

ARCHIVES AND THE MEDIA

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The media these days tend to come in two varieties, especially in the smaller centres. They either see themselves as community supporters; or they see themselves as objective news gatherers.

By and large it is easier to get material published or broadcast by the first group. However, they will be swamped with a massive amount of free material which is offered to them. So it is necessary to go the distance to distinguish your material from that mass of other events and activities which normally go on in any centre.

The second group is much more discerning in what they publish or broadcast. The rule of thumb is: Is it newsworthy? Is it *new*? To have your material used by this group means that your release must be written as a piece of interesting and new information.

What will help any media outlet will be if a relationship has been developed with beforehand.

Let's take an example. In the past several months there have been news stories of archeological finds, some involving human remains – old ones, not new.

The archives can be a main source of documentation and illustrations for the print media, *IF* someone at the archives is on it. Archivists know their collections better than anyone else. A simple phone call to a newspaper or magazine offering supporting documentation or illustrative material to an unfolding or ongoing news story is one possible way of establishing a relationship.

Anything an archivist or the archives can add to make a news story more comprehensible, more interesting or more relevant will help make the media's job easier and more responsible and the archives more invaluable.

An ongoing relationship with the media will also increase the confidence and decrease the nerves of those who are working with the media...and in the media spotlight.

It can be unnerving for the first couple of times. And yes, you will be misquoted. But unless there has been a total distortion of the information you were trying to convey, let it go. Don't sweat the small stuff. Don't put up unnecessary barriers to an ongoing and fruitful relationship.

Remember: *enthusiasm is infectious*. If you love the work you do and are passionate about sharing that with others that will translate into print and electronic media.