



What an INCREDIBLE year!

This time of year, one of the things I really hate to do is to reflect on the past...mostly because I tend to look back at all the things I **didn't** cross off my list of New Year's Resolutions.



Lori Quiller

You know, that pesky list of things that you say you're going to do, but rarely find the time or energy to accomplish: get in shape, lose weight, spend less time at work and more time with family and friends, read more of the "classics" and watch less television...

But, the Montgomery Chapter Board of Directors, with volunteers from the Annual Conference Committee, are knee-deep in putting together our 2008 Chapter of the Year presentations, so reflection right now is a very good thing!

If you want to know the accomplishments of our chapter, then keep reading. I've enclosed a copy of our year-end report with this final issue of the 2008 newsletter. And, as soon as we get all the invoices from our vendors from the conference, the conference committee will issue a final report as well.

It's been a very long year of service for your board, actually 14 months since the state board extended our terms to change our operating year, but it's been an incredibly productive one as well...and such a wonderful journey for this kid who discovered how and when to take a stand, speak up, what true friendship really means, and what kind of person and professional she wants to aspire to be.

The first time I took that podium and called my first luncheon to order, I was terrified! I've never been much of a public speaker, and I've never pretended to be one. When I took on this position, I realized it would be a very trying year, and I would be facing some of the best in the biz at every meeting, and quite probably

squeaking like Minnie Mouse by the end of the meeting. I think my record was 10 minutes before Minnie appeared.

Truth be told, as nervous as I was at every lunch meeting, I knew that I had the best group of folks standing behind me, and I also knew they would never let me fail. This board of directors has meant so much to me, and to you, this year. Everyone has worked so hard pushing our chapter forward that I feel very good about "retiring" as president!

The board set out many goals last October when we had our first meeting, and we've exceeded every one during our tenure. Of course, my running joke with Lori Moneyham has been that I was going to "retire" immediately following the conference and turn everything over to her early. Believe me...she's more than ready to take over!

These guys know how much I love them, and I'm not about to waste another opportunity to publicly honor them one more time for their hard work and persistent dedication to this chapter: **Lori Moneyham**, president-elect; **Diane Christy**, secretary; **Mary Kelley**, treasurer; **Niko Corley**, VP programs; **Belinda Bazinet**, VP membership; **Carol Gunter**, VP education and professional development; **Danielle Cole**, VP projects; **Linda Lee**, APR, Accreditation chair; **Neil Probst**, communications; **Lara Lewis**, publicity; **Nia Johnson**, student liaison; **Stacy Benefield**, immediate past president and ethics chair; and **Heather Holcomb**, historian. And, our Annual Conference wouldn't have taken place without the hard work of **Diane Christy**, **Peggy Collins**, **Bill Cunningham**, **Nia Johnson**, **Mary Kelley**, **Lara Lewis**, **Scottie Mitchell**, **Lori Moneyham**, **Jim Plott** and **Kay Yarbrough**, APR.

We got the ball rolling this year, the momentum is high, the energy is sparking...I can't wait to see what happens next!

CHAPTER MEETING

Public Relations and Governmental Affairs

Yes, the two ARE related!

Monday, Jan. 12
RSA Plaza Terrace
11:45 a.m.

GUEST SPEAKER

Amanda Buttenshaw,
CAE

Executive Director

Alabama Optometric
Association

Members: \$12
Non-members: \$20

RSVP to Carolyn Kinney
ckinney@aum.edu

RSVP Deadline:
Noon Friday, Jan. 9

SPECIAL NOTE

Members who make reservations for chapter luncheons but fail to cancel by noon the Friday prior to the meeting ARE responsible for payment. **We will invoice you!**



The importance of being a MEMBER...

This year, the members of the Montgomery Board of Directors marveled at the increasing numbers at each chapter luncheon. Each month, we watched as more and more active members brought guests and introduced them as prospective members.

We are only as strong as our membership base, and it remains up to us to continue to seek out prospective members who might benefit from membership in our chapter. And, we benefit just as much from our new members' expertise as they do from ours!

Membership means having a network of professionals to bounce ideas around with, talk to, glean information from, and of course, socialize with.

If you know someone – a colleague or a friend – who might benefit from being a member of PRCA, extend an invitation to a chapter meeting. Explain who we are and what we do. Most importantly, explain what **WE** can do for **YOUR** colleague as much as what your colleague can do for us.

Although the membership renewal process for this year is over, membership information can be found online at www.prcamontgomery.org, or you may contact **Belinda Bazinet**, vice president of membership at Bazinetb@MAXWELL.AF.MIL. Membership definitely has its privileges...and it's never too late to join!

Member Profile...



Lori Moneyham will begin her presidency of the Montgomery Chapter on Jan. 1, 2009, but has served on the board of directors for several years. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in mass communication from Auburn Montgomery in 1989. She is a public information specialist for the Alabama Real Estate Commission and is responsible for the Commission's publications, including the *Alabama Real Estate Commission Update* magazine, internal communications, Commissioner relations and meeting/event planning.

Do you have any tips to being a top PR practitioner?

Lori: Never stop learning. With the emergence of social media and the use of the Web as a means of disseminating information, it is important for PR practitioners to stay up-to-date on all the avenues we have available to reach our many publics.

What are the top three skills needed in PR?

Lori: 1) Great writing skills; 2) Flexibility; 3) Ability to multitask.

From where did your interest in PR originate?

Lori: I went to college to become a news reporter. The Mass Communication program at AUM offered courses in journalism, PR, marketing, and advertising. As I began to take more PR classes, I just fell in love with PR, and I am still excited and thankful to be in this profession.

Why did you join PRCA?

Lori: I have been involved with PRCA since joining the student chapter at AUM. I really benefit from networking and professional development.

What experience most shaped your career?

Lori: I think my career has been shaped by a series of different experiences over the years. I do recall, however, the first time one of my news releases was printed in *The Montgomery Advertiser*. As a new practitioner, it was very exciting to see something I wrote actually printed in the newspaper.

What would you like to be doing in five years?

Lori: That changes all the time. I am still trying to figure out what I want to be when I grow up!

What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?

Lori: Maintain your integrity. Treat others as you would want to be treated.

What is your greatest achievement?

Lori: I have two: becoming a Senior Practitioner and being elected president of the PRCA Montgomery Chapter.

Past President and Long-Time Member Retires

Long-time member and Montgomery Chapter Past President **Hank Schmitt** retired from the River Region United Way in November.

At a reception held in his honor, organizations from across the tri-county area came out to pay tribute to Hank for his tireless efforts to better his community. Dignitaries, both political and corporate, were on hand to show their support (and even tell a few “Hank” stories) during the reception.

Visitors signed a giant poster, adorned with a caricature of the lovable Hankster, which also served as a reminder of the more than \$101 million he raised during his tenure at the River Region United Way.

PRCA-Montgomery was honored to take part in the reception. The board of directors, on behalf of the members, honored Hank with the Montgomery Chapter’s first Lifetime Achievement Award.

But, we couldn’t let the occasion go without a little humor in PRCA fashion with our own version of an unofficial “Proclamation.”

Although Hank’s retirement reception was the Monday of Thanksgiving week, he didn’t exactly show any signs of slowing down. In fact, he was taking the names of any volunteers who would be willing to help cook Thanksgiving dinner beginning the next day. As a reward, he offered to let the volunteers in on the recipe for his famous turkey gravy, although he always makes it in bulk for the shelter.

Hank, you may be retired, but you are always welcome at PRCA! We love you, and we hope to see you again soon!



Proclamation

WHEREAS Hank Schmitt joined the Montgomery Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama too many years ago to mention, for it might reveal his age; and

WHEREAS Hank Schmitt, having recognized what a crazy bunch of public relations professionals that we are, decided to run for president of the chapter to whip the membership into shape, never once decreeing, “Oh dear, what have I done?!”; and

WHEREAS Hank Schmitt, having survived his presidency decided to continue his membership in the Montgomery Chapter, lending his knowledge, wisdom, wit, and the occasional “Um-hmmm...” and “That’s right!” to our monthly chapter meetings; and

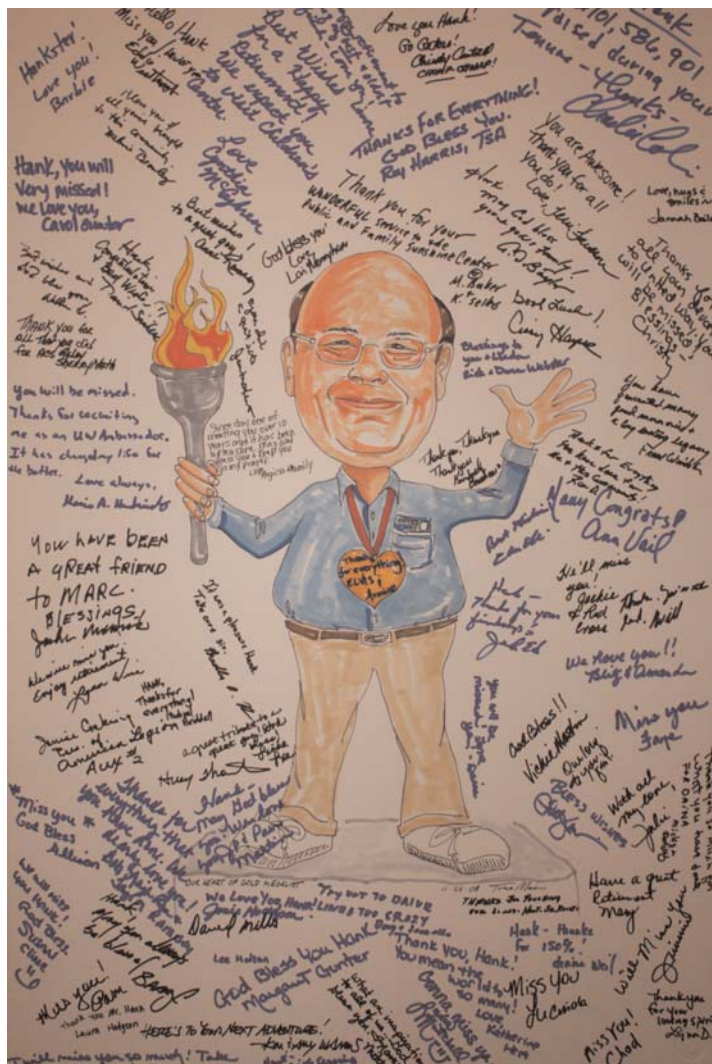
WHEREAS Hank Schmitt continued to endure the trials and tribulations that public relations professionals must all survive in order to remain in this prestigious field, such as learning Web and design software, just what exactly a “blog” really is, how to make the perfect cup of coffee, and how to greet the media with a warm and hearty, “Hello!” instead of “NO COMMENT!” even on the worst of days; and

WHEREAS Hank Schmitt may be retiring from his long-tenured service to the community of which he loves so much, his advocacy for those less fortunate, his volunteerism, and his sacrifices throughout the years will stand as a testimony to his character as a man who continues to give much in this world; and

WHEREAS Hank Schmitt will always be remembered by his PRCA family for his heart, which he shared with each member who was privileged to have worked with him on the Board of Directors, committees, or simply had the opportunity to share a meal with him during an event; and

THEREFORE I, Lori M. Quiller, president of the Montgomery Chapter of the Public Relations Council of Alabama, on behalf of the 2007-2008 Board of Directors and members of the Montgomery Chapter, hereby recognize Hank Schmitt for all that he has given to us through the years as we recognize his lifetime of achievement and dedication to PRCA and all its members...and of course, he is expected to continue to attend all PRCA-sanctioned social functions and events because that’s what PR folks do.

Signed Lori M. Quiller Date Nov. 24, 2008



Montgomery Gives HUGSS for Christmas

Christmas for the Montgomery Chapter has always meant a time for giving back to our community.

This year, we had so much success with our service projects, the board of directors decided to go one step further and challenge our members during the months of November and December to make a difference in our community.

The board's challenge to our members was two-fold: not only a challenge to the membership, but also for our membership to challenge their friends and colleagues to give as well. The outpouring of generosity was astounding!

The third food drive this year, as part of our November luncheon when the challenge was first issued, garnered more than 200 items for The Montgomery Area Food Bank.



Melanie Beasley and Leisa Johnson unpack HUGSS for the Family Sunshine Center.



Members collected nearly 200 HUGSS and dropped them off at The Lattice Inn during the Christmas Party.

A good estimate of all three drives combined would be around 500 items donated to the food bank this year by our members.

The challenge continued in December with our Christmas Party, hosted by **Jim Yeaman** at The Lattice Inn. A clothing drive nicknamed HUGSS (hats, underwear, gloves, socks and scarves) netted nearly 200 items that were donated to the Family Sunshine Center. Again, members who were challenged also challenged their friends and colleagues to participate in the drive.

An artist with The Montgomery Museum of Fine Art learned of

our clothing drive and donated three boxes of coats and hats to include with our donation to the center.

And, many thanks to Jim for hosting our Christmas Party!



Bob and Niko Corley poke a little fun at each other during the Christmas Party at The Lattice Inn.

2007-08 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lori M. Quiller	President
Lori Moneyham	President Elect
Mary Kelley	Treasurer
Diane Christy	Secretary
Linda Lee, APR	Vice President Accreditation
Niko Corley	Vice President Programs
Belinda Bazinet	Vice President Membership
Danielle Cole	Vice President Projects
Carol Gunter	Vice President Education and Professional Development
Neil Probst	Communications
Lara Lewis	Publicity
Nia Johnson	Student Liaison
Heather Holcomb	Historian
Stacy Benefield	Past President Ethics Chair



2008 State Conference Committee

Lori M. Quiller	Chair
Jim Plott	Medallion Awards
Mary Kelley	Finance
Peggy Collins	Registration
Nia Johnson	Student Programs
Lara Lewis	Publicity
Diane Christy	Specialty Items
Bill Cunningham	Speakers
Nancy Mitchell	Speakers
Lori Moneyham	Speakers
Kay Yarbrough, APR	Speakers



PRCA-Montgomery's 2008 Annual Report

MEMBERSHIP

- PRCA-Montgomery ended the year with 111 members with a net gain of 13 new members from 2007.

MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Kay Yarbrough** received Accreditation in Public Relations. Kay was the only member in Alabama to receive Accreditation in 2008.
- **Bill Cunningham** received PRCA's 2008 Philip R. Forest Professional Achievement Award.
- **Peggy Collins** received SPRF's Senior Practitioner designation.
- **Hank Schmitt** received PRCA Montgomery's first Lifetime Achievement Award upon his retirement from River Region United Way for outstanding service and commitment to our chapter.
- One member received a **Lantern Award** during the 2008 SPRF Lantern Awards Program.
- Eleven members received **Awards of Excellence** during the 2008 SPRF Lantern Awards Program.
- One member received an **Award of Merit** during the 2008 SPRF Lantern Awards Program.



Kay Yarbrough gets "pinned" by Linda Lee, APR, during the 2008 PRCA Annual Conference



Lori Quiller presenting the Montgomery Chapter's Lifetime Achievement Award to Hank Schmitt during his retirement ceremony.

- One member received one of two **Judges' Awards** during the 2008 PRCA Medallion Awards Program.



Bill Cunningham and Lori Quiller

- Fourteen members received **Medallion Awards** during the 2008 PRCA Medallion Awards Program.
- Seventeen members received **Awards of Excellence** during the 2008 PRCA Medallion Awards Program.
- Eleven members received **Awards of Excellence** during the 2008 PRCA Medallion Awards Program.

MEMBERSHIP

- The chapter held its annual kick-off social in September 2007...food, fun, fellowship and the initiation of the new board of directors.

- We hosted 10 monthly chapter luncheons averaging more than 35 members each month. Attendance at the monthly meetings increased



The media panel during one of the chapter luncheons.

- from 2007 attendance by roughly 10 percent. Speakers included Tim Lennox, host of Alabama Public Television's "For the Record;" Buddy Sharpless, executive director of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama; Dana Beyerle, Montgomery Bureau Chief of The New York Times; a media panel with WSFA-12 anchor Bob Howell, Associated Press reporter Shedd Johnson and Wanda Lloyd of *The Montgomery Advertiser*; and many more notable public figures.
- PRCA After Hours, a quarterly after-hours networking and social program, began in December 2007 and traveled to several locations in the city in 2008. The program was successful and will probably continue in 2009.

PHILANTHROPY

- In November 2007, our Auburn University Montgomery student chapter hosted a fundraising event for Aid to Inmate Mothers, Inc. Students collected toys, money and sold tickets to benefit the organization, which encourages building relationship between inmate mothers and their children by providing rehabilitative services to help the mothers overcome addictions, cope with emotional trauma and develop life skills.
- In December 2007, the chapter donated \$250 each to The Salvation Army and Brantwood Children's Home as part of the chapter's annual holiday community service projects.
- Following the EF-3 tornado that ripped through Prattville in February 2008, nearly \$400 was collected during the announcements at the March luncheon to be donated to The Salvation Army for ongoing efforts for the Prattville residents.

- In March 2008, the Montgomery chapter collected unused digital cameras for Kiva.org, an organization that gives small business loans, less than \$1,200, to poor entrepreneurs overseas to help start or expand their businesses and raise their families out of poverty-level conditions.



The microfinance institutions need cameras so that loan officers can take pictures of clients to post on the Kiva webpage to raise the loan funds. The organizations have a network of small, rural branches rather than a large, central office so that clients do not need to travel very far to visit an office.

- Three food drives collected more than 500 canned goods and staples for The Montgomery Area Food Bank.



- As part of our annual Christmas event, donations of hats, underwear, gloves, scarves and socks were collected for area homeless shelters. The board of directors challenged the membership to include their fellow work colleagues to donate as well. Donations reached nearly 200 pieces. An artist with The Montgomery Museum of Fine Art heard of the challenge and donated several coats for our cause to help those in need during the holidays.



HUGSS donations

EDUCATION

- The chapter's annual educational workshop was the most successful one-day professional development event in Montgomery in several years. Speakers included Bill Leake, founder of Apogee Search; Tom Barnes, senior vice president of Fleishman-Hilliard; and Marty Sullivan and Quentin Riggins of the Business Council of Alabama.



- PRCA-Montgomery hosted the 2008 PRCA State Conference at the Renaissance Montgomery Hotel and Spa at the Convention Center. The Montgomery Conference Committee worked for more than a year to bring nationally known speakers such as Dr. David Bronner, Dr. Joe Trahan, Dr. Sarah King, Tim Lennox, and many others to the conference that was held Oct. 2-3. The conference kicked off with an immersion course, an APR Boot Camp, for the first time as a pre-conference activity the day before the conference began. *A state conference wrap-up will soon be available.*



APR Boot Camp