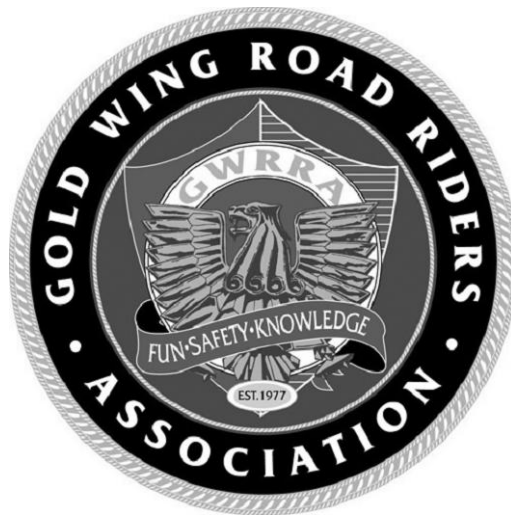


Gold Wing Road Riders Association



Membership Enhancement Division

Public Relations Guide

4th Edition
April 15, 2003

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Overview</u>iii
 <u>Chapter 1 - The “W’s” of Public Relations (PR)</u>	
What is Public Relations?	1
Why Does GWRRA Need Public Relations?	1
Where is GWRRA Public Relations?	1
Who Promotes GWRRA?	1
When is GWRRA Promoted?	1
 <u>Chapter 2 - The Public Relations Coordinator (PRC)</u>	
What It Takes to Be a PRC	2
What’s My Job? (Responsibilities of the PRC)	2
<i>Chapter PRC</i>	3
<i>District PRC</i>	3
<i>Region PRC</i>	4
<i>National PRC</i>	5
 <u>Chapter 3 - Public Relations Coordinators’ Tools</u>	
GWRRA PR Notebook	6
PR Data Base	6
Computerized PR	7
 <u>Chapter 4 - The Media: The Written Form of Communication</u>	
How to Deal with the Media	
<i>Overview</i>	8
<i>What Do They Want?</i>	8
<i>How Do We Prepare to Make Use of the Media?</i>	8
Writing Press Releases	
<i>Overview</i>	9
<i>Timing Is Everything</i>	9
<i>How Do You Write a Press Release?</i>	9
<i>What Should It Look Like?</i>	10
<i>What Do I Get for All This?</i>	10
The Weeklies	11
Writing Public Service Announcements	
<i>Overview</i>	11
<i>How to Write and Send a PSA</i>	11
The Press Kit	
<i>Overview</i>	12
<i>Press Kit Format</i>	12
<i>Backgrounders</i>	12
<i>Fact Sheets</i>	13

Page

Case Histories (Success Stories)..... 13
Photographs..... 13
Ready, Set, Press! 13
Using the Telephone 14
Writing Effective Pitch Letters 15
Reaching Reporters Using Electronic Mail (E-Mail) 15
Sending FAXes (Sometimes)..... 16
Guidelines for FAXing to the Media 16
And By All Means, Follow Up!..... 16

Chapter 5 - Speeches: The Verbal Form of Communication

Types of Speeches..... 17
Parts of a Speech..... 17
Tips About Speechmaking..... 18
Effective Speeches Are 18
Effective Speakers Are 19
Delivery Techniques 19
Know Your Audience..... 20
Common Errors to Avoid When Speaking 20
Dealing with Troublesome Questions 20
Helpful Hints..... 20

Chapter 6 - Mall Shows: The “Up-Close and Personal” Form of Communication

Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions
What Is a Mall Show? 21
What About Another Name for Mall Shows? 21
What Sort of Things Can You Do for Your Display? 21
What Should You Wear? 21
Should You Stay with Your Bike? 21
What About “Bike Judging” at Your Mall Show? 21
How Do You Organize a Mall Show?..... 22
In Summary 22

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Sample GWRRA Press Release A-1
Attachment 2 - Sample GWRRA Public Service Announcement A-2
Attachment 3 - Sample GWRRA Pitch Letter A-3
Attachment 4 - Sample Sign for Mall Show Displays A-4

OVERVIEW

Dear Chapter, District, and Region Public Relations Coordinators:

The Gold Wing Road Riders Association (GWRRA) Membership Enhancement Division (MED) is pleased to provide you the 4th Edition of the GWRRA “Public Relations Guide”! This edition builds upon three previous editions of the Guide that were prepared by former National PR Director *Bob Merriman*, former National PR Director *B.J. Lyman*, and former National PR Coordinators, *John and La Chelle Carson*, with input from several other Members.

Welcome to the position of Public Relations Coordinator (PRC) and to the GWRRA Membership Enhancement Division team! Public Relations (PR), is part of the Member Enhancement Division, and is an important aspect of the Association. We need to fully market and mold the perceptions of our Association. More so today than ever before we do have an opportunity to do this. With the continued growth in numbers of motorcycle enthusiasts, we can make our presence known as the leader we are. But being out front and staying there will require commitment! So let us work together to help our Association stay strong and continue to grow.

The purpose of this Guide is to give you a resource to refer to as you perform PR activities for GWRRA. The guidelines do not have to be followed exactly, but they are for you to use in a manner that works best for you and in the geographical area in which you live. As always, common sense should always prevail. And know that your efforts will be greatly felt and appreciated by all, especially the hard-working Members who will continue to take pride in belonging to GWRRA.

As the National Public Relations Coordinators, we welcome any comments or suggestions to improve the Guide. Also, please remember that help and advice are only a phone call away! Any questions or comments may be directed to us:

June & Derrell Agee
63 South Riverview Drive
East Peoria, Illinois 61611
Phone: (309) 822-8947
E-Mail: deloria@mtco.com

As National Directors of the Membership Enhancement Division (M.E.D.) we also offer to help at any time. Please contact us if you have questions about any aspect of the M.E.D: Public Relations; Fun & Friendship; Member Retention; or Couple of the Year.

Steve Johnson & Beanie O’Neill
2600 Randall Way #111, Box 121
Silverdale, Washington 98383
Phone: (360) 377-1137
E-Mail: med@gwrra.org

We hope you find this Guide useful as you perform the duties of Public Relations Coordinator and showcase this great Association!

Chapter 1

THE “W’s” OF PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR)

What Is Public Relations?

“Public relations” (PR) is defined in *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* as being “the business of inducing the public to have an understanding for and goodwill toward a person, firm, or institution; also: the degree of understanding and goodwill achieved.” *Webster’s New World Dictionary* defines PR as “relations with the general public as through publicity; specifically those functions of a corporation, organization, etc. concerned with attempting to create favorable public opinion for itself.”

Why Does GWRRA Need Public Relations?

People have a strong inclination to believe what they read in newspapers, magazines, and newsletters or what they see on TV or hear on the radio. If we want to create a positive image of the Association, and motorcycling in general, in the minds of the public, GWRRA needs to have a good PR program, one that takes advantage of every available means of reaching the public.

Within GWRRA, PR is a process of communicating with the public, as well as the Association’s Members and potential Members, by using all forms of media, e.g., trade publications, business press, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, speaking opportunities, etc., to promote the Association and a positive image of motorcycling.

PR involves knowing how to communicate with the media to get coverage. This is achieved against some odds, because many other organizations are also clamoring for the attention of the media. And the publicity you get is a sure indicator of public interest. By evaluating Members’ and prospective Members’ reactions to the announcements you send to the media, you quickly become aware of the Association’s appeal.

Where Is GWRRA Public Relations?

GWRRA PR is everywhere we are. No matter if we’re on the bike or off the bike, when we wear the GWRRA logo, we are GWRRA. PR opportunities are all around us, from the person who approaches us at a rest stop, to the media in our cities.

Who Promotes GWRRA?

Everyone promotes GWRRA to some extent. The “Friend Finder” 5-Heart Bars or “Recruiter” 5-Star Bars show one type of PR. Every Member promotes by appearance and action. But, the Public Relations Coordinators (PRC’s) are prepared to spend their volunteer time reaching out to everyone by using all forms of the media. The role of the PRC is to keep a positive image before the public of the accomplishments achieved and the fun-filled events held, by writing articles or giving speeches. PRCs refine of art of telling others “who we are,” “what we are,” and “where” and “when” we can be found”!

When Is GWRRA Promoted?

PR is both structured and unstructured. Most of what we’ve discussed thus far, and what the majority of this Guide relates to, are the “structured” forms of PR, e.g., contacts with the media, Mall Shows, etc. But just as the answer to the question of “*Where* is GWRRA PR?” is “It’s *everywhere* we are,” the answer to the question of “*When* is GWRRA promoted?” is “*anytime*”! We must be prepared, at all times, to communicate with people by any means available.

Chapter 2

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR (PRC)

What It Takes to Be a PRC

The perfect PRC, who knows how to do everything flawlessly . . . doesn't exist! The reality is that we all have some skills, but not in all areas. Some of the desired skills and assets of the PRC position are:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Writing and editing | 4. Advertising | 7. Community relations |
| 2. Knowledge of electronic media | 5. Photography | 8. Organizational ability |
| 3. Promoting | 6. Marketing | 9. Managerial ability |

However, it is rare to find a person or couple who possesses expertise in all these areas. You may have great writing skills but are timid in giving speeches; but if you have an outgoing personality, an ability to communicate, and a genuine caring for people, you can learn the rest, or you can use your ability to involve others who possess those skills.

It is important that you have a thorough knowledge of, or learn the concepts of, GWRRA in order to effectively guide the PR program. Remember that you represent GWRRA everywhere, all the time. It is imperative that you not only talk GWRRA, but also look GWRRA! You need to be a person who believes in our Association and its concepts--one who is prepared to spend time reaching out to everyone who might have an interest in our type of Association. By using the media and every means available, you, as the PRC, can tell others about who we are, what we are all about, and when and where we can be found. PR is keeping before the public all of the fun-filled events we put on and the accomplishments we achieve. Keeping a continuously positive image before the public by writing articles and arranging speaking engagements is also a plus.

Other valuable traits:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Common sense | 4. Interest in people | 7. Charisma |
| 2. Creativity | 5. Business sense | 8. Personal appearance |
| 3. News sense | 6. Sincerity | 9. Confidence (or appearance of) |

Additionally, you should be self-motivated and require little to no supervision. You should be able to deal with all types of people, influence other persons' actions or opinions, and make decisions using personal judgment. If you can go up to a total stranger, introduce yourself, and talk about the fun of motorcycling with GWRRA, you are a candidate for PRC. The person/couple filling this position will use their imagination for new ideas for fun ways to keep the positive image of GWRRA before the public and the Members of this Association.

What's My Job? (Responsibilities of the PRC)

Welcome to a team devoted to promoting the image of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association, not only to our Members but also to the world around us. Like all new beginnings, a new challenge can be both exciting and thrilling! Let's communicate together, as a team, to achieve a successful PR program for GWRRA.

We have attempted here in the next few pages to list and define some of the primary responsibilities of the PRC at the various levels (i.e., Chapter, District, Region, and National). The responsibilities listed are for you to "pick and choose" from, to use what works best for you and your area. Feel free to add other responsibilities as needed. Directors and Coordinators should work together to determine the PRC's responsibilities and to set attainable goals.

In the area of PR, we're never "done." Success is measured by setting goals, then seeing they are accomplished. For example, set a goal for the upcoming year of having one mall show, one toy run, and riding in one parade, and see how you do. Then the following year add some more events. Have FUN with it, and see how many smiles you get along the way from people of all ages as they see what GWRRA is all about!

Chapter PRC

With over 900 Chapters in this great Association, this is clearly where GWRRA PR can have the greatest impact! Some of the responsibilities you may have as a Chapter PRC are:

1. Set up mall shows and cruise-ins
2. Involve the Chapter in charity events
3. Write articles for local newspapers
4. Prepare and promote coverage of Chapter events (e.g., flyers, press releases, public service announcements, press kits, and TV or radio coverage)
5. Speak to non-GWRRA groups
6. Write articles for the Chapter newsletter
7. Write articles for *Wing World* magazine

As a Chapter PRC you are the one responsible for publicizing GWRRA and all it stands for. This means you set up mall shows and cruise-ins so the public can see us (see Chapter 6 for some ideas), and get your Chapter involved in such things as riding in local parades, visiting nursing homes, picking up highway litter, gathering toys for children, donating food and clothing to those less fortunate, donating blood, etc. You can also attend community group meetings (e.g., Kiwanis, men's clubs, women's clubs, etc.) and speak about GWRRA and motorcycle awareness (see Chapter 5 for tips on speechmaking).

And while you and your Chapter are doing these wonderful things, you make sure the public knows you're part of the greatest motorcycling association in the world! You do that by writing articles for your local newspapers, both before and after the event. You can also try to get TV or radio time as well. See Chapter 4 for more details on using the media. You also prepare and distribute flyers to promote whatever event your Chapter is planning.

You also need to help your Chapter "brag" about the wonderful things that are going on to others within the Association. You should prepare articles for your Chapter newsletter, and also for *Wing World* magazine. These articles can promote an upcoming Chapter activity or report on a Chapter activity after it has taken place. They can also spotlight individual Members or sponsors.

Most importantly, talk with the Chapter Director who appointed you. What does he/she want you to do? For example, you might also run the Couple of the Year program for your Chapter, greet new Members and visitors at Chapter meetings, be responsible for Member Retention and Recruitment, and/or arrange Chapter Fun Activities. If so, there are other Member Enhancement Division guides available from your Chapter Director to help you in these areas as well.

District PRC

Some of the responsibilities you may have as a District PRC are:

1. Assist and advise the Chapter PRCs
2. Maintain database of Chapter PRCs within the District
3. Be aware of and help promote Chapter PR activities
4. Share PR tips among Chapter PRCs
5. Conduct PR seminars
6. Visit Chapters to speak on PR
7. Publish District PR newsletter
8. Write articles for District Director's newsletter
9. Communicate information to Chapter PRCs from Region and National PRCs
10. Prepare and promote coverage of District Rally and other District events (e.g., flyers, press releases, public service announcements, press kits, and TV or radio coverage)

As a District PRC, you are there primarily to assist and advise the Chapters within your District. To do that, you need to maintain a database with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your District's Chapter PRCs.

You need to stay aware of which Chapters are having mall shows or toy runs, appearing on public TV, etc. That way you can gather and, more importantly, share tips on how they did it. You can share this information several ways. You can hold seminars at the District and/or Region Rallies and Workshops, or personally visit the Chapters.

You can do an informative PR newsletter and/or write a recurring article for your District Director's newsletter. In addition to sharing information across the Chapters, these newsletters and articles should pass along information received from the Region and National PRCs.

You should prepare and promote coverage of your District Rally and other District events. You can do that by writing articles for the local newspaper where the event is being held, both before and after the event. You can also try to get local public TV or radio time as well. See Chapter 4 for more details on using the media.

You can promote District-wide participation in your Chapters' charity events and in various motorcycle awareness programs.

You may also be responsible for the District Couple of the Year and Retention and Recruitment programs. Bottom line is . . . You are the single link across all the Chapters in your District! Make sure you stay linked and pass advice and support to all the Chapters. Just ask your District Director what you can do to help!

Region PRC

The job of the Region PRC is to assist the District PRCs. While the District PRCs work with the Chapter PRCs, you work with the District PRCs. You share ideas across the Districts and depend on the District PRCs to feed you information on what's happening in the Chapters within your Region. Some of the responsibilities you may have as a Region PRC are:

1. Assist and advise District PRCs.
2. Maintain database of District PRCs within Region
3. Share PR ideas across the Districts
4. Conduct PR seminars
5. Publish a Region PR newsletter
6. Write articles for Region Director's newsletter
7. Communicate information to District PRCs from National PRC
8. Prepare and promote coverage of Region Rally and other Region events (e.g., flyers, press releases, public service announcements, press kits, and TV or radio coverage)

As a Region PRC, you are there primarily to assist and advise the Districts within your Region. To do that, you need to maintain a database with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your Region's District PRCs.

You should communicate with your District PRCs much the same way the District PRCs do with their Chapter PRCs. You can hold seminars at the Region and/or District Rallies and Workshops. You can produce an informative PR newsletter and/or write a recurring article for your Region Director's newsletter. In addition to sharing information across the Districts, these newsletters and articles should pass along information received from the National PRC.

You should prepare and promote coverage of your Region Rally and other Region events. You can do that by writing articles for the local newspaper where the event is being held, both before and after the event. You can also try to get local public TV or radio time as well. See Chapter 4 for more details on using the media.

As with Chapter and District PRCs, you may also be responsible for the Couple of the Year and Retention and Recruitment programs for your Region. Bottom line is . . . You are the single link across

all the Districts in your Region! Make sure you stay linked and pass advice and support to all the Districts. Just ask your Region Director what you can do to help!

National PRC

The National PRC is the last link in the PR chain of communication. The National PRC is there to assist the Regions to ensure a strong, ongoing PR program within every geographical region.

This is routinely accomplished via articles in the Member Enhancement Division newsletter and *Wing World* magazine and at seminars at Wing Ding.

The National PRC maintains a database of Region PRCs, to include their names, addresses, and phone numbers.

Chapter 3

PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATORS' TOOLS

GWRRA PR Notebook

Each PRC should maintain a 3-ring binder, with a collection of guides, resources, and documentation. The notebook should be divided into sections and tabbed as follows:

<u>Tab</u>	<u>Tab Title</u>	<u>Contents</u>
A	PR Guide	GWRRA Public Relations Guide
B	PR Data Base	Names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses of PRCs & media contacts
C	PR Articles	Newsletter and <i>Wing World</i> PR articles

PR Data Base

A PR database is essential to establishing a “chain of communication” at all levels. The PR database will be a quick reference for PRC and media contacts. For example, there may be occasions when a Region PRC may need to contact the District PRC for help with the media in the area where the Region Rally is being held. Or a District PRC may need to contact a Chapter PRC for a District event. Since our rallies and activities may move to different areas, using a PRC that has already created a working relationship with the media in that location would be an enormous help to an outside PRC.

National, Region, District levels:

Compile (and update at least quarterly) a list of your PRCs:

- Name
- Address
- Phone/FAX Numbers
- E-mail Address

Chapter level:

Compile (and update at least quarterly) a list of media contacts (e.g., newspapers, TV, radio) in the local area:

- Media Name
- Address
- Contact Person
- Phone/FAX Numbers
- E-mail Address

Computerized PR

The latest in PR diversity -- “on-line communication”!! Our messages now have a direct link to our Members and the public, at home or at work, as this medium unveils GWRRA exposure to endless possibilities.

GWRRA has a great “Web-Site.”

To access, connect with Internet and input address: <http://www.gwrro.org>

From the GWRRA “Web-Site,” you can explore . . .

Information/Resources

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Guest Area
- Helmet Laws
- Join/Renew On-Line
- Leadership
- National Staff Listing
- Officer Resources
- Press Releases
- Wing World Magazine

GWRRA Events

- Ozark Motorcycle Jubilee
- Tours & Rallies
- Wing Ding

Special Interest Groups (SIG's)

- Camping SIG
- Classic Wing SIG
- Cyber Wings SIG
- Recreational Vehicle SIG
- Trike SIG

Services/Products

- Custom Pins & Patches
- Towbusters
- GWRRA Wearhouse

Links to GWRRA Divisions

- GWRRA International
- Leadership Training
- Membership Enhancement
- Operations
- Recruitment
- Rider Education
- Special Interest Groups

Web Resources & Links

- Audio/Video Resources
- Classified Ads
- Downloads
- Each Region's Web-Site
- Message Boards

“On-line” PR is a very effective tool in maintaining the “positive image” of GWRRA. Notices of activities and events are now shared across the world, perhaps more accessible than newsletters! Newsletters should be reviewed by a Director or Staff Member before they are released. Now, with on-line communications, anyone can input information that can be accessed by anyone with access to the Internet. So, as PRCs, we need to gently remind ourselves, and fellow Members, of the implications of messages and information relayed and received.

Chapter 4

THE MEDIA: THE WRITTEN FORM OF COMMUNICATION

How to Deal with the Media

Overview

The effective use of the media is key to the success of the GWRRA PR program. The media bombards us with thousands of publications and broadcasts that are ever increasing. Television, radio, and print have become the great informers whose capacity to influence is enormous.

But the needs of the media are also enormous. This is great news because it opens the door to opportunities to make use of the media. They need the kind of human-interest stories we can bring them.

What Do They Want?

The media are not just interested in facts--they want stories. Mostly, they are looking for something with controversy too--something negative or sensational--because their goal is to provide stimulating and exciting reading. But their goals and ours are not necessarily different.

To get their printed story, they will be probing us in an interview format. This is why we need to prepare. So, know exactly what you want to say. A main reason why interviews aren't effective is that we've made no decision about what points to get across. The information found in the GWRRA "Welcome to GWRRA" brochure is a great place to start, a short list to commit to memory.

For example,

GWRRA is a social organization, founded in 1977 for owners and riders of the Honda Gold Wing motorcycle (and now the Valkyrie motorcycle). We are over 81,000 Members strong in the United States, Canada and 50+ foreign countries. That breaks down to over 900 active chapters managed by 4,000 volunteer leaders. Typical GWRRA fun-filled activities for the whole family include restaurant runs, picnic rides, campouts, dances, charity runs, ice cream socials, weekend trips, all-day rides, CPR/first aid classes and safe riding clinics. The benefits to GWRRA membership are the friendships you make and the comfort of belonging to the largest family of Gold Wing owners, group insurance rates, and much, much more.

How Do We Prepare to Make Use of the Media?

No one is born "media-skilled." Even being highly communicative doesn't ensure success. It's a learned skill, and we can begin at the beginning--our "attitude" --which can be the most important skill in PR.

Developing the right attitude is essential, especially in the areas of enthusiasm (in telling the good news about us) and flexibility in dealing with the needs of the media. Then there's preparation--being informed and confident.

One final word about preparing: Practice. Choose a friend who is serious about helping you, give them a list of questions that you think you'll be asked in an interview, and try it. Then assess yourself. Did you make your points? Were your answers too long (or too short)? Just going over the points in your head will not allow you to get a sense of timing about your answers. Bottom line: This is not the time to "wing it."

The preparation holds true for television also. However, these kinds of interviews reveal more of your personality than the message. And TV cannot completely edit what you say like newspapers and magazines can unless they don't run the story. But if all this seems like quite a lot, remember that you will always know more about GWRRA than the reporter. No matter what they ask you, you can always bring the focus back to good news.

Develop good press materials and build good rapport with the press. When you do, your press releases and public service announcements will get noticed.

Writing Press Releases

Overview

The most effective strategy we can use to build awareness with publicity is to write a compelling press release. What's in it? A press release is a descriptive marketing tool that tells the press what is new, interesting, and exciting about GWRRA or a GWRRA event. When done well, it is the quickest, cheapest, and most effective way for most people to reach the public through the news media. Here are a few of its advantages:

- It is easy and inexpensive to write, duplicate, and distribute.
- It is convenient for the news media, which increases your chances of getting the exposure you want. With just a glance, editors or reporters can make a quick judgment. It can easily be scheduled for coverage or filed for future reference.
- Because you are dealing with the written word, it lessens the risk of errors in names, dates, and ideas.
- Even if it doesn't lead to a story, it may result in a short notice or calendar listing.

Timing Is Everything

The publisher must receive your release for newspapers and radio two weeks in advance. That means you must have a schedule and stick to it. Plans for your next get-together and ride must be made well in advance so that you can make advertising deadlines. If you have an event that you want advertised in other locations, you need even more time--plan on an extra 7 to 10 days.

How Do You Write a Press Release?

Hundreds of press releases pass through a news organization every week. More and more releases are coming from local community groups, and they get as much or even more attention. Still, fewer than one in ten press releases result in a story. Whether yours is one of those depends not just on the importance of your event, but on how well you describe it.

Writing a press release is easy. You want to state your point so that it is clear, accurate, brief, and contains all essential information. Reporters get hundreds of press releases a day, so they don't have time to read them all from beginning to end. Therefore, a press release should rarely be longer than two pages. You can be stylish or catchy if you like, but don't overdo it--especially at the expense of clarity and brevity.

To catch a reporter's interest, you must follow a distinct press release layout, which has five basic elements (see the sample GWRRA press release in Attachment 1):

- **Release Information:** The release information is usually positioned at the left margin just below the letterhead. Normally, prepare and submit press releases with the words "For Immediate Release." If you are submitting the press release in advance but don't want the information made public until a certain date, specify that release date here. Editors are not bound by such dates but usually observe them. If you are announcing a coming event, you also may want to include a "kill" or "do not use after" date.
- **Contact Information:** Editors won't pay much attention to a release unless they know who sent it. The names, titles and telephone numbers of GWRRA contacts are usually listed just below the release information. If possible, include each contact's work telephone number and home number (because the press works under tight deadlines and may need to reach a contact on off-hours).
- **Headline:** Every press release should have a headline that briefly states the main point. The main headline may be followed by subheads that make secondary points. Headlines are usually positioned below your contact information, and should always be centered on the page in boldface type.
- **Dateline:** The datelines include the city and state where the event is located and the date of the release.
- **Body Text:** The first paragraph is a quick encapsulation of the main message of the release. It should answer the questions who, what, when, where, and why.

For example:

The Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Chapter WA-B “Who”
will hold their monthly get-together on Sunday, May 3rd, “What” and “When”
at Bill’s Breakfast Café, in East Bremerton. “Where”
Breakfast at 8:30 a.m., social gathering at 9:30 am. “Why”
Weather permitting, there will be a short ride following. Visitors are welcome.
For further information, call John or Joanne Doe at: (360) 123-4567

Other details should be summarized as briefly as possible in following paragraphs. You may want to provide some brief historical background or a one-paragraph biography of a speaker. You might suggest some interesting angles or how your speaker or event relates to other issues in the news. Finally, you should include a short paragraph describing GWRRA and its Members.

Write short sentences and paragraphs. Use active verbs and concrete nouns. Spell out abbreviations and acronyms. Avoid rhetorical adjectives; they won’t impress editors. List your most important points at the top and other points in descending order of importance.

Check and recheck name spellings, addresses, and telephone numbers. Reporters usually will not double-check those details from releases, so any mistake you make will be passed on. Identify persons by title and, where appropriate, a hometown or street address.

Assume that editors are not familiar with GWRRA or your Chapter or your subject. Give them the basic information they need plus easy-to-reach people for more details.

Here are some possible topics:

- Relate the facts of your event to the needs of the community.
- Highlight your event with real-life situation.
- Explain how your event came into being.
- Tell a story about an unexpected benefit to the community.

Be accurate. If your release contains language that could hurt the reputation of a person or business, you can be accused of libel or slander along with the news organization.

What Should It Look Like?

Your materials should look professional, but there’s no need to waste money paying for glitz. The press doesn’t care if the release is printed on 60-pound colored paper with colored envelopes. They just want the useful information. A press release should not look like a brochure, pamphlet or any other similar type of material. To ensure that your press release looks professional and makes a positive impact, we offer the following suggestions:

- Type your release, double or triple-spaced, on one side of the paper.
- Use only 8 1/2 by 11-inch GWRRA letterhead.
- Center headlines and use a bold typeface to make headlines stand out.
- Capitalize the first letter of each word in the headline except for articles like “a,” “an” or “the,” and prepositions like “of,” “to” or “from” to make the headline more distinctive. The use of upper and lower case letters in a headline increases legibility.
- If your press release must be more than one page, print the word “more” between two dashes centered at the bottom of the page to alert reporters that another page follows:--more--
- Print three number symbols centered after the last paragraph to indicate the end of the press release:
###

Tip: Draw attention to important selected sentences by highlighting them with a yellow marker.

What Do I Get for All This?

Don’t expect too much from a press release. Some small organizations may print or broadcast your release verbatim, but that’s unusual. Your well-organized release may appear as five words in a calendar listing, as a public service announcement broadcast at 3:00 a.m., or as a one-paragraph story buried in the classified ads. Sometimes it seems as though logic is missing in the judgment of news editors and reporters, and often it is.

The Weeklies

At weekly papers, doors may swing open more easily. Taken as a group, the weeklies also may reach as many people as a daily or broadcast station. Yet in the age of mass media, groups seeking publicity easily overlook the weeklies. You may unwisely spend a lot of time and effort trying to tell a story through the mass media when a simple notice in your community paper would accomplish your goal.

Most weekly and community newspapers are tailored to specific groups: Neighborhoods, suburban areas, ethnic or political groups or readers with relatively high levels of education and income. That presents you with some potential advantages. While they have fewer readers, the weeklies may have more of other qualities:

- More specific audiences -- Smaller papers will get your news to some people who don't read a daily.
- More hungry -- Some weeklies follow a different standard of news value. While daily newspapers often toss out news items, weeklies frequently are hungry for stories to fill their papers.
- More detail -- If a news item affects a small, specific group, weekly papers frequently will report far more detail than the mass media.
- More positive -- The weeklies often are more inclined to look for "good news."
- More identification -- Readers may identify more closely with their community newspaper.
- Better play -- Because they frequently are short-staffed, weeklies may give your story more space and better play than a daily.

Smaller papers are more likely to use photographs you supply. But you still should check before spending money on prints. You can call and ask. Or you can check the photo-credits in the paper; if there are no credits, the newspaper probably uses outside photos.

Finally, work with the newspaper's publication dates and deadlines. As a rule, weekly staffs are swamped two to four days before publication. Since most weeklies are published Wednesdays, this means you should contact them the previous Thursday or Friday -- and preferably earlier. Another rule: weeklies generally work a week in advance of publication.

Writing Public Service Announcements

Overview

Most radio and TV stations air public service announcements, known in the business as "PSAs," free of charge as a community service. A PSA is a brief plug for a cause or event related to a non-profit, public service organization. They are used to announce local events, to gain support for a project, campaign, or behavior, and to build general awareness. They sound like commercials, but they're different: unlike commercials, you don't have to pay for them; and the station, not you, decides if and when they will be aired. No references to products or services for sale can be made.

Choose stations that run your kind of public service announcement. Write it briefly and clearly (see Attachment 2 for sample). Submit it two weeks in advance.

How to Write and Send a PSA

The guidelines for preparing press releases also apply to PSAs. That is, include the information of who, what, when, where, and why statements which typically run about one page in length, double-spaced (which is about a 60-second spot). Unlike the newspaper that can extend a column if needed, the radio stations look at airtime in seconds. Most stations now prefer 30-second PSAs though some use 60-second or 10-second messages. Assume that an announcer can read about 20 to 25 words in each ten seconds of airtime. Use the following guidelines when writing your PSA:

10-second spot	=	20 words
20-second spot	=	50 words
30-second spot	=	75 words
45-second spot	=	110 words
60-second spot	=	150 words

When writing the announcement, never use abbreviations and always spell out numbers, i.e., fifty, instead of 50. This will allow you to gauge the seconds more closely (see example later in this chapter).

For a routine announcement of an event, send a release to the station's public service director or community calendar--at least two weeks in advance. Don't bother with a cover letter or follow-up call unless you need to correct an error in the release.

Writing style is important. Phrasing should be in the rhythm of ordinary speech. Use common contractions like don't or won't. Avoid long sentences, jargon and large statistics.

Include a "kill date," the date after which the PSA should not be aired. And include a reliable telephone number for a spokesperson who can give more information. Some stations may even call for an interview, using the tape to promote your event or cause.

In most cases, you can send the same PSA to newspapers, some of which use such announcements as short news or calendar items.

The Press Kit

Overview

A press kit is a set of materials designed to communicate your message in more detail to reporters. It can contain any combination of the following informational pieces about GWRRA:

- **Press Release:** This is the previously described announcement of news that tells about your event.
- **Backgrounder/Fact Sheet:** A backgrounder is a summary of GWRRA's history, including a description of, or profiles of, the founders. A fact sheet condenses the most salient points about GWRRA into a one-page format.
- **Case Histories:** These can be testimonials from satisfied Members, public officials' acknowledgments for community projects done well, and the like.
- **Photographs:** These can be color and/or black-and-white shots of the person or event to support your press release.
- **Charts, Graphs and Line Art:** Graphics can help illustrate a story, especially one involving numbers. They can be printed on the same page as the press release or printed on separate pages.

The press kit is used to help reporters get a full understanding of a specific activity and/or GWRRA as a whole. It can be sent to reporters whenever you have a significant news announcement. It can be mailed or hand-delivered when meeting with them for an interview or demonstration, or placed in the press kit room at trade shows and conventions.

Press Kit Format

The press kit materials are usually assembled in a folder that has two flaps or pockets on the inside. Colorful folders can be bought at stationary supply stores or from a printer. Look for strong flaps that are attached on two or three sides to securely hold the materials. Also, be sure that the flaps are only three or four inches high -- any higher may obscure the headline and first paragraph of the press materials (we want these materials to be easily viewed, as reporters may only scan the press kit). The right-hand flap of the folder may have slots for holding your GWRRA business card.

Assemble the press kit folders carefully. The right-hand flap should contain the lead press release that explains what is news. On the left-hand side, the GWRRA fact sheet or backgrounder should be in front. Case histories, reviews, press articles and other materials can be inserted behind. If there is a photograph, it should be the first item on the left-hand side.

Backgrounders

The press is probably unfamiliar with GWRRA, and they may ask for the backgrounder. This is a document that profiles GWRRA, its objectives, and its Members. Written in a narrative style, the

backgrounder can range from one to 20 pages or more. It's best to provide one to three pages. (The pamphlet "Welcome to GWRRA" can be a substitute for the backgrounder.)

Your backgrounder may be the first (and perhaps only) information the news writer has about GWRRA. A good backgrounder will help writers understand what GWRRA stands for. Done well, the backgrounder can enhance the article the reporter writes. Done poorly, it may dissuade the reporter from writing about GWRRA.

Fact Sheets

The fact sheet is a one-page backgrounder that encapsulates the "highlights" of the Association. Think of it as a resume for GWRRA. Like a resume, left (margin)-justified headings organize the information provided. Reporters use fact sheets to learn the most important facts about your Chapter, District or Region with a quick read.

Case Histories (Success Stories)

Case histories are articles developed from "success stories." Editors like to print case histories because they are interesting and can be run any time. You can also use case histories as great back-up pieces in a press kit. These success stories can be pitched to editors to build momentum (i.e., "after last year's event, this year's show promises even more!").

Case history articles range from two paragraphs to five pages. Two pages (about 500 words) is a good length to shoot for. This will provide a reporter enough material to write an article. Some specialized publications print case histories word for word; others rewrite the material, or call the source so they can write an original story.

Photographs

Photographs increase the likelihood that a publication will write about your event or activity. Many publications need artwork to liven up their pages. Publications print all types of pictures, but editors tend to prefer photos in two formats: black-and-white prints and color transparencies. Often, a photo is separated from the press kit when an editor passes the photo along to the art department. Always provide an identifier that explains what is happening in the picture. Provide this information in two sentences, and include the GWRRA name and your name and phone number. By identifying the photo this way, it's not as likely to be lost or thrown away because no one knew what it was or where it came from.

Keep adequate supplies of photos on hand so that they can be sent to reporters at a moment's notice. Because of the speed at which daily and weekly newspapers must be produced, art directors usually need pictures "yesterday."

Ideally, you'll include at least one photo with every press kit. Because photos are expensive (about \$1 each in quantity for black-and-white), your budget may not allow you to do this. Many publications will call you if they want a picture, and you can send it by overnight courier to meet their deadlines, so it's all right if you can't afford to include a photo in each press kit. However, some publications simply print materials received and don't call to ask for pictures.

Ready, Set, Press!

Now all you need are some names and addresses so that you can issue your release. But before you go, here are some final dos and don'ts:

- **Don't** cold-call editors. Get an insider contact to break the ice for you first.
- **Don't** include cover letters or other documents when sending just a press release. Your release should speak for itself (and it only has five seconds to do it!). However, cover letters are okay if you're sending a press kit.
- **Don't** fax or email full press releases unless you know that the editor will accept press releases that way.

- **Do** include photos whenever possible. Tape a short note to the back of the photo and identify the subject matter.
- **Do** hold press conferences, especially if you have access to VIPs who will speak for you. Suggestion: announce your press conference by writing and distributing a press release.
- **Don't** be shy. Every aspect of your project is an angle, and every angle deserves a story. An editor will never fault you for trying to get attention.

Using the Telephone

Phone pitching is one of the most effective strategies for getting press coverage. In the phone call we can:

- Convince a reporter to write a news article. This will also help you in building rapport for future contacts.
- Determine what action the reporter will take.

Calling reporters can be the hardest part of your job as a PRC. Many people dread talking to people they don't know. They also fear the possibility of rejection. Even experienced PR people feel this way.

The best way to overcome fear is to be prepared. For example, by getting to know the reporters who cover your topic and developing a rapport with them, you can minimize your fear of contacting them by phone. By learning about the publication, you can talk to reporters with confidence. So by targeting the audience carefully and focusing your message, you will reduce the likelihood of rejection. As always, by practicing your pitch with a friend, you can feel more comfortable talking with reporters and more confident that you're presenting GWRRA effectively.

Follow these guidelines when calling reporters:

- Be prepared -- have pen and paper in hand!
- Always introduce yourself and who you represent, GWRRA.
- Ask the reporter if he or she has time to talk; if not, arrange a better time to call back.
- Know GWRRA. Be prepared to answer questions or to refer the reporter to the right person.
- Know the newspaper or magazine. Read several issues. Know the themes they focus on, and the readers they write to.
- Know what you are going to say, and why, before you call, so as to not waste the reporter's time. Have an outline of the important facts of your event.
- Smile while talking; convey a positive, upbeat attitude.
- Be cooperative. Realize that reporters know their publication, its readers, and what materials are appropriate, and avoid arguing with them. The reporter argued with today will remember you tomorrow.
- Document your conversation. Be sure to keep notes on your calls so you can remember what was discussed, what information and/or materials were promised and what the due dates are.

When reporters are not in the office, leave a detailed message on their voice mail service. Although some people are put off by voice mail, what better way to have your message delivered to the reporter than by your own voice? Be sure to leave that phone number. When leaving a lengthy message, it doesn't hurt to leave the number once at the beginning of the message and again at the end.

Writing Effective Pitch Letters

A pitch letter is a one-page letter that can act as a cover letter for a press kit, or can be a stand-alone letter (see Attachment 3 for sample). Its purpose is to capture the reporters' interest, and motivate them to write about us. We can be creative, witty, entertaining and imaginative--just avoid going overboard.

Reporters respond favorably to "pitch letters," especially when the letter relates to their needs. Sending a pitch letter can increase the chances of media coverage.

Example:

Date

Name and address of newspaper, magazine, etc.

Dear (reporter/news editor's name),

Gold Wing motorcycles will be working hand-in-hand with the (name of charity event) "Walk-a-Thon" this year, and do you know why? Our volunteers on motorcycles are equipped with CB radios! They will ride the entire route, monitoring and assisting the participants by calling in emergency medical personnel, as needed.

These volunteers are part of the local chapter is one of more than 900 chapters in the Gold Wing Road Riders Association (GWRRA). Our international Association has over 81,000 Members in more than 50,000 households in the U.S., Canada and more than 50 other countries throughout the world (please refer to the Backgrounder included with this Press Release for more information).

We look forward to working with the "Walk-a-Thon" organizers to make this event as safe and successful as possible. In addition, I would be happy to talk to you in more detail about GWRRA's participation this year! I'm sure it would make a great human-interest story for your readership!

Sincerely,

Your name, title, and phone number

Reaching Reporters Using Electronic Mail (E-mail)

Reporters are on the road a lot. Frequently they have e-mail so that they can be reached anytime, anywhere, and anyplace. CompuServe and America Online are examples of electronic messaging services that require a computer, a modem, communications software, and an account with the service. The Internet is now accessible free, and it's one of the best ways to reach reporters. Using the service is a sure way of getting reporters' attention because:

- It bypasses the stack of pink "While You Were Out" message slips and stops the "phone tag" game;
- It bypasses the stack of incoming press releases;
- It can be sent asking for a receipt with the message that tells you when the reporter read the memo;
- Most reporters like getting e-mail, and respond quickly and politely.

There is etiquette about using e-mail. Messages are brief (100 words or less) and lack formality. This makes e-mail great for sending quick pitch letters, follow-up letters, and thank-you notes. Always include your name, your staff position, address, and phone number.

Sending FAXes (Sometimes)

Because of their immediacy, facsimile (FAX) machines are the fastest, most reliable and inexpensive way to send information. Used incorrectly, they can also be the most detrimental to your credibility because reporters don't like having their machines tied up with unsolicited press releases. Before you FAX, call the reporter, gain their interest, and then ask if you can send a FAX. Always double-check the FAX number against any printed reference number because some receivers, flooded with unsolicited FAXes, change their numbers every few weeks.

Guidelines for FAXing to the Media

- Send a FAX only if the reporter requests it; then write a note on the cover page that states "Sent at Your Request."
- Send FAXes no longer than one to five pages in length (excluding cover sheet).
- Direct the FAX to one reporter only, and don't list others receiving the FAX.
- Write brief notes on the cover page to save transmission time and paper.

And by All Means, Follow Up!

Once you get publicity, it's very important to follow-up on it. Monitor the coverage, maximize the benefits of positive reviews, and maintain good relations with the press even after less-than-favorable reviews. If the review is good, we can show our appreciation to the reporter. A good idea is to send a "thank you" note.

Here's another reason to follow-up: the review appears--that's the good news. The bad news is that there's an inaccuracy. What to do? If there is a factual problem, write a polite letter to the editor and provide the correct information. Publications want to correct their mistakes.

All publications work under tight deadlines and many don't spend the time to check every fact in the article with the sources. That is a sad fact, but true. This means errors will appear in print. Be ready to take appropriate steps to correct errors while still maintaining positive relations with reporters.

What happens when a reviewer finds fault? Stop and think about it; is the reporter right? Do your best to mend fences. Call or write the reviewer and tell them their comments are appreciated and that GWRRA is striving to address the issues they raised in their review. This approach will help create a receptive atmosphere for a subsequent submission.

Here's how to make the best of a bad situation. When a reporter calls about bad news, follow these steps:

- Acknowledge the problem.
- Explain how the problem is being corrected.
- Tell reporters you will keep them updated--then DO IT!
- Ask if they have any other questions.
- Offer to let them speak to your Operations Officer.
- Be direct--don't lie, hide the truth, or obscure the facts.

If you follow these steps, reporters will cooperate with you. Always acknowledge the time and effort given.

Chapter 5

SPEECHES: THE VERBAL FORM OF COMMUNICATION

Types of Speeches

1. Opening Speech
 - Audience is fresh and receptive
 - Should stimulate and motivate the audience
2. Closing Speech
 - Remembered longest by audiences
 - Audience is mentally tired, speaker must infuse energy
3. Keynote (Main) Speech
 - Could be scheduled at any time
 - Should reinforce main points of theme
4. Breakfast/Morning Speech
 - Audience is alert with high energy
 - Begin after meal
5. Luncheon/Afternoon Speech
 - Audience may feel effects of meal
6. Dinner/Banquet
 - Success sometimes relates to the quality of the meal
 - Audience expects humor and entertainment
 - Alcohol may cause major difficulties
7. Evening/Neighborhood/Community Speech
 - Difficult to estimate audience
 - Meeting room may be incorrect size
 - Distractions from late arrivals and early departures

Parts of a Speech

1. The Opener (5-10%)

- Secure the listener's attention--a speaker must immediately capture and hold the audience's interest. Once lost, it is difficult to regain. Some suggested openers:
 - Ask a question
 - State a startling or shocking fact
 - Arouse curiosity
 - Show that something is wrong
 - Compliment the audience
 - Use an analogy
 - Tell a joke
 - Refer to the occasion or the meeting theme
 - Use a brief illustration or example
 - Make a short, colorful demonstration
 - Quote newspaper or magazine headlines
 - Stress the importance of your topic
 - Keep the listeners' minds open by giving a short preview

2. The Body (80-90%)

- Present logically arranged major points
- Have points reinforced with back-up material, such as:
 - Facts
 - Other people's testimony
 - Quotations
 - Demonstrations
 - Visual aids
 - Definitions
 - Contrasts
 - Examples
 - Comparisons/analogy
 - Statistics
 - Restatements
 - Hand-outs

3. The Closing (5-10%)

- Make a brief review of topics and major points
- Conclude conclusively:
 - Appeal for action
 - State your final conclusion
 - Tie the close to an opening statement
 - Ask a question
 - Tell a joke
 - State a startling or shocking fact
 - Use a dynamic quotation
 - Use an analogy
 - Emphasize the meeting theme
 - Pay a sincere compliment
 - Use a short, colorful demonstration
 - Stress the importance of your topic
 - Summarize the important idea of the speech
 - Quote newspaper or magazine headlines

Tips About Speechmaking

Because comfort with public speaking is an enormous asset in Public Relations, the skills that will make you effective in this area are given next in some detail. Like in all interpersonal communications, these are skills that can be learned.

Effective Speeches Are . . .

1. **Clear in Focus or Purpose** - Early in the speech the key points are introduced, the points unfold as previewed, and the closing proposes to the audience an action to take or a single idea to ponder.
2. **Tailored to the Occasion or Group** - Material, language, technical information, and examples demonstrate an awareness of current issues and information of interest to the specific audience.
3. **Clearly and Logically Developed** - Key points of the speech unfold in a sequence based on time, importance, or some other appropriate order.
4. **Appropriate in Length** - In good speeches, key points are given the time they deserve, no more or less.

5. **Memorable** - A good speech blends general information with concrete illustrations and examples. Each main idea is vividly backed with facts, visual aids, anecdotes, or other supporting elements to help the audience remember and act on the information.
6. **Understandable** - Complex or technical ideas are presented through examples, metaphors, props, visual aids and anecdotes to help the audience grasp the ideas.
7. **Realistic in Scope** - The speech is not overly ambitious or incompatible with the group's mood. Audience reactions are predicted and an appropriate response is planned.
8. **Challenging** - The speech paints a picture of a favorable future for the people and programs concerned. The speaker offers insights to help the audience share and participate in that challenge and vision.

Effective Speakers Are . . .

1. **Believable** -- These speakers show they sincerely believe in their message.
2. **Dynamic** -- These speakers flow with vitality and reach their audience through lively voice, face and gestures.
3. **Comfortable** -- These speakers exude ease and confidence, which in turn helps the audience to relax and listen.
4. **Enthusiastic** -- These speakers display energy that is focused in a positive direction. The content and delivery of the speech show clearly that the subject matter is very important to the speaker.
5. **Knowledgeable** -- These speakers give the impression of depth of understanding on their topic and experience beyond the actual content of the speech.
6. **Humorous When Appropriate** -- Skilled speakers use humor, often spontaneously, to relax their audience and to reinforce presentation points.
7. **Skilled with Eye Contact** -- These speakers are not overly dependent on their text, and therefore look prepared and confident.
8. **Skilled in Voice Variety** -- These speakers use volume, pitch, intensity, breath and silence to underline ideas.

Delivery Techniques

1. Mentally give yourself a short pep talk when being introduced.
2. Approach the speaking position briskly, enthusiastically, and confidently.
3. Never start a speech as soon as you reach your speaking designation.
4. Start off professionally.
5. Establish eye contact.
6. Smile -- look like you are enjoying yourself.
7. Use the gestures that come naturally.
8. Be comfortable and confident.
9. Emphasize certain words.
10. Use a change of voice volume.
11. Use effective pauses, don't say "ahhh" or "okay," pause, then continue.
12. Stress important phrases or words by speaking slower.
13. Stand erect and poised.
14. Speak loudly enough so that everyone can hear.
15. Be humble and audience-centered, not self-centered.
16. Refer to notes only as necessary, be prepared--have outline cards.
17. Minimize your mistakes.
18. Keep your energy level high.
19. Say "thank you" at the end, pause, then return to your chair.
20. End on time.

Know Your Audience

1. What is the exact purpose of the meeting?
2. What (if any) is the theme to the meeting?
3. What are the backgrounds of the listeners?
4. What have the listeners been exposed to, and what was their attitude toward the subject and the speaker?
5. What is the age of the audience?
6. Is the group male, female, or both?
7. How many people will be in the audience?
8. Where will the meeting be held?
9. What's on the meeting agenda right before you speak?
10. What is the morale of the group?
11. Is the room properly lighted?
12. Does the room have fresh air, and can it be kept at a comfortable temperature?
13. Is the platform area neat and professional, with nothing distracting in the sight of the audience?

Common Errors to Avoid When Speaking

1. Don't start a speech with an alibi, apology, or excuse.
2. Don't be on an ego trip.
3. Don't speak too softly or away from the microphone.
4. Don't be ill prepared for the group or the topic.
5. Don't mispronounce the name of the group or any individual.
6. Don't make a fuss over the time or your watch.
7. Don't have a sober, deadpan expression on your face.
8. Don't tell an off-color, X-rated, ethnic, or motorcycle brand joke.
9. Don't be a time-waster, a rambler, or stretch out material.
10. Don't have the wrong attitude.
11. Don't emphasize claims or opinions; do emphasize facts.
12. Don't talk after the scheduled quitting time.
13. Don't assume the equipment is working properly or everything is in the proper place.
14. Don't close the talk inconclusively.

Dealing with Troublesome Questions

1. Say, "I don't know." You lose credibility when you give the audience a snow job.
2. Paraphrase. Repeat the question in your own words, but rephrase it into one for which you have an answer.
3. Mirror the question. If you feel a question has a "hidden agenda," turn the tables. "Do helmets really make you safer?" "Why do you feel unsafe when wearing a helmet?"

Helpful Hints

1. Dress wearing the GWRRA logo; present your best appearance.
2. Try for audience interaction, but don't slip into an Instructor-Student mode. There is a difference between presenting to an audience and teaching a class.
3. Do not get caught up in controversial subjects, such as helmet laws. Acknowledge differing viewpoints, offer to discuss at a more convenient time, and move on.
4. If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it, and tell that person you will check on it and get back to them. Follow through on the answer.
5. Smile while speaking; this helps to deliver a positive tone.
6. Enjoy yourself!

Chapter 6

MALL SHOWS: THE “UP-CLOSE AND PERSONAL” FORM OF COMMUNICATION

Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions

What Is a Mall Show?

A Mall Show is an opportunity to show our motorcycles and our GWRRA life-style to the public. This is a chance for us to visit with a wide range of people, creating a positive public relations image and is a fantastic way to recruit new members. The bikes are a means of attracting attention, which slows the people down during their busy outing at the mall. Then it is up to us to talk to those folks. This interaction gives the public a chance to meet us and find out we are regular (well, sort of regular) people. They may even view motorcycles just a little differently the next time they see one of us on the road.

A Mall Show usually is a weekend event. You bring the motorcycles in on a Friday evening and set up your displays (after the mall closes). During the hours the mall is open during the weekend, the bikes are on exhibit. Hopefully the GWRRA Members and owners are wearing their colors and are standing with the machines. At the end of the weekend, the displays are taken down and the motorcycles are removed (after the mall closes).

What About Another Name for Mall Shows?

Sometimes it seems that we should come up with a different name for our Mall Shows. Some people think they need to have a "show bike" to be involved in a mall show. But, the most important ingredients at this event are the people. The bikes are just there to attract attention. We really want them to meet us (the Members of GWRRA).

What Sort of Things Can You Do for Your Display?

A map of the United States showing all the places you have been on your bike can be a good way to start up a conversation with someone. They may see that you have been to the "Black Hills" or the "Grand Canyon" and may want to relate their experiences.

You might have a list of some of the options on your bike: electronic cruise control, stereo system, voice-actuated intercom, adjustable suspension with on-board compressor, fresh-air and warm-air vents, etc. Do we want to do this to brag? No, most people would be amazed at the conveniences we have, and that can be a good way to start a conversation.

What Should You Wear?

If at all possible, wear your GWRRA colors and logo. This will identify you as part of the Association that is putting on the Mall Show. It looks sharp and professional. It provides another chance to show the GWRRA logo.

Should You Stay with Your Bike?

YES!!! (If at all possible.) Even if your bike is worth \$15,000 or \$20,000 (or more), the most valuable part of the display is your presence. If you can possibly take the time to stay with your machine and visit with the public, you can be the best public relations tool available to the Gold Wing Road Riders Association, and to motorcycling in general.

Your motorcycle may be one of the most beautiful machines in the world. Someone may stop and stare at it for fifteen minutes, but it cannot interact with that person. It cannot answer any questions, but you can.

What About “Bike Judging” at Your Mall Show?

To keep the Mall Show from becoming a place to only have show bikes, some people don't feel there should be any kind of bike judging. One method that can be fun without becoming a serious contest is to have a "people's choice." In a "people's choice," the public gets involved, and the participants can have a lot

of fun. How does the "people's choice" work? You assign a unique display number to each bike, you provide a box and ask the public to indicate whichever bike they like the best. This way, they will have a reason to go look at all the bikes (maybe talk to several of the GWRRA Members), then they mark the number of their favorite one and put it in the box (and maybe get another chance to visit with another one of us). If someone does not want their bike to be part of the people's choice selection, they simply remove the number from their display.

What can you do to get them to select your bike? One of the best rules for this is ...No rules! Some people hand out candy. Some let kids sit on their bikes. Some folks set up campsites. At one Mall Show, a Member had his motorcycle's CB on, and he sat a little ways away talking into a walkie-talkie. He had his motorcycle ask people to choose it for the "people's choice" award!

How Do You Organize a Mall Show?

The first step is to contact the appropriate person at the mall. Usually that will be the Marketing Director. Make an appointment to meet with them to plan your event. Be sure to discuss all aspects such as the dates and time to set up and tear down (usually set up after the mall closes on Friday evening, and begin to tear down after they close on Sunday evening). Often there are rules about placing carpeting under tires and center-stands to protect the floor. Some malls will not allow any type of "solicitation of funds." They may have rules about cleaning or waxing of the bikes in the mall (because those chemicals may damage the finish on the floor). Whatever the rules and restrictions are, make sure the participants are aware of and adhere to them.

You will probably want to remind the Chapter Director to provide the mall with a Certificate of Insurance. Check with the Marketing Director ahead of time to confirm their mailing address.

The mall may be able to provide stanchions so you can rope off the areas where the bikes are displayed. The mall may be able to provide electrical power, tables and chairs so you can set up an area with a television and VCR to show videos. This would be a good place to set up a GWRRA information/recruiting table. How about positioning your Couple of the Year (COY) here too? There are still some folks out there on Gold Wings, Valkyries, and other motorcycles that don't know about our Association, and COYs make excellent representatives.

At the GWRRA information/recruiting table, you may consider having the following items on hand: The **Gold Book**; copies of **Wing World**; a Schedule of Events for the area (including rallies, poker runs, and Chapter meeting locations and times); and a list of the local Chapter Directors with their phone numbers. Your Chapter Director, District Director, Chapter Public Relations Coordinator, or District Public Relations Coordinator may be good sources for this material. Or, contact "Member Services" at the GWRRA Office phone 1-800-843-9460, e-mail: membership@gwrra.org.

It's a great idea to have a sign on each bike with some basic information (see Attachment 4 for sample), such as: What year it was made, what size the engine is, which model it is, who the owners are, how many miles it was ridden in the past year, how many total miles it has on it, which Chapter is sponsoring the event, who the local Chapter Director is, etc. Putting the number of miles a machine has been ridden can be a real eye-opener for the public. They walk into the mall, see these gorgeous, two-wheeled machines, and think they are for show only and never ridden.

Let other Chapters know about your Mall Show. Encourage them to attend, and encourage them to wear their colors. Try to keep track of when other Chapters are putting on their Mall Shows and return the favor. (Don't forget to wear your colors).

In Summary...

Mall Shows are one of the best Public Relations tools we have available for providing direct contact and interaction with the public. We can have fun, improve the image of motorcycling, and introduce many people to our fine organization. One of the side benefits is that we may even find a new Member or two. Each Member is an important part of the Public Relations network of GWRRA; since the motorcycle can't talk, encourage people to stay with their bike as much as possible. Have fun with your Mall Show!

ATTACHMENT 1

SAMPLE GWRRA PRESS RELEASE



Gold Wing Road Riders Association
Chapter WA-B, Bremerton, Washington
Public Relations Coordinator



Joanne Doe
1234 5th Ave. E.
Bremerton, WA 98312
(360) 123-4567

FOR RELEASE: Friday May 1, & Saturday May 2, 2003

Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Chapter WA-B will hold their monthly get-together on Sunday May 3rd at Bill's Breakfast Café, in East Bremerton. Breakfast at 8:30 am, social gathering at 9:30 am. Weather permitting, there will be a short ride following. Visitors are welcome. For further information call John or Joanne Doe at: (360) 123-4567

For further information, contact: Joanne Doe

ATTACHMENT 2

SAMPLE GWRRA PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT



Gold Wing Road Riders Association
Chapter WA-B, Bremerton, Washington
Public Relations Coordinator



Joanne Doe
1234 5th Ave. E.
Bremerton, WA 98312
(360) 123-4567

FOR RELEASE: Begin Use: April 30, 2003
Do not use after: May 1, 2003
Time: 30 Seconds

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Gold Wing Road Riders Association, Chapter WA-B will hold their monthly get-together on Sunday May 3rd at Bill's Breakfast Café, in East Bremerton. Breakfast at 8:30 am, social gathering at 9:30 am. Weather permitting, there will be a short ride following. Visitors are welcome. For further information call John or Joanne Doe at: (360) 123-4567

For further information, contact: Joanne Doe

ATTACHMENT 3
SAMPLE
GWRRA PITCH LETTER



Gold Wing Road Riders Association
Chapter WA-B, Bremerton, Washington
Public Relations Coordinator



Joanne Doe
1234 5th Ave. E.
Bremerton, WA 98312
(360) 123-4567

March 4, 2003

TO: Letter to the Editor

Saturday March 2nd and Sunday March 3rd was the fifteenth annual Kitsap Mall motorcycle show for the Gold Wing Road Riders Assn., Chapter WA-B. I would like to thank the Kitsap Mall staff and employees for all their work, which contributed to the success of the show. Thank you also to the 58 GWRRA members who proudly displayed their motorcycles with trailers, sidecars, campers and trikes. This year we had over 250 mall shoppers join in the fun by voting for their favorite display. For those shoppers who are wondering who won, the "Peoples Choice Award" went to display #38 (Fred & Jackie Smith's Red 1999 Gold Wing Trike).

Joanne Doe, Public Relations Coordinator
GWRRA, Chapter WA-B

ATTACHMENT 4

SAMPLE SIGN FOR MALL SHOW DISPLAYS



Gold Wing Road Riders Association
Chapter WA-B, Bremerton, Washington



This 1997 GL-1500 SE
Honda Gold Wing
Special Edition

Is owned and operated by
John & Joanne Doe
From Bremerton, Washington

This machine was ridden 8,500 miles during
the past year, and has 67,800 total miles.

The 2003 “Kitsap Mall Show” is sponsored
by the Bremerton area’s Chapter “B” of the
Gold Wing Road Riders Association.

(The GWRRA has over 81,000 members in more than
50,000 households in the U.S., Canada
and 50+ other countries internationally)
