

PRESENTENSE

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CIVIL AIR PATROL
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

the newsletter for CAP public affairs officers

INSIDE

PT SHORT FORM

Because of our Annual Conference and National Board meeting, Aug. 25-27, *Presentense* is shorter this month. Never fear, however. We'll return to our regular format next month with the October issue.

QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST

Graphic artist Peggy Greenlee has watched desktop publishing and computer-aided design evolve dramatically since 1997. She has tips for PAOs who want to take their designs to the next level.

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COMING SOON

New feature: CAP in the News

Want to know if CAP's been publicized nationally in major newspapers or magazines, on the Web or through national television and radio outlets? We'll keep you posted in this section.

Media kits that rise to the top

How can you put together a press kit that will stand out among the stacks sent to media every day?

Personal profiles

When is a member profile appropriate? How do you write one that won't put your readers to sleep?

PLUS

- Cool Web sites for PAOs
- Latest CAP stats

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 mlemay@capnhq.gov or call her at (334) 953-5320.



Photo by Marc Huchette

A lapse in credibility can leave a blot on the good name of even so venerable a publication as the *New York Times*. When news broke in May 2003 that *Times* reporter Jayson Blair had apparently faked interviews, changed and embellished quotes, and fabricated scenes for his news stories, Blair wasn't the only one to pay the price. *Times* managers had to do serious damage control.

What we can learn from Jayson Blair

Melanie LeMay
Public Relations Specialist

The Jayson Blair story will doubtless go down in history as one of media's all-time biggest scandals. Blair, a 27-year-old reporter for the venerable *New York Times*, apparently faked interviews, changed and embellished quotes, plagiarized other people's work and fabricated scenes for his news stories. To make matters worse, he did all this for an amazingly long time before he was discovered.

As a result, Blair lost his job, key leaders at the newspaper resigned and the *Times* suffered a serious blow to its reputation.

PAOs can learn a lot from Blair's

mistakes. Although he was a gifted writer and wanted badly to be successful as a journalist, Blair apparently fell into the quick-fix trap so tantalizing to writers under pressure. Instead of doing the hard work to nail down the good quotes, get the facts right and wrangle the tough interviews, he found it easier to tamper with the facts. What's wrong, you might ask, with adding a few extra words here and there, an implication or two, or a description that implies you were onsite when you weren't? Plenty.

Quotes

Granted, it's hard to reproduce quotes with absolute accuracy, especially when you're taking notes by

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Quick-change artist

If you've seen CAP's aerospace education texts such as *Aerospace: The Journey of Flight*, CAP's thematic unit on the Wright Brothers, or even the hundreds of signs and placards that dress up NCASE and the CAP annual conference each year, then you've seen the work of Peggy Greenlee. Peggy is a graphic designer in Strategic Communications, and the official "go-to" person for almost all design work related to the AE program.

Since coming to CAP in 1997, Peggy has followed the evolution of desktop

publishing and design, progressing from early design programs like CorelDraw to the current industry standards, including Adobe Pagemaker and Quark Xpress. She frequently designs publications, and offers this advice to PAOs who want to professionalize their design work: "Keep your designs simple. Don't think you have to use all those fonts and graphics just because you have them. The goal of your design should be to catch your reader's eye and communicate immediately what it is you want him or her to know."



Photo by Marc Huchette

Peggy Greenlee has changed with the times as desktop publishing and graphic design have evolved. "I think Microsoft Publisher currently offers the best set of newsletter templates for the novice designer," she says.

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hand. Reproducing the spoken word on paper is sticky business, and takes common sense and a good ear both for what people say *and* what they mean.

Do your best to quote your subjects as closely as possible. If you won't change the essential meaning of the quote, you can sometimes add some clarifying words in brackets, correct a speaker's minor grammatical error or delete a profanity, depending on the circumstances. If you're using the quotes in press releases, always get the quotes approved by the

speakers, as well as your commanding officer, before you release them to the media.

Interviews

Never imply you've actually interviewed someone by lifting quotes and information from other sources. If you can't get a face-to-face meeting with a key person, at least try to set up a phone conversation.

Description

While descriptive detail can make a story come alive, don't get so carried away with your story-telling that you start embellishing your descriptions.

If you know for a fact that a plane crashed in dense forest, for example, then say so. But don't turn an open field with a couple of scraggy trees into a "dense forest" just to spice up the rescue.

Plagiarism

Your high school English teacher was right about this one. Plagiarism never pays. Never republish a story, quote or photo from another source, especially a big-time source like Associated Press, without permission. You could set up yourself and possibly even your unit for legal action if you violate copyright laws.

That said, we at headquarters public affairs give you carte blanche to republish and localize any of our official press releases or photos.

The ethics of journalism involves some sticky points that confound even some of the most experienced in the field. Fortunately for the reading public, most journalists don't base their choices on standards as shaky as Jayson Blair's.

For CAP members, the habits of integrity and discipline inherent in your training should stand you in good stead as a PAO.



Cool Web sites for PAOs

API newsletters – According to the American Press Institute, "This weekly e-mail is designed to help news industry professionals do their jobs better - and deliver a bit of the API Experience right to your inbox. In addition to advice, recommendations and insights from API, Roundtable now includes updates on the newest tools and resources contained in API's Journalist's Toolbox." We've recommended the Journalist's Toolbox in the past. Now you can get a mini-course in journalism delivered right to your (e)mailbox. Sign up for this and other API e-newsletters at <http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/subscribe>

Fund-raising links – This site includes hundreds of links to sites with info on everything from having a bake sale to writing a government grant. If, like many PAOs, you're also responsible for fund raising, this site may help. Find helpful information at <http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/4fcelec.html>

LATEST CAP STATS

CAP Membership as of July 31, 2003

Cadets	27,142
Seniors	37,538
TOTAL	64,725

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