

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 3:

"PR Rising" panel discussion on PR vs. Advertising at Italian Community Center

MAY 15:

Paragon Awards

JUNE 11:

"How to Plan a 100-Year Anniversary Party" with Kathleen Lawler, VP of Harley-Davidson

JULY:

No Meeting

Check the Chapter's Web site (www.prsawis.org) for up-to-date information on these and future programs. **And don't forget that you can register on-line through the chapter Web site, using your credit card.**

NOTE: If your company affiliation, address, e-mail or telephone changes, notify Bluemound Executive Office Center at 225 Regency Court, Suite 200, Brookfield, WI 53045-6166, to be sure your directory listing remains up-to-date.

UWM-PRSSA WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The Public Relations Student Society of America's chapter at UW-Milwaukee has received the Dr. F. H. Teahan National Chapter Award for a chapter Web site. Judging criteria include creativity, design, content and overall appearance. Out of a possible 100 points, the UWM Web site received 90. The award includes a plaque and \$200 for the organization. You can visit the site at www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/PRSSA.

January Workshop Explores Creativity in Communications

By John Moriarity, Charleston Orwig

Joe Fumo likes to pretend. While that is not always an advantage in the day-to-day business world, for a freelance writer/editor/communicator like Joe, pretending is sometimes just the ticket to get over that terrible case of writer's block.

Joe and a team of ComedySportz improvisers took PRSA members through a series of interactive exercises at the January meeting, a rare evening session at ComedySportz that included all the pizza you could eat.

The ComedySportz folks — Bob Orvis, Tom New and Paul Staszak — performed a series of improvisations, then divided the group into smaller teams to do their own improv performances. Each skit and audience participation was based on four creativity ideas from Joe:

1. Change of environment / Imagine the future or the past. A change in one's immediate environment can spark creativity, such as a walk in the woods, moving to a different room, or even going to a corner at the local library. To come up with a creative opening, Joe suggests conjuring up images of the past or future, then comparing the subject you're writing about to those images.
2. Consider the reader or end user. Joe says to always think of the end user/reader of our work — an editor, stockholder, or chief executive of the company. This is especially helpful when you're in a rut. Pretend that your article is competing

for the reader's attention with the daily newspaper or Time magazine.

3. Personal experience and interests. By injecting your personal interests and experiences into your subject matter, it will almost always be livelier, according to Fumo. He says he's had much success weaving in music, film, soccer — and other references he knows and enjoys — to "pep up" what could otherwise be mundane subject matter.
4. Poke fun at dry subject matter. According to Joe, "Everyone has a sense of humor. Even engineers and actuaries." Nuts and bolts, insurance premiums, architects, even room humidity sensors can be made fun of. And by poking fun, you can bring life to your copy.
5. Opposites or satire. Having trouble bringing life to your subject? Fumo suggests thinking of the opposite of what you're trying to say — it may trigger an analogy or a comparison that will make your point perfectly. Joe says: "If you want to run a hotel correctly, watch John Cleese in 'Fawlty Towers,' and do the opposite!"

Fumo and the ability of ComedySportz' improvisation pros combined to make the evening both enjoyable and worthwhile. They proved that as communicators, it can be helpful to pretend sometimes. ●

Meeting the Challenges of Convergence

By Crystal Barone, UWM PRSSA member

Investor relations have seen a tough time in the media this past year. For public relations professionals, it is important to restore the confidence of stakeholders. At the Feb. 20, PRSA meeting, William F. Mahoney, of *Shareholder Value Magazine*, illustrated the problems facing investor relations and ways to improve them.

William Mahoney is a graduate of the Marquette University school of journalism. Mahoney worked at Motorola and was a professor at Temple University, where he taught investor relation courses. He is now the executive editor of *Shareholder Value Magazine*.

Mahoney explained that stakeholders look for certain qualities in a company:

- Integrity
- Accurate accounting of business performance
- Honest reporting of business performance
- Management recognizing responsibility to serve stakeholders

He gave a list of options to help improve the quality of investment relations:

- **Improving media relations.** In order to send a positive message to the public we must maintain good media relations.
- **Community involvement.** People tend to trust companies when they play a large role in the community.
- **Honesty.** People don't want "lip service" they want to see management act on what they believe.
- **Use the market.** "Market is the ultimate decision in what you are worth. It's what's behind the number."
- **Educate management.** Management should be well educated on how the company is valued, investor

attitudes toward the company, public perception, and most importantly its governance within the company.

William Mahoney increased the awareness of problems concerning investment relations, and how public relations can help to build trust and bond tighter relationships with stakeholders. He made it clear that public relation professionals must help to increase awareness of new improvements in the investment relation field. ●

SPRING COUNSELORS ACADEMY CONFERENCE

Counselors Academy members — plan to attend the Spring Counselors Academy Conference in Vancouver, BC, May 4-6. If you're a counselor and not a member, consider joining. This year's conference focuses on "Creating Your Own Reality," with speakers that include Al Ries, Susan R. Meisinger, and Ford Harding. As always, it also offers numerous breakfast roundtables, breakout sessions, and chances to mix with and share ideas with your peers. Check out the website at www.prsa-counselors.org for more information. ●

SEWIS PRSA CHAPTER BOASTS 8 NEW APRS!

Lisa Ninmer, APR; Paul Holley, APR; Jeff Fleming, APR; Janay Wittek-Balke, APR; Karren Jeske, APR; Betsy Ross Bothe, APR; Vanessa Welter, APR and Jeanne Kessler, APR, have earned the right to wear the coveted "APR" and place the same letters after their last names. All eight passed PRSA's Universal Accreditation Exam, indicating their in-depth knowledge and expertise in the public relations field.

Before the exam, participants attended several intense, day-long seminars, and "studied their tails off" for days on end. The eight-hour written exam assessed each practitioner's PR knowledge in theory and application, and also focused on the code of ethics application and a written case study. A week later after the written exam, a panel of accredited judges interviewed each practitioner in an oral examination.

Some practitioners wonder why anyone would endure this if APR certification is voluntary. "It's more than the "APR" behind a last name," said one new APR.

Accreditation indicates that a professional has exhibited an exemplary standard of character and a general fitness for the profession; having demonstrated a high level of competence in the practice of public relations over the prescribed period of time; having successfully passed the written and oral examination required; and, having evidenced a real interest in the development and growth of the public relations profession.

Increasingly, job listings are specifying APR preferred in their descriptions. In addition, some senior public relations professionals have been outspoken in support of Accreditation.

"APR is a symbol of professionalism. It demonstrates that individuals have the knowledge, ethics and experience that set them apart. It also demonstrates that they care about their own profession and that they are dedicated to enhancing their own personal abilities." Joe S. Epley, APR, Fellow PRSA, President, Epley Associates, Charlotte, NC. Research indicates accredited practitioners' salaries are statistically higher than their nonaccredited counterparts. One of five practitioners (with more than five years in the field) is accredited. Accreditation is required to serve in PRSA board positions.

To apply for the accreditation exam, PRSA members must have at least five years of paid, full-time experience in the professional practice of public relations, or in the teaching or administration of public relations courses in an accredited college or university. More information about APR review sessions will be released in summer.

All 2002 APR candidates from the Southwestern Wisconsin PRSA chapter passed on first try. Nationally, the pass rate is about 60 percent. The last two years, the Southeastern Wisconsin chapter has had a 100-percent pass rate. Newly accredited members will accept their "APR" pins at the March 18 meeting. ●

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

Mike John has taken the position of director, public relations at the Menasha Corporation. Until January, he was director of public relations for Wisconsin Energy. He can be reached at michael.john@menasha.com. **Katie Ostrander** has joined Bottom Line Marketing Public Relations, Inc., as a public relations counselor. She previously served as a public relations specialist at America's Second Harvest of Wisconsin. ●

NEW CHAPTER MEMBERS

Please welcome the following new members: **Ellen Grinde**, Director, Corporate Communications, Sensient Technologies Corporation; **Jeremy Adam Podolski**, Editor, External Communications, Medical College of Wisconsin; **Betsy Rice**, Consultant, Field Public Relations, Northwestern Mutual; **Tara Elise Roth**, Corporate Communications Specialist, Lands' End, Inc., Dodgeville; **Rebecca Dinan Schneider**, Director of Communications, Catholic Knights; **Joann Steidinger**, Public Relations Consultant, Northwestern Mutual ●

FIRST ANNUAL PR DAY AT MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY A SUCCESS

By Laura Gurzynski, PR Director, Marquette University PRSSA

More than 40 students from Marquette University and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater attended the first annual PR Day to hear the latest trends in the PR industry from leading public relations professionals. Hosted by the Marquette Chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America on Nov. 9 last year, the day-long event featured prominent local PR professionals speaking on such topics as non-profit PR, crisis communication, branding and investor relations.

The keynote speaker was John Edelman, vice president of human resources for Edelman Public Relations Worldwide, the world's largest independent public relations agency. Edelman discussed the future trends of public relations and the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the field.

The event began in the lobby of Stratz Hall with a light breakfast, followed by a warm welcome from the College of Communication's Dean William Elliott. The morning session on non-profit PR featured Theresa Dodson, district manager for the American Diabetes Association. In another breakout session, Harry Cherkinian, vice president of Zigman Joseph Stephenson, discussed roles of public relations in branding.

Other speakers included Evan Zeppos, president of Zeppos & Associates Inc., who spoke on crisis communication, and Phil Vollrath from Vollrath and Associates, who discussed investor relations in a faltering economy. The afternoon program was devoted to a panel discussion on "Positioning Yourself in the Marketplace," moderated by PR Professor Carl Schrank.

"We had several prominent PR speakers," said Dr. Gee Ekachai, PRSSA faculty advisor. "It's very fortunate that students had this opportunity to listen to suggestions from seasoned professionals."

With the first year's success, the second PR Day to be held later this year is already being planned. This spring semester the Marquette PRSSA chapter is also planning agency visits to two Chicago PR firms: Golin/Harris International and Edelman Public Relations Worldwide.

If anyone is interested in being a speaker at Marquette's PR Day this year, contact the Chapter President Janet Skogsbakken (janet.skogsbakken@mu.edu), VP of Programming Emalie Fletcher (Fletcher.Emalie@mbco.com) or Dr. Ekachai (ekachaid@mu.edu). ●

PRSA...innercom Ray I. Scroggins, APR, Editor

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