



Spirit & Place

Op Ed Initiative

Project Description

An Op/Ed is an opinion piece that presents an informed view on a newsworthy topic, drawing on the author's insight and expertise. Facts, statistics and anecdotes help to shore up the argument. Remember: the purpose of an Op/Ed piece is not only to express your opinion but also to persuade readers to agree with your viewpoint.

The Op/Ed page of a newspaper (literally, opposite the editorial page) often comments on news or issues reported elsewhere in the paper and should offer a particular perspective that encourages readers to reflect more deeply on the topic. Op/Ed pieces are often included to balance the views of a newspaper's regular editorials and columns to provide readers with the information and opinions of a writer with expertise in a certain area.

The style of an Op/Ed should be lively and provocative, with a clear message and a transparent structure. Reading an Op/Ed should not be hard work for the general public. Jargon is to be avoided but colorful language and a memorable phrase or two will catch the reader's attention and lend support to the argument presented.

Many people are under the mistaken impression that it's next-to-impossible to get an article on the Op/Ed page of the local newspaper. It is true that newspapers have cut down the amount of space devoted to editorials. Even though, your chances are improved if you follow some basic rules:

1. While papers may differ somewhat in standard, it is suggested that Op/Eds be somewhere near 650 to 700 words. You don't want to risk yours being "chopped" by the editor.
2. Double-space your Op/Ed and make sure it is available electronically in a popular format such as Word.
3. Link it to the Spirit & Place Festival's theme, *Food for Thought*. In fact, make sure you mention the Festival and the relevance of the topic as it pertains to this year's Festival theme. Any incident, episode or issue that can be included would be timely and appropriate.
4. Please include the following in your Op/Ed:
 - This is the 15th year of the Spirit & Place Civic Festival;
 - The theme changes every year and this year it is "Food for Thought";
 - The festival dates are November 5-14, 2010; and
 - Visit www.spiritandplace.org for more information on this year's Festival.
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Distribution

Every newspaper has specific criteria for publishing Op/Eds, but you can contact each newspaper you would like to target for their general submission guidelines. Typically newspapers have what is called an "editorial editor" and that is who you should submit your final piece.

A timely, well-written Op/Ed will bring luster to this year's Spirit & Place Festival, as well as to its author and that author's organization.

Additional Suggestions

You can do a "google" search for more information on writing Op/Eds; the following links have samples of well-written Op/Eds as well as guidelines on style, tone, etc.

www.aboutpublicrelations.net/ucmclaina.htm

www.anthologiesonline.com/write%20p%20Ed.htm

www.greenmediatoolshed.org/training/TopTenGuidesAndTutorials/WriteanOpEd.adp