



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

IT'S A WRAP!

2004 State Conference Review by Doug Freeland

Congratulations to PRCA-Montgomery's very own student chapter at Auburn University Montgomery for being named PRCA Student Chapter of the Year during the 2004 State PRCA State Conference held Sept. 23-24 in Birmingham. But AUM wasn't the only student chapter that needs to be recognized. Our Troy University student chapter led the field of all entrants in the student Medallion Awards and received the Best of Show award.

Outgoing state PRCA president Michael J. Tullier, APR, director of external relations for Auburn University's College of Education, earned the Phillip R. Forrest, Jr. Practitioner of the Year award. Peter Pepinsky, state vice president for Projects & Ethics said before he presented the honor to Tullier, that he won because of his "lengthy and successful career" in PR. 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.

Kudos also to the Mobile chapter as they took home the Chapter of the Year Award. According to Pepinsky, the deciding factors earning Mobile the Sharon Heflin Chapter of the Year Award were membership and retention ratios.

Also, Mobile Chapter member Deveney Communications of New Orleans, LA, led the winners with five Medallion Awards and four Awards of Excellence for its national and New Orleans-based campaigns. Deveney also captured Best of Show.

O.K. so we didn't win the two big awards (always the bridesmaid...), but there are several chapter members that deserve their fifteen minutes of fame too.

Montgomery winners were led by Jerry de Bin, Kim G. Nix, Billy Pope, Gaylon Gwin, and Katrina Williams of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The group won a Medallion Award for Outdoor Alabama Magazine.

Also bringing home honors were Doug Freeland, AIDT, Award of Excellence for Billy Banana; Frank Mastin, Alabama State University, Award of Excellence for Classic Parade Provides Family Entertainment; and Marty Sullivan, Business Council of Alabama, Certificate of Merit for Report of the Business Council of Alabama Task Force on Governmental Change and Management Reform.

And Stacy Benefield, vice president for membership; Belinda Bazinet, vice president for students; and Kathy Johnson, Montgomery Chapter president, also received special recognition as they were installed as PRCA State Board of Directors members for 2004-2005.

The foundation for next year's state PRCA conference, to be hosted by the Huntsville Chapter September 15-16, 2005, is already "under construction".

Other Recognitions

Several PRCA members attended the SPRF Conference in Ft. Walton Beach in July and received a Lantern and other awards. Awards received were:

Lantern

In House Newsletters
Office of University Relations
Alabama State University
ASU Today

Award of Excellence

Special Event/Observance
Jim Wilson & Associates/The
Shoppes at EastChase
A Dickens Christmas

Award of Achievement

Special Purpose Publications
Jim Wilson & Associates/The
Shoppes at EastChase
Dickens Christmas Newspaper
Wrap





MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Kathy Johnson
Executive Director
Children First Foundation

State PRCA Conference, 1998, Birmingham, Alabama. I ambled through double doors of a tall downtown building, one of which I can not now recall the name or exact whereabouts. What I do recall of the evening is very vivid and of much more importance than the location. I entered the room as a stranger, to not only the many faces that surrounded me, but largely to the profession of public relations, itself. Although positive PR was an element of my daily tasks, I was unaware that what I was doing was categorized as PR. Furthermore, I was certainly uneducated that a Council existed where I could learn more and perform my tasks better. Two jobs, six years and seven state conferences later, I still fall far short of knowing everything there is to know about this profession. With your help, however, I have learned much.

I joined PRCA shortly after my first meeting in '99. I joined because I had a sincere desire to advance in my career. I joined because I wanted to cultivate relationships and gain knowledge. I joined because I saw PRCA as an avenue through which I could give back to our community. OK, so I also joined for the friendship and fun in the hospitality suites! I have gained all that, and so much more. It was not easy. It was not convenient. It was, frankly, sometimes out of my way and difficult to squeeze into my lengthy 'to-do' lists. It was, however, a priority to me.

After months of listening and learning, I felt the need to go from the 'spectator' position into 'participant' mode. I volunteered, or was coerced (I don't recall which), into serving as VP of Projects. What a job! I remember beginning that year with a challenge--a challenge for PRCA members and attendees to get involved, to make a difference--to help make Montgomery a better place to live and work. I challenged you to give of your time and talents to help non-profits in dire need of PR counsel. I chal-

lenged you to find within yourselves, a compassion for those less fortunate than most. You rose to the challenge. During that year, our chapter participated in 26 PR and/or community service projects. You brought awareness on everything from cancer to the Anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. You helped save lives through the Share the Road Campaign. You cooked for the homeless, you read to the illiterate, you visited prisons and picked up puppies. You made us all proud, and made our tri-county area a better place for our citizens. Again, for all that and more, I thank you.

I followed that year as your VP of Programs. It was quite a break from projects, but our speakers came through with rave reviews. I learned from them and hope you did, as well.

State PRCA Conference, 2004, Birmingham, Alabama. I stood before you and enthusiastically accepted the challenge to serve as your chapter President during the coming year. I may lose some of those friendships I've gained throughout the past several years, but I have a vision for our chapter and it will not come without work! So, I ask you, why did you join PRCA? How long ago did you join, and what has come of your membership? Are you wiser of the profession and wealthier in relationships? Have you taken advantage of the opportunities afforded through this chapter to give of yourself and your talents? I believe I share the sentiments of many when I say that those who have been in this chapter for numerous years have been worked to the bone. They have given and shared, have served and sacrificed. They are, for the most part, still willing to help, but we need to develop more leaders. If we all, new members and old (membership wise, of course) will share what we know and give what we can, this chapter will truly evolve into what our earliest members envisioned--a chapter that promotes the profession and gives back to the community. If you receive a request from any of our phenomenal board members to move for a moment from spectator to participant, please consider serving. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your confidence in me as your President. I, also, thank you for continuing your commitment to PRCA. See you on the 18th!

Kathy

SECOND DUES NOTICE E-MAILED

Membership dues notices were e-mailed on August 31 with an Oct. 31 deadline. To date, close to 50 percent of our members are current. Thank you to those members who have submitted their payment in a timely matter.

Second notices have been e-mailed. If you have not yet paid your dues, please do so by Nov. 5.

As a reminder, any corrections indicated on your renewal invoice will be made to the Montgomery database. However, the local chapter is unable to make these corrections to the statewide on-line database. You must log in to the members only

section of www.prcanonline.com and make the corrections to your personal information yourself. In addition, you may continue to update your information on-line throughout the year and the changes will automatically be forwarded to the local chapter.

Accessing the database does require a username and password, which all members should have received. If you have misplaced this information, please e-mail membership@prcanonline.com.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Stacy Benefield, vice president of membership, at 272-8781 or sbenefield@alaha.org.

STATE MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

While there are six local chapters of the Public Relations Council of Alabama, the Montgomery chapter makes up nearly one quarter of the membership. We are second to Mobile's nearly 30 percent. Following the top two are North Alabama (18.6%), Birmingham (13.5%), East Alabama (7.6%) and West Alabama (6%). All together we were 500 members strong at the time the state annual report was produced.



CHAPTER MEETING

THE FUTURE OF THE RIVER REGION October 18, 2004

Guest Speaker:
LYNN BESHEAR

Executive Director, Envision 2020

RSA Plaza Terrace | 11:45 a.m.

Members \$12

Non-members \$25*

RSVP: Kay Yarbrough

K.Yarbrough@jwamalls.com

RSVP Deadline:

Noon,

Thursday, October 14, 2004

*Non-members will receive the \$12

rate for their first two visits.

Meet Your 2004-2005 PRCA Board

We have already introduced you to the 2004-2005 president on page two so now it is time to meet the rest of the PRCA Board of directors.

from left to right

PEGGY COLLINS, VP, PROGRAMS, Public Information Specialist, Alabama Bureau of Travel and Tourism; **STACY BENEFIELD, VP, MEMBERSHIP**, Publications | PR Specialist, Alabama Hospital Association, **ROSEMARY BLACKMON, VP, EDUCATION AND ACCREDITATION**, VP Public Relations, Alabama Hospital Association; **EMILY WHEELER, VP OF PROJECTS**, Director of Communication, Alabama Association of Realtors; **SUSAN CLINE, COMMUNICATIONS**, Creative Director, Square Root Solutions, Inc.; **NANCY MITCHELL, STUDENT LIAISON**, Manager of Public Affairs, Business Council of Alabama; **CAROL GUNTER, TREASURER**, Director, Marketing and Public Relations, Montgomery City Parks and Recreation; **LINDA LEE, FUNDRAISING**, Director of Public Relations Montgomery Eye Physicians ; **KAY YARBROUGH, SECRETARY**, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Jim Wilson & Associates, Inc.; **MELANIE BEASLEY, PUBLICITY**, Public Information Officer, Montgomery County Commission; **MANDY HARRISON, HISTORIAN**, System Public Relations Coordinator, Baptist Health; **DOUG FREELAND, PAST PRESIDENT | ETHICS**, Media Services Manager, Alabama Industrial Development Training.

TROY UNIVERSITY SEEKS QUALIFIED CLIENT FOR PR PROGRAM

Each spring, the Troy University PR program offers its services to a client in the region. Interested in becoming their next client? Visit PRCA Montgomery's web site, www.prcamontgomery.org for more information or contact Donna Schubert before Nov. 1, 2004 by phone 334.670.3233 or by email, schubert@troyst.edu

MONTGOMERY REPRESENTED ON STATE PRCA BOARD

by Stacy Benefield

Two members of the Montgomery chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama were elected to serve on the state board for 2004-2005. Stacy Benefield will serve as vice president, membership, and Belinda Bazinet will serve as vice president, students. In addition, PRCA-Montgomery President Kathy Johnson, along with the other five local chapter presidents, is also invited to attend the board meetings to provide updates on our local chapter.

Other state board members include: Joy Carter of Birmingham, president; Karen Yarbrough of Huntsville, VP programs; Adam Kelley of Birmingham, VP accreditation and education; Melissa Bullard of Huntsville, VP projects and ethics; Melita Nissen of Mobile, VP communications; Pat Smith of Auburn, treasurer; Rebecca Booker of Tuscaloosa, secretary; Stephanie Kelley of Huntsville; Peter Pepinsky of Birmingham, member-at-large; and Deborah Geiger of Mobile, member-at-large.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

PRCA-Montgomery would like to welcome **Kristen McLendon** as its newest member. Kristen McLendon is the Marketing Coordinator for Auburn University Montgomery's University Outreach.

Kristen holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing and is currently pursuing her master's degree in business administration from Auburn University Montgomery.

Since joining University Outreach, Kristen has worked on projects such as implementing and updating Outreach's six websites, creating an e-mail newsletter to update clients and consultants on projects in which Outreach is participating, and numerous graphic design projects. Kristen also plans and promotes special events hosted by Outreach.

WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

by Rosemary Blackmon, APR

Are you interested in moving up the ladder, making the big bucks, having the respect of all your peers? Then, you might consider becoming an accredited public relations practitioner. All right ... maybe the millionaire bit is stretching it, but gaining the APR designation does provide a certain credibility. It shows you are a person deeply committed to your career and to continued learning. Plus, going through the study program is a great way to take a quick pulse on your current career. Most people who become accredited claim the process of reviewing and evaluating their career was invaluable.

So, what are you waiting for? There are several scholarships now available to reduce the application/testing fees, and you can take the exam on your own time in your own city. Or, if there are several of you who are interested, I'd be happy to put together a study group to keep you on track.

If you're interested in finding out more about the process or beginning it, contact me at rblackmon@alaha.org, or 272-8781.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Don't Ruin Your Special Event

provided by Joan Stewart*

In the more than two decades I worked as a newspaper editor, I saw one special event planner after another moan and complain that the media didn't give them enough publicity to draw huge crowds—resulting in special events that were colossal flops.

In many cases, it wasn't the media's fault. The event planners did it to themselves. Some of them failed to find out if another major event was taking place on the same weekend as theirs. Others didn't stockpile photos of the event the year before, so that they had something to offer the media for pre-event publicity the following year.

If you're in charge of a special event, make sure you're giving yourself a big enough lead time for the planning and publicity. Too often, event planners discover their event is two or three months away, and they haven't yet planned for national publicity, including placement in the "calendar" sections of national magazines that work six months ahead.

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