

July 2007

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

# PRCA MONTGOMERY

CHAPTER NEWS

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I was so pleased to welcome back a few "lost" members at the June luncheon. The meeting marked the first distribution of door prize tickets for our membership recruitment, retention and participation game. Everybody got one ticket for just attending the meeting. And, KUDOS to those who earned additional tickets by bringing a visitor.

Make plans now to earn more tickets by attending the July 13 workshop. The workshop committee is planning a WONDERFUL PROGRAM that you won't want to miss. And, you can again earn additional tickets for bringing "lost" members (see list on page 2).

Not only are we looking for "lost" members and visitors, we're also looking for individuals interested in becoming new members right away. Now is a great time to invite your friends and co-workers to join PRCA. With our grandfathering policy, new members joining now get three months of FREE MEMBERSHIP! Not to mention that YOU increase your chances of being the big prize winner by bringing a visitor with a membership application in hand to the workshop.

Speaking of big prizes, the current board is already cooking up a YEAR-LONG membership recruitment, retention and participation contest for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. This competition will not be left up to the luck of the draw, but will instead reward the ONE MEMBER who contributes most to the chapter's membership goals. Stay tuned for details on this exciting membership campaign.

Finally, now is the time to start thinking about how you will be involved in PRCA during the next fiscal year. Will you be part of the membership committee that helps plan the major campaign I mentioned above? This and other committees, not to mention positions on the board of directors, will provide ample opportunity to BECOME INVOLVED in our local chapter. More information about serving on the board of directors will be available soon, with information about committees coming early in the fiscal year, which starts October 1.

*Stacy*

### CHAPTER MEETING

**LAISSEZ LES  
BON TEMPS  
ROLLEZI!**

**PRCA Professional  
Development  
Workshop**

Friday, July 13, 2007

AIDT Training Center  
8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Members: \$75  
Non-members: \$100

To register:  
Visit our Web site at  
[www.prcamontgomery.org](http://www.prcamontgomery.org)

*NOTE: Members who  
make reservations for  
chapter luncheons but fail  
to cancel by noon the  
Friday prior to the meeting  
will be responsible for  
payment.*

## LAISSEZ LES BON TEMPS ROLLEZI!

### Don't Miss Your Chance to Attend Our Annual Professional Development Workshop

You can bet that when the good times aren't rolling, the cameras will be. Are you prepared to speak on behalf of your organization in the face of a crisis event close to home? Workplace shootings? Terrorists attacks? Life threatening accidents? Hurricanes? Tornadoes? Recalls? Scandals?

You don't want to miss this interactive workshop that will include media role-playing exercises for crisis situations. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Joseph Trahan, III, APR, Fellow, PRSA, who is a media relations, crisis and risk communications expert trainer. Dr. Trahan, III is a New Orleans native with more than 20 years of experience in governmental, association, educational and non-profit public relations.

The workshop will be held Friday, July 13, 2007, from 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the AIDT Training Center. The cost for PRCA members is \$75, with PRCA student members paying \$25 and non-members paying \$100. Bring the CEO or spokesperson from your company at the PRCA membership rate (limit one additional attendee per PRCA member.)

If you have any questions about this workshop, please contact Heather Holcomb at [heather.holcomb@uss.salvationarmy.org](mailto:heather.holcomb@uss.salvationarmy.org) or call her at 799-9058.

## Sponsor a Potential New Member Today and Enjoy the Rewards

Get involved in a campaign to boost membership and participation in PRCA and become eligible to win two tickets to the Shakespeare Festival and a \$45 gift certificate to Bonefish Grill. (The drawing will be held in August.)

Participating is easy. Just tell your friends and colleagues about the many benefits of PRCA membership and invite them to join. You'll receive three door prize tickets for each potential new member you bring to a meeting, plus you'll get a ticket just for attending the meeting. The more members you recruit, the more tickets you earn! Five tickets will be awarded for each "lost" member you persuade to come back to a meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Belinda at 953-9482 or [bazinetb@maxwell.af.mil](mailto:bazinetb@maxwell.af.mil).

## Rescue Mission for Lost Members

Are YOU lost? A lost member is one who has not been to a PRCA-Montgomery meeting or event since October 2006. We also haven't heard from you in response to our "Calling All 'Lost' PRCA Members!" e-mail. There's no desert island in Montgomery and no reason for missing one of PRCA's outstanding meetings!

We miss you, we want to see you and learn from/with you. Please return to a meeting SOON. If you're not lost, but know some of the folks on the list below, please help us by bringing one of these members back to a PRCA meeting. You just might win a prize! (See the article above)

Janel B.  
Sonny B.  
Anna B.  
Rebecca C.  
Michael D.  
Sam D.

Terri F.  
Doug F.  
Margaret G.  
Sheila J.  
Donna K.  
John K.

Donna S.  
Janet T.  
James T.  
Lisa W.  
Gay W.

## Be Sure to Greet Our New Members at the Next Meeting!

Emily Benton  
Knology  
*Marketing Coordinator*

Nia Johnson  
Community Bankers Association  
of Alabama  
*Communications Coordinator*

## Take the PR Practitioner Profile Survey

All PRCA-Montgomery members are asked to complete a "PR Practitioner Profile" by July 10. Please visit [www.prcamontgomery.org](http://www.prcamontgomery.org) and access the survey from the home page. This survey will provide the current and future boards of directors with information about each of its members that will be useful in a variety of ways, including determining eligibility for Senior Practitioner Status. The plan is to keep this information on file with membership records and update it annually.

If you have any questions or suggestions for expanding the profile, please contact PRCA-Montgomery President Stacy Benefield at [stacy@squareroot-inc.com](mailto:stacy@squareroot-inc.com).

## PRCA Member Profile

Ami Simpson is public information manager with the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel. Her public relations responsibilities include pitching story ideas to travel media and responding to their requests for assistance, editing and writing a weekly newsletter, preparing and distributing press releases and press kits, arranging trips for visiting journalists and evaluating the results of PR efforts. Ami graduated with a bachelor's from Auburn University and has done post-graduate work at the University of New Orleans.



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

**Ami:** Get to know the media and their needs before you need them. It's easier to call on someone you know than a complete stranger.

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

**Ami:** Good listening skills, good writing skills and creativity.

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

**Ami:** My husband and friends encouraged me to apply for a job in PR, and I discovered it was a field I enjoyed.

### *Why did you join PRCA?*

**Ami:** It was written into my job description when I assumed my position as public relations officer for the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. Had it not been, I would have pursued membership. I've learned a lot over the years from my fellow members.

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

**Ami:** Experience as a radio news reporter led to the path I'm now on.

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

**Ami:** Giving back to humanity. I've been so blessed, and I would like to get to the point in my life where I have more time to volunteer.

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

**Ami:** Don't let a reporter put words in your mouth.

### *What is your greatest achievement?*

**Ami:** Starting Travel Writers Marketplace, a forum for travel journalists and Alabama travel industry members to meet each other and share story ideas. Alabama was the first state to hold a travel writers marketplace coordinated by the state tourism office. Since we initiated a travel writers marketplace, other states have copied it.

## 2007 PRCA/SPRF Conference Reminder

The annual PRCA Conference will be a joint conference this year with SPRF. The conference is planned for Sept. 16-18, at the historic Battle House Hotel, a Renaissance Hotel in downtown Mobile. You can now reserve your rooms and register for the conference online.

Discounted room rates at the Battle House are \$125/night. Earlybird registration is \$250 for the full conference if you register by August 24. Visit the state web site at [www.prcaonline.com](http://www.prcaonline.com) for further information.

### Professional Development Topics

#### Key Notes

PR to the Rescue: When All Heck Breaks Loose  
How to Baby Your Contacts

#### Breakouts

Trends in PR and What it Means in Education Today  
Brave New World: PR in the Age of Consumer-centric Media  
The Bottom Line: PR Analyzes Media Impact  
Connecting the Dots: Using Everything You Know to Be an Exceptional Communicator  
Become a PR Super Spokesperson  
Getting Social Online

#### Student Session

Powering Up for Your Dream PR Job

#### New!

Pre-Conference Leadership Session

*Seasoned practitioners won't want to miss the "Powerful Leadership" seminar on Sunday, Sept. 16. The speaker will share stories and insights to teach seasoned practitioners easy tips to remain at the top of their game.*

## If You Are in Need of a State Conference Scholarship - Read On!

PRCA-Montgomery has available three scholarships to cover the cost of full conference registration for the 2007 SPRF/PRCA Conference "Power PR" in Mobile on Sept. 16-18. Scholarship recipients will be selected randomly from the group of eligible applicants. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Personally responsible for conference fee (company will not pay)
2. Attended three or more regular PRCA meetings year to date
3. Able to attend full conference (social and awards events optional, pre-conference leadership session not covered by scholarship)
4. Able to secure own accommodations, either at The Battle House Hotel (Special PRCA rate: \$125/night) or alternative accommodations

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in attending the conference, please submit your name to PRCA-Montgomery President Stacy Benefield at [stacy@squareroot-inc.com](mailto:stacy@squareroot-inc.com). Also, feel free to direct any questions related to the scholarships to Stacy.

## PRCA, SPRF Call for Award Entries

### *Groups Debut New Online Entry System*

Award entries are currently being accepted online for PRCA's Medallions competition and the Southern Public Relations Federation's Lantern Awards. Both groups will present their awards during the joint PRCA/SPRF conference in Mobile, Sept. 16-18.

Medallion and Lantern entries are being accepted through July 15, 2007. Work produced from May 1, 2006, to April 30, 2007 is eligible for both competitions.

An online tutorial for the new online entry system is available at [www.sprf.org/OnlineEntryTutorial.ppt](http://www.sprf.org/OnlineEntryTutorial.ppt). More information is at [www.prcaonline.com/Conference/conference/awards.htm](http://www.prcaonline.com/Conference/conference/awards.htm).

## Call for Entries for Lifetime Achievement Award

The Public Relations Council of Alabama Grover Smith Lifetime Achievement Award was established to recognize a dedicated practitioner whose lifetime has been one of distinguished service to the public relations profession and to the Public Relations' Council of Alabama. Recipients must have demonstrated the highest and most meritorious contributions to the improvement, promotion, development, and progress of public relations throughout their careers.

To be eligible, individuals must have (1) devoted 25 or more years of service to the field of public relations, (2) been members of the Public Relations Council of Alabama for at least 10 years and (3) contributed to the organization in some capacity.

Contact PRCA-Montgomery President Stacy Benefield for more information or visit <http://www.prcaonline.com/Conference/conference/awards.htm>.

## Last Month's Meeting

Last month PRCA-Montgomery members enjoyed hearing valuable advice from our guest speaker, Mr. Ken Selvaggi, vice president and general manager of WSFA 12 News. Mr. Selvaggi has extensive experience in the television news industry. Prior to coming to Montgomery earlier this year, he held leadership positions at several television stations across the country.

He gave us insight into the daily operation of a newsroom, in particular how certain stories become part of the news and how we can ensure our organizations' stories are among those that make the cut. Mr. Selvaggi also shared with us what we can do to help keep the River Region heading in the right direction. Since coming to Montgomery he has been very involved in the community. He serves on several local boards and can be seen regularly on WSFA 12 giving editorials on issues affecting our citizens.



*Ken Selvaggi, vice president and general manager at WSFA, speaks at the June meeting about media relations.*



*June speaker Ken Selvaggi talks with PRCA-Montgomery members after the meeting.*