



PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDEBOOK

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Publicizing Your Unit

Pennsylvania Dutch Council
Boy Scouts of America
630 Janet Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17601
www.padutchbsa.org

April 2013



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
Pennsylvania Dutch Council

Dear Unit Leader,

Public Relations is often an excellent way to help sell the Scouting program to boys and parents in your community. Positive publicity can have a direct impact on your unit's membership, recruiting, and fundraising efforts. In addition, it can often provide a boost to your advancement program by publicly recognizing the hard work, fun and accomplishments of the boy in your unit.

The intent of this guidebook is to assist each unit with their own active and successful public relations program. We hope that you will find the following information a useful tool for your unit.

If you have questions or additional thoughts please send or e-mail your suggestions to Duane Crouse, Development Director at 630 Janet Ave, Lancaster, Pa 17601 or e-mail: duane.crouse@scouting.org

Yours in Scouting,

Jim Castanzo

Council Vice President
Marketing & Communications

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Getting Started

Here are some key steps to help you get started on your own PR.

A. Recruit a Unit PR Chairperson

This person would be responsible for taking photos or collecting any photos taken at events and working with the unit committee to draft press releases.

B. Develop a Plan

As you plan your yearly calendar look for key events or activities that would be great opportunities for you to share Scouting with others.

C. Decide Which Media Outlets to Use

Community newspapers are always looking for pre-made stories and somewhat likely to include photos.

Consider publicizing your activities to your chartered organization, they may also have a newsletter that you can utilize.

D. Call the Local Newspaper or Radio Station

Find out who you should be dealing with, e.g. editor, community bulletin board editor, etc. Introduce yourself and explain what you are trying to do.

A good rapport with the media can increase the chances your material will get placed.

E. Meet the Deadlines

Make sure you know the paper's deadline day for submitting articles.

Plan, Promote, and Perform Publicity Campaigns

Good planning is indispensable to a successful publicity campaign. Whether you are a part of the planning group or handling the entire event, the key is dividing the function into smaller objectives and goals.

Getting publicity for an event requires persistence and follow-up. A good working relationship with your local media is ideal. However, you can build new relationships to get media attention for your event.

Plan

- Create a master event calendar for the year.
- Create a publicity plan for each event that meets the needs of your units.
- Identify a spokesperson for the event. Is there a local celebrity willing to support the function?
- Can you tie your event to similar events planned in your community?
- Does your event coordinate with a monthly theme? For example, April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month and BSA Youth Prevention Month.
- Is the event's location in a well-traveled area or does it provide great exposure?
- Taking photos? Use the attached talent release form so that you have parent's permission to use their son's image in any press release you might send.
- Reporters generally have a beat or area of focus. Contact local news media to learn who covers a beat that relates to your event and send your press release to that individual.

Promote

- Prepare your press release to be sent via mail, fax, and e-mail.
- Give the news media the cell phone numbers of your spokesperson and other key contacts so reporters may speak with them before and during the event.
- Consider faxing a news alert to local media within two days of the event. A sample alert is available in this packet.
- Have realistic objectives. These types of events are "soft news" or human interest stories. If a big story is happening at the same time, even your best efforts may not produce the results you want.

Perform

- Develop two or three strong talking points for the spokesperson to use to help the reporter and audience understand the importance of what you are doing.
- Have refreshments available to the media during the event.

Relationships you cultivate now may flourish later, even if your efforts this time don't result in a story.

News Release Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed to improve your success rate in writing and placing information. Media to target include

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Newsletters and bulletins
- Community directories
- Radio
- Television, including cable television

What is a news release?

A news release is the most common of all public relations tools. News releases should communicate key information — the who, what, when, where, why, and how of an event or issue — and contact information to reporters and editors in the news media.

Reporters and editors receive thousands of news releases a week, and they look for accuracy, clarity, brevity, timeliness, and newsworthiness to determine what they will feature in the news. A newsworthy release can be described as one that appeals to the broadest audience and offers the most information with the greatest sense of urgency.

In most cases, reporters or editors will rewrite your release to fit their style, so it's crucial to present the information as clearly and accurately as possible. The best way to do this is by following the journalistic method of organizing the material into an inverted pyramid. The inverted pyramid style of writing puts the most essential information at the beginning, followed by items of decreasing importance.

The Basics

All news releases begin with a headline designed to attract the reader's attention and encourage them to read the entire story. Remember, first impressions are key! If a headline is dull and uninteresting, the reader will assume the same for the rest of the release. Large numbers and visual language can make the difference between a sparkling, attractive headline and one that is flat and lifeless.

The most essential information in a news release should be listed in the first paragraph, or lead, of the release. Include as many of the who, what, where, when, why, and how elements of the news item as possible.

For the majority of releases, the who, or subject of the release, should include the name of the organization and/or individual who is either an expert on the subject or contact person. The more important or influential the organization and the individual, the greater the appeal of the press release.

The topic of the release, the what, and the where, should be unusual in some way. Unusual can mean different, better, less expensive, unique, or beneficial to the community.

The when of a release actually has two applications — the first being the date and time of the event or issue featured in the release, the second being the date and time for the information to reach the audience.

When addressing the why of a release, remember cause and effect. For example, what caused your unit to hold this activity? What effects will this event have

on adult and youth members.

A rule borrowed from advertising states that an organization shouldn't promote the features of its product or service, but rather the benefits to its customers.

The how of a news release answers, for example, how a decision was made, how changes will affect youth, volunteers, and the overall Scouting program.

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?

The main body of the news release should include significant details that relate to the lead, including quotations and succinct descriptions. Any related but nonessential information should appear toward the end of the release. Generally, the last paragraph provides overall information and statistics about the local council, such as territory served, number of youth and adult members, and the location of the council headquarters. It is also a good place to list a phone number for more information.

General Rules of Thumb for News Releases

- Always type a news release. Releases should be double-spaced and typed on one side only of 8.5-inch by 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides.
- Brevity is the key. Try to limit releases to one or two pages. A news release should not exceed 500 words. A straightforward and concise writing style is the objective. Use short, clearly written paragraphs.
- Never split a paragraph at the end of a page.
- Type “—more—” at the bottom of a page when the release is more than one page in length.
- If a release is more than one page in length, put an abbreviated headline and page number at the top of each page following page one.
- Type “####” to signify the end of the release.
- Clarity, accuracy, grammar, and neatness are vital. Verify all names, addresses, and facts before distributing the release.
- Avoid the use of Scouting abbreviations, i.e. WLOT (Webelos Leader Outdoor Training), SFF (Scouting for Food)
- Don’t use flowing tributes, flowery descriptions, or glowing adjectives when writing your news release. The news release should be more informative than subjective. Be impartial and objective; try to write the release as the reporter might.
- Use first and last names on first reference. Use last names only on subsequent references. Include titles and descriptions, such as district chairman, or a person’s hometown or age. Provide full names of groups with appropriate descriptions.
- If an editor must choose between two otherwise equal releases, he or she is more likely to pick the release that has an accompanying photograph. If including a photograph with your release, make sure it will capture the interest of the reader. Every photograph should include a complete and correct caption that identifies each person and the action in the photograph. Your photograph file should include the following information on each photograph: source, date taken, copyright information, and releases signed by people in the picture.
- Put the local news angles at the beginning of a release if the story covers an area beyond the community’s borders or newspaper’s circulation area.
- Include a good quote from Scouts, volunteers, or local distinguished individuals early in the story.
- Add boilerplate material. This is general information about the Boy Scouts of America that help people understand the importance and relevancy of Scouting. For example, “Scouting has had more than 100 million members since its inception in 1910.”

Delivery of the News Release

Work the local angle. Look for a local angle, or hook, in every story and make sure the appropriate news bureau knows about it.

Think photos. The perfect photograph to support your story requires planning and attention to detail. When pitching an event, be sure to pitch to the photo desk as well as the reporter.

Make sure you have signed model release forms for all individuals in the photograph.

Alternate Publicity Instruments

- Send a letter to the editor. This should be a simple, straightforward statement, written to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Submit something for the newspaper’s op-ed page—some newspapers use this page to print readers’ opinions and articles by columnists.
- Target vertical media, publications that target special interests, such as magazines for parents and kids, outdoors publications, and other youth development magazines in your area.
- Send releases to local business newsletters and community bulletin boards.
- Speak formally at churches and other community and civic organizations, as well as informally with parents, friends, and coworkers on behalf of your council.
- Decorate a float for Scouts to ride on in your local parade.
- Hang banners to promote Scouting Anniversary Week or School Night for Scouting.
- Pass out fliers promoting School Night for Scouting.
- Hang posters and fliers in places where boys and young adults will see them. Local schools may have bulletin boards for such items.
- Host a media pancake breakfast where Scouts deliver pancakes to local radio personalities on a chosen day. This could be done during fall recruiting. The radio personalities can talk about Scouting. Give the personalities a public service announcement or flier listing details of the recruiting program or coming event.
- With more than 100 merit badges, there is something that will interest almost anyone. Market the activities a young person can be involved in while earning merit badges. Write a story about the Cooking merit badge for the food section. Include a recipe for food that can be prepared for a group of hungry young men. Write an article about the Personal Management merit badge for the finance section in local publications or the Music merit badge for the local theater’s playbill. Think of ways to create interest and generate positive publicity through the other merit badges?
- Promote your unit’s major events and community service projects.
- Word-of-mouth advertising can be a great marketing tool. It is a free and effective method to spread positive messages.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
Pennsylvania Dutch Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: May 22, 2010

Contact: Duane S. Crouse
717-394-4063

Boy Scouts to Collect Food for the hungry during their annual
"Scouting For Food" Campaign

Lancaster/Lebanon, PA-The Scouting For Food Drive is part of the National Boy Scouts of America Good Turn for America program. Good Turn for America aims to make a substantial positive impact on the nation by providing millions of volunteer hours to benefit those in need.

The annual Scouting For Food drive involves thousands of boys, adult leaders, and parents, and gives thousands more an opportunity to provide food to needy families throughout Lancaster and Lebanon counties.

Since its inception, the Boy Scouts of America has trained young people in citizenship, service, and leadership to better serve America's communities and families through its quality, values-based program. Over the past century, the nearly 110 million members of Scouting have provided countless hours of service. The more than 1.7 million Eagle Scouts alone have provided an estimated 36 million hours of service through their Eagle projects. Good Turn for America aims to make a substantial positive impact on the nation by providing millions of volunteer hours to benefit those in need.

The Boy Scouts of America is celebrating their 100th Anniversary throughout the year in 2010. For the past century, the Boy Scouts of America has created a strong foundation of leadership, service, and community for millions of America's youth. We celebrate this legacy as we reaffirm our commitment to inspire and prepare future generations.

The Pennsylvania Dutch Council of the Boy Scouts of America serves and inspires 10,000 boys in Lebanon and Lancaster Counties.

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Use the Council Letterhead, or if your Unit has a letterhead, use that

Provide contact information in case the newspaper needs to call to clarify information or if they have questions.

The headline is one-sentence long. Be clear.

The first paragraph should identify the who, what, where, when and why.

There should be at least two paragraphs that provide detailed information about the person or event

These final two paragraphs are standard "boilerplate" on all releases. It states the BSA mission. After December of this year, references to the 100th Anniversary will be removed.

The three "#" (number signs) indicate the end of the release.

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What's news is worth sharing?

Think about Scouting news items you have seen in your local papers in the past year. The MERCHANDISER has always been willing to publish stories and it is not unusual for them to run front-page features as see on the sample to the right.

On occasion, there have been other articles related to Scouting. If you have something worth sharing, submit it. There is no guarantee that it will get placed but it is always worth a shot.

Of course, there are Eagle Award announcements. Just about all newspapers are willing to publish these releases. See the sample at the bottom, right. For Eagle releases, if possible, include a color or black and white photo of the Eagle Scout in Class A uniform. The copy should include the Scout's name, age, Troop number, city, parents names, school he is currently attending. Many Eagle releases identify the name of the Charter Organization, a description of the Eagle Project, a list of other Scouting Awards and recognitions and interests. These are not difficult to write. When you see an Eagle announcement, cut them out and note those you like and model your releases like those.

On the back cover of this Guidebook you will find a list of all the local newspapers and their contact information.

If you have any questions, call Duane Crouse at the Scout office or contact Jim Castanzo. Their contact information is on the back cover.

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HEMPFIELD TOWNSHIP - MOUNTVILLE EDITION VOL. XXVI, NO. 1 • WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2010

Spaghetti Dinner Will Help Scouts With Camping Trips

By Rick Hahn
Since community involvement became a requirement for high school graduation, some

Dance Performance Will Benefit Schreiber Programs

By Rick Hahn
Since community involvement became a requirement for high school graduation, some

Members of Mountville Boy Scout Troop 349 will cook an all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner from 4:30 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 27. The fundraiser will be held in the fellowship hall of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 100 W. Main St., Mountville.

The meal will include spaghetti with meatballs, salad with choice of dressing, garlic bread, and homemade desserts.

Proceeds from the dinner will be used to purchase camping equipment and cover costs associated with camping trips, which troop members enjoy periodically throughout the year. According to committee member Anne Mayesides, the Scouts have been to numerous camps over the years to enhance the range of camping experiences for the boys who have been with the troop the longest time.

The spaghetti dinner, which



Reluctant Cub Scout now eager leader

By HAROLD ROBINSON
Special to the Sunday News

Happy 100th anniversary to the Boy Scouts of America. Wow! I never thought I'd say this, because I never imagined myself being involved in Scouting. Let me explain.

One day I came home from work and before

and, honestly, didn't care for it. I never even thought about joining the Boy Scouts.

Then one day I was washing my motorcycle in the driveway when my son got off the school bus and came running up to me with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Dad! Dad! You have to call this number! A friend of mine left it with at school

its, and I want id they meet u have to call

new it, I was mber. That o my first pack registered my (myself) with ts. ed, and my son g into a troop, y Scouts of a day goes by naking that d allowing my b Scouts.

I KNOW A STORY

I have read all the statistics in the Scouting magazines, listened to all the speeches about how great Scouting is and why boys should join. I've also heard reasons for kids and parents not joining or dropping out.

I have no graphs or percentage pies, just the bottom line from what I have observed in the three years my son has been involved in Scouting:

Scouting does build confidence and self-esteem and provides boys with life experiences they may not get anywhere else. It helps them in their social development and gives them a sampling of some career choices available. It also teaches them the importance of being involved in their community

and giving.

Scouting does not have to take the place of or overpower sports, church or any other activities or interests a boy may have. My son also plays baseball, basketball, wrestles, is in the school band, church chorus and church youth group.

On the flip side, these activities don't have to override Scouting. They all work well together.

I'm looking forward to meeting you and your son sometime in Scouting's next 100 years—but not that long from now, I hope.

The author, former Pack 13 Webelos leader, is now Troop 58 assistant leader, Twilight Camp director and member of the Scout Camp Benefit Ride committee. For information on scouting, call 394-4063 or visit the Boy Scout office at 630 Janet Ave.

EAGLE SCOUTS



Scott Robert Lenox

Scott Robert Lenox
Troop 90, Mountville

Scott Robert Lenox, 17, of Troop 90, has earned his Eagle Scout rank.

He is the son of Dan and Anna Lenox, of Mountville.

His involvement in scouting began as a Tiger Scout with Cub Scout Pack 159. He received his Arrow of Light in 2004.

With Troop 90, sponsored by Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mountville, his leadership



Elliott Clark

Elliott Clark
Troop 51, Mount Joy

Boy Scout Troop 51 announced that Elliott Clark has been awarded the rank of Eagle Scout.

Elliott is the son of Glenn and Louisa Clark, of Mount Joy. He is a senior at Elizabethtown Area High School where his activities include cross country, marching band, orchestra, orchestra pit, Model United Nations and National Honor Society.



Dylan Bensinger

Dylan Bensinger,
Troop 172, Terre Hill

Dylan Bensinger was awarded the Eagle Scout rank Feb. 27 by Terre Hill Boy Scout Troop 172. He is the son of Daryl and Lida Bensinger, of Narvon.

He is the third member of his family to earn the Eagle rank, after his father and older brother Derek.

For his Eagle project, Dylan straightened and re-installed tombstones at the cemetery of the Caernarvon Historical Society.

Dylan began his scouting career in 1997 as a Tiger in Blue Ball Cub Scout

Unit Web site Guidelines

We've long recognized that unit sites created by individuals at the unit level of Scouting are essentially personal, and therefore beyond the National Council's control or liability. We do offer advisory guidelines to those who publish Scouting-related sites on their own responsibility, and we urge local councils to take the same approach. These guidelines are established to help avoid several common mistakes.

Protection of personal information pertaining to our youth members and volunteers should be our greatest concern. This organization has used COPPA, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, as its standard in this area. You can read the details on compliance at <http://www.coppa.org/comply.htm>. It would be a good practice to share them with unit-level publishers in your council.

A second concern about individual unit sites is copyright infringement. Sadly, photos, music, and video are commonly reused on the Web without permission. Plagiarism is also common. Such practices violate the ethics of Scouting. They are also violations of law, and could expose the publishers legally.

Our third concern is commercialism. We don't allow ads on council sites. We recognize that "free" Web services often used to create unit-level sites may contain advertising. This practice may reflect poorly on the Scouting brand, and should be avoided. A more serious concern would be sites that engage in any fund-raising activities not previously approved by their local council. Any independent sales, solicitation, OR collection of donations

is prohibited by our bylaws and charter agreements.

1. The content of the unit site must be appropriate to the Scouting movement.
2. The unit site cannot link to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Scouting movement.
3. The unit site should not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
4. The unit site cannot engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
5. The unit site cannot replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
6. Unit sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the Internet.
7. Unit sites must consider the safety and privacy of their members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual.
8. Unit sites cannot engage in fund-raising except as directly approved by, and under the supervision of, the local council.



Troop 84





[Contact Us](#)
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[Past Events](#)
[Calendar](#)
[Leadership](#)
[Library](#)
[Links](#)
[New To Scouting?](#)

[Home](#)
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[Calendar](#)
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[Eagle](#)
[Our Eagles](#)
[Library](#)
[Gallery](#)
[Links](#)
[Troop 84 Members](#)
[Crew 84](#)

New to Scouting?

Our troop does activities like Biking, camping, rifle shooting, canoeing, swimming, and more!

Troop 84 was established in July 1967, and is sponsored by St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Litz Pike and Delp Rd, Lancaster PA. The Troop has had six different Scoutmasters; former Scoutmasters are still involved with the Troop in some capacity. Our troop is open to boys who are 11 through 18 years old, have earned their Arrow of Light [Cub Scouting award], or have completed the fifth grade. If they have no scout experience (cubs or webelow) they are still welcome.

Troop 84's mission is to provide each boy with a safe, varied, and exciting Scouting experience; and to help him grow in the Scouting tradition. We will challenge him to advance to Eagle rank. We will provide instruction on the art of leadership, and give him an opportunity to lead. We will promote good citizenship through living the Scout Oath and Law.

The Troop meetings are held at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church Monday evening from 7PM to 8:30 PM. When Manheim Township schools are closed, we generally do not meet. Occasionally, meetings, which fall on a holiday, will be held the following Tuesday, especially if a campout is the following weekend.

Interested? Send an e-mail to the [Scoutmaster](#).


[Send Mail](#)

Do you have news for the site? [Contact the webmaster today!](#)

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[Leadership](#)
[Activities](#)
[Webelos to Scouts](#)
[200 Eagle Scouts](#)

Welcome to Troop 99

At Troop 99 we find adventure in all that we do. From Maine to New Mexico, from the Bahamas to Yellowstone National Park. We have fun providing service to our community and our nation. We expand our boundaries and test our skills as we climb Scouting's Trail to Eagle.

The Troop meets at Highland Presbyterian Church at 7:00 pm on Monday Nights September through June. If you are interested in coming to visit please contact us

This site provides an overview of Troop 99 for interested Scouts and parents. We encourage everyone to explore the site, and to contact us with your questions.



BSA Troop 99
Lancaster, PA

"All Out For Scouting"


Troop 99 is a High Adventure Troop with a very aggressive outdoor program.

TRUSTWORTHY

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Serving the school districts of Lancaster, Donegal, Elizabethtown, Columbia, Manheim Township, Manheim Central, and Hemphfield.

"Building the future of America, one boy at a time."

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Troop 16 before departing for Bayport Scout Reservation

Summer is over and a lot of the Troops and Packs went to camp. If you have a picture of your group at camp and would like to see it on the website, send it along with an explanation of the picture to the site. It will be added to the revolving picture box.

First Roundtable The first roundtable for this Scout year is over and there was lots of information put out. Agendas for both the Cub and Boy roundtables are posted under the District tab. Upcoming events were reviewed as well as Back to School Nite info. Tim, our Council Commissioner gave us a presentation on the Journey to Excellence program. This program replaces the "Quality Unit" award. Take a look at the requirements and how you can meet those. Go to www.scouting.org/scoutsources/Awards/JourneyToExcellence.aspx to see all that is available to you to help you keep track of your accomplishments. Don't wait till you recharter to gather this info. Some things must be entered online or turned in to the Council office in advance. For a quick look at the scorecards, click for [Pack](#) or [Troop](#) file.

District Events! Find out the details and information here when it becomes available. However, when planning for events, the best place to look is the Council Calendar. Each unit gets two in their planning packet, and they are available at the Scout Store. All Council, District, OA, and training events are listed.

District Events, Part 2! If you have not heard, Roundtable location has changed. It is now at the Mountville Church of the Brethren, 60 Clay St. 17554. Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Order of the Arrow meetings are also at the same location and coincide with the Roundtable dates. Check out www.WG39.org for specific OA info. Parking is available on College Ave., Lancaster Public Library parking lot, and the church lot. Enter the church from the main entrance off College Ave.



[View Larger Map](#)

Powered by Google Maps

Packs If you are not aware, the www.beascout.org has your Pack listed. However you need to add the personal contact info to the links. Right now they default to the Pa Dutch Council office. But if you want a way to try and generate more Cub contacts, add your own contact info to your Pack link. You will need your Pack personal id number to register, which you can get by calling the council office.

Cub Camperama Drive make plans for the upcoming Cub

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.The LinkedIn logo, featuring the word "Linked" in black and "in" in white inside a blue square, with a registered trademark symbol.The Twitter logo, featuring the word "twitter" in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Social Media Guidelines

Initially considered simply a way to socialize with friends, “social media” platforms such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are now established as major media channels. These sites let individuals build and utilize personal social networks among friends, family, and colleagues. Both for-profit and nonprofit organizations are using social media as well to build and support their brands, drive engagement, support products, increase sales, and more.

Used properly, these media can be an excellent way for Scouting councils to start a conversation with their target audiences by informing, connecting, and attracting them to Scouting.

There are no hard and fast rules in this new media landscape, aside from the abiding commitment of the BSA to protect children from inappropriate material and maintain the privacy of its membership.

Social media constitute a new form of digital communication providing interaction and dialogue around user-generated content. They go beyond merely pushing content to a reader. Organizations wishing to exploit social media must accept the fact that listening is just as important as speaking in these channels, and Scouters wishing to play in this space should be prepared to do so if they are to reap any value.

With that in mind, we encourage those intending to use social media on behalf of Scouting to note the following:

- Social media has to be monitored. A qualified staff member or volunteer should have responsibility to monitor social media channels.
- Integrate your communications. You have numerous choices—print, Web, e-mail, radio, TV, word of mouth, social media. Create a strategy to surround your target audience with your key message or messages.
- Social media takes a thick skin. Negative conversations are happening already, but now you have a voice in the conversation. Don’t delete negative comments.
- Let your audiences talk about you. By posting content regularly, you can tell your story and encourage conversations in the community.
- Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts. Councils should follow guidelines for responding to negative posts on social media sites. Some negative comments do not warrant a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should temper if and how to respond.
- Direct media inquiries to the appropriate person. Media inquiries coming through social media should be referred to the Scout executive or a designee for an official response.
- Be Scout-like. When disagreeing with others’ opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it’s becoming

antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Ask your Scout executive or the designee for advice on how to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on the BSA.

- Build trust by being open and transparent. Share information about your council and what the challenges and opportunities are for Scouting in your community.

Suggestions on How to Use Social Media

As a new media channel, social media can be used in many ways, from recruiting volunteers and starting units to supporting fund-raising campaigns. The following are just a few suggestions for using social media as part of a council's overall communication strategy. As you work with these channels, you will develop more ways to integrate social media into your communications.

- Make social media part of your overall marketing efforts. Along with traditional media, utilize social networks to build community and support within specific target audiences. Example: Keep your network informed about progress in fund-raising campaigns, recruiting efforts, etc.
- Use social media to tell your story. New improvements at a camp? New campaign? Fund-raising kickoff? Positive results from an effort? Major gifts? Share this information through social media. Tell your story to the people who care about Scouting most and let them share it with others.
- Give your positive PR extended life. Don't just put those news clippings in a binder or post the link to a news story on a Web page. Post it on your social media page and share it with your friends and supporters.
- Use social media sites to generate traffic for your Web site. Alumni? Events? Fund-raising? Updates? Post them on your social media site with links back to your Web site for more information.

facebook Search

Pennsylvania Dutch Council, Boy Scouts of America
Non-Profit Organization · Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Wall Pennsylvania Dutch Council... · Everyone (Top Posts) ▾

Share: Post Photo Link Video

Write something...

Pennsylvania Dutch Council, Boy Scouts of America
Great weekend at Camp Mack for the Order of the Arrow Fall Ordeal. Many new Brothers completed their Ordeal as well as their Brotherhood membership. The ranger at Mack said we did a total of 840 man hours of labor. Way to go!
Like · Dislike · Comment · Share · Yesterday at 5:47pm

Andy Nissly, Ed Rasmuson and 8 others like this.

Write a comment...

Pennsylvania Dutch Council, Boy Scouts of America added 12 new photos to the album

Alley Action Cen
Like · Dislike · Jay M. Laser,
Write a comment

Pennsylvania Dutch Council, Boy Scouts of America
A Great event last possible the brain Reservation.

Is this your business?
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Get Updates via SMS
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Boy Scout Troop 24, Lancaster, PA Like
Organization · Lancaster, Pennsylvania

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Phone Add Telephone Number
Website <http://24scouting.org>
Status Closed now
Hours Thu: 6:30 pm-8:00 pm

Likes and Interests

Likes Order of the Arrow - Boy Scouts of America, Boy Scouts of America

Friend Activity See All

Find out how to start checking in.

Andy Nissly likes Boy Scout Troop 24, Lancaster, PA's video Jul 20, 2011 11:21pm.

Jul 20, 2011 11:21pm
Horsemanship MB rides past Greenleaf.
Length: 0:25

Is this your business?
Create a Page
Get Updates via RSS
Report Page

Boy Scouts of America Social Media Guidelines

[Note: It is not the goal of this document to provide a step-by-step “how to” on creating and using the specific features of social media channels. Such guides already exist and can be found elsewhere. Additionally, social media changes regularly, so this document reflects the current guidelines as determined by the BSA and is subject to modifications and amendments from time to time as required.]

INTRODUCTION

It’s an exciting time to be part of the BSA for many reasons. One of those is that new communication vehicles now enable current and past Scouts and Scouters, as well as those who are interested in participating or are just interested in Scouting in general, to communicate directly with each other about Scouting. Online social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made it possible for virtually anyone with an Internet connection to create and be part of online communities where people can discuss Scouting and share stories, photos, videos, and other types of media.

Although using social media is not a Scouting activity, their use to connect with others interested in Scouting can be a very positive experience. But the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility. For that reason, the Boy Scouts of America has developed the following guidelines to help you navigate the use of social media channels. These guidelines are a complement to the BSA’s existing Youth Protection policies and training.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH PROTECTION

First, everyone should review and strictly adhere to the terms of service and existing guidelines outlined by each individual social media channel (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.). As is true for participation in Scouting activities, all Scouts and adult leaders should abide by the guidelines outlined in the Scout Oath and Law when participating in social networking. As with a Scouting activity, safety and Youth Protection should be a key focus. Staying true to the commitment of the BSA to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off, should always be at the forefront of any considerations where social media usage is concerned.

To help ensure that all communication on social media channels remains positive and safe, these channels must be public, and all communication on or through them must be public. This enables administrators to monitor all communication and help ensure there is no inappropriate communication between adult leaders and Scouts or between Scouts themselves. Therefore, no private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invite-only YouTube channels) are acceptable in helping to administer the Scouting program. Private channels and private communication put both the youth and you at risk. If you feel the information you seek to share via social media channels should not be shared in public, you should not share that information via social media.

Abiding by the “two deep” leadership policy that governs all Scouting activities also applies to use of social media.

Two-deep leadership means two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips and outings.

As it relates to social media, two-deep leadership means there should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging (Google Messenger, AIM, etc.), or other similar messaging features provided through social media sites. All communication between adults and youth should take place in a public forum (e.g. the Facebook wall), or at a bare minimum, electronic communication between adults and youth should always include one or more authorized adults openly “copied” (included) on the message or message thread.

While all communication should be public and leaders should follow the two-deep rule while communicating via social media channels, it is recommended that as you and members of your group create personal social media profiles, the personal information on these profiles should be kept private (e.g., do not display your phone number, address, or personal email address on these profiles). It is recommended that any Scouts with personal profiles for social media make those profiles private so the Scout’s personal information is not accessible by the public. In creating personal profiles, everyone should familiarize themselves with and abide by the terms of service of the sites where they create and maintain personal profiles.

INTERNET SAFETY GUIDELINES

Any Scout units that plan to use social media should share the following Internet safety guidelines with Scouts, parents, and leaders, and all Scouts should abide by the following Internet safety guidelines and personal protection rules:

- Keep online conversations with everyone in public places, not in email.
- Do not give anyone online your real last name, phone numbers at home or school, your parents’ workplaces, or the name or location of your school or home address unless you have your parents’ permission first. Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other adult in your family.
- If someone sends or shows you email or any type of direct message/wall post with sayings that make you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts. You are probably right to be wary. Do not respond. Tell a parent or trusted adult what happened.
- If somebody tells you to keep what’s going on between the two of you secret, tell a parent or guardian.
- Be careful to whom you talk. Anyone who starts talking about subjects that make you feel uncomfortable is probably an adult posing as a kid.
- Pay attention if someone tells you things that don’t fit together. If one time an online “friend” says he or she is 12, and another time says he or she is 14. That is a warning that this person is lying and may be an adult posing as a kid.
- Unless you talk to a parent about it first,

never talk to anybody by phone if you know that person only online. If someone asks you to call—even if it's collect or a toll-free, 800 number—that's a warning. That person can get your phone number this way, either from a phone bill or from caller ID.

- Never agree to meet someone you have met only online at any place off-line, in the real world.
- Watch out if someone online starts talking about hacking, or breaking into other people's or companies' computer systems; phreaking (the "ph" sounds like an "f"), the illegal use of long-distance services or cellular phones; or viruses (online programs that destroy or damage data when other people download these onto their computers).
- Promise your parent or an adult family member and yourself that you will honor any rules about how much time you are allowed to spend online and what you do and where you go while you are online.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

For practical considerations, the BSA expects adults intending to use social media on behalf of Scouting to follow the following:

- Social media must be monitored. A qualified staff member or volunteer should have the responsibility of monitoring social media channels daily, and backup administrators/monitors should be designated so there is no gap in the monitoring.
- Integrate your communications. Create a

strategy to surround your intended audience with your key message(s) through print, the Web, email, radio, TV, word of mouth, and social media.

- Talk to your audiences and let them talk to and about you. By posting content on a consistent schedule, you can tell your story and encourage conversations in the community.
- Social media takes a thick skin. Negative conversations are happening already, but now you have a voice in the conversation. • Don't delete negative comments unless they violate the terms laid out in the BSA Social Media Digital Contract.
- Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts if response is warranted. Some negative comments do not require a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should temper if and how you respond.
- Direct media inquiries to the appropriate person. Media inquiries coming through social media should be referred to the Scout executive or a designee for an official response.
- Be Scout-like. When disagreeing with others' opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Ask your Scout executive or the designee for advice on how to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on the BSA.
- Build trust by being open and transparent. Share information and what the

challenges and opportunities are for Scouting in your community.

KEY SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE

There are many social media channels available to users, and new channels are being introduced frequently. As such, it would be impossible to provide information on all of them. We will focus on three of the most popular and most applicable to Scouting. Those channels are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Facebook

Facebook is a wonderful way to form online communities where groups of people can gather to have conversations and share information. Indeed, the BSA National Council as well as many local councils and even some units are already using Facebook to communicate about Scouting. Of course, creating and maintaining a Facebook page for your council or unit is a big responsibility and should not be entered into lightly.

It may be valuable to think of a Facebook page as a little like a troop meeting that is always open, always going on, and where members of the public may drop by and watch or participate at any time of day or night. That means Scouts and Scouters can be even more involved in sharing the fun and excitement of Scouting and be a more active part of the group discussion—even when they're at home. But it's also easy to see how, if left unstructured or unattended by Scout leaders, this never-ending meeting could easily become a problem.

When considering whether or not Facebook might be a good option for your council or unit, it is important to remember that Facebook requires all users to be at least 13 years of age. Before creating a Facebook page, you should educate yourself about what Facebook is and how it is used, and familiarize yourself with its terms of service. This will help you navigate carefully in your development of a fan page.

When creating a Facebook page, you should make it a public fan page. In addition, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the BSA. At least one of these page administrators should be a BSA employee, a local council employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training. All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the use of the messaging capabilities of Facebook.

Perhaps the biggest strength of Facebook is also its biggest weakness: Facebook fan pages are open to the public, which means any information shared on that fan page can be viewed by essentially anyone. As such, you should make sure that any information shared on that page by you or by your fans is information that is appropriate to share with the public. This is especially true regarding the level of detail you provide regarding Scouts and their activities.

For the Info Tab of your Facebook page, you should use the guidelines set forth on the BSA National Council Facebook Info Tab in its Digital Contract, found here:

<http://www.facebook.com/BoyScoutsofAmerica#!/BoyScoutsofAmerica?sk=info>

Once you have created a Facebook fan page, invited people to “like” your page and started gathering “fans,” it is important for you to post good and appropriate content and monitor the content that is posted to your wall. Unfortunately, not all the content posted to the wall by your fans may be appropriate. All content posted by you or by fans on the Facebook wall should conform to the precepts of the Scout Oath and Law. Content that does not meet that standard should be removed immediately.

If a user posts highly offensive content, the content should be removed immediately, and you may need to block or ban the user who posted it. Such an action should not be used liberally but only when content is truly objectionable.

This type of careful monitoring requires vigilance. Before creating a Facebook page, you should consider whether you or someone else who will administer the page will be able to monitor that page and post content consistently to help ensure that only appropriate content is posted. Pages with inconsistent and infrequent updates can cause your fans to become disinterested, and your page can become a target for spammers or other predatory parties who recognize that you appear not to be actively involved on your page.

As with any online site, it is highly important that you do not give out personal information about Scouts or Scouters to anyone on Facebook. Every effort should be made to help ensure that your fans and those Scouts and Scouters that use the Facebook page are protected. Keep-

ing Scouts safe and keeping their private information safe should be the primary concern in any endeavor involving them—whether that’s keeping them safe on a camping trip or keeping them safe on the unit Facebook fan page.

Twitter

Because of its 140-character-per-post limit and relative lack of multimedia capabilities, Twitter is designed for quick, simple updates and also can be used like instant messaging or email to have conversations with one or more people in a mostly public forum.

Twitter can be a great place to share quick observations, provide updates about programs, share training deadlines, link to other websites with event details, share great Scouting stories, and have an informal conversation with followers. In general, Twitter has a more personal voice, meaning posts on Twitter are expected to be relatively informal and friendly. It is also important to remember that Twitter is a public forum and is viewable by virtually anyone. That means content placed on Twitter should be acceptable to your specific intended audience of followers as well as a wider audience.

Some direct-messaging capabilities exist with Twitter; however, adults should not use these direct-messaging capabilities when dealing with Scouts. All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the messaging capabilities of Twitter. Before starting a Twitter account for your council or unit, familiarize yourself with Twitter’s terms of service and adhere to those guidelines.

When creating a Twitter account for your unit or council, you should designate at

least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the BSA. At least one of these page administrators should be a BSA employee, a local council employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training.

In addition, all content posted on your Twitter account should be in line with the Scout Oath and Law. That includes never “tweeting” (posting) content that is un-Scout-like or responding to a tweet in an un-Scout-like manner to anyone interacting with you through your Twitter account.

Twitter should be updated regularly and watched closely so responses can be provided to people requesting information or trying to start a conversation.

YouTube

YouTube is primarily a video-hosting and -viewing platform. It lets you upload videos to a channel you manage. Once on your YouTube channel, each video has an individual URL and can be viewed on YouTube or shared as a link or embedded (by you, your fans, and members of the public) via other social media outlets and on websites. Before starting a YouTube channel for your council or unit, familiarize yourself with the site’s terms of service and adhere to those guidelines.

When creating a YouTube channel, your channel must be public. There should be no private groups. In addition, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep lead-

ership policies of the BSA. At least one of these page administrators should be a BSA employee, a local council employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training.

Like the other social media channels, the public at large has access to your videos and may view and comment on them unless you set viewing restrictions in your settings. If you enable comments, you should monitor those comments regularly to be sure they are appropriate. YouTube also has messaging features (similar to email). All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the messaging capabilities of YouTube.

Having a YouTube channel is a great way to share videos of events, how-to videos, awards ceremony videos, and other videos that would be good to share with members of the group as well as the public.

An important consideration for YouTube or any similar site that features videos and/or images of Scouts is that all videos/images should adhere to recommended Youth Protection policies and should protect the privacy of individual Scouts. Additionally, all videos should show Scouts and leaders following designated appropriate guidelines and wearing proper attire for whatever activity is being undertaken in the video. All safety and Youth Protection policies must be followed for any Scouting activities, including those being captured on video.

Final Thoughts

It is important to remember that all social media channels are, by nature, designed to be social, that is, shared with members of the public. As such, whatever social media activities you engage in should be

completed with the understanding that the public will see them and may engage in an online dialogue with you as a result. You should not do anything on a social media channel that reflects poorly on you, other individuals in your council or unit, the Boy Scouts of America, or anyone else. Before posting any content on any social media channel, you should first ask yourself if that content is in keeping with the precepts of the Scout Oath and Law.

As an additional consideration, once created, social media channels and the content on them “live forever” on the Internet, sometimes even if the accounts have been deleted. That means social media channels created today may still exist five, 10, or 15 years from now, in some cases long after those who started them are no longer involved directly with Scouting. As such, considerations should be made regarding the transitioning of administration rights and duties if and when the initial administrators end their direct involvement in Scouting.

Also, organizations wishing to use social media must accept the fact that listening is just as important as speaking in these channels, and those wishing to participate in this space should be prepared to listen if they are to reap any value.

Social media can be a powerful tool for sharing the joys and triumphs of Scouting, but if not executed properly, it can be a detriment to everything Scouting represents. As such, engage in social media activities wisely. Also realize that social media is a new and evolving form of communication that requires flexibility, patience, and commitment, but the rewards of increased connection with, and

understanding of, your target audience can be great.

In your social media communications, you should be clear that it is not an official BSA social media channel but is instead your own personal channel. You can use the following template as an example:

“This site is the personal [reference your specific social media channel] of [your name or organization] and is reflective only of my personal views, thoughts, and opinions. This site does not have the endorsement of the Boy Scouts of America, and it is not an official communication channel of the Boy Scouts of America.”

Should you have questions regarding any of the guidelines and/or recommendations or concerning the use of a specific social media channel not covered here, please feel free to contact the BSA National Council social media team at social.media@scouting.org for further guidance.

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There is also great information and
resources on the BSA National website. It
is work checking out:
www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Marketing.aspx

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