



Letter to the Editor



4-H Club reporters and members may wish to write a letter to the editor of a newspaper for a number of reasons. A letter to the editor provides:

- A way to provide information to the public about your 4-H event or activity.
- A way to thank area 4-H businesses and supporters of a specific event.
- A way to provide information to the public about the benefits of the local 4-H program.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Letters that are intended for publication should be carefully written.
- Check the letter specifications of the newspaper to which you are writing. Length and format requirements vary from paper to paper. (see examples below)
- Make one point (or at most two) in your letter or fax. Write short sentences, grouped in two or three paragraphs. State the point clearly, ideally in the first sentence.
- Make your letter timely. If you are not addressing a specific article, editorial or letter that recently appeared in the paper you are writing to, then try to tie the issue you want to write about to a recent event.
- Put your full first and last name, address, phone and/or fax numbers (day and evening) and your e-mail address at the top of the letter. Publications may want to call the writer to confirm authenticity: (i.e. that you are using your correct name -- not a phony name -- and that you did in fact write the letter).
- Type your letter if possible.
- Monitor the paper for your letter. If your letter has not appeared within a week or two, follow up with a call to the editorial department of the newspaper.

Examples of Letter to the Editor criteria:

Portage Register: Type or print your name, address, and phone number and sign your letter. They print only your name and town. Other information is for verification. They will edit letters for grammar, punctuation, spelling, libel and length. Keep letters to 500 words or less. They will not run unsigned letters. Only one letter per person every 30 days. They reserve the right not to publish a letter. Send letters to Portage Daily Register, 1640 LaDawn Drive, Portage, WI 53901, or e-mail pdr-editorial@capitalnewspapers.com.

The Capital Times: All letters must be accompanied by a name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. If the letter is used, this personal information is for verification purposes and the letter writer's name, city and state will be printed. Please keep your letter to 250 words or less. They do not print letters that have been generated from advocacy Web sites or organizations. To view past letters electronically, you may access The Capital Times' electronic archive.