Section IV

Press Relations

AN EDITOR'S TEST FOR PUBLICITY

IS the item news?

Does it contain the same factual material that we might have obtained had we sent our own reporter?

Do we believe it to be as truthful and as accurate as it would be if our own reporter obtained the story direct from the principal?

PHIL S. HANNA

THE JOB

THE term "press relations" describes the dealings between the editorial offices of newspapers and outsiders in the journalistic profession whose work brings them in contact with newspapers. From the point of view of the publicity man, the term means businesslike cooperation and collaboration with the working press.

In an ethical sense, the term press relations necessarily connotes fair, honest, and impartial traffic with producers of news. The tie between publicity men and newspapers is as fundamental as the mating urge of the Columbia River salmon. A publicity man must be on good terms with newspapers, for newspapers are a short cut to the public doorstep.

To many persons press relations suggests something mysterious and magical. Although the process of conducting relations with the press in a businesslike manner is a simple one, it is understood by comparatively few persons who have occasion to deal with editors and reporters. Of those who do have a grasp of the meaning of the term, many lack the ability, foresight, initiative, or sense to maintain good press relations.

It will simplify things if the publicity man will try to understand the position of the newspaper editor. Try to give each news story the test that appears on page 9.

To practice press relations and enjoy the friendship of editors and reporters, the publicity man must follow the unwritten rules and supply the paper with timely, significant, and interesting information. If he has nothing to say, let him keep quiet—not try cleverly to disguise the fact that he has no real story but is merely attempting to keep a dead publicity campaign alive by artificial means. A "faked" story can backfire, with disastrous results.

Study and understand the differences between morning and afternoon newspapers. There are great differences in the matter of schedules that are vital to a publicity agent contributing "spot-news" copy or even news for release in the immediate future.

Styles vary in different papers. The editorial policy of some papers favors the Republican party, of others the Democratic party. Some papers "crusade"; others carry banners for no cause at all, maintaining a middle-of-the-road policy as much as possible.

First of all, consider the wide variety of news and the many kinds of publicity contained in the modern American newspaper. A glance at the index to the daily paper will arouse a keener appreciation of the far-reaching field it covers.

Next, compare the indexes and contents of two competing newspapers or one morning and one evening newspaper. Note how differently the emphasis is placed. One paper may have a special department devoted to women's news. The other paper may pass this up as a feature. One paper may emphasize business, industrial, and financial news and publicity, while another may devote little space to such matters.

From a careful study of newspapers and their contents it is self-evident that every newspaper has its particular clientele, a special segment, group, or class of population to which it appeals. One paper, for instance, plays up sex news. Another minimizes all news with a strong sex angle. One paper features sports news, giving it the run of the paper. Another paper may minimize sports but make liberal use of its columns for news and publicity on politics, sociology, science, medicine, and international affairs.

Afternoon papers necessarily carry less complete stories than morning papers, unless they have follow-up stories to morning papers containing new developments. Afternoon-edition stories are less complete, usually, because the day's news happens while the paper is being composed. Thus afternoon stories generally are shorter. Writers supplying Bulldog editions of morning papers depend more on street sales and therefore are usually a bit more sensational in style than final morning or "home" editions.

A city editor's schedule is a busy one. If he works the day shift, he will be too busy—until around 3 P.M.—to have much spare time to devote to incoming publicity men. Unless the interviewer has important spot news to release, he should see the city editor after the paper's last dead line. The final dead line represents a slack period—something like a Spaniard's siesta time—to the city editor.

Morning-paper city editors work in two shifts, one dur-

ing the day, the other in the evening. The day city editor's slack hour is usually around 3 or 4 P.M. After 6 P.M., when the night shift is on, the night editor is occupied with his routine of editing copy and directing the staff. In large cities the first dead line is ordinarily around 8 P.M.

The city editor is interested only in the general nature or character of the submitted story—not in details. Reporters attend to details. The publicity man contributing a spot-news story should outline his information, then give his story in detail to the reporter assigned to take it.

When evening events are not covered by a paper's staff reporters, the publicity man who is on the job will see that the event is covered. He should submit the story, immediately after getting it, to the night city editor, in person or by telephone.

A morning paper's first edition, which is for night street sale and for rural and sectional circulation, has a dead line depending on the social habits of the city's population, which in turn depend on the city's size, the character of its people, etc. The last morning-edition dead line will be past midnight, after the press-association wires close down. Reporters for papers work staggered shifts, the majority of them arriving in midafternoon. Only very important stories will be accepted after 10:30 P.M. Send in your stories early.

Staff men on afternoon papers start work early in the morning and are finished for the day by midafternoon. Only vitally important material goes into the late editions. Noon to 1 P.M. is the rush hour in the offices of afternoon dailies.

Releases for morning papers should, if possible, be in the editor's hands the preceding afternoon; for afternoon papers, very early in the morning of publication; for Sunday papers, several days beforehand. Feature sections

of Sunday editions usually are printed early in the week, and only the news sections on Saturday night. At all times, release dates should be visible on the copy; and if the copy is exclusive, this should be indicated.

A publicity man should obtain a list of the papers in his state, city, or territory from the "Editor & Publisher Year Book," which contains lists of publications. To ensure wide coverage he should have a well-balanced list of morning and afternoon dailies, Sunday papers, weekly publications, trade magazines, and house organs in his locality.

Every newspaperman fights the dead line, the time by which all news copy must be cleared through the editorial office to allow the paper to go to press on schedule. A dead line is set half an hour or more before the paper is to be printed. Dead-line schedules are tremendously important to publicity agents, for a story that is acceptable at 10 A.M. can only rarely be crowded into print at 2 P.M. The race against time is not so intense on the morning paper, since most of the day's events already have occurred. Even so, submitting copy early is a newspaper virtue every publicity man would do well to acquire.

Many stories may be prepared many days in advance of the time they are to appear. Stories containing, for instance, annual reports, committee reports, or speeches to be made at banquets or meetings can be cast in news form and sent to the newspaper offices with "Hold for Release" dates marked on the copy. When the day for publication arrives, the story will be either in type form, ready for printing, or in shape for the copy desk's editing and headline writing. Predating news stories saves time, as is readily seen.

To be sure that prewritten stories are not released before the event occurs—a fatal error!—they should be prominently marked with the date *and the hour* they are to be used. For example:

For Release: Not before 11 A.M., Dec. 7, 1946

or

Hold for Release Expected at 12:30 P.M. *CST Tuesday, Oct.* 13, 1946

In the latter case, the city desk must be informed whether the story was released on schedule, or earlier, or later.

Then the publicity agent's hands are clean. Only a member of the newspaper staff can be blamed if an error occurs.

This does not mean that it is wise for a publicity agent to withhold news. "Blanketing" a story to command a greater amount of space at a later date is a practice frowned upon when the news has greater value at the time of occurrence. Newspapermen dislike having a story kept from the press because the source of the news wishes it to be presented later or in a different light.

The life of a modern community is so complex that no newspaper could possibly employ a large enough staff to report every news happening. A publicity man has the opportunity, therefore, to help the paper get material it might otherwise be unable to obtain. By so doing he helps himself.

Whenever editions of competing newspapers appear almost simultaneously, each should be given an equal chance at publicity stories. Don't play favorites. Don't play both ends against the middle. Stories for weeklies should be sent in early in the week. Such papers usually are published on Thursday or Friday. These stories should be a review of the week's happenings, not the happenings of a day, with the latest event as the lead. A story of three to five "sticks" is the ideal length, *i.e.,* a column 6 to 10 inches deep.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It's two in the morning in the city room of a metropolitan daily and the Associated Press has just reported a train wreck in which 3 were killed and 30 injured. The editor is speaking. "Give me about four paragraphs on this, Johnson. Can't reach any of the railroad people. See what the morgue's got for background." "Right," says the rewrite man and takes off for the morgue. But all he finds are several yellowing clippings setting forth the statistics of another train wreck involving the same railroad. His story in the next morning's paper leads off:

"Three were killed and 30 injured when, for the second time in 4 years, two Eastern Pacific streamliners collided near Fleming, Ariz. The accident occurred at 1:30 this morning, and as late at 2:30 A.M. Eastern Pacific officials could not be reached for a statement. On July 1, 1940, two crack trains of the same company were wrecked at Crossroad Junction, about 10 miles from Fleming. At that time, 9 passengers were killed and 62 seriously injured. Later, at the investigation of the tragedy, officials, etc., etc., etc."

Crucifixion in the public square! Each "etc." another cross to bear. Dirty linen of long ago resurrected for comparison with currently soiled hems. Ancient cadavers cluttering up the closet of public opinion. Rehash of the unsavory, unhealthy ingredients at hand. A poisonous concoction comprised of rattlesnake venom and adder virus, brewed for public consumption. Result: Attempted suicide in reverse. The public drinks the poison, but your client requires the stomach pump. Now suppose instead of those stale, yet damning clippings, the rewrite man had also found a freshly released background bulletin from Eastern Pacific's bureau stating, among other things:

"Since July 2, 1940, Eastern Pacific has transported

8,500,000 passengers a total of 4,000,246 miles, without a single accident or injury. The only major accident in the company's history, which extends over 75 years, occurred on July 1, 1940, when 3 persons died and 30 were injured, as a result of a faulty section of track. Evidence produced during the investigation that followed the accident completely exonerated Eastern Pacific from any culpability traceable to negligence, etc., etc., etc."

Each "etc." here will provide rewrite men with an instrument for injecting softer notes in an otherwise blatantly detrimental news item. Certainly, give them the bad with the good, but be sure you give them all the good about the bad, too. And, above all, keep the morgues regularly and adequately supplied with *fresh* corpses.

Clifford Maitland Sage, crack publicity and advertising man, points out that not all copy prepared and sent out by the publicity man need be news. There is another type of copy, he says, which many publicity men overlook too frequently, and that is *background information.* Although this is not news, it is information that not only is highly valuable to newspapers but, as illustrated in the foregoing example, often pays dividends to the publicity man and the firm he represents. Newspapers usually accept good background information, which is filed for ready reference when the need arises. There is scarcely a newspaperman today who has not found himself desperate for adequate background information on a company or individual. It is a phase of his work that the publicity man should never neglect.

When a story "breaks" in the late evening, it is often impossible to obtain current information. Perhaps just a fact or two are available, and the background to these facts is necessary to make the story complete. Many, many times the availability of up-to-date reference material makes the difference between an accurate—perhaps favorable—story

and one that is quite the contrary. The only missing link is reliable background information that would make the meager facts clear and understandable. Sage says:

"Newspapermen are constantly fighting dead lines as they write the daily news. If only a few unimportant facts come to light that qualify as news, the reporters must make the most of them. The experienced men beat a path to the library or reference room. If additional details are not found there, the telephone is used. A score of persons might be reached, and none of them will be of much help either because of hazy memory and unfamiliarity with the subject. A desk man grabs a bit here and a bit there, piecing together. When he starts to beat out his story, he sincerely believes that he has the facts, knows what he is doing, and is treating the subject fairly and accurately. But often he is not doing these things through any failure of his, but simply because the essential data could not be obtained.

"No one can condemn the newspapers for they appropriate large sums annually to build and maintain their clip files and their reference books; but often the background information is in none of these. It is the responsibility of the public-relations staff to see that it is there. This information is especially valuable to editorial writers for many times fine editorials have been made possible only because the writers of them were kept posted on the various subjects, knew of their importance when new developments arose, and had the reference material to turn to when the occasion called for editorials."

The maintenance of current background information is emphasized because it is usually a neglected publicity production. And the smart public-relations men keep the newspaper files up to date on their clients' personnel and operations.

THE RELATION OF PUBLICITY TO THE PRESS

The publicity profession is a blood relative of the newspaper profession.

In mirroring the news of the community and of the world about us, the newspaper performs four distinct functions: it *informs, instructs, entertains,* and *serves advertisers.* However, its principal function is to furnish readers with informative material. The public relies on it, and public demand must be met. The press cannot thrive or survive merely on anemic fare like puffs, propaganda, or camouflaged advertising.

"I should sincerely like to regard the public-relations staffs as representatives of my newspaper."

This philosophy expressed recently by the editor of a large metropolitan newspaper summarizes the peculiar relationship that exists between the newspapers and the public-relations department of any organization. In making the statement, the editor meant that he would like to place the same confidence in an organization's public-relations representative as he does in a member of his own staff.

The editor, however, was a practical man.

"I understand, of course, that this relationship must be tempered by the obligations and responsibilities each of us has to his own organization," he said. "Yet if we are to work together for our mutual benefit, we must establish trust in each other's sincerity, honesty, and reliability."

This is the relationship that successful public-relations men try to maintain with newspapers.

A St. Louis manufacturing company had several notable experiences that proved the wisdom of maintaining a friendly relationship with the press. On one occasion, an altercation in the company's plant involving members of two racial groups resulted in one employee being stabbed.

Newspapers were informed of the incident, and a request was made by the public-relations department that any stories exclude the fact that a Negro and a white man were involved, for fear of consequent disorders between the two racial groups and possible serious impairment of the company's production program. The newspapers acceded to the request and merely reported the stabbing in one-paragraph stories, omitting all mention of the firm name and giving no indication that members of different races were involved.

It has been found that most newspapers follow the policy of consulting with a company's public-relations department before publishing stories about the company or before using statements made by persons not authorized to speak for the company. When editors receive statements that they consider damaging to a firm or corporation, they check the information carefully because they know that frequently disgruntled employees make unfounded charges against their employers as a means of retaliation. A usual source of such stories is an employee who has been discharged for unsatisfactory work reporting to a newspaper that there is a threat of a "walkout" in his department or that discrimination exists in the plant. By simply advising the newspapers of the facts the public-relations staff is usually able to have such stories "killed" promptly.

Another example of the benefits that can be derived from the opportunity to make a statement for publication occurred when an allegation was made to Congress that, because of a shortage of a certain patented part, production of a certain bomber had been seriously delayed. This was untrue. A formal explanation by the president of the company manufacturing the bomber clarified the situation, and the facts and editorials on them were published in newspapers throughout the country. In his statement, the president explained that the part-manufacturing company had

given his bomber company permission to manufacture the particular item in the plant many months previously, when it became apparent that the former could not meet production schedules, and that because of this action the threat of curtailed production had been alleviated.

Some public-relations executives believe that the wisest policy to pursue is to keep such comments to a minimum and to make them only in cases where they are absolutely essential. Consequently, they steer clear of all requests to comment on public or political issues or any controversial matters except in cases where it is felt that a statement will be of definite value.

Many publicity stories are of a sort that would never receive public attention unless given special treatment. It is the art of administering this special treatment that in the first place gave rise to that child of the twentieth century, the publicity man.

News can be a number of things. Even very prosaic subjects, given the aforesaid special touch, of course, can blossom as bona fide news. Generally the job of the publicity man is to make news for a group or institutions that possess the ingredients but lack the formula for mixing them in the right proportion for presentation in print.

Institutions and prominent persons figure in events that the newspapers wish to report. Thus, the urge to publicize a specific person or thing often is bilateral; and, in such cases, the publicity man becomes a middleman negotiating a trade. He sees to it that the papers get news and that they get the sort he is authorized to give. Also, he writes publicity, not only according to the dictates of his sponsors, but in line with the established policy of newspapering.

When unfavorable publicity about his client must be given out—and there are times when this has to be done—the publicity man's job is a trying one. His releases must be written with care and tact. The reason is readily seen.

At such a time, it would be bad strategy to distort known facts. The publicist must make the best of a bad situation.

In another way the publicity agent does a middleman's job. He introduces reporters to the "right people" (a sophisticated phrase the meaning of which is clear), arranges interviews with executives, and makes his organization records, as far as diplomacy allows, accessible to the press. If he has information that might clarify a newspaperman's picture of a garbled situation, he can tell it "off the record" and never fear a betrayal of trust. Such confidences are protected by laws in journalism's unwritten book of ethics.

To avoid misunderstanding on the part of interested persons and readers, it is best to clarify in full detail any difficult parts of stories, even at the risk of seeming to be condescending. It is much better to write "down" to the reader's intelligence (and, incidentally, to the reporter's if the story is a newspaper release to be rewritten later) than to employ "fine writing," which often though euphonious is devoid of sense.

It is obvious, then, that publicity is not a halfhearted job. It is full-time work for a man of judgment, ability, and experience.

PRACTICE

In a sense, an industrious publicist is a valuable reporter added to a newspaper's staff. He is not stealthily sowing free advertising in someone's fertile field but is helping the newspaper obtain stories in which there is a definite public interest. And his work competes with that of other reporters.

If his offering has no news appeal, is merely thinly coated advertising, it will find its rightful place in the wastebasket. But when a publicity man has truly demonstrated that his

material is newsworthy, then his stories cannot in fairness be called advertising. They are news.

If a publicity campaign is far-flung or even locally important, reporters may be detailed regularly to the publicist's office to gather news. Or a call to the city desk may send a reporter out to cover a special event. Therefore, since the publicity man deals directly with reporters, he should have at his fingertips as many details of the story as possible. All material for a news story should be available for ready reference.

The importance of newsworthy copy cannot be too strongly stressed. The flowering of the profession in the United States has drawn many quacks, many shady operators and confidence men into the field, some of them possessing nothing but ulterior motives. They are opportunists and parasites and live off news agencies only until their true character is found out. They are bad advertising for the profession, for they are an irresponsible breed. But, no matter what their successes may be, they are using a stacked deck in a risky game. The odds are against them.

Publicity men should not scorn publicity channels other than newspapers. In every community there are other important means of disseminating news. There may be magazines or trade papers. Bulletins published by commercial clubs and civic organizations should not be overlooked.

When there are several such outlets to be contacted in a campaign, it is advisable to notify editors that material coming to them is exclusive—if it is exclusive—meaning that there is no danger of duplication in competing publications. It would be nearly fatal to release identical stories, labeled "Exclusive," to competing publications and have two word-for-word accounts appear separately.

"Special to the *Times Herald*" is generally the way exclusive copy is marked.

Copies of speeches should be provided for the press, to

ensure accurate quotation. Probably only excerpts from the speech will find their way into reporters' stories, but it is vitally important that the gist of the speaker's thoughts be fairly presented. Misquoting leads to libel suits.

A complete program of meetings, conventions, or other gatherings, containing the names and identification of speakers, should be furnished reporters covering such affairs.

If the meeting is one where officers of a group are being elected, a list of nominees and retiring officers should be given the press. If an interesting impromptu discussion develops, it is the publicity man's job to inform the reporters. Actually, he acts toward them as a guide through the convention hall, clubroom, or meeting place. He knows the territory. It's home ground to him. Thus he can be invaluable to reporters who are on unfamiliar terrain.

If tickets, badges, or identification tags are necessary for admittance to a gathering, the press should be furnished with them. Anyone hates to be ignored, even reporters, who are more or less accustomed to slights and rebuffs. Where there is an admission charge, tickets should be given free of charge to members of the press—meaning reporters—and, as a gesture of good will, to some newspaper executives.

The press does not cover events for the purpose of being entertained—thus the term "working press." Reporters have a job to do at banquets, conventions, and dinners, sometimes at stag parties, formal receptions, and the various other places where news occurs. A special table is ordinarily reserved for working reporters, near enough to the speaker's table to ensure audibility. Since the publicity agent is unofficial host to the press on such occasions, he should do a host's job, seeing to the comfort of his guests, seeing that their questions are answered.

Should the reporter want an interview with any of the

persons present at a meeting or convention, the publicity man should make the arrangements. Pictures of speakers or important officials should be sent to newspaper offices in advance. They must be glossy prints of standard size; 8 by 10 or 5 by 7 inches is recommended. Any good commercial photographer will know the type of picture required for reproduction. Small publications prefer cuts or mats. Larger publications will use them if the accompanying story is important and there is no better picture available. A photographer may be assigned to the meeting to get pictures of more immediate and dramatic interest than posed portraits. "Live" action pictures are always preferred, of course. Every assistance should be given and every courtesy shown photographers. And reporters should be furnished messenger or telephone service, should they desire it.

When events occurring during his campaign are of particular interest to the most important publications, the publicity agent should also look to his less important news outlets.

Specifically, in the case of conventions, small community newspapers are interested in the doings of home-town delegates, even though their part in the convention proceedings is minor. This is called "playing up the local angle," for purely local consumption. Releases thus must be written separately, since the delegation featured in one community paper is of practically no interest to people of another community.

When an intense, fast-moving campaign is outlined, the publicity man in charge should contact his potential news outlets in advance to forewarn them of what is to happen and to secure their cooperation and advice. When many stories are to occur in a short space of time, it behooves the publicist to plot his course before the campaign starts roll-

ing. Editors should be "tipped off" on the relative merits of different aspects of the campaign.

When important events are on schedule, newspapers announce them several days in advance and keep interest alive by printing daily stories of news developments. Thus publicity must start rolling well in advance of an actual campaign. And it must continue to roll. Like a snowball, it must gain speed and weight as it goes.

THE NEWSPAPER STORY

There are six general types of news stories. Definite and set rules for writing news accounts have long been established and are generally recognized as universal. The publicity man should know how to prepare and write all types of news correctly.

The types of stories must be considered from the standpoint of style and form and the purpose each is intended to serve. Each type of story has a definite structure, differing in major respects from other stories. In most instances, the basis for the story determines the type. The material used for a feature story probably would not constitute the basis for a conventional news story, and the facts used for preparing a conventional news story might not be suitable for building a chronological news story.

The Conventional News Story.—The conventional, or informative, story must present the facts of the news as simply, concisely, and directly as possible under the existing circumstances.

This sort of story is an anonymous account containing interesting and significant information presented in simple, crisp language. Facts are given in the order of importance. The most interesting and significant points appear in the "lead" (*i.e.,* the opening lines of the story). Elaboration,

amplification, the less important details follow in subsequent paragraphs.

The conventional news account is a third person story, written from the point of view of the disinterested observer. The writer must take an impartial position. He defies all rules if he injects personal opinion or expression in a third person story.

The ordinary news story attempts to answer as adequately as possible the quintuplet questions of journalism—the "who," "what," "where," "when," and "how." And sometimes the "why."

Answers to most of them should be indicated briefly in the lead. For instance, in this fictitious example:

"Divorced and forced to make her solitary living as a manicurist, Mrs. Dolly Glucose, 34, toasted death with poison today in her one-room flat at 122 Dead End."

Now pick out the five essentials.

None of the questions should be slighted, for a complete, detailed story cannot be written without answering most of them. Often the answers to "why" are not essential and need not be answered. The experienced reporter will attempt to produce answers to these questions when it is evident that they contribute vitally to the narrative and are necessary if readers are to be satisfied. Generally speaking, stories with an element of sensational action—murders, fires, thefts—require an answer to the question "how." It can easily be seen that in some stories, such as murders, the "why" cannot always be answered. Nevertheless, interest is not sacrificed if a mystery is involved, for the public is innately curious about sensational news. And until all loose ends are fastened up and all questions settled, the story is still news. Excitement over unsolved murders has sprung up years later with the discovery of new clues, proving that interest in puzzling situations never dies.

Seldom in this type of news story are facts related in

the order of occurrence. The most significant or dramatic come first. The lead is the show window of the story. Its aim is to get the reader to read succeeding paragraphs. The reporter makes every effort to write his lead so well that the most casual reader will be interested and will read on to the end.

Readers alone must not be considered in writing the lead. The publicity man must deal also with the city editor and the copy desk. The editor may find a lead so poorly written that the story is killed; or if he accepts it, he may have to turn it over to a competent rewrite man to construct a new lead.

Technically, a news story has three divisions: (1) the lead, the essential part of the story; (2) an expansion and elaboration of the lead, maintaining the same form (important incidents first) but giving more complete details; (3) further amplification and minor details, which can be cut down if necessary. Lack of space may necessitate that the last of the story be dropped; thus the article should be written in such a manner that the reader will be given all the vital details previously.

The lead should be interesting, perhaps eye catching, but it must abide by the facts. Many stories are killed because the leads, although novel and "tricky," are not in harmony with the material upon which the stories are based.

The supersensational lead, promising great things to come, is a mistake—unless something colossal follows it. Facts first, "color" second is a rule that should be uppermost in a young writer's mind. Facts can furnish the basis for a good lead without overblown rhetoric supplementing them. Overwriting, overemphasizing, and sensational, false build-ups are the major sins of newspaperdom.

The publicity man whose stories show a tremendous excitement over unimportant events will receive no warm

welcome, little sympathy, and no encouragement from the editor.

The inverted pyramidal form of the news story does not mean that everything must go into the lead. The lead must not be overcrowded. The jammed lead is not good form and should not be attempted. The story should be kept moving throughout its length, new facts of lesser importance, but still significant and interesting, being added to make it complete.

The third section of the story contains details. It gives the complete picture of what has happened, so that the person especially interested will be able to have all the details. The same rule of terseness, accuracy, and good writing must be applied here as in the leading paragraphs.

Personal comment is the province of editorial writers, not news reporters. Each fact must have authority in a reporter's narrative. It should always be remembered that there is a vast and important difference between news and comment. Should editorial comment be deserved, the publicity man should take his case to the responsible executive. The editor will be glad to listen and, if he believes the cause a worthy one, will instruct his staff to prepare editorials for publication.

The Chronological Story.—As the name implies, this type of story relates events in their chronological order, depending on growing tension and climax for its effectiveness. The usual order of fact presenting is completely reversed. The story proceeds from the first details to the last. The climax is at the end of the story. In this respect, the story has the structure of popular fiction. This type of story is extremely valuable for an event that is dramatic and interesting but is not over significant and does not constitute spot news. This type of working is tricky and is not often used.

The Signed News Story.—When a reporter is a recog-

nized authority in some special field and his stories are well received by the reading public, he is given the freedom of the news columns by means of the personal, signed story, known as a "by-line." His name is printed just under the "head." He is free to comment on events and personalities and to predict and to judge, privileges usually withheld from the average reporter. The popularity of this type of reporting is evidenced by the rapid increase of such columns within the past few years. The writer of signed stories builds up his own following. His signature on a story becomes a trademark. If a publicity man is fortunate enough to have one of these stars of journalism assigned to his story, he is already assured of a goodly audience.

Sometimes these writers are not under contract to the papers, preferring to pick and choose their jobs. Sometimes during an intense campaign it is worth while for the publicity expert to hire such a writer to do a signed article or a series of articles on the cause.

The Informal News Story.—This type of story follows certain well-defined forms. It differs from other types of stories in that it is usually signed, sentences are short, paragraphs brief, and rules of grammar relaxed. It can always be distinguished by its slangy, friendly approach.

It is the type of story that, if well written, appeals to all classes and ages. Sometimes the writer himself appears as an actor in the event. A woman journalist will ride a float in one of the spectacular New Orleans Mardi Gras night parades and describe it colorfully to her audience, as though she were talking to friends. Anything dramatic and not particularly significant can be treated in this way. This immensely popular type of story is usually written by a rather well-known member of the paper's staff.

Feature Stories and Articles.—The feature story is an attempt to instill color, drama, humor, or pathos in the news columns. The distinguishing mark of the news story

is its rigid form. The feature story has no definite form, its atmosphere being its identifying characteristic.

Any means that will catch and hold the reader's attention is allowed in feature writing. A feature story can be chronological, in the first person, or chatty and still be a good yarn.

In a feature story, one is conscious of the author's skill. In a news story, the facts themselves make the story. The reporter's ability and cleverness in seeking them out and presenting them accurately are less important. In the feature story, even the most casual reader will recognize the great part played by the individual reporter's ingenuity and originality. Thus the feature story is usually relied upon to give color to the day's news. Really important events are reported in the news columns. The feature writer takes care of the small, intrinsically unimportant, but amusing, touching, or entertaining details of the events of the day. But the feature writer does not forget news values altogether. He is merely allowed a bit more freedom. His story must be reasonably timely, reasonably important. But the hard and fast rule of wide significance and interest does not apply to him as it does to the "straight-news" reporter.

Facts first in the news story, manner first in the feature story is the rule. Techniques borrowed from the novel, short story, or drama may be used by the feature writer. Dialogue is especially important. Straight news is impersonal; the feature story is intimate. The feature writer asks you to laugh or cry or gawk in wonder with him. Upon his ability depends the value of the story.

A story dealing in an interesting and entertaining way with incidents and personalities, which for some particular reason are good material for an article, will be of interest although it may possess no real news value. In any event it must have great appeal and be developed in such manner

that the human-interest or entertainment value will ensure its desirability from the reader's standpoint. Such articles are generally personality sketches, how-to-do-it stories, and historical accounts as told by venerable or quaint characters.

Human-interest Stories.—People are always interested in the doings of other people. Whenever a person does an ordinary thing differently, he becomes the subject of interest.

Human-interest stories must have emotional appeal—little comedies and tragedies that produce laughter, tears, or heart throbs. They can have power and influence and may be effective in a publicity campaign. Human-interest stories cause many people to contribute to community chests, the Red Cross, Christmas funds.

Sob Stories.—"Sob story" is a term bestowed on a well-defined division of the human-interest story. The writer of the sob story wishes his readers to sympathize with the person or persons involved. He sets out to arouse emotion. He is working on dangerous ground, for one false note may cause the effect to collapse. If the story succeeds, however, it produces a strong reaction. Sob stories, just as human-interest stories, have worked wonders in the way of raising help for the unfortunate. A publicity agent handling a humanitarian cause is frequently tempted to use sob stories. He must be very cautious, for he may spoil much work with one mawkish note. But if the story is effective, he will have aroused greater public interest in his work than he could have in any other way.

The risk is really too great for any but the very experienced writer to attempt the sob story. It requires training and a peculiar aptitude to succeed at this difficult art.

The Extended, Colorful, or Sunday Magazine Story.—This type of story is usually more extended and detailed than any of the other types of weekday stories. Any of the feature-story techniques may be employed and used to

advantage. This type is generally written by reporters who have a natural gift for vivid, colorful writing. Such stories are, in most instances, written by specialists in a particular field—political reporters, dramatic and educational experts, and sports writers. Many Sunday sections feature historical accounts and personality sketches.

In this type of story the human- or personal-interest elements are developed in order to increase the value of the story from the entertainment standpoint. The writer takes the information he has gathered and by literary devices enlivens and dramatizes the facts. The treatment depends, of course, upon the type of story that is planned. The reporter may develop his story by vivid portrayal, describing the persons and places, by dialogue, by quoting verbatim, and by employing other methods of fiction.

Any technique or treatment may be borrowed from the methods of fiction and applied to this type of story as long as the facts are not altered and the story itself does not become fictitious. Employment of the basic emotional factors will make the story more appealing and interesting. Joy, sorrow, pity, hate, and love—all affect the human emotions and therefore serve to good advantage as window dressing for the material, which otherwise might be uninteresting, wooden, and drab.

If the story is well written and possesses sufficient reader appeal, it will be given the added space required for a story of this type, particularly if it is written as a Sunday feature for a section of the Sunday paper.

It should be accompanied by several good photographs. It is a good publicity type of story, for by use of emotional appeal readers may be deeply moved and public opinion greatly influenced in favor of some cause. The publicity man should not overlook or underestimate the value of this story, for it has a definite place in the publicity campaign.

Publicity men who are good newspapermen write stories

that are correct, original, and interesting. They never resort to tactics or employ methods considered unethical or in bad taste. They avoid the use of words, suggestive terms, and subtleties likely to offend the public.

Sentence structure must be grammatically correct, and the meaning apparent. Complicated sentence construction should be avoided. The object should be close to the verb and the verb close to the subject. Play your shots with care.

The reporter should bear in mind that he must write his story so that the reader instantly will grasp the idea. If the ability to do this is not natural—and to convey information briefly is far from easy—it must be acquired. Publicity writing should be explicit.

Sentences, paragraphs, and stories should always have strong and arresting beginnings. This is accomplished by putting the most important things first.

RULES TO BE OBSERVED

When writing news observe the cannons of good taste and good judgment.

Follow the style and plan generally considered proper and in good usage for news writing. Interest is challenged by the use of active verbs.

Make your story clear, simple, and direct. News should be concise and lucid.

For news writing, adopt and develop your own style, but be certain that it permits you to give the news to the readers in an interesting form and in understandable terms.

Study the style of our best columnists, Walter Winchell, Walter Lippmann, Henry McLemore, or some of the other top-flight writers, and get the knack of writing good, terse copy.

Omit everything that does not contribute to the story.