

PRESENTENSE

MAY 2004



CIVIL AIR PATROL
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

the newsletter for CAP public affairs officers

INSIDE

CHANGES IN HEADQUARTERS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Mary Nell Crowe is leaving her post as CAP National Headquarters deputy director of strategic communications. Read her parting thoughts on the importance of the public affairs function for CAP. **Page 2**

THIS MONTH'S CASE STUDY

A day in the life of a newsroom

What is it like to work in a newsroom? Once you know the answer to this question, you'll be well on your way to understanding why reporters do the things they do. **Pages 3-4** *Next month: Use this newsroom tutorial for a lively PAO seminar!*

HOT TIP!

NEED RECRUITING MATERIALS?

Did you know your squadron can order recruiting materials from CAP National Headquarters? Get the details and order online on the headquarters Web site at www.cap.gov. From the home page, go to MEMBERS and then E-SERVICES. Enter your CAP ID and password and then select RECRUITING MATERIALS. If you have questions about ordering, e-mail Holley Dunigan in Membership Development at hdunigan@cap.gov.

PLUS

- New CAP membership stats**
- CAP in the News**

Presentense is the official monthly publication for public affairs officers of the Civil Air Patrol, and is produced by Melanie LeMay in the Strategic Communications and Planning Directorate, CAP National Headquarters, Maxwell AFB, Ala. All copy is written by Melanie LeMay unless otherwise noted.

Is there something you'd like us to cover in *Presentense*? Contact Melanie LeMay at mleamay@cap.gov or call her at (334) 953-5320.

Bodies recovered from central Oregon plane crash

07:51 AM PST on Thursday, April 1,
2004

Associated Press

BEND, Ore. -- Search and rescue crews on Wednesday recovered the remains of three people killed in a small plane crash near the summit of Three Fingered Jack in the Cascades.



Photo by 2 Lt. Ted Tannory, CAP Oregon Wing

When local media covered a plane crash in Oregon, wing PA director Lt. Col. Tom Traver was disappointed to see that the Associated Press had failed to credit CAP with the find, despite his sending press releases that clearly stated the facts. With dogged determination and unflinching courtesy, Traver was able to get AP not only to correct its subsequent articles on the find, but also received from them an unpublished address to which he could send future information about CAP.

Oregon PAO takes on AP

By Lt. Col. Tom Traver
Oregon Wing Director of Public Affairs

It was a textbook-perfect mission. An airplane was missing in Oregon, and messages went out through the Civil Air Patrol mission alert system there, notifying base and mission staff via e-mail, paging and text-page messages.

The Oregon Wing launched its planes. We alerted the media. Soon, thanks largely to exemplary intelligence work that led to a very likely search grid, Oregon CAP members located the missing aircraft only two hours after launch. We sent out fresh news releases and handed over the mission to land-based authorities for recovery operations.

Lemons

How did the local print and broadcast media report the find? "An aircraft was flying over the area," they said. "The occupants looked down, and there was the missing aircraft."

A report like this is the bane of existence for any public affairs officer. What, we wondered, had happened to our carefully crafted press releases about the mission and the find by CAP? It wasn't the first time this had happened. All too often the media referred to our CAP members only as "searchers" or mentioned our participation only in terms of "aircraft involved in the search."

Making lemonade

Oh, nuts, I thought. Where did that quote about the aircraft and its occupants even come from? I was determined to set things right. First, I looked over the press releases sent out by the local law enforcement agency. Sure enough, they properly credited CAP with participating in the search, and with the find.

Next, I looked for the source of the print story that had failed to recognize CAP. It had originated with the

See AP, page 2

Crowe leaving Strategic Communications

Mary Nell Crowe, longtime marketing and public relations director at National Headquarters, left CAP on May 3, 2004. Below, she shares some final thoughts on the importance of the public affairs function...

On May 3rd, I ended a rewarding, and often challenging, career with Civil Air Patrol. Many of you will recall that when CAP's headquarters was restructured in 1995, the organization had a very different "look" than today. At that time, it was indeed the "best-kept secret in general aviation."

A cohesive public relations campaign did not exist. Public information was disseminated through information printed on copy paper, folded and called a brochure. Your newspaper was a "cut and paste," black and white periodical. The term electronic marketing was just being coined. Media impressions were almost nonexistent. Fewer than 40% of our wings had a public affairs officer and there was no specialty track to reward those that did.

Over the past nine years, supported by your HQ staff, you have accomplished so much. You now have professional-quality promo-

tional material to distribute, a full-color newspaper produced electronically and in print, a redesigned, more user-friendly Web site and CAP PSAs that have been aired on national television. Today more than 80% of CAP wings have a PAO and they can each earn a specialty track badge. Printed media impressions alone totaled more than 70 million during 2003. All of this was possible because of the team effort that exists between you and your HQ staff.

As I close this chapter in my 30-year nonprofit career, I want to encourage you to continue to tell the CAP story at every opportunity because it is through visibility that CAP will receive support for its missions. In a recent Roper survey, American consumers were polled as to how much weight they place on media relations vs. advertising in determining their trust of companies. Sixty-eight percent placed more weight on media coverage than advertising! CAP has so many activities that are media-worthy. That's why what you do is critical for the organization!

Let no one devalue the job you do for CAP! There is no function more

important to a nonprofit organization than public relations. Many years ago, I had the opportunity to speak with Elizabeth Dole, then president of American Red Cross, after a talk she gave at a seminar I was attending. I asked her if she could name one thing that had helped her enhance the image and gain so much visibility for the ARC. She replied at once. The keys, she said, were the wonderful public relations staff and volunteers supporting her efforts. For CAP, it is the PAOs and those who recognize the importance of what you do, that will make this great organization even greater.

For the many friendships and the support you have given my staff and me over the past nine years, I thank you. For taking time away from your families and friends to better serve this vital organization, you are to be applauded. For having the opportunity to know such generous, giving people, I leave CAP far richer than when I arrived.

If I can ever be of assistance to you in the future, just let me know. The HQ Strategic Communications staff can tell you how to reach me. I wish you all the very best in the future.

CAP in the News

In its April 12, 2004 edition of "News for Kids," the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran an interview with astronaut Jim Voss about the features required for a spacecraft to successfully travel to Mars. The story was written by Melanie LeMay and featured an info box on the CAP cadet program.

CAP's corporate partnership with Goodyear is prominently featured in the May 2004 issue of *EAA's Sport Aviation*, on page 22.

MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

as of Apr. 30, 2004
Cadets 26,360
Seniors 35,261
TOTAL 61,621

AP, from page 1

Associated Press, which had distributed the story on the AP wire to local newspapers, television and radio stations.

I decided to take the bull by the horns and call AP myself. That meant getting my professional act together. (Although I see myself as a cross between Spock and Commander Harm, others tell me I'm more like a cross between Star Trek's Commander Worf and JAG's Admiral Chegwidden! Calling the giant Associated Press took some nerve-gathering.)

Professional demeanor in place, I placed a call to the local AP bureau and asked to speak with the bureau chief. She told me where the less-than-informative quote originated and seemed very concerned that the AP story failed to properly credit the find to a CAP search plane that was operating at the request of Oregon Emergency Management through the AFRCC.

Apparently the AP reporter was unaware of CAP's involvement, the AP chief said. She

not only apologized for the oversight, but gave me her own unpublished e-mail address for future press releases to prevent such mishaps in the future.

I then contacted the local print and broadcast media to make sure they had received our post-mission news releases and offered our digital aerial photos for their use.

A whole pitcher of lemonade!

AP corrected its story, giving full credit for the find to CAP. AP also mentioned CAP in all its subsequent articles about the mission and later wrote a feature article on the dangers of mountain flying that included quotes from our CAP mission incident commander.

Moral of the story

◆ Don't hesitate to try and find out what happened when your local CAP is not mentioned in the news. Take pains not to come off as a complainer when you initiate your inquiry, however.

◆ When working with other agencies, always request copies of their news releases

and offer to send copies of yours in return, giving credit to other agencies whenever possible as joint team members.

◆ Be sure to send out media alerts when you initiate a mission. This lets the media know you are involved, even though some details may be lacking. This notice need only be a simple paragraph stating that you are assisting XYZ Agency in the search and will provide more details as they are available. Be sure to include your phone and e-mail contact information.

◆ If you're trying to do PA work from your workplace, save time by calling to confirm receipt of your faxed and e-mailed press releases.

◆ Keep all necessary information on a PDA, and keep essential templates on CD or floppy for emergency use.

Happy ending

When Oregon CAP participated in its next search mission, our participation was accurately noted by the media.

Public Affairs Case Study 8

Organized chaos: A day in the life of a newsroom

If you really want to understand another person, spend some time in his world and see what pleasures and perils he faces each day.

Nowhere is this more true than in media relations. You can work with reporters and photographers much more easily if you understand the demands of their jobs. If you know what's expected of them, you can provide exactly what they need and become one of their most valuable sources.

To help you understand the world of a reporter, let's walk through a typical day in a mid-sized American newsroom. Use the sections marked with an asterisk () as starting points for discussion. In next month's Presentense, we'll include some suggested discussion questions to accompany this tutorial.*

7 a.m.

The day editor and his staff are coming in, many clutching medicinal cups of coffee to recover from the late hours they worked last night. Since they never know what each day will bring, it's very hard for them to plan their days. This morning, the editor is hoping he'll be able to keep his promise to watch his son's 6:00 baseball game. The police beat reporter is hoping she'll be able to keep her dental appointment, the one she's already cancelled three times to cover breaking stories.

8 a.m.

While the editor flips through the pages of this morning's edition, the reporters are listening to their phone messages and reading their e-mail. Since the paper publishes their contact information,* they're fair game for readers who want to applaud as well as those who want to criticize. Their mailboxes overflow with press releases and announcements from marketing and public relations types. Friends and business contacts send them story ideas. They try to return some calls, but the phones ring so often that it's hard to find time.

9 a.m.

The editorial staff gathers for its first budget meeting of the day.

("Budget" is their term for the list of stories they'll run in a particular issue. The budget is a fluid list; it changes throughout the day.) They discuss the day's probable news, investigative and feature stories.



Only 40 years ago, newsrooms were the sacred space of mostly-male reporters whose long hours were fueled by copious amounts of coffee and cigarettes. They pounded on manual typewriters, shouted over the clatter of AP and UPI teletype machines, and snatched up one jangling phone call after another. Those hardy journalists had no computers, no e-mail services, no fax machines, no digital cameras and no cellular phones.

For national and state stories, the editor consults one of many budgets AP will send across the wire throughout the day. There he can read a synopsis of the day's breaking news stories and find out what kind of photos may be available.

AP seems to think a local businessman may be arrested for embezzling later today. If this is true, the AP bureau will expect the editor to have one of his own reporters covering the story. After all, if one of the paper's best reporters writes the first story on the scandal,



Today's computerized newsrooms allow editors and reporters to transfer stories back and forth throughout the writing and editing process. Page and graphic designers also use sophisticated software to place stories, photos and art. Even the pre-press process and actual printing are controlled by computers. Despite all these technological advances, however, the typical newsroom is still a constantly changing and frequently tense environment. The best journalists are those who thrive in such an atmosphere.

AP will distribute that story throughout the state and nation under the reporter's byline and the name of his employing newspaper. The editor knows this visibility will be good for the paper, especially since it now belongs to a big media conglomerate that constantly compares its newspapers to one another.* But the story hasn't been confirmed yet. The editor hesitates, then takes a reporter off the planned CAP mission training flight for that afternoon and assigns that reporter to investigating the embezzlement story.*

11 a.m.

The editor and publisher leave for a civic group luncheon. The publisher spends much of his time networking with local government officials, business executives and civic organizations. The editor fidgets. He's left his deputy editors in charge, but he'd rather be back in the newsroom himself. The publisher is introducing him to the commander of a local CAP squadron and the editor tries to be courteous. He's distracted, thinking about the embezzlement story and how the conglomerate will come down on him if he fails to nail down all the information about the case. The CAP commander is telling him about their three cadets who just went to a national event up in D.C., but the editor isn't really listening.* He wonders if the reporter can even get through to sources who will know about the embezzlement.

12:30 p.m.

A fire has broken out in a downtown hotel and word hits the newsroom just as the editor walks in the door from lunch. He grabs the closest reporter and photographer and sends them to get the story. The reporter drops his half-eaten chicken sandwich on his desk and follows the photographer to his SUV. The sandwich will stay there until midnight tonight, when the reporter will suddenly realize he hasn't eaten a bite since lunch.*

1:30 p.m.

The editor is reading a draft of his youngest reporter's latest feature story. He is scowling and the reporter is swallowing hard. Colorful

NEWSROOM

graphics and info boxes are planned for the story layout, but the graphics staff can't do much until they have the text. They need the text by 2:00 in order to have the page ready for tonight's Lifestyle press run at 6:00. The reporter has missed his first deadline and now his revision is faulty. Why is this news? the editor asks. Why would anybody want to read this? Where did you get this statistic in the second paragraph? I want the facts checked, he tells the reporter, and spell all the words right while you're at it.

2:00 p.m.

The reporter is angry and embarrassed. The graphics staff have already called to see why they don't have the text. Now they're really mad. If they don't have the Lifestyle pages ready on time, the press guys will be late starting the run. If the Lifestyle section runs late, then the Lawn and Garden tab scheduled next will run late, too. Running late on the tab will probably make them late starting on tomorrow's paper. If the paper is late coming off the press, the carriers will be furious. They already don't like those editorial types who sit in front of their computers all day without a clue as to what it's like to haul newspapers all over town at three a.m. every morning.

The reporter is in agony. He can't reach any of his sources to check facts. He's left seven voice messages for seven different people and flooded the server with e-mails begging for additional details. No one will call him back. The editor is glaring at him. The phone rings and the reporter snatches it up eagerly. It's some guy from Civil Air Patrol who wants to chat about an upcoming air show. The editor is pointing to his wristwatch. The reporter cuts off the CAP guy in mid-sentence and frees up his line again, praying that the next call will come from somebody who can give him the information he needs so badly.*

3:00 p.m.

The reporter and photographer rush back in from the fire. They huddle in the editor's office. Apparently a prominent city councilman perished in the fire. The photographer got photos of the horror-stricken wife when she heard the news. Can they put such a photo on the front page? They study the digital shots.

One of the newsroom secretaries sticks her head in the door. Wasn't the photographer scheduled to shoot some teenagers taking their first glider flight this afternoon? Isn't he already 30 minutes late? The photographer sighs and turns to leave. Wait, the editor says. I think we can use one of these photos. Don't leave 'til you make arrangements to send it to AP after it comes out in tomorrow's morning edition. The photographer calls AP and falls into a heated discussion with the bureau's photo editor. He forgets all about shooting the glider kids.*

4:00 p.m.

Tempers are flaring at the 4:00 budget meeting. The press is late running the Lifestyle section. The reporter responsible is popping antacids and washing them down with Coke. Not only has he messed up another assignment, but his landlord has called three times threatening to evict him if he doesn't come up with last month's rent. He wonders again why he ever went into journalism. Beginning reporters make less than the guys who work at the video store down the street. And he knows for a fact that the editor, who's ten years older than his dad, isn't making a fraction of what his dad makes. Does he really want to do this for the rest of his life?*

The editor is shifting items on the budget. What should he put above the fold on the front page -- the still half-baked embezzlement story or the big fire? And where is the copy on the embezzlement story? The reporter in question checks in by cell phone. She's stuck in traffic and can't get back for the obligatory budget meeting.

Public Affairs Case Study 8 (CONTINUED)

The editor frowns and looks at his watch. By the time the reporter escapes from the traffic jam, his son's baseball game will be half over. The editor sighs and makes a note to call his wife.

5:00 p.m.

Articles are flowing into computers at the copy desk, and copy editors are frowning over misspellings and uncorroborated stats. They've already sent two articles back with questions. The embezzlement story reporter has just blown in with an important new finding and is waiting impatiently for the editor to get off the phone. They talk, deciding whether this new development should knock the fire story down below the fold on page one.

6:00 p.m.

A new copy editor is working on an inside news page. She's got a five-inch hole to fill and is flipping through recent press releases to find something that fits. She runs across a story about CAP's new Gippsland aircraft. The suggested head on the press release is "New aircraft to enhance CAP missions." Since the story is filling a hole near the bottom of the page, her headline can't be larger than 24 points. She tries the suggested headline. Too long. She scans the first paragraph of the story for another idea. "CAP buys Australian aircraft," she types. It fits.

10:30 p.m.

The night's deadline is looming. The embezzlement reporter is on the phone trying to cajole a statement from the suspect's ex-wife. The copy desk is holding the front page in case she gets the quote and her additional copy has to be inserted at the last minute.

The fire reporter and photographer are back on the scene and call in to report that they're getting even better photos than they got the first time. Since it's so close to deadline, the photographer says he will download and e-mail the new shots from his laptop.

10:45 p.m.

The photographer can't get a good phone connection at the fire site. His laptop is four years old and like most of the paper's equipment, is on its last legs. The embezzlement reporter is still on the phone with the suspect's wife. The editor has grabbed a cup of coffee and now is standing over the copy desk. He points out that deadline is only 15 minutes away. The copy desk has already been late on deadline twice that month, and the editor is getting heat about it from the publisher.

10:58 p.m.

The photographer gives up on his e-mail connection and the page designer goes with the original fire photo. The reporter is finishing up her addition to the embezzlement story. She doesn't know it, but the copy editor is paring down her original version to make room for the new paragraphs. The tension is palpable.

10:59 p.m.

The page designer cuts and pastes the new embezzlement paragraphs into the front-page story and finds it's still three lines too long. He looks at the clock, makes an executive decision, and deletes the final two sentences. At exactly 11:00, he sends the final page to the press prep staff. The paper's computer system notes the time, which will come out in a report to the publisher and the parent corporation tomorrow morning.

11:28 p.m.

The first sections of tomorrow's paper are already beginning to come off the press. The copy desk staff passes them around, looking for misplaced ads, errors in headlines, incorrect jumplines. The atmosphere is noticeably more relaxed, with a general feeling of accomplishment. As for the editor, he's already left, hoping his son hasn't yet gone to bed.