

But above all, never forget that the best way—the only way—to live with yourself is to do what fits your own guts guidelines of what is right and what is wrong. I'll be hoping that things work out for you—let me know how it goes, okay?

## From Steph Gilbertson of Cedar Rapids, Iowa

"I just finished reading your 'Test of the Press' article in *The Hobby Horse News*. I wanted you to know I think it's the most well-reasoned article about our hobby that I've ever read! Thank you for writing it. I trust it will have an impact.

"...I too felt more than a little uneasy about the *Horse Illustrated* one, but didn't want to express my distaste, because that seemed somewhat like 'biting the hand...' So, just brushed it off, though I know major articles like that make an impact for good or ill. Your article helped remind me that there are many reasonable, open-minded, and interesting people involved in the hobby. And now I feel better.

"...I work in a tack shop that has sold models since the 50s, and over the four years I've been there I've gotten acquainted with many of our model customers. I'd guess that about 80% of those model buyers collect for their own reasons and aren't interested in or involved in the 'network' of showers, clubs, etc. A fourth of those are youngsters, but the majority are adults who have many different angles on the hobby than the 'network's.' I've come to think the 'visible hobbyists' are really just the tip of the iceberg, and always have been. Us 'visible hobbyists' will never be connected with this 'silent majority,' and that's fine. They don't acknowledge us and we need to keep in mind that we don't represent them. I think we need to remember to keep our position in the hobby in perspective so that we represent ourselves with open minds and common sense. Thank goodness there are people doing that, like you!"

*Thanks for the kind compliments! Does it sometimes seem as though members of the "silent majority" aren't aware of just how large the entire realm of Breyer collectors is? At a county fair last year, a man was selling Dan Patch models crudely harnessed to lumpily-welded sulkies. For the fun of it, I asked him where he'd gotten the model, and he shrugged that he'd made it himself. "Nuh-uhhh!" piped up a little girl beside us. "That's just like my Dan Patch at home, only yours is wearing shoestrings!"*

## From Gail Fitch of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"Your article 'The Test of the Press...' was interesting. Besides in horse magazines, another avenue of publicity for the model horses hobby is general circulation publications such as newspapers.

"I wrote the enclosed article which was published in 1983 in *The Milwaukee Journal*, a large metropolitan daily newspaper. The key to such articles is to explain things in a general enough way that people understand how complicated and sophisticated the hobby is.

"I put Breyer's address at the end of the article; I sent Breyer a copy of the article but they never said whether a lot of people contacted them after the article came out or not.

"I've been doing my part!"

*Thanks for sending the copy of your feature article "Horses Without the Barn Essentials" (which appeared in the July 14, 1983 Milwaukee Journal, and focused on the Badger State Live Show of late June 1983). Last issue's "Test Of The Press" piece was one of those mutating columns that grabbed the bit and took me along for the ride. It began as a simple overview of national magazine articles that readers might find and enjoy (as a contrast to the bitter taste the Horse Illustrated piece left in many mouths), but along the way the column sprouted some overtones on obtaining national print coverage.*

*I would never slight the value of local newspaper coverage—I come from a newspaper background myself—and would certainly have mentioned that fertile field had the column been on the subject of obtaining local media attention. But someone else has already written a much better piece on the topic than I ever could...in fact, here it is!*

## From Lynn A. Fraley of Los Alamos, New Mexico

"The first live show I attended in my hobby career was the 1978 Model Horse Congress, and I well remember the excitement the visit from *Classic* magazine inspired. Unfortunately I never did get to see a copy of that article. Nor have I actually gotten my hands on the *Horse Illustrated* article to read it. I knew of its existence in early December and even mentioned it to a business acquaintance at a horsey holiday party here in our small town. From your description of the article, I now know why this person was rather condescending to me when I recently spoke to her about a business matter.

"...I am the Marketing Director for New Mexico's second largest Credit Union. In this position I handle all of the Credit Union's public relations, advertising, special events, etc. My background is in copy writing and graphic design. Combined with the fact that I have enjoyed and grown in the model horse hobby for nearly twenty years now, I feel that I am in a unique position to offer fellow hobbyists/show holders a few tips on getting good press.

### A. Do Your Homework

1. Have your own facts straight, and a positive attitude about what you're doing and why.
2. Find out what media are available to you locally, regionally, nationally. Print media (newspapers, magazines, newsletters) seem to be most receptive to our hobby, but with the proper angle and an interested news director, TV can be possible. Radio is the least receptive, simply because our hobby is so visually oriented, and therefore all the more difficult to make interesting through only audio.

3. Create a press list that includes the name of the publication or stations, the mailing address, the street address, phone number, and the name of the editor in charge of the lifestyles or local features section, the name of the person in charge of the local events calendar, and most important, the deadline to get information in. You will need to call the publication or station to get some of this information.

### B. Create a News Release

1. Realize that you are not writing a story, that's the publication's job. You are alerting the publication to the fact that you have some news that will be of interest to their readers.
2. Get the essence of your "story" into the headline and in the first sentence of the copy. (Remember Who, What, When, Where, and Why should I, the reader, care?) Then support it with essential information. Then and only then go into any "fluff." Why? Because a reporter is trained to write a story this way. The rule of thumb is that an editor should be able to cut a story at the end of almost any paragraph and the story will still hang together and give readers the critical facts in spite of the cut.
3. Find a local angle to your story to play up. People are always most interested in what's going on in their own backyard.
4. Follow this standard format:

Name and address of Organization/person
NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release      Contact: (Name, phone #)
EYE-CATCHING SHORT HEADLINE
Date (Town, State)      Begin your body copy here with only the most relevant information.

5. Deliver your press release/kit to the appropriate editor in person (but not when the publication staff is close to a deadline!). The personal contact goes a long way in establishing a positive relationship with the publication. If you can't deliver it in person, make sure you address the envelope specifically to the appropriate editor by name (spelled correctly of course!)

6. Increase the appeal of your press release with clever packaging. Present the release in a folder. Include in the folder a fact sheet about your event in outline form, the biographies of key personnel and/or local

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