

PRCA MONTGOMERY

CHAPTER NEWS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I logged on to Oscars.com just now, and found out there's only 31 days, four hours, 37 minutes and 15 seconds until the live broadcast of the 79th Academy Awards on Feb. 25. I'm sure our chapter has its fair share of movie buffs and entertainment news junkies, and I'm betting more than a few of you are "in the know" about everything Oscar. (1) Who's hosting this year's awards? (2) What films are up for Best Picture? (3) Leading Actress? (4) Leading Actor?

Sure, keeping up with the latest entertainment buzz can be a lot of fun. I just wish we could show the same enthusiasm in other areas of our lives. Think about this. Some of you have been PRCA members for only a short while, and some for many years. When it comes to PRCA, are you "in the know?"

(5) Which chapter is hosting this year's state conference? (6) Which chapter is hosting next year's state conference? (7) What is the name of the regional organization with which PRCA is affiliated? (8) Who is in charge of coordinating projects for our local chapter?

I hope you know the answers to all or most of the questions about PRCA. Just in case, I've included the answers below, along with the Oscars answers (just for fun). I hope you'll make an effort to be an enthusiastic participant in PRCA this year – get involved, come to meetings, volunteer, ask questions – it's the only way to be "in the know."

Speaking of the Academy Awards, PRCA's own awards program will be here before you know it. While there has not yet been a call for entries, the deadline for Medallion entries is generally by June 1. Take the time now to consider which recent projects you will enter and consider and plan for the Medallions as you work on projects in the coming months.

Stacy

(1) Ellen DeGeneres (2) Babel, The Departed, Letters From Iwo Jima, Little Miss Sunshine and The Queen (3) Penelope Cruz, Judi Dench, Helen Mirren, Meryl Streep, and Kate Winslet (4) Leonardo DiCaprio, Ryan Gosling, Peter O'Toole, Will Smith and Forest Whitaker (5) Mobile PRCA Chapter (6) Montgomery PRCA Chapter (7) Southern Public Relations Federation (SPRF) (8) Alicia Atcherson

CHAPTER MEETING

Riverfront Development
Monday, February 12, 2007

Guest speaker:
Justice Mark Kennedy

Mann Museum
11:45 a.m.

Members: \$10
Non-members: \$20

RSVP to Diane Christy:
dchristy@ascpa.org

RSVP Deadline:
Noon on Friday, February 9

New Meeting Location

Beginning in March, PRCA-Montgomery will no longer be meeting at the Mann Museum. The museum will start charging a \$250 facility fee, which our chapter is unable to pay. In response, several board members have scoped out other possible meeting locations, and the Board of Directors would like your input. Please visit <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?n=420623222573> to complete a short survey. The deadline for completing the survey is close of business Friday, February 2, 2007.

Don't forget, this change will not go into affect until March. Our February meeting will be held at the Mann Museum as planned.

Join Us To Hear The Latest On Riverfront Development

You don't want to miss next month's meeting when our guest speaker will be former Alabama Supreme Court Justice Mark Kennedy. Justice Kennedy held positions in numerous levels of the judicial branch of government before retiring in 1999. In addition to his years of service in elective office, he has gained a national reputation for his expertise in issues relating to families, children and child abuse prevention.

An active community leader, he is also dedicated to seeing our community reach its full potential and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Montgomery's Riverfront Development Foundation. He will share with us exciting news about future plans for our city. Be sure to mark your calendars for Monday, Feb. 12 at 11:45 a.m.!

2008 State Conference Dates

It may be more than a year and a half away, but go ahead and save the date for the 2008 State Conference, hosted by our chapter! The conference will take place October 2-3, 2008. Plans are already being made, as the Montgomery Hotel & Spa at the Convention Center has been booked for the conference. This is the new hotel downtown, which is currently in construction.

More information will be forthcoming as the event draws closer, so be sure to read the newsletter and check the Web site.

ASCA Conference Features Notable Speakers

The upcoming Alabama School Communicators Association conference will feature two speakers that are certain to have widespread appeal. Susan Dryden Whitson currently serves as press secretary to Laura Bush and will share her experiences as communicator for the First Lady. Prior to living in Washington, Whitson was a high school English teacher at Hoover High School in Birmingham.

Beth Holloway Twitty gained international attention when her daughter Natalee Holloway went missing in 2005 on a class trip to Aruba. Since then, she has been on countless television programs and used the media as a tool to communicate about the fate of her daughter.

The conference will be held Feb. 12-13 in Opelika, Alabama. The cost is \$180. For more information or to register, please contact Michael Sibley at the Alabama State Department of Education at msibley@alsde.edu.

APR Workshop Reminder

There will be a statewide Accreditation Jump-Start Workshop held on Saturday, March 10, 2007, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. for those who are interested in beginning the accreditation process. It will be held at First Baptist Church located in downtown Montgomery at 305 South Perry Street.

The workshop will be free for all PRCA members, and \$15 for non-PRCA members. For more information, contact Nan Baldwin, APR, PRCA State VP-Accreditation at 205-912-5964 or nan@mdb.org.

Welcome New Members!

Tara Lanier – Media and Public Relations, Alabama Historical Commission

Daniel Dye – Manager, Communications and Media Relations, Auburn University Montgomery

Timothy Ervin – Staff Writer, Alabama State University

January Meeting Focused On Value Of Public Relations

At last month's meeting we welcomed guest speaker Jackie Buck, CEO of the American Red Cross of Central Alabama. Ms. Buck has been with the Red Cross for 23 years and has served in several leadership positions within the organization. During her time with the Red Cross she has experienced major events, including the unprecedented hurricane season of 2005. She discussed with us the importance of PR to her profession and how it can be beneficial to any organization. For example, by promoting local blood drives the Red Cross has been able to recruit blood donors and thus save lives. We thank Ms. Buck for sharing her unique experiences with our chapter and hope that everyone who attended last month's meeting learned something new.

Membership Update: It's a Wrap!

The renewal period for membership in PRCA-Montgomery has officially ended, and our numbers are looking great. We retained more than 86% of last year's 120 members and have welcomed 11 new members to date. We've also had a few returning members. Our current membership total is 117 members, which – with more than half a year left to go – sets us up for substantial growth by year's end.

Currently, our chapter has welcomed the most new members among the six chapters statewide, and our growth rate is second only to West Alabama, which has already grown from 22 to 26 members. Thanks to all of you for your commitment to PRCA and thanks to our vice president of membership, Belinda Bazinet for her hard work during the renewal period.

Name Change for Member

PRCA-Montgomery member Lara Wilson married W. Hunter Lewis, a native of Montgomery, on November 4, 2006. She is now going by Lara Lewis. Her work e-mail will not change lara@manufacturealabama.org.

PRCA Member Profile



Marilyn Stamps is a Public Information Specialist with the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, where she has been for the past 20 years. She received a BA in Applied Communication from Auburn University Montgomery.

What do you think are the top three skills needed in PR?

Marilyn: Good oral and written communication skills and ability to work with media.

Describe your public relations responsibilities.

Marilyn: I serve as publication coordinator for the Alabama Vacation Guide, the Alabama Calendar of Events and other specialized projects of the Bureau of Tourism. I also serve as emergency management coordinator for our agency.

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

Marilyn: Yes, never become complacent in public relations. Keep your ideas fresh and always look for opportunities to enhance your PR skills.

Why did you join PRCA?

Marilyn: The opportunity to fellowship and learn from fellow practitioners and to stay up to date on current PR practices, learning what works and what doesn't.

What experience most shaped your career?

Marilyn: I believe growing up in a family of 15 siblings and two motivating parents is the one thing that has most shaped my career. Over the years my sisters and brothers have been my sounding board for ideas I have had, and my motivators whenever I had to work on new projects.

What would you like to be doing in five years?

Marilyn: Retired from state government and operating my own printing and consulting business.

From where did your interest in PR originate?

Marilyn: I have always had an interest in the art of communication. I used to write poems and short stories when I was young, and I was the one most often chosen to be the spokesperson for my family whenever the need arose. People would always tell me how much they enjoyed something I talked about or had written.

What was the greatest lesson you learned through PR?

Marilyn: I have learned in the business of PR that you have to be willing to stick things out, even when the picture is bleak, and you have to comment on or write about subjects that are not picture perfect.

What is your greatest achievement?

Marilyn: Please allow me to list two, one being named Employee of the Year for our agency in 2000, and the other is having the Year of Alabama Food campaign, for which I was coordinator, be recognized with numerous awards, including Best of Show from PRCA.

Association Seeks Web Specialist

The Home Builders Association of Alabama seeks a web specialist with good organizational skills who can also assist with keeping the Association's websites current. This person will report to the Public Relations Director, and duties will include updating and maintaining the Association's websites, and administrative duties as assigned.

In addition to good organizational skills, the ability to multitask plus a working knowledge of ASP and PHP are desired traits. Some design ability is helpful but not necessary. A Bachelor's degree in computer or communications field is preferred, although experience with education will be considered. Must have knowledge of html and Mysql and working knowledge of Access. Good communication skills, both written and verbal, are essential.

Entry-level position. Salary commensurate with experience. Benefits include 401(k), medical and dental insurance.

To apply, send resume and references to: HBAA, ATTN: PR Director, P.O. Box 241305, Montgomery, AL 36124-1305.

Why Serve? *by: Alicia Atcheson, VP Projects*

In December, we sent out a call to everyone in our PRCA chapter, asking them to participate in the Salvation Army's "Forgotten Angel" program. The result: 32 brand new toys to brighten a precious child's Christmas morning. I think this program was successful for a couple of reasons. One, it was easy—just pick up a gift on one of your shopping trips and drop it off at the next meeting. Two, I think we all like to offer help when we know it's needed.

For many of us, this isn't a one time occurrence. We volunteer individually to causes that we believe in. We know that even donating a few hours now and then makes a big impact. But how often do we volunteer our public relations skills? There are definitely those who could use our expertise. Two local organizations come to mind:

Character@Heart is a local non-profit that was founded almost seven years ago in an effort to instill character in the young boys and girls who will one day become our community's leaders.

Character@Heart develops curriculum for students in kindergarten through 6th grade and trains teachers and parents how to teach character education. Since April 2000, Character@Heart has made 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 the good character needed to succeed in both school and life.

As a small non-profit, they do not have anyone in-house to develop PR initiatives for them. They could definitely use a total public relations plan or even focused PR initiatives to increase their visibility in the community, broaden their donor base, and promote character education.

The Montgomery County Association of Volunteer Fire Departments could also use our help. As you have read on the front page of the *Montgomery Advertiser* and seen on numerous television news broadcasts, four Montgomery County volunteer firefighters have recently been arrested in connection with a string of arsons in the Pike Road community.

This devastating event has affected not only the men and women who put on the uniforms and selflessly give of their time to protect their communities but affected the community's view of them as well. They could use our help to showcase the positive efforts of these valiant men and women.

So, what do you think? Do you think your PR knowledge could help them? Would you be willing to give a couple hours of your time to help? If you'd like more information, call me at 832-1270 or e-mail aliciaatcheson@mc-ala.org.