1962

Newspaper Correspondent's Manual

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MANUAL

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Contents

Preface

A primary purpose of newspapers is to inform readers about the happenings of the day. The papers need news to exist just as a school needs teachers or students. Daily hundreds of pages of accounts of news that have their inception on the typewriters of correspondents appear in the daily and weekly newspapers across America. Correspondents who are doing this work serve a most useful purpose in informing the newspaper subscribers about the events that are of concern to them. More than fifty million copies of daily newspapers are distributed each day and additional millions of copies of papers of less frequent issue go to readers. Presumably every man, woman and child read at least some portion of a newspaper with considerable regularity. What they read influences their actions and their lives. Around this newspaper reading much of our habit, custom and even our civilization has developed. The men and women who work as newspaper correspondents thus have a grave responsibility because the effect of what they write will influence the lives of many. Readers will act upon the information that they obtain from reading their newspaper. If the accounts are complete, accurate and true then we may hope that their actions will be to the welfare of themselves, their community and their government.

J. L. O'Sullivan

1. Why Have a Newspaper?

The newspaper world, pictured in the thoughts of some and shown to the public through some television programs and movies, appears to be a hodge-podge of hurrying, unscrupulous, snoopy gossip-mongers who have no intent or purpose in life other than harrassing others and making a general nuisance of themselves.

This approach to explaining the journalist and his work, a work in which the correspondent engages, has seized on the "exciting" elements and has neglected the sound, solid heart of this profession which seeks to inform all persons about important ideas and happenings which they need to know to live best as citizens in a democratic society. An uninformed people cannot act as wisely as when they know the truth about the subject on which they are to take individual or group action.

This informing or communications process takes on importance in many ways—it is important for some to know a meeting place, the time of an event, the subject to be discussed; it is important to all to know about scientific advances which will have impact on every human being; it is important to know the qualifications of seekers of office, men who will direct the lives of many once they are chosen; it is important to know of accomplishments in many fields, for the lessons learned may be applied to many other situations, thereby improving that which is unsatisfactory; it is necessary to know of good and bad conditions which exist, the bad so that society will act to improve it and the good

so that acclaim is given and so that others may aspire to this level of achievement.

This is the task of the journalist—telling the events of the day so that all may know and so that all may act well on individual and common problems. This informing process is the major reason that the newspaper has endured, still exists today; satisfying the need for knowledge of daily events at all levels is its aim. If the newspaper substitutes entertainment for the useful function of informing, if it seeks only to thrill, if it seeks to serve only personal interests and prejudices, then it is disregarding the main role that the need of the public has forged, and it may weaken, die or be absorbed by other publications which more fully realize the responsibilities of the journalist.

2. The Correspondent-Reporter

Even though some portions of the newspaper are designed only to entertain and even though the publication does carry advertising which is of service to the public, informing the people is still the main function; those informants, the reporters and correspondents, are the backbone of the newspaper. How well they perform and how efficiently they communicate will determine the effectiveness of that publication and perhaps the fate of the people who rely on newspapers for that which they need to know.

Correspondents are part of a huge working force of men and women who are scattered all over the globe, men and women who are out among the people, observing, scanning records, interviewing, listening and writing so that others may know. Some reporters are responsible for finding, gathering and writing the news in small but important areas; others have the responsibility of telling the stories of whole nations; correspondents have the responsibility of making known events, both large and small, of an entire community.

While working for newspapers, both weekly and daily, reporters and correspondents perform a variety of valuable services. What they write influences public opinion, beliefs and actions. They point out needs and flaws in many areas, guarding public welfare with the faithfulness of a watchdog. They provide full facts and truth in situations where hearsay, rumor and half truth had been the guides. They are the means by which experts in many areas can tell of their advancements so that the public may know and profit. They

are men and women who know the entire scope of news sources for which they are responsible. They report this news with insight, alertness, completeness and accuracy so that the newspapers are a comprehensive day-by-day history of the land.

Since many news sources are inarticulate by themselves, since they are often bewildered by what is expected of them by newsmen who are seeking facts, since some are secretive due to fear or because of a hidden motive, it is obvious that a reporter is not one who occupies an easy chair and expects that the news will automatically come to him. He tosses aside his personal prejudices, pettiness and small thinking and seeks to report the whole of his news area—he objectively surveys his news-land, turning the spotlight on ineptness, cheating, lying, graft and crime; he deals with many human activities, weddings, deaths, births, fires, and new tax measures. Some of these events are meaningful to a few and some are of use to all, thus establishing a dividing line between the large and small news on which he concentrates.

The correspondent or reporter finds that, if he is to succeed, sensible questions which bring out all important elements of a story must be asked; events must be witnessed so that accurate and living description can be written; meetings must be attended so that the contributions of individuals and groups can be noted; sources of news must be so learned that the correspondent is conversant with activities, duties and obligations of persons who occupy many different positions in the community. The correspondent learns that by knowing these details of the community's inner workings he is better fortified to gather news on specific issues rather than using the lame and unworkable approach of asking, "Is there any news today?"

The alert correspondent's nose will twitch when he hears a bit of information which must be elaborated for completeness and for understanding, and he will begin to ask the time-tried questions of who, what, when, where, why and

how? He knows that full answers to these questions will give him the basic information needed for a complete story. The correspondent finds that he cannot settle for desultory gossip from a small circle of friends, and he recognizes that the community is not well represented by such limited news coverage.

The phrase, "the doctor, the lawyer, the Indian chief," has meaning for the correspondent, but he goes far beyond this, realizing that the police, the firemen, the mayor, judges, lawyers, clergymen, law makers, business and labor leaders, dramatic groups, clubs for both sexes and all ages, morticians and public officials all play a part in his work, work which should report many undertakings.

Noting that other reporters are more adept and have a greater grasp of news writing and source coverage than he, the correspondent will study their writing and sources, drawing particular application to his own problems and to his community. He develops a sensitivity to what is truly original and what is trite in the happenings of his world, searching out with curiosity and urgency that which is the warm heart of the news. He scans the community for individuals who are connected to an event, who are concerned about it, who are in a position to act on it, and he questions each and all for needed portions of the story he intends to write. He finds that a friendly, direct approach in his questioning is the most efficient, but on occasion discovers that he must pry and poke before the information he must have is forthcoming. Although he publicizes the fact that he is a newspaper correspondent and receives many stories and tips gratis, this newspaper writer soon sees that he must contact news outlets frequently and with direction.

And when the correspondent has gathered his facts in all their fullness, has written them and has sent them to his newspaper, he may be told that he has missed a deadline. His audience has been waiting to be informed swiftly in this fast-moving world. His story now is tardy, no longer demands attention and has taken on the appeals of history,

not of daily or weekly reports of current events.

To expand his work beyond the narrow confines of his own interest, to insure a steady flow of coverage not entirely reliant on tips and to meet the deadlines imposed by the nature of today's newspapers, the correspondent takes a number of steps to improve his coverage. Having studied his community and knowing the news sources to be contacted, he maintains his own "future book," a record of future events and who is to take part in them. Thus, he cannot forget to gather this or that story. He lists all of the community news sources and contacts them periodically, the more productive ones most often. He develops friendships so that persons "in the know" will form the habit of contacting him with regularity. He covers stories of community-wide impact in person and gathers information on smaller items from reliable persons who know the particulars that are needed. He reports all of this information in an unbiased way, in an expanding fashion so as to represent a community of interests, actions, hopes and aims. He does not neglect the story regarding breaking of laws, does not view it as giving his community an unsavory reputation. Laws are made to protect all; if they are broken, it is the right of all to know and to see that justice is accomplished through institutions society has erected to protect itself. And as he continues in his work, the correspondent, while realizing he will not become wealthy as a part-time writer, feels that he is rendering a community service which is needed for proper functioning, which calls attention to many things in a proper way, which puts his town "on the map," and which rightly rewards many strivings of his fellow residents merely through the publicizing of the events.

3. The News Story

The newspaper has been cast into a chaos of competition where many voices are crying to be heard and far too many ears are either turned, deafened or concerned with other things. Since many of the reading audience are lazy, harried, do not read well or are easily diverted, the newspaper must go about its serious business of informing in an attractive, easy and rapid manner if it expects to be heard.

This need has led to the news story form which is different from other types of writing and which is called the inverted pyramid story form. This simply means that the main lines of the news, the central sense of the happening, is presented quickly and in stark outline in the fore part of the story. That which must needs be known rapidly, the heart of the news, is highlighted in the lead element, in the beginning. Details which are needed for a fuller understanding then follow this introductory paragraph which has presented a condensed view of the entirety.

Through this method, the hurried reader is attracted, the impatient are informed, the lazy may gather the essentials easily. Once having been informed of the generalities of the story, many readers will have been persuaded by the force of the facts to read farther and will come to know the whole happening.

In determining his lead paragraph, the correspondent is faced with a number of choices. Should he choose the answer to the question "when" or "what" or "who?" It is seldom that the answers to "when" or "who" or "where"

are the most important, although they should be included in the introductory portion of the story. More often the answers to "what" or "why" form the hard core of the news; what happened or why or how did it come to be is usually the key.

With his beginning telling the most significant part of the news, the correspondent will then answer the other basic questions. Turning to the body of the story he will relate the details of the news, the most important first and the least important last.

In writing the news he recognizes other basic needs of the story—completeness, color, accuracy, clarity and proper expression. Clarity can be measured in a number of ways—how the sentences are constructed, if all facts needed for understanding are present and whether the proper word for the exact shade of meaning has been employed. Sentences having too many clauses and phrases or containing too many thoughts have a tendency to become rambling and confusing, for a hurried reader may not follow all of the complications. Thus, journalistic writing style is characteristically short, terse and pointed, with vagueness of wording and thought made clear and unmistakable to all who may read it.

Color is added to a piece of writing, not through the fanciful imaginings employed by the fiction writer, but through the detailed observation and telling of the small factual happenings surrounding the situation and through statements of others who have witnessed the news. Generalities such as "very, good, bad, exciting, dangerous" are swept aside by precise and accurate inclusions in the written piece.

A correspondent who realizes that newspapers are designed for many readers and not for a select audience will attempt to tailor his writing so that all may understand with fullness that which he wishes to communicate. His style must allow for different levels of intelligence, for varying vocabularies and for differing backgrounds of his read-

ers. Therefore, his work will not be as "literary" as a book or poem, nor will it contain jargon or technical terminology which is understandable only to a specialist, such as a lawyer, a politician, an economist or such as is found in sports, teen-age or adult slang and in the business and labor world. These special languages will be reduced to terms which are meaningful to all. Clarity, an essential of news writing, is achieved in part through clear construction and detailing of the facts.

A neglect which causes confusion is lack of identification of characters introduced into the news story. They need to be known by their age and address so that they cannot be confused with others, and they must be identified by occupation, title or other characteristics which tell the role they play in the news event. As in fiction writing, the characters and their relation to the facts must be known if the facts of the story are to be followed clearly by the reader.

Since the writer is aiming at truth, he must abide by facts. It is cheating the reader to report only one side of an event, thus concealing a portion. It is unfair to report only that with which the writer agrees, thus denying the opposite side a voice. And it is dishonest for the reporter to insert his opinion into a story, because the reporter is what the name implies—an impartial observer who is telling the facts of a situation to those who were not able to observe or participate in the event themselves. The facts, if related fully and in their proper relation to each other, can speak for themselves. This factual relation of news events is called objectivity in the news; coloring of the story with the correspondent's opinions is called editorializing, a taboo of the news report. This editorializing most often happens when the correspondent is taking sides, is reporting the event not as it happened but as he wishes it might have happened, or is using descriptive adjectives and adverbs such as "nice, very good, etc.," which are not necessary to the meaning of the news.

Although editorializing in news is taboo, there are instances in which the "why" or the "how" of the news must be answered at greater length to bring the full significance of the news home to the reader. This means that the results of the news, either immediate or in the future, should be explained and that the correspondent must draw on his own knowledge of the event for this significance or must have authorities embellish the background of the story. This backgrounding of the news differs from simple reporting of a simple event and often has to be related to other events both past and present to show the meaning of todays' news. This relationship, this backgrounding, this interpretation should not come from the correspondent's judgment alone but should include the thoughtful analysis of men who are in the position to know and to evaluate the subject matter of the story.

If the purpose of the news story is to inform usefully, then the correspondent must consider that some of his stories could degrade rather than elevate the society of which he is a part. Wording of his news submissions would not be obscene or vulgar nor would an unsavory situation be described in such detail as to teach others badness, thus appealing to the baser instincts of man rather than informing them about a situation which needs to be corrected. Detail should not offend the reader.

The news story, then, is of such subject matter that it must be told quickly, appealingly and with the facts ordered by their importance so that all readers may understand them in their full detail and in their proper relationship.

4. The Feature Story

Some of the stories published by newspapers are designed to entertain while informing the public about fringe elements of the significant news or telling them about the lighter side of human activity. Since this type of subject matter is more trivial and need not be known immediately because its nature does not demand action, the written story takes a different form. These are the news features which deal with the unusual, the light, the quaint, the homely matters of the heart rather than the mind.

Since the feature story usually does not possess important facts which are recognized by the reader as necessary, it must rely on the manner of telling to attract and hold. Unless the correspondent is particularly gifted, it is best that the feature tip be relayed to the editor so that the assignment can be given to a full-time newsman who has dealt with this type of writing problem many times. If the correspondent is to write the story, there are some general guides which should be observed. The inverted pyramid story form is not required since the feature is designed to entertain while informing. The short story approach of a teasing, hinting but not telling-all beginning is used widely. The beginning acts as the attractor, and the body of the story following the lead piles fact upon fact until a climax is reached at the end.

More even than in straight news, the feature depends on a deft, light touch, an exact choice of words, a happy blending of direct quotation, indirect statement, and sum-

marizing of ideas so that movement is rapid and boredom is defeated. Personalizing of characters who make the news is achieved through small bits of description, inclusion of mannerisms and actions which make this individual unique in this news setting. Or the commonly found characteristics are told with warmth and humanity so that readers will find a bond in the situation, recalling like circumstances of their lives. These appeals of the feature story are not transient, are not tied to time but are based on emotions which do not shift; thus, the feature story will attract today, tomorrow or next week.

Features may be discovered by the correspondent in many areas—old people, children, animals, historical dates and locations, heart warming activities of policemen and firemen, in projects being carried out by organizations and individuals, razing of landmarks, new discoveries, processes and inventions, those who have succeeded despite adversity or those who have failed and are willing to help others avoid failure through the telling of their stories.

Since these stories depend on the telling for their success, there are many traps in the writing of them. One of the major difficulties is the trap of exaggeration, false coloring, overdone emphasis in an effort to make the story more acceptable. Correspondents must remember that the feature is still a fact story; it must abide by the truth of the situation. Mild truths when told well are appealing in their own right and need no extra embellishments.

5. Finding Stories; Educating Sources

It is rare to find a news source who understands the aim of the newspaper fully and who, on his own accord, will understand the elements of his work which are newsworthy and will report them in the fullness needed for understanding. Many sources live in their own small world, failing to see their endeavors as part of society and failing to realize the implications of their work and decisions to others.

It is the responsibility of the reporter-correspondent to analyze his news area, knowing all activities, who performs them and the relative importance of these actions. It is his work to ask the questions needed to bring out detailed information required by the news report. The capable correspondent will view his community much as a woman will shop for groceries, studying the brands and types available and working out a well-balanced diet. Initiative must be shown in contacting persons who are making the news, in framing questions which aid the sources in becoming articulate. Knowing the parts played by these persons in community life, the correspondent can seek out answers to specifics in gathering his stories rather than retiring defeated because of a too general approach in gathering his stories. While collecting these specific stories, the correspondent must not be a dullard to different ideas but must be prepared to shift to another subject as a hint or partial idea is expressed, showing that a new story is in the making.

During the course of his work, the correspondent will find that some sources are hesitant to speak on matters of public concern or that they speak "off the record" or in confidence, thus binding the hands of the conscientious news writer so that the activity or information is not made public. While many off-the-record statements are given to background the correspondent for fuller understanding of the news situation, the newsman should not blindly agree to silence on all of these statements because this may not be his right; some of this information belongs to the people, and it is not the right of the newsman or any other to keep it quiet. But once the newsman accepts this confidence, it may not be broken.

Experiences of Wisconsin editors who deal with correspondents show that too few correspondents view their community as a news whole, that they concentrate only on a small circle of friends and their doings and on only a limited number of subjects such as weddings and obituaries (which are important but are not all of the news). Editors point out that some correspondents see news reporting as gossip, small talk, social news and nothing more.

Despite the size of the community to be reported, types of news stories to be found are similar and differ only in degree. The sources may be slightly different in that one man or one group may deal with many problems in the smaller town while the activities are met in a more specialized way in the larger city. Knowing the categories of news, the correspondent would be expected to ferret out the source of the news, to gather full-blown answers to the basic questions of who, what, when, where, why and how and to report the news in an unbiased manner. Some of the news categories and the usual requirements needed for the complete report follow:

6. Politics

Elections take place everywhere and are considered a staple in the news. Information needed includes the candidates and their full identity, the office being contested, candidates' qualifications based on experience, education and demonstrated abilities, the opinions expressed by candidates and steps of their campaigns, the election and its results, statement of purpose and changes being considered by the newly elected, and commentary by community leaders as to the significance of the election results.

Correspondents would be expected to write continuing stories as the election news unfolds. Ordinarily, only an initial announcement and a story on the election results would be considered inadequate coverage unless the contest is trivial. If the issues are small, the office inconsequential by comparison to others, the ideas expressed by the candidates trite or inane, the correspondent usually could expect the stories to be trimmed or omitted since these stories are competing with others in the welter of the day's news.

Appointments to positions are reported as part of the community's political news and would include the appointee's name, qualifications, the duties and importance of the post as related by a higher official who is in the position to make the appointment.

7. Legislation

Actions of a central governing body, be it a city council, village board, county board, park board or other legislative units, are matters of import to those who reside in the geographical area concerned.

Correspondents reporting these events should tell what issues are being decided, the action taken on the issues at each meeting, and final decisions as to whether the proposal was discarded, revamped or passed. New laws should be explained in detail, telling whom it affects and how. How it improves or hinders the climate of the community should be explained by spokesmen for and against the issue, including the views of the chief executive. Roles played by individuals of the governing body should be exact in the reports, including their expressions of thought and actions taken regarding legislation.

8. Courts, Police and Fire

Many correspondents are hesitant to report law violations in their community for fear of injuring the community's good name or because an individual involved might be their friend. Truth is violated if special concessions are made in reporting the news as is the journalistic principle of telling the facts fully regardless of their nature so that ills may be corrected. The usual retort by editors, "We don't make the news; we report it," goes deeper than some correspondents may realize. The newsman or the newspaper does not or should not make the news; news is discovered among people and among the records of their activities. If society is united for the common good of all, then anyone who defies laws made by that society is hindering its proper functioning and thus is doing damage to others and to himself. Thus, crime is to be met by society through the agencies it has created for justice and protection—the courts and the police. The public has a right to know about law-breaking because this involves all residents of the community. Punishment and this public telling are to be expected when damage is done to an individual or to society.

Since the crime report is generally derogatory to a man's good name, the correspondent should be positive of the accuracy of the news. Inaccuracy in this type of story which unjustly defames the good name of the man involved in the news might lead to an expensive libel suit against the newspaper and might do permanent damage

to this individual unjustly.

The writer of crime news should employ exact terminology for the type of crime, should give sufficient detail to enable a reader to understand what went on, but should not violate good taste by inclusion of unnecessary ghastly detail. A man charged with a crime should not be labeled as a "robber, murderer, etc.," but should be included in the story as having been charged with this or that violation. He is innocent until proved guilty in a court of law; labeling him prior to this will make him appear guilty to much of the public before the trial has even taken place. This news story should not include so much detail that it can be used as a text by would-be criminals.

Since a man is innocent until proved guilty, he should be given a chance to make a statement so that this statement can balance the official police charge. Correspondents, not being lawyers or judges, are usually unschooled in this type of story. If they depart from objective relation of facts and comment on the news in an editorial manner, they are preempting the role of the judge and are helping to sway public opinion to unjust conclusions.

Crime stories include the name, age and address of the person or persons involved, the official charges that have been placed, statements of the accused, bond or bail imposed prior to trial, names and roles of other persons involved in the news event (such as the arresting officer, witnesses, the victim) and a relation of what took place leading up to the arrest of the suspect.

Accident stories tell the names, ages, and addresses of the persons involved, injuries and deaths (if death, the life record of the deceased is usually included), official charges arising out of the accident and the possibility of court suits, description of the accident (a first-hand account or one gathered from officers or witnesses), investigations that may arise as a result, property damage both descriptively and in dollar value, whether insurance covers the damage, and perhaps comparative statistics to past

accidents of this type.

Court stories relate the names of the participants, the accused and the accuser, their ages and addresses, the nature of the charges which have been filed, a tie-in to the event which placed these persons in their present position of being arraigned in court, an account of the court testimony, and decisions reached by judge or jury including the sentences or fines which might be given. Correspondents are warned against commenting on the trial or how it is conducted, against interrupting the routine of the court while covering the story, against criticizing the judge or participants in the trial. This is editorial writing not fact reporting.

Fire stories include the type of fire, the address, the property owner's name, the damage done (descriptively and in dollar value), the amount of insurance, the cause of the fire, length of time and amount of men and equipment needed to put it out, dead and injured and the supporting detail on seriousness of injury along with biographical material in event of death. The fire story should also consider elements such as wind or rain and their contribution to the results of the fire.

9. Church, Welfare and Club News

Correspondents should be alert to the possibility of reporting church, welfare and club news in a wider concept than is usual. The writer of this news does not report as does the secretary of an organization, who records all detail in a running account as it was dealt with chronologically at a meeting. Organizational news can be made more significant if the correspondent seeks out those decisions and actions which have impact on a greater number of people other than the limited membership of the organization. This item, which is going to affect a greater number, or that item which has great significance to one particular part of society, is the one with which to begin the story. This could then be followed by the less important happenings which took place. The fact that the organization met; which is the way in which so many stories of this type begin, is usually not the news—what happened when the meeting took place is far more likely to be that which should be reported.

The organizational report should include the activities, their purpose and importance as far as the spokesmen are concerned, the type of organization and its name, past accomplishments of this group, present plans other than the activity being reported, and future objectives and how they will be achieved.

Too many organizational stories are mere listings of names without tying the names to events; these stories have only name appeal and are thus not news in the truer

sense but are merely publicity for individuals.

Reports on projects should include the nature of the project, who is directing the project and in what capacity, who is co-operating in the project from outside the membership, what is expected of the project from participants, what the goals are and when they are to be completed and who will benefit in what way from the project.

Announcements about meetings which tell when, where, why, for whom, the speakers and the subjects of speeches are a definite service to membership of organizations since it is difficult to communicate this information otherwise. Changes of laws, rules and regulations within these groupings are also legitimate stories for they give needed information to the membership. Alert correspondents who read sufficiently will note directives from higher organizational bodies which affect the community branches and will report the effects of these changes at the local level, contacting community leaders for commentary.

Correspondents are urged to form lists of organizations and the spokesmen for them. Priests and pastors should be contacted for names of lay members who head church organizations, persons who have the authority to speak for the groups. Church sermons are not generally reported.

When contacting various groups, the correspondent should be prepared to deal with reticence for not all spokesmen care to speak. The best way of "breaking through" is to have sincere interest and pointed questions. On the other hand, the correspondent may find a spokesman who is too eager to publicize the trivial. In this case, explaining the nature of news and the desires of his editor as the occasion arises will train the news source and will help to avoid future difficulty with him.

10. Weddings, Deaths and Births

Since these categories of news are nearly the same for all, many editors have devised printed forms which ask the basic questions needed for completeness. Correspondents are advised to ask their editors for these blanks and to report this type of news on these blanks to save time and effort. Wedding blanks may be completed by the bride and groom prior to the ceremony.

Information needed for wedding stories usually includes name and address of the bride and groom, name and address of their parents, time and place of ceremony, name of the officiating clergyman, names of those who served in honorary capacities, short biographies on the bride and groom, description of the bride's and attendants' dresses, social affairs following the wedding, honeymoon plans and where the newly-married couple will reside.

Obituaries, which can be completed by contacting the undertaker, clergymen and members of the family, include the name, age, address and occupation of the deceased, when and where he died, cause of death, length of illness prior to death, plans for funeral services and burial, who will officiate, when and where friends may view the body, a biographical sketch of the deceased, and names, relationship and addresses of members of the immediate family.

Birth stories may include the names and address of the parents, name, weight and sex of the child, time and place of birth, the number of other children in the family and names and addresses of grandparents.

11. Sports

News of amateur sports should be gathered from high school coaches and from officials of various sports groups in the community. Besides football, baseball and basketball, the staples of sports news, correspondents should write of conservation practices, activities of game and fish clubs, golf, bowling and other participant sports. City officials often lend support to worthwhile sports activities, and when this is the case, civic sources should be contacted for their portion of the story.

Sports stories from such sources as high schools should include the names of the participating teams, when and where the contest took place, the outcome of the game, individual contributions by players, a briefed down chronological report of the contest, statistics by periods of the game, records achieved, a summary of past contests and commentary from the coach on this particular contest and as to his expectations for the future.

Correspondents are warned against editorializing in the sports story, an area of the news where it is easy to be carried away. The hometown team usually is not a victor in defeat even though the coach or the correspondent might prefer to see it that way.

12. Schools

New appointments to the teaching staff, news of school board meetings and decisions reached there, increases in salaries and plant facilities, club activities, projects, awards and individual honors form the basis of most school news printed in the newspaper.

Correspondents should be alert to feature and picture possibilities within the school, realizing that schools exist for reasons other than sports and that many promising citizens are being groomed for important roles in society. Individual initiative and accomplishment should be rewarded through publicity. The primary news source, the school principal, should be questioned regularly and at length about teacher and student successes.

13. Farm News

Since many correspondents are reporting small towns and rural areas, farm news is of particular use to much of the reading audience.

It is here that youngsters are learning in projects directed by the Future Farmers of America, the Future Homemakers of America and the 4-H. It is in the Grange, the rural women's clubs and through agricultural departments of universities, state and federal agencies that many news stories of worth are found.

Conservation measures to provide trees, better pasture and crop lands and improved production methods are stories which may teach others to discard outmoded methods. Farmer opinion on county, state and federal programs can be gathered and reported. The status of today's farmer can be seen and told.

Achievement in farm progress furnishes many feature and picture story ideas in the rural areas covered by the correspondent. Other than observation and personal contacts, the correspondent can gain much information and leads to other stories through the formal organizations, the farm and conservation agents. These activities are of importance to many and are prime news sources for the rural reporter.

14. Labor and Business News

While the organization goes by many names, there are versions of Better Business Bureaus, Advancement Associations and Chambers of Commerce in nearly all of the villages and towns reported by the correspondent. These groups can tell of current business conditions, plans for future expansion, projects being fostered to attract businesses to the area and level of employment. Individual companies should be contacted for new products being introduced, new production methods, expansion plans within the company, changes in working conditions and salaries for the labor force, social affairs, awards, promotions and staff additions.

Many times branches of labor groups are found in the smaller areas, and much of their activity furnishes stories for the correspondent. Contract bargaining and gains and losses, views on the town's economy, social affairs, elections, community projects and results of top labor decisions and new regulations as applied at the community level are a few of the news stories of worth which the correspondent may find.

15. Photographs Needed

Many correspondents do not take news photographs, but could do so. It would expand their earning power, and if the pictures are taken correctly, community coverage would be improved. There are many cameras available which are simple to operate and which take pictures of sufficiently high quality so that reproduction in a newspaper is clear and attractive. Many straight news stories are enhanced by the picture which tells the high point of the story in unmistakable terms and with living detail which is hard to capture through words alone. And some subjects can be told completely, simply and cleanly through news pictures in a small amount of newspaper space. Many editors would be willing to recommend cameras to correspondents, to set up a "short course" in photography for them and to work out a system by which negatives could be developed and prints made.

Two general types of photographs are used by newspapers—identification shots and action pictures.

Identification pictures show individuals or groups and are mainly concerned with clarity of faces so that the picture may be included in the newspaper with the story, pointing out the persons who are in the news and the parts they are playing. Action shots are usually pictures which include a peak of movement which illustrates one of the main themes being told by an accompanying story.

There are many precautions to be taken by correspondent photographers. If the correspondent is printing his

own pictures, the head size of individuals should appear no smaller than a dime in the finished print because anything smaller than this would make the features difficult to recognize when reproduced on a rough paper such as news print.

When taking a picture, the photographer should attempt to control color divisions in the original setting, realizing that a picture should have tones ranging from clear white to dark so that the print will have snap and life in the newspaper reproduction.

When group shots are taken, subjects should be so arranged that they can be easily identified in the underline, should be grouped tightly so that newspaper space is not wasted, and should not be staring into the camera or standing in a militarily-squared position but should be going about their business with their faces visible.

Attention should be given to the foreground and background of the setting, attempting to remove all objects which clutter up the scene and which might help to detract from the center of interest.

Care should be taken so that one color does not cancel out another, as in a case where a piece of coal might be photographed against a school blackboard.

Perfect focus is a necessity so that clean lines are apparent in all images.

Correspondents should view the picture subjects for their story telling qualities. As in the news story form, the photograph is designed to tell its story "at a glance." It is not just a snapshot of some unrelated happening; it is the thoughtful, forceful representation of an idea. The story may be told at times without any special requirements of the photographer other than that he be at the right place at the right time; in other instances, the correspondent may need props to accentuate a point or might have to arrange the picture subjects so that the story is best told. These actions are taken with the proper precautions that the truth of the situation will be unchanged.

16. Editorial Problems

According to a survey of Wisconsin editors conducted by the College of Journalism at Marquette University, flaws in correspondents' work are remarkably the same whether they are working for metropolitan newspapers, small dailies or weekly publications.

A majority of editors agree that correspondents are not alert, do not recognize news and do not systematically contact the news sources available to them.

A correspondent must view his community with an eye to what functions are being carried out and who is performing them, always looking, examining and questioning in order to gather the full facts. Subjects about which residents are talking often form the basis for factual, complete stories which dispel rumor and gossip and substitute detailed accounts for half truths.

The correspondent who is truly attempting to do a thorough piece of work will have assembled a listing of news sources in his town. He contacts these sources regularly, systematically and asks pointed questions regarding some phase of their work. Sources who are more active and are dealing in matters of greater concern to all are contacted more frequently and with greater depth.

Initiative is a scarcity, editors agree, for all too often correspondents merely follow the leader on the news that is reported; if one correspondent reports a story of one type, it is immediately followed by a rash of similar reports from other correspondents. Newsmen view their

communities with imagination, realizing the similarities that exist in some areas of the news but also knowing what makes their towns different, outstanding and appealing and so reporting them. Correspondents should publicize the fact that they are newspaper correspondents so that others will contact them about news happenings, thus supplementing their own news gathering efforts.

Editors also agree that many correspondents fail to realize the differences in newspapers for which they work and that they treat the news stories in the same manner for all.

A metropolitan newspaper usually is serving the entire state or the greater portion of it. Since this newspaper is reporting national, international, state and city news, all stories are highly competitive for available space, and except for the more significant news, only the highlights are presented. Thus, stories submitted by state correspondents are judged on a statewide significance basis, and those possessing only one-community appeal are usually omitted.

The small daily, while reporting national and international events, also has the function of reporting news of its city in depth since this news is not carried by other publications. As the metropolitan serves the state, so does the smaller daily serve its trade area. Stories submitted from the trade area should have widespread usefulness to the reader or else they may be trimmed in size. This is why editors urge coverage of serious news and usually decry the chit-chat. Since the trade area of the smaller daily is more tight-knit and has a community of interest not possessed in the same degree by the more sprawling coverage of the metropolitan, stories of community events are given greater length in comparison to the "shorties" published about the same event by the metropolitan.

Closest to the people of one community is the weekly newspaper. No other publication has the thoroughness of one-community coverage that is found in the good weekly.

It is here that the smaller events are to be found and the minute detail of the important event is written. Since these publications do not attempt to cover national and international news and usually cover state news only when it has particular meaning to the community, the weekly reflects all that is big and small within the community. Personals belong to the weekly, although many weekly editors agree that names alone are not news but need to be tied to a news event. And editors say that many personals could be turned into larger stories if correspondents would gather sound answers to the five W's and How, thus having more to report than mere backyard comments which form too much of the news grist.

Not meeting deadlines is another gripe of many editors. The state desks of dailies which are charged with gathering the news through correspondents are often shorthanded. Editors rewrite many stories and gather much of the news themselves. An editor often becomes angry when stories are submitted late because he is in the business of supplying news while it is fresh and meaningful and in time for readers to act, if action is required of them. Dailies work on short deadlines. Correspondents should contact their editors to determine what categories of news should be mailed, telephoned or telegraphed in order to meet prescribed deadlines.

While weekly newspapers have more time between issues, they do have deadlines, and these deadlines are just as pressing because the weekly editor is many times a jack-of-all-trades with little enough time for any one aspect of publishing. He, too, prefers to publish a newspaper which is fresh, not a newspaper which is competing with historians.

While few of the editors surveyed expect correspondents' stories to be polished pieces of reporting, they do expect good grammar and urge that basic texts on English grammar and composition be read and applied by the correspondents. And editors justifiably expect that cor-

respondents will glean full answers to the basic news questions so that loopholes in stories will not exist, thus causing troublesome, time-consuming and expensive telephone calls to gather the extra information which the alert correspondent should have supplied in the first place. Failure of correspondents to observe news style and story form results in exasperated, hurried editing, or in some cases the inclusion of stories which are vague, poorly written and in error.

Style as to capitalization, punctuation and abbreviation varies from newspaper to newspaper. Most publications have devised a style book which all writers on the staff must learn. Correspondents are advised to contact their editors for directions as to the style of their newspapers.

Poor spelling causes much lost time on the editorial desk. Correspondents are expected to use the dictionary in their work.

The survey found that many correspondents work for a number of publications, a situation understandable to some editors since cash paid correspondents by one publication may not be large. Still, many editors agreed that it is disheartening to receive carbon copies of stories which they know their competition has received a day earlier. Correspondents should give newspapers for which they work an even break on the news, not favor one over another. And if one editor should ask the correspondent to check through on a special angle of the story, the results of this checking belong to that editor's newspaper alone. Some editors report that correspondents inform competing newspapers about their special projects and features that are being planned for improved coverage of the community. To do this is to destroy the competitive spirit of publications and is outright dishonest because this special news belongs only to that editor and his paper.

Timidity and gullibility of correspondents are other characteristics bemoaned by editors. It is the right of the public to know what officials are doing in their office; this

is one of the checks of democracy to insure that efficiency and forthright actions are forthcoming. Should an official refuse to co-operate with the correspondent or should the news be of such a nature as to make it uncomfortable for the correspondent to live in his hometown, editors agree that the correspondent should "tip" them on the story and leave the details of coverage to the full-time newspaper staff. Editors also warn correspondents to be aware that some unscrupulous sources will color the facts to their own benefit, thus using the correspondent to gain their own selfish ends. Stories should be an objective evaluation of facts, not a medium of propaganda for any one person or group. Correspondents are advised to balance outlandish claims or statements with statements from the opposite side of the question or issue.

Some editors report a clash of interests among the weekly newspapers and the daily, the clash being an unwarranted one for the greater number. Since the daily does not deal in the detail of the weekly and the weekly achieves its place through thorough coverage of community news, there seldom is need of the correspondent withholding news in favor of one or the other type of publication.

Editors urge that one of the best texts for the correspondent is the newspaper for which he works. Story form, individual likes and dislikes, news style and types of news can be learned here. Mistakes in wording, phrasing and grammar are corrected in the published version. Correspondents who retain carbons of their stories could benefit by comparing the original and published versions. Then questions concerning changes in the story could be forewarded to the editor who usually will be happy to give the answers because he also is interested that the correspondent attain his full potential. The correspondent who does not ask questions, who does not open any letters except the one which contains his pay check, who does not read instructional materials or heed advice given to

him is the bane of an editor's life. This type of workman would not retain his position in any other type of labor and probably is being kept on the payroll only because the editor is soft-hearted or cannot find anyone else who could be trained satisfactorily as a correspondent.

17. Conclusion

Results of the Wisconsin survey showed that financial rewards to correspondents varied from a few dollars a month to as high as $275 a month, when the column inches of news, the feature and picture tips and coverage and the special bonuses for outstanding work were calculated. Higher paid correspondents invariably were those who reported news gleaned from the many sources available within the community and who were alert to all possible stories. These correspondents are highly valued by any editor.

Regardless of the amount of financial reward, correspondents who realize their position in the newspaper and the community know that theirs is an invaluable service. All fellow townsmen must rely on them for much that they need to know; community living is smoothed and proper actions are taken because they have written the truth of many situations. The trained correspondent occupies a position of prestige and influence for the good, the same position that all journalists have traditionally held since complexities of society forced the need of full knowledge about ones fellow man.

18. Mechanics of Writing

News copy submitted for publications should be typewritten. This makes the editing chore more simple and cuts down on inaccuracies which often occur in the newspaper because the handwriting of correspondents is illegible.

Correspondents should "slug" the upper left-hand corner of the first page with their name, an abbreviated title for the story and the date that the story is being written. Following pages should be slugged on the upper lefthand corner in a similar manner, giving each page a number.

If copy is typewritten, a one-inch margin should be allowed on the left, and the typewriter should be set for a 60-space line. Four typewritten lines of this length roughly equal one inch of news column copy, making the job of fitting the story into the newspaper page easier for the editor.

The top half of the first page of the story should be left blank, except for the identifying slug. On succeeding pages of the same story, leave 1½ inches at the top (except for the slug). Indent paragraph beginnings five spaces. Write "more" on the bottom of each page if more pages are to be added, and place an end sign (30 or #) at the end of the story.

Do not erase or strike over figures or letters. Instead, mark them out with a soft lead pencil. Do not turn in "dirty" copy which is impossible to read; rewrite it instead.