

**Disclaimer:** The Internet has many benefits and many pitfalls. **If something does not seem right to you or if you don't understand it, DON'T do it** – until you find out more about it. It is never as easy to UN-do, than it is to do!

## **Communications**

### **DCCRW By-Laws:**

#### **Communications Director**

- (1) To be responsible for notifying, by telephone, e-mail or mail, Club Presidents and the Council Executive Board members of all regular and special meetings, when requested by the President.
- (2) To handle any other communications.

**Telephone and U.S. Mail** need no explanation, but are relatively time-consuming and expensive.

**Email** has become very common. Most people have email in their homes. It is easy enough to make an email list of the email addresses of the members of your club, and send communications to the club.

*TFRW advises “Engage in great communication devices so that all can see what a fine organization you are, newsletter, website, email blasts. We are now in the 21st Century, so your club should be as well.”*

### **Blast Emails**

An email marketing program will give you a very professional looking and readable email with the ability to add pictures and links. They are relatively easy to use, and some have online help or videos to help you set up your format. You can set up various lists so you can direct your emails to the group, or to other interested persons, also. Some options are Benchmark Email, Constant Contact, GetResponse, iContact, MailChimp, and Vertical Response. There are others. Usually the cost is quite low, but each has its own pricing plan, usually based on the number of emails sent per month.

### **Websites**

#### **Every Club Needs a Website!**

- 1) It will attract new members. People looking for a Republican Club will find your website and will be able to contact you. Otherwise, they might never know you exist.
- 2) It is a place to store information important to your club, like your By-Laws, a Membership Form, your Newsletters. It reduces your costs for xeroxing and makes it easier for ALL of your members to have the same information.
- 3) You can post the details of your next meeting. If it is a different place or at a different time, the changes are there for all to see. There is no need to call someone to double-check; you can check it 24/7.

#### **It is no longer as difficult as it once was to have your own website.**

There are a few basic parts.

- 1) You need a URL or a Domain Name. It will probably end in “.org” since you are a not-for-profit organization, but there are no hard and fast rules. You will need to register who the Domain Name belongs to and there is a small fee for that. Even if you do not have a website, you can register a Domain Name to hold until you are ready to use it.
- 2) You need a webhost, the company that provides you with space on their servers that enable you to have a website.
- 3) You need software with which you build the content on your website.

The good news is that there are many Do-It-Yourself options which combine all of these parts into one fairly easy-to-use package. Some actually give you a free (although very simple and limited) website, and many have very adequate packages, including a domain name, hosting, design templates, email, and more for around \$100 or less a year. There are more and more all the time, and they do not require any special coding or html skills.

Some online web building tools that are relatively easy to use are Doodlekit.com, Weebly.com, and Homestead.com, MyEvent.com, GoDaddy.com, Webstarts.com, Yahoo.com, and Vistaprint.com. All of these sites have low-cost options, and some have 'free' options.

The information clubs should include is Who you are, What you do, Why you do it, When and Where you do it, and How to get in touch with you. For additional ideas on what to include check out the National Federation of Republican Women's “Winning Webs” at [www.nfrwwinningwebs.org](http://www.nfrwwinningwebs.org) The Winning Web application form can serve as a starting checklist.

***NFRW provides the following list of pitfalls and cautions for your website:***

*Web sites can be effective communicating and recruiting tools, but be careful what you include on them. Web sites are not limited to your city, Texas, or even the USA. A web site is not a newsletter to your members and citizens of your community. Your web site is available to anyone anywhere, all over the world. You need to remember that and its implications. You should submit your search engines so that people searching for a Republican club in your local area can find you. It is also a good idea to set up the club email such as president@YourDomainName instead of providing personal email addresses online. These generic email addresses can be redirected to the person holding the office.*

**Other Free Online Communication Tools (from TFRW)**

**Facebook**

You can always use Facebook to establish your online presence. Even if you have your own website, remember that Facebook has over 500 million users, so it is a great outreach/PR tool.

Cost: Free

Website: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

"How To" Helps:

Mahalo, an online "knowledge sharing service," has easy-to-understand, step-by-step instructions for setting up and maintaining a Facebook account, and there is even an instructional video for visual learners. [www.mahalo.com/how-to-use-facebook](http://www.mahalo.com/how-to-use-facebook)

TechSoup is an online source devoted entirely to non-profit organizations, and while they primarily work with 501c3's, their article on using Facebook as a non-profit is also very helpful.

[www.techsoup.org/community/facebook/index.cfm](http://www.techsoup.org/community/facebook/index.cfm)

TechSoup also offers 'how-to' articles and webinars on a variety of tech tools.

**Scribd**

Scribd is an online reading and publishing company that allows users to upload documents. If you do not have a web site, this is a great place to post your news releases online. You can then direct readers to your document by posting a link on Twitter and Facebook. This will also allow internet users to 'find' you using a search engine like Google.

Cost: Free

Website: [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com)

"How To" Helps: <http://www.scribd.com/scribd101>

**Twitter**

Twitter is NOT a substitute for a website or Facebook page; Twitter is best for directing followers to your other online resources. With a Twitter Account, you 'follow' others and encourage them to 'follow' you. All of your posts are visible to your followers, but remember, just like anything you put online, posts are visible to everyone in the world! Twitter posts are public statements, NOT private communications.

Cost: Free

Website: [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

"How To" Helps: TechSoup has a 1 hour presentation on both Twitter and Flickr at <http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/internet/webinars/page12235.cfm>

**Blogs**

Blogspot.com allows you to set up a free blog which can be "followed" by your members. This is also *not* a website, but can be useful in keeping members informed.

WordPress also has a Blog service for a small fee.

**Publicity**

Make use of your programs, projects, and special events, to create a positive image for your club in the community, and to bring in more people to your club who may become members.

While you may not get your program in *The Dallas Morning News*, NeighborsGo or smaller community newspapers may print your information. They need interesting articles relevant to their communities to keep their readers reading!

Many have online Calendars and forms online or email addresses with which to submit articles.

Post your meetings on the Online calendars. Many people check those calendars to find events of interest. Many times an event will be added to a print calendar, particularly if it is on a weekday.

**Post your meetings and events on the DCRP calendar, and notify DCCRW to post it on their calendar.**

Almost all newspapers have online editions as well as print editions. So your submission may appear online, even if it does not appear in print. **Do not be discouraged**, if your first submissions are not printed.

Create your own Media List. Include your local town or county newspapers or magazines, online media outlets like local blog sites or news sources, local radio and television reporters. Some media outlets may never respond, but if sent electronically, frequent releases cost you nothing, and your persistence may eventually pay off.

Check out the free newspapers in your neighborhood. Some go out of business and new ones start, so do a little research to be sure your news is appropriate for the publication and vice versa!

Some of the local newspapers include,

#### Daily

Dallas Morning News [[www.dallasnews.com](http://www.dallasnews.com)]

DMN Guide [[www.guidelive.com/](http://www.guidelive.com/)]

Pegasus News [[www.pegasusnews.com](http://www.pegasusnews.com)]

#### Weekly

Carrollton Leader [[www.scntx.com/](http://www.scntx.com/)]

Coppell Citizens Advocate

Coppell Gazette [[www.scntx.com/](http://www.scntx.com/)]

Dallas Business Journal [[www.bizjournals.com/dallas](http://www.bizjournals.com/dallas)]

Dallas Examiner (focuses on the black community) [[www.dallasexaminer.com](http://www.dallasexaminer.com)]

Dallas Observer [[www.dallasobserver.com/](http://www.dallasobserver.com/)]

Dallas Post Tribune (focuses on the black community) [[www.dallaspost.com](http://www.dallaspost.com)]

Dallas Voice (focuses on the gay community) [[www.dallasvoice.com](http://www.dallasvoice.com)]

DeSoto Today

Desoto Focus Daily News [[focusdailynews.com/](http://focusdailynews.com/)]

Irving Rambler [[www.irvingrambler.com](http://www.irvingrambler.com)]

Mesquite News [[www.mesquitenews.com](http://www.mesquitenews.com)]

Oak Cliff People (focuses only on the events in the community named) [[www.oakcliffpeople.com](http://www.oakcliffpeople.com)]

Park Cities People (focuses only on the events in the community named) [[www.parkcitiespeople.com](http://www.parkcitiespeople.com)]

Plano Star Courier [[www.scntx.com/](http://www.scntx.com/)]

Preston Hollow People (focuses only on the events in the community named) [[www.prestonhollowpeople.com](http://www.prestonhollowpeople.com)]

Rowlett Lakeshore Times [[www.celinarecord.com/rowlett\\_lakeshore\\_times](http://www.celinarecord.com/rowlett_lakeshore_times)]

Seagoville Suburbia News [[www.suburbanews.com](http://www.suburbanews.com)]

Sunnyvale View [[www.scntx.com/](http://www.scntx.com/)]

Texas Lawyer [[www.law.com](http://www.law.com)]

White Rock Weekly [[www.whiterocklakeweekly.com/](http://www.whiterocklakeweekly.com/)]

**Don't forget to post your releases on your website, Facebook, etc., and include your website or Facebook in your release so readers know where to find out more about you!**

TFRW lists "Some Publicity DONT'S to keep in mind:"

- Don't try to disguise advertising as news.
- Don't try to color the facts; don't use flowery language
- Don't try to pressure the Editor; it will backfire.
- Don't beg, plead, wheedle or shed tears before the Editor
- Don't argue with the Editor or try to go over his head to the Publisher if your story is rejected.
- Don't send your material to the wrong person. Make sure you know the right person.
- Don't rush in with a routine story five minutes before the deadline.

If you don't have time to create a full press release, you may send a photo with a caption. The caption should include the Who, Where, How, Why, and When in very concise and precise language – the industry standard is about two or three short, declarative, present tense sentences.

**DO** try to keep press releases short, no more than one page of moderate sized type. Include a contact person. If the Editor wants more information, he or she will contact you.

**DO** try to find a human interest or general interest topic. Many of the papers try to avoid engaging in partisan politics. While you want to identify your club clearly, finding a more general, neutral topic for the subject of your release may help to get it printed.

**DO** use declarative sentences. State Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.

**DO** keep to the point. This is not the place to cover more than one topic.

News Releases may be sent prior to an event to add to community calendars or to encourage coverage of the event. News Releases may also be sent after an event as a complete article. Include a photograph along with information on when and where it was taken, and who is pictured.

Post-Event Articles should read just like a newspaper article with

- \* A 'hook' sentence to catch the reader's attention
- \* Basic information in the first paragraph
- \* Quotes from attendees
- \* The 5 W's, and maybe a 'How' (How to get more info, join, etc.)
- \* Boilerplate!
- \* A photograph

**Sample News Release:**

[Your Club's Letterhead or Name]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
[or FOR RELEASE ON (DATE)]

Contact: [Name of Contact Person]  
Phone: [Number of person to be contacted]  
Email: [Email of person to be contacted]

Dallas, Texas, [and date]

**[Suggested Headline]**

One or two paragraphs stating the facts of the article. [Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How]

### or -30- [indicating the end of the article]

A description or explanation of any photographs attached.

A "Boilerplate" paragraph giving basic information about your club.

[The "boilerplate" paragraph for the DCCRW might state "The Dallas County Council of Republican Women (DCCRW) is the not-for-profit umbrella organization for the sixteen Republican Women's clubs in Dallas County. Founded in 1955, DCCRW supports Republican candidates at the local, state and national level, promotes programs to inform the electorate, and participates in community service activities. DCCRW is affiliated with the Texas Federation of Republican Women and the National Federation of Republican Women. For more information see [www.dccrw.org](http://www.dccrw.org)."]

**You MUST include POLITICAL ADVERTISING PAID FOR BY THE [Name of your Club] PAC.**