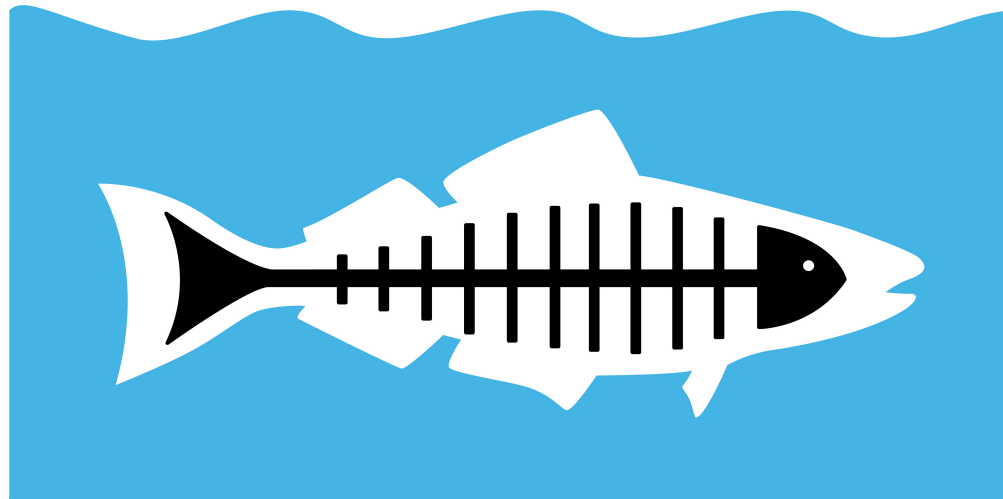


# POWER OF THE PEN

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How to Write an Effective Letter to the Editor



**Heal the Bay**

# “Protect What You Love”

- THRIVING OCEANS
- HEALTHY WATERSHEDS
- SMART WATER MANAGEMENT



# My Story

- Angeleno
- Leftie
- Writer
- Surfer
- Father



# The Five W's and one very important H





# THE ROADMAP

WHO

WHAT

WHERE

WHEN

WHY

And very important ...

HOW



# WHY They Matter

## THEY WORK

- Highly read section of paper
- People Like Plain Talk
- People Trust Their Neighbors
- People Like Personal Stories
- Politicians Like to Be Liked

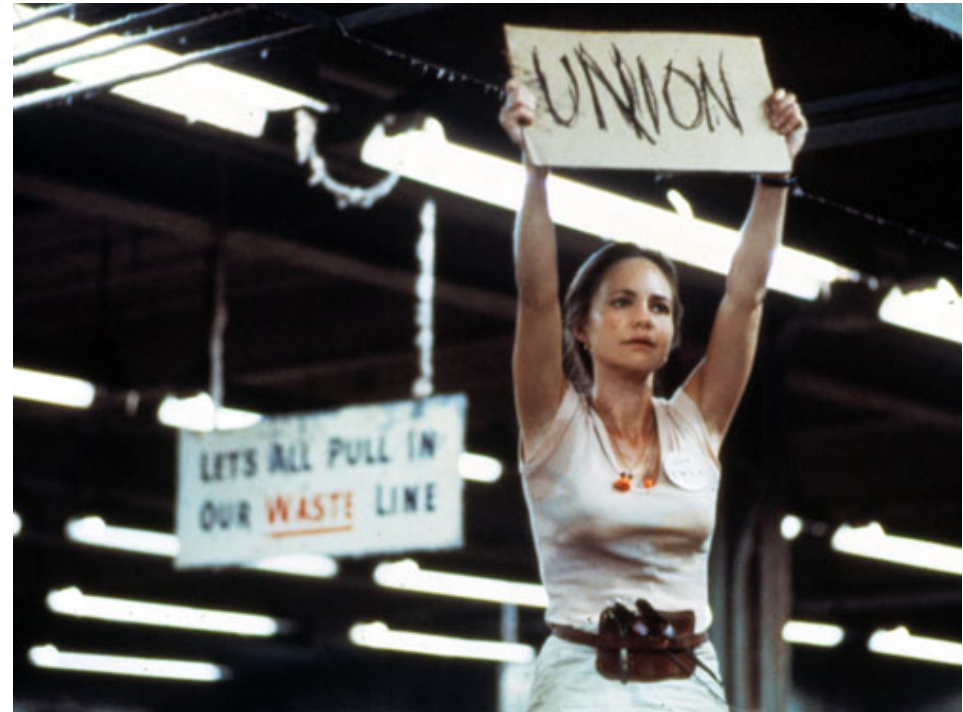


# WHAT to Put in Your Letter

## SHORT AND SIMPLE

- Keep it local
- Make it personal
- Facts/Numbers/Data AND emotion
- Don't ignore costs/economics
- Answer "What's In It for Me?"
- SPECIFIC ask at very end
- Less than 150 words

## Problem> Solution>Action





# WHERE to Place Your Letter

## KNOW YOUR MARKET

- Match Your Audience & Outlet
- Tailor Your Tone Accordingly
- Multiple Versions for Multiple Outlets



# WHEN to Send Your Letter

- MUST BE TIMELY: Why Now?
- Find your “peg”
- Within 48 hrs. of published story
- Ahead of an important vote
- Ahead of an important meeting
- Ahead of a public event
- My holiday trick



# To WHOM to Send Your Letter

- Follow online submission rules
- Tip: Send personal emails as backup
- Once IS enough!



# HOW to Make Your Letter Sing

## PERSONALIZE

- **Speak From the Heart**
  - Not dry facts, canned rhetoric
- **Write With a Smile**
  - Don't be a know-it-all or sourpuss
- **Stay Positive**
  - ALWAYS Offer Solutions
- **Acknowledge Other Side**
  - Good people can disagree

## TELL YOUR STORY



# Other Tips

- Use active voice
- Short sentences
- No \$20 words
- Always proofread. Twice.
- Read aloud to a friend

...THE RUN-ON SENTENCES OF LIFE...

Where you and me both wonder what I'm talking about.



# Create Once, Publish Often

- Blog
- Longer Op-Ed
- Change.org Petition
- Facebook
- Twitter Post
- IG



# My Favorite Letter to Editor

