

PRESENT TENSE

the newsletter for public affairs officers

OCTOBER 2002



CIVIL AIR PATROL
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Present Tense is the official monthly publication for public affairs officers of the Civil Air Patrol, and is produced by **Melanie LeMay** in the Public Relations & Marketing Directorate, CAP National Headquarters, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

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

At National Board conference

Philly media interview CAP



Photo by Melanie LeMay / CAP National Headquarters

Homeland Security was the hot topic for the Channel 3 CBS affiliate in Philadelphia, shown here at the CAP National Board Meeting and Annual Conference on Aug. 16, interviewing Col. Richard Greenhut, Northeast Region commander, about CAP's efforts after the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

A case study in media relations

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

At this year's National Board Meeting and Annual Conference in Philadelphia, we were able to arrange coverage for Civil Air Patrol on both the ABC and CBS television affiliates, the CBS radio affiliate and in the *Philadelphia Daily News*. How did we do it?

Advance notice

Prior to our arrival in Philadelphia, we faxed and emailed a notice to all the major media outlets in the city, telling them of the upcoming conference and inviting them to cover it. The

notice included ideas for story angles and offered additional information. At this point, none of the recipients responded or requested a press kit, which was not surprising. We had not yet established a relationship with any of them.

Personal visits

Many of us in the Marketing and Public Relations Directorate went to Philadelphia early, and this gave us the chance to spend a whole day visiting the media outlets in person. The Pennsylvania Wing PAO, Lt.

See Philly, page 4

Secrets of CAP Publicity

Want more coverage in the *Civil Air Patrol News*?
Here's how...

Dealing with the *CAP News* is no different than working any other media outlet. The key to getting published is to make life as simple as possible for the editor.

Right from the horse's mouth (Jim Tynan, editor-in-chief), here are some tips on getting your stuff into print.

How to write it

- Write it immediately!
- Keep it short and simple.
- Use dates (month, day) not weekday names.
- Provide complete names, ranks, unit names, especially in Coast To Coast.
- Use your byline.
- Use previously printed articles in *the CAP News* as templates.

How to send it

- Send it immediately!
- E-mail your story in the body of the message to capnews@capnhq.gov – only one story per e-mail.
- In your subject line,

put your unit name, wing and a suggested headline.

Send color photos (only the best two or three) as attachments. Send them as jpeg or tif images, at least 230 dpi and with at least 1280 x 960 resolution.

Send detailed outline info for the photos – describe the action, give complete identities and name of photographer.

No e-mail? Send the story and photo prints via USPS. If possible, include a copy of the story on a disk.

Always include your own contact info: name, unit/wing, phone, e-mail, etc.

NEVER ...

- Never use ALL CAPS.
- Never submit via fax.
- Never send photos as bmps or gifs.
- Never send in photos inserted into a Word file.
- Never send in just a change/fix; do it yourself and resubmit the entire story.

Official statement on the CAP counterdrug program

(Note: This is NOT a press release. It is a guide for you to use in responding to any questions about CAP's counterdrug program and related missions.)

If you are asked to make a statement about the CAP counterdrug program, this is the information you can release:

In 1986, the U.S. Congress authorized Civil Air Patrol (CAP) to support law enforcement in the government's "war on drugs." The mission of CAP's counterdrug program is to assist federal, state and local government and law enforcement agencies involved in the fight to eliminate illicit drug use, production and sale in the United States, its territories and possessions.

CAP is involved in both the drug demand reduction and supply interdiction of illegal drugs.

CAP provides aircraft, aircrews and other personnel to support counterdrug operations – however, we do not get involved in law enforcement activities.

Unpaid volunteer CAP members who choose to participate in counterdrug operations receive extensive training and additional background screening by appropriate federal agencies prior to participating in counterdrug operations.

According to our customers, CAP's counterdrug support assists the government in keeping a tremendous amount of illegal drugs off the street.

*Source: Civil Air Patrol
National Headquarters Public Relations
Effective 27 August 2002*

Cool Web sites for writers

Grammar hotline

Can't find your old copy of Strunk & White?

Get fast grammar answers at
<http://www.tc.cc.va.us/writcent/gh/hotlinol.htm>

Copy editing

Revision giving you a headache?

Get tips from the pros in an online newsletter especially for copy editors at
<http://www.copyeditor.com/default.asp?id=3>

Fast facts

Need help managing your time, your staff, your troublesome colleagues?

Find briefings for every need at
<http://www.briefings.com/cb/index.html>

LATEST CAP STATS

CAP Membership as of 31 August 2002

61,711 total members
3576 over August 2001 (6% increase)

Tenth consecutive month of
membership growth

25,599 cadet members:
18% female, 82% male

36,112 senior members:
18% female, 82% male

Of the total membership:

Female cadet members - 8.2%

Female senior members - 9.9%

Male cadet members - 37.3%

Male senior members - 44.4%

Youngest member - 9 years old

Oldest member: - 96 years old

Senior member age breakdown:

Over 60 - 23%

Ages 50-60 - 22%

Ages 40-50 - 25%

Ages 30-40 - 15%

Ages 18-30 - 12%

Need the latest CAP Fact Sheet?
Go online at www.capnhq.gov and click on "Tools for PAOs."

Allenback: Public relations 'cleared hot'

Melanie LeMay

Public Relations Specialist

"I don't want Civil Air Patrol to keep being the nation's 'best-kept secret.'" That was the word from CAP Executive Director Al Allenback on Sept. 3, his first day on the job.

Allenback took time that day to talk about the public affairs program with headquarters staff, saying that visibility for CAP is one of his top five corporate goals.

"We've got to take every opportunity to tell the CAP story," said Allenback, who assumed the executive director's role after having served previously as the CAP-USAF commander. "Visibility is crucial for a growing volunteer organization. If no one knows about us, how are we supposed to get new members? And if no one knows what we're doing, why would anyone even want to remain a member? These seem like obvious points, yet we sometimes see public affairs treated as if it's a fluff job - something incidental. It's not incidental. Making our presence known to the public keeps our organization viable. We need our best and our brightest in the PAO positions, and the rest of us need to support those PAOs in every way we can."

Allenback's interest in public relations springs from his own experience in the field. Before joining the Air Force, he was a radio broadcaster, and the power of the media left a life-long impression.

"It always amazed me when I would walk into a store and someone would come up and comment about something I said that morning," Allenback remembered. "People listen and watch, and they believe what they see, hear and read. As General John Shalikashvili, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, once said, 'We don't win unless CNN says we win!'"

Allenback wants to see CAP publicized with increasing frequency in trade and national publications. He also plans a monthly column in the *CAP News* to keep members informed on issues that affect them.

What does this mean for PAOs in the field?

Support from leadership

Allenback says support from leadership is critical for the public affairs officer. Leaders



BRAINSTORMING:

CAP's new executive director, Al Allenback, left, meets with Mary Nell Crowe, headquarters director of marketing and public relations, on Sept. 24 at her Maxwell AFB, Ala. office to discuss national public affairs initiatives.

Photo by Melanie LeMay
CAP National Headquarters

"...we sometimes see public affairs treated as if it's a fluff job - something incidental. It's not incidental."

— Al Allenback
CAP Executive Director

need to keep PAOs informed about unit and wing activities. The media wants news when it happens, not after the fact, and that goes for good news as well as bad. PAOs need to know about good news in order to capitalize on it, and they need to know about potential problems in order to deal effectively with the media.

Leaders also need to make themselves available to PAOs for interviews with the media. As they go about their work for CAP, leaders must keep their eyes open for PA opportunities and think about ways to use their wing and unit activities to strengthen CAP's image.

Emphasis on national publicity

Allenback says PAOs in the field are the eyes and ears for the headquarters marketing and public relations staff. While the PA staff members at headquarters have the experience and expertise for dealing with national publications, they have nothing to publicize without details and recommendations from the field. All PAOs should look at wing and unit activities from a national perspective. Do those activities tie into any current national news stories or trends? What magazines, newspapers, Web sites, television networks, radio broadcasts, specialty publications and other media outlets would be interested in such stories?

Look at these examples. When Florida Wing's all-female cadet team swept color guard honors at the National Cadet Competition in July, *Aviation for Women*

picked up the story. When the Georgia Wing helped Auburn University sponsor E-Tech, an engineering technology encampment for CAP cadets, *Engineering Times* published an account of it, along with a color photo.

Headquarters PA suggests PAOs send up a red flag, whether by e-mail, fax, phone or letter, when local activities produce opportunities that warrant a national news story. Sometimes the local PAO can provide just the right details to make a story come alive for national coverage.

Publicity doesn't ensure coverage, of course. "We must be sure to keep the media informed every single time we have newsworthy information," Allenback said, "knowing that only a percentage of what we share with the media will actually see print or air time."

The most unfortunate example of their failing to air an important CAP story occurred just last year after Sept. 11, Allenback said. "We missed a huge opportunity the day after the terrorist attacks when the New York Wing took the first photos of the Ground Zero site and the CNN commentator noted the 'little yellow and white airplane' over the site.

Despite headquarters' attempts to notify CNN in both New York and Atlanta that the plane belonged to CAP, the on-air reporters never acknowledged that information. That airplane was on-camera for over two minutes — what a great way it would have been to let the American public know about our volunteer commitment and service!

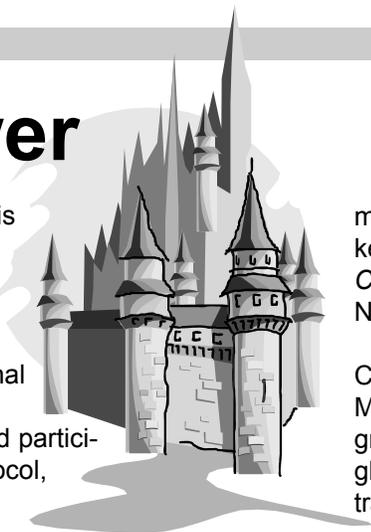
"I don't know why that phrase about 'best-kept secret' keeps popping up in relation to CAP," Allenback said, "but there's no future for us if we keep that mindset. With a strong public affairs program throughout the organization, we can go from being the 'best kept secret' to being a growing organization that all Americans know about and want to join." ♦

No ivory tower

So who are those people in the national headquarters Marketing and PR Directorate?

They're a small group of pros who all work hard to cover the bases for CAP's national marketing effort. With a staff of nine, Director Mary

Nell Crowe is responsible for membership development, national conference planning and participation, protocol, advertising,



media relations, marketing publications, the CAP News and the NASCAR program.

Now housed in the CAP Annex on Maxwell AFB, the group is constantly juggling deadlines and travel. In upcoming

issues of *Present Tense*, we'll introduce you to each staff member and explain what he or she can do to make your life easier as a PAO.

**In November
Who exactly is
Mary Nell Crowe?**

Philly, continued from page 1

Linda Paulsen, went along on some of the visits.

At each media office, we left a folder packed with information, including a press release about the conference and suggested story ideas, a conference program, marketing brochures, a copy of the 2001 CAP annual report, *The CAP Story*, information about CAP Racing and copies of previous stories written about CAP in major publications. When possible, we met with editors or reporters ourselves.

During such a visit with the city editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, I learned the man's nephew had been a CAP cadet. The editor knew the experience was valuable for his nephew, but still didn't know much about CAP itself. Our friendly meeting with him eventually led to his putting in a good word for us with the *Inquirer's* sister paper, the *Daily News*.

It was important for us to understand production deadlines for the media we were visiting. Afternoon papers have deadlines before noon, while morning papers have deadlines close to midnight. Television stations have major newscasts in late afternoon and then again around 11 p.m. We watched the time and made it a point not to visit or call too close to these deadline times.

Follow up

Even more important than the personal visits was the follow-up. The next morning after the visits, we contacted the media to see if the right person had received the press kit and whether that person had any questions. In many cases, we got only voice mail when we

called, so reaching a real person took some persistence.

The hook

Once we got an assignments editor on the phone, we tried to find out what it was about the conference and CAP that might be of interest for that publication. Remember, news media like to cover topics that give a slightly different flavor to whatever it is that's current at any given moment. In our case, homeland security seemed to be the hook.

Because the conference was held in mid-August, media were already working on special programs and printed sections for the Sept. 11 anniversary. We explained to them that it was a little-known fact that Civil Air Patrol was first in the air over the World Trade Center after the terrorist attacks. We offered to make some of our members who worked in the post-9-11 effort available for interviews.

The bridge

We weren't singling out certain members or certain wings in order to give them all the glory. We were using a tried-and-true marketing technique, guiding the media from the specific to the general. There was no way they could talk about CAP and Sept. 11 without giving background on the organization itself. (This is the same rationale behind the NASCAR marketing plan.)

As a result, shots of the exhibition hall with a voiceover about the conference appeared on the ABC Channel 6 evening news. An interview with Northeast Wing Commander Col. Rick Greenhut appeared on CBS Channel 3.

Mike Dunn of KYA-Radio interviewed New York Wing's Col. Austyn Granville and Chaplain Van Don Williams, and a reporter from the *Philadelphia Daily News* included Col. Granville in a special section on Sept. 11. We had a staff person present for these interviews and made sure the media had copies of additional resource material as well as a cell phone number for calls at any time, night or day.

Appreciation

Once we returned from the trip, we wrote personal notes of thanks to each of the media people who made those interviews happen and sent each one a small picture frame for their office desks. Each frame bears the name of Civil Air Patrol, so in addition to showing our appreciation, it keeps our name visible.

Relationships

The names of these media contacts in Philadelphia are now in my files, and we make it a point to send press releases to them directly, especially if we think a particular story will be interesting to them. This is the way to build relationships with media people over a long period of time. Remember that media people change jobs fairly frequently, so they take their newfound awareness of Civil Air Patrol with them wherever they go. ♦

A new **recruiting video** has been mailed out to your unit. The 30-minute loop-to-loop tape was produced by NASCAR Images and includes footage of Ashton Lewis Jr. and the CAP No. 46 car.



See your unit commander for more on this great publicity tool.