

HOMETOWN CORRESPONDENTS

Have you Googled the “Boy Scouts” or “Boy Scouts of America” lately? As a volunteer in the Bay-Lakes Council, you know that this is not an accurate picture of our organization, and the Character Building program full of activities that you work so hard to provide for your children in your hometown Scouting Unit. It’s time that we share with our communities the value and relevance of the Scouting program today. It’s clearly more needed than ever before.



The Bay-Lakes Council is asking for one Scout, and/or one Venturer from each Troop and Crew to serve as a *Hometown Correspondent* and one registered adult volunteer from each unit *Hometown Correspondent Editor* for their Scouting Unit. The Bay-Lakes Council will provide you with a “how to” packet built by news and advertising professionals from the Council’s Membership Steering Committee, as well as a Virtual Training experience on how to write and submit news stories and pictures to the local media.

The time is now to register as a Bay-Lakes Council Hometown Correspondent or Editor for the 2022-2023 Scouting Season.

Cub Scout Pack *Hometown Correspondents* must be a Registered adult volunteer, selected by the unit’s Pack Committee to participate. Scouts BSA Troops and Crews should designate one youth member to be a *Hometown Correspondent*, and one Registered adult volunteer to serve as their Editor. We recommend utilizing the Scribe and Secretary leadership positions in Scouts BSA and Venturing to fill this function, but you can certainly assign the Correspondent or Editor positions as new stand alone positions.

For additional information or assistance, contact Roger Shellman at rogershell@netnet.net.

HOW TO LOCATE YOUR LOCAL NEWS

ORGANIZATIONS

[Click here to view a current list of media contacts throughout the Bay-Lakes council service area.](#)

See Page 2 for tips and tricks of writing a press release.



HOW TO WRITE A NEWS RELEASE

The start of any news story is called the “lead.” It tells the whole story in a to-the-point paragraph. Its purpose is to set “the hook” to get your reader to want to learn more. The lead should answer the questions ‘Who, What, Where, When, and Why’ all in the one short paragraph.

Example: *Tim Tenderfoot and Sammy Scout of Troop 007 of Frostbite Falls (Who) completed their service project of building a new observation tower (What) at the Forelorn Hope Nature Preserve outside of town (Where). The Scouts finished the three-week construction Saturday (When), as part of their requirements for their First Class rank (Why).*



After the lead, you can add more details and “flesh out” your story. You could explain why service projects are so important to Scouting, for example and how they grow increasing more difficult as the Scout matures.

Photos: You want to do more than take a photo; you want to make a photo. The old saying ‘A pictures is worth a thousand words’ still applies. In the example above, pose the Scouts actually constructing the tower, or climbing it, yet be sure to clearly show their faces – readers will want to see who it is you are talking about. When making a photo, it is best to have the light source coming from behind you to illuminate your subject. Do not shoot into the sun or with the light behind the subject. Be aware of the background (the classic example is the photo of the man against a wall in front of a stuffed deer head. It looked like he had antlers.)

Captions: Short and sweet. Identify everyone in the photo with full name and in our example, what they are doing.

SUBMITTING A STORY/PHOTO

If possible, submit your story/photo in person, especially if your local newspaper is a weekly. That way the editor or staff can “put a face” on your pack/troop/crew and you will have a better chance to “sell” your article.

Do not be discouraged if your article is shortened or edited. Space in a newspaper is at a premium, and there may not be room for you in any given week, but you may get in the next edition.

SUBJECT MATER

- Eagle or Other service project
- Summer Camp or High Adventure Trek
- Court of Honor
- Pinewood Derby, Campout, or other Fun Activity



Although these are very different subjects, the start of your article can follow the classic “Who, What, Where, When, and Why for the first paragraph. Then you can describe the event in detail.

Get the reader hooked, then provide the rest. Talk to your contact at the media outlet and ask for advice. They are usually happy to help.

Always include your own name and contact information, including phone number, as the newspaper may want more information.