

## **Publicity Program Georgia Society, Sons of the American Revolution**

### **Responsibilities**

Publicity for an event or occasion is generally the responsibility of the sponsoring chapter or state committee. The state-level Publicity Committee serves to meet the following needs of the Georgia Society by:

- Coordinating state and chapter news reported to the *SAR Magazine*.
- Compiling a scrapbook of published news media stories related to SAR activity within the region.
- Publicizing stories not otherwise pertinent to a specific chapter or committee.
- Providing tips for improving a chapter's publicity program.
- Serving as an additional source for editing news releases prior to submitting them to the media.

The Publicity Committee does not oversee submissions to the state society's newsletter, *The Hornet's Nest*.

### **SAR Magazine**

The national *SAR Magazine* is published quarterly. The amount of space dedicated to any one state under the section for state capsules is necessarily limited. Thus the same degree of coverage afforded to our state's chapters and committees in our state's quarterly newsletter, *The Hornet's Nest*, cannot be duplicated at the national level.

To afford the smaller or less active chapters the opportunity to also be represented at the national level, priority is given to reporting on the events of specific chapters once a year in a designated issue of the *SAR Magazine*. This allows up to eight chapters to be highlighted in the state capsule for each issue. This does not necessarily preclude more active chapters from reporting their events more often than once a year, since designated chapters may choose not to provide a report, so filler reports from other chapters can usually be accommodated. Also, a unique or unusual story is always subject to inclusion when it occurs.

To implement this approach, the state Publicity Committee compiles the state's capsule report on chapter activity for each issue of the *SAR Magazine* based on submissions by chapters to the Publicity Committee Chairman. Chapter submissions should be as brief as possible. If a photograph is included, the preferred method is in digital format. Usually only one or two photos can be printed in the state capsule, so a 1-, 2-, or 3-sentence submission with no photograph can be done quickly and easily highlighting some recent event of your chapter.

The state society also receives coverage in other sections of the magazine for which there is no limitation except that determined by the editor of the magazine. This coverage typically covers historic site celebrations, national awards, and similar activity. The state Publicity Committee is not involved in editorial decisions on this material, but should be provided an advance copy. Chapter capsule reports must be submitted to the

Publicity Chairman by the end of each quarter. If enough chapters do not submit individual reports, the article for the *SAR Magazine* will be compiled from published news releases on file with the state Publicity Committee.

### **Mailing Address**

Forward copies of published news releases, submissions, and pictures for the *SAR Magazine* to the Publicity Committee Chairman, whose name and contact information appears on the State Society's website [www.georgiasocietysar.org](http://www.georgiasocietysar.org) (select State Info/Committees, then Georgia Society Officers).

### **Tips for Your Local Publicity Program**

There are two major aspects of any publicity program. One is to advance or pre-publicity and the other is post publicity after the event has taken place. A goal of advance publicity is to contribute to the success of an event by providing details on the activity that will encourage attendance by members, the public, and the media. A goal of publicity after an event is to highlight the activities that took place in order to recognize the contributions of those involved and to encourage future interest in the activity. In both cases, publicity provides name awareness to our society and brings awareness to the public of the types of historic, patriotic, and educational programs that our society represents, and thus contributes to our attaining the goals of our organization.

**Advance Publicity** - If your chapter is sponsoring an event such as a grave dedication or lineage workshop where the measure of its success is the number of participants, advance publicity is the key to attracting a large attendance. Make sure that your publicity covers the key areas of who, what, where, when, why, and how. Mass e-mailings through the presidents and regents of area lineage, veterans, genealogy, and historical societies are effective because the message will target those persons in the community most interested and active in the types of activity in which we involve ourselves. Try to create flyers to advertise your event that are as professional looking as possible. To the public, a professional looking announcement translates to a well organized and worthwhile event to attend.

The formal news media is of course a desired source of advance publicity. Even if advance publicity is limited to listings in calendars of events, you should not miss this opportunity. Providing photographs from a previous event can increase your chances of advance story coverage in the printed media (make sure that everyone in the photo is identified by name and title from left to right). The smaller the media source (weekly and monthly publications for example), the more likely they may be receptive to accepting submissions from your organization, but their deadlines may also be much further in advance than larger media sources. Keep the local media contact points happy with your publicity notices: (1) include all of the necessary information noted previously (the 5 W's) in addition to a full name, address, phone numbers (cell, home, work, fax, etc. and when it is best to use each), and e-mail for your contact point (as well as an alternate contact point who can also answer any questions), (2) instruct them to feel free to edit your material as needed, (3) provide no more than three photos

for them to choose from for an article (know whether digital or hard copy format is preferred), (4) know their deadline dates and make submissions as early as possible prior to that date, (5) submit interesting photos of people doing something rather than standing in a row staring at the camera, (6) have others check your article for proper spelling, grammar, and flow before you submit it, and (7) get to know your local media contacts (take them to lunch, drop by their office and discuss the kind of format they prefer, present their office with a flag certificate or a certificate of appreciation, invite them to your events, or best of all make them a member!). Try to establish a regular routine of submitting notices and articles, especially if the local printed media source has a section devoted to club news.

**Post Publicity with the News Media** - After an event, the same guidelines apply for working with the news media as for advance publicity. The most important aspect after an event is likely timeliness. Remember that old news is no news. Provide an advance notice to the media when they are not providing coverage themselves, that you will be providing a photo and written article for their consideration. If the media does not use your submission, contact them and find out in a constructive way why not and if you can do anything in the future to make them more acceptable (you may be using an outdated software format, your photos may be fuzzy or the wrong size or format, you may have sent it to the wrong editor, or your article may be too long).

If the media does attend your event, provide them as much written information as possible to avoid spelling persons' names wrong, using the wrong titles, and using outdated background information from their own files. A helpful aid to a reporter taking their own photos is a handout with close-up photos of your officers or other members and wives involved in the activity so that the reporter can easily identify the persons in the photos that they took. Consider taking a photo of the reporter covering your event and occasionally including it in your own chapter newsletter with a copy to the reporter.

**Post Publicity within the SAR** - Obtain news media releases after your event and submit them to the State Publicity Committee Chairman for archiving. These provide valuable input and background for the future and make it easier for the Publicity Chairman to make releases of his own. Identify any errors in the article. Original news print is acidic in nature and does not archive well. If possible, provide the article photocopied to an 8.5-inch by 11-inch white sheet of paper with at least 2 inches of white space at the top of the page. Position your article with the paper in the "portrait" layout design if possible (i.e., the 8.5-inch width of the paper going horizontally). When photocopying an article it is usually best to lower the settings to a lighter image in order to avoid a dark hue to the printed article. Also remember to clip the date, newspaper name, and page number banners from the top of the newspaper page and to tape them neatly on the page with the photocopied article, or write down what they are on a separate sheet of paper.

Consider submitting the article or some form of it to *The Hornet's Nest* as part of your chapter's quarterly activity capsule. If the event is especially newsworthy,

also submit the article and photo to the Georgia Society Publicity Committee Chairman for inclusion in the national SAR magazine.

**Examples of Press Releases** - Section 24 *Media Program and Guide* of the Georgia Society Source Book, Web Edition (available at <http://sourcebook.gassar.org>) has sample press releases covering about 40 program areas.

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