



## Publicity

(Public Relations) will publicize the activities and programs of the council using a variety of print and non-print media. [IRA Council Planning Guide]

Opening: How many of you have heard of the story of the "Go Getter" In a nut shell in order to be hired for a great job, this man must complete a task that on the surface seems very simple but turns out to be a great challenge. The man goes to great lengths to accomplish the task. But he learns about himself and his own personal drive to succeed.

IRA Council Planning Guide is just one of the references available to each council president in the notebook each year. There are resources and reference materials that would be beneficial to the Publicity chair.

## What role do you play?

Who are you?



We all wear many hats and as publicity chair you will wear several. I want to provide you with a few basics that will prepare you for this role.

**Cheerleader: Provide support and enthusiasm.**

**Let others know what your council is doing and doing great!**



Be a fan of your council. You don't need to be a Pollyanna but accentuate the positives. As a cheerleader its important that you attend or arrange for someone to attend to record information that can be used later to let others know what you council is doing and doing great.

**Promoter: Inform the public that there is something they want to see.**

Create excitement for council meetings and events.



[http://www.breage.com.au/forums/2005/01/13/don\\_king\\_0.jpg](http://www.breage.com.au/forums/2005/01/13/don_king_0.jpg)

Here are two great promoters, we all know who Don King is, but have you ever thought about all that Don King does to make you want to see the events he promotes. The other fellow is my Basset hound, Whattamess, if he thinks it needs to promotion....look out.

You can build or create excitement in upcoming council meetings and programs. Use descriptors, catch phrases or themes to create interest. Make it fun. Set yourself a schedule of when you need to notify the media and the membership. To promote is to remind and to entice. So promote your council.

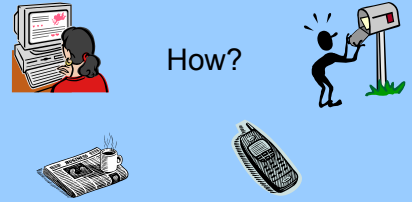
## Informant: Share information.

Keep council members in the loop, keep the public informed.



Your reading councils have great things going for them. Don't let your council be the best kept secret. Tell it. Programs are planned and developed to better your council, keep everyone in the loop, keep the council members in the loop, keep the public informed. Good communication is simple, clear and consistent. When using the media, be sure to place any and all announcements on council letterhead. Don't use educational jargon in your announcements as this is a real turn off for the public. Think about who you want to reach, what is the most important area to stress, finally what media will be most effective.

Publicity is supporting, promoting and informing your membership and the public at large about reading council.



You wear many hats but basically publicity is supporting, promoting and informing your membership and the public at large about the programs and events of your reading council.

Now how do you do this? There are literally a limitless range of ways. I want to focus on those that will cost you little to nothing. And the more you involve the whole community the more likely local media will be to coverage.

5

## Newsletters

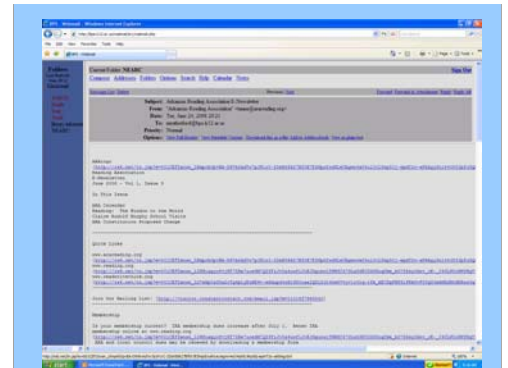
Create a letter formal or informal and send by postal service, e-mail or fax to membership.

Make sure to ask recipient to post or share with their friends/colleagues.



Communication is key. And remember this is one you can use on the Honor Council list. Newsletters need to provide information in short concise manners- just address the who, what, where, when, why and how's of the program. Keep your newsletters friendly use humor and praise.

You can send newsletters through email or fax, postal service or post on the web. Newsletters don't have to be that regular. But provide them as often as you meet. Also, ask members to share the newsletters or post them where others will see what's going on.



# Press Release

Use public media to let others know what is happening.

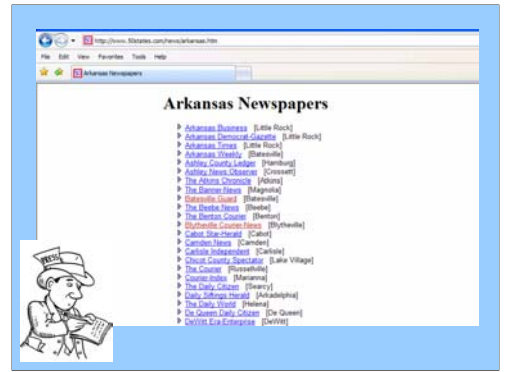
Radio -broadcast of Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Newspaper –PSA, Community Calendar, Photographs with brief articles about current events relating to the council.

Community Blogs /Forums –post online information about council events, programs, etc.



Miss Tenacity Rutherford



Public Service Announcements are a part of the media. Don't be afraid to meet with media representatives and find out what they require in time frame and length of announcement. Make a friend in these people and invite them to be a part of the council. They may decline but they will help you with your needs.

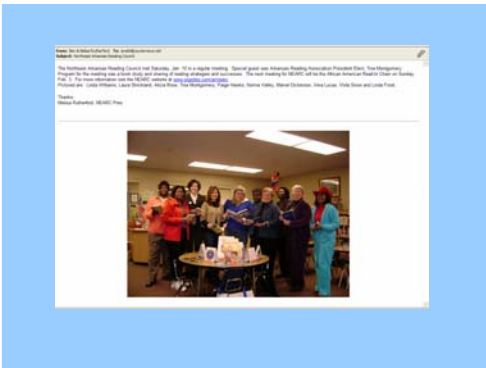
Radio stations will broadcast PSA's about major events like fundraisers or read-in chains. Don't forget the IRA Planning Guide has pages of generic PSA's that just promote reading.

There are also many pages concerning communication and broadcasting.

Newspapers especially local small newspapers will publish community calendars, side bar news announcing your next meeting and even photos with cut lines.

A new resource is the community blog or forum- Topix. Yes this is a public forum and the discussions range for informative to entertainment to pure gossip but the point is people read these. Use it! Set up an account and use it to bring discussions about your council's next meeting/program.

Not sure about who to contact, use AR Newspapers website, this is a listing of newspapers that have websites in AR. This does not include all the newspapers just those who have a website and publish a regular paper.



# Community Calendar

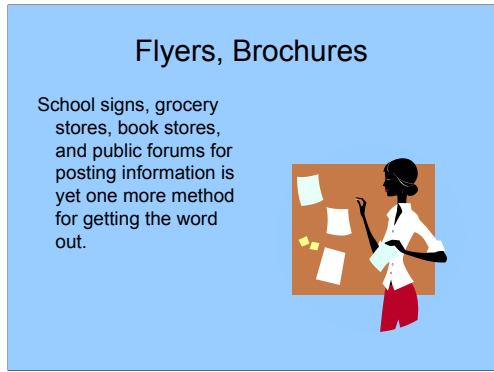
Check with local Chamber of Commerce and see if you can get information placed in their publications.



Just like with the press release, contact your local Chamber of Commerce. Many publish community newsletters and calendars and this can be a resource for you.



The kindergarten center has a building calendar, council events are a part of this.



Be sure that signs are bright and eye catching. Keep the information concise and direct. Also as a courtesy remember to take down any signs after the date of the advertised posting.



My council produces a tri fold brochure using Microsoft Publisher. One copy is printed into a pdf or Public Document File for the website and then paper copies are created to distribute to area schools and libraries. This is also one way we promote for membership as well as promote our programs.



This note was distributed to area schools, businesses and churches.

## Personal Contact

Telegraph, Telephone, Tell a Friend

Making the effort to contact others you feel will share is a wonderful way to get information out and you never know...



Even in the technological age we now live in, you can never replace the human touch. Even when placing information for broadcast, get to someone at the media station- newspaper reporter/editor, radio station liaison or television provider personnel. Once they have a face to connect to your council, the more receptive they will be to helping you in spreading the word.

## Website



Consider creating and maintaining a website for your local council.

Benefits: current events listed, ready information, publicity of accomplishments, promotion of council and council membership

No budget? Free sites are available and are generally easy to use.

[www.freewebs.com](http://www.freewebs.com)  
[www.orgsites.com](http://www.orgsites.com)

I alluded to this earlier. You can have your own website for nothing. A website provides a place for your membership to visit and obtain information about the council. You don't think you can build it yourself. Ask a teenager, they are all over this and besides many college classes require students to create and upload a webpage. A student member might be the ticket to have a website up and maintained. Here are a couple of sites that are completely free and are easy to set up and maintain.

17



This is my local council's website and it is very simple but very easy to maintain. Lots of information- too much according to my webmaster husband but we like it.

## Anything Else????



Communication is key. But there are a few other things that you can do to help your council while helping yourself.

Make a point to keep a record of events for later use. (Display boards, celebrations, scrapbooks, etc.)

Take lots of photographs and share them with not only the local council but send them to the state council.

Make the picture of your council bigger, brighter and clearer.



Publicity can be reused. I know because I rework old newsletters, brochures and media announcements every time. Build a base of communication and information. This will make your job easier. Also when we go to build our display board, I pull out the materials from the previous year and I have something to begin my project. May not use any of it but I have a base for creativity.

A photograph carries a lot of weight. We all like to see ourselves, so keep the camera ready. Digital makes storing and processing so much easier. Do keep photos of your council programs, it may be the same faces but you are doing different things. Candid photos are as important as posed. Make a photo CD at the end of the council year and share these photos with the state, also share these with each other. Keep a photo CD in a safe place for access later.

Get with your membership chair and work together to promote the council. Think about the things that have attracted you to a group and work together to create materials that not only promote your council but help it to grow.

Use the information you have collected to fill out Honor Council reports. If you have a photo or a newsletter about an event it makes it much easier to recall details for the report.

21

## And I do this all by myself???

NO- Everyone is a part of publicity. Everyone can do a small part to build, support and provide information about reading council.



Publicity or Public Relations is a big job that we all take for granted. Distribute the job to those with little niches of interest. Everyone goes shopping so find out who could post flyers. Find out who likes to take photos and ask them to assist. By sharing the responsibility you are in fact sharing news about your council. When people have a small job in something they take interest, they take interest, they help build. This is a very important place to be.

## Publicity Chair = Licensed to Brag

So get out there and let everyone, everywhere know just who, what, where, when and why your reading council is the best group to be a part.



Wear those hats proudly. You can delegate to others, involve everyone in assisting you but support, promote and inform others about your council. Get out there...

## Need more?

Contact:

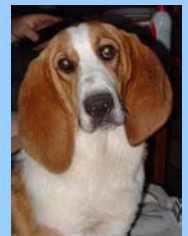
Melisa Rutherford, ARA  
Publicity Committee Chair

[mrutherford@bps.k12.ar.us](mailto:mrutherford@bps.k12.ar.us)

[nvrhme@swbell.net](mailto:nvrhme@swbell.net)

[melisa@arareading.org](mailto:melisa@arareading.org)

870-740-0421 (cell)



Barkley Rutherford

Go over additional handouts: Publicity, Media Training, PSAs on CD, Logos and other items for generating public relations with the community.