

PRESENT TENSE

APRIL 2003



CIVIL AIR PATROL
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

the newsletter for CAP public affairs officers

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S BIG 6-PAGE ISSUE

THE NAME GAME

Is it "Civil Air Patrol"? How about "U.S. Air Force Auxiliary"? What's the official word on the official name for CAP? **Page 2**

WEB SITE NEWSROOMS

Don't forget the media when you design your unit Web site. **Page 3**

WHY DO REPORTERS GET THINGS WRONG?

They're all really not out to get you. Look at CAP from their perspective. **Plus:** How to respond when they make a mistake. **Page 4**

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

Build support for your unit among your local business leaders and garner two big benefits – buy-in for employee participation in CAP and a more generous hand in funding local units. **Page 5**

HQ MARKETING & PR

Linda Tynan brings an elegant touch and a practical perspective to her design work for CAP. **Page 6**

PLUS

- Cool Web sites for PAOs**
- Web site address for digital camera review**
- Latest CAP stats**

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.

Think you get no respect?

Make yourself indispensable



Getting no respect is no laughing matter when you're responsible for handling the media. If you ever find yourself being the last one to know and the first one to be questioned, work on positioning yourself as a member of the "need-to-know" circle. Follow the tips below and soon your commanding officer will wonder how he or she ever made a move without you.

Photo of
comedian
Rodney Dangerfield
courtesy of
triviatribute.com

To make your job easier and make sure you're kept in the loop, help your commanding officer

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

Ever feel like the Rodney Dangerfield of your unit? The oft-overlooked PAO who gets no respect?

Don't take it personally. Most public affairs pros deal with this attitude at some point in their careers, usually with bosses who don't fully understand what a PA person faces in dealing with the competitive media market.

If you don't feel comfortable with media questions about a particular situation, chances are that you don't have a good big-picture perspective on what you're talking about. When your commanding officers do a good job briefing you on all aspects of

a given situation, you always have a better feel for what you can and should say, *and* for what *not* to say.

Unfortunately, sometimes the PAO can end up being the last to know the details of a newsworthy situation. In the heat of rapid response, those in charge may neglect, or forget, to keep you in the loop. If you've been doing your job and promoting yourself as the local contact for media questions, you can end up looking unprepared and unprofessional when those media outlets call you with questions you can't begin to address.

If this is your dilemma, work on gaining admittance to the "need to know" circle in your unit.

Deadline approaching for PAO award entries

Win the Spirit of Volunteerism Award; nominate a star!

PAOs, thanks for the entries you've sent so far. The contest deadline is **April 30** and entry requirements have been simplified to save you time. You can enter as many times as you like.

The Marketing and Public Relations Directorate is developing a new national marketing campaign, and we need your help.

We want to build new PR materials around testimonials from real members who are out in the field doing the work that makes us all most proud of CAP.

We're looking for people who represent the average

members of CAP, people with jobs and families and other responsibilities who contribute their valuable free time to public service through CAP-related activities.

We're looking for senior and cadet members, young and old, long-time and new members.

If you have a candidate in mind, prepare an entry with the following: An explanation (no more than 1,000 words!) telling why that individual represents CAP's spirit of volunteerism, his/her contributions to CAP, information about that person's non-CAP life and

What you can win

Official CAP NHQ Spirit of Volunteerism Award from the Marketing and Public Relations Directorate;

\$100 voucher for any merchandise from CAP Bookstore

complete contact information for the individual. PLUS, we must have a color photo of this individual "in action," performing his/her duties for CAP. If we choose your entry for national publication, you win! (See box above.)

You may enter as many times as you like. Be sure

your entries reflect diversity in origin, location, background and gender.

The contest deadline is April 30, 2003! Mail entries to:

Spirit of Volunteerism Award
Melanie LeMay, PR Specialist
Civil Air Patrol National Headquarters
105 South Hansell St., Building 714
Maxwell AFB, Ala. 36112-6332
or e-mail to:
mlemay@capnhq.gov

Identity crisis? "Civil Air Patrol" or "U.S. Air Force Auxiliary"? PAOs ponder the question

The rumor has been winding its way through CAP PAO message boards and down the halls of headquarters PA. Is the "official" name of Civil Air Patrol about to change?

According to the CAP Executive Director Al Allenback and PA's own Mary Nell Crowe, there's no official ruling that will force you to rush out and redo all your letterhead and business cards. The official word is this:

"All units should continue to use the name 'Civil Air Patrol' to identify the organization. The term 'U.S. Air Force Auxiliary' should be used as a way to further identify CAP, but should not be used as the primary name. The name 'Civil Air Patrol' should take precedence over 'U.S. Air Force Auxiliary' in designing all publications and press releases, and should also be the primary name of the organization used in

designing letterhead and business cards."

We've also fielded numerous questions about a "new" CAP emblem. Many units are using the emblem, shown at right, that combines the CAP seal and the USAF wings. To date, it appears that you can use your own discretion in choosing whether to use this emblem or the seal alone.



Cool Web sites for PAOs

Online photography course
Customize your own photography short course by choosing your favorite instructional modules at www.shortcourses.com

Shoot like a National Geographic pro
At least you can try! Find out more about how these photographers get such great shots (you'll be surprised at how many rolls of film they shoot) at www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/

It's not your mother's Brownie
Tried and true photo guru Kodak offers a great online tutorial for amateur photographers. Click on "Taking great pictures" at www.kodak.com

LATEST CAP STATS

CAP Membership as of 28 February 2003

Cadets	27,249
Seniors	36,639
TOTAL	63,888

Need the latest CAP Fact Sheet?
Go online at www.capnhq.gov and click on News and Issues, Inside CAP, and then Tools for PAOs.

Harbinger of spring

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

There it was, in the lead of a press release I'd just sent out across the country: "VIPs from the *annuals* of aviation will join current movers and shakers in space technology at this year's National Congress on Aviation and Space Education in Cincinnati, April 2 - 5."

I had no idea until Roger Middleton of Great Lakes Region, in an e-mail message with the subject "NCASE blossoms as a harbinger of spring?" wrote to me, "A nice promo for NCASE, but please – couldn't someone have proofread it before it was sent nationwide?"

Roger was absolutely right, of course. The mistake was inexcusable. Nevertheless, those of us who write for a living will testify – the more copy you write, the more likely you are to make the occasional mistake. This one wasn't my first, and I suspect it won't be my last.

Which isn't to say that my stomach doesn't turn over every time I think about this, or any of the other faux pas I've made in print. Or that I don't remember the classic words of an old editor friend who would bellow in staff meetings, "If you can't spell the \$%^&# WORDS right, why on earth would anybody think you could get the FACTS right?"

While the mark of a pro is the ability to get everything right, no matter what the circumstances surrounding the writing, that

doesn't keep us writers from jumping mentally to our own defense. If you've ever made a stupid mistake in print that was pointed out by some irate reader, you may have been tempted to comfort yourself with anything from a self-righteous "ye who are perfect, cast your stones," to a "let's see YOU do it!" challenge.

Nevertheless, my latest faux pas is a fine example of how a mistake can creep into a piece of writing, even when everyone concerned follows approval protocol. In

this particular case, I wrote the release, at least seven other people approved it, I reread it numerous times and I even spell-

checked it.

But I was in a hurry to get it out. I had a stack of other distracting, time-sensitive projects pending. The seven other people were checking for facts, not spelling, and spell-check didn't catch the mistake since "annuals" is as bonafide a word as "annals."

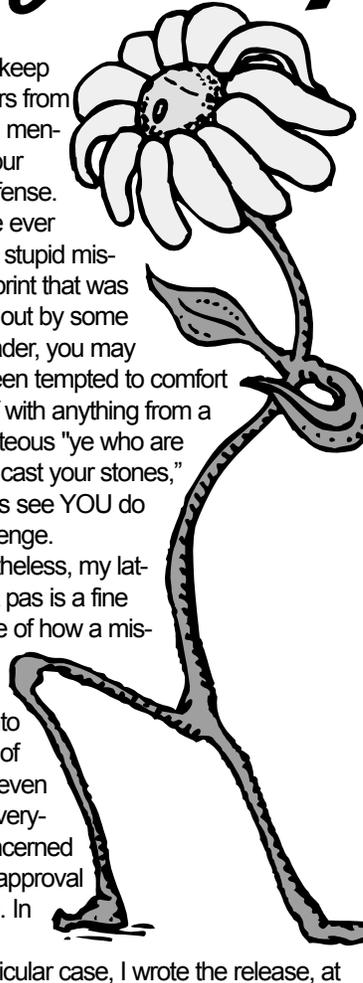
Sometimes the hardest part of public relations writing is knowing that, when all is said and done, the buck stops with the writer. It's not the job of your chain of command to police your grammar and spelling. The occasional stupid mistake happens, and it makes you sick. You're more careful the next time, and that helps you get just a little bit better at what you do.

Of course, if nobody had told me about annuals vs. annals, chances are I might not have discovered the gaffe until weeks down the road when I read the release with fresh eyes.

So, Roger, thanks for keeping me on my toes, and thanks for your later gracious observation of, "Ahh ... if only I could say 'it never happens to me.'"

And to all you PAOs out there, always remember, readers will judge your grasp of the facts by the accuracy of your grammar and spelling!

Go forth and do better than I did!



Check this site to find digital photography and imaging news, reviews of the latest digital cameras and accessories, discussion forums, a large selection of sample images, a digital camera buyer's guide, side-by-side comparisons and a comprehensive database of digital camera features and specifications.

Build a newsroom for media on your Web site

Here's a tip from *Writing That Works*, an excellent public relations newsletter:

"If you want to cement a good relationship with the relevant news media, provide a new media link on your home page, Sara Means Geigel says. Reporters don't like to hunt for information.

"On your media page, include such categories as news releases, contacts, senior executives' photos and a calendar of special events. Reporters should be only one click away from what they need.

"You also can invite reporters to register online for your news media list. Keep the

form brief. All the information you really need is name, organization, telephone, fax and e-mail address."

In addition, consider placing on your site some good high-res color photos of your unit in action (along with explanatory cut-lines) as well as appropriate CAP emblems. Publications are pressured to include as many graphic elements with a story as possible, even if it's just the emblem or logo of the featured organization. Make it easy for the media to obtain graphics to accompany their stories and they'll be more inclined to give those valuable column inches to you.

Why do reporters get things wrong?

Mike Marek
South Dakota Wing

Unfortunately, it is inevitable that reporters get things wrong from time to time. I have been a reporter myself, and I can tell you that – try as they might – reporters are not always going to get every detail and nuance of a story right.

It is the business of reporters to ask questions about things they don't know about and then to synthesize the information into a story for the general public.

This synthesis is based on the interviews they do and information they gather for the story, as well as their past experiences and assumptions, not all of which may be correct with respect to CAP.

I had a state elected official tell me once, "I just assume that I am going to be misquoted. The only question is, 'how serious is it?'"

We need to make the implicit assumption that the reporters we work with do NOT know the answers to the questions they are asking. We also need to assume that they don't have ANY of the background they need for the story. The thing that is hard to do is to second-guess what their past experiences and assumptions may be and therefore what the background items are on which we need to coach them.

Given that we usually have to start from scratch in educating reporters about who we are and what we do, we can pretty much be assured that their interpretations will not be the same as ours, from time to time.

Sometimes the difference is something innocuous, like referring to CAP as "the patrol." It's not the terminology we use with in CAP, but it doesn't really hurt anything if it's used in a general news story.

Sometimes a reporter introduces a significant factual error into a story, and that is more serious, of course.

How does this happen? Sometimes it is a legitimate matter in which the reporter's interpretation is different from what we would like it to be.

Often it is a simple thing like the reporter's not using a tape recorder during the interviews and having to write in his or her notebook too fast. (Newspaper reporters, you see, have an unwritten code that says they should take their notes by hand and

“ We need to make the implicit assumption that the reporters we work with do NOT know the answers to the questions they are asking.

not depend on a tape recorder.)

These are the questions we need to ask ourselves in evaluating inaccuracies in news media story about CAP:

1. Is it really a factual error, or simply one of different terminology or interpretation?
2. Does it do harm to CAP's image? If so, did the reporter have a hidden agenda?
3. Does it leave a favorable impression of CAP in the minds of the readers?

The PAO cannot be held responsible for the words that appear in a news story written by somebody else, or even for the words in a CAP news release RE-written by somebody else. It is the risk we take in seeking promotion through third party media.



Lt. Col. Michael Marek has been a public affairs officer for South Dakota Wing and is moderator for the CAP PAO list at sempervigilans.org.

How do you correct a really bad mistake?

The reporter has made a really bad mistake, and it's there in black and white for all to see. Now what do you do?

◆ **Assess the damage.** Reread Mike's questions in the article above. Will this mistake really have lasting repercussions ?

◆ **Visit the editor.** Remember that publication editors hear complaints from readers all day long. They're hardened to it and will throw up an emotional brick wall if you charge in with all guns blazing. If possible, arrange to meet in person with the editor (not the writer) and calmly explain the error. Offer to coordinate on a followup story that will correct the mistaken impression left by the article. If you approach editors in the spirit of getting the facts right,

and they're ethical, they'll usually try to correct the mistake. Keep in mind that editors hate to run corrections, though, and use this to your advantage by suggesting a followup story (which means more publicity) instead.

◆ **Write a letter to the editor.** If it's not feasible for you to visit the editor, then compose a courteous, professional letter on unit letterhead stationery. Ask that a correction be run in the paper, and again, offer to coordinate a followup story.

◆ **Explain the potential damage.** Be sure the editor understands that CAP is an all-volunteer organization and its continuation depends on the public's perception of it as a worthwhile group to join and support.

Get funding, support through Business memberships

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

In a recent issue of *PR Week*, results of a study on corporate funding showed that while America's businesses are cutting back in some ways, they're still interested in demonstrating their patriotism by contributing to organizations that support homeland security.

This is good news for CAP members who want to secure local funding by signing up local companies as CAP business members. If you haven't considered this source of support, here's a short primer.

According to CAPM 39-2, a CAP business member is "any U.S. corporation, partnership, proprietorship or organization which applies for CAP membership in the name of the corporation. This category of membership is designed for members of the business community who demonstrate desire to financially support the CAP missions and associated programs. The Marketing and Public

Relations Directorate is responsible for this category of membership and complete details are contained in CAPR 173-4, *Fund Raising/Donations.*"

To recruit a business member, follow these steps:

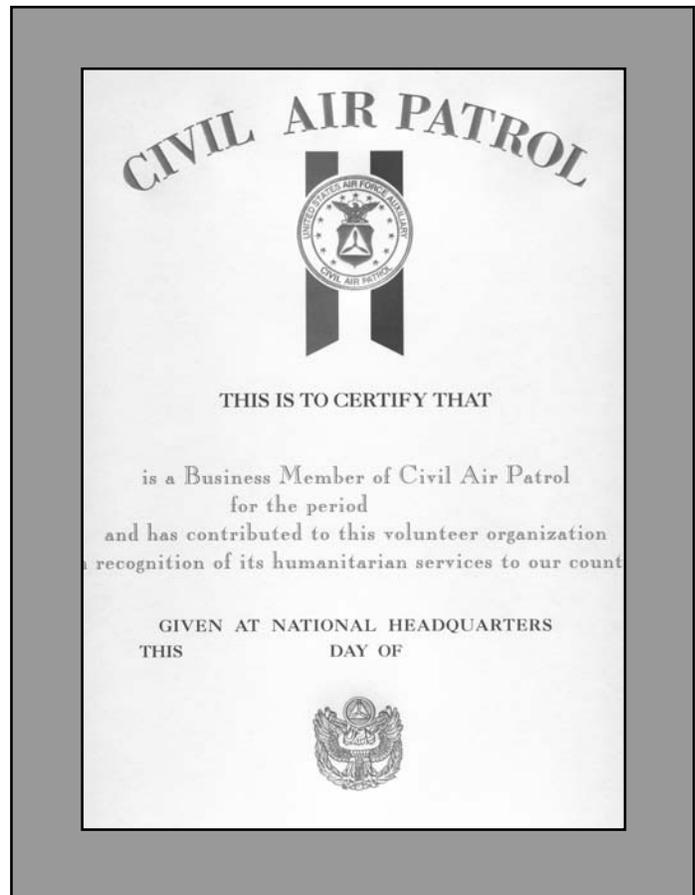
1. Thoroughly study the regulations governing fundraising, found in CAPR 173-4. (You can download this document at www.caphq.gov. Click on "Publications."

2. Obtain a Business Membership Application form. Diane Long in the Marketing and PR Directorate can fax one to you. Request it from her via e-mail at dlong@caphq.gov.

3. Work with your commanding officer to set up a presentation to the target business.

4. Include the application form in the packet of information you leave with the business following your presentation.

5. Follow up to determine interest. If the business decides to become a member, the check should be made out to your local CAP



CAP Business Members receive this handsome 11 x 14-inch engraved certificate on heavy stock, packaged in a presentation folder. You can obtain these personalized certificates for your local business members by e-mailing Diane Long in the Marketing and PR Directorate at dlong@caphq.gov.

unit.
6. The Marketing and PR Directorate can supply you with a certificate recognizing the company as a business member.

Again, simply e-mail Diane to obtain one.

7. Finally, don't forget to notify the press and arrange a glitzy certificate presentation!

Nebraska Wing courts employers through CAP pin project

During World War II, the United States military used "E" flags to recognize companies whose efficient production helped the war effort. The Air Force has recently updated the program with its new "E" pin, used to recognize employers who support the reservists and Guard members on their staff.

Drawing from this idea, the Nebraska Wing is designing its own version of the "E" pin, and organizing a campaign to recognize employers who support their CAP members on staff.

Lt. Col. Sam Blanchard of Nebraska Wing headquarters is working on the project with Lt. Col. Ken Jurek, who came up with the idea.

"If this project works as well as we expect," Blanchard said, "it will increase support for our CAP people among the business community, advertise CAP and recognize our supporters."

Employers nominated for and receiving the Air Force "E" pin are receiving a letter signed by AF Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper and AF Secretary James Roche.

The Nebraska Wing is following suit, planning to send with the CAP supporter pins a letter signed by Maj. Gen. Richard Bowling and Nebraska Wing Commander Col. Warder Shires. Their pin project should go into effect in coming weeks.



A program featuring the Air Force "E" pin, shown above left, is an update of the "E" flag program first used during World War II. A preliminary sketch at right shows a similar idea in the CAP supporter pin now being designed by the Nebraska Wing.

Design for living

Graphic designer Linda Tynan puts an artistic spin on every project, professional and personal

With the soul of an artist and the cool head of an advertising executive, Marketing and Publications Coordinator Linda Tynan lends an elegant touch to headquarters' marketing materials.

From her early oil painting lessons as a six-year-old to her long hours today wielding brushes in Adobe PhotoShop and Illustrator, Tynan has focused on presenting the practical in a creative and visually appealing way.

Tynan, who holds a BFA in visual communications, is the

one who most often provides headquarters-generated graphics or photos to PAOs for special projects.

"There is a tremendous amount of planning required for what we produce," she said. "It can be really frustrating to have a great idea and a very limited budget. The challenge is to come up with creative solutions that fit the bill." Her ongoing projects include a new volunteer-centered CAP marketing design.

Tynan's trademark subtle, elegant style undergirds all those creative solutions, just

as her fun-loving style permeates her projects outside the office. A sunny Alabama day may find Tynan astride her Arabian mare Mista on a forest trail, feasting on sushi with husband Jim, faux-finish-ing the walls of the couple's refurbished Scotty travel trailer or braving local river rapids in a kayak.

"The most interesting stories we have to tell in CAP are the stories of our volunteers," she said. "Finding new ways to tell those stories is the most rewarding part of my work at CAP."



Photo courtesy of Jim Tynan

Linda Tynan and friend Mista

NEXT MONTH
Diane Long is the unsung voice of Marketing and PR.

Indispensable, continued from page 1

Once your commanding officers know they can trust you and that you'll give them good advice about handling the media, they'll keep you in the loop.

Here are tips from Colorado Wing PAO Chad Morris:

Be proactive. Take the initiative on creating articles or press releases. Plan frequent meetings with your commander to discuss potential articles, releases and other publicity ideas.

Speak up. When the commander asks squadron staff to report on their various functions, be sure you have something substantive to say. Morris says this serves two purposes. It keeps your work on the radar screen of the squadron and it keeps you motivated to come up with new ideas to report.

Develop a communications plan. Sit down with your commander and go over the plan. Get his ideas. This will demonstrate your ability to set goals and objectives and help ensure his buy-in.

Give a presentation to your unit on some aspect of public affairs. For example, show the different methods media people use to collect information. Role-play media interviews. This will not only educate your fellow members, but will also establish you as a knowledgeable source of infor-

mation on things relating to media and public affairs.

Recruit and train an assistant. As Morris points out, CAP units emphasize having more than one person to fly a mission. By the same token, be sure you have more than one person in your unit who can handle public affairs. Then you'll have a backup and someone to brainstorm with. If you have cadets in your unit, consider training one or more to help with your unit newsletter and Web site. You may just awaken in that young person an interest that will lead to a fulfilling career.

Lt. Col. Buddy Harris, a PA veteran in the Florida Wing and editor of the wing magazine, *Florida Facts*, has more good ideas:

Arrange for your commander to meet the local media. Set up appearances for him or her on local TV and radio shows and as a guest speaker for local organizations. Make yourself available to work with your commander on what he will say and what unexpected questions he might be asked.

Quote your commander in your press releases. Make his name recognizable to the media and the public.

Schedule your commander for meetings with local business peo-

ple. Those community leaders can open doors for your unit, and can demonstrate their good corporate citizenship through business memberships and financial support.

Be sure your commander knows the key ES people in your area. If not, arrange meetings and introductions for your people to the key players in local emergency management, law enforcement and government agencies.

Keep your commander's schedule full. Alert him to relevant community events coming up, and keep him apprised of any certificates of appreciation or thank-you notes he can send to key supporters.

Suggest "movers and shakers" who might speak at unit meetings. Besides educating your unit, meeting the members will educate that community leader about your unit. You never know when such a relationship may come in handy.

From the U.S. President to the Fortune 500 CEO, successful leaders depend on key people in public affairs to help them promote a desirable image to the public.

Help your commander see how much you, as a public affairs pro, can do to help him promote and gain support for the unit he works so hard to direct.