

April 2007

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

# PRCA MONTGOMERY

CHAPTER NEWS

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



"Hot Doughnuts Now" – my mouth waters when I see that sign. Whether or not I stop in for a doughnut, I always imagine how wonderful it would be to have one of those sweet treats practically melt in my mouth...mmmmmm, PERFECTION!

Why am I talking about doughnuts? Since one of my jobs as president of our chapter is to write something each month that hopefully inspires you to do something to better yourself professionally or to help better our organization, I often look at everyday things differently and wonder if and how they could relate to PRCA or PR in general.

Watching the blinking neon Krispy Kreme sign one day, I thought, "Wouldn't it be awesome if we could have some sort of signal indicating to those around us that we're at our best." The "Great PR Indicator" would signal: "We're giving it our all!" – "No substitutes or half-done jobs today!" – "It simply doesn't get better than this!"

Then, I thought about the implications of such a signal. How often would my sign actually be flashing? Did I really want people to know when I WASN'T at the top of my game? In the end, I decided the pros would probably outweigh the cons. After all, wouldn't we all give 110 percent more often if our performance rate was on display?

While I have no plans to file a patent for the "Great PR Indicator," I do encourage each of you to reflect on your dedication to your profession and your willingness and enthusiasm for "giving it your all." If you had a sign, would it be blinking often or would the bulbs be burned out? Pick a week or a day or even an hour to pretend that everyone can see your performance rate and notice the difference it makes.

That said, even Krispy Kreme can't serve hot doughnuts all the time. That's OK because the room-temperature lemon-filled doughnuts are pretty darn good, too.

*Stacy*

## Mark Your Calendar!

We will have a PRCA Night at the Biscuits on May 10. Earlier that week, a representative from the baseball team will be our guest speaker at our regular luncheon meeting. More details to come!

## CHAPTER MEETING

**Project Focus:**  
**Character@Heart**  
Monday, April 2, 2007

Guest speakers:  
**Mike Conn, President**  
**Ann Shoemaker, Curriculum Director**

RSA Plaza  
11:45 a.m.

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

RSVP to Diane Christy:  
dchristy@ascpa.org

RSVP Deadline:  
Noon on Friday, March 30

## Our Newest Members!

**Angier Johnson**  
Director of Public Relations, Public Service Commissioner Susan Parker

**Lauren Vinson**  
Director of Public Relations, ProEthic Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

**Heather Sellers**  
Marketing and Advertising Manager, Triton Management Group

**Krista Hawkins**  
Public Relations Specialist, Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Alabama

## April Meeting Gives You the Chance to Get Involved!

Character@Heart, a local non-profit organization founded to promote character education, will be our guest at April's meeting. President Mike Conn and Ann Shoemaker, curriculum director, will speak about their organization's work in Montgomery and across the state.

Following their presentation, we will brainstorm ways to help this local group develop PR initiatives for their organization. So, put your thinking cap on and be ready to flex your PR muscle.

Since April 2000, Character@Heart has made character education curricula and training available to more than 1,500 teachers and parents. As a result, annually, more than 35,000 students in more than 130 schools in 18 Alabama counties have the opportunity to develop good character needed to succeed in both school and life.

## February Meeting Re-cap

We had great participation at our February meeting when Justice Mark Kennedy served as our guest speaker. Justice Kennedy is a former Alabama Supreme Court justice and has held many leadership positions throughout his distinguished career. He is the president of the Montgomery Riverfront Development Foundation and shared with us some very exciting news about projects in our city.

Our members also enjoyed many of his humorous anecdotes, as well as a touching story about cherishing family. We thank Justice Kennedy for his very entertaining and informative speech and thank our members for their participation.



*Justice Mark Kennedy speaks about Riverfront development at the February meeting.*

## Chapter Members Show Interest in Accreditation

The recent state PRCA JumpStart session on accreditation was a huge success, with participation from 14 PR professionals from around the state who have an interest in achieving professional accreditation. The Montgomery chapter had five members attending!

Accredited practitioners from most of the state's local chapters reviewed various aspects of the process and exam, with a concentrated focus on some of the knowledge, skills and abilities tested in the examination and the benefits of becoming accredited.

Discussion among both attendees and presenters pointed to the fact that the examination not only tests knowledge of PR, but also identifies whether the candidate understands how to apply that knowledge in day-to-day professional life.

Join your fellow chapter members headed down the accreditation road! Visit the accreditation Web site at [www.praccreditation.org](http://www.praccreditation.org) or contact Linda Lee, APR, for more information at [llee@aap.net](mailto:llee@aap.net).

## March Meeting: It Was All About PRCA



*Vice President of Accreditation Nan Baldwin prepares to speak at the March meeting.*

At last month's meeting we were honored to have State PRCA President Adam Kelley and Vice President of Accreditation Nan Baldwin as our guest speakers. Nan began with an icebreaker modeled after the game show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." The point of the exercise was to encourage our membership to consider becoming accredited in public relations. She then explained the benefits of accreditation and outlined the entire process. Nan also reminded everyone of the many resources available to them through PRCA if they decide to take their careers to the next level.

Adam then told us of the many advantages to being a member of PRCA, among them networking opportunities and professional development seminars. He also shared with us exciting initiatives, such as "PR for PR," that PRCA is currently undertaking and how our members can become involved. We were glad to have Adam and Nan with us and thank them for taking time to share with our members such valuable information.

## Survey Shows PR as Promising Career

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' "2004-2014 Job Outlook for College Graduates," public relations is identified as an occupation that will have significant openings in the years ahead. Public relations is also listed number one in a list of seven prominent career fields presenting the most opportunities to bachelor's degree graduates.

It is predicted that in the field of arts and writing, the job of public relations specialist will provide the most opportunities to recent graduates. It lists the median salary in 2005 for these types of positions as \$45,020 and predicts more than 70,000 job openings between the years of 2004-2014.

The survey then goes on to list duties of public relations specialists including: promoting media's awareness of clients via publicity campaigns, and acting as a liaison - often via written news releases - between clients and the public. Experts behind the survey believe there will be many openings in the coming years in PR because of expanding media outlets and a retiring workforce, creating career opportunities for college graduates with strong communication skills.

## PRCA Member Profile



Darryl Gates has been vice president of communications for the Alabama Rural Electric Association and editor of *Alabama Living*, the association's 375,000-circulation monthly magazine, since 1983. He holds a BA degree in communications from Auburn University Montgomery and has done graduate study in business administration and recreation resources management. Darryl is also Accredited in Public Relations (APR) and a Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC), as well as a Senior Practitioner.

### *Describe your public relations responsibilities.*

**Darryl:** In addition to producing a monthly magazine of more than 200 pages, I handle state-wide media and public relations for the association and its 22 member cooperatives.

### *What are the top three skills needed in PR?*

**Darryl:** 1. The ability to know when to shut up and listen; 2. To know the difference between the correct time to promote your clients and the time to promote yourself; 3. The ability to recognize win-win situations and being able to take advantage of them

### *Why did you join PRCA?*

**Darryl:** I enjoy the networking opportunities and the wealth of knowledge available from other PR practitioners (shut up and listen).

### *What experience most shaped your career?*

**Darryl:** The bad times; the times of crisis.

### *What would you like to be doing in five years?*

**Darryl:** Hmmmm. Not sure. I fully enjoy what I'm doing now and hope to continue doing this for sometime. I would like to be able to ride my bicycle longer and faster, though.

### *From where did your interest in PR originate?*

**Darryl:** I was attracted through my roots as a journalist. It's all about communication. PR tends to afford one to use as many channels of communication as his imagination can allow.

### *What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?*

**Darryl:** Your publics pay the greatest attention to you during a crisis. Use that.

### *What is your greatest achievement?*

**Darryl:** Being able to entice Martha to marry me, then being able to keep her interested for 30+ years.