

September
2004

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

LWT TAKES PRCA BEST OF SHOW



Starr Winners (left to right): Courtney Johnson (Frazer Christian Television), Frank Mastin (ASU), Cindy Scott (LWT), Nancy Dennis (BCA)

LWT captured Best of Show in the Montgomery Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama's annual Starr Awards competition held Aug. 13. A Montgomery-based advertising and public relations firm, LWT topped a field of nearly 30 area public relations practitioners to garner the top award. The award was presented during PRCA-Montgomery's professional development workshop held at AIDT.

The Starr Awards program, recognizing above-average achievement by PRCA members in public relations and communications, is named after founding member and

Montgomery-based travel writer Starr Smith.

James Hamner, Jim Leonard and Lanie Ashner with LWT received the Best of Show award for their project, "TIA Builds a Home with Aronov Homes."

Other Starr Award winners included: Courtney Johnson, for the WFRZ (Frazer Christian) television production "Profiles"; Marty Sullivan, Nancy Dennis and Nancy "Scottie" Mitchell, Business Council of Alabama, for the publication, "BCA Task Force Report"; Alabama State University's Office of University Relations for its newsletter, "ASU Today"; and Jerry de Bin, Kim Nix and Billy Pope with the state Department of Conservation for the magazine, "Outdoor Alabama."

other winners

Others receiving Certificates of Excellence were:

- Kathy Johnson, Children First Foundation
- Laura Hicks and Shawn Tritz, LWT/KBK New Media
- Peggy Collins and Ami Simpson, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel
- Melanie Beasley, Montgomery County Commission
- Doug Freeland, AIDT
- Lenore Vickery and Jason Otis, Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church
- Mary Nell Shaw, Alabama Department of Education
- Ryanne Mitchell, Walter Davis, Frank Mastin, Jr. and Mona Taylor of Alabama State University
- Courtney Johnson of WFRZ
- Marty Sullivan, Nancy Dennis and Nancy Mitchell, Business Council of Alabama
- Susan Cline, Square Root Solutions



President's Message

It's time now for the obligatory "adios" column, so here we go:

A heartfelt thanks to all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president this year. At the risk of sounding cliché, the 2003-2004 Board of Directors made my job an easy one, and it has indeed been an honor working with them for the benefit of PRCA-Montgomery!

We had one heck of a year, and learned plenty in the process, especially regarding how to fit our many activities within the constraints of a new fiscal year. We'll undoubtedly do better next year, as some of our finest achievements failed to meet the deadline for our entry into the Chapter of the Year competition. Live and learn, huh?

Among those accomplishments are the professional development workshop and Starr Awards program put together by fundraising chairperson

Melanie Beasley and her committee. Alan Ulman's incredible hands-on approach not only gave us practical experience using a wide array of strategic planning tools, but netted the chapter four worthy community service projects to carry us into the new year. And those of you who left early missed an excellent panel discussion on getting the biggest bang for your PR budget bucks!

This successful workshop was

President's Message *Continued from Page One*

the icing on a year's worth of programming cake. Thanks to VP-Programs Kathy Johnson, we attracted top-notch speakers throughout the year. And excellent programs lead to membership growth, retention and attendance! Under the able stewardship of VP-Membership Stacy Benefield, we now have 127 members. Our year-end total represents an 80.2% retention rate and 31 new members for an overall growth of 5.8%. Wow!

In addition to their substantial efforts in fulfilling their obligations to the board, both VP-Education Linda Lee and Historian Belinda Bazinet gave large portions of their time and talents to assisting our Share The Road project. VP-Projects Lenore Vickery worked hard to drum up support for both this and other PRCA community support efforts. And with Scottie Mitchell serving as our student liaison, both our AUM and Troy University student chapters have raised the bar, and have done themselves, us and all of PRCA proud.

You were all kept completely informed about everything going on in PRCA thanks to VP-Communications Susan Cline! Her prowess in web-based and electronic communications is second to none, and if you were unaware of events and occurrences with the PRCA community, it sure wasn't because you weren't told (and told well)!

Thanks to Secretary Peggy Collins and Treasurer Carol Gunter for continuing to provide our chapter the anchor it has come to rely so heavily upon to keep us from drifting away in a sea of administrative and financial details! And each has never failed to pitch in wherever and whenever they were needed.

Sad to say, Publicity Chairman Michael Boatfield left us during the year. He was a great addition to the board, and we hope to someday see his return.

And while Immediate Past President Nancy Dennis had no ethics issues to deal with during the year, she still lent her experience, expertise and efforts to the chapter at every opportunity. Thanks, Nancy, for all you've done!

The incoming and outgoing Boards of Directors will meet jointly on Sept. 15 for some torch passing fun! All of these folks have more than earned our gratitude and respect, and I offer each of them a resounding, "Yeehaw and yahoo!"

NOTE: A full accounting of our 2003-2004 accomplishments is available in our annual report, posted at our web site. Please take the time to read it. You'll understand, then, why the Montgomery Chapter is the largest and strongest in the state!

Adios, y'all!

Doug Freeland

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming the chapter's newest members.

- **Emily Wheeler**, director, communications & member services, Alabama Association of REALTORS
- **Joy Randolph**
- **Ann Starks**, executive assistant III, Alabama Department of Education

CHAPTER MEETING

2004 PRCA STATE CONFERENCE

In lieu of the September Chapter Meeting

September 23 - 24, 2004
Hosted by PRCA - Birmingham

for more information go to:
www.prcaonline.com

Years ago in the South, when passenger trains transported most travelers, folks in Alabama would take a trip simply to enjoy the pleasures of life in the big city. That city was Birmingham. At railway platforms all across the state you could hear one friend calling to another, "Hey, neighbor, where ya goin'?" And the reply would come: "Going to sweet Birmingham." What joyful anticipation of a trip that promised wonder and adventure. And still does. Going to sweet Birmingham . . .



Left: Workshop featured speaker, Alan Ulman (Ketchum)
Right: Practitioners learning the Ketchum process



Left: Bill Cunningham leads the Alzheimer's project
Right: Stacy Benefield records her group's strategic thinking



Left: Linda Lee shares strategic plan for her group
Right: Panelists share thoughts on fundraising with attendees

Annual Workshop Pays Off for Local Non-profits

Workshop Wrap-up By Melanie Beasley, Fundraising

Continuing education is always the primary purpose of the PRCA Montgomery annual workshop, then comes fundraising. This year, priorities changed a bit when Alan Ulman, one of the nation's leading PR planning consultants, volunteered to train PRCA Montgomery members in the art (and science) of strategic communications planning. His generosity not only benefited PRCA members, but also four non-profit agencies in the Montgomery area.

Ulman, who presented an impressive array of planning tools developed by the world-famous Ketchum agency, worked with four groups to begin developing strategic communications plans for their agencies: the Alzheimer's Organization of the Greater Montgomery Area; Alabama Partnership for Children; Montgomery Education Foundation; and Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The workgroup process resulted in several planning maps and grids, which the non-profit groups can use to advance their communications objectives.

According to PRCA Fundraising Chair Melanie Beasley, "In the near future, group leaders would like to spend time with the non-profit agency administrators to go over the results of our planning efforts. Hopefully, we can find a way to add some creative elements to the core messages and communications strategies we developed during our workshop.

Beasley also added, "The afternoon presenters were also great. Eve Loeb with Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Darold Dunlavy with the Mental Health Association in Montgomery, Karen Sellers with the Family Sunshine Center and Marla Terranova with Montgomery Biscuits Baseball brought an interesting blend of private and public sector perspectives to the increasingly challenging task of fund-raising."

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Dues Notices E-mailed

Notices for renewal of annual dues were e-mailed to PRCA-Montgomery members on Aug. 31. Please note any changes to your information on the invoice and remit the invoice along with your payment to Stacy Benefield no later than Oct. 1.

Please note PRCA dues are not prorated. You are required to pay the full dues amount if you joined anytime during the year before May 1. New members who joined May 1 or later have been grandfathered into the new membership year and are not required to pay dues. However, grandfathered members will still receive a letter asking them to verify their information.

Annual renewal is \$85 for active members and \$105 for associate members.

In addition, if you changed jobs during the year and have not done so already, you must submit a Membership Update/Transfer Form, available under the "membership" section at www.prcamontgomery.org.

If you did not receive your dues notice or would prefer to receive it by fax or mail, please contact Stacy Benefield at 272-8781 or sbenefield@alaha.org.

Members on the Move

Belinda Bazinet has assumed the position of public affairs analyst/instructor at CADRE, Public Affairs Center of Excellence on Maxwell Air Force Base.

Marie Neese has left her position at the Montgomery Humane Society. She will continue participating in PRCA-Montgomery as an associate member. We wish Marie luck as she pursues other opportunities.

Lori Quiller has been named Director of Marketing and Events for the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA), a statewide organization representing Alabama's 67 county governments. A graduate of the University of Alabama, Quiller will coordinate activities of the ACCA's affiliate groups that provide professional training and assistance to county administrative, engineering, emergency and revenue personnel statewide. She will also direct statewide conferences, events and training programs for county officials and employees, as well as developing local public relations programs for county officials.

PRCA Takes Action

PRCA Volunteers Promote Governor's Black Belt Action Commission

by Melanie Beasley

Soon after Gov. Bob Riley appointed more than 100 Alabamians to serve on a Black Belt Action Commission, Montgomery area public relations professionals began volunteering their time to help publicize the commission's work. "We were flattered to be asked to get the word out about the governor's initiative to lift up families in the Black Belt. Our understanding is that this commission is more about action than study. We hope we can help the commission recruit volunteers and provide information to the people who need it, both in Black Belt counties and throughout the state. Like everyone else, we want to see the Black Belt region compete socially, economically and culturally with the more prosperous counties in Alabama," said Kathy Johnson, 2005 president of the Public Relations Council of Alabama (PRCA) Montgomery Chapter.

Johnson, who is the full-time executive director of Children First Foundation, will be joined by several other PRCA-Montgomery members to draft press releases, enlist the support of the news media, and, in general, share information with the public regarding the accomplishments of the commission. Other PRCA members participating are: PRCA Publicity Chairperson Melanie Beasley, who is full-time public information officer for the Montgomery County Commission; Kay Yarbrough, director of Marketing and Public Relations for Jim Wilson & Associates, Inc. and newly installed PRCA secretary; Peggy Collins, PRCA vice president for programs and regional director for Public Relations, Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel; and Julie Chancellor, Copperwing Design.

Annual Workshop *continued from page 3*

Special thanks go to all the individuals, local merchants, and agencies whose generosity helped ensure the success of the conference—the conference planning committee (Cindy Scott, Laura Hicks, Sherry Ward, Amanda Smith, Anna Tadlock, and Carol Gunter), AIDT, Eastdale Mall, the McKee Group, Chappy's Deli, Royal Cup Coffee, the Bureau of Tourism and Travel, Brown Printing Company, Capital City Printers, LWT/KBK New Media, the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the Montgomery Area Visitors' Bureau and others. Special thanks go to Linda Lee for securing the services of Mr. Ulman and attending to the workgroup details that allowed that process to flow so smoothly.

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

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Use Tips in Ads

provided by Joan Stewart*

Publicity Hounds hate spending money on ads when they can generate thousands of dollars in free print space and air time for next to nothing.

That said, there might be times when you MUST buy an ad to promote a product. I seldom read ads. But an ad for Huggies Pull-Ups Training Pants, in a recent issue of Nick Jr. Family magazine, caught my eye.

The vertical ad took up a third of the page and looked like the standard tips list you might see in the editorial section of the magazine. It was titled "Tips for Praising Potty Training Success."

The list included five ways parents can potty-train their toddlers. It gave the number of the Potty Training Totline where junior can enjoy a special potty training song coaching him through the process. Another tip suggested parents reward a child for an accident-free day with a special backyard sprinkler party. My favorite tip suggested a great motivational incentive—Pull-Ups Training Pants' new Glow-in-the-Dark designs.

"After using the potty, turn off the lights, applaud and praise your child for being a Big Kid® with Big Kid® Glow-in-the-Dark underwear," the ad suggested.

I was fascinated by the entire ad, even though I'm not potty-training anybody. Huggies took a standard tip sheet and simply used what could have been editorial copy in the ad. The only thing that looked different was their product logo at the top.

Next time you have to buy an ad, consider a tips list. It might do a better job of keeping readers engrossed in your ad than the standard advertising copy, and you'll be able to insert things such as product names that might be edited out of editorial copy.