

GRIT Contributor Guide

Send this page to neighbors, committee chairs, Board members, and volunteers who want to contribute to the GRIT.

Note: This is practical writing and photo guidance, not the official publication policy. Official rules, approvals, and final editorial decisions live with the Communications & Publications Committee and the current GRIT editor.

Welcome

The GRIT is the community newsletter of Sandia Heights. It is not a newspaper, a social media feed, or an HOA enforcement bulletin.

It is a place for neighbors to share information, ideas, stories, photographs, events, accomplishments, local history, and community knowledge.

The best articles help residents feel more connected to the place they live and the people who live here.

Quick Submission Tips

- Write for a neighbor holding the printed GRIT in their hands.
- Make the local connection obvious: why does this matter in Sandia Heights?
- Send original image files separately instead of embedding them in a Word document.
- Include captions and names for people in photos when possible.
- Use a clear title and include dates, locations, and contact information when relevant.
- Expect light editing for clarity, length, style, and available space.

Know Your Audience

The GRIT is primarily a print publication. Approximately 1,800 printed copies are distributed each month.

A digital version is also emailed and posted online, but only a few hundred readers typically access the issue electronically.

Write for someone holding a printed copy in their hands. If a link or QR code is useful, include it, but do not make the article depend on readers clicking around online.

What Makes Good GRIT Content?

Ask yourself: **Why should a Sandia Heights resident care?**

Good topics often include:

- Local wildlife
- Gardening in Sandia Heights
- Hiking and trails
- Neighborhood history
- Volunteer efforts
- Community events
- Local organizations
- Wildfire preparedness
- Astronomy and dark skies
- Interesting neighbors
- Practical homeowner knowledge
- Kids' activities
- Seasonal topics

The strongest articles are relevant to both place, meaning Sandia Heights, and time, meaning what is happening now.

Avoid HOA Nag-Grams

Readers generally do not enjoy being scolded. Instead of "Residents should stop doing X," try "Here is why X matters."

Teach. Explain. Entertain. Tell stories. Share useful information.

A reader who learns something interesting is more likely to change behavior than a reader who feels criticized.

Bring Your Personality

The GRIT does not need to sound like a government report. Humor, storytelling, local anecdotes, and personal experiences are welcome.

Articles can be informative while still being warm, neighborly, and enjoyable to read.

Photographs Matter

The printed GRIT is black and white. An image that looks beautiful in color may become muddy and difficult to understand when printed.

Good Photos

Useful photos usually have:

- Strong contrast
- A clear subject
- Simple composition
- A large foreground object
- Distinct separation between subject and background

Photos That Are Hard To Print

Photos often print poorly when they have:

- Distant subjects
- Heavy shadows
- Low contrast
- Busy backgrounds
- Lots of similar colors that become the same shade of gray

Image Guidelines

Whenever possible:

- Submit original image files.
- Do not embed images inside Word documents.
- Provide captions.
- Identify people in photographs.
- Submit multiple image options.

The editor may crop, resize, or adjust images for publication.

Length

Shorter is usually better.

- **Announcement:** 50-150 words
- **Short article:** 200-500 words
- **Feature article:** 500-1,000 words

If an article is longer, the editor may shorten it for space.

Final Thought

The best GRIT articles answer one question: **What would make a neighbor stop flipping pages and read this?**

If the article is local, timely, useful, interesting, or amusing, you are probably on the right track.

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