

HGW Publicity



From a
Small Town Perspective

Dolley Madison Garden Club

HGW Tour Characteristics

Established Annual Tour

Typically large estates or historic homes

Roads can't accommodate buses

Club has only 45 active members

1 person does publicity

50% attendance out of county

Attendance 750 - 1750

Publicity budget: \$0



Publicity In A Small Town

Realities

- Weekly Newspaper
- One Radio Station (country western)
- TV from nearby larger market with its own clubs/tours
- County population: 34,000
- No Bandwidth
- No Buses

Implications

- Schedule press releases
- Country Western not our demographic
- TV or radio, to go further afield we run into markets with their own Clubs
- Our county market is largely saturated for HGW
- Can't easily upload photos
- Plan doesn't include marketing to groups

Publicity Plan Components

On-line calendar of events

Regional magazine article placement

HGW guidebook

3-fold brochure

Liberal use of handout cards and posters from GCV

Invite non-GCV garden clubs

Social Media

Main Street Banner

Department of Tourism

Other organizations

Series of newspaper articles

Articles in on-line newsletters

On line calendars

- Do on line calendars for multiple events at same time/efficiency
- Mention URL for on-line ticket sales
- Publicity Value ?
 - Quantitatively
 - Qualitatively
- Know your market
- Develop a spreadsheet with hyperlinks

Magazine Articles

- Key: pitch story that furthers their editorial focus
- Piedmont Virginian
 - Feature article
 - Always add all GCV tours within their 12 county region
- Albemarle mag
 - just send press release early and our tour is combined with others in nice article
- Photos on press-only website
 - Credit photogs
 - Editors Self-Select
 - Eliminates heavy MB graphic transmission problem
 - All press releases posted also
 - <http://dmgc.christchurchgordonsville.org/HGW14pk/>
- Pitch in September
 - Query letter /email
- All reviews done by Christmas

Thinking of Story Angles

- Two approaches to coming up with angles/stories
 - What stories are inherent in the tour
 - Which organizations (media or special interest) already reach my target market who share an interest in my story angle
- Consider the publicity values of your tour beyond the standard press release
 - Civil War
 - Conserved Land
 - Development/Conservation
 - Virginia History
 - Human interest
 - Can be just one property or all of them

Partners in Publicity

- Once you've come up with some story angles, think about who else is interested in this topic
- Leverage
 - Ad Dollars
 - Staff Time
 - Blogs/websites/newsletters
 - Honor tour ticket?
 - Mailing lists
- Orange Department of Tourism
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground
- Montpelier
- Advertisers in guidebook
- Hospitality Industry

Guidebook & HGW Website

- % sales on line increasing significantly
 - Data mining of on line sales from Groupon
- Holding pretty steady at ~ 18 guidebook ads
- Because of links to ticket sale URL, HGW website becoming even more interesting than guidebook for us
- Suggestion: URL for ticket sale with fast link to individual tours
- Distributed in same locations as other GCV materials
 - Particular success with small poster and cards
- Tip: Make sure the photo on the front is taken on a bright, sunny day

Invite non-GCV clubs

- Observed that one “typical” group of attendees was 3-5 women in a car who indicate they are members of a garden club in nova
- Send emails to non-GCV club presidents inviting them to our tour
 - No discount
 - Welcome tent/table
 - Develop an email list/bulk email bcc
- Would be nicer to send a letter

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for 'Historic Garden Week in Orange, Virginia'. The page features a cover photo of a butterfly on a pink flower. The page name is 'Historic Garden Week in Orange, Virginia' with 80 likes and 1 person talking about it. Below the name, there is a 'Non-Profit Organization' section with text: 'Dolley Madison Garden Club announces "Somerset: Where Tradition Meets Today", 80th Historic Garden Week tour. Saturday April 20, 2013 10-5 Tickets available at www.vagardenweek.org'. Navigation tabs include 'About', 'Photos', 'Likes' (showing 80), and 'Events'. On the right, there is an 'Advertise Your Page' button and a 'Recent' section.

- Schedule
 - Announce tour in January
 - Bi-weekly posts Feb-Mar
 - Weekly posts April
 - Daily post 7 days out

- Club website also carries content

- Haven't done on-line FB ads but will
 - Can control cost/\$10

On-line Newsletters & Blogs

- Orange Downtown Association
 - Highlight local businesses who are 1) selling tickets or 2) open on the day and offering some kind of promotion or discount
- Others
 - James Madison's Montpelier
 - Piedmont Environmental Council
 - Journey Through Hallowed Ground
 - County Tourism Office
- Local B&B's have active online email outreach

Local Newspapers

Lynch pin

Typically 3 or 4 articles in
weeks leading up to tour

Each must have a different
slant

Invite photo day before
event


behind the scenes

Big spread week after event

[Place an Ad](#) [Advertise With Us](#) [Subscribe](#) [Manage Subscription](#)

STAR EXPONENT




[Home](#) [News](#) [Opinion](#) [Sports](#) [Entertainment](#) [Weather](#) [Obituaries](#) [Services](#) [Business](#)

Friday, October 18, 2013  Culpeper, VA | Now: 64° | High: ° | Low: ° | [5-Day Forecast](#)

[Home](#) ▶ [Culpeper Star Exponent](#) ▶ [News](#) ▶ [Local News](#)

Orange County Garden Tour Saturday in Somerset

[Story](#) [Comments](#)

Print  Font Size:  

Main Street Banner

- \$600
- Replaceable text
- Last about 5 years
- Truly believe locals don't get excited enough to purchase tickets until about the week before the tour.
- Banner our best method of reminding this group.

Timeline

- Summer – Early Fall
 - Figure out three or four different news stories about the tour; start gathering data
 - Query regional publications for feature articles
 - Put tour info up in on-line calendar of events
 - Share basic info with County Tourism Office
 - Create photo gallery/on line media resource page
- Sept/Oct – write feature articles, continue on line calendar posts
- January – send first press releases, Facebook
- February – distribute posters, guidebooks etc

Timeline

- First of March start pitching bi-weekly news stories (newspapers and fb)
 - Each different/can be tweaked from the magazine articles
 - Don't forget bloggers who cover the story topic or other organizations who have established connections with your target audience

Timeline

- April
 - Start weekly fb updates
 - Busy time with pitching the various news stories
 - Invitations (electronic) to non-GCV garden clubs to visit our tour
 - Set up photo op for day before tour
 - Arrangements in progress
 - Two weeks out
 - Daily face book posts

Timeline

- One week out
 - Main Street banner goes up
 - Local radio PSA's
 - Eventful
 - Cross fingers

What we could do better

- Better tie in to advertisers
 - better leverage their outreach/increase the publicity value to them of advertising
- Start FB advertising in final week
- Improve our list of non-gcv club contacts
- Use GCV slide show
- Better info on who attends, where they are from, where they heard about the Orange tour, why they chose to attend