

THE BEACON HILL
UPDATE
MONITORING STATE ACTIVITIES
AFFECTING LOW INCOME PEOPLE

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Who to get to know

The Print & Broadcast Media

Frequently, the work of community organizations and service agencies involves working with the print and broadcast media. More often than not, the interactions are frustrating and uncertain. This guide to the statewide media, based upon interviews with activists and journalists, lists reporters and editorialists who are generally sympathetic, or at least receptive, to non-State House people and groups. If names have been omitted, it is because they did not come up in our interviews.

The purpose of this guide is to mention those people who should be included when press work is attempted. Satisfaction is not guaranteed. The treatment these people give to stories, if they cover them at all, will not always be sympathetic. Facts may be misinterpreted or omitted. The orientation of the story may not coincide with the hoped-for point of view. But since the media's role in public policymaking is significant, these people must be dealt with.

Some general characteristics

Reporters and editors generally exhibit one or more of the following characteristics that should be kept in mind. Many pride themselves on being cynical. They know more than they report, knowledge that includes incompetence and insincerity throughout the state system, corruption and unethical behavior. Many are accustomed to doing their job with the minimum amount of effort, choosing to report on the more "glamorous" politics (personalities) rather than government (issues). Said one writer: "It's easier to write about what people are saying than what they're doing." Many are politically conservative, or are drifting that way, as goes the country. And many have

Some Sage & Thymely Advice

To improve upon the typical approach of running up to the State House, dump-off press releases and hoping for the best, a friendly media sage offers the following tips. Leak information to cooperative media people under the theory that its better to get a complete story someplace than a couple of buried column inches across the board. Make it a point to approach the wire services which are subscribed to by all but one of the state's 43 dailies. Go directly to local papers which are often starved for news. And follow-up with the reporters who carry your story. (The State House library carries all Mass. papers.)

a disrespect for young, seemingly naive and unprofessional "outsiders" who come to them expecting coverage. All of this dictates a patient media strategy.

Fortunately, there are a number of State House and state issue oriented reporters and editorialists who do not fit these stereotypes, or who will not let them interfere with their news gathering and interpretive functions. (Unless otherwise noted, call letters represent radio stations and 'ed.' indicates editorial staff.)

Who's who

The media people with some interest in the broad area of human, or social, services are: Carol Surkin (ed.), Kirk Scharfenberg (ed.), Paul Szep (ed.) and Nils Bruzelius, *Boston Globe*; Jim Dorsey, *UPI*; Shelly Cohen, *AP*; Phil Balboni (ed.), Bill Harrington and Gwen Dillard, *WCVB-TV*; Ann Jacobs and Fred Reinsch (ed.), *Quincy Patriot Ledger*; Dick Gaines, *Boston Phoenix*; Darrel Gould, *WBZ*; Harry Durhning (ed.), *WBZ & WBZ-TV*; Don Gordon, *WEEL*; Janet Wu, *WGBH-TV*; Connie Paige, *Real Paper*; Sue Sprecher, *WBCN*; and Judith Brackley, *WCAS*.

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