

June
2004

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

.....
**COMPANIES SHOULD
RESERVE A SEAT AT THE
EXECUTIVE TABLE FOR
THEIR PR PERSON!**

DR. DAVID BRONNER

.....



PR: STRAIGHT FROM THE TOP

by Kathy Midgley, VP Programs

Dr. David Bronner understands the importance of involving those who promote the image of the organization, and makes it a regular practice at the Retirement Systems of Alabama (RSA). "It is so important to clue them in, right from the top, on what's happening. Give them a heads up before they hear it outside."

"As PR professionals, you're the ones that get blamed when it goes wrong, and the boss gets the credit when it goes right!" Much has gone right for Dr. Bronner and the RSA, a public corporation managing investments in excess of over \$24 billion. It is no surprise that Dr. Bronner has been featured in The Wall Street Journal, Forbes Magazine, Time Magazine, Business Week, and others. His ingenious strategies have brought much attention to Alabama.

"My dad taught me that there are three things you need to be successful: vision, implementation and money." Dr. Bronner and his PR staff fortunately had all three for the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. They realized that in order to promote the trail across the country, it would take more than typical PR. "We couldn't use trade publications, newspapers, radios, or television. After they had one story on it, it would have been old news. So we decided to buy newspapers." They purchased 100 newspapers in 22 states. This gave them the avenue to run a one-page article each week. They pumped news about the trail from Georgia to Oklahoma, from Kentucky to New York. They not only promoted the golf trail—they promoted Alabama. Weekly articles discussed everything from Space Camp in Huntsville to Carnival Cruise Lines coming to Mobile. The tourism industry went from a \$1.8 billion industry to the \$6.8 billion industry it is today. In addition to print, they purchased six television stations and have increased to the current 42 they own today. Twelve percent of America's population can now view promos on Alabama tourism, thanks to this venture.

Dr. Bronner closed his discussion with this final note, "Good public relations is critical because as we all know, negative news travels. Good news stays at home."



President's Message

by Doug Freeland

Hard to believe, but somehow June has busted out all over, and I even got some of it on my shoes.

What this means, besides my need for a shine, is that we're on a downhill slide toward Sept. 30 — the end of PRCA's new fiscal year. And of course, what THAT means is that several items of business we didn't used to worry about until the dog days of summer are now rapidly becoming top priorities. To wit:

- >>> A nominating committee will be appointed this month to make recommendations for next year's Public Relations Council of Montgomery board. If you are interested in joining the board, please let me know (that includes current board members). Believe me, the more you get involved in PRCA, the more you get out of your membership!
- >>> Our chapter book will no doubt be required at the end of July, rather than August as in the past. We need to get our reports together for our historian, Belinda Bazinet. Board members are responsible for certain reports, and anyone who has been involved in a service project this year needs to provide documentation and a summary of your involvement. We only need one summary for each project, so coordinate with Projects VP Lenore Vickery.
- >>> Our chapter's Practitioner of the Year should also be selected this month in order to give our

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

MINNIE LAMBERTH NAMED WINNER OF PARACLETE PRESS FICTION AWARD

On Saturday, April 24th at the Calvin Festival of Faith & Writing in Grand Rapids, Michigan, contest judge Leif Enger announced the winner of the 2004 Paraclete Press Fiction Award given for a new literary novel with Christian themes. PRCA's very own **Minnie Lamberth** was on hand to receive the award for her novel, *At Home in the Center of the Universe*. Ms. Lamberth will receive a \$2,000 award as well as publication of her book in 2005.

The selection of *At Home in the Center of the Universe* is the felicitous culmination of the literary contest launched in 2003 by Paraclete Press. The contest was advertised in writing magazines, at writing workshops and conferences, and at college and university creative writing departments. In conjunction with Calvin College's Festival of Faith & Writing (featuring writers such as Leif Enger, Joyce Carol Oates, Mary Hood, Frederick Buechner) Paraclete worked to promote and encourage participation for emerging authors.

Congratulations Minnie from all of us at PRCA.

PRCA MEMBER WEDS

Congratulations to PRCA-Montgomery member **Erica Merrill Hartzog**, administrative assistant in the office of the mayor of Troy. She married David Hartzog on March 13.

CALLING ALL SENIORS

Nominations will close at 5 p.m., CDT, on June 11 for 2004 Senior Practitioner nominations, which are presented annually by the Southern Public Relations Federation to deserving public relations professionals.

The senior practitioner designation honors members of SPRF who are recognized by their peers as veteran public relations professionals with high ethical standing. Nomination and selection is made by each local chapter based on criteria set by the Federation.

SPRF member chapters are the Public Relations Association of Louisiana (PRAL), Public Relations Association of Mississippi (PRAM), Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) and the Emerald Coast Public Relations Organization (ECPRO).

To receive the designation "senior practitioner," a recipient must qualify in three of the following four criteria:

- (1) 15 years of full-time public relations experience,
- (2) Accreditation by the NAPRC member organization,
- (3) Officer or board member at chapter, state or SPRF level, and/or
- (4) Recognition of professionalism as evidenced by such awards as Practitioner of the Year, Lantern Award or similar honor.

If you qualify for Senior Practitioner status, please email your entry to Doug Freeland <dfreeland@aidt.edu> no later than June 7, who will confirm eligibility and forward the nominees to SPRF.

TUNE UP NOW FOR PRCA IDOL

Mark your calendars for this year's **PRCA-Montgomery Conference**, August 13, 2004, 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) Center. This year's theme is PRCA Idol, and the conference holds the exciting promise of identifying new talent through the annual STARR Awards, as well as opportunities to improve your craft through a slate of interesting speakers and panel presentations. Call Melanie Beasley at 334.832.1270 or visit prcamontgomery.org for more information.

CHAPTER MEETING

WHEN PR ISN'T PRETTY

Guest Speaker:
JOHN HACHTEL

*Assistant Vice President of
Communications and Marketing for
Auburn University*

Monday, June 14, 2004
RSA Plaza Terrace | 11:45 a.m.
Members \$12

Non-members \$25*
RSVP: Kathy Midgley
kathy@alabamachildrenfirst.com
RSVP Deadline: Noon,
Thursday, June 10, 2004

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

Ever have one of those days? How about one of those years? Auburn University has certainly had their fair share of PR challenges lately. John Hachtel, Assistant Vice President of Communications and Marketing for the University, will join us on June 14 to discuss how AU has handled PR, from basketball coaches to presidents on planes—you won't want to miss this discussion!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

The PRCA-Montgomery Board: An Opportunity to Serve

by Stacy Benefield, VP of Membership

As PRCA-Montgomery approaches the end of its membership year, now is a good time to begin thinking about taking a leadership position in our organization. A nominating committee will be appointed this month to make recommendations for next year's PRCA-Montgomery board. You may not be aware of what serving on the board involves, therefore, listed to the right is a description of the responsibilities of each board position. I hope you'll consider serving in one of these capacities. More information about electing board members will be available closer to the end of PRCA-Montgomery's fiscal year (ending Sept. 30).

Phillip R. Forrest, Jr. Practitioner of the Year Award

by Doug Freeland, President

Each year, the Public Relations Council of Montgomery nominates one of its own as the PRCA Phillip R. Forrest, Jr. Practitioner of the Year for Alabama. This award is the highest honor bestowed by the Public Relations Council of Alabama to a single practitioner. It is given to recognize public relations practitioners who are outstanding in the field of public relations.

Nominees, selected from each chapter, must have been employed full-time in the field of public relations for a minimum of five years and be a member in good standing of the Public Relations Council of Alabama. Nominees will be judged on professional activities, community service, work samples, and career achievements.

Please send your nominations to sbenefield@alaha.org by Friday, June 11. Voting will take place, with any luck, at the June 14 meeting.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Renée Casillas, Executive Director
American Council of Engineering Companies of Alabama

John F. Knight, Jr., Special Assistant to the President
Alabama State University

LaVonette W. Bartley, Director of Marketing
Alabama State University

PRESIDENT - Presides at monthly meetings and board meetings, writes monthly column, represents chapter on state board.

VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMS - Arranges speakers for monthly meetings. Traditionally, assumes the role of President the following year.

VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP - Takes membership applications, bills members for annual dues, maintains membership database, plans membership drives.

VICE PRESIDENT, PROJECTS - Plans and helps execute chapter service and public relations projects.

VICE PRESIDENT, EDUCATION/ACCREDITATION - Educates membership about the accreditation programs administered by Southern Public Relations Federation, encourages members to seek accreditation.

SECRETARY - Collects RSVPs for monthly meetings, communicates with RSA Plaza staff, keeps minutes of board meetings, maintains and updates membership nametags.

TREASURER - Prepares annual budget, collects money for monthly luncheons, maintains checkbook, pays bills, files income tax for nonprofit corporation.

COMMUNICATIONS - Maintains Web site, develops monthly newsletter, communicates with membership via e-mail.

PUBLICITY - Writes and distributes news releases about meetings and projects to local media, collects news clippings concerning members' awards and activities to provide to historian.

FUND RAISING - Coordinates annual professional development seminar and Starr Awards as well as any other fund-raising projects. In years when Montgomery hosts the state conference - every sixth year, this person acts as state conference chair.

STUDENT LIAISON - Works with affiliated student chapters, coordinates annual student scholarship, plans programs and social events involving students.

HISTORIAN - Develops chapter's annual scrapbook.

PAST PRESIDENT/ETHICS - Presides over the judicial procedure in the event of a bylaw ethics complaint. Traditionally, the immediate past president fills this position.

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.

APR | Education Update

by Linda Lee, APR - VP of Education

SPRF Subsidy

The Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF) has good news for those seeking accreditation! Effective immediately, for those who complete the Accreditation in Public Relations examination, SPRF will subsidize \$100 of the \$385 fee (upon request by the candidate within 30 days of completing the exam). Please note: this subsidy is IN ADDITION to the \$100 reimbursement from PRCA already available to members who take the exam. Both subsidies are granted to candidates one time only (whether they pass or fail). Thus, a candidate who is a member of PRCA will effectively pay \$185, not \$385! If you have any questions, or need more information on getting started in the process of taking the exam, please contact Linda Lee, APR, VP, Education/Accreditation, at llee@onlinemep.com.

Public Relations Resource Center



The board of PRCA-Montgomery is working to establish a Public Relations Resource Center at a local library. The goal of this center is to provide viable educational tools for our members and for students. In particular, we hope that the library will serve as a resource for those studying for the accreditation exam. While many details are still being worked out, the first order of business is for us to seek donations to the library—up-to-date textbooks (see APR Preparation Sources at right), publications, CD-roms, etc. If you have anything you would like to donate, or

think your business would be willing to “sponsor” a book for the library, please contact Linda Lee, APR, at llee@onlinemep.com.

APR Preparation Sources

Here is a list of suggested titles (which is actually the “short bookshelf” of texts recommended by the Universal Accreditation Board):

- >> *Advertising and Public Relations Law* by Roy Moore. Erlbaum, 1998
- >> *Effective Public Relations* by Cutlip, Center and Broom. Prentice-Hall, 1999
- >> *Campaign Strategies and Message Design* by Mary Anne Moffitt. Praeger, 1999
- >> *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*
- >> *Primer of Public Relations Research* by Don Stacks. Guilford Press, 2002
- >> *Strategic Planning for Public Relations* by Ronald Smith. Erlbaum, 2002
- >> *The Handbook of Strategic Public Relations and Integrated Communications* by Clarke Caywood (editor). McGraw-Hill, 1997
- >> *The Practice of Public Relations* by Fraser Seitel. Prentice-Hall, 2000.
- >> *This is PR: The Realities of Public Relations* by Doug Newsom, et. Al. Wadsworth, 2004

President's Message *Continued from Page One*

champion ample time to get her/his documentation together for the judges.

- >> And time is running out for those eligible for SPRF Senior Practitioner status to get their names in the hat. We know you're out there — we can hear you breathing.
- >> Look for the call for entries for the 2004 PRCA Starr Awards and start getting your stuff together to compete in this showcase of Montgomery's best PR work. The awards will be held again in conjunction with our annual professional

development workshop, set for August 13.

- >> This flurry of activity all leads up to PRCA's 2004 State Conference and Medallion Awards in Birmingham Sept. 23-24. The Magic City chapter is putting together an excellent program of speakers and activities, so check www.prcaonline.com for the latest information.

So much to do, so little time, right? You think you're busy? Hey, I've got to get this stuff off my shoes.

Montgomery Chapter News is a monthly publication for PRCA-Montgomery members. Be sure to visit prcamontgomery.org for the latest news information. Send all job announcements, news items, and comments to susan@squareroot-inc.com and indicate “PRCA” in the subject line.