

Format and Style Guide for *The GRIT*

Version 1.0, 17 April 2019

The GRIT is the Sandia Heights Homeowners Association newsletter. The following information is recommended, but not required, in writing for and laying out *The GRIT*. Where examples are used, they are taken from *GRITs* ≥10 years old. Should anything in this document conflict with the Communications and Publications Committee (C&PC) *Charter* or *Operating Manual*, the latter two documents have precedence.

GRIT Formatting

Other than the cover page, *The GRIT* pages shall be single or double column. Layout can have both on the same page. For example, a full-width ad and two-column article. The cover page shall have a single column of content that allows for the standard board members and office information box along the left side.

Text shall be a sans-serif font, such as Candara, Calibri, Arial or Helvetica. Body text shall be 11- or 12-point, with 12-point preferred and 11-point used sparingly for squeezing more into the allotted space.

Title text shall be the same font as the body text. Titles shall be boldface and be 14- or 16-point, with 16-point preferred and 14-point used for long titles or where space is limited. Titles shall be centered on the page or column. The author line shall be in the same font, boldface, centered, but with a smaller font size than the title, preferably the font size used in the article.

Text of articles shall be right and left justified. Hyphenation shall be turned on. The first paragraph of an article shall not be indented, but space should be allowed between the title/author line(s) and the first line of text. Subsequent paragraphs shall not have preceding or following line spacing, but will be indented, typically 3 characters.

Where clock times are listed with *ante meridiem* or *post meridiem* abbreviations, these shall be in small caps, i.e., AM and PM. In Microsoft Word, small caps can be found under the “Format” menu, then select “Font”.

Style Guide

The GRIT is written for the residents of Sandia Heights. Articles in *The GRIT* should be written as though addressing those residents. The second person, “you,” should be used when appropriate. (“Well if you haven’t noticed, spring is here.” Apr 2008). It is also okay to use first person, “I” and “we.” (“I want to encourage you to take part in this process and bring about a 21st century local government.” Aug-Sep 2001)

The GRIT is fairly informal. Some informality in the writing makes for easier, more engaging reading.

Use active voice as much as possible. Passive voice both obscures the actor in a sentence and comes across as quite bureaucratic. And if you must put a “by” in the sentence to indicate the doer, then by all means make it active voice. Some examples:

- “In order for it to become law it has to be introduced as legislation by a member of Congress.” (Summer 2000) Instead, “A member of Congress must introduce it as legislation in order for it to become law.”
- “If an animal is seen repeatedly in the same area and causes problems, it may be necessary to call the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.” (Fall 1996) Instead, “If you see an animal repeatedly in the same area or it causes problems, call New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.”
- “A second certified letter will be sent if there is no response received within two weeks.” (Aug-Sep 2001) Instead, “The CSC will send a second certified letter if we receive no response within two weeks.”

Try to be concise. Extra words often make it harder rather than easier to understand what you are saying. Also, concise articles mean we can put out more information in each issue.

- “Finally, the Tram Company can argue that if they don’t develop the La Cueva land it is very possible that another developer could eventually obtain the land from the Forest Service and build at a much higher density without regard to the rest of Sandia Heights or that the La Cueva Picnic Ground would be expanded dramatically creating a serious liability for those current owners of property in the North.” (Apr 1984) Instead, “Finally, the Tram Company can argue that if they don’t develop the La Cueva land another developer could, and at a much higher density. Furthermore, dramatic expansion of the La Cueva Picnic Ground would likely impact North Sandia Heights residents.”
- “Those residents with dogs that bark a lot, in consideration of your neighbors, might think about investing in a no-bark device available at local pet stores.” (Aug 2006) Instead, “If your dog barks a lot, think about getting a no-bark collar.”

And lastly, have fun writing for *The GRIT*. Your readers will see that you enjoy what you’re writing and will, in turn, more enjoy reading it.