

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>The ACS Guide to Local Section Public Relations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section I</b>	<b>4</b>
Part 1 – Getting Started	4
Part 2 – Identifying your Targets	6
Part 3 – Know your Audience	12
<b>Section II</b>	<b>15</b>
Part 1 – Working with Journalists	15
Part 2 – Who’s Who in the Media	20
Print	20
Broadcast	24
Part 3 – Writing to the Media	29
News Releases	29
Sample	33
Media Advisories	34
Sample	34
Op Ed Articles	36
Letters to the Editor	37
Websites	37
Part 4 – Contacts with the Media	38
When you Phone Reporters	38
When Reporters Phone You	40
When Reporters Show Up	41
<b>Section III – Mailing Lists</b>	<b>43</b>

<b>Section IV – Developing an Experts Lists and Member Survey</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Section V – PR Plans</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Section VI – Budgets</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Section VII– Ongoing ACS Programs</b>	<b>57</b>
<i>Afterword</i>	<b>60</b>
<i>[note- all those should link to the relevant sections]</i>	

# **The ACS GUIDE TO LOCAL SECTION PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**This Guidebook covers the many areas of public relations that apply to ACS local sections.**

**Section I is designed to give you an overview—and a practical point of view—that will help you in your work.**

**Sections II - VII contain detailed information and samples.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

You've signed up for a challenging job: promoting awareness of the vital contributions that chemists make to society—in your community, your country, and around the world.

It's hard for men and women who are devoting their professional lives to the practice of chemistry to understand that most nonscientists have no idea what we actually do for a living. Nor do they really get it that chemicals fuel their cars, kill pathogens in their foods, keep their drinking water safe...and on and on and on.

**That's why chemistry PR is so gratifying. The results really count.**

# **SECTION I - Part 1**

## **GETTING STARTED**

### **Do Your Homework**

PR is not unlike chemistry— good results depend on good prior research. So learn all you can about the PR activities your section is doing or has done in the past. This homework could keep you from smacking right into two hoary, but relevant, cliches: the one about being doomed to repeat history and the other one that says, Don't Reinvent the Wheel.

### **Get Connected**

As soon as you can, meet personally with the people responsible for planning and staging section meetings and special events. It's your opportunity to learn more about upcoming activities and to let the planners know you'll work to publicize these events. It's especially important to coordinate closely with the chairperson of National Chemistry Week, which historically has been the best way to get media coverage.

Contact the Treasurer as soon as possible and find out when and how to obtain funding.

See “Preparing a Budget,” Section VI

*[link]*

### **Get Help**

Try not to be a one-man band. If possible, establish a permanent PR Committee. If not, ask members to volunteer for work on specific projects. You may also ask members to sign up on a “can be called” list for times when help is needed.

## **Collect Information**

Start with a schedule of upcoming LS and ACS programs and events, with notes on how to contact the people involved. This data will be a great resource later on, when you’re ready to develop a PR Plan.

**Read** newspapers, **Watch** TV and **Listen** to the radio. Note who covers chemistry related stories and how they are handled. This will help to jumpstart your media list.

Create an **Experts List**—people you can call on for speaking dates and, especially important, who can respond to reporters who call for information. In a large section, an Experts List may require a member survey.

**See: PR Plans, Section V**

*[\[link\]](#)*

**Sample Experts List, Section IV, pp. xx-xx**

*[\[link\]](#)*

**Sample Member Survey, Tab IV, pp. xx-xx**

*[\[link\]](#)*

## **SECTION I - Part 2**

### **IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGETS**

**Your target publics fall into three general categories:**

**Chemists and other scientists**

**The lay public**

**The media**

#### **Chemists and other Scientists**

##### **Local Section Members**

Getting needed information to your members is basic to your job, and you can decide on the best way to get their attention. Here are some vehicles you can use singly or in combination:

**Group Email**

**Listserve**

**Local Section Newsletter**

**Local Section Website**

**Presentations**

**Direct Mail**

##### **Other Chemistry Professionals**

To increase awareness of your LS and its benefits and recruit new members, it's a good idea to expand your mailing list to include chemists who are not members of the LS or even of the ACS. For example:

Members of the chemistry departments of local colleges and universities;

Department heads in local chemical or chemistry related companies;

School supervisors;

Other professionals whose support or cooperation could one day prove valuable.

## **The Lay Community**

It's easy to communicate with other scientists; they talk your language. It's harder—but essential—to sustain a dialogue with nonscientists. These include:

**Neighbors**

**Parents and teachers**

**The business community**

**Interest-group members**

**Civic and political leaders**

Most laymen know little about chemistry, yet they exert enormous influence on the way our profession is perceived, supported, and funded. To get their attention and understanding, learn what topics interest them, and be sure all your communications are in plain, jargon-free English.

See “**Know Your Audience,**” page X, below.

*[link]*

## **Reaching Lay Audiences:**

### **The Media:**

Because its reach is so wide, the mass media—primarily newspapers, radio, and television—is the best way to talk to all of your publics at once. Virtually everyone—from parents and teachers to CEOs and politicians—is exposed to what's covered in the media.

## **Public Events**

### **National Chemistry Week**

The centerpiece for community involvement, NCW also attracts extensive media coverage.

The NCW chairperson is one of the first people with whom to coordinate your activities.

### **Other National Programs**

ACS has many ongoing programs that interest both laymen and scientists, and generate media coverage. For example, the National Historic Chemical Landmarks Program invites LS members to nominate a site in their section to receive ACS landmark status. The Chemistry Olympiad allows local students to vie for the right to represent the U.S. in an international chemistry competition. These are two of several ACS programs with good PR potential.

See “Ongoing ACS Programs,” **Section VII**. [\[link\]](#)

### **Speaking Dates:**

Many civic, fraternal, and professional groups welcome outside speakers. Are certain LS members involved in work that would interest a lay audience? Are they good at communicating to laymen? If so, they should be on your Experts List. Think about matching them with appropriate organizations. The Izaak Walton League might want to hear about water quality—a farm group about new agricultural research—a garden club about child-and-pet-safe pesticides.

You’ll need to contact the organizations’ program chairs. Keep in mind that many groups plan their meeting schedules many months in advance.

**See Developing an Experts List, Section IV**

## **Demonstrations in classrooms and public spaces**

Many demonstrations take place during NCW, but they can be held at other times as well. Classroom demonstrations are not only a great way to interest children in the wonders of chemistry; they also are a good way to bond with teachers, supervisors, and parent groups.

Media coverage is also a possibility, especially on television: TV news segment producers need stories that can be told in pictures—and they know that viewers enjoy positive “human interest” stories, especially those that involve children.

TV crews may also show up when demonstrations are done in unusual venues—a mall or supermarket parking lot, for instance.

## **Open Houses**

Inviting the public to see chemistry in action is a very good way for companies and institutions to build understanding and goodwill. Open houses can be held at random times or they can be timed to celebrate anniversaries or other positive events.

## Reaching Local Media

**This topic is covered more fully in Section II. The following is basic information that will help send you off to a good start.**

### **Primary Media Categories:**

**Print:** Daily and Weekly Newspapers

**Broadcast:** Radio and Television News

Public Affairs programming

Never underestimate the power of a weekly paper. In some small communities, it is the newspaper of choice. In larger areas, some weekly corporations publish multiple editions targeting different localities; their combined circulation can be substantial.

Among the additional print categories are trade publications, house organs, and alumni newsletters, which may publish articles about new LS officers, award winners, and other topics that larger news outlets may not cover.

### **Heads-up List:**

**The term “media”** includes advertising, a different field from which almost all journalists take pains to disassociate themselves. The people you will be talking to are reporters and editors, and wish to be called so.

**In large metropolitan areas, newspapers and TV stations may have science reporters**—or perhaps reporters assigned to particular areas of science, e.g., health, technology, or the environment. In smaller cities, you will probably be working with reporters who are generalists.

**In either case**—whether they are specialists or generalists—it’s safe to assume that most journalists know very little, if anything, about chemistry. Your job is to tell the story in language laymen understand.

**Sometimes reporters will call you.** More often than not in some localities, they are calling because there is a problem of some sort—a chemical spill or other real or perceived hazard. If you are the right person to answer the reporter’s questions clearly and accurately, do so. If not, have someone else on your Experts List call the reporter back as quickly as possible. It’s times like these when your Experts List really proves its value.

**Journalists want to hear from you** when—and *only* when—you have information they believe will interest a wide audience of readers, viewers, or listeners. So before you contact journalists, make sure the information you offer falls into their “beats,” that is, into the parameters of their job assignments.

**See Contacts with the Media, Section II, Part 4.**

*[link]*

## SECTION I - Part 3

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Would you regale the dinner partner you've just met with stories about your research project? It's doubtful--unless you have reason to think that person will be interested. So before you contact ANYONE, ask yourself:

- 1. Who am I talking to?**
- 2. Will they understand what I'm talking about?**
- 3. Why will they want to know this?**

If you are talking to the wrong audience, or maybe in the wrong language (using scientific terminology when addressing nonscientists, for instance) you are wasting your time. You're also wasting their time. It could be the reason why that imaginary dinner partner left early. But let's get serious: it could be the reason an important editor leaves your releases unread.

### WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW?

Question 3 above is always the hardest to answer. We recommend that you try an old and reliable mnemonic: **WIFM**. It stands for "What's In it For Me?" The reference is simple: People are interested in topics that *affect them personally*. When laymen read or hear about science, they want to know how it will influence their lives or the lives of people they know. If they don't see a connection, most lose interest quickly. Journalists know this, and turn down stories in which the connections are unclear.

**According to ACS surveys, the chemistry-related topics that most interest the general public are:**

**HEALTH/FITNESS**

**FOOD/NUTRITION**

**MEDICINE**

**ENVIRONMENT**

**EDUCATION**

## **Telling the Story**

You may have news that fits the WIFM criterion perfectly: At upcoming LS meetings, nutritionist John Brown will discuss the startling results of a new pastry-based reducing diet; polymer scientist Sarah Green will discuss a new device that can instantly and safely obliterate the town dump. These stories (we made them up) clearly affect the lives of the people in the community.

You are off and running. Just be sure your releases are brief, and written in plain, jargon-free English. Busy editors often ignore stories that are long or difficult to understand—usually because they just don't have time to pursue them.

Many chemists are skilled at translating scientific concepts into plain English. Others find it difficult. If you fall into the latter category, see **Section II, Part 1**.

# **MOVING FORWARD**

We hope the preceding overview has made you more aware of how interesting and exciting PR can be. We also hope you're more aware that PR, if not exactly a slam dunk, is definitely doable.

Having read this far, you probably have many questions. Most will be answered in Sections II - VII, which offer detailed information and instructions.

**If you have an urgent question that requires an immediate answer, don't hesitate to contact us now.**

**ACS Office of Communications  
1-800 227-5558, Ext. 6274**

**[j\\_ginsberg@acs.org](mailto:j_ginsberg@acs.org)**

# ##

## SECTION II – Part 1

### WORKING WITH JOURNALISTS

With so many reporters and newscasters playing pundit on primetime news shows, it's easy to think that a journalist is some special kind of public servant. Resist the tendency to think this way about the journalists you deal with.

**Journalists are professionals who get paid for writing or airing stories that they and their editors believe are “newsworthy,” a term that, in essence, means stories that affect a large general audience.** If reporters cover stories that don't meet this criterion, they will at some point lose their jobs. So keep it mind that it's not their job to help you publicize your section—it's your job to help them find newsworthy stories.

### SEND NEWS THEY CAN USE

Before you offer any information, review “Know Your Audience” in Section I, p. x. [\[link\]](#) Be sure you can answer the question, “Why will they want to know this?”

**Be Selective.** The thing reporters lack most is time—they're deluged with hundreds of news stories every day—and they have time to pursue only a few of the stories they receive, get them approved by their editors, and write them—all on a tight deadline.

**Test Ideas.** Sometimes you'll know the story you want to send is newsworthy. For times when you're not really certain, there's a sure-fire way to find out: Tell the story to one or two people who have no particular interest in science—or personal interest in you. (Friends and family do not qualify.) Then ask yourself:

Are the listeners interested? Careful here; people are usually polite.

Is it difficult to tell the story without using scientific terminology?  
If so, can you think of ways to say the same things in lay language?

Does the listener understand the story? Ask the person to tell it back to you in his or her own words. (If they can't, rethink the idea—it may not suit, or it may need revisions.)

**Be Brief and to the Point.** Keep all releases as short as possible.

Put the most salient points in the subject line, headline, and first paragraph.

See Writing for the Media, Section II, Part 3.

**Check the Beat.** Be sure you're addressing the right person. A story about local Olympiad finalists is not “news she can use” to the reporter covering environmental issues. It *is* news for the education reporter or the science reporter, or both. (When emailing the same release to more than one person at the same organization, be sure to cc the other recipients.)

**Be Timely.** Different media have different lead times. Some may need information weeks in advance—others may not want to hear from you more than a day or two before an event. The only way to be sure who wants what when is to gather this information in your early contacts with the media and keep it on file. See **Mailing Lists, Section III.** *[link]*

**Be Sparing.** In the academic world, one may rush to publish. In PR, one may be rash to publish. The most common error PR people make is to send too much information, too frequently.

**Be Accurate.** Double-check every release for accuracy and clarity. If your releases contain errors or ambiguities, reporters will soon learn to ignore them.

## FINDING PR OPPORTUNITIES

**Be aware of upcoming activities.** Give special thought to those that involve chemists in the life of the community.

**Coordinate your plans** with the members responsible for LS events.

## **Consider these events and programs when you construct your PR plan:**

**Local Section Awards, e.g., “Salute to Excellence”**

**Sponsorship of Science Fairs**

**Earth Day Celebration**

**Chemical Demonstrations**

**Mentoring Programs**

**Announcements of LS meetings**

**Are the speakers, perhaps ACS Tour speakers, presenting newsworthy topics? Are these meetings open to the public?**

**Chemistry Olympiad**

**National Historic Chemical Landmarks Program**

**ACS Scholars’ Program**

**Chemagination**

**Project SEED**

**Regional Meetings**

If you plan to publicize the section’s role in a national program, such as the last six mentioned above, you must also coordinate with the ACS Office of Communications.

**Decide whom to contact.** In each case, this will be a judgment call based on your familiarity with who does what in your local media. (The one exception is an announcement of a regular section meeting—which in most cases goes only to a calendar editor at a newspaper; the person handling public service announcements at a radio station; or the editor of a company or university newsletter.)

**See Who’s Who in the Media, Section II, Part 2.**

*[link]*

**Think outside the box.** Okay, that’s a cliché, but do give yourself room to be creative. You may know about a bilingual chemist who helps Hispanic kids with their homework—or one who runs an after-school science club at a troubled neighborhood school. **Journalists like human-interest stories, especially those that involve youngsters.**

**“Piggy-backing.”** Look for opportunities to piggy-back on current issues in the news. For example, if there’s public controversy over a chemistry related issue, check your Experts’ List—you might be able to provide a TV or radio news show with the perfect person to interview. Or you might help to produce an Op Ed piece for your daily newspaper—or an article for a weekly paper. **Journalism thrives on controversy—it’s the element that injects drama into mere reportage.**

## Selecting Media Outlets

Media outlets fall into two general categories, print and broadcast. Within these categories are many kinds of publications and radio and TV programming. Some news stories lend themselves better to one medium than another—others merit broad distribution.

**See Who’s Who in the Media, Section II, Part 2.**

*[link]*

## **SECTION II – Part 2**

### **WHO’S WHO IN THE MEDIA**

#### **PRINT**

##### **DAILY NEWSPAPERS**

**Reporters cover news and write the stories.**

At most dailies, reporters are assigned to cover particular topics, or beats, (e.g., business, sports, or politics) or geographic areas (e.g., the county, city, or state). The beat system helps reporters develop expertise in their subject areas.

Beat assignments are not always permanent. At some newspapers, reporters who’ve covered the same topic for a long time are transferred to new beats they can approach with a fresh eye. Such transfers also assure that reporters don’t become “insiders” in the fields they cover.

**Listed below are the beats most likely to affect your section.** Education is listed first because so many section events, including National Chemistry Week, involve students.

**Education**  
**Science**  
**Environment**  
**Health**  
**Food**  
**Agriculture**  
**Business**  
**Community Affairs**

## **Editors have the ultimate power over news content.**

**Editors decide what stories the reporters should cover and determine which stories the paper will carry.** In other words, the reporter who loves your story still has to clear it with his editor. Moreover, when he does get approval, he writes the story, but not the headline. A different editor—the copy editor—makes that decision. (That’s why we sometimes see stories and headlines that don’t seem to mesh.)

**Editors oversee special weekly sections**—some devoted to different locations in the paper’s circulation area (e.g., different counties) and others devoted to particular topics (e.g, health, food, business). Check your newspaper(s) for special sections that cover your home area and others that cover topics related to chemistry or the chemical industries.

**Editors control the editorial and Op-ed pages**, which may at times offer PR opportunities. They also control the “Letters to the Editor” columns.

**See Writing for the Media,” Section II, Part 3.** [\[link\]](#)

**Deadlines.** To make the next edition, reporters and editors must complete all their research, writing, and editing at a certain time each day. Never call journalists when they are on deadline, unless you have information you know they need immediately. Ask about deadlines in your very first media contacts.

**See Contacts with the Media, Section II, Part 4.** [\[link\]](#)

**See Mailing Lists, Section III.** [\[link\]](#)

## WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

**Weeklies and neighborhood newspapers** are easier to work with than are dailies. Since their staffs are much smaller, reporters and editors tend not to specialize as much; they also tend to lean more heavily on outside sources for story material. Moreover, since staffers at weekly papers have only one deadline a week, they are under less pressure.

**Photographs:** Smaller staffs make it difficult for weeklies to assign photographers to cover events, so it's especially important that you provide ready-to-use photographs.

## MAGAZINES

**Some cities have local magazines.** Most are devoted to cultural events, home decoration, restaurants, and the like. Magazines also have long lead times, another downside.

Nevertheless, a local magazine is worth a call—it could be an exception to the rule.

Note: The ACS Office of Communications contacts national magazines.

## OTHER PRINT MEDIA

**School-district publications**

**Company house organs**

**University newspapers**

**Alumni publications**

**Civic and fraternal organization newsletters**

**Neighborhood newspapers**

Don't ignore these very significant outlets. Send releases and photos whenever your news involves one of their employees, colleagues, members, or residents. And don't forget bulletin boards at companies, schools, and universities

# PHOTOGRAPHS

**Offering photographs with news releases improves the odds that the story will be published. Reporters and editors know that a photograph can double or even triple the readership of an article.**

**Reader's eyes are naturally attracted to a photograph.** In addition, photographs humanize the story by showing readers the actual people involved.

**When publicizing a future event,** encourage the newspaper to send a photographer by flagging available "Photo Ops." These should be cited on releases and events schedules.

**When sending releases after an event,** have a photographer present. Call or email reporters to tell them photos are on their way—unexpected attachments are not opened. Then send the photos as quickly as possible. Ascertain ahead of time whether the editor wants black & white or color.

If you're sending photos of an individual—say a newly elected officer or an award winner—try to avoid sending posed studio portraits. Editors prefer photos that show a person in action, i.e., at work at their desk or in the lab.

# **BROADCAST**

## **TELEVISION**

**Radio and television journalists, like their counterparts in the print media, balance a daily deluge of incoming information against the pressure of short deadlines.**

**TV reporters and editors are under particular pressure, because stories must be ready to air in their scheduled time slots. In addition, they are competing with other local stations to get there first with breaking news.**

**News Directors shape a station's overall style and content, and make the ultimate decisions about what goes on the air.**

**Assignment Editors decide which reporters will cover which stories.** Because TV news time slots usually start at 5:00 a.m. and end with the 11:00 p.m. news, different assignment editors operate within given time periods; there are also separate weekend assignment editors.

**Producers are the key figures at talk shows and public affairs programs.** They do the research, select the topics, and choose the guests. Executive producers are in charge of an entire show. Segment producers work on different topics, in shows in which several topics are presented. **Producers are the people who brief the hosts and interviewers you see on the air.**

**Public Affairs Directors are, as the title implies, in charge of public affairs programming.** Usually, they are also tasked with promoting their stations' involvement in community activities.

## **TV PROGRAMMING**

**Local News.** Most local news shows air in the time slots that immediately precede the network news. Most of these local shows focus heavily on hard news, especially news that's sensational.

Some stations carry news at 4:00 and/or 5:00 p.m. These shows are more likely to air news of community affairs, human-interest stories, and other kinds of “soft” news—so they are probably your best bets.

**Talk Shows.** In some areas, stations produce local versions of the network morning news shows. The local shows generally include a mix of news, feature stories, and interviews, but content varies considerably from city to city. You’ll need to watch to find out.

**Public Affairs Shows.** Some local stations carry weekly PA shows featuring interviews or panel discussions. Upside: PA’s offer more time for discussion and explore topics more thoroughly than do regular news shows; they are also easier to get on. Downside: Broadcasters are obligated to devote time to PA’s, but they tend to air them at times when audiences are small.

**Cable.** Some areas have cable stations dedicated to local news and public affairs programming. Often they are run by the city or county, or by a local school system or university. If you’re really lucky, you may live in a city that has a local all-news cable channel.

## VISUALS

**Television is a visual medium—producers need stories that can be told in pictures, the more dramatic the better.** When choosing which of two equally newsworthy stories to air, they will choose the more visual of the two. That’s why releases sent to TV stations should conspicuously flag visual opportunities and, if possible, the availability of photos and, more important, videotape footage supporting the story.

NCW has obvious visual potential, but other stories can also be told in pictures—a chemistry demonstration in an elementary school, for instance, or a Project SEED student at work in a lab. You may think of many other possibilities.

Not all stories lend themselves to visual treatments. This means you may have a significant story to tell and you don’t get TV coverage. Forget it and concentrate on print and radio outlets.

On-Site Coverage: Local stations have a limited number of news crews. This means that even a very visual event like NCW could suddenly have to compete with a flood, fire, or police chase!

## Providing Visuals

**You can capitalize on TV's thirst for visuals by supplying them with photos, videotape footage, and on-air interviews that support your story.**

**Recruit volunteers to take photographs and to videotape section events. Whenever companies or academic institutions are involved in the story, ask their PR departments for assistance.**

**Videotape.** In your first calls to TV stations, ask about deadlines: they need time to edit the footage you send. Also ask how long the footage should be, and what format they require.

**TV editors will use your tape as background,** or b-roll, which they'll edit to fit the thrust of the story as they decide to tell it. Your footage should be long enough to allow them to pick and choose the elements they want to use—this avoids their showing the same footage that appears on competing stations.

## INTERVIEWS

Your NCW chairperson wants to invite the public to participate.

A local student becomes an Olympiad finalist.

Another student has won an ACS scholarship.

A member is an expert on a hot topic in the news.

**All are potential interviewees.**

Are they articulate? Personable?

Are they willing to be interviewed?

If so, email TV stations to suggest an interview. Include three or four questions they can be asked. Offer to send a photo (but don't attach it.)

# **RADIO**

## **News/Talk Radio Stations**

### **WHO'S WHO**

The hierarchy at news/talk radio-stations is similar to that of local TV news shows, and much of the information above is applicable. The chief difference is that most radio stations are smaller, so there's less specialization. If the station is very small, the news director is the best person to contact.

### **PROGRAMMING**

Many radio stations are owned by or affiliated with national companies that transmit canned programming; make sure they're not on your mailing list. The odds are, however, that your hometown has a local News/Talk station. If so, it is a great PR opportunity.

#### **Audience Reach.**

During morning and afternoon drive-time hours, many news/talk radio stations have substantial audiences; in some big cities, the figures are in the millions. Audiences are substantial at other hours as well.

## **Advantages**

Radio reporters are more likely than their TV counterparts to use your material, and to give it more time and in-depth coverage. They're also more likely to include your announcements in public service segments.

Interviews can be done at the station—but very often they're done on the telephone, a great convenience for busy members.

When any kind of emergency occurs, most people automatically turn on the radio for updates. Be ready for chemical emergencies; radio reporters may call on you for information or to ask for an expert to interview.

## **University and Public Radio Stations**

Some of the programming on these stations is picked up from network sources. But most of these stations produce local programming as well. Be sure to explore the possibilities for coverage and interviews.

## SECTION II, Part 3

### WRITING TO THE MEDIA

**Virtually all correspondence with the media is conducted via email.** If reporters are working on a story in which time is not a factor, they may okay your mailing or delivering hard copies of supporting materials. Don't send attachments unless you get prior okay; unexpected attachments are not opened. **Faxes are not used for media correspondence.**

### NEWS RELEASES

On page x is a sample\* news release. As you read it, please note the following elements: *[link]*

**Address.** Always use the “cc” line to let reporters know when you're sending releases to other people at the same organization. Their editors will decide who writes the story.

**Subject line.** Put your best foot forward. It could be the only part of your message that gets read. PR people try hard to make subject lines “catchy.” Unless you're feeling inspired, it's safer to be straightforward.

\*based on an ACS release about an actual finalist

**Summary.** A very important second chance to get your release read! Its purpose is to give reporters the highlights of the story and encourage them to continue down the page to the news release. **Be brief!**

**Contact Information.** Give the names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of the people who can be contacted about the story. It's best to have two contacts, in case one is not reachable.

**Release Date.** “*For Immediate Release*” tells reporters the story can be used at any time. If there's any reason why news cannot be released immediately, write “Embargo Date: \_\_\_\_\_” to request that publication be deferred.

**Headline.** Another chance to sell the story. But headlines no longer have the importance they once did, now that they're preceded by the subject line and the summary.

**Body Copy.** The sample writer has followed two time-honored rules for structuring news releases: The “Four W's” and the “Inverted Pyramid.”

### The Famous Four W's

## WHO - WHAT - WHEN - WHERE

**These four W's” are essential parts of every story. They should appear in the first sentences of the first, or lead, paragraph of every release.**

**In the sample we're using,** WHERE has already been stated in the subject line, summary, and headline. Yet it still needs a mention in the lead. Here the WHERE is Green Hope High School. WHO is Kevin Anderson. “Learned *today*” establishes the WHEN, showing the news is current. The text starting with “he was chosen...” constitutes the WHAT.

Some releases require a Fifth W—the WHY. For example, if you were writing about a talk to be delivered at a section meeting, you'd need to say WHY the topic and/or the speaker are newsworthy.

## The Inverted Pyramid

**The sample illustrates a time-honored rule: Once the four W's are taken care of, present the remaining information in order of descending importance.** This Inverted Pyramid structure will always serve you well. Friendly warning: Don't forget to apply **WIFM**—your criteria must be based on what will interest reporters, rather than you or your section members.

You may be concerned that the ACS is mentioned only in the last paragraph. This is really not unfortunate—studies have shown that when people scan documents, their eyes focus most on the beginning and ending.

**Length.** It can be difficult to keep releases down to one page, but do so whenever it's feasible. Never exceed two pages. In the sample, reporters get sufficient information with which to decide whether or not to pursue the story. If the answer is yes, they can ask for more.

**Note the “Available” list.** It suggests other elements that enhance the story, including interviews. It also tells TV reporters that visuals are available.

**When additional information is requested, send it in succeeding emails.**  
**As stated above, attachments aren't opened unless reporters know they're on the way.**

**More/End.** Center the word “- end -” at the bottom of the message to signal that the release has ended. If the text continues to a second page, center the word “- more -” under the last line of page one.

**Date.** Date every release at the bottom of the last page. You'll need this for your records.

\* \* \*

**NOTES:**

**Quotes.** Include quotes in your body copy whenever you can. They humanize the text and improve the chances the releases will be used. Before sending the releases, check the quotes with the person quoted to be certain the wording is exact.

**Datelines.** Datelines are used when a release deals with an event that's not local, or which occurred on a previous date. The following example covers both contingencies: The Tuesday, July 13, issue of a Baltimore newspaper, covering a paper delivered in Boston the previous day, starts with

“BOSTON, Mass., July 12— Researcher John Doe asserted Monday that...”

**From:** John Doe, email address  
**To:** email address recipient 1  
**cc:** email address recipient 2  
**Date:** Tue, 19 July  
**Subject:** Local student wins chance to compete in  
International Chemistry Olympiad

**A local high-school student was named one of 20 finalists--out of nearly 10,000 contestants—in a nationwide chemistry contest. The win qualifies him to vie for one of four places on the U.S. team that will compete in the International Chemistry Olympiad in Greece. Fifty-four countries will participate.**

**Contact:** John Doe  
**Tel. No.**  
**Email address**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**Local student reaches finals for the International Chemistry Olympiad team**

Green Hope High School student Kevin Anderson learned today that he was chosen one of 20 finalists in the National Chemistry Olympiad. This qualifies Kevin to compete for a place on the four-person team that will represent the U.S. at the upcoming International Chemistry Olympiad (ICO) in Greece.

Kevin and the 19 other finalists were chosen from a pool of nearly 10,000 contestants nationwide. Final rounds take place June 1-15 at a study camp held every year at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. When concluded, four U.S. teenagers will leave for Athens to compete with teams from 54 countries. Last year, our team won three medals: two gold, one silver, and one bronze.

The ICO originated in Eastern Europe in 1968; the U.S. sent its first team in 1984. The American Chemical Society (ACS) has sponsored a team every year since that time.

Representing 159,000 chemists and chemical engineers, the ACS is the largest educational and scientific society in the world.

**AVAILABLE:**

**More on Kevin and his family; photos**

**Interviews (through 5/29) - tel # and email**

**Videotape of USAF Academy study camp in action**

**Top- ranking ICO Countries—improved U.S. scores in last 10 years**

**More on: ICO; ACS**

**-end-**

**5/19/03**

# MEDIA ADVISORIES

Media Advisories are most often used to give reporters advance information on upcoming events. They are briefer than news releases and have a different format. **The biggest difference is that the body copy is, in effect, a longer version of the summary.**

The following page shows a MA that could have been (but wasn't—we made it up) sent out by a local section:

## Address

**Subject Line: Protecting manufacture and transportation  
of chemicals against terrorist attacks.**

**Contacts:** Jane Doe  
Tel No./email address  
John Roe  
Tel No./email address

## *MEDIA ADVISORY*

**Protecting manufacture and transportation of chemicals against  
terrorist attacks to be subject of expert panel.**

Experts will discuss new technology designed to detect the presence of explosives in chemical plants located in areas that are likely targets for terrorist attacks. The technology includes newly developed sensors to be used in advanced early-warning systems. The systems can be adapted for use in railroad cars transporting chemicals through vulnerable urban areas.

**WHAT** Experts on chemicals to discuss anti-terrorist technology

**WHEN** [day, date and time]

**WHERE** [address and directions if necessary]

**WHO** [list of names, titles and affiliations of each panelist]

The meeting is sponsored by the \_\_\_\_\_ Section of the American Chemical Society. Representing [163,00] chemists and chemical engineers, the ACS is the world's largest educational and scientific society.

- end -

**MA's are especially useful for programs (like National Chemistry Week) at which different events are scheduled to happen at different times and places. The run-on text of a news release could bury the details, and busy reporters may not take the time to exhume them.**

The Four-W format makes schedules clear and easy to read, improving the odds for on-site coverage. Of course, reporters can't always get there. But sometimes they'll say, "I can't make it, but send me some photos (or, if TV, videotape) and I'll run a piece on it."

Not all MA's refer to events or require schedules. Nor do they always refer to upcoming events. You could send an MA summarizing a talk given at last night's meeting, including quotes from the speaker's presentation.

MA's are useful anytime you feel that a full-fledged news release is unnecessary. For example, if there's an ongoing topic in the news and people on your Experts List could add important information, it's time to let print and broadcast reporters know you have experts they can interview. Use an MA to summarize their credentials and talking points.

Reminder: Never offer reporters interview opportunities unless you are sure the appointed interviewees have something important to say, and will say it well. If they don't, you and the section will end up paying the check.

# OP ED ARTICLES

The Editorial Page reflects the views of the newspaper. OP ED Page articles reflect the views of the writers—whether they’re professional columnists or outside contributors. Since they usually appear opposite the editorial page, they have very high readership.

**Reporters must write stories that are (or appear to be) “balanced,” in that they present the major opposing viewpoints. Bylined OP ED articles can state your side—and only your side—of the story. That’s why they’re so valuable.**

**Topics.** With rare exceptions, OP ED articles refer to an event that recently occurred or is about to occur, or to an ongoing controversy. Some of the most powerful are calls for action on issues that affect the well-being of the community or the larger society. While OP ED articles are expected to be one-sided, they should not appear to be self-serving.

**Bylines.** Articles signed by people who are well known are far more likely to be printed. If the article is important to you or your section, you may have to write it for someone else’s signature.

**Text.** Like everything you send to the media, the article should make your case clearly and concisely. Remember that you’re writing for a large, general audience—use language that’s easy to understand and avoid professional jargon.

**Also remember that you are writing an OPINION piece. Some passion in support of your viewpoint is not only allowable, it’s called for. Bland articles don’t hold readers’ attention or stay in their memory banks.**

**Getting Published.** Like most things valuable, OP ED articles are hard to get. There’s no one way to get published, but we can recommend a first step: Try calling the editor and saying something like,

**“We have something to say about \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m calling to find out the way you prefer us to approach it.”**

If you’re lucky, the editor will ask questions and give you an opportunity to “sell” the article. The editor might also say, “I’m not interested, but would be if the article also included \_\_\_\_\_, or the focus was changed to \_\_\_\_\_.” At worst, he or she might simply say, “I’m not interested,” and you can look for another print outlet.

**Query Letters.** OP ED page editors might not have time to talk with you—in which case they may ask you to send a query letter summarizing the proposed article. Be sure the query makes clear that the topic relates to an ongoing news story or an important

event that recently occurred or is about to occur. Be happy if you're asked to send a query letter—it's how most free-lance writers get published.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editors are most likely to pick letters that relate to articles the paper has published in the past one or two days.

Letter editors expect you to be brief and to the point, but they don't rule out a show of emotion. You can be angry, sardonic, witty, pithy, or humorous--if you can do it with style. **As you write, be aware that letters from the public get edited.**

Caveat: If you write to refute statements in an article the paper has printed—e.g., something negative about chemicals that you know to be untrue—think before you punch the send button. Sometimes protest letters only serve to remind readers about the offending article and reinforce the content. It's a judgment call.

## WEBSITES

Your section may already have a website that's accessible to journalists. If not, perhaps you are the person to establish it.

**Websites can serve both members and media. Your section website might include:**

- Meeting Notices**
- Scientific abstracts and papers**
- Bios of speakers and presenters**
- News Releases**
- Media Advisories**
- Event Schedules**

If the website is properly constructed, journalists who log on can quickly find links to the information they need.

## **SECTION II - Part 4**

### **CONTACTS WITH MEDIA**

#### **When you Phone Reporters**

##### **Apply the WIFM\* Test**

**Busy reporters and editors want to hear from you when you can help them do their jobs. So give every media call the “WIFM” test before you phone.**

**As a rule, you should phone journalists only when you have a specific story to offer—or information that’s pertinent to an ongoing news story.**

Sometimes this rule becomes relaxed with time, as reporters and editors get to know you—they may tell you it’s fine for you to phone them. Still, the rule should be observed until it’s clear it can be broken.

##### **Timing**

**Don’t call when reporters are on deadline. This is usually in the afternoon. To play it safe, make your first words, “are you on deadline?”**

##### **Always Be Brief**

**Reporters who work at daily newspapers or at TV or radio news outlets almost never have time for extended conversations. They really appreciate callers who convey information quickly.**

## Plan Ahead

**When you first start to make media calls, take the time to prepare before you phone.**

Suggestion: Write a “script” that includes everything you want to say. Say it aloud and time yourself. Is it too lengthy, too wordy? If so, go back and delete everything that’s not essential.

## Alert Calls

**If you’re sending an important release, it’s a good idea to phone in advance to say the story is on its way.** Alert calls don’t sell stories, but they *can* encourage a second glance at your subject line! This is a significant advantage, considering that editors and reporters mull through hundreds of emails every working day.

**Get right to the point:** When beginning conversations, it seems natural to start with our names and affiliations, but in alert calls, it’s the story that’s important. Consider these “scripts”:

*“Hi – called to tell you that*

*...starting next Tuesday, there’ll be hands-on science demonstrations in public spaces all over town! It’s part of National Chemistry Week. I sent a release today—hope it’s useful.”*

*...a boy at Whitney High was just picked as a finalist in a national chemistry Olympiad. If he wins, he’ll represent the U.S. in an international competition in Sweden! I sent a release today—hope it’s useful.”*

Reporters may thank you and hang up—or ask for further information. Don’t fret if it’s the former. What counts is that you’ve alerted a reporter to an incoming release, in less than 30 seconds.

## Voice Mail

**Don't be discouraged if your calls don't get through. Voice mail is often more effective.** That's because reporters collect their messages at times they find convenient.

**Note:** Voice-mail messages should be just as brief as those that get through.

## Media List Calls

In most cases, the first time you speak with journalists will be to collect data for your media list. Treat these calls the same way you do all others. You can't know who'll pick up the phone—it could be the person you most need to impress!

See **Mailing Lists, Section III**

*[link]*

## When Reporters Phone You

**When reporters call you, it means you've established yourself as a reliable source of information.** Pat yourself on the back, and keep up the good work!

### **Reporters will call you because:**

They want further information on a story you've sent them.

They want further information on a current news story.

They want a sit-down interview with you or another section member.

**To be ready for media calls, keep your Experts List handy.**

## **Guidelines:**

**Respond promptly.** If you don't help reporters get information, and get it in time to meet their deadlines, you lose credibility as a news source.

**Ask questions.** Be sure you understand what the reporter is looking for. Remember to ask about the deadline.

**Don't "ad lib."** If you're able to provide the information requested, do so. If not, don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Perhaps you'll be able to say, "I don't know, *but* ...I'll find out and get right back to you," or  
...I can give you the names and numbers of two experts on this topic."

If you simply can't help—or can't make the deadline—say so immediately so the caller can move on.

**If you are not in** when reporters phone, return the calls as soon as you can. This rule applies whether or not you can fulfill their requests. Always call back to say, "Sorry I can't help you on this one."

**Reporters interview many sources, so don't be disappointed if the information you or your experts provide is not quoted. Helping reporters when they need you improves the odds that they'll notice your future releases.**

## **When Reporters Show Up**

**Be Prepared.** Sometimes you'll know in advance that reporters, photographers, or TV camera crews plan to cover a section event. Sometimes you won't have advance notice:

Without ever responding to a release or returning your calls, assignment editors may put your event on their schedules.

**Spokespeople.** Before every event, designate two or more people who are prepared to greet the media, lead them to the best Photo Ops or TV visuals, and answer questions. Always designate at least two people, in case one is tied up when reporters or camera crews arrive.

**News Releases.** Have multiple copies of your news release readily at hand. Reporters often receive only the briefest information from their assignment editors. Handing them a copy of your news release and/or events schedule will help them—and help you get better coverage.

**Give advance copies to the Spokespeople.** It's important that they know what you have already told the media so they can anticipate the questions they'll be asked.

**“No-Shows.”** Remember that your event has to compete with breaking news—reporters or camera crews headed your way could be suddenly reassigned. **Be ready to send photos and/or videotape.**

See **Working with Journalists,” Section II, Part 1.**

*[link]*

# SECTION III

## MAILING LISTS

### MEMBERS AND MEDIA

Developing and maintaining mailing lists is a dull, but absolutely essential, part of every PR effort. Your lists should be as accurate and up-to-date as you can make them.

**Be sure to maintain two separate lists for members and for media.**

Never add the names of anyone in the media to your member mailing list. If you do, you run the risk that journalists will receive “news they can’t use,” a possibility you should work hard to avoid.

**See *Working with Journalists, Section II, Part 1.*      *[link]***

Regular emails will put you in touch with individuals in your section. For multiple recipients, you can use your address book to set up a group list. If the section is quite large, you may need to use a commercial email service; check out the Listserve.com website and its competitors.

# COLLECTING DATA

## Members

If you're lucky, the existing LS list is accurate and up to date. But mailing lists age quickly, so check for errors and omissions. (See "Maintenance," below).

*[link]*

[If you find that you need to make many changes, or create a new list, the ACS can help. Contact the Local Section Activities Office (1 800 227-5588), and ask for a list of the current section members.]

**Add the names of nonmembers** working in local academia and industry who may benefit the LS and/or your PR program. For example, they could be people you'd want on your Experts List, or people who could provide support for future PR activities. They may also be prospective members.

## Media

**The PR Department at a local company or university may allow you to copy its list.**

**Media Directories**, published by Bacon's, Burrelle's, and other companies, are easy to use and contain comprehensive information on media personnel. The main library in your city should have these or similar publications on hand. If not, call and request them. Caution: Check the publication dates to be sure the information is the most current.

**The Internet.** Many newspapers have websites listing their editorial staffs. Some include names, beats, emails addresses, and even telephone numbers. Sometimes it takes some noodling to reach this information, but it's no doubt

more current than a printed media directory. Information on staff may not be so accessible on the websites of TV and radio stations, but it's worth investigating.

**Telephone. We've saved the best for last.** Nothing equals the value of calling the newsrooms of print and broadcast outlets and asking questions.

**But do prepare in advance for your calls,** so your questions are quick and clear. Although you're only constructing a mailing list, each call is, in effect, your first point of contact with a particular news organization—and first impressions count.

**Ask** first if the person you reach is on deadline. (If so, ask the best time to reach him and hang up quickly.)

**Ask** who should get stories on science, health, technology, education, and the environment.

**If calling print media,** also ask what size photos they use, and whether black and white or color.

**If calling a TV newsroom,** also ask what videotape format they use.

Don't be surprised if busy reporters or editors cut you off before all your questions are answered. PR people learn not to take it personally, and to try again at another time.

**See Contacts with Media, Section II, Part 4.**

*[link]*

## **Maintenance**

**Keep mailing lists up to date.** Mailing list entries are prone to sudden death, especially nowadays, when jobs and titles change frequently. This is especially true of jobs at radio and television stations.

**Check for errors and typos. This is not a minor point.** It may sound silly, but people really hate seeing their names spelled incorrectly or attached to the wrong honorific. Also check for obvious address errors.

## SECTION IV

# DEVELOPING AN EXPERTS LIST

**It's essential to have quick access to people who can talk to the media—especially in response to inquiries from local journalists.**

It's possible that such inquiries could involve very diverse topics—anything from water quality to fertilizers to global warming to stem cell research to a new cancer therapy.

A handy experts list will enable you to respond promptly to reporters' inquiries. It will also enable you to be proactive in arranging media interviews and speaking dates.

**When necessary, don't hesitate to refer reporters to non-members who can provide the information they need. See Working with Journalists, Section II, Part 4.**

---

### Sample Experts List Entry

**TOPIC: WATER QUALITY**

**NAME: John Smith Ph.D**

**EMPLOYER: Vista University**

**TITLE: Associate Professor**

**TELEPHONE: (\_\_\_\_) XXX XXXX**

**BTW 10 AM & 8:00 PM ONLY**

**E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_**

**AVAILABLE FOR: print & radio interviews  
speaking dates**

**Notes: 10/14/04 Interviewed WJX Radio re Rio Creek project. Knows his stuff but very technical, "talked down" to audience.**

---

## **Choosing the Participants**

**The mythical Dr. Smith needs some help before you arrange another interview. We've given you this negative scenario to make a point:**

**We know that every ACS member speaks only for himself or herself.**

**But Dr. Smith's AUDIENCE didn't know that, and neither did the REPORTER\_who called you.**

**In other words, anyone you offer to the media—or for a speaking date—may be thought to represent you and your section.**

Suggestions:

Select people whose communications skills are known to you, or to other members or colleagues.

After media interviews or speaking dates, call the reporters or organizations' program chairs to get their reactions. As the sample indicates, make notes that will guide future choices.

Better still, try to be present when your experts do interviews and speaking dates. Ask yourself:

Did they have a firm understanding of the topic?

Was their language and behavior appropriate to the situation?

Were they likeable?

## **The Member Survey**

We recommend that you conduct a member survey. Then you'll know for sure what topics can be covered. See below for an example.

You may be surprised to learn that your friend the environmental chemist can also talk brilliantly about the chemistry of cooking!

## **Media Advisory**

When you feel ready, send reporters, editors, and producers a media advisory stating the topics on which you can provide experts.

# **SAMPLE MEMBER SURVEY**

## **TO OUR MEMBERS**

**It's important that chemists and chemical engineers help members of the lay community to understand what we do for a living, and how strongly our work influences the quality of their lives. For this reason, we are compiling a list of members whose areas of expertise have immediate impact on the community.**

**If you would like to be on our "Experts List," please answer the following questions:**

**Name:**

**Area(s) of Expertise:**

**Employer:**

**Title**

**Phone number: Home ( )\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Office ( )\_\_\_ \_\_\_ Cell ( )\_\_\_**

**e-mail address:**

**When is the best time to reach you?**

**Are there times you are unreachable? If so, please tell us when:**

-----

**Can we call on you to respond promptly to questions from the media?**

**NO\_\_YES\_\_**

**If yes: Will you do a sit-down interview with a print reporter?**

**NO\_\_YES\_\_ Telephone Interview? NO\_\_ YES\_\_**

**How about a radio interview?** NO\_\_YES\_\_ **If yes:** Live? NO\_\_YES\_\_  
Taped?\* NO\_\_YES\_\_

**Will you do a TV interview?** NO\_\_YES\_\_ **If yes:** Live? NO\_\_YES\_\_  
Taped?\* NO\_\_YES\_\_

**Are you personally involved in community activities? If yes, please tell us about it.**

**Are you willing to speak at meetings of lay organizations?** NO\_\_ YES\_\_

**Do you belong to lay organizations that book guest speakers?**  
NO\_\_YES\_\_ **If yes,** please tell us if any might be interested in hearing about chemistry related topics, including science education.

**Are you experienced in talking about science to laymen?** NO\_\_YES\_\_  
**If yes,** please check one or more of the following: Classroom \_\_ Speaking dates\_\_ Media interview(s)\_\_ Other:

**If you checked “media interview(s),” please tell us where and when:**

- end -

**\*Note: In most cases, taped interviews are later edited.**

# SECTION V

## PR PLANS

When you develop a PR plan, think long range. You and your committee can't do everything—so you must decide how you want to expend your time, energy, and money.

### **Most PR plans contain the following elements:**

Names of Activities

Time Line for each activity

Responsibilities List

Estimated costs

These items can be included in one document or in separate schedules.

PR plans can be simple and informal or they can be very comprehensive—including the objectives of, and the rationales for, every planned activity.

The two pages that follow contain excerpts from the 2003 plans of the Columbus section and the Washington-Idaho Border section, respectively. You'll note that they're very different from one another.

You and your committee can choose any format that works for you.

## **COLUMBUS SECTION PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN FOR 2003.**

**OBJECTIVE 1:** To increase size of committee and provide on the job training for prospective chair.

*Action Plan:* Invite Jeff Trent, lead Chemonstrator to attend the PR Workshop.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Focus the Section's website to become a main portal of PR and communications with the public, in addition to serving the needs of the Section

*Rationale:* The website is a virtual window to the workings of the Section. It must be a professional, up to date, informative presence. There are various points of contact between the PR committee and the communications infrastructure of a section. Coordination of both elements streamlines processing of information and focuses volunteer resources.

*Action Plan:* The Communications group is in place. It includes the Editor of the Newsletter, George Greene; the Webpage content manager, Priscilla Ratliff; the Webmaster, Stephen Renner; the e-mail posting person, Rich Dardis; archives, Steven Rosenthal; and Maria Rosenthal as PR Chair and Group Coordinator.

The Group will develop webpage resources to facilitate production of the newsletter and generation of emails.

Formats will be in place for media to access information as soon as alerts are sent to them.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** The PR Committee will provide promotion services to all Section's committees and activities, as customary.

*Action Plan:*

1. Press release template in place.
2. Media e-mail in place.
3. Integrate with key committees, especially NCW, with Jeff Trent as main PR for NCW. Other committees: Chemistry Teachers, Chemistry Olympiad, YCC, Kids and Chemistry events, and Section's Awards programs.

## Washington-Idaho Border Section Public Relations Plan for 2003-2004

**Objective 1** – Increase public awareness of WIBS and local student affiliates (Washington State University and University of Idaho) outreach activities.

- September 11 to 14 – Latah County Fair demonstrations by University of Idaho (UI) ACS-SA.
- October 23 - Mole Day demonstrations by UI ACS-SA & Solo Green Nez Perce environmental educator.
- November 15 – Opening of the Palouse Science Center, Pullman, WA. Demonstrations by both the WSU and UI ACS-SA.
- December – 12 Days of Christmas demonstrations by UI faculty and students.
- May 1 to 2, 2004 – Moscow, ID Renaissance Fair demonstrations by University of Idaho (UI) ACS-SA.

*Action Plan:*

- Pre-activity: Inform local newspapers, *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* and *Lewiston Tribune* for postings in their calendar sections. Inform local radio stations, KWSU, KFRA, KNWV, KQQQ, and KMAX of the upcoming activities.
- Post-activity: Email press releases along with photographs of activities to *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* and *Lewiston Tribune*.

**Objective 2** – Increase attendance of the invited ACS speakers.

*Action Plan:*

- Pre-activity: Email and/or call *Moscow-Pullman Daily News* and *Lewiston Tribune* for additions to their calendar sections about the speakers.

**Objective 3** – Increase local awareness of professional achievement of local members, e.g. ACS awards, important publications.

*Action Plan:*

- Create press release templates for the local universities press offices and newspapers.

## SECTION VI

### PREPARING A BUDGET

**PR costs money, and you will need funding from your LS. This means creating a budget and having it approved by the officer or committee responsible for LS finances.**

You can't construct a budget without first creating a PR plan detailing the activities you'll undertake and estimating the costs. But there are things you should do as quickly as possible:

#### Getting Started

**Tell the Treasurer you'll be submitting a PR budget proposal. Ask how the approval process works and how long it takes.**

**Find out when the yearly LS budget is finalized.** Should the budget cycle create a problem (you've missed the deadline, or your starting date will be unreasonably delayed) find out if interim funding is available.

**Find out which expenditures should be included in your budget—and which excluded.** For example, the overall LS budget may already include funding for PR related to National Chemistry Week, the Chemistry Olympiad, and other programs.

**At the time you submit your budget, or promptly thereafter, meet with the officials involved to clarify any questions that could arise.**

**Don't spend any money until your budget is approved.** If following this rule means you will miss an outstandingly good PR opportunity, check the possibilities for interim funding, as noted above.

## **Itemizing Costs**

**Expenses vary widely from location to location. This includes the price of almost every item—the chief exception being the current cost for postage. Reminder: Most of your correspondence will be conducted via email. Following are items that you may have to budget for:**

- Copying costs
- Photography
- Graphics
- Equipment Rentals
- Promotional materials
- Videotape cassettes
- Videotaping charges
- Local Section Letterhead
- Plain Bond
- Envelopes
- Postage
- Long-distance telephone charges
- Transportation
- Business entertaining

Note: Most journalists are not allowed to accept gifts, including free meals. In such cases, you can itemize the cost of your own meal.

**Research the prices in your area before committing yourself to any cost estimate.**

**Record all purchases and keep the receipts.**

## Reducing Costs

**Before making purchases, find out what you can get for free or at a reduced price. For example,**

**Your LS may have**

letterhead stationery you can reprint or reproduce

a Listserve system

**A local company, school, or university** could provide, among other things:

laboratory equipment for chemical demonstrations

presentation equipment e.g., TV monitor and VCR; slide carousel and screen

use of copying machines or printers

meeting spaces

videotape footage (for TV stations) and photographs or graphics (for newspapers and other print media)\*

**\*See Working with Journalists, Section II, Part 1,**

## **SECTION VII**

### **ONGOING ACS PROGRAMS**

The ACS Office of Communications publicizes national programs, sending general news releases to media outlets across the nation.

All of these programs obviously have local components, because they involve people—and people live in particular towns, cities, and states. Companies and academic institutions are also site-specific. And that's where you come in. Working with the O/C, you may be able to help publicize programs that involve your home town.

### **NATIONAL CHEMISTRY WEEK**

While NCW is administered nationally, it is, in essence, a collection of local celebrations that take place across the country. The participating sections generate much, if not most, of the media coverage. By the end of the week, the average section has reached more than 75,000 people, either directly or through the media.

### **NATIONAL HISTORIC CHEMICAL LANDMARKS PROGRAM**

The NHCLP brings U.S. chemical history to life by conferring landmark status on sites, artifacts, and collections that are closely linked to seminal achievements in chemistry and chemical technology. It, too, has powerful PR potential. The NHCLP is administered by the O/C—but local sections and divisions initiate the designation process and organize and implement the attending events.

## **PROJECT SEED**

In effect for more than 35 years, SEED gives economically disadvantaged chemistry students the chance to spend the summer working with scientists in colleges, universities, industry, and government. The students also receive a stipend.

## **THE ACS SCHOLARS PROGRAM**

This program awards a one-year scholarship, on the basis of merit and financial need, to minority students of African-American, Hispanic, or Native American heritage. Applicants must be U. S. citizens or permanent residents.

## **“CHEMAGINATION”**

Sponsored by the Office of Community Activities, rather than the O/C, Chemagination is a science essay and poster contest for high school chemistry students. The students submit posters, as well as essays on chemical innovation written in the style of *ChemMatters* magazine. Good Photo and Visual Ops are possible, so find out if your local high school is participating.

## **AWARDS**

The ACS grants far too many awards to list here. But if one of your section members is a recipient, it's time to contact her or him and send out a media advisory. Don't forget the photo.

## **REGIONAL MEETINGS**

If your city is the host for a regional meeting—or one of your members is playing a starring role, you may be able to help the O/C with local media contacts. But be sure to coordinate your efforts with the O/C before you take any action.

## ***AFTERWORDS***

**Please accept our thanks for agreeing to be the public relations chairperson for your section.**

When your efforts put the positive contributions of chemistry in the news, you serve not only your section and the ACS, but the chemical community throughout the nation and beyond.

Please remember that you don't have to do it alone. We are ready to help you whenever you need us.

**Office of Communications  
American Chemical Society  
1155 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C., 20036**

**1 800 227-5558, Ext. 6274**

**[j\\_ginsberg@acs.org](mailto:j_ginsberg@acs.org)**