



PO Box 41229 Raleigh, NC 27629-1229 (919) 872-4884

Occoneetchee Council Unit Media Guide 2009

The purpose of this guide is to assist each Unit Marketing Representative to get Scouting out to the community through successful authorship and placement of articles in local community newspapers. These are events that are scheduled to happen soon or have recently passed. Any community service project fundraiser or community event no matter how small should be recognized as a Unit or an individual. Any event where prospective Scouts can attend should be included in advance of the event. All Eagle Scouts should get their projects and Courts of Honor published so everyone can share in this great accomplishment. The purpose of this guide is to assist units.

The Boy Scouts of America is active and relevant. However, we need your help in getting that word out. Scouting articles and photos printed in your local community newspaper can carry a strong, positive message about the presence and vitality of the Boy Scouts of America in your community.

Your community newspaper is looking for items with local relevance. News releases on a council-wide (12 county area) basis are generally considered too broad for publication by your, newspaper. Therefore, your pack, troop, team, or post is the only source of local Scouting information your community newspaper has.

This guide contains the following information:

- A quick overview of news writing
- A few words about your community newspaper
- Preparing the news release
- Some helpful hints
- Photos should not make you shutter
- Frequently asked questions
- Media contact worksheet

There are lots of reasons to talk to the press. The news media can be a powerful liaison between your council and target audiences within your community. They have incredible resources to disseminate information about your council volunteers, educators, businesses, and the youth themselves.

There are also a lot of benefits with the general public. First and foremost, news coverage gives you free publicity. It also creates word-of-mouth endorsements, which build trust. A placement in the media adds credibility because people believe it more than paid advertising and coverage often leads to more coverage. Positive press is highly beneficial because it is viewed as an endorsement by a disinterested third party. It also highlights what you're doing in the community.

What might be surprising, though, is that **the press wants to talk to you**. They want to hear your side of the story. And, quite frankly, they often have a news hole to fill.

What Is News?

In relative terms, news is "new." It is a vision, a unique approach. It's controversial. It's an idea, a launch, or an event that is relevant to consumers. It's something that makes a difference or an impact. News doesn't operate in a vacuum, though. It takes you to identify and create it and then share it with the media. It has to be organized and well thought out. News should be encapsulated into the famous six questions-who, what, when, where, why, and how.



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A quick overview of news writing:

News is a current event which may be of interest and value to readers, such as:

- Human interest
- Progress or change
- The unusual
- Conflict

Editors judge news on:

- Timeliness - Is the event "now?"
- Proximity - Is the event "close" to the reader's location, frame of reference, or field of activity
- Importance - Is the event significant or of value to the reader?
- Policy- Is the event consistent with the publication's editorial policy? If possible, talk with editors with whom you deal to discover their objectives, expectations, needs, and wants.

Ideally, every item should answer the questions:

- **Who** did it?
- **What** did they do?
- **When** did they do it?
- **Where** did they do it?
- **Why** did they do it?
- **How** did they do it?

Significance is importantWhat does it mean to the reader? How is the reader affected? How may he apply the information? What should he do about it?

Story Organization

- ⇒ The lead (first paragraph or two) should summarize the relevant information so the reader reads the entire story to learn that happened. Most readers don't read most of the article. Therefore, if you don't write a complete lead, the point usually will be lost.
- ⇒ Then, clarify the relevant details in descending order of importance so editors can cut the story from the bottom up without losing the meat of the article.
- ⇒ When putting sentences together, they should follow a logical sequence of events, immediately answering the questions a reader might ask as he reads. A simple format to follow is: State principal or subject; state clarification or justification; explain the clarification or justification.

A few words about your community newspaper:

A newspaper is a business. At the same time, a newspaper recognizes its responsibility to be a service to the citizens of a community.

The individuals who work on a newspaper are no different than those who staff other businesses, with the exception that they may be more pressed for time than others. Most newspaper staff members are engaged in writing, editing, and printing, in a few hours, enough material to fill the average novel. **To help make your job easier, try to keep in mind the deadline pressures under which newspaper people must work.**



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Your community newspaper has an editor who is directly responsible to the publisher for the non-advertising content of the newspaper. The Editor is just like you, sharing the concerns for their families and community that you do.

The news room has a managing editor. This individual handles the day-to-day news production for the paper, including making reporter and photographer assignments. They are also responsible for the section editors. Section editors cover areas such as real estate, business, and sports. The editors make the ultimate decision as to what is (and isn't) news. It's easy for virtually anyone to recognize the news-worthiness of information. **If it's something you think your neighbor or the people on the next block should know and would like to read, then it's news!**

When you hand a legitimate news story to an editor, he or she appreciates it. Because of the increasing complexity of reporting major happenings on the national and regional scene with a limited staff, editors rely on volunteers, just like you, for local news. It will surprise you how soon you will begin to develop a news sense, to know instinctively when an event is news and when it isn't.

One of the best ways to develop this sense is to study newspapers. Notice the types of stories used and which go on the front page, which on the opinion page, and which on the "inside" of the paper. Try to adopt a simple pattern for writing your stories. Imitation can aid you greatly in developing skill in presenting the facts with a minimum of effort and training. **Follow the style and construction of articles that already have appeared in the paper.**

The newspaper wants all the facts and the necessary details, including the full names and addresses of local persons involved and any identifying titles they may have. **The newspaper naturally will want every story you give an editor to be as accurate and impartial as if it had been prepared by one of their reporters.** In fact, when you give a news release to an editor, you in effect become a member of his or her reporting staff. They will rely on you as a dependable and discriminating news gatherer by publishing the material you prepare, **if it's newsworthy.**

When possible, the newspaper will want the news **no later than the week it happens.** An event that is weeks old is no longer news. Much of the time, you can get your story to the newspaper **before it happens.** For example, you know well in advance that your group is going to conduct a recruiting night, Blue and Gold Banquet, Court of Honor, or other activity.

Experience tells us that although an "advance" story on a certain event is beneficial, there is little benefit derived when the story runs a month or more ahead of the scheduled date. People tend to forget about a coming event if they see it in the paper too soon. There is also the risk that the story will get lost under the sea of paperwork that continually engulfs an editor's desk.

A good rule is to submit a story about a scheduled event about two weeks in advance of the event. This gives the paper the chance to find room for the story. Waiting for the final edition preceding the event will only lessen the chances for publication, since available space is always a problem.



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The cornerstone of a news story is to tell who, what, when, where, why, and how. Journalists call it the "five Ws and H."

Who? - List participants and any partners affiliated with the event

What? – What is the importance of the event?

When? – What is the timing of the event?

Where? – This could refer to the actual location of the event or how what you are doing impacts the community.

Why? – Explain the purpose, rationale, and why this is important to the average reader.

How? – Describe the logistics of the imitative or event.

Preparing the release: There is one thing that all newspaper editors have in common - they insist on complete honesty and accuracy.

Following these ten additional basic rules when preparing a news story will go far in building prestige for you in the mind of the editor:

- 1 All stories, without exception, must be typed.
- 2 Check, check, and recheck your spelling. Nothing will leave more doubt in an editor's mind about the validity of your facts than misspelled words.
- 3 Typographical errors -called "typos" show you were lazy, in a hurry, or simply didn't care.
- 4 Double-space your story, one side only, on 8 x 11 paper.
- 5 At the upper left corner, type your unit's name, address, and then your own name and telephone number. This will identify both the unit and you as a news source, and the editor will have no trouble reaching you if there are any questions about the story. This information, of course, will not be published. **Do your best to keep away from Scouting "jargon"**.
- 6 Start typing the story about one-third of the way down the page.
- 7 Keep the story as accurate, brief, and concise as possible.
- 8 Head all pages with the unit's name and a page number.
- 9 End each page with the word "-more-" centered at the bottom so the editor will know to continue reading.
- 10 End the article with "END" centered so the editor will know that he has reached the end of the story.

Some helpful hints: These helpful hints will further clarify your role as your own public relations counsel and better enhance your chances of getting your story printed in your community newspaper.

- Give the full name of your unit in the story, and then fully identify it. Don't assume readers know and understand the Scouting organization. Sufficient identification is normally contained in a brief description, such as, "a local group of Cub Scouts," or, "St. Martin's Boy Scout Troop 445."
- Since your community newspaper is dedicated to the community it serves, it naturally is interested in those aspects of any story which directly reflects or affects that community.
- Be sure those aspects called "the local news angles" are at the beginning of the story when the overall story concerns a larger area, such as the entire Triangle, which may be beyond the community's borders or the newspaper's circulation area.
- Don't begin a story with a time, day, date, or name.
- Don't submit carbon copies or duplicated copies which are impossible to decipher.
- Don't submit a story typed in all upper case or capital letters. If you are unsure about capitalization, don't capitalize, journalists have simple copy-reading marks which will correct any flaws.



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- If you wish to convey an opinion, do so in a letter to the editor. News stories must be objective and should never contain editorial remarks. The exception to this rule is when you are being quoted. The telephone is beneficial in newsgathering, but it is not necessary to call the newspaper to see if you may send a story in. Simply send it in.
- Don't expect an editor or reporter to take your routine story over the telephone. It consumes too much valuable staff time, not to mention the increased probability of error caused by the verbal transfer of information.
- Use a person's full name the first time it is mentioned in a story. After that first mention, use that person's last name alone. Nicknames are discouraged in newspaper copy, and the terms "Mr., Mrs., and Ms." are seldom used.
- Women's names should be presented as follows; Mary Smith. The use of husbands' name in reference to women, Mrs. John B. Smith is not used.
- Use the youth's last name after using the full name.
- Don't use the term "ladies;" use "women "instead. The same holds true for "gentlemen" vs. "men."
- Save flowing tributes, flowery descriptions, and glowing adjectives for advertising copy!
- Facts will always the show importance of the story. Many news releases are unnecessarily long, due to excessive editorial remarks. If your story takes more than three pages, read it over and do a little editing of your own.
- Names make news. Don't leave out the names of anyone pertinent to your story. At the same time, avoid long lists of names when possible. Newspapers don't like to publish membership rosters.
- Don't "bug" the editor by calling and asking, will my story run?" There are stories of editors who actually search through their pile, find the story a caller, inquired about, and purposely throw it out because of the annoyance.
- Keep the "plugs" for services and products to a minimum. Editors receive stacks of mail daily. Most find their way to the wastebasket. They have no "local news angle." They are poor attempts to get advertising for which space should have been purchased.
- When you hand in a story to an editor, do not casually mention that you, your office, relative, or neighbor is a big advertiser and wants to see your story published. Most newspapers draw sharp lines between the news and advertising departments. News stories find their way into a paper on ***their relative merit, not the merit of a relative!***

Suggestions for Sending a Press Release

- 1 You start a new unit
- 2 You partner with a new chartering organization.
- 3 Your unit introduces a new service project or activity.
- 4 Your unit celebrates an anniversary tenth, twentieth, etc.)
- 5 Your unit has received an award, commendation, recognition or accreditation
- 6 You hold your annual awards presentation banquet.
- 7 The national news is covering a Scouting-related event or activity and you can provide local comments.
- 8 You select new unit committee members or unit leadership.
- 9 Someone from your unit is to appear on a panel, as a speaker, or in the local or national media.
- 10 Someone from your unit is quoted in a major Scouting or general news magazine, newspaper, TV or radio show.
- 11 Your unit achieves a major milestone such as number of Eagle Scouts, popcorn sales, or pounds



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of food collected for charity.

- 12 Your unit, or certain members of your unit, meet some unusual challenge or rise above adversity.
- 13 Your unit announces any changes in status of members: rank advancement, retirement of leaders, or appointment of new leaders.
- 14 A member of your unit is named to serve on the board or in a leadership capacity with a major business, community, professional, or charitable organization.
- 15 A member of your unit receives an award, commendation, or special recognition.
- 16 Your unit is visited by a VIP: a local, regional or national Scouting leader, a community leader, a business leader, a sports celebrity, etc.
- 17 Someone from your unit is asked to make a presentation to another group.
- 18 Your unit volunteers to support a significant community event or project.
- 19 Your unit receives a grant or significant funding from an outside source or donor or you participate in a charitable or community service activity.
- 20 Someone in your unit celebrates a longevity milestone: ten, twenty-five, forty years of service.
- 21 Your unit implements a unique activity program: aviation, long-distance bike or canoe trip, science fair, international program, environmental activity, etc.
- 22 Your unit changes its meeting place.
- 23 Several generations of the same family participate as members of your unit.
- 24 A member of your unit is cited for heroism, commendable service, or another major accomplishment.

Photos should not make you shutter:

To request a photographer

Telephone the newspaper's managing editor (this person is also responsible for photo assignments) not less than one week before a scheduled event. He will determine whether the newspaper can use the photo and if an appointment time is available.

If you take your own photo it must be sharp, preferably black and white, and preferably a 5 x 7 print. Many of the instamatic-type snapshots are not sharp enough for newspaper use, but don't be afraid to have them look at one. The worst thing they can say is "no."

Three subject limit

Most newspapers prefer photos of no more than three subjects, the fewer the people, the better the photo! Individuals in a photo should be doing something, not just looking at the camera. Identify people in the photo from left to right by typing (or printing clearly). Type the full names on a full sheet of paper. Clip or tape (don't staple) the paper to the photo.

Do not write or type on the back of a photo as it may show through when it is converted into a half-tone for publication.

A final word: A photo staff and accompanying darkroom is geared to serve its newspaper only. Please don't ask for extra copies of photographs. The prints used in the paper are usually available on a first-come, first-served basis. Photos submitted to the paper for publication will be returned upon request and should be so designated at the time of submission.

If you are to use a photograph of an adult or youth, make sure you get a release form filled out and signed by the subjects. We never know where the picture might end up.



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Frequently asked questions:

- Q. *Must all my stories be typewritten?***
A. Yes, if you want your story met with a favorable reaction from the editor and typing precludes the possibility of mistakes.
- Q: *Why wasn't my story used?***
A: There could be dozens of reasons, including: The story didn't meet the newspaper's deadline. There was no room in the paper. The story was not as important as the other news of the week. The story was never received. However, keep at it! Study the stories that are used and don't be afraid to contact the paper for help. You'll soon find your batting average going up steadily.
- Q: *Will the editor save me a clipping of the article?***
A: Don't even ask! Good manners and common sense dictate that you buy a copy of the newspaper and do your own clipping. Remember, the newspaper is like your corner grocery store-both are businesses and they simply don't give things away.
- Q: *Does it help to know the editors personally? Should I invite them to social gatherings?***
A: By all means, invite them. Their busy schedules may force them to kindly turn down an invitation. However, they do like to talk with members of the community and editors have been known to make good guest speakers.

Media contact worksheet:

Name of community newspaper:		_____	
Contact name:	_____	Business title:	_____
Best time to call:	_____	Address:	_____
Telephone:	_____	Fax:	_____
		Email:	_____
Notes:	_____		



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A Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(Be sure to include contact information with the easiest ways to be contacted.)

Contact: Jimmy Wudbaje
919-111-000
Jimmy@ocscouts.org

Suzie Denleiter
(919)111-0000
Suzie@den2.org

SCOUTS NATIONWIDE COMPETE FOR 100TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO

(Start with a title that is catchy and newsworthy.)

*Once-in-a-Lifetime Design Contest Celebrates
Boy Scouts of America's 2010 Milestone*

(List the city and date)

RALEIGH, Feb 1, 2009 – Calling all Scouts! Nearly 3 million Scouting youth from every corner of the country are invited to participate in a special contest launched today by the Boy Scouts of America to design the new logo that will showcase the BSA's upcoming 100th Anniversary.

(Answer the who, what, where, why and how.)

Centered on the theme "Celebrating the Adventure, Continuing the Journey," the winning logo design will be chosen by a select panel of judges for use as the official symbol of the 100th anniversary for the duration of the BSA's widespread celebration culminating in 2010.

(Use specific powerful quotes to reinforce your message.)

"As we approach this important organizational milestone we'll be working hard to inspire, engage and empower the entire Scouting community," said Chief Scout Executive Bob Mazzuca. "What better way to create a logo that signifies the true spirit of Scouting than to go directly to the source – our talented youth? We are inviting every Scout to help us develop a design that truly captures Scouting's rich heritage and the promise of our journey ahead."

Five winners will be chosen from the categories of Cub Scouts, Webelos Scouts, Boy Scouts, Eagle Scouts and Venturers. The overall winner will work side by side with nationally recognized graphic artist and Eagle Scout Kit Hinrichs in his San Francisco office to prepare the design for its widespread national use.

First incorporated in February 1910, the BSA is known for the motto "Be Prepared." In keeping with that spirit of preparation, the organization is planning a broad, purpose-driven 100th anniversary celebration over the next few years to "reintroduce" Scouting in America – to celebrate the organizations' past and to reinforce the important role Scouting will play in shaping the country's future. The goal of the 100th anniversary logo contest is to create a memorable design that captures and embodies that message for the nation.

(Continually reinforce key messages)

Design submittals may be entered through the BSA's new 100th anniversary website www.scouting.org/100years or by mail to Boy Scouts of America, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, Texas, 75015-2079, ATTN: Anniversary Logo Contest.

(Give Detailed directions in your "call to actions.")

Occoneechee Council represents the Boy Scouts of America in the 12 counties surrounding the headquarters office in Raleigh, NC. For additional information about this news release or about the Boy Scouts organization, please call (919) 872-4884 or visit www.ocsouts.org.

(Include a method for obtaining additional information.)



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Talent Release Form

I hereby assign and grant to the Boy Scouts of America the right and permission to use and publish the photographs/film/videotapes/electronic representations and/or sound recordings made of me this date by the Boy Scouts of America, and I hereby release the Boy Scouts of America from any and all liability from such use and publication.

I hereby authorize the reproduction, sale, copyright, exhibit, broadcast, electronic storage and/or distribution of said photographs/film/videotapes/electronic representations and/or sound recordings without limitation at the discretion of the Boy Scouts of America and I specifically waive any right to any compensation I may have for any of the foregoing.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Unit #: _____ Unit City: _____

Signed: _____

Guardian: _____
(if under the age of 18)

Witness: _____

Session Date: _____