

PRESENT TENSE

JUNE 2004



CIVIL AIR PATROL
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

the newsletter for CAP public affairs officers

INSIDE

HELP PROMOTE CAP's UPCOMING 2004 NATIONAL CONFERENCE AUGUST 18 - 21 IN TAMPA

PAOs, be sure your local units have the information they need about CAP's upcoming national conference. Find out how to get a colorful flyer to post at your meeting site and reprint in your local newsletter. You can also get a promotional video online registration link to post on your own Web site.

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WHAT DO PAOs REALLY WANT?

Headquarters StratCom needs your ideas for this year's public affairs seminars at the national conference. What sessions would most help our PAOs in the field? Send your ideas to Melanie LeMay at mlemay@cap.gov by June 20.

THIS MONTH'S CASE STUDY *But is it NEWS?*

How do you know if a story is really newsworthy? This tutorial explains how to judge newsworthiness, and how to target your news stories to specific media outlets for maximum results.

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PLUS

- The latest CAP Fact Sheet**
- New CAP membership stats**
- Cool Web sites for PAOs**
- 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 Plans 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 mlemay@cap.gov or call her at (334) 953-5320.



Photo supplied by Maj. Lisa Van Clief, CAP

When New Jersey PAO Lisa Van Clief wrote a story about her wing's recovery of a Rutgers University research vehicle, she knew it held potential for national news coverage. Yet, when she submitted the story to Air Force news media, she received a message from the Air Force saying she had not followed proper procedures in submitting the story directly to them. Find out why in the story below.

What to do with national news

New Jersey Wing PAO Lisa Van Clief had a great story on her hands. Member of the New Jersey and Maine wings had helped a team of scientists from Rutgers University recover an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) after it was lost along the New Jersey coast.

The AUV was used by Rutgers for water-sampling tests. Scientists at the university had lost communication with the valuable research vehicle and had called in CAP to help find it.

CAP members found the AUV after searching a 225-nautical-mile section of the ocean off the New Jersey coast.

Van Clief wasted no time writing a press release about the mission, combining her efforts with Courtney Kohut, project coordinator for the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences for the Coastal

Ocean Observation Laboratory.

Van Clief sent the story to area media, but knew it might be appealing to national media since it involved both an unusual mission for CAP and a prestigious university.

She sent the story to national media outlets, as well as to CAP National Headquarters, where it was posted to Online News. She also sent the story to official Air Force media, and that's when she was stopped in her tracks.

"I got a very gracious, but very firm message from the editor of one of the Air Force publications informing me that CAP had an agreement with the Air Force that all press releases had to be coordinated through AETC public affairs," Van Clief said. "He even gave me the name of the AETC public affairs officer who handled coordination."

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National, from page 1

Still, Van Clief wasn't sure what to do with this unexpected piece of information. She called National Headquarters public relations for advice.

In fact, the Air Force editor was correct in what he wrote to Van Clief. All national stories go through a prescribed approval process, and Air Force public affairs is frequently involved.

Here's what happens. After the press release is drafted, it's cleared with all headquarters directorates and CAP field personnel who are mentioned in or have any connection with the news story. Once the resulting edits are incorporated into the press release, it then goes to the headquarters executive level for approval – typically to CAP Executive Director Al Allenback. If necessary, the release may then be submitted for approval to the appropriate CAP leaders, including Maj. Gen. Richard Bowling.

Once the release is OKed on the CAP side, it goes to AU/AETC public affairs. They have jurisdiction because CAP falls under AETC in the Air Force organizational structure.

Once the release is approved by AETC public affairs, their personnel can distribute it at their discretion to Air Force media, which includes all official Air Force publications and broadcasts. At the same time, headquarters public affairs can distribute the press release to non-Air Force media such as major news outlets, aviation-related magazines, and major Internet outlets. The release is usually distributed in the body of an e-mail message rather than by fax. Photos are not included on first distribution, since attachments often activate anti-virus software that deletes the entire e-mail message. (The release

itself indicates if photos are available and tells how to obtain them.)

The release is also sent to *CAP News* and CAP Online News, and is posted under "Press releases" (Media Info) on the headquarters Web site.

If, as a PAO in the field, you find yourself with a good national news story, follow these procedures:

1. Write the press release in your best AP-approved style. Try to have high-resolution photos available in electronic versions, and be sure they have complete cutlines and photo credits.

2. Submit the press release and photos by e-mail to Melanie LeMay (mlemay@cap.gov) at headquarters public relations. In the message line of your e-mail, write: *Story for possible national release!*. Flag the message as URGENT.

3. Check your e-mail frequently, since you may receive follow-up questions from headquarters about the story. You may be asked if you want to be listed as the official media contact for the story, or whether you would prefer that headquarters handles media calls.

4. Your press release will then go through the regular headquarters approval and distribution channels. Your press release will start with internal approval at headquarters. If it is approved for national distribution, headquarters public relations will notify you and tell you when and to which outlets it will be distributed. If the story is suitable for Air Force media, it will go to AETC for approval and distribution through their channels.

It will also be sent automatically to *CAP News*, CAP News Online, and listed on the national press releases page under your byline.

CAP in the News

Newspapers in Education

A story about astronaut Jim Voss that appeared in the April 12, 2004 edition of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* News for Kids has been picked up by the Cox newspapers' *Newspapers in Education* program. NIE directors at Cox newspapers nationwide are running the story on their Web sites, including sites in Texas and South Carolina.

Carolina Country magazine

A story about CAP appeared in the April 2004 issue of *Carolina Country* magazine. See it online at <http://www.carolinacountry.com/StoryPages/ourstories/CAP/cap.html>.

The story was written by former CAP senior member Peggy Howe, who worked closely with the International Air Cadet Exchange when she was a member in the 1980s.

The story includes not only Peggy's personal experience with CAP, but also good information about CAP's work in North Carolina.

CAP MEMBERSHIP

as of April 30, 2004

Cadets 26,360

Seniors 35,261

TOTAL 61,621

Need an updated national CAP Fact Sheet? Look in the PAO Toolkit in the member section of www.cap.gov. The Fact Sheet was just updated with new membership numbers and changes to such items as the National Congress on Aviation and Space Education, which is now called the National Conference on Aviation and Space Education.



Web sites for PAOs

Web site for leaders of volunteers – "Energize" is a Web site especially for volunteers and the people who lead them. Here you'll find ideas for recruiting, fostering diversity, rewarding hard work, and leading with panache.

PAOs will find good information in the "hot topic" section. For example, in May, the hot topic was "Shaping Public Opinion: Volunteering, Government, and News Reports," which discussed the general public's perception of volunteerism. Take a look at this site at www.energizeinc.com.

Freebies from Ragan Communications – Ragan is best known in the public relations arena for its training seminars and newsletters, but its Web site, www.prexec.com, offers some good free articles on public relations. Included are such titles as "How do you make a perfect pitch?," "Four steps to better PR writing" and "Three steps to better Web management." Ragan also offers PR workshops throughout the nation.

Help promote CAP's hottest conference ever!

PAOs, we need your help to promote this year's CAP national conference, August 18 - 21 in Tampa, Fla.

This year's conference will focus on technology and how CAP is using technical advances to improve its mission capabilities.

And as always, the conference will offer outstanding training, including special sessions just for PAOs! And while you're promoting the conference to everybody else, don't forget to make

reservations for yourself!

To help you promote the conference to your members locally, there are some tools available to you right now in the PAO Toolkit online. To find the Toolkit from www.cap.gov, go to the member page, then to programs, then to strategic communications.

♦ **A full-color 8.5 x 11 promotional flyer** (shown below) is available on the Toolkit page in pdf format. You can print it out to post at

your unit's meeting place, reprint it in your unit newsletter, and post a link to it on your Web site.

♦ **A promotional video** for the conference is also located on the main conference Web page. Download the high-bandwidth version if you have high-speed internet access and low-bandwidth version if you have a dial-up modem. You can show the video at your unit meetings and also place a link to it on your own Web site.

♦ You can send **promotional e-mail messages** for the conference to anyone you wish. Use the Outlook template posted on the Toolkit page. Just insert your own list of e-mail recipients and press *send*!

♦ Finally, don't forget to include a link to the conference's **online registration page** in your promotional materials! **Register online by Aug. 1 and you'll be eligible to win a free laptop computer!**

National Board & Annual Conference Web site

<http://www.cap.gov/events/nbmain.html>

please post on your unit's bulletin board

Civil Air Patrol's 2004 National Board & Annual Conference

TODAY'S MISSIONS - TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY



18-21 August 2004
Tampa Marriott Waterside
700 South Florida Avenue
Tampa FL 33602

Rates:
\$119.00 - single, double
\$139.00 - triple
\$159.00 - quad
12% - Tax rate

Hotel Registration Deadline:
16 July

Reservations:
800-228-9290
813-204-6397

Are you ready for the challenge?

New technologies will change the way CAP members save lives and impact their communities. Are you ready? Come to beautiful Tampa and see how Civil Air Patrol can help you sharpen your skills. Enjoy the tropical atmosphere and get up to speed on the latest technology advances. Listen to expert guest speakers and visit with vendors in the exhibit hall. Don't miss the Beachcomber Bash in the exhibit hall Thursday evening.

This year's new seminars will include:

Catch the Funding Wave -- \$urf's Up!!!
Tactical to Practical: Creative Cadet Program Enhancement
Exploiting the Spectrum: Hyperspectral Imaging Enhances Operations
Get Ready for Shuttle Ops: How You Can Use STK to Track STS Missions
QuickBooks Online—The Solution for 24-7 Access to Your Accounting Records

And don't forget your shades and sunscreen!

WIN THIS

ONLINE REGISTRATION ONLY BY 1 AUG 04

AT NB!



REGISTER ONLINE FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A NEW LAPTOP COMPUTER

WWW.CAP.GOV/events/nbmain.html

or photocopy reverse side for mailing or faxing.

Here's what you'll find on the conference Web site

The conference Web site is updated every few days as new information becomes available. Here's what you'll find there:

ABOUT

This is a general summary of CAP's annual national conference and what it offers.

ATTENDEES

This section includes registration costs, hotel information, the conference schedule, seminar descriptions and information about special events.

EXHIBITORS

This section includes a downloadable registration form for exhibitors, as well as information about sponsorships, advertising, and the hotel. A schedule for exhibitors will also be included.

SPEAKERS

This site will include biographies and photos of the conference speakers.

REGISTER

From this page, you can get information on three different ways to register – online, by fax, or by mail. **Remember – register online by Aug. 1 and you'll be eligible to win a free laptop computer!**

Public Affairs Case Study 9

BUT IS IT NEWS? NEWS? NEWS? NEWS? NEWS?

Judging newsworthiness is an art, and mastering it is the key to success for a public relations pro.

The most successful PAOs have a knack for looking at CAP events through the eyes of the general public. They understand that what is

newsworthy to members of CAP isn't necessarily fascinating to the rest of the world.

Still, within CAP's stories lie the seeds of angles with universal appeal. The trick is to dig out those universal points of interest and focus

on them.

In this tutorial, we'll look at ways to develop that revered "nose for news" and pinpoint CAP stories with intrinsic news value. Finally, we'll see how to effectively package these stories for presentation to the media.

Study what's in the news

One of the best ways to learn how to judge newsworthiness is to look at what the media puts in the most prominent news spots. What are the headlines on your nightly national and local newscasts? What stories are on the front page above the fold of *USA Today*, *Newsweek*, and your largest local newspaper?

Below is a list of current national news topics. Can you see how each one can be tied to CAP in some way?

- ◆ Soldiers serving in or deployed to Iraq
- ◆ The high cost of homeland security
- ◆ Bush's space exploration initiative
- ◆ Schools' challenges with the No Child Left Behind Act
- ◆ Education budget crises
- ◆ The fight to keep teenagers drug-free
- ◆ Post-traumatic stress disorder
- ◆ Homeschooling on the rise
- ◆ How today's kids get citizenship and values education
- ◆ The graying of the aerospace industry

Become a news analyst

Look at how the media presents its stories. How do the different media approach the same story? As you study the same networks and publications every day, you'll get a sense of their specific editorial slants and how they pitch their stories to appeal to their target audiences. Note the differences in, for example, Fox News, CNN, National Public Radio, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*.

Examine the photos used in print publications. Notice how much space they give the various photos and where they place them on the page. Notice what they run in color versus grayscale. Notice the length of the cutlines and whether they run both the photo and the text for a given story.

Notice the layout for one story versus another. Do they make the story even more important by including more points of entry for the reader? (Points of entry include photos, outquotes, info boxes, illustrations or locator boxes, or sidebars.)

On television news, notice how much time the media devote to one story versus another. Notice the kinds of sound bytes they include and whether they include the stories on more than one broadcast.

Once you can see these kinds of differences, even if you're talking about your closest big-city newspaper versus your community weekly, you'll understand how to slant your story for that particular publication.

The "WHO CARES" factor

Before you read any further, make a photocopy of this page and cut out the handy reminder card below. Tape it to the top of your computer monitor.

Every time you contemplate the sentiment on this card, you'll be asking yourself the very question editors and reporters throughout the nation ask themselves all day, every day. If a story makes it on the nightly news or the front page of a newspaper, it's passed the "who cares?" test. As a PAO, your goal is to be sure your press release or story passes that test as well.

To come up with a story that passes the "who cares?" test, ask yourself these questions:

- ◆ Does this story appeal to the reader's intellectual curiosity or his emotions? Will this story amaze or entertain him?
- ◆ Is this story timely and fresh? Does it relate to current national or regional news?
- ◆ Does this story have visual appeal? Would it offer good photo ops and/or video footage?
- ◆ Is this story multi-faceted? Is there enough substance to this story that it could be covered from several different angles? Might it contain the elements of one or more follow-up stories?

Remember, public relations success isn't measured by the number of press releases you send out. It's the number picked up by the media that really matters.

WHO CARES?