The goals of The Bear Truth, the monthly student newspaper of Palmer Ridge High School, are to inform, educate and entertain its readers; to provide a forum for the Palmer Ridge community to express attitudes and opinions; to provide an educational opportunity for both the students who produce The Bear Truth and those who read it; and to provide a medium for commercial messages.

Printing of The Bear Truth is paid for through the sale of advertising and from donations.

The newspaper is published nine times per year, approximately once every four weeks beginning in early September. It is distributed to students and faculty free of charge, with a limit of five copies per issue. Possession of more than five copies of this publication with intent to prevent other individuals from reading an edition is illegal. Subscriptions are available for $15 per year, and are mailed to subscribers. A digital copy of the newspaper will be available on the school website. Extra copies of the newspaper are distributed to the general public through numerous local supportive businesses.

The Editorial Board retains the right to choose all content and to determine story priority. This Board is composed of students holding the following staff positions: Editor-in-Chief, Assistant Editor, Business Manager, News Editor, Features Editor, Sports Editor, Ridge Ramblings Editor, Entertainment Editor, Student Life Editor, and Copy Editor – with the adviser a non-voting member of the Board. This Board also oversees the finances of the publication as well as various production operations.

Censorship: No administrator or other staff member of the Lewis-Palmer School District has the right to censor any student publication (with the exception of material deemed to be legally obscene, libelous or disruptive, as defined by Colorado statute). However, the Editorial Board takes a major responsibility for overseeing good taste and maintenance of community standards. The Board is also charged with maintaining the journalistic integrity of the publication. These are not mutually exclusive aims.

All material – writing (other than editorials), photography, or art – appearing in the newspaper will receive credit, with the method of credit being at the discretion of the Editorial Board.

The Editorial Board will select editorial topics. These editorials will not be signed by the writer, but will reflect the opinion of the majority of the Editorial Board. The Board takes full responsibility for all editorials.

Commentaries and columns, on the other hand, will be signed and reflect the views of the writer alone. They are not the official position of The Bear Truth. Editorial cartoons fall into the same category as commentaries.

Any person with an interest in the Palmer Ridge community who has an opinion to be voiced is encouraged to submit letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and should be fewer than 250 words in length. Anonymous letters will not be accepted or printed. If excessive editing is needed, the letter will be returned to the author for corrections. It is preferred that letters be typed, although handwritten copies will be accepted, if legible. The Bear Truth reserves the right to edit any letter for grammatical errors, libelous content or space limitations. Letters may be brought to room A2222, mailed to Palmer Ridge High School, care of The Bear Truth, or e-mailed to the publication. All signatures will be verified through a phone call or personal interview.
The Bear Truth will strive to present information in a fair, impartial, accurate and truthful manner. The newspaper will function in accord with all applicable laws, both in regards to the rights and restrictions of journalism. The Statement of Principles of the American Society of Newspaper Editors serves as the basis for the publication’s ethical standards. The basis for the publication’s legal positions include the D38 policy and regulations pertaining to school publications and Colorado Rev. Stat. 22-1-120, student exercise of free expression.

The Bear Truth reserves the right to refuse any advertising not found to be within the publication’s standards, particularly in reference to good taste and to product and/or services that are illegal for the majority of high school readers.

In the event of error (omission, misidentification, etc.) the Editorial Board will attempt to mitigate the damage. Every reasonable precaution is made in avoiding errors, but some amount of error is perhaps inevitable. Each case will be evaluated on its own merit.

Reporting on student, faculty, and community deaths can be sensitive, and the Editorial Board will confine its coverage to news and opinion sections. The publication will always take into consideration the wishes of families, but maintains its responsibility to report truthfully on all aspects of life, and death, at Palmer Ridge.

As members of a student newspaper, reporters and editors may find themselves aware of violations of the law committed by students which do not involve authorities. However, only crimes and transgressions that result in official charges will be reported in The Bear Truth. It is not the Editorial Board’s goal to embarrass any member of the Palmer Ridge community, but that discretion must be balanced with the Board’s responsibility to dispel rumors, report the facts and provide perspective on the community.

Reporters for The Bear Truth will always identify themselves as functioning in that capacity before any interview or survey. It is not our intention to catch people in embarrassing or misleading quotations. The editors reserve the right to correct gross grammatical errors in quotations, if the source’s meaning will be distorted without such editing. Otherwise, quotations will be reported as stated by informed sources.

Sources will not be allowed to read the final text of any story to be published in The Bear Truth prior to publication. Reporters may read back quotations to sources, and will follow up with sources who wish to supplement their initial interviews. The Editorial Board will consider the relative experience of the source in dealing with the press in each case.

Sources may wish to have their names withheld from a particular story, and some may have valid reasons for this. The Editorial Board will decide on a case by case basis whether anonymity may be granted to protect the source. The Board recognizes that a high school is a very confined community of young people, and that some topics, while important to the community, may involve public embarrassment and official sanctions if names are printed. Once anonymity is granted, the Board must stand behind its decision, whatever the pressure. This, therefore, is a weighty decision.

Equipment: Students assume responsibility for all equipment used in the Publications Lab when they utilize that equipment. Normal wear and tear is expected, but willful abuse or neglect of equipment will result in a fine being levied against students to effect repairs. This includes photographic equipment.