

# Unit Media Guide

No-Nonsense Advice on Getting Your Scouts in the News



BOY SCOUTS  
OF AMERICA®

CAPITOL AREA COUNCIL

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**Why we see news anchorpersons  
only from the waist up.**

## Why Should I Read This?

I love Scouting. You love Scouting. Other people would probably love Scouting, too, if they knew more about it. Ah, but that's the problem: many people hardly ever see Scouting.

Scouting needs families to read stories or see pictures about all of the great things Scouts and Scout units are doing, whether it's something fun or something that's helping the community. People will join groups with which they feel comfortable - groups that they feel they know. And the only way many of these people are going to know about Scouting is by all of us telling them about it through the local media in your community.

Believe it or not, "the media" loves positive stories. I can say this, having been a television news Producer and Executive Producer for 14 years. Nobody calls and complains when you run a positive story (they don't call and say "thank you", either, but that's a different topic). Unfortunately, it's much easier to find negative news. And, when you don't have enough staff (all TV, radio, newspaper, and online newsrooms are short-staffed, trust me), you tend to grab the most available news and events to fill time or fill space. But if we can provide easily accessible, positive stories – the press will grab them.

Your Scouts deserve public recognition for the good deeds they do, as well as the fun they're having in Scouting. But, nobody knows your Scout unit better than you do – so that means we need you to actively contribute news stories, photos, media advisories and press releases to your community newspapers, church bulletins, Homeowners Association newsletters, etc. How do you do that? Glad you asked. I'll try to keep it fun.



Charles Mead  
Director of Marketing and Public Relations  
Capitol Area Council

P.S. Throughout all this, I'll sometimes just refer to a "newspaper" – most every tip applies to television and radio news outfits as well.

## “The Media”

One of the first things I was taught in Journalism school was that no matter what form it takes – newspaper, television, radio, magazine – the media is a business. And it's true; without ad sales and subscribers all the websites, television news departments, and print journalism outfits couldn't survive. This reality can make “the business” a lousy job sometimes. However, the people who are the decision-makers in every newsroom are still there doing those jobs because of one reason and one reason only: they still feel that their job allows them a chance to serve the citizens of their community.

Folks who work in the media are always working against the clock. If you have a bad day or something unforeseen comes up, you might be able to get your boss to give you an extra day to finish your project. Not always, but most of the time. If a reporter is having a really lousy day, too bad! The news starts at 5pm, no matter what - and he or she had better have something to contribute to the 22 minutes of the newscast that must be filled.

I don't mention all of this to make you feel sorry for reporters or editors or other news managers. I mention this so that you'll understand that if you make things as easy as possible for these folks when you submit a story – that story is much more likely to get online, into the paper or on the newscast.

So who are the decision-makers in a newsroom?

- Newspaper: Editor or Managing Editor. If a paper has both, more often than not you want to speak with the Managing Editor – because that's who handles the day-to-day news decisions.
- Television: Assignment Editor. These folks are generally the gatekeepers of information that comes into a newsroom. As a result, they're often the busiest people in the newsroom – and will want you to be brief and to the point. Notice how most TV station websites don't list a direct phone number for reporters and anchors? The number they list for “news” is the Assignment Desk.
- Radio: News Director. Typically, radio news staffs are small and the News Director usually is the only person you can guarantee will be in the office at some point during the day. That makes them the best contact, generally.

All the above people share at least one thing in common: they don't have enough staff. As a result, newsrooms can't keep in touch with all parts of the community as they'd like. That's where you come in – giving editors positive stories about real people doing good things. Fortunately for us, Scouting provides plenty of these kinds of stories.

# What “Makes” News?

## **Stories that happen before a newspaper goes to press or a newscast goes on the air**

If it's old, it's generally not “news” – no matter how good the story. What's old? Even a small paper may not run a story if it's as much as a week old. The paper might still run something, but it will likely just be two sentences in the “Accomplishments” section. Those kinds of mentions can still be valuable, but if you think a paper will run all four paragraphs of your two-week old story – then you'd better adjust your expectations. TV and Radio? If it didn't happen that day or the day before, good luck.

## **Really compelling and dramatic stories that have already happened, but that no one else has already published or aired**

OK, so sometimes you can get away with a story that's “old”, but it had better be pretty amazing stuff... I'm talking “Eagle Scout pulling a man from a burning house” amazing. Even then, that might not be enough – it all depends on what the paper has already lined up for the current issue, or whether you have amazing pictures you can give TV.

## **Stories that involve someone from the publication's primary market**

This seems pretty obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many people miss the opportunity to play this up. For instance, if you're pitching a story to the *Round Rock Leader* about a Scout that has earned every merit badge – make sure you're very clear that the Scout is a member of Troop 1, sponsored by the Round Rock Methodist Church (Troop # and chartering organization are made up for this example, but you get the point).

## **Stories which are unique or different**

A Cub Scout that wins his pack's Pinewood Derby is certainly worthy of recognition... but that recognition might only come in the form of a picture and caption, not a full-fledged five paragraph article. A Cub Scout that wins his pack's Pinewood Derby with the car that his now-deployed Army Captain father helped him build – now that's different.

## **Stories that you think your neighbors might want to read**

Sometimes, it's just that easy.



## OK, So How Do I Do This?

If your story **is happening...** then you should:

two weeks from now	Send a media advisory
today	Send a press release

If your story **happened...** then you should:

today	Send a story and picture
yesterday	Send a story and picture
a week ago	Know that it's old and not "news"

Let's talk now about a media advisory, a press release and a story. Turn the page, dear reader...

### AWARDS: Boy Scouts to march to Capitol today

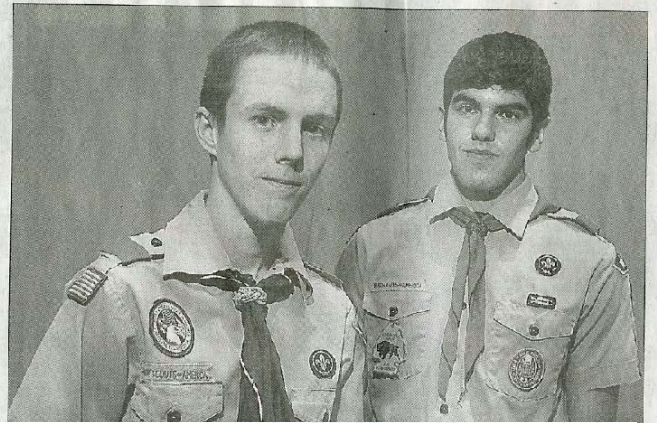


Scouts working for the Hornaday Award. From left: Proske, Jonathan Dickinson, M. Beathard, Deunger, Brandon Britton, and Committee Chair Gerry Beathard.

the ball, the man Brown recalled. The strong swimmer,

ns and a T-shirt, was Brown remembered. he cold water; swimming through waves and grabbed his rescue them to a dock. ng I had and acted on just happened to be right time." en blood gushed out lept. 2. was at home recovering from lymph nodes

staples and stitches "like a faucet," the



### Friendly donation from Cub Scouts

Cub Scout Pack 39 will donate about \$5,000 Sunday for the Friends of Scouting fundraising campaign at its annual "Blue and Gold Banquet."

### Bastrop Scouts go for conservation, Hornaday Award

Boy Scouts from Troop 533 of Bastrop have begun working towards the Hornaday Award, medal. Past projects in central Texas have included creating a city park from an abandoned

### New police-led troop seeks Scouts

The Austin Police Department's Southeast Area Command is looking for fifth-grade students who want to become members of a new Boy Scout troop.

Officers will be at Rodriguez Elementary School, 4400 Franklin Park Drive, from 10 a.m. to

## Writing a Media Advisory

A media advisory is not a full story. It can't be – because your event hasn't happened yet. The media advisory is just a fancy title for a "save the date" note about an upcoming event or story.

In a media advisory, you need to make sure you provide the five Ws and H" (this will come up again later). Your advisory should tell an editor:

**Who** is doing something?

**What** are they going to do?

**When** are they going to do it?

**Where** are they going to do it?

**Why** are they going to do it?

**How** are they going to do it?

Pretty easy, really. Let's look at an example:



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### **ADVISORY FOR WEEKEND EDITORS**

For more information, please contact:

Charles Mead, Director of Marketing and Public Relations

512-966-1586 cell [charles.mead@scouting.org](mailto:charles.mead@scouting.org)

### **SCOUTS POUND PAVEMENT TO "KEEP TEXAS FED"**

*Scouting mobilizes Saturday to collect 100,000 pounds of food for Central Texas*

**AUSTIN** – Scouts from all over Central Texas will visit homes Saturday to collect 100,000 pounds of food to help feed needy families.

This weekend will be the culmination of weeks of planning for the "Keep Texas Fed" Scouting for Food drive. Earlier this month, Scouts visited homes in their communities and dropped off grocery bags. On this Saturday, April 14, 2007, Scouts will return to those same homes and collect the bags, filled with donated food. The donated food will be taken to Capital Area Food Bank agencies or other food pantries in the communities where the food was collected. So if someone donates food in Hutto, Bastrop, Cedar Park or San Marcos - they can rest assured that their donation will help people in their area and will not be shipped somewhere else.

**WHAT:** 2007 "Keep Texas Fed" Scouting for Food Drive

**WHEN:** Saturday, April 14, 2007

**WHERE:** Scouts will collect food in areas all over Central Texas; Main Austin metro drop-off point is at Riverbend Church, 4214 Capital of Texas Highway, North

**SCHEDULE:**

8:00am – First Scout units will begin collecting food from homes

10:00am – Heaviest expected arrival period for Scout units dropping off food at collection points

12:00pm - Scouts expected to have finished collecting and delivering food to collection points

### **VISUALS/SOUND:**

There are 2 opportunities for visuals and/or sound:

- 1) While Scouts are in a neighborhood collecting food from homes
- 2) While Scouts are dropping off food at collection points

If you are interested in following Scouts as they collect food from homes, please contact Charles Mead at (512) 966-1586 to find a unit most convenient for your editorial schedule.

At the main collection point at Riverbend Church (4214 Capital of Texas Highway, North), interviews will be available with Scouts and their families, as well as:

- Charles Mead, Boy Scouts Spokesman
- Adrienne Longenecker, Capital Area Food Bank

### **TAG/SIDEBAR INFORMATION:**

If a Scout unit did not pick up your donation, please call at (512) 926-6363 ext. 17 or (800) 444-1910 ext. 17 to request pick up

###

Notice that I'm not leaving anything to chance here, giving an editor all of the contact information he or she might need. Plus, I have spelled out exactly "What" the event is, "Where" it will happen and "When" it will happen. You might not need to be as lengthy as I was in this example, but I think it's a good place for you to start.

One word of caution: I wouldn't submit a media advisory any more than two weeks before an event. Any sooner and you run the risk of it getting buried in an editor's file (paper or electronic). But don't wait until the day before your event, either.

Oh, and you might be wondering what the "###" means at the end of the advisory. You put that at the end of an advisory, a release or a story to let the editor know that you given him or her all of the information – and there is nothing more attached to your message.

Now, let's talk about press releases...



## Writing a Press Release

If a media advisory is like a “save the date” note for an event, a press release is like a “program” for an event. It should be informational, but isn’t necessarily prose.

Often a press release is meant to give a reporter or editor all of the information that a group wants them to know and possibly include in the published story. But a press release is rarely published “as is” – often because editors figure that the release is only painting its organization in the best light and not necessarily telling the whole story. I don’t think this will be a problem for you in a Scouting context, but I think it’s helpful to understand the mindset of a news editor.

Let’s look at an example of a press release:



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **A WORLD OF SCOUTING CELEBRATED IN AUSTIN**

*Parade, ceremony mark 2007 Report to State, 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Scouting*

**AUSTIN** – A quarter million hours of service. A hundred years of Scouting.

Thousands of Scouts from across the state gathered in Austin to show the strength of Scouting across the world and tell state leaders how Scouting is serving communities here in Texas, as part of the 2007 Report to State.

The Report to State kicked off with a Scout parade up Congress Avenue to the Capitol. Scout delegates gave a report to State Attorney General Greg Abbott on the floor of House of Representatives, describing their Scout unit’s activities during the past year and the number of service projects Scouts provided in communities across Texas. According to Scouting’s “Good Turn for America” service campaign, Scouts in 2006 provided one million hours of community service in Texas.

"For 100 years, young men have learned the importance of character from Scouting," said Attorney General Abbott. "This program has taught countless Boy Scouts the value of strong families, community service, and civic activism. It an honor to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of an organization that has done so much to help build a stronger, more successful Texas."

Scouting in Central Texas celebrated a successful 2006. The Capitol Area Council began 2007 with 20,500 registered youth members and 7,500 registered adult volunteer leaders, both an increase from the year before. 324 young men earned Scouting’s highest rank, Eagle Scout, joining the likes of Governor Rick Perry and House Speaker Tom Craddick. New construction has resulted in a first-class

Cub Scout camping and outdoor learning facility, Cub World, at the LCRA Lost Pines Scout Reservation in Bastrop.

Parade sponsor AT&T is making a \$7,000 donation to the Capitol Area Council, Boy Scouts of America. “The Boy Scouts’ contributions to the state are immeasurable. We are glad to hear that Scouting is growing in Texas, both with youth members and adult volunteers. AT&T is proud to sponsor this event,” said Joe Cosgrove Jr., general counsel-Austin for AT&T Texas and parade chairman.

The celebration is not only happening in Central Texas, but also worldwide. 2007 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Scouting Movement (Scouting in America will celebrate its centennial in 2010). In 1907, British General Lord Robert Baden-Powell founded Scouting on the belief that the outdoors provided the best classroom to teach young people about leadership and values, while having fun. Today, there are more than 28 million Scouts, youth and adults, boys and girls, in 155 countries (including Iraq and Afghanistan).

Scouting is proud of its proven program and the benefits it provides to young people and their families. According to research by Harris Interactive, men who were Scouts five or more years as boys are more likely than men with no Scouting experience to graduate from high school and college, earn higher annual household incomes, have lifelong friendships and believe helping others should come before one’s own self-interest. Families interested in Scouting should visit [www.bsacac.org](http://www.bsacac.org).

###

See what I mean about “...all of the information a group wants a reporter to know...”? Most editors will automatically cut off the last paragraph, figuring that it’s purely pro-Scouting material that they can’t confirm independently. But – the information about the Harris Interactive study about the benefits of Scouting might peak an editor’s interest about a future story. Or, if nothing else, the information might help put Scouting in a more positive light in an editor’s mind.

All right, now let’s look at news stories:

## Writing a News Story

Most of the time, you're writing a news story because your event has already happened and you couldn't get a reporter to come cover it. That's OK – remember that I said practically all types of media are short-staffed. That just means that it's up to all of us to make sure these terrific stories about Scouting make it to editors. Sometimes, though, you can get a paper to run a story you've written about something that's *going* to happen – provided it's well-written. I'll show you examples of both in a moment.

The cornerstone of a news story is to tell **who**, **what**, **when**, **where**, **why**, and **how** (see, I told you this would show up again). Ideally, every news story that you submit should answer these questions:

**Who** did it?

**What** did they do?

**When** did they do it?

**Where** did they do it?

**Why** did they do it?

**How** did they do it?

Even if you're just submitting a photo with a caption, give the editor all of the above in the caption. It will probably be too long and the editor will edit as he or she sees fit, but at least you've given them all of the information.

One of the best ways to learn about news stories is to study newspapers. Notice the types of stories used and which go on the front page, the opinion page and the "inside" of the paper. Imitation can help you put together future stories without a lot of effort: just follow the style and construction of articles that you've already seen.

This isn't a textbook, so we won't go into all of the details of writing and composition, but here are some hints to keep in mind when it comes to news writing:

1. The lead (first sentence) should generally give the reader all of the basic information about the story, so that they don't have to read much further. This is particularly effective, because many people don't read the whole story.
2. "Flesh out" the relevant details in descending order of importance. Why? Because editors will generally cut a story from the bottom up.
3. Proofread your work. No, really. I can't tell you how many press releases I used to throw away just because I spotted a misspelled word in the first two paragraphs.

4. Make sure your information is correct, including the full names of local persons involved and any identifying titles they may have.
5. The newspaper wants every story you give to an editor to be as accurate and impartial as if it had been prepared by one of its reporters. So don't oversell - just tell them what happened and why it's important or special.

OK, I promised you examples. First, here's a story about something that has already happened:

Scouts from all over Central Texas visited homes in April to fight hunger in Central Texas, collecting more than 83,000 pounds of food.

The weekend was the culmination of weeks of planning for the "Keep Texas Fed" Scouting for Food drive. Earlier in the month, Scouts visited many homes in their communities and dropped off grocery bags. Scouts returned to those same homes on April 14 to collect the bags, filled with donated food.

The donations are now in the hands of Capital Area Food Bank agencies or other food pantries. Food collected in the Austin metro area have helped fill Capital Area Food Bank agencies in town, but food collected in Hutto, Liberty Hill, Bastrop, Gonzales, Hays and other outlying areas was instead taken to local food pantries in those same areas. All of the food will immediately begin to help needy families served almost every Central Texas community.

"Many people donate food during holiday periods," says Adrienne Longenecker, Deputy Director Community Relations for the Capital Area Food Bank. "But families need help throughout the entire year, and the 'Keep Texas Fed' drive will go a long way to helping us meet the needs of those families in communities all across Central Texas."

The "Keep Texas Fed" Scouting for Food drive is a partnership between Scouting in Central Texas and the Capital Area Food Bank. Additionally, volunteers and donations from the Lower Colorado River Authority, H-E-B, Cirrus Logic, Time Warner Cable, Clear Channel Radio and the Austin Wranglers helped make this the largest volunteer food drive in Central Texas.

The "Keep Texas Fed" Scouting for Food drive will take place again next year on April 12, 2008.

###

Now, here's an example of a story I had published – even though it was describing an event that was *going* to happen:

## **Scouting Fights Hunger With Massive Food Drive**

### ***Central Texas Scouts Collecting Food for Area Charities***

It's 10am on a Friday morning. The sounds and discussions you hear from the people gathered here are not unlike what you'd hear at your office or church: some talk about the growing cost of good daycare for our kids, a mother and her grown daughter laugh over a private joke, a look of concern over what needs to get done today.

The difference is that all of this is happening in the lobby of the Catholic Charities building at 6<sup>th</sup> and Chicon, and the people described above are there almost an hour before the food pantry opens. They are early so that they can get a place in line, during the two hours for which the food

pantry will be open. While they are here, they are concerned with just one thing: getting food to help them and their families make it through the next two or three weeks.

In the back of the building, where the food is stored and made ready for distribution, Meg Key is thanking a group of volunteers who have come today. Some will interview people who are here to get food, to make sure they are from the area the pantry serves (if they're not from the area, they will still receive food – but will be directed to a pantry closer to their home for next time). The other volunteers will sack the food and hygiene items so that people can carry them to their homes.

“We’re so thankful to have so much today,” says Meg. This pantry prides itself on being able to provide clients with at least a two week supply of food each time. This particular week, the pantry received 2,800 lbs. of food from the Capital Area Food Bank. That will go a long way, but Meg notes to her volunteers that “we may run out of fresh vegetables today”. The pantry has been open on just Mondays and Fridays, but there are plans to expand that to Wednesday evenings, too. “It’s just so hard for working families to get here during the day,” says Meg, adding, “There is such a tremendous need.”

The volunteers’ briefing ends with a prayer calling for worthiness to serve people who live and die in poverty and hunger every day. The clock strikes 10:30am, and the pantry is up and running. The volunteers at the front greet the clients and run through a list of requirements for each of them, including a check of their household income. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has rules to decide whether a client is eligible to receive help; to leave with food today, a person living alone can’t make more than \$18,130 – and for a family of four, the requirement is \$37,000 or less a year.

The first person in line is a woman – we’ll call her “Ann” - who carries herself with an undeniable sense of pride. Talking to her, you see the fatigue in her eyes – but the strength in her spirit. “I have lots of mouths to feed, and the food goes fast,” says ‘Ann’. “The food prices at the store are so high. But I keep the lights on and a roof over our heads. It (the pantry) helps.”

“Ann” cares for five children, ages 11, 8, 6, 5 and 4. She’s thrilled that the oldest has joined the choir at school, and has a positive social outlet. “Ann” starts each day, bright and early at 5:30am, getting the children ready for school or daycare. She then begins a long day’s work as a home health care provider, making sure several clients not only receive medical care but also any needed social assistance. One of her clients is here today, too: a retired man who worked for years in the Sherriff’s Department, but is now having trouble with his benefits after a stay in the hospital. By the time “Ann” has finished her work day, fed the children, allowed time for play and then put everyone in bed, it’s pushing 10pm.

There are more people like “Ann” across Central Texas who are hard-working, employed and have families to support. Despite their best efforts, they need help from their fellow Texans to survive. But that “help” is not always there; the Capital Area Food Bank and its partners say that nearly one in five adults and one in four children in Texas are hungry.

Every year, there are stories about Scouts who save others’ lives – usually from drowning, a serious injury or a heart attack. The “Keep Texas Fed 2007 Scouting for Food” drive in April will allow every Scout to be a lifesaver – just not in ways we might normally consider. The canned goods they collect are just as much of a lifeline to those in need, as a life jacket thrown to someone drowning.



Please take part in Scouting for Food by leaving non-perishable food items in bags or boxes on your doorstep on the morning of April 14, 2007. Scouts will go door-to-door to pick up donations that morning. Without your help, Scouting will not meet its goal of collecting 100,000 pounds of food. The Capitol Area Council, Boy Scouts of America, thanks you for your help in fighting hunger in all the 15 counties we serve in Central Texas.

Notice that I didn't follow my own rules in the second example, especially the part about "The lead (first sentence) should generally give the reader all of the basic information about the story..." Since I was trying to "sell" a story about something that had not yet happened (the food drive), I decided to write a feature on one of the agencies that would be helped by the food drive (Catholic Charities). In this instance, it's a feature and not a "straight news" story – but hopefully it produced the desired result with readers: those Scouts sure are nice folks and I'd like to help them.



## Think Visually

This won't take long. I need to make this one point to you: You read a newspaper; you watch TV.

### Newspaper

It's a big plus if you have a picture to submit to a newspaper or newsletter with your story. The picture will help your story stand out in the publication and draw readers' interest.

You don't have to have an expensive camera or be a professional to submit a photo to your community paper. Just try to take photos that involve more than just a group portrait or two people shaking hands (the 'ol "grip and grin").

Since most people shoot with a digital camera these days, I'll assume that you will, too. It's probably safe to assume that you can submit your photos in a .jpg format – but it's better to call your paper and ask them what format they prefer. If you have the ability to send in a high-resolution image (.tif, .raw) and the paper can use them, great. With the advances in cell phone camera quality, you can send a photo from your phone if that's all you have.

### Television

If you want TV to cover your story, you **must** have something visual to offer them. What's visual?

#### Visual:

Pinewood Derby races

Scouts doing a cooking contest

Scouts working on Eagle project

Scouts practicing on CPR dummy

#### Not Visual:

Blue and Gold Banquets

Scouts watching cooking contest

Scouts standing at finished Eagle project

Scouts watching CPR class

I think you get the idea: there must be action. Newspapers don't like "grip and grin" photos, but will occasionally run them. If you can't offer anything more than a room full of people, TV won't cover your story.

## Tips

You don't have to call and ask permission to submit a story to your local paper.

Always write up your media advisory, press release, or story; don't expect to call in and say, "I have this great story..." and then expect the person on the other end to start taking notes. If you do, they'll cut you off and tell you, "that sounds great – please send me a release" or words to that effect.

If you want your community newspaper to run a story about your Scout, make sure you point out that the unit is located in the newspaper's coverage area. *The Westlake Picayune* will be more interested in Scouts from Westlake than c.

Always remember to include your unit's chartering organization somewhere in the release or story. We in Scouting don't do a good enough job of providing publicity for the generosity of these organizations. After all, they own the unit.

Cub Scouts are in a pack. Boy Scouts are in a troop. Varsity Scouts are in a team. Venturers are in a crew. Sea Scouts are in a ship. Explorers are in a post. STEM Scouts are in a lab.

Do:

- Get the most important information in your story in the first sentence.
- Proofread your work.

Don't:

- Start a story with a time, day, date or name.
- Type in ALL CAPS.

Use a person's full name the first time it is mentioned in a story. After that, just use their last name alone.

Women's names should be as follows: Mary Smith, not Mrs. Ralph Smith. This is a news story, not a wedding invitation.

If you're using a quote from someone outside of Scouting, always get them to approve the quote before you send it to the newspaper.

No advisory or press release should ever be longer than one page.

Write your story as if you were not involved in Scouts. Try to be objective and don't be opinionated: this improves your chances of having your story run "as is".

Don't expect a newspaper to print your membership roster as a part of your story.

It's OK to make a follow-up call to an editor to make sure he or she received your information. Just try not to be a pest. Calling every day for a week would qualify as being a pest.

## A Reporter is Calling Me, and it's Bad News

Heaven forbid you should ever get one of these calls. This would be because there is a report about something bad that is happening or has happened to a Scout or Scouting in general.

First: If this story involves your family, you have every right to dictate what information you do or do not want to release to the press. The Capitol Area Council will respect your wishes. However, we need you to contact the Scout Executive right away to let us know you have been contacted by the media.

**NOTE: if this story concerns a suspected case of child abuse and you haven't called the police... call the police FIRST and then contact the Scout Executive.**

Second: If this story involves your unit, we want you to do the following:

1. DO NOT GRANT AN INTERVIEW
2. Write down:
  - caller's name
  - phone number
  - which station/publication for whom he or she works
  - short description of the story about which he/she is asking
3. Tell the caller a spokesperson will contact them in a few minutes
4. Contact Scout Executive with the above information
5. If you can't reach the Scout Executive, contact Director of Marketing/Public Relations with the above information

**Scout Executive: Jon C. Yates**

**Office: 512-617-8613**

**Cell: 512-496-3289**

**Director of Marketing/Public Relations: Charles Mead**

**Office: 512-617-8624**

**Cell: 512-966-1586**

Please remember: "No Comment" is, in fact, a comment. It tells a reporter you (or we) have something to hide. It's OK to instead say, "I'm not ready to talk about it" or "You'll have to speak with our council spokesman."

Also please remember: Parents and/or Scout volunteer leaders are not expected to deal with the media during moments of crisis. Please contact the Director of Marketing and Public Relations and/or the Scout Executive so that we may provide you the support you deserve.

## Crisis Response - Media Inquiries – Additional Notes

- You can lock the gate to a camp to keep the media off the property, but understand that locking the gate will not keep the media from shooting video or taking pictures of action happening on the property.
  - Texas law allows the press to shoot video or take pictures of people or actions happening on private property, provided the people or actions are visible to the naked eye from a public right of way.
  - For example, if a photographer standing on the side of the road outside Lost Pines Scout Reservation can see something happening outside the Ranger's residence, he can shoot it. Even if the action is happening inside the Ranger's residence - if a photographer can see it through a window, he can shoot it.
- Many television news operations will use a helicopter or drone for news coverage - so locking the gate to a property will not necessarily keep cameras out.
  - Never put an injured person's life in jeopardy, but if there will be some period of time between triage and transport to a hospital – and there are people available to help – put a tarp or other covering up over the area where the patient is being treated.
- Never say “no comment”. That, in fact, is a comment – suggesting that we're hiding something.
  - It always OK if you don't want to talk to the press. Respond to media phone inquiries with, “I can't talk with you right now, but give me your name and number and I will have someone call you right back”.
- News operations in “breaking news” mode will look for any bit of information to give to reporters or anchors, and will be persistent in asking if anyone on the scene can talk to them.
  - Again, your response can be: “I can't talk with you right now, but give me your name and number and I will have someone call you right back”.
- Do not share information about the crisis with others – even other Scout leaders – if they're not directly involved in the crisis.
  - You should tell a parent at the scene if their child is hurt, but do it after you have them on property and away from a crowd.
  - A reporter on the scene will look to anyone to give them an interview, including other adults, leaders, and the clerk at the convenience store across the road from camp. If you give information to anyone other than those directly involved in the crisis, you will hear it or read it somewhere later.



## Thoughts on Social Media

The Boy Scouts of America's national council offers some very general guidelines for social media use. You can find them at [www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/social-media](http://www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/social-media).

A few key concepts for your consideration:

- Social media is a great tool in concept, because it allows for honest-to-goodness conversations between our program and its participants or potential participants
- Social media involves a “peer review” quality that people trust more than they trust traditional marketing messages
- Social media can spread a message faster than radio, print, or TV
- In its application to organizations, social media is about what the customer *wants to ask* an organization – not what an organization *wants to tell* a customer

Here are some important thoughts/discussions your unit should have **BEFORE** you decide to create a Facebook page, Twitter or Instagram account, or any other social media channel for your unit:

- 1) Do you have at least one person who will commit to checking this social media channel at least once a day, EVERY day? (If you don't, don't move forward)
- 2) Why are you creating this social media channel? (Communicate with members of your unit? Recruit new members?)
- 3) What is your policy for dealing with critical posts/messages? (Do you automatically remove them? Do you leave them, so long as there is no profanity/threats/inappropriate content?)

As a general statement, our council leadership wants you and your unit active in social media. Why? You are among the most passionate advocates we could hope to have. These are our council's primary social media channels:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/capitolareacouncil](http://www.facebook.com/capitolareacouncil)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/capitolareabsa](http://www.twitter.com/capitolareabsa)

You Tube: [www.youtube.com/capitolareacouncil](http://www.youtube.com/capitolareacouncil)

Flickr: [www.flickr.com/capitolareacouncil](http://www.flickr.com/capitolareacouncil)

Last thought: social media is not the place to air your grievances with Scouting and/or Scouting policy. You should assume that everyone online will see everything you say on social media – so please don't give them something negative to think about our program.



# BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

## CAPITOL AREA COUNCIL

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**For more information, please contact:**

**Name**

**Unit #**

**Phone**

**Email**

### **TITLE**

*Subtitle or additional information to explain title (optional)*

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3 (if necessary)

**WHAT: what is the story about**

**WHEN: date, time**

**WHERE: location**

List any visual opportunities for your story here

####



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®  
CAPITOL AREA COUNCIL

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information, please contact:**

**Name**

**Unit #**

**Phone**

**Email**

**TITLE**

*Subtitle or additional information to explain title (optional)*

(YOUR TOWN) – Text

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