



# Hot Off the Press Release

Creating Content that Catches the Attention of the Community



# Who I am

- Been in libraries for 6 years
  - 2 at Springdale Public Library
  - 4 at Bentonville Public Library
- BPL's resident wordsmith 😊
  - Write/edit over 100 press releases a year
  - Copy editor for *Arkansas Libraries Journal*
  - Create monthly newsletters
  - Edit BPL's website



# Why We Market

- To get people interested in our events
- To let the community know what's going on
- To celebrate our accomplishments
  
- But most importantly...



We Let the Community  
Know We're Here!



## Look at us!

- In this digital age, it takes a lot to be at the forefront of people's minds
- The more they see us, the more the community will think fondly of us!
  - The Mere Exposure Effect
    - AKA The Familiarity Principle, the mere exposure effect is a psychological phenomenon by which people tend to develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them.



# Be Consistent!

- Presentation is important
  - Create a basic template for all press releases across organization that follows AP Style
  - Your signature is important too, be professional!
- Consider a single sender
  - Creates consistency for the receiver



# Be Consistent!



Contact: Name  
Phone: Number

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Date:

## Title

**BENTONVILLE, Ark. –**

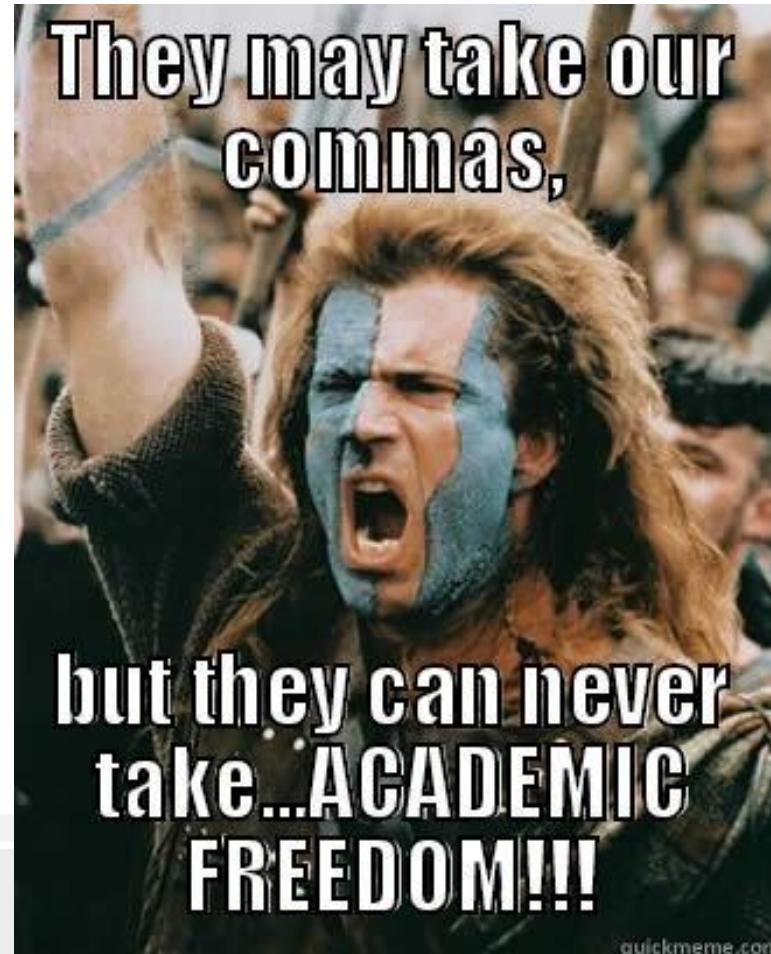
For more information about this event or Bentonville Public Library, please visit [www.bentonvillelibrary.org](http://www.bentonvillelibrary.org) or call 479-271-3192.

###



## Be Consistent!

- Keep to one formatting style (AP)





# Be Consistent!

- Extra eyes help to edit
  - It's not fun to send out corrected releases!
- Be professional!
  - No Comic Sans!
  - No background wallpaper!
  - No **crazy colors**!





# Who, What, When, Where, Why

- Never send out a press release if you can't easily identify who, what, when, where, and why
- Identify the main points within the first couple of sentences
- If something is confusing, rewrite!
- Media often uses info straight from release, make it easy for them!



# Make it Easy for the Press

- Don't be afraid to send releases out more than once. The press is busy!
- Be easy to contact
  - When they do contact, be easy to work with!
  - Establish a great rapport with the media
    - Send a thank you email if you have their direct contact
    - Let them know you appreciate them!
    - When you would really like a photographer at an event, go ahead and ask and follow up with a thank you!



# How many press releases to send

- Consider sending monthly releases of all your events
  - Weekly during the summer!
- For really big events, consider sending out multiple releases
  - Announcement release
  - Full detailed release on all activities
  - Break-out releases focusing on individual activities
  - Reminder release
- Be sure to change the releases so receiver won't get déjà vu!



When you send it out...

- Be aware of deadlines





## When you send it out...

- Be aware of deadlines
  - Send press releases at least 5-7 days prior to event
  - Some may need it much sooner, so make sure you know the print dates for your contacts
- Make sure you are sending it out to all appropriate contacts!
  - Don't forget to send it to your City and State Officials!

# Creating Great Copy

- Don't be afraid to have fun!
  - Don't make your readers yawn! You need to get their attention!







# Creating Great Copy

- Experiment with different types of copy. You are a salesperson!
  - Conversational, storytelling, imaginative... play with different styles to see if you come up with something new!
- Be your own cheerleader
  - Emphasize how great you are, not your weaknesses
  - Don't waste time apologizing



# Creating Great Copy

- Know who your reader is
  - Don't bog your readers down with library jargon





# Creating Great Copy

- Start with a great headline
  - It doesn't take much to change a plain headline into an engaging one!
  - “Free Comic Book Day at BPL” Vs. “Action-Packed Free Comic Book Day at Bentonville Public Library May 6!”
- Your headline is your subject line- so make it count!
- Hook ‘em and then get to the point
  - Don't focus on being so creative that people don't even know what's going on

# Creating Great Copy

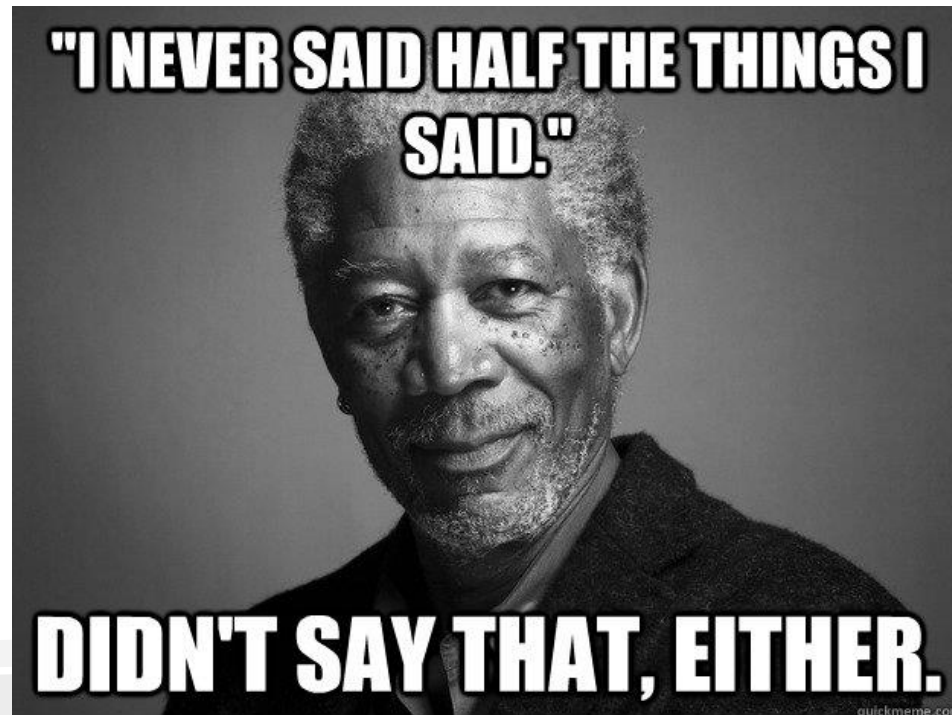
- Throw in some great facts and stats

*"The facts, Ma'am.  
Just the facts."*



# Creating Great Copy

- Quote me on it!
  - Quotes are a great way to bring a personal and/or authoritative voice to the marketing





## What's next...

- Edit your great copy to fit different avenues
  - Web, Facebook, Twitter, newsletters, etc.

# Go be awesome!



Any questions?