

Spread the Word!

Media Coverage Around Your Action

Ten tips to getting your story covered

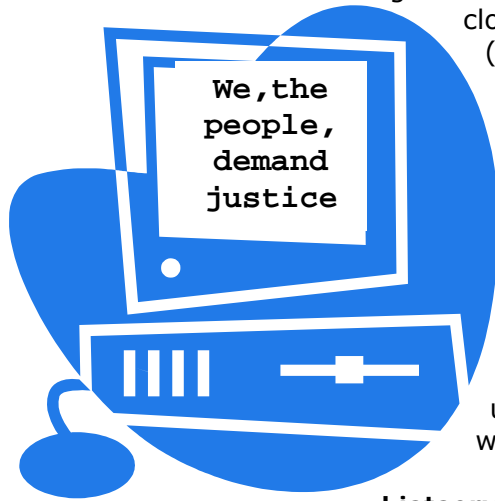
- Know the reporters.
- Know the media.
- Know your message & audience.
- Prepare with person who will deliver it.
- Make it easy for the reporter.
- Know what's newsworthy.
- Keep it simple; explain the story.
- Find the angle: pocketbook, etc.
- Be persistent.
- Make media strategy part of your campaign.

A follow-up call will help you even if the reporter doesn't cover your story, because you can usually find out why. If the reporter says he can't use your release, don't hang up in a huff. Ask what would make it more interesting and newsworthy.

Adapted from the Western Organization of Resource Councils (www.worc.org)

BE THE MEDIA

Facebook: Social networking sites are great avenues for spreading the word about closing the SOA. If you're not on Facebook (www.facebook.com), what are you waiting for?! Facebook allows you to write notes publicizing events (or reporting on them), create notifications for events, and post photos. All this information can be posted publicly or confined to your "Friends" list. MySpace is similar.



Blogs: More and more, people are turning to blogs (short for "web logs") for their news and current events. Signing up is free and they are user-friendly. www.blogger.com is a leading blog web site.

Listservs: Link e-mails around a common theme and reach a large, interested group. lists.riseup.net and lists.mutualaid.org host thousands of listservs focusing on areas of human rights, militarism, and peace.

E-Newsletters: Many organizations send out e-newsletters with info of interest to the group or local community. This can be a valuable resource when organizing local people to travel to Columbus. Ask if your school, place of worship, media center, or workers' center will add your piece to their e-newsletter. Or create your own!

Video, YouTube and Vimeo: Are you bringing a video camera? These sites allow anyone to post videos for public viewing. Check out the SOA Watch YouTube page <http://www.youtube.com/user/closethesoa> for more ideas. Offer to screen your video at gatherings back home, or even on public access cable television.

Twitter: In their words: "Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" You can post anything you want to be seen by its 25 million users.

Cell Phones/Texting: Use your phone to spread the word! Many phones allow for mass text messages, a great way to directly reach many people quickly.

Indymedia: Indymedia.org is a web site dedicated to current events on a variety of social issues. Anyone can post news or events. There are also regional Indymedia sites for targeting specific audiences, which can be accessed through their site.



Community Radio: Does your city or town have a community (or college) radio station? They may be happy to have you / your group as a guest, especially on public affairs programs. You can find a list of non-commercial radio stations at the following site: <http://www.gumbopages.com/other-radio.html> . Each one varies, so get a feel for your local station, and act accordingly.

ENGAGE YOUR LOCAL MEDIA

Assess the times. What has been your track record of local print and broadcast coverage? What has changed in your local media scene? Who are sympathetic editors and reporters? Who needs some education? What has changed with your local SOAW organizers and activities?

Who's who? *Is everyone prepared to make a statement about why s/he is participating in this movement?* In your outreach, include a descriptive list of local travelers to Fort Benning. Brainstorm a local human interest angle. Supporters at home may organize a press event that could increase your chances of local coverage of the national action.



Tie in with national media. List the SOA Watch national office phone number (202-234 3440) underneath a local phone number on your press releases. Cite www.soaw.org/newsroom as an info source. Circulate copies of the SOAW tabloid iPresente! stuffed with an insert sheet listing local contacts and supporting organizations.

Beyond October 11th Day of Action. Announce developments in congress and claim victories ~ or even just progress. Submit regular announcements of speakers, organizing meetings, bus or van trip availability, new educational resources.

Remember faith congregation, labor and community newsletters. Are there Spanish language publications in your area?

It goes without saying (but we will say it anyway). Keep your message fresh and up to date; your written communications clear and carefully edited; your personal interactions enthusiastic, reliable, considerate. Create and use visuals. Plan your work and work your plan!

Prepared by Geralyn McDowell

Why do you want media coverage?

Before you spend a lot of your organization's time and resources on a major media campaign, stop and think about why you want media coverage. You want:

- △ The public to know arguments and facts that support your position on an issue.
- △ People to hear about and join your group.
- △ To pressure the governor, a company or some other decision-maker to act.
- △ To publicize upcoming events or a fundraiser.

There are also stories you don't want in the news:

- △ Stories on an issue on which your group has no position or is divided.
- △ Stories about conflicts within your group.
- △ Stories about your losses.
- △ You may not want stories about your internal strategy discussions.
- △ You may not want stories about sensitive negotiations with your opponents.

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