



UPDATE

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Who's responsible?

With this issue we are continuing the series covering the various aspects of being a Publications Officer.

The PB officer is the most influential staff officer in your unit – you have the hardest job, will probably take the most flak and receive the least cooperation.

In spite of these difficulties, you have the most freedom to innovate and develop new ways of doing things.

You and the Secretary of Records are the only two officers that are in contact with all of the membership and unit supporters on a regular basis.

So we need to establish the guidelines that we work under.

Notice, I said guidelines – very little here is hard and fast except for one thing – *final responsibility* for the unit newsletter rests with the elected officers.

Do you remember the rule we learned as children?

The person who touched something last is responsible. When two children are playing and one knocks over the lamp, and it falls through the others hands – the second child is at fault for dropping it.

The newsletter is the unit's when everything is fine and yours when something is not quite right. This means that you must work very closely with your elected officers to avoid having things go wrong

ON PUBLICATIONS

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or being “not quite right.”

Start by working with your VFC or VCP to determine the target publication dates for each issue.

Don't agree to a production schedule that you cannot meet!

Next, work your calendar backwards to determine when is the last date you can accept articles for each issue. Make sure you allow sufficient development, review and mailing time.

Work with both elected officers to determine what they want in each issue. Suggest a theme or emphasis – try to cover the four cornerstones in each issue. You may consider suggesting an emphasis on operations in the spring/summer and PE/MT in the fall and winter issues.

Don't forget your unit notes (not just the minutes). Make suggestions that you feel comfortable developing.

Once the emphasis has been determined, what staff officers or committees do you need information from in order to develop that issue?

Let everyone know the due date for articles. If someone is not able to meet the due date, let your

elected officers know as soon as you find out.

Let your elected officers determine how they want to handle the situation – that is their responsibility! Yours is to let them know and give them impacts and alternatives.

This month's Helpful Hints are from Mary A. Lipstate BC-AIA. Thanks Mary!

Helpful Hints

- Always write the correct abbreviation for the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. It has no spacing, is done in capital letters with no period: USCGAUX.
- The abbreviation for a flotilla is FL with no period.
- Use capitalization for flotilla only if writing of a specific one – Flotilla 93 (FL 93). This also holds true for a division or divisions as well as district or districts. It is capitalized when writing of a specific division or district – Division 9 (DIV 9) or 5th District, Southern Region.
- When writing about a specific officer, title follows name, *except* for a full commodore; Commodore Mary Larson (COMO Mary Larson). For rear commodores and below, the title follows the name; Philip Merrill RCO-W, or Philip Merrill, Rear Commodore West; Jim Campbell DCP 3, or Jim Campbell, Division Captain 3; Dick Forte FC 93, or Dick Forte, Flotilla Commander 93.

We can turn them off, too

There is no doubt that our most efficient form of promotion are publications.

When our article is published, thousands of people read it. The problem doesn't seem to be what to write but how to get it into print.

Sometimes, in our zeal to do that, we turn off our newspaper friends by violating their code of ethics.

You can check the web sites below for more details. Frankly, some smaller hometown papers don't follow these codes but you can bet gold bullion-to-barnacles that the large metropolitan papers do.

In the big city we find ourselves working with the: Outdoor Editor, The Fishing Editor, The Sports and Leisure Editor, etc. This person is usually the only reporter for that department. They are good people to get to know.

It is a good idea to see if you can meet with them for a brief – *brief* – orientation of the CGAUX.

Or, perhaps a short write up of what we do would be helpful.

Say: We are volunteers dedicated to assisting the Coast Guard through boating safety. Then list the flotilla offices with a brief description of what they do for the public in your local area. A few stats would be good, and be prepared to answer questions.



Words to the wise

If you don't know the answers, don't guess or speculate. Say: "I will have to get back to you on that."

DON'T offer free tickets to your Change of Watch, picnic, or offer to take them to lunch or even buy them anything!

You can ask them if they have a boat. If so, they can get a VSC. Those are free to all. Make sure they understand that.

Ask if you could meet them at lunch or during a break.

I once offered our small town paper editor a free BS&S course. He was a good friend of the AUX for years. But that was years ago and small town stuff, and I was lucky. It would have been better if I could have interested him in coming to a staff report meeting.

DON'T offer them gifts. We may be tempted to offer an AUX hat, flag, or some other trinket. No matter how small, it may be perceived as an attempt to bribe. Not good.

DON'T offer an AUX

membership. Journalists are not allowed to profit in any way from their position or by the use of information gathered as a reporter.

There is also a conflict of interest rule here. This states that a reporter can't provide publicity services for outside organizations.

Outside work must not conflict. Translated, that means: We must allow them to be reporters, we can give them the lead, provide the information or even write it up. But, they report it as they see fit.

DON'T identify accident victims. That's taboo for many journalists and for us too. Sure, if a person breaks down and we assist him, we can use his name, with his permission, as long as we don't make him look bad.

After all, boats do break down. The thrust of our story should be how we helped this fellow boater who was unlucky enough to have trouble. OK?

Most media guidelines can be found on line:

- **Society of Professional Journalists**

www.spj.org

- **Radio and television:**

Radio Television News Director's Association's Code
www.rtnda.com

- **Online News Association**

www.onlinenewsassociation.org

Keep up the good work, it's appreciated. – *Nick*