing editor. The requested publication dates must be consecutive editions of the paper (we can't skip dates). If an article is desired to run more than once, request a "pick-up" of the first article, listing the date(s) you would like it to run again. If **small** changes need to be made, submit a copy of the original article with the changes boldfaced or highlighted. **Do not** reword an article that is already running and submit it as if it is a new article.

With rare exceptions, articles cannot recap what occurred at an event/meeting (results of competitions are permitted). Otherwise, articles can only make brief mention (one or two sentences) of past events. One photo from a past event can be submitted to run as a standalone (with no article) along with a caption; see photo rules below.

Word limits and bylines

The following are the word limits. Articles: 500 or less. Columns: 800 words or less. Club trip listings and club movies: 180 words or less. Letters to the editor: 250 words or less. Religious services listings: 120 words or less. If you are writing a special feature, requests for extensions on the word limit must be made in advance; the News cannot guarantee the request will be honored.

Please include preferred byline (either correspondent's name and title such as club correspondent or club/organization name on top of all submitted articles). If no byline is included on a submitted article, the News will use the club/organization name for the byline (note that "Club correspondent" can only run accompanied by the author's name; otherwise it is by the name of the club).

Commentary and personal reflections are not allowed in news articles. References to political topics must be limited to facts describing the topic itself and not include phrasing that suggests a particular point of view or political agenda. References to the political views of a particular speaker must be attributed directly to the speaker, either through direct quotes or paraphrases.

Email is best

Email is the preferred method of submitting articles – as a Word attachment or in the body of the email. Send it to **news@rossmoor.com**. Emailed articles always get a reply back; if you don't receive one within one business day, follow up with a call to 1-925-988-7800. No handwritten articles will be accepted. PDF versions of articles are not recommended as proper formatting can be lost when we convert it to Word.

GENERAL EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

- The first paragraph should begin with the most important facts: who, what, when, where and how. Paragraphs should be short – 2 to 4 sentences. All vital information should be included in the BODY (after the byline) of the article and not simply listed in the headline or in note form at the top of the document.
- The News follows the rules of the Associated Press Stylebook and will edit accordingly for space. As a general rule, shorter is better. Be clear and concise.

- First and last names are required for all people mentioned in an article or who are clearly identifiable in a photo. References to people by only their first name will be removed from the article unless we are able to confirm the full name by deadline.
- It is recommended that every article on an upcoming event or ongoing program include the name of a contact person and phone number and/or email address who can be reached for more information. (This is in addition to the correspondent's or club byline information that should already be at the top of the article.) Phone numbers must include area codes, including 1-925.
- Use of humor, quips, satire, etc. should be kept to a minimum in articles. It is fine to include a light-hearted reference or two if deemed appropriate to the subject matter, but the articles as a whole should be written in a professional, straightforward manner.
- Extensive use of exclamatory statements and/or exclamation points is not allowed in news articles. Use of exclamation points should be limited to one or two per article, and only if deemed appropriate for emphasis.
- If multiple topics are covered in one article, it is OK to separate them with a short title/mini headline (a few words at most), but all other content of the article should be written in complete sentences. No lists or extensive use of bullets, numbers, etc.
- A flyer or an invitation for an event will not be accepted as an article. The article should contain full sentences, written just as it would appear in the newspaper. Flyers are not published in the newspaper.
- Double check dates and names for accuracy. This is the correspondent's responsibility. Both day of the week and dates should be included in articles, with times of events listed after the date.

WHAT NOT TO DO IN ARTICLES

- **Do not** type words/sentences in ALL CAPITAL letters or use **bold**, *italics* or underlines in the body of articles. We have to strip all these out for publication. **THIS IS SOMETHING WE SEE IN MANY SUBMISSIONS.**
- **Do not** use second-person pronouns such as "you" and "your" or first-person pronouns such as "we," "us," "our," "I" etc. in news articles (they are permitted in pre-approved columns such as "Golf Shop News," "The Pickleball Life," "As You Write It"). Nouns and pronouns should refer to the club or organization by name ("the club" or "members") and use third-person pronouns ("it," "they," "their," etc.) For example: "The club will hold a dinner dance ..." not "We will hold a dinner dance ..." **THIS IS SOMETHING WE SEE IN MANY SUBMISSIONS**

- **Do not** refer to people by their first names unless it is necessary to avoid confusion when multiple people in the same article have the same last name. After introducing a person by their first and last name, they should be referred to by their last name only on succeeding references (regardless of gender). **THIS IS SOMETHING WE SEE IN MANY SUBMISSIONS.**
- **Do not** use multiple tabs, spaces or other format alterations. Do not use headers or footers, text boxes, photo insets or other special formatting or graphic elements in articles. Photos should **not** be inserted into articles but attached to the email as separate jpeg files (or sent in a separate email as jpeg files).
- **Do not** place movie, play, song and book titles in italics. They should be placed in quotes instead (e.g. “Star Wars, not *Star Wars*). **THIS IS SOMETHING WE SEE IN MANY SUBMISSIONS.**
- **Do not** use “please” in articles; expressions of thanks must be written in third-person (i.e. “The club thanks its volunteers” NOT “We thank the volunteers”)
- **Do not** capitalize menu items or names of food dishes unless the item includes a proper noun (Caesar salad, Parmesan cheese).
- **Do not** end sentences with email or website addresses as our style is not to place a period at the end of them. Instead of “For more information, email Joe Smith at joesmithw@gmail.com” write “Email Joe Smith at joesmith@gmail.com for more information.”
- **Do not** give a full biography of speakers. Supply a brief summary instead – something that will draw people to the meeting and information about the speaker’s background and qualifications (1 to 2 paragraphs).
- **Do not** use acronyms such as LMFT, CHPH, MSN for professional degrees or certifications, as most readers do not what they stand for. If the designation is important to the story, please spell it out and put the acronym in parentheses (licensed marriage and family therapist, registered nurse, certified hospice and palliative nurse).
- **Do not** use long urls or web addresses in articles as they will break over multiple lines in the paper. If you have a long url, please shorten it by using the tiny url program (<https://tinyurl.com>)
- **Do not** send us photos obtained from internet without verifying that they are available for media use and not copyright protected. Unless a photo is clearly labeled as available for reproduction, it should be assumed to be copyright protected and could result in you or the paper being fined if published by the News.
- **Do not** send us illustrations, graphics or other artwork (non-photo) elements with a club article unless it is a piece of work by an artist being featured in the article. (See more information on photo submissions below).

Corrections

- Email your article **AFTER** everyone in your group has proofread it.
- If using Track Changes, accept them before sending the article.
- If making a correction after sending the article – **bold** or **change the font color** for the changes in the article so that we can easily identify what has been updated.
- Always double check that the day of the week and date match.

Editing

The editor reserves the right to edit any content submitted to the Rossmoor News. Edited articles cannot be emailed back to correspondents because of time and the volume of content received. The style guidelines below can help writers to submit articles that are less likely to need extensive editing.

Photos

If you wish to have a photo taken, email the request to news@rossmoor.com or call Managing Editor Craig Lazzeretti at 925-988-7817. Give plenty of lead time as the photo schedule may fill up.

You may submit a photo or photos, but they will be used at the editor's discretion. Photos must be submitted by email in jpeg format (we cannot work with other formats such as heic). The News cannot use photos that have been reproduced in other newspapers or magazines nor can it use copyrighted photos without permission. (Professional studio photos are copyrighted. Photos found by searching Google online are usually subject to copyright rules.) Also note that many photos found on websites are too small in size to reproduce properly in print, unless they are specifically labeled for media use or as "full resolution."

To submit a photo, be sure it is clear and in focus and that faces are about the size of a dime. For group photos, **do not** crowd too many people in one shot; try arranging groups in layers (some seated, some standing) to make it more interesting.

When sending a photo shot with a cellphone, be sure to send the original size so it is large enough to be published in the paper. Photos should be a minimum of 100kb to reproduce adequately in print (reminder: photos found on websites are usually smaller than this).

A maximum of three photos can be submitted per article (unless they are all simple "mug: shots, in which case we can try to accommodate four); there are no guarantees that all photos will be published.

All photos where faces are recognizable must include the full names of the people photographed. Posed group photos should include no more than 12 people.

(For group shots of 12 or more people that are not posed, a generic caption is OK.)
List the names of people from left to right, top row to bottom.

All photos of children who are 13 years or younger **MUST** include a written photo release signed by the child's parent or legal guardian and the child's full name must be included in the photo caption. This is state law. To ensure we are not in violation of this law, we will require a photo release for any child middle school-age or younger.

FACT CHECK

It is the responsibility of the correspondent to fact check all dates, names, phone numbers and email addresses. Be sure names are spelled correctly in the captions. These are the most common mistakes we see.

AP STYLE GUIDE RULES

Here are some rules per AP Stylebook and some that are specific to the Rossmoor News.

DATE, TIME, PLACE:

The order is day of the week, date, time and place (i.e. Monday, April 3 at 3 p.m. in Multipurpose Room 1 at Gateway)

DATES:

The name of a month is written out unless it includes a date. When including a date, the following are the months with abbreviations: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.

Do not include the year in any date unless it was last year or a date next year.

Correct

April 1 or Sept. 5

It was hot in August.

Tuesday, Dec. 12,

Incorrect

April 1st or Sept. 5th

It was hot in Aug.

December 12

TIME:

Times should include a.m. or p.m. (please remember to lowercase and include periods). If the top of the hour, double zeros are not needed.

Correct

a.m. and p.m.

2 p.m.

noon or midnight

Incorrect

morning, afternoon, evening

2 o'clock, 2:00 p.m.

12 noon or 12:00

NUMBERS:

In general (except in dates, times, addresses), spell out numbers one to nine and use figures for 10 and above.

The rule is the same for first to ninth, 10th and above in figures. However, scores such as in tennis may be in numerals (6-1, 6-2, etc.).

Regarding money, use the dollar sign “\$” and the dollar amount with cents if there are any, but no zeros.

Use “cents” with a numeral when the amount is less than \$1.

Correct

One, third place, 20

35 cents

\$4

\$1 million

\$1.45 million

\$4,225.44

Incorrect

1, 3rd place, twenty

thirty-five cents, \$.35

\$4.00

one million dollars

\$1,450,000

\$4,225.44 cents

ADDRESSES:

Capitalize and abbreviate “street,” “avenue” and “boulevard” only when used with an actual address. For example: 485 South Main St., 2020 San Pablo Ave., 1820 Tice Valley Blvd.

For Rossmoor addresses, write the manor number as “No.” not as “#.” There is no need to include the city and zip code. Entry is capitalized. For example: 425 Singingwood Court No. 2, Entry 8.

PHONE NUMBERS:

All phone numbers dialed from Contra Costa require 10-digits. Landlines require the 1- before the number. Therefore, all phone numbers should be written as 1-925-555-5555.

CLUBHOUSE:

Clubhouse is one word. Only capitalize it when referring to a specific clubhouse or room in a clubhouse. Don’t use “the” before the name of a clubhouse. Spell out Multipurpose Room on first reference and use the acronym MPR on succeeding references.

Correct

Hillside Clubhouse

the Diablo Room

Dollar Clubhouse

Multipurpose Room 3

Incorrect

The Hillside Club House

Diablo room

Stanley Dollar Clubhouse

Multi-purpose room 3

FORMAL TITLES AND NAMES:

- On first reference, use a person’s full name. On second reference, use last name only.

- Do not use courtesy titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss and Ms. After the first mention, refer to people by last name only unless it is necessary to distinguish two people with the same last name.
- Only use Dr. before a name when referring to a medical doctor, dentist or veterinarian.
- Titles and degrees (i.e. Ph.D) are not used in bylines or captions. They can be referenced in the body of the article if relevant to the subject matter.
- Capitalize titles such as president, reverend and chairman only when used before a person's name. If used as an identifying term or in a general way, do not capitalize it.

For example:

President Ray Carter is going to...

Ray Carter, the president, is going to...

Ray Carter, president, is going to...

Correct

chairwoman or chairman

Mary Rodriguez

Incorrect

chairperson

Mrs. Mary Rodriguez

COMMON AREAS OF STYLE MISUSE

The following are areas in which editing is most often needed:

- Capitalize only proper nouns when listing menu items (i.e. house salad, Caesar salad, mozzarella cheese, Parmesan cheese, etc.)
- “underway” is one word in all instances.
- “cutoff” as a noun and adjective is one word; as a verb, two words.
- When referring to a decade, the 1930s, 1990s, etc., is the correct usage (without the apostrophe). For example: “A group of women in their 90s” and “He was a mechanic back in the ’20s.”
- Periods and commas are inside quotation marks; semicolons are outside.
- “brown-bag” lunch has a hyphen.
- “car pool” is two words as a noun and an adjective; one word as a verb.
- Use “its” when referring to a group. For example: “The Community Club will hold its meeting...”
- Seasons (winter, summer, etc.) are not capitalized.
- Academic degrees should appear as: bachelor's degree, a master's degree, doctoral program, a doctorate degree (preferred form for Ph.D.). The use of

Dr. before someone's name is reserved for medical doctors, dentists and veterinarians (do not use for other Ph.Ds.)

- Most acronyms do not have periods: UC Berkeley, DVC, PG&E.
- Mutual when referring to a Rossmoor Mutual is capitalized.
- Board is only capitalized when referring to the RWC Board. Mutual and organization boards are not capitalized.
- "sign-ups" (the noun, not the verb) and "long-term" has a hyphen; "nonprofit" and "longtime" do not.
- Use hyphens, not periods or parentheses, for phone numbers (i.e. 1-925-988-7800).
- Don't abbreviate the days of the weeks. It's Sunday, not Sun.
- Avoid the overused phrases "Mark your calendar" and "And a good time was had by all."
- Use women, not ladies.
- Avoid overusing exclamation points. We will delete these.
- Movie, play, song and book titles should be in quotes.

WRITING TIPS

- Limit use of adjectives and adverbs. Avoid "very."
- Use the fewest words possible. (i.e. It's not "will be sponsoring" but "will sponsor")
- Don't describe the weather for a past event, unless it was significant. For example, "The heavy rain resulted in low attendance."
- Avoid redundant references and repeating the same information (dates, locations, websites, email addresses) multiple times in articles.
- Remember to write for all Rossmoor residents, not just members of the club or organization.
- Remove unnecessary filler words or phrases e.g., "the fact that" or "in order to."
- Keep it simple: Long sentences often contain more than one idea. Cut longer sentences in two.
- All the sentences in a paragraph should relate to the point of that paragraph.
- Keep verb tense consistent all the way through, don't switch from past to present.
- Remove jargon and references that others outside the club might not understand and avoid exclamatory phrases, e.g. "We'll see you there!"
- Try to use the active rather than the passive voice, e.g. "The goals were accomplished by the club in 2020," rather "The club accomplished its goals in 2020."

SAMPLE CLUB ARTICLE

Submitted by: Joe Smith, 1-925555-5555

Dates to run: April 24 and May 1

Suggested headline: Golden State Club hosts Valentine dinner

Dinner and entertainment are planned for the Golden State Club on Saturday, Feb. 9 at 6 p.m. in the Diablo Room at Hillside Clubhouse. The event will have a Valentine's Day theme, with hearts and red flowers at every table.

Entertainment will be by the country western group Hard Travelin'. The four members of this band offer a variety of bluegrass and country songs.

The dinner will be catered by Food with Love and will feature Cornish game hens, mashed potatoes, green beans, spinach salad and strawberry shortcake.

The cost is \$15 per person. Tickets must be purchased by Monday, Feb. 6. Drop off checks in the club mailbox at Gateway Clubhouse or mail it to Joe Smith, 2525 Saklan Indian Drive No. 1.

For information about the party, call Smith at 1-925-555-5555.