



Winter 2009 Newsletter

Behind the Gavel: A Message from the President



Brett Turner

Welcome to 2009. I would like to start this year by thanking our 250+ members. I am well aware of the increasing demands in our professional lives and the daily challenges we face due to the current economic climate. We barely have time to think, much less volunteer. But we all do. And I am extremely grateful to each of you for your part in SCPRSA.

As a matter of fact, more people are volunteering than ever before. Why? Impact. People know that they can make a difference, just like every one of us are doing with SCPRSA. No other organization serves South Carolina's PR practitioners more effectively than SCPRSA. As one of only a handful of statewide chapters in the nation, we continue to train and teach our young professionals, provide leadership opportunities for mid-careerists, and provide mentoring opportunities for our senior practitioners. I see the impact we are making everyday, and I am excited about where the future of our profession is headed.

As president of our chapter, my job is to prepare you for that future by providing each of you value, vision and a voice. All of us that hold leadership positions with SCPRSA are here to inspire, teach, mentor, guide and help. We are a member-driven, volunteer organization; therefore each of you is important to the success of the chapter. We are only going to be successful if we are all working towards the same goals. That is why I ask each of you to take a few minutes to review this year's strategic plan and attend your upcoming programming luncheon.

In the last year, the profile and processes of SCPRSA have changed dramatically. This is due to all of our members embracing the goals of advancing the professional and raising the standards of the profession in South Carolina. We have heard from many of our members throughout the year and understand that you want high-quality programming, better networking opportunities, more communications from the Board, an improved website, and training opportunities. Here is what you can look forward to in 2009:

- Leadership being instilled into every action by the Board
- An increased depth of speakers and activities for your monthly programming, scheduled three months in advance in each region
- A return to one, annual professional development seminar in the Fall that brings engaging speakers from outside the area
- More networking opportunities for all of our members
- Establishing relationships and getting involved with our state's three PRSSA chapters
- Proactively working to identify and establish a more diverse chapter
- A proactive accreditation effort

- Strategic development of SCPRSA's leadership agenda to ensure all members receive the support they need to be outstanding professionals
- Engagement of more members in chapter activities and committees
- A continuation of this newsletter, which adds to the fabric of our chapter communications
- Planned leadership training for all future officers, board members and committee chairs and vice chairs to ensure strategic and tactical excellence in governance

The result of these actions will be a more cohesive chapter that encompasses all members in SCPRSA's actions, activities and achievements. It is now up to you, the members, to engage and get involved in SCPRSA. Attend monthly meetings. Serve on a committee. Invite peers to share in SCPRSA. Enroll in the annual professional development seminar. These actions will make a positive difference in the lives of our state's public relations professionals. Together, as SCPRSA, let's continue to make an impact.

Welcome New SCPRSA Members

Stacy Boyce (Upstate)

Lee Butler (Lowcountry)

Jamie Muldrow (Midlands)

Spencer Pryor (Lowcountry)

Doug Reynolds (Lowcountry)

Greta Thomas (Midlands)

Rebekah Tyrrell (Upstate)

Jennifer Wilson (Midlands)

Lindsay Wine (Lowcountry)

Jennifer Winter (Lowcountry)

Morgan Yarborough (Coastal, Midlands)

The first National membership promotion of 2009 will run from February 1 to March 31. Prospects may join for \$290 (\$225 national dues and \$65 initiation fee) and receive a free, first year Chapter membership when they do - the cost is subsidized by National. For questions on the promotion please contact membership@prsa.org.

Can You Help?

Orchestrating and executing monthly luncheons, conferences and other activities in the chapter take a lot of hands. We have need for a few more people to help with several committees: programming for luncheons/conferences, professional development conference, sponsorship, media relations and the quarterly newsletter. You can volunteer as much or as little

SCPRSA Member Profile: **Ashley Sherry**



Ashley Sherry
Corporate Communications Specialist,
First Citizens Bank Corporate
Communications
Columbia, South Carolina

Ashley Sherry's position as Corporate Communications Specialist for First Citizens puts her on the front lines of public and media relations, internal corporate communications, and events management for a financial institution with more than 1,800 employees at branches throughout South Carolina and eastern Georgia. Combine her professional accomplishments with her strong commitment to the SCPRSA and other organizations, and it's no wonder you're looking at one of Columbia's "20 Under 40 Rising Stars in Business" and the 2005 SCPRSA "Rookie of the Year."

We managed to catch up with Sherry recently (yes, we had to sprint!) to get her advice on PR and media relations, the best way to navigate SCPRSA membership, and more:

On handling the bank's media relations in the current economic climate:

"We're a very stable bank, so a lot of our media calls have been positive for us to respond to. We haven't had to deal with issues that so many of the bigger banks have had to. Of course, we're still responsive to the market, and we've been doing proactive media relations. But we haven't had to deal with crises communications."

On social vs. traditional media:

"I really think it depends on your industry. There's no question that social media is something for PR professionals to really take a look at. But I think it's very important to be aware that traditional media still works. I think a lot of executives still want to see that traditional media side of the PR measurement. We have to be aware of what's going on in the print media, and how our stories can be told in a non-traditional manner."

On making the best use of your SCPRSA membership:

"I strongly recommend that members just contact someone on the board and not be shy. Just say, 'I want to help', and ask how to get involved. One of our strategic goals is to get members even more involved. It's really a member-driven organization and their volunteering is what makes so many of the resources and activities offered by the SCPRSA possible. We want people's advice and their opinions to make the organization even stronger than it is."

On the 2009 Mercury Awards:

"I'm in charge of the Mercury Awards from a logistics standpoint. The call for entries goes out in January, and the awards will be presented April 30 in Columbia. We'll swap entries with the Seattle chapter. They will judge South Carolina, and we'll judge Seattle."

Any advice for young PR pros just starting out?

"Stay positive. Network with other professionals as much as you can. Keep learning."

time as you like. Committee participation allows you to meet and network with PR professionals statewide, and the chance to develop your leadership skills. "You may not always get your way, but if you volunteer, you'll always get your say!" Please contact Brett Turner, APR, to sign up to help on these or any other committees.

Kristie Byrum Named One Of Top 25 Emerging Women Entrepreneurs in U.S.

Kristie Bohm Byrum, President and CEO of The Byrum Innovation Group, Inc. in Greenville, has been selected as one of 25 Sam Walton Emerging Entrepreneurs in the inaugural year of the nationwide competition, co-sponsored by Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence™. Additionally, Byrum, APR, has been selected as a 2008 winner of the Make Mine a Million Business Program, co-sponsored by Count Me In™ and the American Express Co.

Byrum is the only competitor to be a winner of both Count Me In programs. Count Me In is the leading national not-for-profit provider of resources, business education and community support for women entrepreneurs, seeking to grow micro businesses to million dollar enterprises.

The Sam Walton Emerging Entrepreneur Award winners, chosen by a panel of national business leaders, were selected on the basis of their business profiles, their commitment to community and their personal development.

Byrum will receive one-year of paid professional business coaching, a scholarship to a Leadership Forum in Fort Lauderdale, free access to Count Me In's educational resources and seminars, and a Sam's Club Business Membership, made through a separate donation from Sam's Club. The national competition, funded by the Wal-Mart Foundation, was inspired by the 25th anniversary of Sam's Club, a division of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. The winners will also benefit from inclusion in the Count Me In organization's community of like-minded women entrepreneurs who inspire and mentor each other.

Karla's Korner: Messages from SCPRSA's Chapter Administrator, Karla Falk

SCPRSA is making a few changes in the luncheon/event policy in 2009. The RSVP deadline in some regions will be moved back a few days to accommodate host location and caterer requirements. Minimum numbers are required to hold luncheons. Earlier RSVP deadlines allow us to cancel the event should there be insufficient participation without incurring fees from the host location. We will be moving to completely online and pre-paid reservations for payment convenience, cut down check-in lines and to eliminate impact of no shows or bounced checks on our chapter finances.

When you RSVP for a luncheon, your online payment is proof of your reservation. We understand some organizations block PayPal credit card processing. In that case participants will need to pay on personal cards and get company reimbursement. Please contact Karla with any concerns or challenges with this new system. Other policies remain the same. Walk-ins are welcome, but are charged an extra \$5 and cannot be guaranteed a lunch without a reservation. No requests for invoices/billing will be accepted at the door to an event. Should you need to cancel your reservation, refunds will be gladly given 24 hours before the luncheon, but no refunds within one day of the luncheon. Remember, we are a statewide chapter. All members and guests are welcome at all events. If you cannot make an event you are registered for, please send a colleague or student in your place.

Monthly Meeting Highlights

Lowcountry: Thinking big with Jan Pringle at the September luncheon

We've all heard the business adage, "Under-promise. Over-deliver." Jan Pringle disagrees.

"Think big," Pringle told the attendees of the Lowcountry region's September luncheon. "I say, 'Over-promise. Over-deliver!'"

Pringle, of the Beaufort-based Pringle Agency, challenged the group to constantly find ways to achieve a greater impact and stretch the client's dollar through integrated marketing – an approach she pioneered as founder of her own Atlanta public relations firm.

She gave the group several case studies that illustrated how to hit homeruns instead of playing it safe.

Anheuser-Busch was looking to sponsor the typical beach party in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Pringle thought bigger. She assembled architects and artists alike and constructed the "World's Largest Sandcastle" – a five-story creation that garnered national media attention.

The Ford Motor Company wanted to donate \$300,000 to charity and earn a photo-op. Pringle took things many steps further. It was the mid-1980s and the Atlanta Fulton County Zoo was awash in bad publicity, having been named by "Parade" magazine as one of the worst zoos in America. Some in the community were calling for the closure of the fa-

Upstate: Bob Mihalic speaks at fall luncheon

Bob Mihalic, former WYFF broadcaster and current governmental affairs coordinator for Greenville Count, recently joined SCPRSA's Upstate group. Mihalic discussed how improving an organizations' internal communications can improve the impact of its external communications. He also spoke about techniques and tactics public relations professionals can use to optimize their impressions and coverage with the media.

Some of Mihalic's pointers:

- The most important stories in a TV newsroom are weather or health

Does Integrity Pay? By Wes Cantrell

Midlands: Wes Cantrell spoke on integrity a luncheon last fall

Every time I hear this question, I wonder what would happen if organized crime did an IPO. Since their profits are enormous, no doubt the offering would be oversubscribed. Certainly no one would tout their ethics. Their customer relations and human resource policies are indeed problematic. Obviously crime pays in the short term, but does integrity actually pay?

My first business was a paper route. In our community most folks believed that a good reputation was the most valuable thing you could possibly have, more important than money or anything else. At the age 13, I applied that principle to my business. It was obvious that customers loved a dependable delivery, even in foul weather. Customers loved a dry paper, placed behind the screen door, safe from dogs etc....

There was only one shareholder and one employee so there was only one business relationship where integrity came into play, my relationship with customers. Integrity applied to my first business experience paid off quite well.

There is no better growth engine than loyal customers who continue to buy and recommend your products to others. Increased profits always

result from lower turnover and a highly productive work force. This combination, happy customers and a loyal workforce, always yields happy shareholders.

She organized an integrated marketing campaign that both highlighted Ford's sponsorship and kick-started a landmark capital campaign for the reborn Zoo Atlanta. Pringle arranged for a crew from Atlanta's ABC affiliate to travel to Africa with the new zoo director to film an hour-long special. Then a series of public events at the zoo culminated in a 25th birthday bash for the zoo's most famous resident, silverback gorilla Willie B. More than 2,000 people turned out for Willie's party, including news media from as far away as Japan. Ford further stamped its commitment to Zoo Atlanta when The Ford African Rain Forest opened in 1988.

"The idea is, we stretched the client's dollar out over a whole year, through a series of events – not just one photo-op," Pringle, who lives on Fripp Island, told the luncheon attendees.

Pringle said she was never embarrassed to ask for advice, and to build on what has worked well for others.

"A fool learns from experience," she said. "A wise man learns from the experience of others."

related. If you can find a way to tie your pitch into one of these subjects, you'll have better luck getting TV coverage.

- Always have a visual in mind when you pitch a news story. Even newspaper reporters are doing their own video these days to link to their Web stories.
- You can't get enough information from the people you work with and for. The more you get to know people, the more you learn about behind-the-scenes stories you can pitch to the news media.

result from lower turnover and a highly productive work force. This combination, happy customers and a loyal workforce, always yields happy shareholders.

In the business world, there is constant change. The trick is in recognizing what must never change —while at the same time driving major changes that are necessary in any successful organization. This process always produces true success. In our book, *High Performance Ethics*, Jim Lucas and I build our case around 10 timeless principles that are thousands of years old. These principles never change.

Does integrity pay? When we look at those who embrace these timeless principles in the treatment of all involved in the business, there is no question that integrity pays—year after year. And what's more, those who run the company have something more valuable than money—a good reputation and the peace of mind—knowing that they always did the right thing.

Wes Cantrell is the retired CEO of Lanier Worldwide Inc.

Fall Development Conference

In October, SCPRSA practitioners gathered in Columbia for the chapter's Fall Professional Development Conference. The conference, which was held in the Colonial Life Arena, featured national speakers and timely content.

"Professionals across South Carolina came to learn about how to better understand the issues that will most vigorously advance their clients' businesses and that will enable them to more productively run their own businesses," said 2008 SCPRSA President Reed Bolton Byrum, APR, Fellow PRSA. "SCPRSA delivered tools to practitioners that could be applied the next day to making stronger professionals with stronger bottom lines."

Track 1 attendees participated in a workshop led by Ira W. Yellen, APR, Fellow PRSA, president/CEO of First Experience Communications in Connecticut. Ira's workshop entitled, "Are You Running Your Business or is Your Business Running You?" was aimed at agency owners and independent practitioners.

Yellen discussed setting business goals, sustaining a marketing and sales plan, profit and compensation models and business issues with workshop attendees. He also shared many resources, materials and best practices he uses in running his own firm.

Highlights from Yellen's workshop include:

- If you don't have your personal and financial goals well thought out, you will be a slave to your firm, and eventually you will not want to have your own agency.
- Hire or retain professionals that are smarter than you, compliment your personality and know how to work in a team spirit.
- Fire clients who are always questioning your fee and costs.
- Profile the type of client you want and work toward that goal.
- Take three to four weeks of vacation a year.
- The key to surviving in today's challenging business environment is delivering consistent performance over time.
- If you can't measure what marketing and public relations contribute to your bottom line then you are not delivering for yourself, what your clients require you to deliver for them.
- Audit your business every year.
- Integrate yourself into what your client is thinking. Make your services so needed, there is no debate about using you.

Relive the National Conference Experience

Visit comprehension.prsa.org and read the firsthand experiences of industry thought leaders, session speakers and guest bloggers at the PRSA International Conference in Detroit. Watch opening keynote webcast of Craig Newmark, provided by our "Official Webcast Provider" Thomson-Reuters. Paula Tutman, WDIV news reporter, hosts the session "How Social Media Creates a More Democratic Society" with the "Craig" of Craigslist. Read Tactics and The Strategist Online's in-depth coverage of Conference highlights.

Lyn Mettler Receives National Exposure

Lyn Mettler, owner of Mettler Public Relations and president of Step Ahead Web Strategies, a company that helps clients engage and manage Web 2.0 tools, was recently featured in both the "Wall Street Journal" and on MSNBC.com discussing how small businesses can best engage social media. Visit StepAheadWebStrategies.com to read the articles.

Track 2 focused on traditional public relations procedures, as well as Web 2.0 convergence. There were several speakers— Kara Sproles Mock, APR, Steven Behm, Kim Curnutt and Marcia Purday, APR.

Marcia Purday's workshop was titled "The Convergence of the Web and Traditional Media Relations." She focused on explaining how media was not only evolving to mainstream web, but it was also getting extremely personalized. Each web user is able to customize their "web lives."

Purday explained how companies and agencies should be targeting "uber niches" with the news. She broke audiences down into four groups:

1. Integrators – these are educated, highly connected news consumers with an average age of 44. Television is their main source of news, but they also gather news from traditional newspapers and internet resources.
2. Net-Newsters – these are affluent, highly educated news consumers with an average age of 34. They go to the web for all news and read magazines as their "traditional media." They are the only group interested in blogging.
3. Traditionalists – these are older, less affluent consumers with an average age of 54. They gather all of their news from television.
4. Disengaged – these are less educated, less affluent consumers who have a very low interest in current events. They don't get news from any outlet.

Purday acknowledges that for your clients, you must figure out your audiences based on these groups and use the media outlet that best suits the group. Also, she suggests that you should highly personalize your messages. Understand your audience and know what they want in their news.

She also suggests, when pitching stories, use the names of the reporter or editor involved and explain why each story would benefit them. This will not only help in getting more coverage, but it will also increase the credibility of you and your clients.

2009 Mercury Awards

Save the date for the 2009 Mercury Awards: April 30, 2009 at The Hall at Senate and Canal Streets in downtown Columbia. The SCPRSA Mercury and Silver Wing Awards Competitions are open to anyone in the communications or public relations field in South Carolina. Mercury Awards recognize public relations programs and campaigns. Silver Wing Awards recognize outstanding tactics used in public relations. Individual awards recognize the accomplishments of four public relations practitioners (or others) in South Carolina. A call for entries started in December 2008 and we encourage you all to participate. For more information, contact Ashley Sherry, 2009 Mercury Awards Chair at ashley.sherry@firstcitizensonline.com or visit the Mercury Awards blog at <http://mercuryawards2009.blogspot.com/>.

Your News Here

Do you have news to share with other SCPRSA members? We would like to include your news in the quarterly newsletter. Email scprsa.newsletter@gmail.com or contact someone on the newsletter committee with your ideas.

2009 SCPRSA Leadership Announced

The South Carolina Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (SCPRSA) is pleased to announce its 2009 Executive Board. With combined experience across multiple industries and areas of expertise, the Board will focus on executing SCPRSA's Strategic Plan and promoting the organization as the leader and pre-eminent advocate for advancing the public relations profession and the public relations professional. The Executive Board is representative of all regions of South Carolina and was elected by SCPRSA members in November.

President – Brett Turner, APR. As Public Relations Director for Jackson-Dawson Marketing Solutions, a Greenville firm offering fully integrated marketing communications services, Turner is responsible for strategic planning and daily oversight of all of Jackson-Dawson's public relations clients. This client list includes BMW, Michelin, Milliken and the Greenville Hospital System, among others. He has extensive experience in sports journalism, sports marketing and public relations and achieved the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation in 2006. Turner is a graduate of Clemson University and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a minor in Communications/Journalism.

President-Elect – Melissa Flynn, APR. Flynn is Vice President, Director of Public Relations at Rawle Murdy in Charleston. In this role she serves a wide range of clients from Nickelodeon to Piggly Wiggly to MeadWestvaco with an emphasis on crisis communications and issues management, community and media relations and employee relations. Flynn has served as Secretary and Board Member at Large for SCPRSA and is a 2004 recipient of a national Silver Anvil Award of Excellence from PRSA. She received a Bachelors degree in Communications from the University of Michigan and a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Tennessee.

Vice President – Allison Skipper. As Public Relations Associate for the South Carolina State Ports Authority in Charleston, Skipper handles external communications for the organization, which employs more than 580 people and has a \$45 billion economic impact on the state. Before being named SCPRSA Vice President, Skipper served a two-year term as SCPRSA Lowcountry Regional Director and also chaired the 2008 Mercury Awards, SCPRSA's signature event. She was named SCPRSA's 2006 "Rookie of the Year." Skipper graduated magna cum laude and With Honors from the South Carolina Honors College at the University of South Carolina.

Secretary – Ashley Sherry. As Corporate Communications Specialist for First Citizens in Columbia, Sherry handles public relations, media relations and a variety of corporate communications for the company in addition to managing internal and external corporate events. She has been named a rising business star in The State newspaper's annual "20 under 40" listing and was the 2005 SCPRSA "Rookie of the Year." She also currently chairs the 2009 Mercury Awards. Sherry received a Bachelors degree in English and Journalism and a Masters degree in Professional Communication from Clemson University.

Treasurer – Penny Delaney Cothran. Cothran is a Vice President and Director of Communications at the South Carolina Bankers Association in Columbia. In this role, she is responsible for all media relations, crisis communications, print and Web communications. In addition, she edits Palmetto Banker, the organization's flagship magazine. Cothran is a multiple Mercury Award winner and has won Best in the Business awards from the South Carolina Society of Association Executives. Previously she served as SCPRSA Secretary and was Professional Development Chair. Cothran received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Carolina School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Save the Date

February 10
Midlands Luncheon
"Successful Email Strategies"
The Summit Club
Columbia, SC

February 10
APR Coffee Chat
Coffee Underground
Greenville, SC

February 17
Lowcountry Luncheon
Charleston, SC

February 17
Upstate Luncheon
Greenville, SC

April 30
2009 Mercury Awards
Columbia, SC

SCPRSA to host "APR Coffee Chat" in the Upstate

Have you ever wondered just exactly what the APR process is? Are you looking for a professional challenge in 2009? Do you think the APR process is intimidating and don't know where to turn?

The 2009 APR committee will host an informational meeting at Coffee Underground – 1 E. Coffee St., Greenville – on Tuesday, Feb. 10, for individuals who are interested in pursuing their APR (Accreditation in Public Relations). The free one-hour session will begin at 6 p.m.

Attendees will have a chance to speak with individuals who have already received their APR, and will also have a chance to learn about the necessary requirements to obtain the APR designation.

"We are committed to making ourselves available for everyone who wishes to pursue their APR this year," said Dusty Deming, APR, chair of the APR Committee. "This first meeting will address everything from the application process to the final exam, and our committee is looking forward to supporting everyone involved."

Interested individuals are encouraged to e-mail Kim Banks, APR, at kim@simkocomm.com to submit questions, which will then be addressed during the informational meeting.

A special thanks to the SCPRSA newsletter committee: Brooke Bailey (Midlands), Amy Bomar (Upstate), Pete Nardi (Lowcountry) and Susan Patrick (Upstate). If you would like to serve on the newsletter committee, please contact Brett Turner, APR at Brett.Turner@jdsouth.com.