



Getting records copy right

Records copy is an important part of the content of every community newspaper. We use it in items such as police and fire reports, calendars and the like.

Without records copy, our readers would be much less informed. Yes, they'd have our stories and photos and our reports on what's going on in the community—but they wouldn't have information that is often crucial to day-to-day living. They wouldn't have school lunch menus. YMCA workout listings. Support group meetings. Senior citizen health screening.

And they wouldn't be aware of the fun stuff that's coming up in town: Arts and crafts shows. Church ice cream socials. Summer reading programs. Garden club shows.

Most of this content is handled in the form of lists: paragraph after paragraph of tightly written items, notices and calendar events. And it needs to be given a different typographic approach because it's not read in the same way as your stories.

Lists and records are not "read" so much as they are skimmed. Readers tend to breeze through a half dozen or more items until they find one that interests them. Then they may skip ahead another few items, stopping again at another one that piques their interest.

So lists and records need to be given typographic treatment that makes each of them stand out from

FRIDAY, JULY 27
LAKE GRANBURY Art Association Photography Show opens, Shanley House Center for the Arts, 224 N. Travis, (817) 573-3481. Show runs through July.

SATURDAY, JULY 28
CAR SHOW, 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. in Home Depot parking lot.
ARTS AND CRAFTS and Food Vendors on the square, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

SUNDAY, JULY 29
ARTS AND CRAFTS and Food Vendors on the square, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
PIONEERS AND Patriots Hometown Parade in Granbury, 10 a.m., (817) 573-1622.

AUGUST 1 WEDNESDAY
POLYMER CLAY CLASS Granbury Extension Ecobenefitting 4-H clubs
EIGHT CHARITIES, 9 a.m. annex building at Pearl streets, (817) 579-1160
ART CAMP for ages 6 to 12 Craft Mall, 2 to 4 p.m., or (817) 629-6452.
FREE BEGINNING knitting offered by the Granbury 10 a.m., Whimsy's (on (817) 579-0987 or arduinter.net for reservations
LAKE GRANBURY Amish Family Post 491 installation, 4 p.m., followed by fireman, 3409 Davis Road,

Records copy need not be stylish. The idea is to make it easy to skim.

the others—while not attributing any hierarchy so that one item appears more important.

Here are some tips:

USE SANS SERIF: It helps to differentiate list copy from your standard body text.

GO FLUSH LEFT: Again, it's different from body copy—but flush left also is more forgiving when you've got to list long names of groups or events.

USE A REVERSE INDENT: It's different from text and it helps to inject some needed negative space into long columns of lists.

DON'T SKIMP ON TYPE SIZE: True, your lists may not be Pulitzer Prize caliber writing, but the content is critical to many readers. Don't make these packages difficult to read—especially for older subscribers.

ALIGN TO A BASELINE: It makes your lists easier to read—and easier for you to place on the page.

CONSIDER EXTRA SPACING: How about putting an open line of space between the items? It makes the list even easier to skim.

CONSIDER BOLD LEAD-INS: This gives the beginning of each item a bit more punch. It helps if you start the item with a couple of words describing the event, such as: "Car show" or "Yard sale."

CONSIDER COLUMN RULES: They can give the package a bit more support and stability.

You may not consider lists and records the most important content in your newspaper. But many of your readers would disagree—and they would want you to give that content proper display.

Check Ed Henninger's site for details on his newspaper design book!

'Henninger on Design' is a winner because it condenses all the fundamentals, the rules, the options and the how-to's of newspaper design into a manual that's easy on the eye and mind, and downright fun to use.'
Ken Blum | Black Ink Publishers' Auxiliary

Find out more about **Henninger on Design** by visiting Ed's web site: www.henningerconsulting.com

ED HENNINGER is an independent newspaper consultant and Director of Henninger Consulting.

Offering comprehensive newspaper design services including redesigns, workshops, design training and design evaluations.

www.henningerconsulting.com
edh@henningerconsulting.com
803-327-3322