



Class Notes 101: Tips & Best Practices

Fall Fest, October 13, 2018
10–11:15 a.m.
Meneely 104

What makes compelling Class Notes? What are the dos and don'ts of submitting the notes? In this session—tailored toward class secretaries—Wheaton Magazine's Class Notes editor, Laura Pedulli, will drill down into the Class Notes process. She will share tips on writing engaging notes; formatting submissions; and providing quality photos that are usable in the magazine. She also will be available to answer any specific questions you may have.

- 1. Pop Quiz and Review**
- 2. The Purpose of Class Notes**
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- 6. Open Questions**

Questions?
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Class Notes Quiz—True or False

1. The purpose of the Class Notes is to honor accomplishments and report on other news of the alumni community, including job promotions and awards, travel, recent mini-reunions, new marriages and children, and more.
True **False**
2. The perfect type of news to include is the your classmates's upcoming birth of a baby.
True **False**
3. Your Class Notes submission will appear in the magazine exactly as submitted.
True **False**
4. Strong political commentary is encouraged in Class Notes.
True **False**
5. Only share news that you receive firsthand from a classmate (news learned on Facebook doesn't count).
True **False**
6. A family member of a classmate received a prestigious award. This type of news is appropriate in the Class Notes.
True **False**
7. All photos that I submit are guaranteed to be published in the magazine.
True **False**
8. If I learn of the death of a classmate, I should inform the college.
True **False**
9. It's OK to promote a classmate's fundraiser, including web address, in the Class Notes.
True **False**
10. I learned that a classmate is dealing with a difficult medical diagnosis. It's OK to write about this classmate and her health condition in the Class Notes to offer support.
True **False**

The Purpose of Class Notes

Why Class Notes? Despite the popularity of social media, alumni still engage with Class Notes to learn the latest news on their classmates and the college. I've heard on many occasions that it's the first section readers turn to when they receive the magazine.

- Strengthen the alumni community
- Reaffirm connections between classmates, Wheaton
- Showcase the rich and varied personal and professional accomplishments of our alumni
- Report on Reunion and mini-reunions
- Celebrate special milestones (births, weddings, etc.)
- Share photos of alumni gatherings
- Help coordinate planning or future activities
- A platform to share thoughts/ideas, especially with classmates who may have similar stories or experiences

Did you know...

- I receive 50–60 Class Notes submissions (from the 1940s to today.)
- We check **every name** mentioned in the Class Notes against our database. That is why it is extra important for alumni to update their personal information (e.g., if they changed their last name when married) as we'll only publish what's in our system
- I edit the Class Notes for grammar, readability and to conform to our style guide. I also fact check, checking proper names of organizations and towns/cities mentioned in the Class Notes.

Basics

What to submit

- Submissions with fewer than 1,000 words (ideally under 600 words)
- One edited paragraph with a cohesive narrative, including an introductory greeting and call to action for classmates/readers
- Submit ALL photos with Class Notes, and not in separate emails. Send as attachments; do not embed in email or Word document.
- Photos and captions (of those pictured) of alumni—think mini-Reunions, weddings, etc.
- News from a variety of classmates
- Send one version to ensure the correct text is published

What NOT to submit

- News overly-focused on a spouse/child/relative, etc. Foremost, focus on your classmates.
- News heard secondhand over social media. Please reach out to the primary source first.
- Detailed medical information/conditions of someone other than yourself.

Frequently Asked Questions

When are the deadlines for Class Notes?

Issue	Deadline	Publication
Spring	Jan. 9, 2019	March
Summer	April 4, 2019	July
Fall	July 2, 2019	October
Winter	Sept. 27, 2019	December

About a month before each deadline, the Class Notes editor will send you a reminder email with instructions on submitting the notes. Many class secretaries find it helpful to send out a mass email two or three weeks in advance of the deadlines above to solicit news from their classmates. If a Class Notes column is not received by the deadline, we will email the secretary to confirm non-receipt for that issue.

What if I miss the deadline for my Class Notes column?

If you can't make the deadline for your column, please contact Laura Pedulli for assistance or to make other plans for submitting your column. In selected cases, we can extend the deadline, but generally we can't guarantee the publication of Class Notes that are received after the deadline.

How do I get an updated address list of my classmates?

A class list request entails two simple steps: Sign the confidentiality form (if you have not already); and fill out the class list request form. Both forms are online; ask Laura Pedulli for assistance.

Is there anything I shouldn't write about in Class Notes?

In general, avoid news of forthcoming events, such as a classmate's impending wedding, parenthood or career change. It's not a big deal to report a classmate's future plans to spend a few weeks at the beach, but it could be embarrassing or hurtful if we've written about a major life event—like a wedding or the birth of a child—that doesn't occur as planned. Please share news of these events after they have occurred.

Also, use discretion in reporting news that came to you from secondhand sources. (“Joe Schmoe heard that Wendy Wheaton will be moving to Florida in May.”) In such a case, you may want to contact the original source (or the alumni in question) to verify the news. Also, if you write about an illness, be sure to be sensitive on whether that person wants to share that information.

If a classmate’s child (or other family member) is engaged or expecting a baby, can I write about that?

Please wait until after the event has occurred.

How do I submit a picture for the Class Notes section?

Digital photos (preferred): To submit a digital photo, attach it to an email message addressed to magazine@wheatoncollege.edu. Please note that for print reproduction of digital photographs, we need high-resolution files (a minimum of 300 pixels per inch or 300 dpi) in as large a format as possible. Photos that have a lower dpi are usually not acceptable. Digital photos should be saved in the JPEG format.

Please do not take photos from Facebook—or any other social media channel—without the permission of those in the photo. Also, please note that photos that appear in social media often are not high enough in resolution for us to publish in the magazine.

Photographic prints: While we do accept print copies of photos, we strongly prefer digital photos sent as email attachments. For photos sent by email, they must be at least 4x6 inches in size. The photos you send to the *Wheaton Magazine* should be sharp and clear. Photos that are out of focus, or that have harsh shadows, over-exposed areas, or “red-eyed” subjects, may not be usable. Mail your photos: *Wheaton Magazine*, Wheaton College, Norton, MA 02766. *We cannot return photos. Send copies only.*

For all photos: Please supply a brief description of the event and all the names and class years of the alumni who appear in the picture.

May I include a classmate’s email address or telephone number in my Class Notes column?

In most cases, you should not include this information. One exception is listing the contact information (including email addresses and phone numbers) for Reunion organizers or class officers. This information is already published on the Wheaton website and thus is permissible in Class Notes.

It's trickier when classmates ask to have their email addresses published as part of their updated news. In the past, we have occasionally allowed this information in Class Notes ("Winona Wheaton writes that she would love to hear from her classmates. Her new e-mail address is..."). But because we want to limit the publication of alumni addresses for privacy reasons, it would be better to say, "Contact me for Winona's address."

How do I notify the college of an alumni or family member's death?

Deaths should be reported to Alumni Relations at 508-286-8207 during business hours or by email to alum@wheatoncollege.edu.

If the classmate has written of the death in a letter or email message to you, please forward the letter (or the email)—as well as the obituary, if you have one—to Alumni Relations.

How do I handle a classmate's (or family member's) death in Class Notes?

It's fitting to acknowledge the death in your Class Notes, even if it's just to include a simple message of condolence to the classmate or the family. After the death is reported in the *Wheaton Magazine*, classmates may write to you to offer an anecdote or favorite memory about the person who died. You are welcome to incorporate these sentiments into your column as you see fit and as length allows.

Something I'm writing about hasn't happened at the time I'm preparing my column, but the event will be over with by the time the column is published. How should I handle that?

You can handle it simply by writing about the event in the past tense. Or, you could use some appropriate contextual language, illustrated in the following two examples, to let your readers know that you're writing about the event in advance.

"As I write this column in March, I know that everyone is eagerly anticipating our upcoming Reunion at Wheaton..."

"By the time you read this, we will have been together for our mini-reunion in Florida. I look forward to sharing the details in my next column."

I have an idea that I think is publication-worthy. Should I submit the idea to the magazine?

Yes! We are always interested in your ideas for feature articles or profiles of alumni. Send your suggestions to magazine@wheatoncollege.edu.

A classmate of mine reported a new address when she sent me her Class Notes. Should I forward this information to the college?

Yes. You can report name and address changes to Alumni Relations at 508-286-8207 during regular business hours, or by email to alum@wheatoncollege.edu.

And if classmates share updates about a relocation they've made, but haven't listed their new addresses, kindly ask them to report their most recent contact information to the college.

Find Mistakes in this Class Notes Submission

Note: Based on real Class Notes entry, but I fabricated several facts

1975

Hello, everyone!!!! ☺ Fifteen of us gathered and enjoyed a lovely lunch in Plymth, Mass., on October 1, compliments of our hostess **Anna Beck**. Thank you, Ann. I heard from several of you—and what follows are the updates in your own words. From **Ann Lurray**: “My son, Peter, is getting married in London next week to a lovely British gal, Roxanne. I can’t wait.” **Laura Page** wrote that she is moving to Sarasota, Fla. for her husband’s work. “My husband works in banking. He currently serves as vice president of Bank of America. He will oversee offices in six locations. Part of his work entails providing loans to small businesses. Last year, he received an award for his contributions to business development.” **Vicky Drum**) reports: “I’m celebrating my 63rd birthday today, can you believe it? In October, **Cari Tyler** and I met up in Brattleboro, Vt., for a fun, fall foliage weekend. We saw tons of gorgeous colors at Hogback Mountain, visited the Nature Museum—which has live owls and birds of prey—and we hit a local micro brewery, too. It was like old times. Lots of laughs. I also connected with **Angela Dunn** to see her daughter, Heather, perform in a comedy on stage in New York City.” I heard from **Ellie Blue**. Her daughter is expecting a baby in March. Also, she told me that she heard on Facebook that **Joanne Walsh** was diagnosed with cancer. Our thoughts go out to her family. Such fun spending time with Class of ’75 girlfriends. I agree. I hope 2017 is a happy and healthy one for all.

Mistakes

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Hello, everyone!!!! ☺ [no emojis or overuse of exclamation points] Fifteen of us gathered and enjoyed a lovely lunch in Plymth [town spelled wrong], Mass., on October 1, compliments of our hostess **Anna Beck**. Thank you, Ann. I heard from several of you—and what follows are the updates in your own words. From **Ann Lurray**: “My son, Peter, is getting married in London next week [Don’t mention upcoming weddings] to a lovely British gal, Roxanne. I can’t wait.” **Laura Page** wrote that she is moving to Sarasota, Fla. for her husband’s work. “My husband works in banking. He currently serves as vice president of Bank of America. He will oversee offices in six locations. Part of his work entails providing loans to small businesses. Last year, he received an award for his contributions to business development.” [Too much information about Laurie’s husband and not Laurie.] **Vicky Drum**) reports: “I’m celebrating my 63rd birthday today, can you believe it? In October, **Cari Tyler** and I met up in Brattleboro, Vt., for a fun, fall foliage weekend. We saw tons of gorgeous colors at Hogback Mountain, visited the Nature Museum—which has live owls and birds of prey—and we hit a local micro brewery, too. It was like old times. Lots of laughs. I also connected with **Angela Dunn** to see her daughter, Heather, perform in a comedy on stage in New York City.” I heard from **Ellie Blue**. Her daughter is expecting a baby in March [Don’t mention upcoming births]. Also, she told me that she heard on Facebook that **Joanne Walsh** was diagnosed with cancer [Don’t mention information heard secondhand, and don’t discuss medical diagnoses unless that news comes directly from person affected]. Such fun spending time with Class of ’75 girlfriends. I agree. I hope 2017 is a happy and healthy one for all.