

April
2004

A report from the Montgomery Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama

Show Me the Money!

by Doug Freeland, chapter president

For many of us, fundraising is just another part of a lengthy PR job description. But even if it isn't, you're undoubtedly familiar with the concept. Heck, I get at least two phone calls each night from folks interested in tapping my checking account for one worthy cause or another. Sometimes these folks get a yes and a contribution, but more often I politely, or not so politely, decline.

No matter what an organization's good works, it must prove the value of those works to the community and the efficiency with which the organization delivers them. The primary key to any organization's fundraising success is to have a first-class organization in every sense. There are no entitlements in the nonprofit world. That definitely includes PRCA.

As a PRCA member, you've been asked from time-to-time to contribute your hard-earned cash to your local chapter's treasury. These pleas for support come on top of your PRCA membership dues, monthly luncheon costs and assorted workshop and conference fees. Obviously, you have every right to ask where the money goes and to question whether your bucks are being well spent.

Let's dispel one myth right up front -- your chapter is not raising money to repay a debt from the 2002 State Conference we hosted at The Legends. Well, not exactly. That conference did, in fact, end up costing the state organization \$10,000 beyond projections. The debt was paid using funds available in the state coffers, but which were certainly not budgeted for that purpose. What we have, in fact, pledged to do is to lead separate statewide fundraising efforts to replenish this account over time. The Montgomery board is working on a couple of fantastic projects which will involve every PRCA chapter (one of which will be announced soon), but again, neither the Montgomery Chapter nor its membership owes the state organization for last year's budget deficit, and none of the money we raise locally has been or will be used for that purpose.

The biggest chunk of your membership dues, of course, goes to the statewide organization and to your SPRF membership -- your local chapter gets only \$17.50 of your \$85 dues. Your \$12 luncheon costs are just enough to cover what we're charged -- there's no PRCA profit built into the buffet. And as for the workshop and conference fees, sometimes these events break even, sometimes they don't, and sometimes they make a profit. On the local level, any profits go into the treasury to be supplemented as possible with revenue from other fundraising efforts -- and this what we have to operate on for the year.

The Montgomery Chapter's current balance is hovering at about \$1,500 following a successful Valentine's Day fundraiser. Our normal operating costs come out of this, including printing and mailing newsletters, monthly speaker costs, and other usually small administrative costs we incur as a nonprofit corporation. The rest is budgeted strictly for community, professional development and student support projects.

So far this year we've sponsored our AUM student chapter's entry in the Mardi Gras parade, and are planning to award one student from AUM, Troy State or ASU with a \$500 scholarship to aid them in their pursuit of a communications degree. We're also planning a Spring Fling following April 14's special blockbuster program to give student's a chance to network with their professional counterparts.

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Get Educated!

by Linda Lee, APR



Chapter to Host **FREE** Education Teleseminar

Whether you are considering the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), would like a better understanding on PR planning, or just need a professional development boost, an upcoming educational opportunity may be just for you. PRCA-Montgomery has agreed to pay to be a local site for a one-hour interactive seminar sponsored by the Public Relations Society of America, entitled "**APR Study Programming: Planning Terminology and Structure**," set for Tuesday, April 27 at 1 p.m. (location TBA pending number of participants).

The first in a series, the teleseminar is designed to give an overview of planning terminology and experience in organizing the function of public relations and gaining acceptance for a professional approach--addressing two of the "knowledge, skills and abilities" areas covered on the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations. By attending this session, participants will learn to distinguish between goals, objectives and strategies; recognize the difference between process objectives and outcome objectives; and describe strategies, tactics, tools and activities that lead you to your objectives. The seminar will be presented by Steven L. Lubetkin, APR, Fellow PRSA, vice president and director of corporate communications for Fleet's New Jersey and Pennsylvania franchise and a former member of the Universal Accreditation Board.

To reserve your seat, please contact Linda Lee at 271-3804 or llee@onlinemep.com.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY TO SUCCESS



"One common thread that runs through those who are successful is the ability to communicate." Senator Jabo Waggoner truly believes and lives by these words of wisdom, and shares them frequently with others. Although Senator Waggoner has seen literally hundreds of men and women serve in the Alabama State House, he has

noticed that the vast majority are good, hardworking, well-meaning individuals. There are a few who have taken advantage of their positions and abused the privileges. Therefore, the public image of state government has not been a healthy one.

Waggoner related his Senate position to that from his post-college days when he refereed basketball games. He learned very quickly that every time you blow the whistle, 50% of the crowd cheer you on--50% hurl nasty insults. It's impossible to keep everyone happy as a Senator, but Waggoner shared insights into how our messages to the Legislators have a better chance of being heard.

- A constituent from the Senator's/Representative's district calling in support of or against proposed legislation carries more weight than someone lobbying for that cause.
- Understand the bill in question before making a call or writing a letter. Know your facts!
- Never, ever be misleading. If you don't know the facts, just say so. Make an attempt to find out the information they are looking for and get back with them.
- Never make threatening comments. It is a sure way to NOT be heard.
- Be brief. The Legislators are busy people who care about what you have to say, but have very little time for chit-chat.

To search proposed legislation that may be of interest to you, your organization, or company, log onto the state legislature web site:

www.legislature.state.al.us Click on "Legislation, Code, and Constitution." Scroll down and click on "Visit ALISON." From this page you can click on "Bills," then "Search." Enter a keyword or phrase to see current proposed legislation. After the brief descriptions appear, click on those of interest to you to view the bills' content.

CHAPTER MEETING

APRIL 12, 2004

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR MEDIA COVERAGE

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Denise Vickers, WSFA
Heather Connell, Cumulus Broadcasting
David Rountree,
The Montgomery Advertiser

RSA Plaza Terrace | 11:45 a.m.
Members \$12

Non-members \$25*

RSVP: pcollins@tourism.state.al.us

RSVP Deadline: Noon,
Thursday, April 8, 2004

**Non-members will receive the \$12 rate for their first two visits.*

About the Program:

Media are flooded with requests from the public. Those who better know and understand the decision makers and their process are the ones who will more likely be successful in getting coverage. On April 12th, Denise Vickers-WSFA, Heather Connell-Cumulus Broadcasting, and David Rountree-The Montgomery Advertiser will discuss the best way to go about getting television, radio, and newspaper coverage for events.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS: Getting the Recognition You Deserve

by Stacy Benefield, VP of Membership

Several award and recognition opportunities exist for members on the local, state and regional levels. PRCA-Montgomery hosts the annual Starr Awards; the state hosts the annual Medallion awards; and SPRF hosts the annual Lantern Awards - each recognizing excellence in various areas of public relations. Each year, the local chapters nominate one practitioner to compete at the state level for the Philip R. Forrest Jr. Practitioner of the Year Award; the winner of that award goes on to compete for SPRF's Professional Achievement Award following year. The state also awards the annual Heflin Chapter of the Year Award. In addition, the "Senior Practitioner" designation was established to honor members, meeting certain criteria, who are recognized by their peers as veteran public relations professionals with high ethical standing.

More about these awards and recognitions, as well as the Grover Smith Lifetime Achievement Award, is posted on the PRCA-Montgomery Web site, www.prcamontgomery.org.

Look for more on PRCA membership benefits in future editions of this newsletter. Next: Incorporation: Why should I care?

Welcome New Members!

PRCA-Montgomery would like to welcome the following new members.

- **Mitch Edwards**, director of communication, Alabama Department of Education
- **Alice Davis Gunter**, manager of communications department, Children's Hospital
- **Susan Moss**, executive director, Montgomery Area Crime Stoppers
- **Christopher Roquemore**, multimedia coordinator, AIDT
- **Mary Nell Shaw**, graphic arts specialist, Alabama Department of Education
- **Arrol Sheehan**, director, public information division of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, Alabama Department of Public Health
- **Rebecca Leigh White**, public information specialist, Alabama Department of Education
- **Lynn Williams**, health educator, Alabama Department of Public Health

Valentine's Fundraising Event a Success

by Melanie Beasley, Fundraising

Congratulations to Ralph Stacy, president and chief executive officer of the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama.

As winner of the Valentine's gift basket at the February 9 PRCA Montgomery meeting, he and a guest now have the opportunity to see Macbeth at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, attend the full Jubilee City Fest weekend, and have dinner at La Jolla Restaurant at the Shoppes at East Chase – to name a few. Special thanks to those who donated gifts for the basket--Sherry Ward with ASF, Cindy Scott with LWT Communications, Marianne McLeod, executive director of Jubilee City Fest, and Anna Tadlock, marketing director for Eastdale Mall—and to the many members who "collected donations" for this special fundraiser. Together, PRCA raised \$458.00!

Show Me the Money

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On April 27, we're offering the first in a series of PRSA interactive APR Study Programming tele-seminars designed to give an overview of planning terminology and experience in organizing the function of public relations and gaining acceptance for a professional approach. The program will rate whether or not you're planning to pursue APR status, and will be offered at no additional charge to our chapter's members.

We've made an annual tradition of supporting the Brantwood Children's Home during the holidays, and other projects will be announced throughout the year. Stay tuned, and join us every month!

We know PRCA is not entitled to anyone's support, but by heck we intend to earn it.

Note: If you change jobs in the year, don't forget to let us know about it. Simply download the Membership Update Form from www.prcamontgomery.org and send the completed form to Stacy Benefield via fax, 270-9527, or postal service, AlaHA, 500 North East Blvd., Montgomery, AL 36117. Also, be sure to let us know about promotions, awards and special projects in which you're involved so we can share it with the membership – email susan@squareroot-inc.com.

National Publication Gives Kudos and MONEY to AUM Student Chapter

by Stacey W. Little, development director for Child Protect and AUM PRCA Chapter President

Auburn University Montgomery's chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama has made the news again and this time it's worth big bucks.

USA Weekend, a national publication inserted into 598 newspapers weekly, will feature the chapter in its April 18th edition as one of the top ten "Make a Difference Day" projects in the nation for its *Writer's Block* program. If that recognition wasn't enough, the chapter will also receive a \$10,000 check from the Paul Newman Foundation, enabling the project to continue for years to come.

This honor began earlier this year when the students adopted the AUM *Writer's Block* program as their official charity and have worked hard to help promote and fundraise for this project.

The *Writer's Block* program, headed by AUM Professor Nancy Anderson, goes into the Montgomery housing communities to help teach reading and creative writing to the children in those areas. The project began years ago as a project for *USA Weekend's* "Make a Difference Day" held in late October each year. "It's a day where people are supposed to go out and do good things to help the community," AUM PRCA Vice-President of Projects and Project Chair Jennifer Johnson said.

But when Anderson realized the incredible benefits the children received from this program, the plan was altered and volunteers now go into the communities once a week versus once a year as had been planned.

The project has traditionally been funded by a university outreach grant, but those were eliminated after the sweeping cuts last fall. Realizing the extreme situation and the value of such a program, AUM PRCA jumped into action.

They planned a super celebration this past October on "Make a Difference Day" that included various State Legislators, Montgomery City Councilmen, the media, and droves of volunteers from AUM PRCA and the entire men's and women's basketball teams from AUM.

As a result of the good deeds put forth that day, the *Writer's Block* program has been recognized as one of the top ten "Make a Difference Day" projects in the nation and will be featured in the April 18th edition of *USA Weekend*. But not only that, the project will also receive a \$10,000 check from the Paul Newman Foundation. This will enable the project to continue for years to come.

Speaking about the student's involvement with the *Writer's Block* program, AUM PRCA advisor Blair Gaines said, "This year's PRCA group is a dynamic and motivated corps of students willing to work hard to help worthy causes and to help teach themselves PR skills. Their contribution to this project is unique to AUM PRCA."



AUM PRCA President Stacey Little poses with two of the students from the *Writer's Block* project.

April Student Events

PRCA Montgomery chapter members are encouraged to attend student events when possible. April gives us two opportunities to see these chapters in action.

19th Resume Writing Workshop

AUM Student Chapter

April 19 | 7:30 pm

Auburn University Montgomery

Room 230 Taylor Center

Open to all all students and PRCA members

30th TSU Senior PR Student's AEC Presentation

TSU Student Chapter

April 30 | 2-4 p.m.

Light reception to follow

RSVP to Donna Schubert by April 1,

334.670.3233 or schubert@troyst.edu

This presentation is part of a senior Branding assignment for Alabama Electric Cooperative. TSU extends this invitation to all Montgomery PRCA chapter members.