



Public Relations Handbook

For NARFE Chapters
and Federations



Table of Contents

FOREWORD	1
PUBLIC RELATIONS	2
Introduction	2
External & Internal.....	3
Goals for NARFE PR Programs.....	4
THE MEDIA.....	6
Print Media	6
Electronic Media	7
Getting Ready to Meet The Media	8
Media Contact List.....	8
BEYOND THE NEWS.....	10
Letters to the Editor.....	10
Special Newspaper Features & Sections.....	10
Flyers & Brochures	10
Public/Community Affairs Programs	10
Radio Talk/Call-In Shows.....	11
Public Access Channels/Cablecast	11
THE PRESS RELEASE	12
How To Write & Use	12
Sample Release	14
THE MEDIA INTERVIEW	15
COMMUNITY RELATIONS & PUBLIC SERVICE.....	17
TIPS ON PUBLIC SPEAKING	18
CHAPTER & FEDERATION NEWSLETTERS.....	20
THE INTERNET	22
INTERNET ADVERTISING	23
AFTERWORD	24
INDEX	25

Foreword

Public relations is essential for the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE). It is important for promoting membership and the NARFE message. It is important for increased understanding and support of NARFE's legislative agenda. It helps to shape the public's perception of federal retirees and current federal workers. And, public relations helps to increase awareness of the significant community service contributions being made by NARFE volunteers throughout the United States and around the world.

This NARFE Public Relations Handbook is designed to help those who are responsible for public relations in NARFE federations and chapters.

The chapter public relations officer is NARFE's principal means of positive communication with the press and local public concerning NARFE activities and accomplishments.

Public Relations Officer Basic Responsibilities

- ★ To make NARFE known throughout the community by informing the public about chapter meetings and activities.
- ★ To foster public appreciation of NARFE and federal retirees and employees in the community.
- ★ To increase public respect for the chapter as a constructive element in the community.
- ★ To ensure that elected officials from your state and district are kept fully informed on issues affecting NARFE chapter members.
- ★ To make a continuing effort to see that newspaper editors and radio/television producers receive and understand the facts, and NARFE's position, on controversial issues.
- ★ To create opportunities for chapter and other Association officers to address civic, business, religious and other local organizations.
- ★ To study position papers, fact sheets and other informational material from the National Office and put the material to use.
- ★ To be alert to opportunities to sign up new members and publicize any chapter recruitment activities. Coordinate closely with membership chairperson.
- ★ To work with chapter and federation officers to stimulate activity and interest of members.

Public Relations

INTRODUCTION

Clearly, personal contact is the most effective means of communication. The opportunity to tell someone about NARFE's purpose and benefits of membership face-to-face gives you a chance to personalize the message and, moreover, an opportunity to gauge reaction. The message about NARFE can be adjusted to accommodate the interests and even objections of the listener.

For instance, a prospective member's voiced concern about annual membership dues can be addressed by a careful explanation of the affordability of NARFE membership and its many benefits, including *NARFE* magazine and NARFE PERKS. The prospect who is interested in legislative issues can be told in great detail about NARFE's involvement on Capitol Hill and in statehouses across the nation.

This personal contact can be extended and expanded. NARFE Retirement Service Centers provide an important public service and, in turn, provide an excellent opportunity to reach potential NARFE members. Sponsoring and participating in pre-retirement seminars (PRS), NARFE pre-retirement seminar leaders are reaching tens of thou-

sands of potential NARFE members each year. The public service activities of NARFE chapters, such as the important contributions being made in the area of Alzheimer's disease research, help to increase public awareness of NARFE, its involvement, and its message.

As the person responsible for your chapter or federation public relations program, you have the opportunity to further extend and expand the reach of NARFE, to strengthen communications among its members, and most importantly, you have the opportunity to promote NARFE's goals and objectives.

SUGGESTED PR OBJECTIVES

- ★ Protect the interests and advance the causes of federal retirees and survivors in Congress
- ★ Increase NARFE membership and revenue
- ★ Build public appreciation for retired federal employees and their families
- ★ Increase public stature for your NARFE chapter/federation as a community and issues leader and make known the contributions by members to their communities
- ★ Inform local and state officials of NARFE's interest and positions on issues affecting your members
- ★ See that newspaper, radio, and television editors understand the NARFE position on controversial issues
- ★ Work with NARFE officers to teach Congress and the public that the well-being of public employees has a direct effect on the quality of government

Welcome to the field of public relations. The philosophical hows and whys, along with the multitude of academic definitions views and theories, are beyond the scope of this handbook. This handbook is more concerned with the rewards of persistence, identifying and using existing technologies effectively, and pulling off a few public relations

miracles here and there.

The purpose of a public relations program is to achieve defined goals and objectives using effective communications tools and techniques. The goals and objectives may include earning favorable public recognition, promoting understanding, or encouraging action.

For NARFE, public relations is important for gaining and maintaining public understanding and support. It is essential for informing elected officials and for influencing legislation and policies that affect federal retirees. Public relations helps highlight the public service contributions being made by NARFE chapters and federations. Public relations helps to attract new members. Most importantly, public relations can help achieve the goals outlined in the preamble of NARFE's constitution.

In order that the retired employees may receive from the Government of the United States remuneration to which their long and faithful service entitles them; to aid them in securing their rights under the retirement law; for the promotion of their general welfare; and to secure legislation perfecting the retirement law the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association has been formed.

PREAMBLE TO NARFE'S CONSTITUTION

THE "PUBLIC" IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

With the goals and objectives of a public relations program established, we must then consider where our message, information and efforts will be directed. The "public" in public relations includes internal and external audiences.

Internal Public Relations

Internal public relations is targeted toward NARFE members. Public relations helps promote communications among the membership, chapters, federations and NARFE National Headquarters. It provides important information on legislative positions, developments and initiatives. It serves to promote public service activities and fellowship. In short, the internal public relations program encourages individual NARFE members to work together to achieve our goals and objectives.

The best means of communicating with our members is a chapter newsletter. The public relations officer may serve as the newsletter editor, or a separate member may serve in that capacity. In either event, public relations and newsletter publishing are related activities and should complement each other in communicating NARFE messages.

External Public Relations

External public relations is meant for the general public, with special consideration given to targeted audiences, ie. potential members. NARFE's external public relations program seeks to generate favorable public recognition for federal workers and federal retirees. Beyond the general public, our external public relations efforts should also

include: elected officials, groups and organizations with shared concerns and interests, and the media.

POSSIBLE GOALS FOR NARFE CHAPTER/FEDERATION PR PROGRAMS

The following objectives and goals are simply to illustrate the kind of activities you might consider appropriate for your public relations plan. In each chapter and federation there are unique circumstances and individuals that might help advance the overall goals of the organization. Use the resources and talents that are available to you in your chapter or federation.

- Make a concerted effort to get favorable news items published periodically.
- Learn the needs, deadlines and structure of your local newsroom.
- Develop working relationships with news directors, editors, producers, and reporters of print and electronic media.
- Develop story ideas around NARFE's views on events and legislation affecting individual local members.
- Create opportunities for chapter and federation officers to address civic, business, religious and community organizations in your town. Urge chapter/federation members to wear NARFE badges. Use every opportunity to identify yourselves with NARFE.
- Invite your elected officials (local, state and national) and candidates for elected office to speak at your chapter/federation meetings. Send out releases and media alerts announcing the visits; in general, seek out press attendance.
- Study and use position papers, fact sheets, articles and other materials generated by NARFE headquarters, such as *Quarterly News*, Legislative Hotline, *NARFE* magazine and GEMS messages.
- Set up a NARFE display at fairs, community meetings and in conjunction with special events, such as during Public Service Recognition Week.

The Multiplier Effect

NARFE's PR procedure calls for our members and officers throughout America to do as much public and media relations as possible in their own communities. Our members are best equipped to identify and respond to media challenges in their own communities, since they live there, know many local personalities and newsmakers, and are familiar with local issues. Furthermore, newspapers and broadcast stations usually show a preference for airing the views of community residents rather than those of professional spokespeople.

National Headquarters provides training, guidance and information to federations and chapters, who then spread the word in their communities, allowing more people to hear NARFE's message. Thus, the Multiplier Effect is an excellent use of NARFE's most important resources: our vigilant and energetic members. Of course, National Headquarters stands ready to handle challenging cases upon request from the field, as



well as dealing with the Washington media and national publications.

In the following chapters, you will find information designed to assist you in developing a public relations program. Keep in mind that your audiences, internal and external, are equally important for achieving NARFE's goals and objectives. Finally, know that, as a public relations officer, you are providing an essential service for your chapter, federation, and for our association.

.....
The Media

AN OVERVIEW

In our information-driven society, there is an abundance of messages competing for our attention. Nowhere is this more evident than in the media and related areas. Newsletters and direct mail, signs and billboards, newspapers and magazines, radio and television and the Internet are all vying to inform us, entertain us, or motivate us to buy, sell, borrow, or get involved. A quick trip across our radio dial or through our television channels provides a sampling of the many different ways information is delivered. As the person responsible for public relations, you will want to become familiar with the media and related fields. This knowledge will enhance your understanding of how the media works and, in turn, prepare you to make full use of available media to promote the NARFE message and membership in your chapter/federation.

The media is usually divided into two descriptive categories—print media and electronic media. The print media includes newspapers, magazines, newsletters and other publications. The electronic media, also referred to as the broadcast media, includes radio and television, but can also include technologies such as video infomercials, satellite transmissions, computer-generated telephone calls, and online computer news and information services.

PRINT MEDIA

Newspapers

Local daily and weekly newspapers remain a vital source of news and information in our communities. Local newspapers play an important role in the development of a successful public relations program.

Regional & Specialty Newspapers

In many areas, there are newspapers devoted to regional coverage. These papers cover a larger area than your local newspapers but will usually have a page or section dedicated to information and news from your community. There may be a special page or section geared toward a specific audience, such as senior citizens or federal workers. Specialty newspapers would include those that target a specific group or community, such as the growing number of newspapers solely designed for retirees or the newspaper published for the local federal installation. Another useful, however often overlooked, publication is the local Buyer's Guide or Shopper's Guide. These specialty publications have a good readership, and while they may not accept news items like those sent to regular newspapers, they usually will have a "Community Bulletin Board" for meeting announcements and may provide Public Service Announcement (PSA) space for such things as NARFE Retirement Service Centers and NARFE chapter or federation-sponsored public service activities.

.....

Newsletters & Direct Mail

In addition to your chapter or federation newsletter (which is covered thoroughly in a later chapter of this handbook), there may be newsletters published in your area that could be included in your public relations program. Newsletters published for communities, subdivisions, churches, government installations and others should all be considered and viewed as potential vehicles for promoting the NARFE image, message and membership.



While there may not be a great opportunity for a full-blown direct mail public relations campaign in your chapter or federation, you should be familiar with the tools and techniques, which can be effective even on a limited basis. For instance, a list of potential NARFE members can be compiled and a copy of the chapter or federation newsletter or a recent, appropriate press release could be directly mailed to them.

ELECTRONIC (BROADCAST) MEDIA

Radio

There are more than 13,000 radio stations in the United States. These stations vary in size, coverage, and programming. While there is an increasing number of stations adopting a “talk radio” format, many radio stations still feature music with consideration given to demographics, listener preference and market segmentation.

Knowing who is listening to a radio station helps advertisers decide on which station to buy time. The same information can help public relations practitioners when they are trying to identify which radio stations have the audience they are trying to reach.

As you start to analyze and become more familiar with your media market, you will be able to identify which radio stations can help in your efforts to deliver the NARFE message and promote membership.

Television

There are almost 2,000 television stations and some 10,000 cable systems in the United States. Some television stations are affiliated with networks, such as CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS or FOX. The bulk of the programming on network-affiliated stations originates from the network and is not produced locally. However, network-affiliated stations usually have some locally produced shows, including news, weather, sports and community/public affairs programming.

Independent television stations (those not affiliated with a major network) provide a clear alternative in program choices. The programs on these stations will vary from region to region, town to town. Where one independent station may feature old movies and reruns, another may focus on programs of interest to a specific group or groups within the community it serves. As with radio, becoming more familiar with the programming of your local television stations—network affiliates and independents—will help you identify which stations provide the best opportunities for promoting NARFE.

One of the most important developments in television has been the rise in the number of cable systems. More specifically, the increase in public access cable television and other community cable channels has created new opportunities for individuals and groups to produce and present their own television programs. In a later chapter, we will take a more detailed look at public access cable television and how it can be used as part of your public relations program

GETTING READY TO MEET THE MEDIA

Media relations is a key component of the job done by those responsible for chapter/federation public relations. Working from a list of the media and other appropriate outlets, you can communicate important information about NARFE, its purpose and its legislative agenda. You can strengthen NARFE's identity by sharing news about your chapter/federation activities. And, through your media relations efforts you can increase and strengthen NARFE membership.

“The basics of establishing an effective communications program within the chapter can also be used to develop an effective external public relations program.”

While the newsletter may be the cornerstone of communications within the chapter/federation, a media relations program will use a variety of tools and techniques, including press releases, press conferences, media interviews, talk show appearances, letters to the editor and media kits. The foundation of your media relations program will be your media contact list.

CREATING A MEDIA CONTACT LIST

The media contact list helps organize essential information. This list should include your local newspapers, radio stations, television stations and other media-related outlets. This list should also identify key people at the media outlets, such as news editors, program directors and others. The list can also include other publications and organizations. For instance, the local federal installation may have an employee newsletter or quarterly paper that you will want to include.

Information for the media contact list can be gathered from a number of sources. The NARFE home page, www.narfe.org, is one great source. After signing in as a member, click on the Legislation section, go to Legislative Action Center, and click Media Guide. Then type in your ZIP code. This will give you a list of media in your area. You can also go to the “Yellow Pages” in your local phone book. Under the headings of Newspapers,

Radio Stations and Television Stations, you will find basic information about your local media.

The media list information should be listed in a way that makes it easy to use. For example:

Anytown Clarion-Bugle
Reporter or Editor Name
Title (City Editor, Business Editor, etc.)
123 Main Street
Anytown, MD 01234
(301)123-4567
Fax (301)345-6789
E-mail address

These suggested press entries provide the essential information needed for creating a media contact list. From these entries, you can develop a mailing list for press releases and media advisories. In addition, you can develop a media telephone contact list for follow up calls, timely announcements or scheduling changes. The media list can also include other important information, such as deadlines, notes about special public affairs programs or special editions of the local paper.

Knowing the deadlines (when a paper goes to press or a radio/television news program makes final preparations to go on-the-air) helps to ensure that materials arrive in a timely and usable manner. Some daily newspapers have more than one deadline. There may be early and “Final” editions. Weekly papers will want materials two to three days before the paper goes to press. Radio and television news departments will want reasonable time to develop and produce news stories for broadcast. Information concerning the deadlines of particular media outlets is important and should be included as part of your media contact list.

An essential public relations tool, the media contact list helps organize the important information you need to develop a media relations program.

Beyond the News

Beyond the front page, beyond the radio or television newscast, there are a number of opportunities to promote the NARFE message and membership. While soft news stories can provide a consistent presence for your chapter/federation, the opportunities that lie beyond the news mainstream should be considered when putting together a public relations program. A media availability inventory can help you identify and organize opportunities that go beyond the news. In Chapter 2, we talked about developing a media contact list to help identify and categorize the different media outlets in your area. The media inventory goes one step further and identifies the public relations opportunities that exist at each media outlet.

The local newspaper may have special sections or features that would be appropriate for NARFE-related stories and information. The local radio and television stations may have public/community affairs programming. And, the local cable television system should provide public access channels for use by individuals and organizations in the community. Developing a media availability inventory calls on us to look beyond the news and analyze the public relations potential of media outlets. A media availability inventory may include:

Letters to the Editor

The editorial page, one of the most-read sections of the newspaper, is an excellent forum for promoting the NARFE message. In many instances, an editorial written by a NARFE member has not only increased awareness and concern for a specific issue but also has increased public awareness of NARFE's very existence, which promotes membership and support for NARFE's positions. Letters to the editor are excellent methods of responding to incorrect or slanted stories about federal retirees and their retirement benefits.

Special Newspaper Features & Sections

Many newspapers have special features and sections that focus on specific communities and neighborhoods in their coverage area. There may be a special feature that spotlights people, events or activities. Smaller newspapers may even be receptive to a regular column written for federal retirees to talk about important federal retiree issues and concerns. A newspaper column for and about federal retirees would be extremely appropriate in areas where there are a large number of federal retirees.



Flyers & Brochures

Flyers, brochures and posters are all good ways to promote NARFE and your chapter or federation. Start taking stock of all the places you see where other groups and organizations are placing their announcements and information, and determine whether NARFE materials could be put there as well.

.....

Public/Community Affairs Programs

Local radio and television stations provide opportunities for community-based groups and organizations to discuss issues and events of public interest. By identifying and becoming familiar with the public/community affairs programs in your community, you can determine which ones should be included in your public relations plan.

Radio Talk/Call-In Shows

Talk radio programs provide a double opportunity for public relations practitioners. First, there is the opportunity to appear on the program. The chapter or federation legislative chair or other officer could be scheduled on a talk radio program to present a federal retiree's perspective on current events and issues. A NARFE public service activity could be featured. Or, a representative from the local NARFE Retirement Service Center could appear on a program to talk about services provided by the center and to answer callers' questions.



Another public relations opportunity provided by talk radio is the chance to participate in the program as a caller. By participating in the program, the NARFE caller can increase public awareness about NARFE and the concerns of federal retirees. While some subjects may not lend themselves to NARFE's objectives and message, you should be alert to opportunities to interject a NARFE point of view.

Public Access Channels/Cablecast

Provided as part of local cable franchise agreements, public access channels provide an excellent public relations opportunity for NARFE chapters and federations to participate in existing programs or to produce their own "cablecast."

With public access, air time on a local cable channel is provided free of charge or for a small fee, usually on a first come, first served basis. Production facilities and equipment, along with professional assistance, may also be provided. You can check with your local cable television company or the local governmental body that issued a franchise license to the company for detailed information. The franchise licensing agreement outlines public access channel availability and what services and assistance the cable company will provide.

In addition to public access channels, your local cable company may also have education and government access channels. These channels may also provide public relations opportunities for your chapter/federation.

These are but a sampling of the public relations opportunities that exist "beyond the news." By developing a media availability inventory for your community, you will be able to identify the appropriate opportunities to include for your use.

The Press Release

THE PRESS RELEASE: HOW TO WRITE IT, HOW TO USE IT

The press release is the most common tool used in public relations. Your release tells editors and reporters what news you have to offer and gives them the chance to weigh it against other demands for news space or time. Remember, though, a release is not the only vehicle for telling about NARFE and may not be the best one. (Check Chapter 3, “Beyond the News” and Chapter 6, “Community Relations” for other suggestions.)

A typical big city newspaper or TV station gets literally hundreds of releases every single day. An editor doesn’t have time to do much more than give each one a glance. In many big city newsrooms, they may not even get opened. Reporters and editors say that they use only 2 percent of the releases they receive. Don’t lose heart, though; they also say that 60 percent of news stories are suggested by PR practitioners. This means you have to create a “news hook”—show its importance—in the headline and again in the first paragraph or “lead” of your news release.

Content of the Release

Whenever possible, the first paragraph or lead should answer the five basic questions of a news story: Who, What, When, Where, Why. The headline on your release is nothing more than an abbreviated version of the lead. The paragraphs that follow the lead provide supporting details.

Pointers for Writing your Press Release:

- ✍ Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. That’s not always possible, but it’s a good rule of thumb. One page is best, but no more than two pages, fronts only, is recommended.
- ✍ Give exact dates of events. Use “Thursday, September 1, 2011,” rather than “next Thursday” or “tomorrow.” Check all days and dates on a calendar. Use a.m. or p.m.
- ✍ If your news release concerns an upcoming event, include the address as well as the name of the place.
- ✍ Give the town of residence for all the people mentioned.
- ✍ Spell out numbers from one to nine; use numerals for 10 and above. Do not begin a sentence with numerals.
- ✍ Check all names for accuracy and spelling. The first mention of a name is “John Smith of Newark.” Subsequent mentions are “Mr. Smith,” although the editor may delete the “Mr.”
- ✍ Attribute any opinions. For example, According to Mr. Smith, “The reluctance of the mayor to release funds is hindering the programs for the elderly.”

- The second paragraph should be devoted to developing the “news hook” of the story in a succinct, declarative way.
- If an individual is the subject of a release, substantiate his/her qualifications in the third paragraph by ranking them from most to least impressive.
- In the fourth paragraph, state the relevance of the individual or event to the NARFE chapter/federation.
- Include a final “boiler plate” paragraph on NARFE that identifies the Association and provides membership statistics both nationally and locally.

Format of the Release

- Use your official chapter/federation letterhead for the release.
- Type the release, double spaced, fronts only.
- Type the headlines in capital letters.
- The text should have generous margins on both sides (NARFE uses 1”); center on the top and bottom.
- If you have a sharp, clear glossy photograph (black and white) that goes well with your story, include it. Carefully identify the photo and everyone in it (from left to right) on a second piece of paper (typed) and attach to back of photo with a single piece of scotch tape. NEVER WRITE ON THE BACK OF A PHOTOGRAPH, and never send Polaroids.
- Keep a copy of all releases filed in chronological order.
- Give the following information at the top of the page. It can go in either the left or righthand corner, but should be consistent:

CONTACT: John Roberts
301-123-4567 (office)
301-234-5678 (home)

This tells an editor or reporter whom to call if there is a question about your news. In the other corner type:

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, September 1, 2010.

Before you mail or deliver your release, check spelling and typing for accuracy.

SEE SAMPLE RELEASE ON PAGE 14

**NEWS
FROM**



NARFE

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

606 North Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1914
(703) 838-7760 • FAX (703) 838-7785
E-Mail: nathq@narfe.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — September 1, 2011

CONTACT: John Roberts
301-123-4567 (office)
301-234-5678 (home)

**FEDERAL RETIREES TAKE LITTLE COMFORT IN BUDGET PROCESS:
NARFE CALLS ON LAWMAKERS TO “HOLD FAST” ON EARNED,
PROMISED BENEFITS**

Federal retirees can take little comfort in the fact that the administration's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year does not recommend cuts in their earned and promised retirement benefits.

“We know from experience that the congressional budget process can create cuts not even called for by the Administration,” said John Roberts, a Legislative Officer with the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE).

Mr. Roberts called on members of the House Budget Committee to “hold fast” against any congressional budget proposals that might diminish earned and promised federal retirement and survivor benefits.

NARFE, with some 1,500 chapters and almost 360,000 members, is the only association dedicated to protecting the earned retirement benefits of federal employees and retirees.

The Media Interview

Preparation is the key. Whatever your interview goal, first clearly define it in your mind and on paper. This will help you remember the main points to make and will keep you focused on these points during the interview. Focus on two or three points you want to make during the interview. Be sure to make them over and over. You don't have to avoid questions, but your responsibility is to make NARFE's points quickly and effectively, then answer the interviewer's questions. The techniques described in this section work equally well for print or radio/TV.

There is evidence that a television viewer makes a decision about a speaker's credibility within the first 25 seconds. It is vital, then, to be prepared to speak easily and naturally, to know what is the most important message you wish to present, and then to do it. Here are steps you can take to ensure that you will appear to be a poised, confident and experienced expert on the subject.

Find out as much as possible about the interviewer

If you are booked for a radio or TV appearance, for example, watch or listen to at least three or four shows to determine the interviewer's style, the kinds of questions asked, and whether he/she is bland or abrasive. For a print interview, read the reporter's column or some of his/her stories written for the paper.

Summarize your main points

With your objectives in mind, list the main points you want to make. Typing them on large index cards and going over them repeatedly is one way to sharpen your memory. If you're slated for a radio or newspaper interview, take the cards with you as a source of ready reference. Having them will prevent you from forgetting key points and will also help to relieve any anxiety. However, don't read the cards during the interview or try to remember what you want to say word-for-word. Memorize key phrases or sentences here and there. The surest way to make a TV/radio appearance dull is to sound as if you are reading. The goal is to sound as conversational, relaxed, informal and spontaneous as possible.

Give the interviewer information about yourself

Some interviewers find out as much as they can about their guests beforehand. Others do little in the way of homework. It is a good idea to send, in advance, a short biography of yourself highlighting your activities, career and interest in the subject.

Anticipate difficult questions

Are there any questions the interviewer might ask that could embarrass either you or NARFE? Prepare for tough questions and be ready to answer effectively. Never get mad! It will reflect badly on you and NARFE and will not solve any problem. Any chance to effectively respond to a difficult question will be lost since the audience will see and remember only the anger and not the response.

Keep your audience/readers in mind

The interviewer will do this and so must you. Consider the type of station/readership, the time of day, the nature of the community, and the audience/readership attitudes toward the subject being discussed.

Prepare aids you will need

Will props help you achieve your objective and make your points more readily? Especially in the case of a TV interview, it's wise to check ahead of time with the program director and the show's producer. Props might be photographs, charts and illustrations.

Build your poise and assurance

The best way to develop genuine self-confidence is to get to know your subject so well it would be difficult to stump you on a question or catch you in a blunder. Genuine self-confidence relaxes you and frees you from anxiety. Remember reporters, writers and talk show hosts prefer short, terse comments that get across solid points. He/she then has the opportunity to either go on to another question or encourage you to elaborate on what was just said.

Level with the audience

This is a basic rule of interview procedure. If you are not sure of the answer to a question, say so. If you need more information, offer to get it. It's ok not to know the answer to every question. At the same time, you have to be careful not to exaggerate or slip in giving out sensitive information. If asked a question that puts you on the spot, you can explain that you haven't had time to examine the facts, but you will be glad to make a statement when you do.

Talk, but do not monopolize

Guard against doing all of the talking, as any one-sided interview is usually boring no matter what the subject. On the other hand, you may have the opposite problem if you participate in a group interview and are confronted with a talk show monopolist. In this case, fight fire with fire; don't hesitate to interrupt; try to get the interviewer's attention by signaling when you have something to say. Be extremely careful with this technique. It is easy to be perceived as bullying or domineering. Strive to be concise, polite and professional in your delivery.

Community Relations & Public Service

COMMUNITY RELATIONS ... DO GOOD AND TELL ABOUT IT!



Chapters and federations are deeply involved in their communities. This involvement is reflected in the numerous public service activities undertaken by NARFE members, chapters and federations. This great public service, this significant contribution being made by NARFE members in their communities, makes for good public relations.

First and foremost, NARFE public service activities are making a difference. The significant contributions made by NARFE members to Alzheimer's disease research are nationally recognized. NARFE Retirement Service Centers are providing essential assistance to federal retirees, their spouses and survivors. NARFE members are involved in adopt-a-highway litter cleanup programs, they are visiting shut-ins, and they are volunteering time at hospitals and nursing homes. Where there is a need in the community, it is likely you can find a NARFE member involved.

NARFE public service activities go a long way toward achieving important public relations objectives. Public service helps increase public awareness throughout the community and among potential NARFE members. It helps NARFE gain and maintain public appreciation. And public service increases respect for NARFE, its message and its membership.

The potential news value of NARFE public service activities should not be overlooked. Newspapers, particularly weekly papers, will include news stories and photographs about significant public service activities. Local radio and television stations may be interested in having NARFE members participate in a public or community affairs program to discuss a public service activity. An invitation for members of the community to join with members of a local NARFE chapter in a public service activity might have some news value. Working with NARFE members involved in public service activities, you can identify the potential news stories and assess their news value.

GREAT PUBLIC SERVICE CAN MAKE FOR GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS.

Tips on Public Speaking

One of the greatest challenges for NARFE chapters and federations is that of maintaining positive public visibility. To answer that need, you should actively seek out opportunities to speak in public settings. Those who do so perform a valuable service for NARFE. All members are encouraged to work similarly, to seek out opportunities to place the name and good work of NARFE in the public spotlight regularly and vigorously.

There are millions of individuals who are eligible to join NARFE but haven't done so because they don't know about the organization. It is up to folks like you to help shape NARFE's identity in the most positive terms for those many individuals who are still in the dark. The truth is that people who could join us are everywhere. But if we fail to use the tools around us to deliver our message, they might as well be invisible.

We often hear from members who want to find new ways to tell their friends and communities about NARFE. It is our hope that this handbook will help members to do just that.

If you recognize that some retirees or near-retirees in your town don't understand what NARFE is all about, then you can work to inform them. One way to do that is to use your local business or social clubs, church or community groups, who often seek out speakers carrying important messages.

Letters sent to these groups from the chapter or federation can tip them off to the existence of worthy speakers from NARFE. The topics one might suggest are many. These might include NARFE's work through over three-quarters of a century. They might include noteworthy life stories and careers of chapter members, or community work done by NARFE volunteers. If the talk is well done, people will know more about NARFE. And that ought to trigger questions like, "How do I join?" (Of course, you or your speaker will be likely to provide the answer to that whether it is asked or not.) The key is to create within your chapter or federation a speakers' bureau, a pool of members who know NARFE well, and who are, above all else, enthusiastic. With knowledge and enthusiasm on their side, public speaking ability can become an acquired skill.



Preparation

Studious preparation beforehand will go a long way toward calming pre-talk jitters. You should know that stage fright is normal. The trick is to avoid the appearance of being nervous, which will put an audience ill at ease. Practicing beforehand enables a person to be more spontaneous because he or she will be that much more familiar with the material.

Tape Recording

Try it in advance. You'll find that, by listening to the playback, you can spot controver-

sial or long words and eliminate them. Remember: Little words work well. Also, mark your text for phrasing and emphasis. Use lively pacing. Varying the pitch and tone of your voice will create interest and credibility. And practice.

Videotaping

If you can arrange it, videotape your practice sessions. Work to project a confident, authoritative presence. Because “presence” is mostly a function of posture, pay attention to that. Keep your weight on the balls of your feet and do not shift or lean, but don’t freeze either. Find your comfortable balance.

Hands

Use gestures only to accompany, underscore or emphasize words, but only in a motion away from the face. Use one hand to mark your page, the other to move it aside when finished with it.

Smile

Do it to relax your face and your audience. Make eye contact. Rehearsal will make it easier to lift your eyes from the written page.

Grooming

Wear conservative attire to keep your audience’s attention focused on the message. Avoid plaid jackets or ties, busy prints, or out-of-date clothing, all for the same reason.

Text

Type double-spaced and in large type, if possible.

Critique

Ask for one after each rehearsal and from friends after the final presentation. This will help you polish your skills. Do not take offense; perspective always changes with the viewpoint. You may also be relieved to know that some of the things you were concerned about went unnoticed.

Recon

Scout out the surroundings before the presentation. Check the size, acoustics, temperature, and the sound system (if there is one). Ask for adjustments to room temperature or sound system beforehand if you so desire.

Remember: If you are nervous about public speaking, you are in good company. An investment of time, energy and practice will ensure that you will accelerate your development as an effective speaker for NARFE.

Chapter & Federation Newsletters

TIPS FOR EDITING CHAPTER AND FEDERATION NEWSLETTERS

Check your facts! Make sure the information in your newsletter is accurate. Check for spelling, especially of members' and national officers' names.

For help with chapter and federation newsletters, go to the NARFE Web site, www.narfe.org, choose Public Relations Department, and click on Chapter and Federation Newsletters. At the bottom, click on NARFE Chapter Newsletter Template 1 or Template 2.

Check your mailing lists! Are you mailing to deceased members? Don't send more than one copy to HQ. It will be circulated through the National Officers and senior staff. Be sure you have current national officers' names.

Visit the Bulk Mail Section of the local post office for rules on mailing your newsletter. Or visit USPS.com/businessmail101.

A newsletter is one of the best means to promote communications among the members of your chapter/federation. Sent to all members, the newsletter will communicate important information, share news about chapter/federation activities, and promote membership improvement and retention. The newsletter is designed for a specific audience—NARFE members and potential members.

While how the information is conveyed is as important as what the information is, an effective chapter newsletter does not have to be an expensive project. Some of the best newsletters consist of just a single sheet (8½" x 11") typed on both sides and photocopied. Brief declarative sentences and descriptive headlines are recommended to enhance understanding and interest. Listed below are some guidelines.

Standard Information

Regardless of whether a newsletter is two or more pages in length, certain "standard" information should be in each issue, such as:

- Names of chapter officers accompanied by their titles, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- The name, telephone number and e-mail address of the editor.
- A calendar of upcoming chapter events (next two-to-three months).
- Names of senators/representatives along with their local and Washington addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Headlines

Liberal use of headlines (heads) is important. This practice enables the reader to quickly and easily absorb the sense of the news, thereby allowing him or her to focus on items of most interest. A lack of heads can discourage a person who reads slowly or has either limited attention span or time.

President's Column

It is a good idea to lead off the text with a president's column, which should be clear, concise and oriented to the most important chapter business. The message could be a report about an important recent event, a policy meeting, national news or correspondence received concerning an issue of broad membership interest. It is best if you refrain from discussing vacations or home renovations or other topics not of general interest.

.....

Identify Writers

If “I” or “we” is used in the body of an article, make sure that the writer is first identified.

Cover Pertinent Issues

Federation and national issues should be regularly covered in chapter newsletters.

Consistent Design

Strive for consistency in design so that readers may readily refer to sections of primary interest to them. As an example, you may choose to start each issue with the president’s column followed by the legislative report and the service officer’s news. You can enclose upcoming meeting details and similar important subject matter in a box. See NARFE Web site for design ideas and boilerplate design: www.narfe.org.

Tips for Layout

- A double-column layout is easier to read than a span of page-wide type.
- If there is more material than will fit comfortably on both sides of an 8½” x 11” sheet then try a piece of 11” x 17” paper folded horizontally. You can easily enlarge this format by adding an insert.
- A newsletter designed as a self-mailer saves envelope expense. On the lower quarter of the back page imprint the chapter return address, preferably in the upper left-hand corner. (Usually the editor’s address is used.) The remaining space is reserved for an address label and postage. Tape along the bottom.
- Either underline important dates and times or type them in caps or bold type for purposes of easy reference and emphasis.

Advertising

Some chapters have found that selling small ads for local businesses in their newsletter can help with the cost of publishing the newsletter. Before you take this step, however, check with the postmaster where you mail your newsletter to make sure you are within Postal Service guidelines.

Copyright

Any article or story disseminated by NARFE Headquarters may be reproduced, with attribution. Some chapters like to reproduce articles from other sources. Generally, this may be done without violating copyright regulations if the source is credited.

Here are some ideas for items you might want to include in your chapter newsletter:

- Local/chapter news
- “Hats Off” section, congratulating local members
- Minutes of the last meeting and/or reports from committees
 - NARFE-PAC
 - Treasurer
 - Membership
 - Sunshine Committee
 - Alzheimer’s
- Editorials/commentaries (keep them non-partisan)
- Member profiles (e.g., Mystery Member of the Month)
- Reports/commentary from chapter/district/federation/national officers
- Legislative/political reports
- Service officer info
- Clippings of interest
- News from Headquarters
- Calendar of events
- Member prospect name forms
- Chapter history tidbits
- Health tips
- Poems, quotes, anecdotes, jokes (in good taste) and trivia questions
- Photos

(You don’t necessarily need to include all of these components; you might want to vary your newsletter from time to time.)

The Internet

The advent of the World Wide Web revolutionized mass communications. The world now has a new medium at its fingertips, a medium that facilitates communication between computer users anywhere in the world, at any time, with a few strokes of the keyboard or a simple click of the mouse.

In addition to the traditional use of newspapers, radio and television, the Internet offers another viable medium for companies, organizations and individuals to convey messages, relay information, and solicit responses via Web sites on the Internet. NARFE HQ has taken full advantage of this opportunity by posting www.narfe.org.

NARFE now offers hosting for chapters and federation Web sites. For information and prices, contact: webhosting@narfe.org.

The objective of our Web site is threefold: first, to inform the public of who NARFE is and what our objectives are; second, to update and inform our members on key legislative issues, press releases, retirement and annuity news and advice, and other administrative information; and third, to attract and solicit potential members.

In addition to NARFE HQ's Web site, some NARFE regions, federations and chapters have independently established their own Web sites. The sites are similar to the NARFE HQ site in that they provide important information, but with a local touch. Members and non-members alike can access information on dates and times of local NARFE events and chapter meetings, messages from chapter/federation officers, list of chapter/federation officers, legislative information, and NARFE background facts. These Web sites assist in achieving name recognition for our Association, and allow visitors to the sites the ability to access information in a short amount of time with little effort.

We wish to stress the benefits of posting such sites. You should talk with your chapter/federation officers and members about posting a Web site on the Internet if your region/federation/chapter has yet to do so. NARFE HQ provides such services for a nominal fee.

Internet Advertising

Using Internet (Web) advertising is becoming more and more common today as contrasted to traditional newspaper or radio/television advertising. As we reach out to attract new members and retain existing members, the Internet will become our best tool. The next generation of members, especially “baby boomers,” individuals born between 1946 through 1964, have transitioned to the Internet as their principal source of information. The boomers are the largest segment of the U.S. population and constitute nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population. If we are to recruit them, we must transition to the Web.

Web advertising lends itself to quickly alerting current federal workers and retirees, members and nonmembers to legislative proposals that would adversely affect federal workers and retirees’ benefits. These ads should direct the viewer to a Web page where, with little or no effort, they can send a letter or e-mail to their congressional or state legislator voicing their opposition. It should also be used to recruit new members by providing either a Web site or a point-of-contact to obtain more information about the advantages of belonging to NARFE. Probably the greatest advantage of Web advertising is its ability to capture the names, addresses and e-mail addresses of federal workers and retirees who are not members of NARFE.

The key to a successful federation/chapter Internet-advertising program is to have an integrated process. An integrated process would use the personal information gathered about the nonmember to send an immediate follow-up letter inviting the individual to join the Association. The invitation letter should also include a membership application already filled out with required information, only requiring a signature and payment, and then returned using a pre-addressed postage paid envelope. If done properly, hundreds of potential members will be enrolled.

.....

Afterword

This handbook ends where it began, with an emphasis on how important public relations is to the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association. NARFE public relations volunteers are essential if we are to achieve the fundamental goals and objectives of our association.

With an understanding of the fundamentals of public relations, along with some effective tools and techniques, you are now prepared to develop a public relations program for your chapter or federation. The Public Relations Department is prepared to offer you the support and assistance you need to develop and maintain a public relations program.

In partnership, working together, and with open lines of communication, NARFE's public relations network can be strengthened, and it can achieve great things. This handbook is intended to create a foundation on which to build a successful public relations program.

A

Adverse articles, responding to 32
 Alliance for Community Media 22
 Alzheimer's disease research NARFE's
 Contribution to... 2, 34
 Announcements for News conferences 27
 Assignment Editors 17

B

Bogart, John 18
 "Boiler plate" paragraph, Press Release 23
 Bureau Chiefs 14
 Buyer's Guides 7, 15

C

Cable television 9, 16, 20
 (See also Television)
 Call-In Shows (Radio) 21
 Chapter meetings, publicizing 20
 City Editors 14
 Community Affairs Director
 (See Radio-Public Affairs Director)
 Community Bulletin Boards 7
 Community Relations 34-35
 Community/Public Affairs programming 9
 Computer-generated telephone calls 6
 Critiques of Public Speaking 38

D

Deadlines, Awareness of 12
 Demographics, Consideration in Radio 8

E

Editors 14, 23
 Editorial page 20
 Editorial Page Editor 14
 Electronic (Broadcast) Media 8-9, 16
 External Public Relations 4

F

Fact sheet- Inclusion in Media Kits 27
 Features Editor 14
 Flyers & Brochures 21
 Front Page/Lead Story opportunities 19

G

General Manager-Radio Station 16
 Goals of PR Programs 3-4

H

"Hard" news 18, 20
 Headlines (in chapter newsletters) 39
 "Human interest" stories 18

I

Identifying key people 11

Independent television stations 9
 Internal Public Relations 4
 Internet, The 41

L

Legislative chair, as speaker on radio show 21
 Letters to the Editor 10
 Libraries, As resource 3, 11
 Lifestyle Editor 14
 Listener preference-Importance in Radio 8
 Localizing Your Material 19
 Locally produced TV shows- As possible
 media outlet 9

M

Market segmentation 8
Media, The 6-17
 Electronic Media 8
 Getting Ready to Meet 10
 Media Contact list 10-12
 Media Kits 13
 Newsletters & Direct Mail 7
 Overview 6
 Print Media 6
 Radio 8
 Regional & Specialty Newspapers 6
 Television 9
 Who's Who in 14-17

Media advisories 12
 Media availability inventory 20

Media contact list 10-12
 Building of 17
 Creating 11
 Sample Entry 11
 Updating, Importance of 11

Media interviews 10, 29-31

Media kit 10, 13, 30
 Creating 13
 What to include in 13

Media relations program, Establishing 10
 Media telephone contact list, Creating 12
 Membership, promoting through PR 10

N

NARFE Retirement Service Centers
 2,7,8,20,34
 NARFE PERKS, As benefit of membership 2
Negative Publicity, Responding To 32-33
 Network affiliated stations (TV) 9
 News, Definition of 18
News Conference 26-28
 Announcing in Media 27
 Gathering Press Kit 27
 News Availability as Alternative 28
 Setting time/day/place 26
 News Departments 16

News Director *16*
News “hook” *23*
News value *18,19,35*
Newsletters
 As potential medic *7*
 As part of your internal PR *10*
 Tips for Editing Your Own *39-40*
Newspapers
 Acceptance of Press Releases *23*
 As Part of Media Contact List *11*
 Letters to The Editor *21*
 Overview as Media *6-7*
 Special Features & Sections *21*
 Stories about Public Service Activities *35*
 Regional & Specialty *7*
 Who’s Who At The... *14-15*

O
Objectives of Public Relations Program *2*
On-line computer news *6*
Operations Managers *16*

P
Photographs *24,27*
Poise & confidence, Attaining *29*
PR News&Views *5,32*
Pre-retirement seminars (PRS) *2*
Preamble to NARFE’s Constitution *3*
Press conferences (See News Conference)
Press Kit (See Media Kit)
Press release 10, 23-25
 Content of *23*
 Pointers for Writing *24*
 Format of *24-25*
 Sample of *25*
Program Director *16*
Promoting membership *8,10*
Promptness, importance of *32*
Public Service Recognition Week *5*
Public access cable television *9, 21-22*
Public Affairs Director- Radio *16*
Public Relations Program *2-5*
Suggested Objectives of *2*
Internal vs. External *4*
Public Service Activities *20,34*
Public Service Announcement (PSAs) *7,8,16*
Public Service Director *16*
Public speaking 36-38
 Critique *38*
 Grooming *37*
 Hands, Use of *38*
 Preparation *37*
 Scouting Area *38*
 Smile, Importance of *37*
 Tape Recording Speech *37*
 Text *37*

Video Taping Speech *37*
Public/community affairs programming *20,21*

R
Radio 8,16
 Overview as Media *8*
 Who’s Who in Radio *16-17*
 Talk Radio/Call-In Shows *21*
Regional & Specialty Newspapers *6*
Reporters *15,17,23*

S
Sample press release *25*
Satellite transmissions *6*
Self-confidence *30*
Shopper’s Guide *7*
“Soft” news *18*
Special Newspaper Features & Sections *21*

T
Talk Radio *8,21*
Talk show appearances *10,31*
Television *9,16*
Network Affiliated Stations *9*
Locally Produced Shows *9*
Independent TV Stations *9*
 Cable Systems *9*
Public Access TV *9, 21-22*

V
Video infomercials *6*
Volunteering time *34*

W
Ways to promote NARFE *21*
What is NARFE? membership brochure *13, 27*

Y
Yellow Pages as reference *11*



**National Active and Retired
Federal Employees Association**

606 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1914
(703) 838-7760 • FAX (703) 838-7785

www.narfe.org

E-mail: pubrel@narfe.org