



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

Share the Road and Save Lives

by Linda Lee, APR | Vice President - Education and Accreditation



The Share the Road Committee, a joint collaboration of the Montgomery Bicycle Club (MBC) and PRCA-Montgomery, has been on a roll in recent weeks.

Organized last year, the committee's goal has been to create awareness among motorists that roadways are meant to be shared by both drivers and cyclists alike, and to promote safety among cyclists. The initiative was fueled by the death of Jim Glassner, M.D., a long-time Montgomery ophthalmologist at Montgomery Eye Physicians who was killed on his bicycle in December 2001 after being struck by a motorist in Bullock County.

"We felt that the development of a billboard campaign urging drivers to 'share the road' was central to this initiative," said PRCA and MBC member Darryl Gates, APR, who has spearheaded this campaign.

Kicked off in conjunction with National Cycling Month, billboards began appearing along the tri-county roadways on April 14. Thanks to donations from Montgomery Eye Physicians to the MBC and space donated by Lamar Advertising, approximately 30 billboards will stay up for one month, reaching 100 percent of the driving population.

In addition, committee members are reinforcing the billboard campaign with public service announcements and interviews with the local media, some of which have already taken place. (PRCA had a nice mention on the WSFA 10 o'clock report!) Perhaps most importantly, the short-term campaign has spurred interest in a long-term partnership with the City of Montgomery to promote cycling safety. Already, Mayor Bobby Bright has agreed to help the committee by recording a public service announcement during the campaign.

"We're really excited about these developments and their positive role in bringing about long-term awareness, which will, in turn, save lives," Gates said.

Stay tuned for more developments, and remember to "share the road!"



President's Message

by Doug Freeland

I just spent a nice April afternoon touring the Troy State University campus, where my youngest son is in his fourth year of what appears to be a 10-year program to earn an undergraduate degree in broadcasting. Go figure.

When the subject of his current class work came up, he announced that he was preparing to deliver a speech to one of his classes -- an assignment he hasn't faced since he had to give an oral book report on Chitty Chitty Bang Bang to Mrs. Higginbottom's third grade class.

In an effort to set his mind at ease about facing his peers, I offered this observation: "You know, son," I said, "Jerry Seinfeld once joked that at a funeral, most people would rather in be in the casket than giving the eulogy!"

My son failed to see the humor in this, but he certainly recognized the truth. He was petrified at the prospect of standing up in front of his peers and convulsing with fear.

Consider the speech delivered by Don Knott's character, Luther Heggs, in the classic 1966 classic Universal Studios film *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken*. It's the scene at the Chamber of Commerce picnic when Luther loses the notes from which he was planning to speak and improvises, horribly, for a couple of minutes.

"I have been called brave," Luther stammers, slipping into what becomes a quivering ballet of knee-knocking, teeth-chattering, eye-bugging terror. "What is brave? Let me clarify this. Of course we all know this is short for brave-ry. That goes without even being said. But it is also

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



LOCAL UNITED WAY REVEALS NEW IMAGE

by Susan Cline, Communications

In today's pop culture, it seems that everyone wants an "extreme makeover." A nip here, a tuck there, TV shows make it look so easy. But in the PR industry, we know better. Creating and implementing a new image can be a challenging and scary task. Just ask PRCA member Hank Schmitt.

During its Annual meeting in March, United Way officials announced it would no longer operate as the Montgomery Area United Way — a name that has been in place since 1976. Instead, they have changed their name to the River Region United Way as part of its public relations awareness campaign.

"The change to River Region United Way better reflects who we are and the area we serve," explained Hank Schmitt, United Way's marketing and communications director. "United Way agencies have been serving people in Lowndes and Macon counties for years, so it's only appropriate that our name reflects all the counties this United Way represents."

If a new name wasn't enough, the United Way of America had some changes of their own. The official United Way logo received a face-lift, shedding years off its tired look. The River Region United Way became the first to implement the new design.

To learn more about the River Region United Way, visit them online at www.doingwhatmatters.org.

CUNNINGHAM GROUP, SQUARE ROOT SOLUTIONS UNITE TALENTS

Square Root Solutions, a full-service new media agency, and the Cunningham Group, a full-service advertising and public relations agency, announced their new partnership that combines traditional advertising services with new media services. This blending of talents provides both agencies' clients with one resource for advertising, public relations and Web site needs.

"Our two agencies compliment each other," explained PRCA member and SRS creative director Susan Cline. "This became evident while working on various projects in the past. By partnering with Cunningham, we can offer our clients, and theirs, one resource for advertising, marketing and communication needs."

Bill Cunningham, PRCA member and president of Cunningham Group added, "Having a strong internet presence is now a significant part of a client's advertising program. With Square Root Solutions as our new media partner, we can expand our client services beyond traditional advertising in a highly efficient way. And by joining talents, each agency remains focused on what they do best. It's a win-win for us, for Square Root, and most importantly, for our clients."

To enhance synergy, Square Root Solutions has relocated to the first floor of the Cunningham building located downtown at 35 Court Square. Cline explained that while the two agencies will continue to operate separately, this move will allow them to communicate efficiently while working on projects together.

MEMBERSHIP SNAPSHOT

Total Membership:.....118

Number at April Meeting

Members:37
or 31.4% of membership

Visitors:14

Total51

CHAPTER MEETING

PR STRAIGHT FROM THE TOP

Guest Speaker:
DAVID BRONNER

Monday, May 10, 2004
RSA Plaza Terrace | 11:45 a.m.
Members \$12

Non-members \$25*

RSVP: pcollins@tourism.state.al.us

RSVP Deadline: Noon,

Thursday, May 6, 2004

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

Very few know the power of and need for positive PR like Dr. David Bronner. As CEO of the 14th largest internally managed pension fund in America, Dr. Bronner and the Retirement Systems of Alabama manage investments in excess of \$24 billion. He has most recently been featured in Time Magazine, the Wall Street Journal, Business Week, and Forbes Magazine. Please join us on May 10th as Dr. Bronner shares his view from the top!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

LAST QUARTER GREAT TIME TO RECRUIT

by Stacy Benefield, VP of Membership

It's hard to believe it's already May, and next month begins the final quarter of PRCA-Montgomery's fiscal year.

PRCA's "grandfathering" policy presents an excellent opportunity for recruiting new members to our organization. Under the policy, prospective members submitting their applications this month for approval at the June board meeting will get four months free! That's right! As the membership year winds down, new members are automatically renewed through Sept. 30, 2005.

Please encourage friends and co-workers who are not members to consider joining. Don't forget your business associates. 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.

INCORPORATION: WHY SHOULD I CARE?

by Stacy Benefield, VP of Membership

The Public Relations Council of Alabama was incorporated in December of 2000 and granted 501 (c) (6) non-profit tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service the following year. Since that time, PRCA-Montgomery, along with the other five local chapters of PRCA, has also become incorporated. What's the big deal? Not only does incorporation give PRCA the status of a legally recognized non-profit professional organization, it also protects members of the state and local boards from lawsuits.

Look for more on PRCA membership benefits in future editions of this newsletter. Next: The PRCA-Montgomery board: an opportunity to serve

MEDIA TIPS & TRICKS

by Kathy Midgley, VP of Programs



From left to right: Denise Vickers, WSFA; Heather Connell, Cumulus Broadcasting; and David Rountree, The Montgomery Advertiser

Three of Montgomery's finest teamed up to remind us the most effective way to work with the media. Tips shared included:

- Know who the power person is, then develop and maintain a relationship with them.
- When you have a story, know what you want from them before you make the contact.
- Find your target audience and tailor your message to that audience. Don't use the shotgun approach to getting your message out.
- When you make the contact, get to the point.
- Use e-mail or fax. Phone calls are disruptive.
- Sell the idea. Offer exclusivity and explain why their audience will be interested in your news.
- Timing is everything. Contacting them the morning of an event, or even too far in advance, is not appropriate. One week advance notice is adequate for a press conference.
- Don't schedule an event on a date when you know other major events are taking place; i.e., Election Day or the day the Ten Commandments Monument is scheduled to be moved from the Rotunda of the Judicial Building.
- Don't take it personal if no one shows up for a press conference. Plans change and spur-of-the-moment events cause crew changes.
- Don't forget that news is free, but advertising costs money. There is a difference between the two and staff at the newspapers and stations that will ensure the two don't intertwine!

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 Your Article is Stolen

Joan Stewart - *The Publicity Hound**

Publicity Hound Jon Gestl of Chicago, Illinois writes with this dilemma:

"I've discovered that an article I wrote and distributed through various portals was at another website. However, neither my name nor contact information was listed. In fact, the website owner had substituted his own name as the author.

"I spend valuable time developing quality content to promote my services as a personal fitness trainer and build credibility. It is disconcerting that someone in the same field would be so bold, not to mention foolish, to steal another's work. Do you have any suggestions on how to handle this?"

The Publicity Hound says: I have some great suggestions, but none I'd dare mention here. So I asked Patricia Eyres, the intellectual property attorney who was my guest during a teleseminar last year on legal issues you must know when writing articles.

"Regrettably, this seems to be an increasing problem," she said. "The starting point is a professional letter that puts the infringing website operator on notice that the posted material should be immediately and permanently removed. There are two issues: (1) copyright violation and (2) plagiarism.

"First, if you have perfected a copyright in the articles, the starting point is a professionally crafted cease and desist letter. Copyright ownership exists from the moment the article is fixed in tangible form, and this includes digital copies. A further way to protect the

copyright would have been to register the article with the U.S. Copyright Office. Since copyright ownership provides the author with the exclusive right to control the use of the work, the letter should put the website owner on notice that the copyright holder has not provided permission for its use, and ask that it be removed immediately and permanently.

"The second issue, equally important, is that the infringer is passing off the article as his or her own. This is, of course, unethical but it is also plagiarism. Even without copyright protection, you could and should write to the infringer and point out that the article is taken verbatim from one published in (and then list the portals and the dates.) Ask that the infringer immediately cease from using the material."

Read her full response, including exactly what to say in the letter at <http://www.PublicityHound.com/stolenarticle.htm>

If you're writing articles for print or online publications, make sure you understand all the legal ramifications. "Legal Issues You Must Know When Writing Articles" explains the land mines you must avoid, what you need to know about reprinting your own articles that appear in other publications, and instances when the law is on your side and when it isn't.

Read more about what this recording included at <http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/marketing-tapes/legalissues.html>.

President's Message *Continued from Page One*

a symbol of another thing. Take your World War II. There was many heroes in World War II. What were your heroes? Who were your heroes? Let me clarify this. Thank you for having me."

As PR practitioners, eventually we will need to speak in public to get certain tasks done. And if we want to be leaders or achieve something meaningful in our lives, we'll often need to speak to groups, large and small, to be successful.

In a paper on relieving common causes of stress, Morton C. Orman, M.D., offers the following "Hidden Causes of Public Speaking Stress" (you'll find the full text at www.stresscure.com/jobstress/speak.html):

- Thinking that public speaking is inherently stressful (it's not).
- Thinking you need to be brilliant or perfect to succeed (you don't).
- Trying to impart too much information or cover too many

points in a short presentation.

- Having the wrong purpose in mind (to get rather than to give/contribute).
- Trying to please everyone (this is unrealistic).
- Trying to emulate other speakers (very difficult) rather than simply being yourself (very easy).
- Failing to be personally revealing and humble.
- Being fearful of potential negative outcomes (they almost never occur and even when they do, you can use them to your advantage).

As Dr. Orman says, the best way to stay aware of, and avoid, these causes of fear is to practice. And the best way to practice speaking in public is to speak in public. Keep throwing yourself into the arena, and in no time at all, your skill, confidence, and natural ability will come to the surface.

**Reprinted from "The Publicity Hound's Tips of the Week," a free ezine featuring tips, tricks and tools for generating free publicity.*

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.