



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Have you read your local newspaper lately? How about watched an evening newscast? Or, better yet, do you get your news from the Internet? I think it's



Lori Quiller

interesting to note how our sister industry has grown just in the last few years...but is it for the best?

I recently attended one of the orientation training programs that my employer, the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, uses for our members. Part of this training includes several hours on how to deal with the local media, and this class is taught by our Assistant Executive Director and two-time Former PRCA-Montgomery Chapter President Sonny Brasfield.

On this particular day, Sonny was talking to a room filled with county administrators and county engineers from across Alabama. Some had been in office for just a few weeks while others had been working for their respective counties for many, many years. Still the mysteries of their local media outlets and how the county commissions are covered posed issues.

Sonny went to the board at the front of the room and drew three boxes in a vertical line. The top one he labeled "National." The middle box was labeled "Daily," and the bottom box was labeled "Weekly." Such a simple drawing, and it certainly didn't look like much...at first. But, as Sonny

continued to explain about how the media as a whole works, from the top down, everything began to make sense. For a lack of a better word...thievery!

While I certainly do not purport to be as eloquent as Sonny, and for the sake of space here, I'll have to give you a much abbreviated version of the class.

He explained how there was a time when the national news was just that...the national news. As time went on, daily newspapers needed copy and took what they needed from the national news. That left the poor weekly papers to fend for themselves...to use what they could to fill their columns, and most importantly, to use what they knew they could KEEP. Daily papers do the same thing.

Want some proof? Since when did a list of birthdays of citizens in YOUR community become newsworthy?

Sonny's right. But, it's not for a lack of what the PR professionals are trying to do. There is good news out there to report. We surely try our best to do just that. Question is, are we telling the right story the right way? Maybe the bigger question should be, is anyone listening?

Given our training and abilities, shouldn't we be able to make the gatekeepers take notice? Certainly we have better stories out there that can take the place of a list of birthdays. We may even have some stories that are worth stealing...

CHAPTER MEETING

The PR of Preparing for Weather Emergencies

Monday, Feb. 4
RSA Plaza Terrace
11:45 a.m.

Guest Speaker:
Rich Thomas
Chief Meteorologist
for
WSFA-12

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

Please RSVP to:
Diane Christy at
dchristy@ascpa.org

RSVP Deadline:
Noon Friday, Feb. 1



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!

Jobline...

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

The Alabama Academy of Family Physicians is seeking an individual for the position of Executive Vice President. This is a hands-on position responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Academy, including supervising a two-person support staff. The successful candidate will have a minimum of a Bachelors Degree from an accredited college or university, and be able to operate without day-to-day oversight by the Academy's elected leaders. Desirable applicants have experience in the following areas:

- ☆ Association management, preferably at the executive or department director level;
- ☆ Communication skills, both oral and written, including experience in publication work;
- ☆ Familiarity with governmental relations processes;
- ☆ Meeting planning;
- ☆ Familiarity with medical issues, and players, in Alabama medicine;
- ☆ Budget management.

Starting salary range is \$60,000 to \$70,000, depending on experience and background. Additional benefits include BlueCross/BlueShield health insurance, including a dental plan; car allowance; life insurance; and, a retirement plan. Some overnight travel is required, both in state and nationally. It is preferred, but not required, that the successful applicant has earned the Certified Association Executive (CAE) and/or Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designations.

Send resumes to: Mr. Holley Midgley, APR, CAE, Executive Vice President, Alabama Academy of Family Physicians, 19 S. Jackson Street, Montgomery, AL 36104, or email to alafamdoc@charter.net. Resumes should be received by close of business on **Feb. 8, 2008**.

WEB ADMINISTRATOR

The Alabama State Bar has an opening for a Web Administrator. This position includes: creating and designing graphics for new and existing pages; maintaining currency and ensuring accuracy of information posted; editing submissions; monitoring site for errors and making repairs; managing content supplied by various department staff; and podcasting. This position also requires a working knowledge of and experience with graphic design and printing processes. Bachelor's Degree preferred. The successful candidate will have 2-3 years of experience, possess excellent interpersonal skills, be highly organized, able to manage multiple tasks, and be detail-oriented. A working understanding of client-side technologies such as HTML, Dreamweaver, JavaScript, Flash, Photoshop, InDesign, and CSS are required; familiarity with Cold Fusion is a plus. Salary commensurate with experience. Send cover letter indicating reasons for interest, resume, and three examples (two of which must be print examples of design work and one of which must illustrate Web design) by **Feb. 11, 2008** to: Director of Communications, Alabama State Bar, 415 Dexter Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104. Equal Opportunity Employer.

Member Profile...



Tara Lanier is the media and public relations coordinator of the Alabama Historical Commission and the State Historical Preservation Office. She serves as the primary media contact for the agency and as a liaison with the Alabama State Legislature, as well as oversees all print publications; writes and designs the bimonthly newsletter, *The Preservation Report*, and materials for the Alabama Preservation Conference; manages news conferences, media events and the annual preservation awards; and serves as content manager for the agency's website.

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

Tara: Just that it's so important when dealing with the news media that their calls are directed appropriately and their requests are filled quickly. Your reputation with the media is everything and building trust is essential.

What are the top three skills needed in PR?

Tara: Ability to listen, think on your feet, and follow up.

From where did your interest in PR originate?

Tara: My interest in writing and design began in high school as yearbook editor. The Alabama Reunion put on some amazing public events – that was a great opportunity to learn events management and for me to realize how much I enjoy being part of a creative team.

Why did you join PRCA?

Tara: Networking opportunities and I especially like the speaker portion of our chapter luncheons. I always come away with something useful.

What experience most shaped your career?

Tara: My first "real" job was with The Alabama Reunion, a two-year marketing and awareness campaign that increased tourism and economic development in Alabama while enhancing the state's image worldwide. During those two years, I traveled the state as a regional coordinator and had the opportunity to learn from the best, namely, Bill Cunningham and the Cunningham Group, who was The Reunion's lead ad/PR agency.

What would you like to be doing in five years?

Tara: In five years, I will actually be able to retire! But, since that is not likely, honing my fundraising skills would be nice.

What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?

Tara: Nothing can take the place of personal contact whether it's with reporters, legislators, or constituents. Public relations is all about building relationships.

What is your greatest achievement?

Tara: Through the Alabama Historical Commission, I helped create the museum store in the Alabama State Capitol and serve as the manager/buyer. The 1,870 sq. ft. space, which Capitol restoration carpenters helped build, showcased Alabama and the South through books, art and contemporary crafts.

How to Ask for a Correction...

You're lucky enough to get a front-page article about your company in the local newspaper. But, they spelled your CEO's name wrong and made two other factual errors. What do you do?

During my days as a newspaper editor, I was astounded by the number of people who called the newspaper to report inaccuracies but asked that corrections not be printed "because we don't want to call more attention to the error."

That's the WRONG tactic. Always call and ask for a correction. Many public relations people disagree with me and believe you should "save your ammo for the really big battles." I think that's dangerous. Here's why.

Printed corrections usually are filed along with the original article in the newspaper's library. If a different reporter refers to that incorrect article several months later, she will know there was inaccuracy and will not repeat it because she will see the printed correction filed along with it.

That's the reason you ask for a correction – not so people will read the tiny little paragraph buried at the bottom of Page 2. See "Special Report #1: Damage Control – How to Keep the Media from Making a Mess of Your Story." (<http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/reports.html>)

If you need to ask for a correction, start by calling the reporter who wrote the story, but don't belittle or yell at the reporter. Explain the inaccuracy, give them the correct information, then ask if they can read the correction back to you after it's written. Nothing is worse than an

inaccurate correction. If the reporter refuses to run a correction, ask to speak to the reporter's supervisor.



If the situation warrants it, try to get added mileage from the correction by following it up with a letter to the editor saying something like this, "Thanks for your article in the May 14 issue of the *Daily Woof*. We did, however, want to clarify two points in your article. Our orientation event is actually July 13 and the correct name of our speaker is Steve Little." (Never repeat the inaccuracy in your letter.)

Then you can add another point the reporter didn't include, like this: "We also wanted to add that all proceeds from this fund-raiser will be used for to help our local homeless shelter." See "Special Report #4: How to Write Crisp, Compelling Letters to the Editor."

(<http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/reports.html>)

In other words, rather than just write a letter that sets the record straight, try to weave in a few more

points that weren't mentioned in the article. That way, it doesn't look like you called to ask for a correction, then wrote a letter to the editor that's identical to the printed correction.

For more grievous errors, you can write an opinion column setting the record straight, along with a photo of the author.

For super-duper blunders that the publication refuses to correct, a well-written letter from your attorney might often be the solution. The media hate lawsuits and will do almost anything to avoid them. See "How to Keep the Media Wolves at Bay."

(http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/marketing-tapes/media_wolves_atbay.htm)

For TV and radio, you can ask for corrections, but few stations broadcast them, unless they think they might be sued. So, unless that's the case, you can call to set the record straight, but the correction probably won't be broadcast. See "The Dangerous Hidden Secrets of Print and Broadcast Reporters." (<http://www.publicityhound.com/publicity-products/marketing-tapes/printandbroadcastsecrets.htm>)

If, by chance, you want to reprint an inaccurate article for your media kit, ask if the newspaper will agree to give you a corrected version. Lots of publications won't do this, but it's worth asking for.

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Have a little...Give a little...

Did you know that in the 24 counties served by the Montgomery Area Food Bank more than 350,000 residents are struggling to survive?

You can help by bringing a canned food item or any non-perishable item to PRCA's next meeting on Feb. 4, 2008.

The Montgomery Area Food Bank stresses that any efforts, no matter how great or small, are vital to those who will be receiving the donations.



Let's make our first service project of the year a hard act to follow! In addition to the items mentioned above, donations of paper products are helpful because they provide individuals with supplies they need, but don't necessarily have the money to buy.

WANTED: Suggestions for future service projects... As mentioned at the last PRCA meeting we plan to pick a project every two months or so. We're looking for your input and ideas on activities/organizations you'd like to support. Please submit any comments/suggestions to **Danielle Cole** at dcole@aparx.org.

Thinking about Accreditation?

Take the first step by enrolling as a candidate in the APR Online Study Course:

- ★ Study anywhere...anytime, online;
- ★ No face-to-face meetings, no travel. Learn at your own pace;
- ★ One-year subscription to resources, handouts, webcasts, exercises, quizzes, facilitators and learning activities;
- ★ Interact with APR facilitators and other online candidates;

★ Materials effectively organized around the KSAs;

- ★ Present topics and share your perspective... online;
- ★ Weekly cohort groups and academic credit available.

Ready to take the first step? www.Online2Learn.net/APR/

Or, contact **Linda Lee, APR, Accreditation Chair**, at llee@aap.net

NOTE: Chapter-to-Chapter study groups are being planned. More details coming soon!



A reminder about membership dues...

For those of you who renewed your membership, THANK YOU for continuing to show dedication to a professional organization that is working for your benefit!

However, there were some members who were unable to renew their memberships as of the Dec. 31 deadline. Unfortunately, at this time, you must now download a membership application and reapply to the Montgomery chapter in order to rejoin.

We are sorry for the inconvenience this may cause you. However, due to the regulations set forth in our local and state bylaws, this is the rule we must follow.

To download a membership application, please log on to www.prcasonline.com. Applications must be submitted with a check and approved by the board of directors.

Remember, the cost to attend monthly luncheons for non-members is \$20, so membership definitely has many, many privileges!

PRCA Montgomery is a monthly publication for PRCA's Montgomery Chapter members. For the most up-to-date information, visit www.prcamontgomery.org. Please send all job announcements, news items, updates and comments to Neil Probst at nprobst@capnhq.gov and indicate "PRCA" in the subject line.