

PRESENT TENSE

the newsletter for public affairs officers

MARCH 2003



CIVIL AIR PATROL
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

INSIDE

SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM PAO AWARD

The deadline's getting closer! Help us feature the best real-life CAP members in our new promo materials. **Page 2**

THE AUTOMATED PAO

Kentucky Wing PAO Mike Brown used his marketing instincts and some tips from *Present Tense* to win the attention of Louisville media. Find out how he created a system that worked. **Page 3**

QUICK PIX – PART 3

From special lenses to memory cards, digital cameras are rewriting the book on photography. **Page 3**

CAP HQ MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Tim Frantz, CAP headquarters electronic marketing manager, found at CAP a variety of marketing and design challenges to suit his unorthodox background and training. **Page 4**

PLUS

- Tips for writing photo captions
- New tagline for press releases
- Cool Web sites for writers
- 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. It is posted online in PDF format each month at www.capnhq.gov.

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.

Pitching like a pro

Developing sound news judgment is key to success with the media



What's wrong with this picture? The media (and readers) would yawn at the "execution at dawn" photo, left, of Gen. Lionel Bourgeois of the Air Cadet League of Canada and John Sharp of CAP National Headquarters. The photo below of Gen. Bourgeois, right, and Sharp is much more salable. You can see the expressions on their faces and tell they're busy examining and discussing an aircraft. Note how the camera angle and closeup perspective makes you wonder who they are and why they're so interested in this plane.



Photos by Melanie LeMay, CAP National Headquarters

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

The key to getting media coverage is knowing how to package and "pitch" your product. To be effective, you must take off your CAP hat and assume the perspective of Joe and Jane Q. Public. When you do, you'll look at your media submissions, events and photos in a different light.

The best editors and reporters are those who have an instinct

for asking the same questions the average reader or viewer would ask. (This ability has often been cited as the key to Oprah Winfrey's interviewing success.)

In the same way, your photos should show aspects of your subject or activity that average, non-CAP people would find interesting. Here are some tips for creating media submissions that will practically pitch themselves:

1. Tie your story to what's currently in the news.

See Pitching, page 4

5 Tips for writing photo cutlines

Save the new tag below to insert at the end of your press releases.

1. Address the famous 5 Ws.

Who are these people? *What* are they doing? *Why* are they doing it? *Where* are they? *When* was this photo taken?

2. Identify the subjects correctly.

Tell where they are in the photo (front, left to right, etc.) and spell their names correctly. Be sure to get their first and last names and ranks. Use AP style (put a period after abbreviations) in listing ranks.

3. Include the subjects' functions or titles, relevant to the photo.

Example: "Lt. Col. Joe Schmoie, pilot for the mission. . ." or "Josie Schmoie, director of emergency services. . ."

4. Write the outline in present tense. For example: "Three Civil Air Patrol cadets search a snowy hillside during a search and rescue exercise at Hilldale Forest Reserve. . ."

5. Be sure the main points of your story are included in your cutline, in case the photo runs without an accompanying story. Editors can always pare down your outline if they decide to run the story, too.

**NEW CAP TAG
FOR PRESS RELEASES**

EFFECTIVE FEB. 1, 2003

Civil Air Patrol, the official Air Force Auxiliary, is a nonprofit organization with more than 63,000 members nationwide. It performs 95% of continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. Volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counterdrug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members take a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the almost 27,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs.

On the Web: www.capnhq.gov

Spirit of Volunteerism

PAOs, thanks for the entries you've sent so far. The contest deadline is now extended to **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

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

(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 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 has been **extended** to 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

Cool Web sites for writers

Need tips for writing PSAs? This Web site, though selling a service, also offers free counsel on writing PSAs and press releases at www.press-release-writing.com/newsletters/t54-psa.html

Looking for Present Tense online?

Find PDFs of all recent issues of *Present Tense* online at CAP National Headquarters' (thankfully, soon to be redesigned) Web site at www.capnhq.gov/nhq/pa/PresentTense/

LATEST CAP STATS

CAP Membership as of 31 January 2003

Total	63,270	Renewals	3,960
Cadets	26,968	Cadets	1,184
Seniors	36,302	Seniors	2,776
New Members	1,454		
Cadets	826		
Seniors	628		

Need an updated CAP Fact Sheet?

Go online at www.capnhq.gov and click on "Tools for PAOs." The Fact Sheet was updated as of Feb. 3.

The automated PAO

PAO Mike Brown used his training, good instincts and some tips from *Present Tense* to interest Kentucky media

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

Admittedly, Kentucky Wing PAO Mike Brown came to his job with marketing experience. A 1995 graduate of McKendree College in LeBannon, Ill., Brown holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and has worked for five years as a marketing manager.

Nevertheless, he said he found some useful ideas in the October 2002 edition of *Present Tense* ("Philly media interview CAP: A case study in media relations") and followed that model to set up a media event of his own.

For a recent statewide SAREX, Brown helped the Kentucky Wing get nine minutes of airtime to tell the CAP story on WAVE-3, the NBC affiliate in Louisville. Here's what he did to get local media to cover the SAREX:

1. Brown determined the appropriate contacts for each media site, obtaining the exact names and titles, street and e-mail addresses, and fax and phone numbers for each contact.
2. He wrote a comprehensive press release about the upcoming SAREX.
3. He e-mailed the press release to those media contacts about five weeks before the SAREX.

4. He faxed the same press release to the same contacts *again*, two to three weeks before the SAREX.

5. A week before the SAREX, Brown visited in person and/or personally phoned each one of these contacts with a reminder about the SAREX.

As a result of Brown's systematic approach, WAVE-3 called and arranged for a camera crew and reporter to cover the exercise and, Brown said, "They very accurately reported about CAP in general and the SAREX in particular."

Brown took the time to handle small details that made a big impact, including the

Kentucky Wing PAO Mike Brown gathers information from fellow squadron members in Louisville, Ky. Brown used a systematic approach to get media coverage for a recent Kentucky Wing SAREX.



Kentucky Wing photo

reporter's wardrobe during the shoot. The unit provided a flightsuit for her to wear during taping.

Reporter Kaplan was impressed with the unit's professionalism. "I can't believe they're all volunteers," she said afterward.

Brown's proactive stance in dealing with media will go a long way toward helping viewers understand the contributions CAP members are making.

Now that he has helped WAVE-3 film an effective story, that relationship will serve Brown well when he seeks more coverage from the station – and other local media – in the future.

What to know about digital cameras

Part 3

Lenses

In comparing lenses for your digital camera, pay attention to the field of view (how wide or narrow the view is). Digital camera lenses are measured differently from those for film cameras, but most manufacturers quote 35mm equivalents. Thus, if you know something about 35mm lenses, you'll know what to expect from the add-ons you purchase for your new digital camera.

If you're looking at zoom lenses, be aware that optical zoom lenses create better close-ups because they actually scale the images by changing the focal length of the lens. Digital zooms scale the image electronically and thus can lose something in the translation. Check your digital to see if it has a macro feature, however. This feature allows the digital camera to focus on objects very close to the lens and will help you take good closeup shots.

Camera speed

Be prepared for some wait-time on powering up and in between photos with your digital camera. The more expensive the camera, the shorter the wait. What is most difficult to get used to is the lag time between depressing the shutter button and the actual taking of the photo. Try depressing the shutter button halfway to make the camera measure and pre-adjust focus before you actually take the photo.

Batteries

Digital cameras are notoriously battery-hungry. Your best line of defense is to keep a charged backup battery with you at all times. Murphy's Law really comes into play where camera batteries are concerned.

Memory cards

Currently there are three kinds of memory cards available, and none offers a distinct advantage. Just be sure you have enough storage on your cards to hold an adequate

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

number of photos. Otherwise, you'll run out of storage room before you've finished your photo shoot and you'll have to download the images you've taken to free up your cards once again.

Downloading

Most cameras use USB cables to transfer photos from cards to computer, and the latest models don't even require special software to make the connection.

Of course, it's this instant access to your photos that makes all the disadvantages of digital photography worth the hassle. As with all techno-hassles, expect these to diminish as time goes on.

The creativity factor

In public relations and marketing, Tim Frantz found a fit for his unorthodox background and interests

It made sense in a wacky kind of way. With a military school background and a college degree in creative writing, Tim Frantz faced the challenge of finding a job to suit his training and interests. Luckily, he found a good fit when he joined CAP Public Relations and Marketing in 1995. Since then, Frantz has been able to call upon both his military experience and his creativity to fill a variety of marketing roles.

"My first assignments were to create a 'look and feel' for CAP recruiting materials," Frantz said. "There was a need for quality PR materials at that time, and computers and desktop publishing were just coming of age. I found

that what I'd learned in college about photography and drawing and writing blended well with computer-aided graphic design. It was enormously creative. I was hooked!"

Since then, Frantz has designed not only CAP print materials, but also materials for CAP's national exhibitions and the Web site for CAP Racing. He's a fixture at certain national conferences where CAP has a major presence, including EAA in Oshkosh and the annual AOPA trade show.

"I did nine trade shows last year," he said, "and that means customizing the CAP exhibit for those specific audiences." As a result, Frantz has created

everything from CAP Racing hero cards to a life-size stand-up figure of Ashton Lewis Jr. for show-car displays. He's also continued to do still photography and has learned the ins and outs of Web design.

Though Frantz characterizes his work as "behind the scenes," he's the one most often called upon to provide graphics or photos to PAOs in the field or for national publications.

"I like working for members of a national organization," he said, "because the scope of everything I do is much wider and much more interesting than what I'd do with just a local job here in town."

As for his life's priorities,



Photo courtesy of Tim Frantz

For Tim Frantz, left, wife Deanna and son Ethan are top priorities.

Tim is crystal clear, even though he's not yet celebrated his 35th birthday. Wife Deanna and son Ethan take the top spot, an honor they're looking forward to sharing with a new Frantz baby expected in May.

Next month: Linda Tynan brings an artist's eye and an elegant touch to CAP graphic design and marketing.

Pitching continued from page 1

Editors and reporters operate under constant pressure to "localize" their stories. Each day they examine the breaking national and state news and try to come up with related stories that will have a local angle.

Keep up with the national and state news in your area and think about how your story could be relevant.

Tip: CAP stories often tie in well with homeland security, education, engineering or space exploration, and volunteerism themes.

2. Send action photos along with your story.

There are certain kinds of photos the media avoid as often as possible. Some larger publications even have a blanket policy of rejecting all such photos.

The worst, from their perspective, is the "proclamation" shot, which usually shows a government official holding a pen poised over an unreadable sheet

of paper, with two or more people lined up on either side. Such photos are submitted to newspapers so frequently that many refuse to run any at all, particularly if the same official appears regularly in the photos. To get your proclamation covered, remember that most proclamations celebrate a special day, week or month. Take a photo of members preparing for the special event, and then mention, in the accompanying photo caption or story, that the mayor has signed a proclamation in honor of the event.

The second worst photo class is the classic "grip-and-grin" shot, usually the result of an awards ceremony. While the organization and the award winners love such photos and clip them for their scrapbooks, the majority of readers skip right over them. That's why large publications hate to publish them.

It's far better to submit a shot of the

winner doing whatever it was he won the award for, and save the grip-and-grin for the unit scrapbook!

Finally, there's the "execution at dawn" shot, in which people are lined up – sometimes in front of an object or sign or building that has some significance.

The cure? Inject some action into shots like these. Let them work on that object or hold up the sign or open the door to the building.

3. Give 'em what they want.

Ask your media prospects what format they like, and then accommodate them. Most publications prefer stories and photos submitted electronically.

Tip: When you submit a story electronically, your best bet is to cut and paste your story into the body of your e-mail message. Many media types work on Macintosh computers and sometimes have trouble opening PC text attachments.