AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

A COMMUNICATIONS

HANDBOOK FOR

LIBRARIES

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I. Introductory Letter to Libraries

Summer 2007

Dear American Library Association member,

Library visits have increased to nearly than two billion a year. Public, school and university libraries are flourishing, yet school library media centers were hard hit by funding cuts in the past year.

To help tell our story effectively, library staff at all levels need to have the tools to get the word out to media and advocates alike in a results-oriented, cost-effective manner.

Just like those we serve, we thrive with access to the right tools. This handbook can provide your library community—public library professionals and staff, school librarians, library researchers, curators of special collections, trustees, systems librarians, and Friends of libraries—with many of those tools. All you need to do is access them – the technology, the tips, the skills to keep you in instant and constant touch.

Communications and public relations are in essence the art of influence. With the great relations we have developed with media—and therefore the public—over time, we have gained the ability to help shape public opinion in our communities through such efforts as National Library Week, Library Card Sign-up Month and Banned Books Week. We have worked steadily to build relationships with professionals in our community as we motivate our customers to become lifelong learners who faithfully use our unique library resources throughout their lives.

This guide is designed to help you determine if the story you're shaping is a news item, a feature, or a calendar listing. Is it best for radio, TV, print or the Internet? And, how can you get attention for your programs without breaking the bank or taking up too much valuable staff time. Building on the ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*, this communications tutorial will be helpful for novices and experts alike, taking you through basic outlets, sample materials, and tips for navigating the Web.

In addition to this guide, you may find additional resources at the ALA Public Information Office's Web site (www.ala.org/pio). There you will find press releases, sample PSAs, national fact sheets, props

for press conferences, soundbites, and more. Be sure to check out “The Campaign for America’s Libraries” Web site (www.ala.org/@yourlibrary), which contains valuable information for the day-to-day promotion of and advocacy for your library.

We hope the skills, tools, and confidence you gain from this manual will provide you with what you need to disseminate your message to the media and beyond. And remember: everything you need for a strong, effective communications strategy is available @ your library®.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Gould

Director, Public Information Office

American Library Association

II. How Can Media Attention/Publicity Help @ Your Library?

Publicity is everything when you are trying to gain visibility and support for your school or library. It may seem daunting, but with some planning and dedicated effort you can shape and organize effective communications outreach. Media attention has its limits, however. What are its limitations?

Media Attention/Publicity Can:

● increase public awareness of your programs, personnel, and services;

● attract and increase involvement of public and private partners;

● create, change, build, or enhance your public image;

● encourage contributions of money, materials, services, and time;

● win support for city, state, federal, foundation, or individual donor funding;

● help you reach new or never before approached audiences, such as non-English speakers;

● clarify misunderstandings about what libraries do and how they're financed;

● mobilize opinion leaders in your community to become active supporters and advocates;

● help knit together a vital network of libraries throughout the region, state, and nationwide; and

● help build public and private support for libraries.

III. Developing and Implementing a Simple Media/Communications Plan

It's always recommended to develop your flight plan before you take off. Similarly, drafting a communications plan will help you chart the course to a successful communications campaign. Below is a standard set of sections you can consider following each time you want to begin an outreach campaign, no matter how small. Even a brief, one- or two-pager can be helpful. Consider developing it with a small or large group of colleagues, depending on the scope and breadth of the project. The kind of staff or volunteers you involve may include those from development, programming and library services as they can help you to consider all of your strengths as you move forward to gain the kind of attention you want.

What Do You Want to Achieve? Your Goals and Objectives

Why do you want to do media or advocacy outreach? You only need two or three goals for a simple campaign and to keep your focus on what you are looking for. You can refer to what publicity can do as a guide (Section II).

Your goals may be specific:

1. Making current and potential library users aware of the services offered @ your library®;
2. Letting the public know about a specific upcoming event, report release, or activity; and
3. Informing the public and other stakeholders about a referendum for library support.

Or, they may be quite broad:

1. Increasing your base of potential donors; and
2. Increasing public awareness and support for your library.

Or, they may be a combination of the two.

Who Are You Trying to Reach? Your Target Audience

When planning media outreach, your first impulse is to focus on the story. Resist the urge. Instead, look at the goals you have just set forth and consider which audiences you will need to help you attain your goals. Remember that “the public” represents many groups of people who read, watch and listen to a variety of sources. Here are some of the possible “publics” you may include on your list:

- Your library leadership—board members, staff, volunteers;
- Past, current and potential contributors;
- Decision makers and opinion leaders in your city, state and in Washington, D.C.;
- Potential library members and leaders;
- Your colleagues in other local and statewide associations;
- Your counterparts in other states;

● Local and regional business leaders;

● Potential library users;

● Seniors, teens, parents of young children;

● Journalists;

● Community groups;

● Personal contacts;

● Your neighbors; and

● Ethnic communities.

What Should You Say? Your Key Messages

Regardless of your goals and audiences, it's important to shape messages that are simple and consistent. Generally, you will have three or four key messages for your library. For specific campaigns, you may consider adapting one or more of your key messages to fit the new campaign. Either way, your message should always be applicable to your library's primary mission (for example, libraries are community centers, libraries are centers of lifelong learning.)

Once you've shaped your key message(s), you can develop talking points that support these messages.

Once you have drafted and approved messages, it is essential that you create a message manual or notebook where all of your key messages and campaign messages live on a permanent basis for easy access. You should update this as needed and have several copies available for any media interview situation. It can be divided into general messages and talking points – and sections delineated for campaigns and programs. One copy should be kept with your communications' staff, one with your executive director and one, possibly, with development or program staff.

Here are a few message-crafting pointers:

1. Develop messages that are extremely understandable so they can be used to reach all or most of the audiences identified.

2. Be proud of your messages. This is especially important for libraries because your constituencies – library, Friends, donors, and politicians – need to get your messages so they can easily convey your key messages in one or two sentences or talking points. These constituencies can be your best advocates!

3.Your message(s)—boiled down to a tagline—might represent a core value of your library ("Libraries are centers of democracy." or "Our library meets the need of our children") or be a call to action ("Get involved—get a library card!"). We also recommend you incorporate The Campaign for America's Libraries messages that include the phrase "@ your library."

The Campaign for America's Libraries

Following are the three main Campaign for America's Libraries messages (and talking points):

● Libraries are changing and dynamic places. Librarians are techno-savvy, at the forefront of the information age, and help people of all ages find the information they need, when they need it.

● Libraries are places of opportunity. Libraries are part of the American dream, a place for education, self-help and lifelong learning.

● Libraries bring you the world. Where else can you have access to nearly everything in print or online and even have the personal assistance of a librarian to help you find what you are looking for?

TESTING MESSAGES: You, the library staff member reading this guide and/or some of your colleagues, may not be your target audience, nor may you "get" your messages depending on your activity or project. For example, your reference librarian's forte may not be reaching potential library users, but he or she may know exactly how to communicate with your daily visitors. If new users are your target audience, you'll have to test your messages with people who represent that audience.

This does not always mean running formal focus groups, as this can be an expensive undertaking. Consider testing messages on your child's group of friends or their parents or people who attend your gym or religious group, or ask one of your relatives to test your messages with people they know.

You may also find the "Shaping the Message Worksheet" on page 31 of the ALA's Library Advocates Handbook helpful when developing your message. And check out the @ your library campaign Web site at www.ala.org/@yourlibrary.

What Outreach Tools Will Work @ Your Library? Your Tactics

The tactics in this guide can be selected alone or in concert to help you develop a plan of action for your campaign that will help you meet your goals, audience, and time line within the limits of your financial, staff, and volunteer resources. We have included communications tactics that may also be useful in developing your advocacy work as you design synergistic activities to effectively reach and generate support for your library activities and issues. NOTE: You might also consider developing a crisis communications plan that can go into effect should you ever be faced with a crisis situation.

Some sample activities: Below are five types of events or activities that you might consider planning to gain media attention or other visibility. They may be selected for various audiences you've already defined. For each sample, we've included sample tactics, tips, and ideas for you to pick and choose from as you plan and implement your outreach campaign:

1. Opening a new wing, a new facility or embarking on a capital campaign
2. Announcing a new president, executive director or board chair
3. Celebrating the milestone of a longstanding volunteer or staff member
4. Announcing a new program, an event, town hall or other activity for children, teens, adults, seniors, others

5. Releasing a report or study conducted by your library about library usage trends

For all of the sample activities below, what will be essential to develop for media is a compelling story. This is because not only the story, but the 'story-telling' is an essential art for media. As you develop and think about these stories, remember you need to be able to talk about "Why your donors or the spokespeople care about the library." As will be mentioned in sample activity #3, stories can be found in many places in your library. Consider developing a bank of these stories so they are at your fingertips when you have the opportunity to sell the stories to the media.

1. Opening of a new wing, a new facility or a capital campaign
   - Consider a formal invitation or letter of invitation to outlined audiences.
   - If you want the public to attend, in addition to sending out an invitation to your constituents and the general public, send advance media listings to radio, TV, print and Internet outlets;
   - If it is a groundbreaking, plan to invite and include local decision-makers and board members in the program. In fact, check with key individuals offices to coordinate a compatible date;
   - If you want the media to write and run a feature piece on the day of your event, work well in advance to research and create possible feature story angles that you can pitch to the media. The stories could be about the architect, a committed funder or the people who will benefit from the building or space.
   - If you want the media to attend and then do a story about the event, make sure you are prepared with spokespeople, sound equipment if appropriate and a place them to hold interviews if there is not a speaking platform. Follow-up with those that have shown interest to ensure they attend.
   - Think of the props you will need for such an announcement: shovels, construction hats, floor plans, renderings of the new space, appropriate signage.

2. Announcing a new president, executive director or board chair

In planning, first determine if this is news or not.

- If your current leader has left abruptly or is leaving after a short time at the library, there's a chance that this will be considered news. Consider this a crisis situation and handle it very strategically. You might want to consult a communications professional to create a strategy to roll out the announcement. See the appendix for tips on Handling Bad News.
- If this announcement is due to the retirement or leaving of a long-term staff member or board chair, then it may be an opportunity to plan several events – first to celebrate the contribution of the person leaving and second to introduce the new leadership – which may be better planned over the course of a month or two, depending on the new leadership.
- Here you have the opportunity to generate stories both about the dedicated service of the person leaving as well as to pique interest about new leadership. Either may be a good time to schedule one-on-one interviews or media meetings. Always try to have a media professional or other experienced staff member attend any meetings set up, not only to take follow-up notes, but also to provide details.
- With an incoming person, the first step will be to determine if they are already comfortable talking about library issues in general and key local issues. If it is determined that the person is well prepared, then try to schedule a short refresher media training and start outreach calls. If they aren't, consider a phased in media campaign where after more extensive media training they can start off speaking to smaller outlets before building up to the larger and more important outlets.
- Plan your events: a few possible events might be a press conference [find details in the Appendix,] a media breakfast or briefing at your library café, a tour of the library following or instead of a press conference.

3. Celebrating the milestone of a long-standing volunteer or staff member

- This may be a perfect opportunity not to plan a press event. It is, however, a chance to spend time doing a phone or Internet campaign and build your relationships with media sources.
- Your first step is to uncover potentially compelling stories by spending time visiting the stacks, the help desk, the computer room, the children's room, the afterschool program and others. Talk to as many people as you can to identify interesting and unique stories about library members, staff or volunteers who are making a big difference. Try to always have many stories tucked away in your short-term memory. The more you practice, the better you'll become at it.
- Once you have about 10, try to narrow your pool down to three to five different personal stories and draft a bio or story about each person's involvement.
- Create a general pitch letter that includes snippets about each of the stories you are pitching with general information about what a great time it is for libraries.
- Develop your media list, including both people you know and people you think might be interested. Cover all types of outlets: radio, print, TV and Internet.
- Practice your verbal pitch, then get on the phone. Pitching a feature story is something that often times gets pushed to the back burner, but if you carve out 30 minutes or more a day to contact media, you can run your feature ideas by them, ask about stories they are working on and see how the library might fit into their plans. If one person commits to doing a specific story, you will still have several special library stories to pitch to another contact.
- Keeping in constant touch with reporters can always help your case.

4. Announcing a new program, event, town hall or other activity for children, teens, adults, seniors, others

This is a time to reach out to your community at large as well as targeted lists. It would be best if they could hear or read about the announcement more than once from many different types of media over a period of time. Here are some tactics you may try in reaching them:

- Pass out flyers or postcards about the program at all library events starting well in advance. Place these items at the checkout counter, at the information desk, on your Web site.
- Send out public service announcements for print, radio and Internet [depending on the audience and the announcement.] For example, if you are targeting young toddlers and their mothers/caregiver, don't target Web sites for teens. Business people rarely catch daytime TV talk shows, so try not to target these TV stations when targeting legislators. For teens, try pitching some hip Web sites or local stations they watch after school. If you are promoting an event or activity whose potential attendees will be high-school students, then it would not make sense to buy an ad in a local paper where the average reader is considerably older.
- Let your local and state legislators and their staffs know about what's happening. They read both their hometown papers and state or national dailies and weeklies. Local weeklies may have small circulations, but they often end up on legislators' desks.
- Consider broad outreach for events such as a town hall or fundraiser, a pep rally, or a workshop. It can include simple written correspondence, such as a postcard or more detailed pleas for involvement, such as a volunteer or fundraising letter. Once you've determined your end product, you may want to distribute your materials in various forms and to different audiences. Some of these materials can be produced for a very small budget. This is especially true if your board members and advocates agree to approach their contacts for free services or printing. This is a way they can do their part to encourage library support.

5. Releasing a report or study conducted by your library about library-usage trends

Releasing this type of tool can be a fabulous news maker, but takes extreme forethought and organization and is best coordinated by a team of internal staff and consultants. Here are some tactical tips:

- If you would like to do a report, study or survey, try to start planning at least a year in advance.
- Begin by asking such questions as what type of research could you do that would be of interest and when you would like to release the results. This could be hooked to National Library Week, Women's History Month, the first day of spring or during Banned Books Week. Once you decide, then put together your time line backwards, starting from your release date.
- Put together a team that might include staff from development, event, program, management and appropriate consultants who could work on the research, the analysis, the writing, the production of the publication if you are planning to create a formal piece, the media outreach, and a release event, if desired.
- One way to shape ongoing interest in your report is to follow a trend. Not the Uggs your teenager is wearing, but a statistical or factual trend that is happening to libraries over time. Trends influence what gets covered and what doesn't. Local journalists like trends because they show facts that aren't isolated. National journalists love trends because they show national dimension with demographic variation. The American Library Association Public Information Office frequently uses trends to pitch national articles. Here's a sample trend message:

    > "Our library is facing a $200,000 budget cut this year, part of nationwide cutbacks that are impacting libraries in many parts of the U.S."

  Conversely, if you see that a national paper has covered a story that you see relating to a newsworthy local example, take the time the next morning to reach out to some reporters to generate interest in your activities. For example, if *USA Today* reports that libraries are building coffee shops to lure people back from retail booksellers, you can say that since

opening four years ago, your coffee shop has seen a 10 percent increase in revenues. The newspaper likes the story because they can say, "Yesterday, *USA Today* reported an increase in coffee shops in libraries across the nation and here in our town, the local library has seen a 10 percent increase in revenues over the past four years." Suddenly, your old-news coffee shop is new news!

- Consider distributing an embargoed copy of the results to a few key media well enough in advance so that they have time to write or produce a piece about the study on the day you want it published. Don't send the results to the journalists until they have agreed not to break the embargo. Once you've sent the embargoed report, identify those with extreme interest and that might publish and invite the journalists to meet with your executive director or researcher to discuss the details. If you meet with TV producers in advance, you can offer advance interviews to be released on the agreed-upon date. If a TV interview comes through, make sure that your spokespeople have had specific media-training sessions to plan for the release of this report.
- Consider drafting and trying to place an op-ed piece authored by your board chair and/or executive director that will run the morning your report is no longer embargoed.
- Depending on your media market, having a release in key news organizations on the morning of an event will help your chances of attracting additional media. If you have done your homework and advance media outreach, this will be a major key of your success.

What's Up on the Web? Your Online Campaign

Using the Web is becoming second nature. Here are some ideas of how to market your website or promote your library or event.

● DIRECT E-MAIL TO SUPPORTERS. Direct e-mail is used more and more for outreach … you can acquire lists by buying them (usually voter lists or from other organizations). You can also micro-target populations, too. This would include likely voters, those with a high propensity of library users, etc. For your direct email piece, do the following:

- Pay special attention to crafting subject lines so that even if a recipient doesn't open it, he or she still gets a mini-message just by seeing the subject line (i.e. Vote to Keep Your Library Open or Today is Election Day or Help Fund Your Local Library).
- Keep your messages short – 4 or 5 sentences
- Consider who should send out the email. Use prominent community members or special advocates such "Friends of the Library" organizations.
- Include a URL in message.
- Coordinate the email with other aspects of campaign, e.g. direct mail, newspaper ads.
- For larger scale campaigns that have funding, consider placing paid or sponsorship banner ads on newspaper or other websites.

● CHATS. If you have teenagers, you probably have an idea what chats or chatrooms are. These "virtual rooms" allow many users (limits can vary, anywhere from twenty to thousands) to log on to a Web site and "chat" in real time. Each person has a unique ID and can communicate in real time, which will show up on the screen for all the other users in the room to see. Most large chats are moderated, meaning that users can't just post at will. Generally, there are one or two main guests in the room, generally celebrities, authors, or political candidates. Users can log in to the chat and see everything that these guests post, but the users must submit the questions to a moderator who determines which get posted and which are disregarded. Chats are an affordable way of having a panel discussion or celebrity question-and-answer (Q&A) session. You don't have to worry about

having enough room, seats, or food. The guest doesn't even have to be in the same state. Although chatrooms are virtually limitless, they are not ideal ways of marketing.

● ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION LISTS. Electronic discussion lists are voluntary networks where individuals sign up to receive e-mails and messages "posted" or submitted by other electronic discussion list members or owners. Electronic discussion lists are slower than chatrooms and rather than happening very quickly on a Web page, messages arrive via e-mail. Some electronic discussion lists are moderated, so only the moderator or approved messages can be posted. Other electronic discussion lists are a free-for-all, with all members able to post messages at will. Electronic discussion lists are very common for clubs or member organizations. They can be an effective way for a large group of people who share similar interests to have a discussion.

● VIRAL MARKETING. Viral marketing has taken off on the Internet just like a virus, but how can you take advantage of it? If you have a message or topic that is catchy, then create a great subject line with content that is concise and smart, send it to the right email list and see what happens. Because e-mails can be duplicated and forwarded to multiple recipients—without damaging the content of the data—viral marketing is cheap and only limited in the ability of the product to sell itself. And you usually don't have to worry about misinformation being passed like a bad game of telephone the way you do with word-of-mouth advertising. Most grassroots organizations use viral marketing to some degree by posting messages on electronic discussion lists with the hope that members will pass the message on to their friends.

● BLOGS. Blog is short for web-log or an online journal. There are millions of blogs on the web— an exact number is the subject of great debate. However, their ability to give instant news updates has driven them to become mainstays of many news organizations; in fact, many bloggers are now

credible pundits. Consider posting an announcement to community blogs created for neighborhoods, cities and states. They are a good way to get word out about events/votes/etc. So which blogs should you pay attention to? Good question. Start scanning and then building a list of websites and blogs related to libraries if you haven't already. If you want to try to pitch the discussions or blogs that are part of these sites, sign up or volunteer as an editor for them. Talk to your friends about specific blogs you know of and ask for contact information. You may want to start a library blog.

● BANNER ADS: These are typically paid or donated boxes announcing a special program or event. They can be very flashy or simple and are perfect to arrange with a website that has agreed to be a sponsor.

● NEWS WEBSITES: Most news organizations now have corresponding websites that cover not only what is seen, heard or read in their main news vehicles, but they may also develop specific stories for the web. There are several ways to get stories on the web. First, check to see if a story that was on the local news can also be covered on their website. Many times, this isn't automatically done. If your event is covered, maybe the producer or journalist can place it directly; otherwise. you or they will have to contact a "web producer." It can mean extra work, but it will also mean extra eyes. The second way is for you to find reporters who solely are seen on news websites. Many times their email addresses are included in their articles, but other times you will have to do some digging.

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The following list focuses on web-based libraries and information resources:

Online Journalism Review (www.ojr.org) is a project of the Annenberg Center for Journalism at USC and has numerous archives. One recent article even debated whether blogging was journalism.

http://www.libdex.com/weblogs.html

LIBDEX is an extensive worldwide directory [from 26 countries] of library websites, web-based OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogue), friends of library pages and library e-commerce affiliate links.

http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/

BLOG WITHOUT A BLOG details specifically what libraries across the country are currently doing with blogs.

http://www.lisnews.com

is devoted to reporting on current events and news affecting the library and information science community.

http://www.library.gsu.edu/news/index.asp

A subject specific blog, the GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY blog connects you to sites on subjects ranging from recent construction at the library to a recent donation of documents to the NYU library.

http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com

THE SHIFTED LIBRARIAN is a personal blog written by a librarian for librarians. Dedicated to helping librarians keep up with their technologically savvy users, this blog allows them to deliver information to their users in their preferred medium and platform.

http://dmoz.org/Reference/Libraries/Library_and_Information_Science/Weblogs/

Constructed and maintained by a vast community of volunteer editors from around the world, THE OPEN DIRECTORY provides a comprehensive directory of the Web written by volunteer editors and available in numerous languages.

When Is It Best to Plan Your Release, Event or Program? Your Timing and Time Line

Your news delivery timing is a key to your success. Think about the best/worst time to release information or a report—or do an event or activity. Here are some general thoughts:

Timing

● LONG-TERM PLANNING. If you are planning an event or activity that you would like to invite press to attend and cover, consider scheduling when there won't likely be competing events. This is easier said than done. Remember that since your date will be set well in advance, interested media may be pulled away for breaking news at the last minute. Keep this in mind as you plan so that you, your team and your volunteers are not disappointed.

Timing can also help strengthen a news or feature hook. As you consider a date, think about other happenings locally, statewide, or nationally. For example: Design a theme relating to National Library Week, Banned Books Week, School Library Media Month, Library Card Sign-Up Month or Teen Read Week. Also, holidays such as National Library Worker's Day, Labor Day, Mother's Day or Women's History Month can provide opportunities for media-outreach campaigns.

● CONSIDER THE NEWS CYCLE. Your town or city may have better days when reporters and producers are likely to attend your event if there is no breaking news. In many big cities, the best day for media events is Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays between 9 a.m. and noon. This gives you time to get your spokespeople onto early morning shows before your event and will give the evening news shows time to attend and then get back to the station to edit their segments before air time. Figuring out your news cycle can help you plan this.

Devising a Time Line or Internal Planning Calendar

Regardless of how much time you have to deliver your message or to accomplish your stated goals, consider developing a simple or extensive calendar to help you stay organized and coordinate your efforts. To begin, start with the event or release date and work backwards, figuring out how much time you will need to complete each task. Include time for approvals.

For your planning calendar, you will need to develop both an internal calendar for the event itself as well as a calendar for approaching the media. The calendar below is a sample media calendar, which can be adapted for your use, based on your media outlets and deadlines. Note that several months out, your time line might specify what needs to be accomplished in a particular week, but as it gets closer to your event or activity, the timing might be down to the hour. Here you may also include broadcast and print outlet deadlines for longer lead magazines such as monthlies. Short-lead publications like daily papers and broadcast outlets are included closer to the event or activity. Try to be specific in listing tasks to be completed and by whom. This will help staff plan enough time to make phone calls and write releases or other items. Also, remember that the actual event or release isn't the last thing on your calendar! During the days and week after the event, time should be allotted to follow-up by gathering news clips and thanking reporters.

Sample Planning Calendar for a Press Briefing

- Three months to six weeks before an event—
    - Check with as many media outlets as possible to find out their deadlines for listings, public service announcements, articles, if you're trying to get word into a special edition, etc. [This might be a great intern project]
    - Create media strategy and an event team, if needed.
    - Revise and get your strategy approved
    - Contact event site to reserve date. (Should be done earlier, if possible or if not on-site.)
    - Contact and begin to solidify participants and speakers
    - Create invitations if necessary
    - Draft, approve and send long-lead media advisory and materials to long-lead publications
- Five weeks before event:
    - Receive commitment from speakers.

- Revise and send media advisory with any updated information.
- Call key journalists who need a long time to commit to and produce pieces.

- Four weeks before event:
  - Draft and send calendar listing to appropriate local papers and PSA to radio/TV.
  - Begin to shape speaker remarks.
  - Plan and produce press kit components.
  - Continue to call journalists
- Three weeks before event
  - Finalize speakers remarks internally.
  - Edit press kit components.
  - Contact talk-show producers to set up interviews.
  - Continue to call journalists
- Two weeks before event:
  - Update media list with recent changes.
  - Begin to distribute remarks to speakers for editing.
  - Write/mail release #1 to weeklies (announcing the event).
  - Contact talk-show producers to set up interviews.
  - Send advisories out to assignment and planning desks.
  - Consider audio/visual needs and make arrangements for rentals if needed
- One week before event:

Remember, weekly papers have earlier deadlines than dailies. You may need to do outreach to them this week or before.

  - Write/mail release #2 to weeklies (announce speakers).
  - Send release #1 to dailies and electronics.
  - Media follow-up calls.

    - Call speakers to confirm appearance and finalize remarks.
    - Finalize press kit components.
- Week of event: Weekly papers published.
    - Set-up feature stories and interviews.
    - Coordinate coverage.
    - Distribute release #2 to dailies.
    - Copy, collate, and assemble press kit.
- Day before event:
    - Call to remind assignment editors.
    - Set up the space if possible.
    - Create a sign-in sheet.
- Day and week after event:
    - Set up the space, with enough chairs for media and guest, but not too many so it looks crowded even if it isn't
    - Set up a press sign-in table
    - Monitor news coverage.
    - Write/mail follow-up release, if desired.
    - Draft and send thank-you notes and calls for good stories.
    - Send letters-to-editors to correct errors and expand coverage.
    - Debrief.

What Will I Need to Draft for my Campaign or Outreach? Your Materials

A well-written, succinct and effective media advisory, news release or pitch letter can inform and also generate interest and excitement about your event, campaign, or happening. Materials can be used

both to entice the media and constitute your press kit. In many cases, media will want factual pieces before they commit to reporting on your event, activity or issue. It may be as simple as emailing them an electronic press kit. A nicely organized, clean-cut press kit can be distributed to media at the planned event and should include both general items and those specific to your purpose.

Online Pressrooms: The press now expects to be able to access your materials at any time. If you create an online press room with up-to-date electronic press kits, you won't be caught empty handed. This should be very accessible to media—preferably a click on your home page. If you don't already have one, here are some hints:

■ At a minimum, your online pressroom should contain contact information (phone, fax, e-mail) for your communications staff member.

Also consider posting and archiving:

■ Every press release you issue;

■ Fact sheets about your library (how many books are there, how many staff, etc.);

■ Bios and photos of your director, board members and key staff;

■ Photos of the library;

■ Media stories you have generated; and

■ Information about upcoming events or legislation that is affecting the library.

- FACT SHEETS AND BACKGROUNDERS. You can create a series of standard fact sheets and backgrounders to use over the long term, whether for a year or until the facts and details change. These can include general information or specific programs for children or adult services – or your capital campaign. The fact sheet is typically bulleted facts and statistics; the backgrounder is typically a short narrative. Make each of them brief but informational, and make sure they support your position. For example, if you are trying to enlist support for a local ballot initiative for funding,

come up with a fact such as “the annual cost an average property owner will pay in taxes to support the library is the equivalent of a Happy Meal or two movie tickets a year.” And, the fact sheet will help dispel myths or inaccuracies that your opposition may spread. Feel free to distribute general fact sheets and backgrounders to both press and supporters. Your supporters can use the content to become informal spokespersons for your library.

A Quotable Facts about Libraries brochure is also available for your use:
www.ala.org/ala/pio/availablepiomat/quotablefact.pdf.
So is a version translated into Spanish:
www.ala.org/ala/pio/availablepiomat/spanishquotablefacts.pdf

- MEDIA ADVISORY: A media advisory alerts the media, in a concise manner, to upcoming events and developments pertinent to your library and community. Think of it like an invitation and answer only the important questions: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.

● It should be brief and to the point, typically not more than one page.
● It should contain a headline detailing the most important information.
● It should include the five Ws mentioned above. The When should say, “For…” and the date the press should take notice.
● It should include two contact numbers or email addresses. The first for reporters to call to get more information and the second, the contact information to be published if the advisory is for a listing.
● It should include a boilerplate, which is basically a brief description of your library, located at the end of the advisory. If there is only a little room left for this, you can shrink the type size of this paragraph.

● Be sure to send the advisory on your library letterhead, whether by fax or email.

- NEWS RELEASE: A news release has a different purpose from a media advisory. It should read like an article, with quotes and facts, to stimulate possible pick-up by small papers and to generate print and broadcast reports at larger outlets. Where a media advisory offers basic information to entice reporters, a news release creates an image and story that journalists can use alone or as background when writing a story.

  ● It should written in the inverted pyramid style of newswriting—with a headline and the most important information at the top.

  ● It should include quotes from spokespeople.

  ● Be sure to send the release using your library's letterhead, again whether by fax or email.

  ● The release should not be longer than 2 pages

  The Format of a News Release

  - At the top left side of the page write NEWS.
  - Underneath write FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE and under that write the date.
  - At the top right side of the page include your contact information.
  - Type # or -30- at the end of your release to indicate the end of copy.
  - Be sure to print out the release on your letterhead, and if longer than one page include (more) at the bottom of page one. Page two should have "page 2" and the release title in the top left-hand corner.

- PITCH LETTER: Pitch letters are short introductions to a story that you would like a journalist to cover. They're teasers that can be used to pique a journalist's interest. Pitch letters should explain why you want them to cover this story, why they need to read this press release, why they really

need to interview you about this topic. Unlike press releases or media advisories, there are no hard-and-fast rules for pitch letters. Many are rather formal letters, others are tongue-in-cheek, such as “Top 10 Reasons You Should . . .” If you are pitching profiles of key volunteers, include a short list of three individuals with a sentence about each. The factual materials such as backgrounders, Q&A’s, and bios can be sent as support materials. Pitch letters must be short—absolutely no more than a page—and it’s best to keep in mind that their intent is not to give the full picture, but an interesting glimpse.

- Q&A or FAQ: A Question and Answer or Frequently Asked Questions sheet is a place where you can both create and answer questions about a specific topic. Try to create Q&As to answer some of the questions you think journalists might ask. If you have a new executive director, this could take the form of an interview.

- LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. These are short, time-sensitive letters written by the public that the paper can select to print and sometimes edit at its discretion. The letter may be a comment from your library director, your board chair, a volunteer, or a supporter in reaction to an article in the paper or even a political issue in your community. Your newspaper will have specific guidelines for submitting one. If you or another member of your staff submits one, be sure to identify your affiliation with the library. **Note**: Letters to the editor can usually be submitted by email and are best if submitted within 24 hours of the appearance of the original comments – just check with the paper. If mailed or faxed, submit, double spaced, on your stationery. In <u>all</u> cases submit with a phone number to reach you so they can verify your identity and get approval for any edits. In <u>most</u> cases, they should not exceed 250 words, but some outlets only take as few as 100 words or even more than 250. Read examples to see what your paper runs.

- OP-EDS. Op-eds (stands for opposite the editorial page) provide a place in papers, some magazines, television and radio commentaries, for readers to express their views. A good strategy is to be a contrarian, be timely and present evidence to make your point. Before writing, consider: Will this help the cause? Has the idea been overdone? Can you add a new perspective? New evidence? New solution? Are you an authority?

    - It is generally wise to call the editor of the op-ed or editorial page and explain your idea briefly as well as your affiliation with the library.
    - Think about who might be the best author(s).
    - Most op-eds are short pieces of 500 to 2,000 words, or 400 words for radio, but you should contact the publication to ask about length.
    - You can turn a print op-ed into a radio commentary by shortening it and then submitting it to a station that accepts them. Your local NPR or Marketplace might be perfect.
    - Read it out loud to make sure it's suitable for a listening audience.
    - When submitting your op-ed, include a proposed headline. Don't be surprised if the headline changes or the editor makes minor edits to your piece.

- INTERNAL DOCUMENTS. Newsletters and other internal items such as annual reports, brochures and calendars can be distributed to media as part of a press kit. They give journalists valuable information about the 'happenings' and 'highlights' and help to spread the word about your library.

- EDITORIALS. These are opinion pieces in all types of media written by one or more members of your newspaper's editorial board that reflect the opinion of the publication. The editorial board is not related to the news reporters. One of the ways to influence an editorial board is to schedule an editorial board meeting, which is outlined in *the Library Advocates Handbook* (page 10.) Editorial board meetings can be ideal when you either believe the newspaper could editorialize on an issue you're facing (like budget cuts) or when you believe the board will write in your favor. If you're facing a local newspaper that has been historically against your causes, this may not be the best tactic.

- PHOTO-OPS. A photo-op (or photo opportunity) is any situation that would yield a good photo in the newspaper or on TV or Internet. It's always a good idea to have a designated photographer at your event so that if the news photo desks don't show up, you can try to submit them to news organizations as soon as the event is complete.

Photo ops provide you with an opportunity to get attention for your activities when there isn't a big news story involved. They work best when they're appealing for a quirky or sentimental reason. Photo ops of kids are often effective. One unusual example is when a local school had a contest to raise money. The principal promised he would kiss a pig if the students were able to raise a certain amount. Of course, they did raise enough money, and the photo of the principal and the pig made all the papers.

  - Plan your photo-op with photos in mind. Have a library sign very visibly displayed. The Campaign for America's Libraries has a super-sized library card available on its Web site. Ask participants to dress colorfully in case of color photos.

- When planning a photo-op, make sure that you include a VISUALS section in your media advisory to describe exactly what will be available for media to cover. Include directions to the site and phone numbers that will be staffed.
- Make sure your media list contains the photo desks to contact that can cover your event or arrange for coverage.
- Start your calls a few days before the day of the event. Most people will want the information sent to them the day before. You might have to make calls the morning of the event as well to confirm that the photographer knows the correct location and time.

- VIDEO OR RADIO NEWS RELEASES (VNRs or RNRs). You may want to issue a press release as a taped message for either television or radio. These can be created as if you were a news producer, and you may consider hiring a production company to help you create them. Once produced, you can send them to stations as news. This is typically more costly and time-consuming than a print release, but if you find donated services and your local stations will consider your submission, it may be a great way to place a story.

Who Should Do the Talking? Your Spokespeople

People often panic when reporters call. There's no reason for most people to fear a journalist's questions. In fact, it's often a great opportunity to educate the reporter about your library — if you know how to take advantage of it.

Typically, calls from reporters come directly to a communications or development staff member. Many times, however, it is a receptionist who first picks up the phone. Both of these interactions can flavor your library's relationship with the reporter. This section covers both tips for official spokespeople as well as hints for a media professional, an assistant who answers the phone and staff from other departments. There are also specific tips in the Tools, Tips and Tricks of the Trade section.

Before and After the Interview:

For the person that has primary contact with reporters or answers the phone:

■ BE ACCESSIBLE. We all have meetings and other commitments. If you want to become a regular source for journalists, you MUST be accessible. Train the person who answers your phone to keep a separate log of reporters who call—with names, news outlets, direct phone, fax numbers, e-mail addresses, and their deadline. If you are going to be in a meeting, let that person know where you are and if you can be interrupted. When he or she talks to a reporter, this should be communicated along with "but I know she'd be eager to talk with you. Can I interrupt her—or can she call back at 3 p.m.? When do you need to hear from her? Can you tell me what you need to know so I can find someone else to help you right now?" Try to rearrange things if you can to avoid saying no the first several times radio or TV producers call so you can get onto their rolodexes.

■ ACCESSIBLE, BUT YOU NEED NOT TAKE A CALL WHEN IT COMES. Often, reporters are on tight deadlines. But sometimes, you have plenty of time to prepare background materials and to brief your spokesperson, if an interview is requested. Ask if you can return the reporter's call at a specified time. Using your message manual, jot down a few notes based on your talking points or develop new ones for the specific request. Practice or prepare the spokesperson and then call the journalist back. If you're really convinced you or your spokesperson is the wrong source, suggest an alternate.

■ ASK QUESTIONS BEFORE ACCEPTING TO DO OR SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW. Be sure you know the angle the journalist is coming from. Is he or she calling simply for background information or to schedule an interview with a spokesperson? Who else is being interviewed? Will other organizations be represented? Does he or she want a national spokesperson's perspective? Is it going to be in a special section? When will it be coming out or on-air? Will it be taped or live?

■ TAKE TIME TO PREPARE. Even the most skilled media professionals and spokespeople take a few minutes to prepare. If the reporter is on deadline, you or your spokesperson can call him or her back in five to ten minutes. That should be enough time to focus on your key messages.

■ PREVIEW ONE OR TWO UPCOMING EVENTS OR ISSUES. While providing background information, take advantage of any interaction with a journalist and mention a story idea, an upcoming event, or a burning issue. Don't be shy. You may just stimulate the story of your dreams.

■ DROP A THANK-YOU NOTE. Most reporters hear about their errors. Few get thanked for their accuracy and insight. Journalists have long memories. Especially when you're competing for scarce space, it helps to drop a note to a reporter who you feel "Gets it"—and his or her boss. Even though email is used frequently for communicating with reporters, hand-written notes go a long way these days. You may be pleasantly surprised next time you call with a story idea.

Determining the Best Spokespeople: Your Director, Children's Librarian, Volunteer?

Who is the best person for the interview? Whether planning a media campaign or simply answering media inquiries that arise, you need to identify the best spokesperson for the particular type of request. Generally, your director and your board chair are the main spokespersons. However, depending on the size of your library and the amount of media attention you receive, you may identify additional individuals to speak on your behalf. These could include program or other appropriate staff, other members of your board, volunteers, or members of the community who can sing your praises or speak to a specific issue.

Spokespeople need to have media training, whether for a yearly brushing up or full-scale training with a professional. If non-staff are going to be spokespeople, it is always a good idea to be in close touch with them about their contribution well before you need them. Look into professional or pro bono

media trainers—to practice soundbites on or off camera—who can help you professionalize and personalize your messaging. Again, this can be done by qualified staff or outside consultants.

The Actual Interview

Staying in control of an interview can help you get your message out—and save you from future headaches. Skilled spokespeople can take any question thrown at them, answer it, and bring it back to their original message—all within a few sentences. Below are some tips for your spokespeople.

■ TAKE TIME TO PREPARE. [Yes, you just read this message above. It's crucial.] Even the most skilled media professionals and spokespeople take a few minutes to prepare. If the reporter is on deadline, you or your spokesperson can call him or her back in five to ten minutes. That should be enough time to focus on your key messages.

■ BE SUCCINCT. Don't ramble. Even print reporters have space constraints. And they can easily take your rambling comments out of context. If words don't roll off your tongue, keep a sheet of one-liners near your phone. Practice short answers to common questions with a friend or colleague with a stopwatch. Know two or three short, compelling stories that make your case. Then cook them down and practice telling them.

■ DON'T USE JARGON. Even with the reporter who knows your issues, steer clear of tech talk. It's stiff, turns off the uninformed, and is less likely to be quoted. Likewise, always spell out acronyms, and don't assume the friendly reporter you talked to a month ago remembers the buzzwords. Consider starting from square one unless you know and have spoken to the reporter previously. It's a good habit in any case, and usually generates more lively copy.

■ NEVER ANSWER QUESTIONS YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. If the reporter asks a question that's vague or needs clarification, check for understanding. Interviews aren't one-way streets. Ask a

reporter to repeat the question or rephrase it. Restate it yourself, buying time to compose an answer, but be especially sure you understand just what you're being asked. You may even clear up the reporter's confusion or misstatement.

■ PAUSE OR THINK BEFORE YOU ANSWER. You can always buy yourself time by saying, "That's a good question." You can also pause before you begin your answer to get your thoughts in order.

■ AVOID ONE-WORD ANSWERS. "Yes" and "No" won't help you get your point across. Take the opportunity to expand, or bring the conversation back to your main message.

■ STAY "ON MESSAGE." If an interview starts on the wrong topic, be sure to bring it back to what you're really there to discuss. You can do that by using the following Special Tricks …

Special Tricks: These techniques can help you keep control of the interview, ensure you get your points across, and speak directly to the audience if on television or radio.

■ BRIDGING: If the interview is heading down the wrong road or if the reporter has used bad phrasing, build a bridge by saying "well, that's an interesting question, but what we really need to address is . . ." This is a technique that lets you turn the tide from a reporter's agenda to your own. A few examples:

"That's an important question, Susan, but what's critical for people to know about library literacy is . . ." If a reporter says, "but isn't it true that libraries are no longer necessary because of the Internet," don't respond using that bad opinion by saying, "no, it isn't true that libraries are no longer necessary." Instead, turn it around and say "Libraries are flourishing…" and so forth.

■ BEWARE OF LEADING QUESTIONS. Some reporters try to influence interviews by saying "Would you say" or "isn't it true." Avoid falling into the trap of agreeing with them. If you don't agree or if it's not true, be sure to say, "No. Actually, the truth is . . ."

■ FLAG IMPORTANT STATEMENTS. This is different from bridging because you are identifying "The most important thing here is . . ." or "The real issue is . . ." you not only get the reporter's attention, but

you also get the audience's attention too, and the audience is who you are speaking to. This is also a good way to get to your key message.

■ HOOK YOUR INTERVIEWER. By saying "There are three important points here . . ." the interviewer (and the audience) is automatically waiting for those three points. It grabs the interviewer's attention, and they can't cut you off before you finish the three points without annoying their audience.

How Can You Make the Most with a Limited Budget? Your Resources

Your biggest resource is your library users. This means that you or another staff member must spend a significant amount of time talking to library users and identifying those who are best positioned to reach out to the community. Children can be effective media spokespeople; parents know the value of the library to them and to their children. Seniors often rely on the library for reading materials or Internet access and use it as a community center. While developing your human resources may take time, cultivating these supporters will be worth the effort, and the network you build can be used for years to come.

The tips below may help you to maximize your resources:

● TRY TO GET TO KNOW YOUR LIBRARY USERS. Noticing all of the different reasons that people come to the library will broaden your base of support and reinforce the necessity of your library for your community members. For example, if there is an unemployed person who comes to use the Internet at the library to find a job, take note of that, as he or she may be able to provide a moving testimonial in the future. Such a person might highlight important, concrete stories you can tell to the media, funders, elected officials, and opinion leaders. Keeping a file of these individuals can prove invaluable.

● TAKE SPECIAL NOTE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY AND OPINION LEADERS WHO USE YOUR LIBRARY. Perhaps the president of a local PTA or the husband and son of a city council person are frequent users. These persons will likely have access to a large network of contacts that he or she can influence to support the library, either through giving time, money, or simply writing a letter to an elected official. Making use of these supporters and potential supporters is inexpensive, and it is the most effective way to reach your other target audiences.

● DON'T FORGET YOUR LIBRARY TRUSTEES AND FRIENDS. Library trustees and Friends of the library generally have political and community connections that can benefit the library, and are valuable not only as voices, but also as eyes and ears for library staff. Or maybe one of your Trustees is also on the Board of Directors at the local YMCA. Take time in your trustee meetings to discuss these connections in relationship to specific events or advocacy activities—and encourage your trustees to act on them. Discussing their commitments in front of peers can be an effective way to hold them to their promises.

● CONSIDER "IMAGE." It is important that any materials you create are specific to your library and consistent with the character of both your library and your community. For example, if your library has a limited budget, don't try to impress your patrons with a glossy, four-color brochure. Or, if a significant portion of your library's users speaks another language, try to provide a translated version of your materials.

● ASK "VOLUNTEERS" HOW BEST TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM. Everyone has their preferred method of contact, for example, via e-mail or telephone. Remember to keep your volunteers informed about important events, issues they should know about, and/or how they can help. It's important that these people be as "in the know" as possible to enable them to maintain their connection to the library and spread accurate information.

What Lessons Have You Learned? Your Evaluation

Remember to incorporate periodic evaluations or debriefings into your planning calendar. This can be done monthly, quarterly, prior to board meetings, or immediately after the completion of an event or campaign so that it is still fresh in your minds. Evaluation can be focused on the number of placements achieved or can be broader to encompass your overarching advocacy goals. In the ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*, the following chart of indicators is listed:

Key advocacy indicators might be:

● Has funding improved?

● Did the law pass?

● Did demand for a particular service increase?

● Did you receive editorial support?

● Does the library enjoy greater prestige?

● Did you get requests after items appeared in the media?

● What type of comments did you receive or hear?

● Did you build your advocacy network?

Here are a few ways to incorporate evaluation:

● In the day or two following an event, meet with staff that were involved to discuss objectively how you could do it better next time. Talk about the event or activity itself, your time line, media outreach, etc. Remember to make this a constructive session, not one to point fingers. Once you've figured out how to do it better, implement these changes.

● Consider passing out an evaluation form to guests, if appropriate, at your event. Ask questions like:

● How did you hear about the event? What do they read? What websites do they scan frequently? Do they respond to email alerts?

How would you rate the event overall? (provide a scale for a response)

● Will you consider joining us next year for a similar event?

● What was your favorite part of the event?

● Are there any suggestions you can make to help us improve next year's event? If you ask for evaluations, be sure to really examine and consider making changes next time – and, if appropriate, let the attendees know their feedback really counted.

● Keep a running tab of all of the media you reached out to and the placements you achieved. Create a chart to record them. In the chart consider listing them by type of outlet, such as radio, television, print, Internet, or wire services, then create a column for the date, the outlet, the name of the actual article or show and the reporter if notable. If available, include the circulation or audience numbers. If this is an annual event or activity, compare how you did this year with last and use these items to create a plan for upcoming years.

IV. TOOLS, TIPS and TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Pitching and Placing

Now that you have a plan, you need to dig in. Since you are planning to spend a fair amount of time with reporters, it's helpful to know what a journalist's life might be like and why they end up sounding curt on the phone, when they are actually on deadline. But just like all library staff don't keep the same schedule, neither do journalists. These aren't hard-and-fast rules, but they are situations you're more likely to encounter.

- 9 A.M: Daily newspaper journalists read not only newspapers but Web sites and other sources they get their news from.
- 10 A.M. until 1 P.M. or so: Calls, Scheduling and arranging interviews – pitching story ideas to their editors.
- 2 P.M.: Final Interviews and writing time
- 4 P.M., Editors start wanting finished copy.

- 5 or 6 P.M.: Final deadline, but the faster they get their story to their editor, the happier their editor is.

What should you take from this?

- While your schedule may be best suited for calling daily newspaper journalists around 4:30 or 5, the best time to call them is generally from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.
- Weekly journalists work much the same, but their deadline is generally on a Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. Find out which day the weekly journalists have to file by and try not to call them on that day or the day before.

TV and radio producers work a lot like daily newspaper journalists, but their schedules vary, depending on when the program occurs. You'd be surprised how much of a live show doesn't come together until seconds before it is aired.

- Morning shows generally have producers running as soon as they get to work, generally as early at 5:30 A.M.
- Try to avoid calling a producer two hours before a show is scheduled to start (one hour for a radio program) and for the hour afterwards.
- If a morning show ends at 9 A.M., producers are generally open to talking after 10 A.M. If an evening show doesn't start until 5 P.M., you will probably be able to reach your producer in the late morning.

Now that you have a plan including a time line – and you know a little about the people you are going to pitch, you can start thinking about what types of listings and pieces you would like to come to fruition. This begins with ongoing research as you create and/or update your media list. Lists are the backbone of your media work and should be kept up-to-date since journalists change jobs often and lists become outdated quickly. If you are in regular contact with journalists, make changes as you hear of them so that the list is fresh. Before you go to the lists found on the Internet and from other

sources, think about your personal list. This is an ongoing process. Here are a couple of ways to start:

1. Envision the stories and media placements results you would like to see. Read through the information below to understand the kind of placements you might want. Keep track of the names of reporters and writers who you see covering these issues – and then contact them to cover your story.

2. Continually collect names of local and regional media contacts. This includes newspapers (dailies, weeklies, monthlies, etc.,) radio, cable and television stations and programming and Internet sources from websites, to blogs to chat rooms. Consider keeping a notebook or database in your briefcase to collect newswriters and reporters to approach.

3. Keep a short media "Key Contacts" list right by your phone. If you have the names, phone numbers, email addresses, and fax numbers of the key reporters and news directors, sympathetic columnists, and others – they'll be accessible when you need to reach them quickly for breaking news.

4. Remember to go to Spanish-speaking media. If you are looking to reach the Hispanic families in your community, go to the Spanish-speaking media outlets or community centers with your Hispanic spokespeople.

<u>What Kind of Placements Are You Looking For?</u>

NEWS: News is a report on something timely that just happened or will happen soon. This would include an expansion of your library or the receipt of a grant or large donation. Announcing an upcoming event is not as likely to be covered as a news story.

- **For TV and Cable**: Look closely at the program line-up for the station—there might be a public affairs show such as “Meet the Leaders” or “What’s New?” and you can invite the chair of your Board of Trustees to appear with your Executive Director.
- **Radio.** Know and listen to all your local stations. Radio news is becoming less and less local, but it may still be possible for you to get coverage if you have actual news about budgets or groundbreaking changes at the library. Keep in mind the newscaster will usually have to tell your story in ten to fifteen seconds (around thirty to forty words) unless it’s a feature.
- **Internet.** Most national and local news sites have their own Web site, and plenty of us turn to the Web when we miss the local news. (In fact, some studies estimate that up to half of people in their twenties and thirties used the Internet as their primary source of news.) Does that mean everything on ABC World News Tonight will also be on ABCNews.com? No. And everything on CNN.com doesn’t make it onto CNN either. Internet sites also carry news that isn’t covered in print. The same is probably true for your local station, as well,

  Some news sites are only on the Web. This can include national sites like Slate.com or Salon.com, as well as local sites like Gothamgazette.com, a site focusing on local politics, in this case New York City. You must contact these sites individually, and generally their contact information is available on their Web site. In some cases, these sites are listed in *Bacon’s*. Keep in mind that others get their news on the Internet from blogs and electronic discussion lists and even through forwarded e-mails.
- **Wires.** Wires are independent news organizations that provide dispatches to multiple papers or broadcast organizations. Common services include the Associated Press (AP), Reuters, and Knight Ridder. Many daily newspapers are owned by companies with wires (for example, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*/Cox), so that an article that appears in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* can also be picked up in a dozen other papers nationwide. Ask about this possibility when a wire covers your news. Similarly, your local paper may subscribe to one or more wire services. If so,

you will notice this at the very beginning or end of an article. Always include wires in your outreach.

FEATURES

- **Print features:** These tend to feature a particular person (an outstanding volunteer, for example) or issue (literacy) and are not necessarily driven by something timely. Feature stories are sometimes called “evergreen” because they can sit unpublished in the hopper for many moons. Once interest has been established, you may have to push the reporter to publish it. Notice how features writers publish fewer stories than news reporters and aren’t seen as frequently. They may be found in special sections as opposed to every day.
- **TV features**: Watch your local news to find out about their daily or weekly features. Perhaps once a week, they feature a “neighbor” or a person “making a difference in the community.” Consider contacting the producer of that segment and ask them to feature one of your library’s staff, a dedicated volunteer, or an intriguing patron. Features also can include the darker side of library news. Perhaps the paint is peeling away on a wall in the children’s reading room. A local anchor and his or her cameraperson may be interested in shooting footage and interviewing you about the problem. In most cases, you would not pitch this story to producers. They may come to you. Before cameras arrive, you need to figure out your message and what your spokesperson can say on camera to assure the community that the problem will be fixed.
- **Talk Radio**. There are local, regional, and national radio shows. These programs usually discuss issues, not events; hence, they are considered features. Perhaps your library was active in opposing the PATRIOT Act or fighting budget cuts. You or one of your library’s representatives might be a guest on a show to discuss one of these issues. Tailor your pitch to the particular venue. If the station’s audience is in your area specifically, know the effects or potential effects in your area.

- **Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**. Public service announcements are free ads made available to nonprofits as a community service. The announcements are submitted by you and published or aired by newspapers, magazines, radio stations, internet sites free of charge. Deadlines are often two to three weeks ahead of airdates.

  Community newspapers and local radio stations are ideal targets for print PSAs although unlike paid ads, they are not guaranteed to run. When they do, they are free ways to reach larger audiences when you don't have an advertising budget. PSAs are intended to provide information, and are inappropriate for "calls to action."

  Radio announcements are generally thirty seconds in length (about seventy-five words) but may be shorter. When they do run, it is generally not during peak listening time. Remember to submit PSAs to radios in ALL CAPS and double-spaced. Most PSAs are fifteen or thirty seconds, roughly between forty and seventy-five words. Each digit in a phone number, which for broadcasts is best repeated twice, counts as a word, and include your web address.
  If a radio station commits to sponsor your event or activity, they will definitely include your PSAs more frequently. The Campaign for America's Libraries has print PSAs available online at www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/prtools/campaignPSAs.htm.
- **Listings/ Community Calendars.** You might ask a paper, radio station, local TV or cable network if they have a place you can list an upcoming event or announce something the public needs to know, such as a change in library hours. These can be called listings and community calendars and may even have a Web link. Check the outlet carefully to read or hear the directions for submitting information. Be sure to take note of deadlines, formats and criteria.
- **Wire Services.** Wire Services should not be confused with wires (such as the Associated Press). Wire services are services that allow you to pay to post your press releases and then mass

distribute the releases to hundreds of journalists. It's a good way to get out national news to hundreds of outlets at a time—but it's less effective for local news. Wire Services include PRNewswire, USNEwswire, and HispanicNewswire.

How to Research, Build and Organize Your List

Most publicists organize their lists by outlet type (e.g., print, radio, TV, and the Internet) then alphabetically, by outlet, broadcast show, or print section; and then by journalist. In addition to the regular contact information—address, phone, fax number, e-mail address, beat, and deadline—you may want to include comments about your last interaction with the journalist or recent stories he or she wrote (for example, "Wrote about our 2006 summer reading program.").

Make sure you have the correct names of daytime, evening, and weekend staff at both print and broadcast outlets if they differ—and cell phone numbers, if you can get them.

Consider asking volunteers, Friends, or support staff to update portions of your media list several times a year, even as you input individual changes. It's best to do this well in advance of a planned distribution, when you're much less likely to get the e-mail address, zip code, or name wrong. Be sure your lists include the correct job title and the spelling of a journalist's name. Sending a news release to CITY EDITOR is like sending a piece of personal mail to OCCUPANT. It is likely to end up in the trash. As with other data, it is essential to keep backup copies of your data.

Common databases such as Microsoft Access or Filemaker might be good software to use for your lists. Make sure that the program can print out labels or call lists with the information you desire.

Adding to your list using media guides

Consider consulting any of the following media guides:

● CISION MEDIASOURCE® RESEARCH AND BACON'S MEDIA DIRECTORIES POWERED BY CISION (Newspaper, Magazine, Television/Cable, Radio, Internet, News Services and Syndicates)—Published annually. Online database is updated daily. Bacon's Information is now Cision, which lists itself as the leading global provider of media research, distribution, monitoring and evaluation services with over 40 locations throughout the world. This is a great print and online resource. Contains detailed, updated journalist profiles, and information about individual outlets and shows – and also includes a robust editorial calendar feature. Bacon's data is also available online via Cision Directories QuickSearch (subscription based) and mediacalendars.com. Contact: Cision US, 332 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60604, www.us.cision.com, Phone: 866.639.5087.

● BACON'S NEW YORK PUBLICITY OUTLETS/BACON'S METRO CALIFORNIA MEDIA — Published annually. A comprehensive directory of newspapers, dailies, magazines, network and cable television networks, local affiliates, journalists, and editorial staffs for each of these key national markets. Contact: See information for Bacon's Media Directories above.

● FINDERBINDER News Media Directories—Published annually. A detailed information and rate directory covering media services in selected metropolitan and state areas mostly in the west and in Florida. Also Hispanic and African American media listings. Contact: Finderbinder News Media Directories News Media Directories National Support Center, 5173 Waring Road #8, San Diego, CA 92120, ph: (619)582-8500 fax: (619)582-3396, toll free: (800) 255-2575

● GEBBIE PRESS: The All-in-One-Directory—Published annually. Directory listing all United States newspapers, TV, radio, magazines, Black and Hispanic media, syndicates, and networks in print, disk, or CD-ROM. Contact: Gebbie Press, PO Box 1000, New Paltz, NY 12561, (845) 255-7560, www.gebbieinc.com

● LEADERSHIP DIRECTORIES: NEWS MEDIA YELLOW BOOK—Updated quarterly. A quick guide to Who's Who among reporters, writers, editors, and producers in the leading national news media. It

contains an extensive listing of journalists by title and assignment and provides contact information to reach the leaders of major United States government, business, professional, and nonprofit organizations. The Media Yellow Book is also available online and on CD-ROM. Contact: Leadership Directories Inc., 104 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, (212) 627-4140 www.leadershipdirectories.com

● MM Performa: Formerly called MediaMap, this online database is now part of Cision. See above.

Building Supplementary Lists

- **Should you buy advertising space or find free space?**

Ads vs. free space. When you pay for an ad, it is guaranteed to run; calendar listings and public service announcements are not. Paid advertising actually may be a very inexpensive way to get the word out about a specific program, and you can build it into your budget when appropriate and cost effective. In fact, some media outlets offer nonprofit rates that can be affordable. If you DO decide to place a paid advertisement, you may need to provide camera-ready graphics or they will do the layout for you at a cost. Whichever you decide is right for you, create and keep these lists separate from your regular media lists.

- **Do you have official sponsors?** Did you ever consider bringing on media sponsors for events and activities? If not, consider reaching out far in advance of a planned program to appropriate stations, Internet sites or print publications that reaches one or more of your designated audiences. Your list will probably not consist of the news or feature teams, but a community affairs director or public relations office. Try to build a relationship with them and then after they have become more familiar with how you benefit the community, invite them to sponsor an event. If they do, other stations may not cover the event, but you may just get the visibility and support you need. Additionally, dedicated sponsors will hopefully deepen their commitment and involvement over time.

Once you have a track record, they may offer their news anchors or station celebrities as hosts or emcees for events, and you may get great coverage on at least the sponsoring station, rather than a media bust.

● **What about community groups?** This list might include local Parent-Teacher Associations, a Rotary Club, religious organizations, or school boards. Speaking engagements, library tours, or exhibits can be an effective way of reaching key audiences who share particular interests or concerns. You can also create a one-time or ongoing partnership with a community group. For example, if your audience is children and/or teachers, try to arrange for one of your library representatives to visit local schools to talk about the library benefits, programs and activities. This will give you access to teachers, students and, by extension, their parents. It will put a face on their library—and a personal connection.

● **Don't forget decision-makers**. Many staff and board develop relationships with opinion leaders, elected officials, and their staffs. These lists can be cultivated over time through personal, one-on-one contact, but many times a first introduction is in the form of a letter or brochure. Once you become familiar with their offices, you may find that phone calls are appropriate and more effective than e-mail. Keep track of their preferences. After you've made that first contact, it is essential to follow up with a phone call or visit. When you DO speak or meet, let your elected official know how many of his or her constituents support and use your library. In any case, when you do write or speak to your legislator, do so from the heart. Avoid clichés and try to be brief.

Media Events, News Conferences and Press Briefings

Below are several types of events/campaigns that can be planned for visibility purposes:

● GUEST SPEAKER OR SEMINAR: If your library is hosting a guest speaker or an evening event and your mission is to get the word out, determine what media you will use, their deadlines and best times for them to attend events, and fashion your time line accordingly.

● A BALLOT INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM: Perhaps a referendum concerning your library is on the ballot. If so, plan as far ahead as possible. While you might not take action immediately, planning ahead will give you the option. Create a flexible time line that includes specific goals along the way. When do you want letters to the editor to appear in your local paper? Should you or one of your representatives talk to the editorial board of your paper? If so, when?

Closer to Election Day, your time line might be choreographed quite tightly. For example, the night before the election, a predetermined number of supporters receive phone calls and emails reminding them to vote the next day. Then, on Election Day, be sure to call or email them to ask them to vote—turning out your voters will be a key to your success. Someone from your library will need to spearhead this effort by organizing a phone tree or scheduling the volunteer callers and lists of callees. You also need to plan and coordinate the email blast.

Be sure to note who is responsible for taking each step along the way and for monitoring progress. Provide your staff or volunteers with tools to meet their goals, such as telephones and a list of supporters with directions on how to keep track of responses. Have a substitute in place in case someone becomes unavailable.

- NEWS CONFERENCES: First, ask yourself if the topic is worth a news conference or is a press release sufficient?

● Is your topic newsworthy, or is it merely noteworthy? Newsworthy information can carry an entire dinner conversation; noteworthy information can only carry on for a minute or two.

● Do you have video component for TV, graphics/charts, or a celebrity or personality?

● What will you gain from a question-and-answer format?

● Could an event (for example, a TV crew on a tour of the library) convey your story better?

If you decide to go ahead, here are some tips:

- CHOOSE A CONVENIENT TIME
    - Try to avoid conflicts with other big events by:
    - Looking at schedules in your local paper.
    - Surfing online for upcoming events.
    - Asking friends in media re: conflicts.
- Best times
    - 10 A.M.–noon for print P.M. deadlines.
    - 10 A.M.–3:30 P.M. for electronics.
    - Weekends are often good since “news hole” exists with less competition—but fewer crews and journalists are available.
- CHOOSE AN ACCESSIBLE LOCATION: Your site should be:
    - Familiar to media;
    - Connected to your topic—such as in the library online room for a technology event; and
    - Easy to get cameras into and, when possible, wheelchair accessible.
    - If the location isn’t yours, make sure you get any needed permission in writing beforehand.
- CONTACTING THE MEDIA
    - Send an initial notice, save the date or advisory
    - Draft “Notice of a News Conference” in outline form including Who/What/When/Where/Why—list contact person and that interviews are available.
    - Send/fax and e-mail major news directors, assignment editors, wire services, etc., one week to three days in advance of news conference.
    - Send also to individuals who have covered the topic or related news conferences.
    - Call news directors and friendly reporters early that morning.

- If you're in the state capital or major city, go to the state House or city hall press room and talk to journalists to deliver your materials in person.
- Offer to do phone interviews or voice feeds for those who can't attend.

- PLANNING THE ACTUAL NEWS CONFERENCE
- Materials
  - Plan to have appropriate background materials, such as flyers, fact sheets and brochures for attendees to take with them.
  - Draft a press release to go in the press packet summarizing news with key quotes and contact names.
  - Plan to use a colorful banner or poster behind the podium that has a logo or message pertaining to the subject of the press conference. Have a banner for the podium with your library logo.
- Program
  - Plan on no more than four or five speakers.
  - Keep it short (Total time should be NO LONGER THAN fifteen minutes) and to one point. Speakers who are succinct will have their key soundbite recorded and more likely to make the news.
  - Brief all speakers beforehand (initially by phone and, if possible, in a group prior to the press conference). Talk to them about time, focus and likely questions.
  - Choose someone to do introductions, direct questions, and end the news conference.
- Room setup: Work with site hosting the event to ensure you have the necessary room setup items. These may include:
  - Sign-in table outside or immediately inside the room.
  - Table to place background materials.
  - Easels for posters or charts.

- Place to hang library banner.
- Podium or table with podium for speakers.
- Proper or desired type of microphones, one for speaker and others for Q&A.

  Some may prefer lavalier microphones that clip onto clothing.
- Mult-box: this is an audio unit that radio and television stations can hook their audio plugs into so that the sound comes directly from the podium microphone. In cases of breaking stories—where you want to see a lot of microphones at the podium—it's best not to ask for mults, just have media tape their microphones to the podium mike.

- The event
  - Distribute the press kit with the release.
  - Distribute at same time to state House or city hall media if at legislature.
  - Prepare (or plant) several questions in the audience. Ask friends or friendly press who are sitting in the audience to open up the Q&A with one as soon as the news conference is complete.
  - Have back-up documentation, photos, and statistics available to help in answering questions.
  - Take attendance at a sign-in table. Note who asked sympathetic questions during the news conference. Write down unanswered or poorly answered questions.
  - Ask reporters if they would like to do one-on-one interviews for more in-depth coverage.
- Follow-up
  - When the news conference ends, call people who said they would attend and did not to set up phone or in-person interviews or another way for them to get the story.
  - Fax, e-mail, or get releases to key outlets that didn't attend and may be interested.
  - Get back to anyone who asked an unanswered question at the news conference.

- Fax and email releases to weeklies or others who normally don't send people to cover events.
- Monitor press coverage—possibly use clipping service and distribute best clips online to an electronic discussion list, etc.
- Thank those who covered well—supportive criticism also is appropriate.
- Incorporate any new names, email addresses, phone, or fax numbers into press list.
- Review entire event to determine what went right and wrong. Learn from experience!

Media Briefings

When you don't have breaking news, but you have new and exciting information to share and discuss with a group of media, you may consider holding a media briefing or a media breakfast. This would include a few researchers, volunteers, and/or spokespeople and five to fifteen media people who are very interested in your issue.

The only caveat with such a planned event is that media schedules are very fickle and outlets are suffering from limited resources—so only consider this type of event if you know a critical mass of your media contacts would be interested. For every two journalists who say they'll attend, expect one to cancel due to last-minute priorities.

Media Tours

Media tours are a series of meeting with media professionals from generally geographically diverse areas. They are mostly used by national organizations that want to reach the local public, and will strategically choose cities to meet with individual reporters. The goal is usually to generate many articles with local angles.

One-on-One Media Visits

Nothing beats face-to-face contact. It's easier to convey any message in person than it is over the phone, or by just e-mail. But these meetings are often the hardest to get. As media professionals'

jobs become even more demanding, they have less time to spend in face-to-face interviews. However, when working with journalists, especially journalists who you expect will cover multiple stories about you or your library, in-person meetings are invaluable. Try to set them three to four weeks in advance, then confirm the day before.

Phone Pitching

Calling the media on the phone is one of the most important aspects of media outreach, but many times is the first thing that drops off your list when you're busy. Think about carving out a set amount of time each day all year round to contact and develop relationships with media who will be able to deliver when you need to get some visibility for your programs and services.

The importance of following up after you have made an initial contact cannot be overstated. You may have to contact a journalist/editor/producer several times and each time remind him or her why you are calling each time. If you depend on your media contact to call or e-mail you back, you will have limited success. Don't be afraid to be persistent, but respect his or her wishes if the person you contact insists that he or she "doesn't cover that" or is "not the person to contact." In that case, feel free to ask him or her for a recommendation for whom you might contact.

● CREATE AND PRACTICE THE PITCH. In order to ensure as much success as possible for your media event, activity or story, it's helpful to write and then keep a phone pitch in front of you while talking to media on the phone. Think about the event you are trying to get coverage for and create a short description of the most important points you want to convey to the journalist. If you are nervous or haven't done much pitching before, take some time out and practice your phone pitch with a co-worker or friend. The more you say it out loud, the more comfortable you will feel when it is time to speak with the media.

● CONSIDER DIFFERENT ANGLES. Make sure you have thought about different angles to offer the journalist. To be safe, practice two or three different ideas.

● PITCH THE RIGHT PERSON. Most importantly, you want to make sure that you are talking to the appropriate person. If you want a photographer to attend your event, make sure you are calling someone from the photo desk, not the technology desk. If you get in touch with someone who doesn't cover that beat any longer, ask if they know of anyone else in the department that you could speak with.

● ALWAYS START OFF THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING IF THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO TALK. Proceed with your pitch. Have a media advisory and other materials ready to go. Often the person you are speaking with will ask you to e-mail or fax the information to them. It's ok if you don't have all the answers to their questions. BUT, make sure to write down the questions they ask and get their phone number [if you didn't call directly] or email address and a good time and way for you to convey the right information. Be sure to follow up if you send them info.

● KEEP A PHONE LOG OF ALL YOUR CALLS. Mark down what day you called and whether or not you left a message or sent information over. This will come in handy when you are making your second or third round of calls.

Granting an Exclusive

- What's an exclusive? You've probably heard about "exclusives" or "scoops" in the news business, but what is one and how can you use them? An exclusive is when one media organization, such as a newspaper, is able to publish a news story with information that no one else has. News organizations love exclusive because it forces people to buy their paper or tune in to their station for news they can't get anywhere else. An exclusive could be beneficial because news organizations generally give exclusives more space, and other news organizations will be scrambling to cover what they missed.

- Where can it work? If you're a library in a two-newspaper town, like Seattle or Miami, you've probably heard a lot about competition between the papers. You're in an ideal situation to give an exclusive.
- When can it work? If you have newsworthy information that's not yet public and you're the only source that can (or will) make it public, consider giving an exclusive. The times exclusives are particularly helpful are
    - You're afraid the story might get buried; or
    - You want to build a stronger relationship with a journalist.
- How is it done? What are you looking for?
    - Approach a journalist you trust or with whom you want to build a stronger relationship.
    - When weighing giving an exclusive, you should find out what you get in return for the exclusive. Front-page coverage? Top of the 6 o'clock news? Guaranteed coverage of your pet project in a few weeks? If the deal is good enough, go ahead. But be careful not to overuse exclusives.
    - When you begin discussing the story, tell the journalist you'd like to offer an exclusive. If it interests him or her, try to get a confirmation that their editor or executive producer has committed to covering the story. If you've worked with the journalist many times, a verbal yes is all you'll need; otherwise, ask for a short email to confirm.
- What's your obligation? You absolutely cannot tell another journalist about the news until that journalist's piece is public.
- What about the journalist? Conversely, a journalist may discover some news, or for other reasons, ask you for an exclusive. You're not obligated to do so. Besides, if the news is big enough, why only let one media outlet cover the piece when you could have two—or six—outlets covering it.

How You Can Help Train Spokespeople

The following section appears in the ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*, and is reproduced here thanks to Patricia Glass-Schuman, former ALA president. The goal of media coaching is simple: to help people channel their passion, personality, and commitment to an issue, whether they're appearing on TV, speaking to a group of legislators or talking to a reporter over lunch. The most effective and engaging spokespeople are those who are prepared, focused, genuinely enthusiastic and comfortable with themselves.

Key Points

✶✎ HONE YOUR MESSAGE AND DEVELOP SOUND BITES: This is critical! For a successful interview, use the messages developed for your campaign. Refine them by defining key points and

finding the most effective phrases, facts and examples for illustrating those points. Think about your target audience and how to best reach it. To develop sample sound bites, brainstorm sound bites with friends, family and colleagues. Choose vivid images. Paint pictures with words. Try them out on friends. Below we've included some examples. More are available at the ALA's online messagebook: www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/aboutyourlibrary/keymessages.htm.

■ On funding:

■ Invest in futures. Support libraries.

■ We're finding it difficult to meet twenty-first-century demands with nineteenth-century budgets.

■ Everyone loves libraries. But libraries can't live on love alone.

■ The future is @ your library, so make sure your library has a future.

■ On role of libraries and librarians:

■ Libraries open minds.

■ Libraries change lives.

■ Libraries save lives.

■ Libraries are your passport to cyberspace.

■ Librarians are the guardians of your right to know.

■ Librarians support parents. We don’t replace them.

■ Libraries bring you the world.

■ Libraries are places of opportunity.

■ Online:

■ Libraries blend global reach and local touch.

■ Libraries are the lynchpin of the information age.

■ The ultimate search engine is @ your library. It’s your librarian.

2. DO A DRY RUN. On the way home from work, at staff meetings or at someone else’s desk at lunchtime, rehearse your remarks before interviews. Your colleagues are even more likely than reporters to know the tough questions that might be thrown at you. That will give you the chance to prepare a reply, try it out, time it (for live broadcasts especially), and revise. Tape yourself on audio or video. Play it back, so you can hear yourself as others do. Then refine your presentation.

✶☆✎ IDENTIFY YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS FOR EACH TYPE OF OUTLET (TV, radio,

print), and use the training to work on one specific type of outlet. Most problems are nonverbal. They may include adopting a wooden body posture; presenting material too technically; averting, darting, or poorly using eyes; ineffective use of hands; lack of facial expression or one that communicates fear, hostility, arrogance, or defensiveness; low energy; humorlessness; and use of boring language. Have your trainer help to identify weaknesses and then work on ways to eradicate them.

4. IMPROVE PERSONAL STYLE: Everyone has a personal style. What is yours? How is your physical appearance? Your rate of speech, pitch and tone of voice? Your level of animation, use of gestures, eye contact, comfort level? Bring your full personality and most expressive physical self to every interview in person or by telephone.

✶☆☆✎ DEALING WITH DIFFICULT INTERVIEWS: Hostile interviewers or interview questions often throw the most experienced public speakers off guard. It's important to redirect a question if you need to, but be sure to respond in a way that is positive, contributes to the dialogue and doesn't make you look evasive or defensive. If a reporter uses negative, incorrect or inflammatory words in a question, don't legitimize them by repeating the misconception in your answer. The hotter the interviewer gets, the cooler you need to be. Stay friendly, calm and direct in a response to a nasty questioner or loaded question.

Ten Tricks to Help You Succeed on Radio

1. LISTEN TO THE SHOW TO LEARN HOW IT WORKS. Before you call to get on a radio talk show, listen to it so you know the format, the length of segments, and host's style.
2. CALL AT LEAST TWO WEEKS AHEAD TO BOOK A GUEST. The timing may take even longer if it's a popular show. Once you've sent your materials and received a confirmation, send an email or written note to the producer double-checking all of the details and finalizing who will initiate the interview, sharing phone numbers and listing who else can be called if needed.
3. AVOID OFF-THE-WALL HOSTS. With plenty of shows to choose from in most markets, there's no need to get insulted on the air. Pick a show that will give you a chance to deliver your message.
4. TALK SLOWLY. Vary your voice quality. Sound like you're dying to share some juicy gossip. Don't use too many numbers. Avoid jargon.

5. PAINT VERBAL PICTURES. Since body language can't connect you to your audience, try to paint pictures with words.

6. PRACTICE IN PRIVATE. Either with a friend co-worker or on tape, practice answering questions and handling hostile callers.

7. REMEMBER TO MENTION YOUR LIBRARY'S NAME AT LEAST TWICE. Since people tune in and out; just because you were introduced with an ID doesn't mean most listeners heard it. Bring a cassette and ask the engineer to pop it in so you can leave with a recording.

8. LEARN TO ANSWER ODD QUESTIONS WITH THE POINTS YOU WANT TO MAKE. It's ok once a show to use the bridging technique to tell the audience, "What I really hope your audience will want to understand about libraries is. . . ."

9. ORGANIZE A CAMPAIGN if you're having trouble getting on the air of a talk radio show. Write and call. Try to arrange to visit the producer or station manager. Send a demo audiocassette. If all else fails, call in while the show is on the air!

10. ORGANIZE SOME CALLERS if you get on the air for a show with call-ins. See that some friends of your library call, ask good questions, and show support.

How to Succeed on TV

The following section was originally developed by Patricia Glass-Schuman (former ALA president) in ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook* .

Hints:

1. DEVELOP THREE KEY POINTS IN ADVANCE: Television is a medium that requires you to be informal, relaxed and conversational—but to get your message across forcefully in a very brief time. For most interviews, it's important to develop three key points and make those points quickly and effectively. Find the descriptive words, visual images, and concrete examples that best make those points.

✶☆☆☆✎ PAINT PICTURES WITH YOUR WORDS. Especially for TV, but in all interviews, colorful phrases

that call up visual images make interesting quotes. Keep a notebook of such images by your phone, along with key facts and good sound bites.

☆✸✎ DRESS THE PART. If you're like most people, you've probably seen someone being interviewed

on TV only to find yourself thinking, "What are they wearing?" Chances are, you can't remember what that person was talking about. With a visual news medium like TV, there are a few ways you can make sure you're being seen and heard.

■ Dos:

■ Business clothes/suits (it's harder to take someone seriously who is in jeans).

■ Remember: A microphone may need to be clipped onto a blouse or shirt from underneath, so imagine how that may work when selecting your clothing.

■ Jackets and ties for men.

■ Vibrant colors like blue, teal, rose, red, and burgundy.

■ Makeup: for women, make your makeup a little heavier than normal, but in your usual shades. For men, be prepared to wear a translucent powder and possibly foundation, especially in a studio setting. Going without makeup for men can result in looking sweaty or shiny.

■ Don'ts:

■ Women should avoid low-cut or sleeveless blouses and short skirts.

■ Men should avoid T-shirts and open shirts.

■ Plaid and large or busy prints.

■ Dangling jewelry.

■ Very dark or very light colors.

■ Hairstyles that may hang in your face or be distracting.

Dealing with Bad News

The following section originally appeared in ALA's *Library Advocates Handbook*. Inevitably, all organizations have to deal with bad news. Budget cuts. Trimmed hours or closed branches. Parents who want to ban books from the library. While bad news is never good, it can be turned into a positive media message. For example, when a teenage hacker crashed Seattle's King County Library System's computer system, closing the library down for three days, the story became the marvels of the technology rather than its failure, thanks to the library's quick and thoughtful response.

Some bad news you can see coming—budget cuts are generally in the works for weeks.

Others, like crimes, cannot be anticipated. Either way, it's important for libraries to have a crisis communications plan.

Here is a link to the media relations page where you can find the document "How to Write a Crisis Communication Plan": http://www.ala.org/Source/crisis_communication.ppt

Here are a few tips for handling bad news:

■ DON'T OVERREACT. If only one small paper carries the story, only respond to that paper. Don't send out a release to all your media contacts. If they don't know about the bad news, you probably don't want to tell them about it.

■ BE STRATEGIC. If the news is huge, consider holding a press conference to communicate the facts, new developments, and the library's response or message. It will save you time and resource to hold one press conference rather than take a dozen individual interviews.

■ SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE. The most common mistake in crisis communications is to have several spokespeople saying different things. Have one spokesperson, or make sure that all your spokespeople are saying the same thing.

■ UNDERSTAND INTERVIEW TOPICS AND FORMATS BEFORE ACCEPTING INTERVIEWS. During these times, it is very important to be sure you understand the nature of a talk radio

show or TV interview before you agree to go on. Don't speculate. Know who else will be on the show, if there will be call-ins, and what the host's position is before making a choice to go on. If you don't think you'll be given a fair hearing, it might not be best to accept the interview.

■ FOCUS ON THE SOLUTION. Explain how the library is going to address the situation or say that the library is looking for a speedy solution.

■ APOLOGIZE WHEN APPROPRIATE. "We apologize for any inconvenience to our users. We are doing our best to . . ." Empathize. Convey caring and understanding.

■ HAVE ALL THE FACTS BEFORE RESPONDING. Often, when news just breaks, not even the media has all the facts. Make sure you know exactly what is going on before responding to something that could just be a rumor or an exaggerated allegation.

■ PREPARE BRIEFING MATERIALS. As soon as you can, have briefing materials for the media, with accurate facts included.

■ LET LAWYERS REVIEW STATEMENTS BEFORE RELEASING THEM. If this situation has legal implications, make sure you consult with a lawyer before making a statement. Avoid "legalese," but make sure that what you're saying is ok to say.

■ STICK TO THE HIGH ROAD. Avoid criticizing or getting personal with your opponents. Don't be defensive. Staying focused on your message and on the high road will ultimately be your best weapon.

V. SAMPLE PRESS MATERIALS

Appendix: Sample Media Advisory: General NLW release

National Library Week 2007
Sample News Release

Edit copy as needed. Be sure to include contact information. This document is also available in Spanish on The Campaign for America's Libraries Website at www.ala.org/@yourlibrary. Click on NLW 2007 icon.

For release National Library Week
April 15-21, 2007
Contact: (name, title, phone number)

Come together @ your library: celebrate National Library Week at the [name of your library], April 15-21

(CITY, STATE) – It's National Library Week, a time to celebrate the contributions of libraries, librarians and library workers in schools, campuses and communities nationwide - and the perfect time for our community to come together @ your library.

The [*name of library*] is celebrating National Library Week by [*describe programs, activities here*].

"Everyday, libraries in big cities and small towns, colleges and universities, in schools and in businesses help transform their communities," says [*name and title of spokesperson*]. "At our library, people of all backgrounds can come together for community meetings, lectures and programs, to do research with the assistance of a trained professional, to get a job or to find homework help […*add resources/activities that you would like to highlight*]."

First sponsored in 1958, National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and libraries across the country each April.

For more information, visit the [*name of library*] at [*address*], call [*phone number*] or see the library's Web site at [*provide URL*]. Libraries hours are [*list times*].

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Appendix: Sample News Release: State of Americas Libraries

Contact: Macey Morales
Manager Media Relations, ALA
(312) 280-4393
mmorales@ala.org

For Immediate Release
April 16, 2007

New data on U.S. libraries shows almost two billion served

Predicted demise due to Internet fails to materialize

(CHICAGO) Ten years after some experts predicted the demise of the nation's system of libraries as a result of the Internet explosion, the most current national data on library use shows that the exact opposite has happened. Data released today by the American Library Association (ALA) indicates that the number of visits to public libraries in the United States increased 61 percent between 1994 and 2004.

According to the 2007 State of America's Libraries report, there were nearly two billion visits to U.S. libraries in fiscal year 2004. The study was released today by the ALA as the nation begins its observance of National Library Week, April 15-21. In the case of academic libraries, the number of visits exceeded more than one billion for the first time in 2004, up more than 14 percent in just the previous two years.

"Far from hurting American libraries, the Internet has actually helped to spur more people to use their local libraries because it has increased our hunger for knowledge and information," said Loriene Roy, president-elect of the American Library Association. According the ALA report, virtually every library in the United States – 99 percent – provides free public computer access to the Internet, a four-fold increase in the percentage of libraries providing such free access over the last decade. By comparison, Roy pointed to another study released in March showing that only 69 percent of U.S. households have Internet access.

But unlike the Internet, particularly when accessed at home, Roy said libraries still serve a unique function in providing those who seek knowledge and information with guidance from trained and educated professionals.

Even as libraries continue to evolve their services in response to changing needs and technologies, the report shows that people continue to go to their public library to read or check out a book in record numbers. Overall circulation at public libraries in the U.S. rose by 28 percent during the decade, partly driven by significant growth in circulation of children's materials, which grew by 44 percent. Attendance in library programs for children was also up 42 percent for this same period.

The 2007 State of America's Libraries reports that while use of libraries continues to increase and while the general public supports strong funding for libraries, many school library media centers are experiencing budget cuts resulting in staffing reductions, shortened hours, and even closures. The

new federal requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act are cited most frequently as the reasons for these funding cuts.

“Our libraries are investments in our communities and in our future, with an incredibly high return on each dollar spent,” said the ALA’s Roy.

Roy pointed to the report’s findings from studies in Florida and Ohio that provide a compelling case for the return on public investment in libraries. Every dollar of public support spent on Florida’s public libraries produced an increase of $9.08 in gross regional product and an increase of $12.66 in total state wages. A similar study of nine public library systems in southwestern Ohio reported an annual economic impact nearly four times the amount invested in their operations. Other data in the report describes how public libraries build a community's capacity for economic activity and resiliency.

The report also highlights the library community's continued work in defense of the First Amendment against intrusive legislation, including the USA Patriot Act, and to refute challenges that would restrict the free flow of information and ideas to all adults and children.

The 2007 State of America's Libraries also follows up on last year's report, which described the library community's response to Hurricane Katrina. Since its creation, the ALA's Hurricane Katrina Library Relief Fund has raised more than $500,000 in donations, which has been distributed to libraries by ALA chapters in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. By August 2006, 62 percent of the libraries in metropolitan New Orleans that were open before Katrina had reopened their doors.

A full copy of the 2007 State of America's Libraries is available at www.ala.org/2007State.

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Appendix: Sample News Release: Step Up to the Plate

NEWS

Contact: Deborah Bloom, Campaign Manager
312-280-2148
dbloom@ala.org

For Immediate Release
April 2006

National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, American Library Association gear up for "Step up to the Plate @ your library®"

National program uses baseball to improve literacy skills

Cooperstown, N.Y. -- The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and American Library Association (ALA) are teaming up on a national initiative called *Step up to the Plate @ your library®* to encourage fans of all ages to test their knowledge of baseball trivia while improving their literacy skills.

The program will officially launch at the St. Louis Public Library and Busch Stadium on Friday, April 28. Ozzie Smith, education ambassador for the Hall of Fame and Hall of Fame shortstop for the St. Louis Cardinals and San Diego Padres, will help kick off the *Step Up to the Plate* program as its new spokesperson. Smith will also lend his image to the program for print and broadcast PSAs.

"I've been very lucky to live out the American dream as a baseball player," says Smith. "Libraries are part of that dream. They're places for education, self-help and lifelong learning and provide opportunities for everyone to step up and succeed."

Step up to the Plate @ your library encourages people of all ages to visit their library and use its resources to look up the answers to a series of baseball trivia questions developed by librarians at the Hall of Fame. Through answering the questions, people can improve their literacy skills, which today include not only reading but also how find, use and evaluate sources of information in various formats.

One grand-prize winner will win a trip to the Hall of Fame's World Series Game One Gala event in Cooperstown, N.Y., in October. The trip also includes a behind-the-scenes tour of the Museum.

Twenty first-place prize packages also will be awarded, including a commemorative hardbound copy of the *Hall of Fame Yearbook*, Hall of Fame t-shirt, commemorative set of 20 Hall of Fame baseball cards and more.

“To be a part of the *Step Up to the Plate @ your library* initiative is a wonderful extension of our education mission,” says Dale Petroskey, president, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. “The collaboration of such an historic museum with an organization of the ALA's distinction will encourage a love of libraries and baseball as two of our greatest national pastimes.”

On April 28, players will be able to go online to www.ala.org/baseball and download a set of trivia questions for their age group. Questions, available in both English and Spanish, will address five topic areas: women in baseball; African-Americans in baseball; Hispanics in baseball; Major League Baseball; and ballparks. Players will be invited to send their answers in by mail or enter online. The program will run through September 1.

“To be successful in today’s information society, it’s not enough just to be able to read,” says ALA Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels. “Consumers need to be able to find the information they are looking for – whether it’s in print or online -- and understand the source of information and whether it’s credible. That’s where libraries and librarians come into play.”

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is a not-for-profit educational institution dedicated to fostering an appreciation of the historical development of the game and its impact on our culture by collecting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting its collections for a global audience, as well as honoring those who have made outstanding contributions to our National Pastime.

The American Library Association, the “voice of America’s libraries,” is the largest library association in the world. The ALA has 66,000 members who are primarily librarians, but also trustees, publishers and others who support the work of the association. The mission of the ALA is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

Step up to the Plate @ your library is a part of The Campaign for America's Libraries, ALA’s national, multi-year public awareness and advocacy campaign about the value of libraries and librarians in the 21st century.

#

Appendix: Sample Pitch Letter

Dear [First Name of Reporter]:

[Name and Title of Library Leader] is available to discuss the changing role of libraries in the age of the Internet, and the various challenges that impact libraries and the millions of users that depend on them.

Public, school and university libraries are flourishing, both in traditional ways and in the still-exploding universe of the Internet. Library use is up nationwide among all types of library users, continuing a decade-long trend. Almost 1.8 billion visitors checked out more than 2 billion items last year

In a 24/7 Internet age, public libraries are needed more than ever. A recent national study by the American Library Association found that ninety-two percent of survey respondents believe libraries will still be needed in the future - even with all of the information available on the Internet.

[Add event information here]

Example:

Thousands of library staff, publishers, authors and guests will gather at the Washington Convention Center for the ALA Annual Conference, June 21 - 27, to discuss technology, censorship, privacy, funding, advocacy, recruitment and how to best serve new Americans.

[Add Library Boiler Plate Here]

Example:

The American Library Association (ALA), the voice of America's libraries, is the oldest, largest and most influential library association in the world. Its more than 64,000 members are primarily librarians but also trustees, publishers and other library supporters. The association represents all types of libraries; its mission is to promote the highest quality library and information services and public access to information.

If you are interested in scheduling an interview with [name of spokesperson], please contact me at [Phone Number], or [E-mail Address]

Best,
[your name]

Your Name
Title
Name of Library

Appendix: Sample Op-Ed: Leslie Burger, *The New York Times*, 12/8/06

Keep the E.P.A. Libraries Open

By LESLIE BURGER
Published: December 8, 2006

IF you needed to find out how much pollution an industrial plant in your neighborhood was spewing, or what toxic chemicals were in a local river, where would you go? Until recently, you could discover the answer at one of the Environmental Protection Agency's 29 libraries. But now the E.P.A. has obstructed the American public -- as well as its own scientists and staff -- by starting to dismantle its crown jewel, the national system of regional E.P.A. libraries.

Until now, any citizen could consult these resources, which include information on things like siting incinerators, storing toxic waste and uncovering links between asthma and car exhaust. E.P.A. staff members and other scientists have counted on the libraries to support their work. First responders and other state and local government officials have used E.P.A. information to protect communities. In the age of terrorism, when the safety of our food and water supply, the uninterrupted flow of energy and, indeed, so much about our environment has become a matter of national security, it seems particularly dangerous to take steps that would hinder our emergency preparedness.

Although lawmakers haven't yet agreed to President Bush's proposed 2007 budget, which includes $2 million in cuts to the agency's library system, the head of the E.P.A. has already instituted cuts. The agency's main library in Washington has been closed to the public, and regional E.P.A. libraries in Chicago, Dallas and Kansas City, Mo., have been closed altogether. At the Boston, New York, San Francisco and Seattle branches, hours and public access have been reduced.

Anyone who needs to understand the environmental impact of, say, living downwind or downstream from a new nuclear power plant, or the long-term public health impact of Hurricane Katrina, cannot afford to find the doors barred to potentially lifesaving

information. But neither can the rest of us, whose daily lives and choices will be affected by global warming. We all have a right to be able to get access to information about our air, water and soil.

"Libraries and their professionals are integral to the work of E.P.A. toxicologists," says an agency toxicologist, Suzanne Wuerthele. "Without access to their expertise and extensive collections, it will be difficult to explain to the public, to state agencies, industry and to the courts how and why E.P.A. is protecting the environment over time."

Some members of Congress have begun to bring these cuts to light. The Senate minority whip, Richard Durbin, urged the president to reopen the libraries and rethink his budget request. Eighteen senators sent a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee asking it to make the E.P.A. keep the libraries open. Representatives John Dingell, Bart Gordon and Henry Waxman recently had the Government Accountability Office start an inquiry into the closings and requested that the E.P.A. administrator, Stephen Johnson, cease the destruction of library materials immediately.

The E.P.A. cannot hide behind the fig leaf of fiscal responsibility. While the agency says the closings are all part of a commitment to modernize and digitize, we are not assured that its public plan is adequate or its skills sufficient. Users within the E.P.A. and the American public need information specialists, like librarians, to manage paper collections and to help them get access to digital material and organize online information.

Fortunately, there's still time to reverse this dangerous threat to a healthy future. The administration could immediately reopen the closed libraries. Congress could conduct oversight hearings to reverse these decisions and prevent any more E.P.A. libraries -- all of them containing invaluable information about our environment, all of them paid for by our tax dollars -- from closing. The American public deserves no less.

Leslie Burger is the president of the American Library Association and director of the Princeton Public Library.

Appendix: Sample Letter to the Editor: Leslie Burger, *The New York Times*, 1/8/2007

Keeping Libraries Open

Published: January 8, 2007

To the Editor:

Re "Lock the Library! Rowdy Students Are Taking Over" (front page, Jan. 2) captures a struggle many public libraries are working hard to address: how to balance the growing demand for a community "living room" space for preteens and teenagers with the desire for more technology and with the continuing need for more traditional quiet space for research and information.

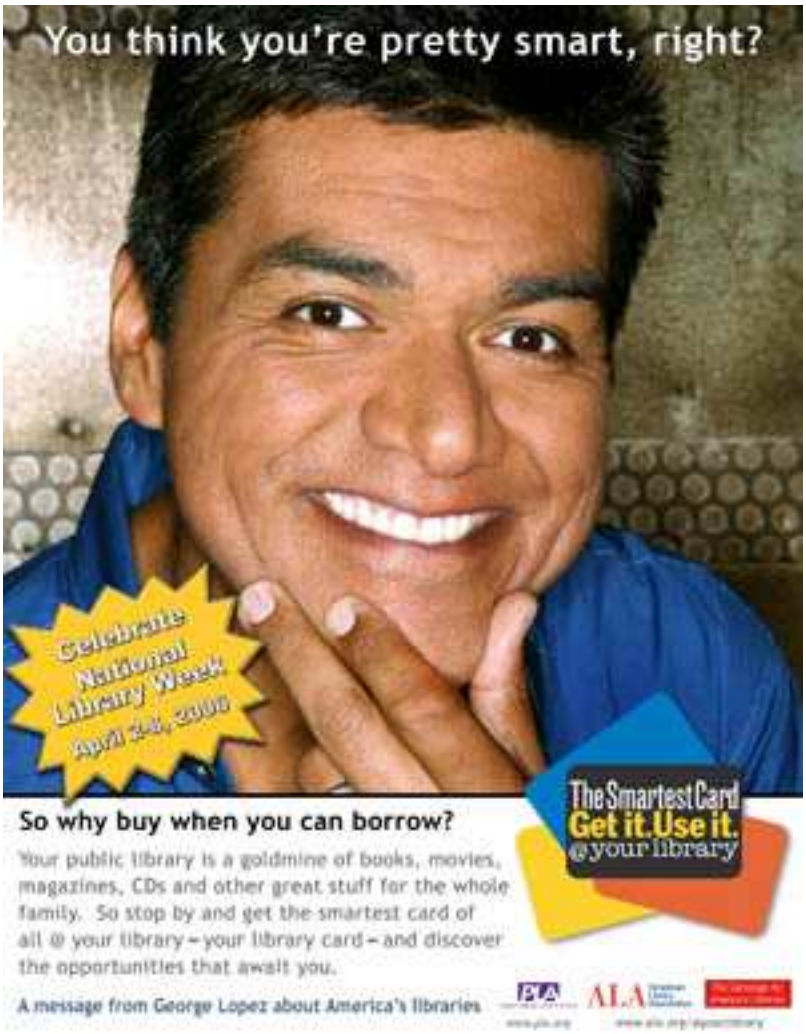
We've seen many examples where teenagers actively seek out the library and where library staffs and boards collaborate successfully with teenager advisory groups to plan programs that provide a structured after-school environment for this age group.

There are many communities in New York and New Jersey where teenagers coexist peacefully in libraries along with adults. Elizabeth, Princeton and Queens, to name a few, have librarians who specialize in working with this age group in a way that engages them and makes them lifetime library users.

Unfortunately, many of our libraries are continually being asked to do more with the same or less money and staffing. Libraries are a vital "third place" for people of all ages and backgrounds. We must work together to find and fund solutions that balance the range of community needs while keeping our libraries open to all.

Leslie Burger
Pres., American Library Assn.
Chicago, Jan. 5, 2007

Appendix: Sample Public Service Announcement:



VI. Glossary

AD RATES—The rates charged by individual media outlets to advertise in their publication or on their station.

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR—Staff member of a television or radio news team responsible for judging appropriateness of story ideas assigned to reporter for coverage.

BLOG – Literally short for weblog or an online journal. Created by pundits and people who want to express their opinions online.

BOILERPLATE—A brief paragraph stating who you are, what you do, and how you do it, usually used as the last paragraph in a news release.

B-ROLL—Stock footage used by television news stations that includes background information for

a story; b-roll is typically filmed using Beta instead of VHS because Beta is used by most TV stations due to its higher broadcast quality.

BEAT—The type of news covered by a particular reporter; such as education, health care, the environment, or city government.

BRIDGING—The process of answering an interviewer's question by transitioning it into a message that the interviewee wants to discuss.

CLIP OR CLIPPING—A story cut from a publication or a segment cut from a video or audiotape.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR—A calendar that lists specific topics that will be covered by a particular media outlet for each issue. Although developed with advertisers in mind, the calendar helps public relations practitioners plan their messages to fit within the general context of the piece.

EDITOR'S NOTES—Wording found in press releases and other materials that are not a part of the main message of the document, but serve to alert the media when they should release the information, where the story came from, where the document ends ,and if it is continued on a second or third page.

FACT SHEET—One- or two-page document that describes an organization's principles, services, and philosophy. This includes the organization's address, telephone, fax, and e-mail as well as a map to provide reporters with information.

FEATURE—A long, probing article or story (as opposed to an "objective" news item or account). Magazines and newspapers may have a features department or desk.

GRASSROOTS DISTRIBUTION—Asking for help from volunteers and local community members for the distribution of flyers and brochures about events and organizations.

HOOK—The main news element of a story. Sometimes organizations look for hooks when attempting to increase their visibility by finding a connection between their spokesperson/organization director and the topic being discussed, and then contact the reporter to get them included in the story.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR—Your opportunity to congratulate, discuss, or criticize an article you have read. These are submitted to print publications in a timely manner, are typically short, and refer to the original article that caused you to respond.

MASTHEAD—The list of editors, publishers, and senior reporters in each publication's issue—it includes an address and telephone number and can be found on the editorial page in newspapers and in a standard location in magazines.

MEDIA LIST—List of appropriate outlets to contact created for a specific organization or issue.

NEWS PEGS—Dates around which to pitch stories. These can be internal (Library Card Sign-Up Month) or external (Labor Day).

PITCH LETTER—Letter written to introduce a source and story idea to a member of the media.

PITCHING—Encouraging the media to report on a story; a pitch letter is often sent to media to spark their interest. However, pitching by telephone to follow up is typically needed for a reporter to take notice.

PRESS KIT—A collection of related information to provide the media with background on a particular organization or event.

PUBLICITY VALUE—The unscientific approach to calculating the worthiness of the media's coverage.

To calculate, multiply the price of a column-inch times the length of your story. For example, if the publication says that an ad costs $100 per column inch and your story is seven inches long, the publicity value is $700. Public relations generated media coverage carries with it an implied third-party endorsement and added credibility since it is not a paid advertisement.

REACH—Geographic area of the audience and the number of readers/circulation, listeners or viewers who can access the media in any region, city or state where the publication or station is located.

ROUND-UP STORY—Story geared to look back at what has happened over a specific

period of time, such as the previous year or quarter; a story in which a reporter typically wants several opinions on a subject.

SPIN—Jargon for the point of view or bias the source works to create a story.

SYNDICATED—Report that appears in more than one media outlet simultaneously, such as the “Dear Abby” column, or one written by a columnist for a specific newspaper or chain of papers.

WIKI—Wikis are collaborative websites whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to them. An example of a Wiki site is Wikipedia.org, which is a free and collaborative encyclopedia consisting of volunteer-created content.

WIRE SERVICE—Wire services should not be confused with wires (such as the Associated Press). Wire Services are a pay services, like PRNewswire, USNewswire, and HispanicNewswire, that allow you to post your press releases, and the services then mass distributes the press release to hundreds or thousands of journalists, based on criteria you select. It’s a good way to get out national news to hundreds of outlets at a time—but it’s less effective for local news.

WIRES—Wires are independent news organizations that provide dispatches to multiple papers or broadcast organizations. Common services include the Associated Press (AP), Reuters, Knight Ridder, and the United Press International (UPI).

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