



IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

# KNIGHTLINE

NEWS FOR KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

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## Rolling Out Your K of C Story

Everyone knows the Knights of Columbus as an organization. Many people even know members. But, too often, they don't know what the Knights of Columbus really does.

They don't know about the wheelchairs the Knights offer to extend the gift of mobility, or the thousands of K of C-sponsored ultrasound machines that are helping moms choose life. They don't know that the Knights are helping save Christianity in Iraq, or giving coats to children on Native American reservations. They don't know about the countless other ways Knights and their families join together in doing good for others.

Each of these moments can inspire. But for that to happen, people need to know what Knights are doing. We need to share those moments of humanity that come in our charitable works. And the success of sharing these stories starts with you, right now. Let's learn how to best share our story and inspire the world.

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# This Knight Is a PR Expert – Here’s His Advice on Promoting Your Council

By Virginia State Council PR Chairman Woody Berzins, APR

*Berzins is accredited in public relations, with decades of experience in strategic communications and media relations. Here are his tips.*

## First, ask yourself the real question

So, you want to tell your council’s story? That’s the easy part. The real question is “who cares?”

If you know the answer to that, then the rest becomes more manageable and useful. That process has the fancy title of strategic communications.

Sounds important doesn’t it?

Actually it is. Each of us sees or gets countless messages, calls and texts a day. Many we let slide on by, while the rest we decide how and when to reply to, what to say, and so on. All of this is part of strategic communications.

## Next, follow these four steps to get started

1. Identify your target audience, i.e., who should want to know about your event.
2. Decide how you’d like to tell them.
3. Use words and/or pictures to share your news.
4. Rethink your first step: Be sure your message is what your target audience wants to know, and be sure that the way you plan on delivering the message is effective.

It’s easy as one, two, three — as long as you’re spot on with number four. And there often is the rub. We’ve got a great story, we’re making a difference, we are helping others, yet we seem to miss the mark in getting the word out.

## Then, create a connection with the media

That’s where “strategic communications” comes into play. Media relations begins with, well, the relationship you have with the media.

Ask yourself these questions: Who covers the news in your town? Do they print newspapers, have online editions, blogs, radio or local television stations? Is there a reporter covering community stories?

*Why is strategic communication important?*

*Former Federal Reserve Chairman*

*Alan Greenspan puts it well:*

*“I know you think you understand what you thought I said, but I’m not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant.”*



*Sharing your K of C story can have a huge impact, as the video series “Everyday Heroes” — here featuring brother Knight and chaplain of the Chicago Cubs Father Burke Masters — shows. These videos, featuring brother Knights doing extraordinary things, are reaching more than 4 million people. (Photo by Spirit Juice Studios)*

create a media event with you. You will likely draw more media attention, and everyone who loves Special Olympics will share the story. The “buddy” may be featured more prominently in the story, but you’ve both made it into the news, so it’s a win for everyone.

## Learn the “news value” of your story

Next comes the *news value* of your good works.

That is decided by somebody else, usually an editor or news director. Their motivation is to sell ad space or air time so they can get paid. If the choice is reporting on your council flipping pancakes for charity or the controversial community board vote, guess what wins? And when it comes to reporter resources, most TV or radio news stations are limited to where and for how long the news director can send a news team out to cover a story.

## Finally, celebrate the good news

But there’s still good news. You can make the story broader and more enticing. How? “Buddy up” with another organization to make your story have a larger appeal. For example, say you’re fundraising for Special Olympics. Ask the Special Olympics’ local chapter to



# “What’s a PR Chairman?” and More

Interview with Alex Cranstoun

*Cranstoun is the PR chairman of the District of Columbia State Council.*

*Knightline interviewed him to find out about his state’s success in sharing their story.*

## What is a PR chairman?

A PR chairman is someone who can manage social media accounts, build relationships with local media and help you get your council’s story out to your community.

## What is the key message you share about the Knights in your area?

Our message is really about *who* the Knights are in their area. They are fathers, brothers, sons, who want to do good in their communities.

## How do you identify which story to share?

By looking at each event’s specific goals, we’re able to identify who would be interested in learning about/supporting that event in the future, or if any local media would be interested in the event itself. In other words, a fraternal social event at a bar isn’t going to make the local media (nor should it), while assisting in the restoration of a set of stations of the cross just might be of interest to diocesan papers.



*Knight Nicholas Shields gets assistance from his son, Charlie, during the restoration project. (Photo courtesy Alex Cranstoun)*

## How did you become familiar with the media in your local area to attract their attention?

It’s all about building relationships and being open to working with them. Focusing on charity and unity will help, because a lot of local journalists want to share positive and uplifting stories. Keeping them in the loop about what’s going on is very beneficial as well, even in an informal manner.



*State Warden Nicholas Shields helps restore outdoor stations of the cross at Pallottine Seminary at Green Hill in West Hyattsville, Md. The restoration was a joint project between Council 433, Council 9542 and Council 16773, all in Washington, D.C. (Photo courtesy Alex Cranstoun)*

## How do you share your story – via press releases, social media, both? What way gets the most response?

Both! Having a write-up after an event on a council website is a big help because I can easily link to it on social media. Additionally, we send out press releases/media advisories for events which might garner press coverage. These are generally circulated to journalists as well as posted on our website.

## Do you have tips to share with councils looking to create a PR chairman position?

The first thing that a council needs to do is to look at what their needs are. Do you need social media accounts? Local media coverage? Better communication with your parish community? A photographer? A website? Something else?

Finally, remember this: A PR chairman doesn’t have to do it all alone. For example, if someone else in the council took pictures at an event, the PR chair wouldn’t have to be behind the camera the whole time. He could instead turn his talent to writing about what happened and then share it with local papers and news channels.

*In addition to serving as the D.C. state PR chairman, Cranstoun is grand knight of Potomac Council 433 and works as the media manager for the Catholic Apostolic Center. He focuses on development, implementation and maintenance of promotion and production efforts, including podcasts, webinars, videos and publications.*

# How These Knights Went Viral

By Florida State Knights

*A story of a veteran's funeral at Sarasota National Cemetery went viral thanks to the Florida State Council.*

**I**t started when Bob Marrah, a member of Saint Patrick Council 13307 and Our Lady of Charity Assembly 3089, both in Sarasota, Fla., realized the troubling number of U.S. military veterans who had no family to attend their funerals. Marrah immediately volunteered the Knights of Columbus to act as next of kin, and receive the flag in a final act of Thanksgiving for these veterans,

Knights were among the **thousands** in attendance at a funeral for an Army veteran that gained nationwide attention. They also were among those honoring three **veterans** in October 2019, which was covered by local news. Videos were posted and the story spread.

It spread because of the work of the Florida State Council and the Knights volunteering as part of their PR team. Here's what they have to say.



*Faithful Navigator Wayne Brewer and Regional Director Gene Dolecki received the flag at a funeral for two veterans who had no families. (Image by Bob Marrah)*

## What we do

The Florida State Council (FSC) isn't made up of a single expert. Instead, we pool our efforts to get the job done. We assembled one marketing team to cover public relations, broadcast media relations, diocesan and community relations, communications, social media, state newsletter, merchandise, photography, website, training and audio-visual operations.

## Synchronizing a message

The FSC team members are located throughout the state. We communicate directly with state officers, district deputies and councils, so that a unified message is communicated to all 55,000 members in the state. We created a one-page council public relations guide with simple publicity instructions, and the emails and phone numbers for our marketing team members.

## Sharing the 3 main goals of publicity

Good public relations at the council level requires that councils fully understand the need and value of publicity. So, as a team we consistently emphasize three main points:

1. Your council's story deserves **recognition** for their volunteer efforts. When your council receives recognition, members are more likely to continue to perform and remain active in the Knights.
2. It helps to **educate and inform** men of your parish or community who are not Knights, increasing their interest in becoming a Knight.
3. Publicizing successful programs and good works is your most effective tool for council growth and **reflects positively** on the Order.

## Emphasizing six simple methods to success

1. **Use the parish bulletin.** A brief mention of the council's work for Habitat for Humanity, a parish clean-up, or visits to nursing homes can help educate the parish about the work that Knights do. Invite men in your parish to participate in future events giving the date, time and location to meet.
2. Feature your charitable activities, with photos, on the front page of your **council newsletter** and put copies in the literature rack in your church.
3. Ask **local newspapers** to publish a photo of Knights performing some charitable or community activity. Check your local newspapers to find out which print such photos, and then check the masthead to find the contact information for the faith, community or neighborhood section editors.
4. Remember that articles must be newsworthy, have broad appeal and be concise with complete information. Always **answer the five "w's"** — who, what, when, where and why (and don't forget the "how").
5. **Keep it short** — use no more than 2 to 3 sentences for a photo caption and a few hundred words for an article. Only include relevant information — people care little about the details of your council, who the grand knight is, when and where you meet, but they are interested in the good works you do.
6. **Share your story** with your diocesan newspaper or magazine, your state council newsletter, *Columbia* and *Knightline*. If any of these want a more detailed story, they will contact you.

see **Knights Went Viral**, next page



### Creating your own newsletter

The FSC has a monthly newsletter, *The Invocation*, put together by a dedicated team of Florida Knights. We have [Guidelines on How To Write an Article](#) so that everyone knows what we are looking for. As a digital newsletter, it's easy to share: We share it via email, Facebook, Twitter and [issuu.com/floridakofc](http://issuu.com/floridakofc).

### Using social media

The younger members of our parishes live in the social media world. Almost everything you do can be posted on your council's or parish website and other social media sites. The Florida State Council has a variety of social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

### Promoting videos of Knights in action

Our state council created the role of "broadcast media relations and productions director." He works with the major media market around the state to get air time for Florida Knights in action. We also promote both videos from our members and Supreme Council home office on our YouTube channel.

### Sharing your story requires collaboration

The marketing team has a dedicated diocesan and community relations director who works directly with diocesan chancellors, Catholic Charities, Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, etc. Through collaboration, our relationship with these agencies is strengthened, better positioning the K of C brand.

We are proud to be part of the Florida State Council marketing team. We're proud to help spread the good works word of our Florida Knights and the Order. It's a labor of love and pride.

*Special thanks to the following members of the Florida State Council Marketing Team for contributing to this story:*

*PR Director Joe Purka, Broadcast Media Relations and Production Director Jim Clark, Diocese and Community Relations Director Francis Shea, Communication Chair and State Newsletter "Invocation" Publisher Ed Sleyzak, Social Media Chair Alfonso Contreras and Marketing and Brands Director George Hayek.*



*Abbot Francis Sadlier Council 6168 in Lecanto, Fla., presents a \$8,000 check to St. John Paul II Catholic School Principal Lee Sayago. (Image by Ben Langer)*

## Your K of C Story Can Influence the World

By Victoria Verderame

*One individual can inspire other men to do more. That's why sharing your K of C story is powerful.*

**T**he inspiring deeds of Knights are on full display in "Everyday Heroes." But there are more stories out there — nearly 2 million of them.

We need your help to share these stories. Start by appointing a council public relations (PR) or communications chairman. Choose creative Knights who are news junkies or are savvy with marketing. They should work with local media and the Supreme Council Communications Department to spread these stories.

Promoting these stories shows the world who the Knights of Columbus are: Catholic men serving their neighbor and supporting their families. Together, let's tell your stories and inspire the world.

*Victoria Verderame is a corporate communications manager at the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council Headquarters. Contact her at [victoria.verderame@kofc.org](mailto:victoria.verderame@kofc.org). Also, check out the Knights of Columbus Public Relations and Publicity Guide by clicking [here](#).*

# Grand Knight's Checklist

## Deadlines

- Prepare your reports on donations, charitable disbursements and volunteer hours for the *Annual Survey of Fraternal Activity* (#1728). The online survey will open for submission Dec. 1.

## Planning

- Meet with your pastor ahead of Advent to ensure your council is supporting the needs of the parish this Christmas season.
- Plan your council's Consecration to the Holy Family (the required program in the Family category). The feast of the Holy Family is Dec. 29.
- Plan your council's involvement in local or national Marches for Life (a featured program in the Life category). The national march in Washington, D.C., is Jan. 24, 2020.

## Things to Consider

- Have a conversation with your district deputy to make sure you are on track for Star Council.
- How often are you inviting new members to take an active role in council activities?

**W**e want to help you share your council's stories. Start by appointing a council public relations (PR) or communications chairman who can help us share the Knights of Columbus story with the world — linking our fraternal, insurance, charity and investment stories.

For help sharing your story, email [victoria.verderame@kofc.org](mailto:victoria.verderame@kofc.org) or [communications@kofc.org](mailto:communications@kofc.org). You can also share questions, feedback and advice at [knightline@kofc.org](mailto:knightline@kofc.org).

## Meet the Everyday Heroes

**E**ach day ordinary men do extraordinary things. To show the remarkable accomplishments of our members, the Knights has launched the second season of the video series "Everyday Heroes."

These men embody our principles of charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism. Their deep faith touches the lives of those around them. Their impact on Catholic men, and on Knights, will be forever.

*The series is being featured in Catholic News Service, local Catholic news, social media and on [kofc.org/heroes](http://kofc.org/heroes).*

*Check it out today.*



## RESPOND TO THE EXPLOSIVE POWER OF CHRIST'S MERCY

A CHALLENGE AND MESSAGE FROM  
SUPREME CHAPLAIN ARCHBISHOP WILLIAM LORI

*Then [one of the criminals] said,*

*"Jesus, remember me when*

*you come into your kingdom."*

*He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you,  
today you will be with me in Paradise."*

— Lk. 23:42-43

We've read these words so many times that it's easy to miss their explosive power. Here is Jesus using his last few minutes of earthly life to show mercy to a dying criminal and to promise him life in heaven that very day. Though we don't like to admit it, we have a tendency to insulate ourselves from entire groups of people. Perhaps it's the poor, homeless or sick. And yet these are precisely the people with whom Jesus spent so much time. While the religious "upper class" so often ignored or mocked him, the poor often acknowledged him as Lord and were transformed. May the unlikely words of a criminal — "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom" — become our own urgent prayer.

### This Month's Challenge

This month, I challenge you to ask God's pardon and mercy by performing a thorough examination of conscience and going to confession. I also challenge you to serve those in need individually or with your council through Faith In Action programs such as *Coats for Kids* or *Food for Families*.

### Questions for Reflection:

*Are there habits in your daily routine you could reexamine which exclude or ignore others on the margins of our society? What are some ways — large or small — you can increase your efforts to help the poor and the needy? How does going to confession help us to imitate the Penitent Thief and what can we learn from his prayer?*



# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS INSURANCE

## This Nebraska Agent Inspires with Social Media

By Marcus Bell

*Bell is a field agent in Omaha, Neb. His goal: To let the world know that Knights get the job done.*

In the Midwest, especially here in Nebraska, we pride ourselves on the fact that if there's something that needs to be done for any neighbor, we will step up and get the job done. No one is forgotten. This plays a role in the insurance we provide to our members because Knights will do anything to protect their family. We see life insurance as an umbrella protecting families when an unforeseen storm comes to their front door.

We share this message with our local community — that we step up for our parish and community in all areas. We have Knights who are in charge of things like evening security at the parish and school, directing parking lot traffic for Christmas and feast day Masses and renovating the rectory. Our community can truly count on us to get things done.

Social media has been a big part of how we share this message. I think social media is such a great way to be in front of our members and the community, since social media is where people are going for information and news. I try to keep it simple by just sharing stories that I've experienced or situations that I have encountered. I'll tell that story with a photo or a graphic, and I infuse some humor or fun into it. I think you need to involve some type of fun into your posts, because a topic like life insurance can sometimes seem grim.



*Bell reads to children at a local read aloud event. (Image courtesy Marcus Bell)*



*Bell and his wife, Halee, with their two rescue dogs, Vinny and Tan. (Image courtesy Marcus Bell)*

My council really had huge success in raising funds for Coats for Kids last year, and this year we are already set to surpass last year's efforts. The coats have directly impacted our local community of Ralston, which has really given the Knights notoriety around here. We share these types of moments when we present coats and people were truly pleased to see the work we were doing. In fact, a mother of three children recently sent me a message on Facebook saying she wanted to meet to reevaluate their family's life insurance coverage because of a post I made. That's what it's all about.

My goal is to provide value in a simple way with my posts. Being as natural and candid as I can be has been very beneficial in my success. When I post pictures of me volunteering at community events, like reading to kids, I want people to know that it's not all about insurance and doing business. I want to make an impact on my community in any way I can. Showing children someone who's dressed professional, who looks like them and who comes read to them, can be an inspiration.

I hope my social media posts inspire people to protect their families from unexpected financial crisis. I also hope they inspire people to realize anyone can impact their community in a huge way by just doing something, whatever that may be.

*Bell is a field agent in the Neil Pfeifer Agency in Norfolk, Neb. Live in the area and have a question about K of C insurance? Call 402-379-0180 or visit [kofcins.com](http://kofcins.com). To find an agent in a different area, visit [kofc.org/findagent](http://kofc.org/findagent).*

MEMBERSHIP IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS is open to men 18 years of age or older who are practical (that is, practicing) Catholics in union with the Holy See. This means that an applicant or member accepts the teaching authority of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals, aspires to live in accord with the precepts of the Catholic Church, and is in good standing in the Catholic Church.

# KNIGHTLINE

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