



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

"THERE ARE TWO THINGS I ENCOURAGE MY EMPLOYEES TO DO: INTERVIEW ONCE A YEAR AND ALWAYS TAKE RISKS."

-- JOHN HACHTEL



WHEN PR ISN'T PRETTY

by Kathy Midgley, VP Programs

A position announcement in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* afforded John Hachtel a chance to follow his own advice. Hachtel, then Associate Vice President for Communications and Marketing at Binghamton, New York, was encouraged to apply for Assistant Vice President of Communications and Marketing at Auburn University. After research, Hachtel was not sure that was a challenge any one would desire. From scandalous photos on web sites to humiliations in football and fraternities, Auburn seemed to be fraught with problems. He wasn't afraid of a risk, but why would any one in their right mind take on a challenge so great? However, in August 2002, he did just that.

After arriving on campus and assessing the office, he set two goals. The first was to change the way they did business. Until that time, the Office of Communications and Marketing had basically been a news bureau, turning out large numbers of news releases. The second goal was to change the perception of the university. "When something bad happens, I want people to shake their heads and say, 'I don't believe that happened at Auburn!' Right now, they just nod their heads and say, 'Yep. That sounds about right.'" The first objective has been accomplished. The second is still a goal he is striving for.

Several new strategies were implemented to achieve goal number one.

- Whereas people across campus had been using communication as competition, from one department and one school to the next, they were encouraged to view each other as resources. Regular meetings now take place, and communication activities and ideas are being shared.
- The major source of news for those on campus used to be the local newspapers from outside. Daily briefs from within campus now update faculty and administration of campus news. Collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, as well as the Student Government Association, resulted in weekly briefs for students.
- A new centralized, web-based calendar now publicizes events in order to reduce scheduling conflicts.
- Tiger Transit saw improvements, with changed logo, redesigned stops, and the addition of campus advertising.



President's Message

OK. July has arrived, and I'm still scraping June off my shoes. As that great philosopher, Groucho Marx, once said, "Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies enjoy a banana." Ready or not, it's already professional development season in the PRCA community. Opportunities to fine tune your communications skills abound both near and far, including our own PR Idol one-day seminar on Aug. 13 at AIDT, the SPRF conference on July 22-23 and the PRCA statewide conference set for Sept. 23-24.

If you normally don't attend these kinds of extracurricular activities, consider picking one or two to experience this year. You'll find they are of great benefit both personally and professionally. Of course, if you can only attend one, I'd recommend highly the Montgomery Chapter's low cost/high impact workshop! You'll be hard pressed to get a bigger bang for the buck than this day with Alan B. Ulman of Ketchum - Atlanta. Registration is underway, so don't miss out either on this or the Starr Awards competition! A perfect way of honing your prospective Medallion Award entries, the Starr Awards celebrate the best our chapter's practitioners produced over the past year during the workshop's luncheon ceremony.

And while we're talking shameless self-promotion, I know it's hard for most of us to toot our own horns. We're generally more comfortable when promoting our organizations and our clients than ourselves. But, it's cool to see our own names in

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ARE YOU PRCA'S NEXT IDOL?

PRCA IDOL WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13, 2004 | 8:15 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.
AIDT | ONE TECHNOLOGY COURT | MONTGOMERY

REGISTRATION:

PRCA MEMBERS \$65.00, NON-PRCA MEMBERS \$75.00,
STUDENT MEMBERS \$35.00, LUNCH ONLY \$20.00

"PRCA IDOL" WORKSHOP AND STARR AWARDS TO TEACH PLANNING TOOLS, SHOWCASE PR TALENT AND HELP THE COMMUNITY

by Melanie Beasley, Fundraising

While members of PRCA-Montgomery compete for the title "PRCA Idol"—the Best of Show award in the upcoming Starr Awards—a number of local community organizations will benefit from ideas stored in the communications tool chest of one of the world's largest public relations firms.

Set for August 13, this year's PRCA-Montgomery Workshop will feature an in-depth, hands-on look at strategic planning by keynote speaker Alan Ulman, senior vice president for corporate communications, Ketchum Atlanta. His approach to the workshop will involve three steps: introducing Ketchum's successful planning tools; breaking participants into groups to apply the tools to solve several real community problems; and, finally, showcasing the results of the planning session.

"I expect to train workshop participants, offer a time for simulation, and leave them with a set of planning tools they can apply to a variety of different situations," Ulman said.

Prior to the workshop, the conference committee and board will select a number of community organizations that could use help in addressing a particular problem or developing a public relations campaign. The groups at the workshop will then use the Ketchum tools to craft proposals for those organizations to achieve a specific goal.

"Basically, one of the world's leading PR firms is helping us use this year's workshop to do pro bono work for our community," said PRCA Montgomery President Doug Freeland.

As in past years, the luncheon will be highlighted with the Starr Awards, which will culminate with the Best of Show, or "PRCA Idol" Award. The workshop will wrap up with a panel discussion, "Learning to Swim in the Incredible Shrinking Resource Pool."

To register online, go to www.prcamontgomery.org. For further information, contact Melanie Beasley at 334.832.1270 or email melaniebeasley@mc-ala.org.

MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

Total Membership:.....121

Number at June Meeting

Members:27
or 22.3% of membership

Visitors:5

Total32

CHAPTER MEETING

PRCA QUESTIONS THE FBI

Guest Speaker:

Agent Margaret Faulk, FBI

Monday, July 12, 2004
RSA Plaza Terrace | 11:45 a.m.

Members \$12

Non-members \$25*

RSVP: Peggy Collins

pcollins@tourism.state.al.us

RSVP Deadline: Noon,

Thursday, July 8, 2004

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

Who handles PR for the FBI? Why does the FBI need PR, any way? These questions and more will be answered when Agent Margaret Faulk joins us on July 12. From Hawaii to Alabama—from SWAT teams to bank robberies and hostage negotiations, Faulk will answer questions regarding the FBI, their need for public relations and anything else you would like to interrogate her on. Be there...don't make her come looking for you!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Recruit Friends, Co-workers & Associates NOW!

by Stacy Benefield, VP of Membership

If you've been active in the various PRCA-Montgomery activities this year, you know what our chapter has to offer - a lot! We've had a great line up of speakers, from Gail Alsobrook, executive director of the Montgomery Riverfront Development Foundation, to Mr. RSA himself, Dr. David Bronner. More than that, our chapter played a pretty big part in the new "Share the Road" campaign put into motion by the Montgomery Bicycle Club. We celebrated great achievements by our members, and we mingled with the students that will follow in our footsteps.

If you've enjoyed this last year with PRCA as much as I have, I hope you'll take advantage of a unique opportunity to invite your friends and co-workers to be a member of our organization. PRCA's "grandfathering" policy presents an excellent tool for recruiting new members. Under the policy, prospective members submitting their applications for approval during these last few months of PRCA's fiscal year are automatically renewed through Sept. 30, 2005.

Also, don't forget to invite your business associates to join as well. PRCA has an associate membership for individuals working in fields related to public relations and suppliers of public relations services. This includes printers, graphic designers, advertising companies, Web designers, Internet providers, specialty print shops, etc.

Simply refer prospective members to Stacy Benefield at sbenefield@alaha.org or 272-8781.

Share Your Volunteer Work

It is time again to showcase the wonderful work our chapter has accomplished throughout the year. Taking on this task is Belinda Bazinet and she needs your help in order to finish the official Chapter Book. If you have volunteered your PR skills during the past year please contact Belinda, (334) 416-4319 or belinda.bazinet@gunter.af.mil, so she can add it to the book.

Deadline for submissions is Friday, July 20.

Meet Your Practitioner of the Year Nominee

The votes are in and it is unanimous. Doug Freeland will represent the Montgomery Chapter in the race for the Phillip R. Forrest, Jr. Practitioner of the Year Award.

ABOUT THE NOMINEE:

Doug Freeland is Media Services Manager for the Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute (AIDT), a position he has held since 1989.

Freeland earned a BA in sociology from the University of South Carolina in 1976, and began his career as a news reporter, humor columnist and photographer for The Newberry Observer in Newberry, SC. In 1984 he left his post as The Observer's associate editor to join The Advertiser Company as editor-in-chief of The Progress, a tri-weekly newspaper in Prattville, AL. In 1986, he joined AIDT as technical editor and media specialist. He currently oversees publishing and video production at AIDT and supports public relations and marketing functions.

He is a member of the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) and has held several positions on its local and state governing boards. He currently serves as president of the Montgomery Chapter, and has served on the PRCA state board since 2001. He has been named a senior practitioner by the Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF) and is a member of the Alabama College System Public Relations Association (ACSPRA), serving as its

State Conference Scholarship

Two lucky PRCA Montgomery chapter members will be the recipients of a PRCA State Conference scholarship*. This scholarship includes full conference access — a value of \$225. Interested? To qualify, you must be a Montgomery chapter member in good standing and we ask that you apply only if your company will not pay for your conference fees. Contact Doug Freeland (334) 242-4158 to apply.

**Does not include hotel and travel costs.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Janel Bell, director, communications and marketing, Southern Poverty Law Center

Jina Clark, tourism marketing manager, Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce

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.

When PR Isn't Pretty

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- Whenever an issue arises on campus, briefing notes go to all senior administrators, which include a summary of the issue followed by 5 key points and contact information.
- A revamp of news delivery to alumni took the task from the hands of the Trustees and placed it in-house. One hundred and thirty-thousand alumni now receive the President's newsletter, *Auburn Commons*, and 60,000 receive the e-version, *E-Commons*.

Hachtel shares a wealth of information and advice, relating experiences with his mom and the depth of the ocean, but his final words of wisdom on public relations say it all. In this profession, one of the most frustrating things is convincing management that you know the best way to handle PR. "We don't get the same respect as plumbers. No one tells them how to do their job!"



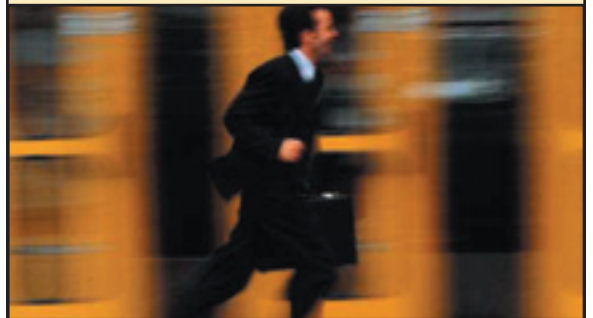
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print, too—when it's in neither the obits nor the police reports. We're charged as a chapter with promoting the field of PR as well as the Public Relations Council of Alabama; and we're held accountable in our year-end chapter book for showing our successes. An excellent way to do that is to include a reference to your PRCA affiliation in press releases or other news accounts featuring you or other members. Your success translates into PRCA-Montgomery success. If you're involved in a community activity, just drop VP for projects Lenore Vickery <lenorev@frazerumc.org> an email outlining same; if you've made the news, forward her a copy of the clipping! Our deadline for submitting our chapter's successes arrives at the end of the month!

See y'all t our next regular meeting July 12!

Doug Freeland

JOBSOURCE



DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

Troy University

(Posted 6/15/2004)

Troy University seeks an individual to manage and direct the university relations, public affairs, publications, and media relations for the University. Primary responsibilities include supervising the Office of University Relations, overseeing all PR communications of the University and for the Chancellor, and directing all media relations. Three to five years university experience in public relations or related field required. Salary range: commensurate with qualifications and experiences. Review of applications begins immediately. Troy is an AA/EEO employer and encourages applications from individuals with disabilities, females, African Americans and other minorities.

Send letter of application, resume and college transcripts to Human Resources, Troy University, Troy, AL 36082.

FREELANCE WRITER

Alabama State University

(Posted 6/9/2004)

Description: Alabama State University seeks a freelance writer to cover daytime, evening and/or weekend events for a national newsletter. Send e-mail inquiry, resume and rates to debarde-laben@asunet.alasu.edu.