

Getting that letter printed

It's that time of year again -- election season.

For newspaper editors, it means endless calls. A great deal of them are about letters to the editor. Why hasn't my letter been published? How long can a letter be? When will my letter be published? The list is long, and we'll try to answer some of the most common questions.

The Times-Standard will try to accommodate all letters that meet our publishing requirements.

Rule No. 1: Please keep letters to 250 words, or less. That doesn't count a person's name or city, just the body of the letter. Election letters over 250 words will not be published. Period. We've already gotten several well over the published limit.

Rule No. 2: The letter must include a writer's name, address and phone number. Only a letter writer's name and city are printed. Letter writers may submitted one letter per month for publication. So, if you like more than one candidate, you might want to talk about both of them in the same letter. Local residents are given priority.

Rule No. 3: Do not submit form letters. If a letter is suspected of being a form letter -- what generally happens is a paper is flooded with eerily similar-sounding letters in a short period of time -- it will be placed on hold for examination. Form letters will not be published. We want to hear what you have to say, not the campaign. Trust us, that's a lot more interesting than any form letter could be.

Rule No. 4: Stick to the issues, not name calling.

The Times-Standard is not accepting My Words on candidates, but each candidate may submit one My Word between today and Oct. 15. My Words are limited to 750 words. No exceptions. My Words do not run on Sundays. Specific date requests for publication can't be accommodated.

Due to the volume of letters, it may take a week or so for a letter to be printed. Please be patient if your letter isn't immediately published. The best way to submit a letter is by e-mail to letters@times-standard.com. Handwritten letters take more time to process because they have to be transcribed. We also can't tell you exactly when a letter will be printed. It depends on space, the length of other letters, the length of columns, etc. Remember, not all letters will be printed but we'll do our best to get in as many as possible. Letters will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 25.

Until then, write on.

The Times-Standard

Posted: 09/17/2010 01:31:44 AM PDT