

2008 Empire Awards

PRSA Capital Region creates professional awards

The PRSA Capital Region Chapter is proud to announce the creation of the Empire Awards. The inaugural awards ceremony will honor excellence in public relations and communications in eleven separate categories spanning both the profit and non-profit fields. As a chapter, we are proud to announce the creation of the Empire Awards. Public relations professionals play an integral role in the success of organizations, agencies and campaigns throughout the region and we felt that there was no better time to begin to recognize and celebrate those achievements.

The awards will include nine categories, recognizing superior performance in public relations campaigns, media relations events, public affairs and integrated campaigns, among others. In addition to these categories, the Empire Awards will honor a public relations practitioner for their proven track record in the field as well as someone who has demonstrated excellence in communications.

The awards ceremony luncheon will take place in early November and the location of the event and the final deadlines on the categories will be announced soon, so stay tuned.

As a chapter we are seeing significant growth in membership and the board feels that now is the perfect time to honor excellence in a continually competitive field. As professionals we are all too often working to promote and advance our clients or organizations, it is now time to begin to shine the light on the cutting edge work being performed by public relations practitioners here in the Capital Region.



A Letter from President Tom Nardacci

Dear Fellow PRSA Members,



As we enter the second quarter of the year, I wanted to write and fill you in on some Capital Region Chapter activities.

In an effort to further advance the professional, we have launched a new series called “Wednesday Workshops,” where local senior practitioners will lead discussions on a variety of topics. This series is meant as a skills building opportunity and is an effort to work collaboratively. Missy Shorey kicked off the series in April and she set the bar pretty high. In June, Megan Baker gave us an insiders look into newsrooms.

We are also working to advance the profession. We are pleased to announce the first-ever Capital Region Public Relations Awards, called the “Empire Awards.” Modeled after the PRSA Anvil, Eric Wohlleber from Zone 5 and Andrea Colby from E3 Communications, spearheaded the effort to organize this year’s calendar. As a learning exercise, Eric and I put in some weekend hours to judge the Wichita, KS Chapter’s “Clarus Awards.” The Board is very excited to present the Empire Awards, and we believe it will help to strengthen the profession in Tech Valley.

Past Chapter President Bonny Betancourt of the American Chemistry Council has been working on our new website, which should be up and running shortly.

Finally, we have a flurry of events scheduled for 2008 including our yearly Meet the Media Panel, to another day at Giants Camp this summer, and our Post Election Journalist Wrap-Up.

Stay tuned for an exciting year, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any ideas!

Sincerely,

Tom Nardacci
President, PRSA Capital Region

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Zone 5 Public Affairs-Public Relations Division Keeps Growing



Earlier this year, Zone 5 formally announced the establishment of a Public Affairs and Public Relations division and they continue to grow. John D'Alessandro has been named Vice President of Public Affairs and is tasked with growing the division. D'Alessandro has more

than 30 years of hands-on experience providing counsel to some of the regions most respected companies and developing outreach strategies for numerous high profile projects.

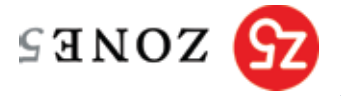
Bill Schwarz has been named Vice President of Public Relations. With more than 20 years in the marketing and public affairs arena, he has extensive experience in higher education. At Union College Bill directed all government and corporate relations efforts serving as the institutional contact with local, state and federal government entities and the industry sector.

Eric Wohlleber, former broadcast reporter and producer, was also added to the Division's talent pool as Public Relations Senior Account Executive. Mr. Wohlleber has extensive experience in media and government relations and has worked with many regional not-for-profit organizations.

Zone 5 is a full service communications agency providing marketing, public relations. New media and strategic branding counsel and services to top regional and national entities. The company started in 1989 to serve the needs of the printing industry and has grown to include expertise in the areas of health care, higher education, financial services, economic development and technology/manufacturing.

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PRSA Capital Region Chapter

PRSA Northeast District News

Jo Ann LeSage Nelson, APR Immediate Past District Chair and 2008 District Board Member

PRSA's Northeast District is busy planning the annual fall district conference, to be held in Buffalo on Thursday, September 11 at the Adam's Mark Hotel. In a tip of the hat to Buffalo's famous chicken wings, the program is entitled "Beyond Winging It: PR Strategies for Success."

The full-day program is shaping up to be a great collection of relevant, important and informative sessions that will help all public relations practitioners – those just out of college and more senior professionals – perform their jobs more expertly.

PRSA Chair-Elect Michael Cherenson will be the event's opening speaker; he'll share his thoughts on trends in the public relations industry. At lunchtime, David Jones, vice president for digital media at Hill & Knowlton, Toronto, will give the keynote address. Conference committee members, most of whom are from the host chapter in Buffalo, have reached out to other industry leaders and have some very interesting prospects for speakers.



Other session topics planned include crisis communications, freelancing, new media, government affairs, women in PR, internal communications, and the transition to the classroom (from practitioner to professor).

This year's conference will also feature a new student track with several sessions planned for PR students who have yet to enter the workforce. Topics include interviewing, resume writing and recruiting; meeting working professionals; and a look back after the first year in a job.

Conference planners have also hinted that attendees will end the day with Buffalo chicken wings and Labatt beer!

Mark Thursday, September 11 on your calendar and make plans to travel to Buffalo with a fellow PR professional for this full day of professional development. And watch for more details throughout the spring and summer!

Q&A With a Journalist Marlene Kennedy

Marlene Kennedy, Times Union Business Editor



What are the things that you most enjoy about being a journalist?

I like being able to put the pieces of the "puzzle" together that form news: a building permit might tip us off to a big project, as might a deed filed with a county clerk. I also like being able to answer my own (and I presume others') curiosity: Why is there earth-moving

going on at that parcel of land? Why are that storefront's windows papered over? Why are selected pieces of property being bought up by an out-of-towner? I also like the "Wow!" rush that comes when you've put the pieces of the puzzle together and discovered something that no one else has reported on yet.

What stories are of interest to you and the Business Section?

We like stories that tell about innovation and change in businesses that may have impact beyond the business itself. (And, of course, we like stories that we get to break first!)

What is the best way for a PR person to contact you? How about any pet peeves about what a PR person should not do?

Email is the best means of contact. And my pet peeve relates to that too: Getting a follow up call a day or two later inquiring "Did you get my email?" Since I literally get a couple hundred emails daily, I need more than "my email" as a point of reference.

During the course of your career, has there been one story that

stands out the most or that you recall as your favorite piece?

The most recent one that comes to mind was the tip in 2002 that Scott Sullivan, fallen CFO of WorldCom Inc. under Bernard Ebbers, was a Bethlehem High School graduate. This was at the time that WorldCom and other big U.S. companies were being crucified in the accounting scandals that eventually led to the new Sarbanes-Oxley reporting requirements. Your immediate reaction on Sullivan was "Say what?!" But then we began to assemble the puzzle pieces and discovered that Sullivan, who started his career as an accountant with KPMG in Albany, signed on in the mid-1980s with Francesco Galesi, principal of the Galesi Group real estate empire, who then was dabbling in telecommunications. (I remembered us writing about Galesi and telecom when I was editor at the Business Review, and so could supply some context. "Institutional knowledge" does indeed pay off!) One of Galesi's companies was acquired by an entity that eventually became WorldCom; Sullivan became CFO of the company and Galesi became a director on the WorldCom board. Our story gave an Albany connection to a big national story.

Generation Y and Social Media

Sheila Fath, Account Executive, Shorey Public Relations &
Lindsay Burke, Communications Specialist, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden



Not too often can Generation Y impart wisdom to their superiors with great acceptance. However, when it comes to the world of new media, they have a keen advantage over their 'elders' and can likely teach them a thing or two. We would like to share some basic knowledge from a communications perspective.

Social Networking Sites

In the most basic terms, a social networking site connects its members through an online portal. It is parallel to a networking event. Your online profile serves as a virtual business card. It is one of the first steps you should take when adopting a new media strategy.

Video Posting

YouTube is a resource where anyone can upload video content. Google the phrase "Will it blend?". These video postings increased Blendtec sales exponentially. We guarantee you will find it inspiring!

Blogging

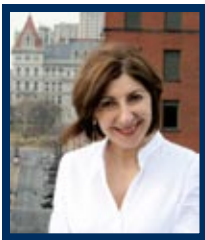
Blogs are another very simple, albeit powerful, form of new media. Some blogs are personal, while others are topic based. Either way, blogs act as essential information sources and are an excellent way to quickly reach a broad audience.

How to Measure Impact

The most frustrating thing is how to measure the ROI impact of social media placements for our clients. Us PR folks continue to remain accountable for our actions (and budgets). Just as we decided on a common metric, we discover the advantages of utilizing social media outlets and guess what, we are at square one for measurement again.

New Staff at Sawchuk Brown

Sawchuk Brown Associates



Sawchuk Brown Associates has hired Rita Petithory as graphic designer. Petithory's responsibilities at the firm include creating and designing brochures, logos, direct mail pieces and advertising campaigns for a diverse group of clients ranging from finance and real estate to entertainment and education. In addition, Petithory will utilize her artistic skills and business knowledge for print production.

Before joining Sawchuk Brown Associates, Petithory worked as an independent graphic designer, with clients that included a celebrity chef, a large urban medical center, a television shopping network, a medical products company, an international financial corporation, a real-estate developer, as well as several high-end restaurants. At one time, Petithory was also a sales representative for Olympic Airways.

Accreditation Study Guide

Mary Bray Gallagher (APR)

The Study Guide for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) is now available for download at no cost at www.praccreditation.com. This guide is a great tool for anyone preparing for the Accreditation exam.

- » **Public Relations: A Management Function**
- » **Ethics & Law**
- » **Communication Models and Theories**
- » **Research**
- » **Planning**
- » **Implementation**
- » **Evaluation**
- » **Crisis Communication Management**
- » **Business Literacy**
- » **Media Relations**
- » **Using Information Technology Efficiently**
- » **History**
- » **Advanced Communication Skills**

In addition to covering the topics on the exam it provides tips for preparation, tips for Readiness Review, and tips for the computer-based exam. It also includes case studies and public relations plan examples.

The local Chapter also has tools available for members interested in pursuing Accreditation including texts from the recommended reading list. If you are interested in borrowing text books or learning more about earning your APR, please contact the Chapter Accreditation Chair:

Mary Bray Gallagher, APR
calliopecommunications@wildblue.net
(518) 868-9799

WEDNESDAY WORKSHOPS

Held at Professor Java's from 8:00 - 9:00am
\$10 for members, \$20 for non-members

These workshops are intended to keep with the PRSA tagline of Advancing the Profession and the Professional. We hope you can join us for these informative and social mornings.

September 17

David Singer, Albany Law School
"Pitching and Securing Stories, and Preparing/Managing Your CEO"

October 15

Brendan Kennedy, Sawchuk Brown
"Podcasting"

November 12

Jon Pierce & Joann LeSage, Pierce Communications,
"PR Lean & Mean"

December 10

Dan Forbush, Skidmore College
"Social Networks as a PR Tool"

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Public Relations 101

Missy Shorey, CEO & President, Shorey Public Relations



"Those of us in the Public Relations Field are essentially the peacekeepers between clients and customers", explains Shorey to a crowded room. She is the President of Shorey Public Relations, focusing on technology, government, luxury lifestyle, and healthcare services, and within three years has grown to the third largest firm.

The early morning presentation focused on a number of key issues facing the profession from the critical fundamentals, to the minute details often forgotten when deadlines quickly approach. Other issues included were a check list of "essential program elements", a must have list for any professional in the field looking to make sure that every angle of a job is covered.

The morning concluded with an engaging conversation between Missy and the audience, which was primarily comprised of other Public Relations professional and professors from businesses and Universities in the Capital District. As the workshop ended everyone continued on with their day, refreshed with new ideas and new connections with others in the field.

Media Relations

Megan Baker, CEO & President, Baker Public Relations



Megan Baker is the President of Baker Public Relations. As a former anchor and reporter with Fox23 News and Capital News 9, Megan understands how to make media relations work towards your advantage. Baker Public Relations has spent years building relationships with reporters, assignment managers and editors.

The presentation covered all the key topics and minor details a professional should practice to build strong media relations.

Tips For Talking To The Media

- » Know your message.
- » Avoid jargon.
- » Be honest.
- » Keep answers short and concise.
- » Remember: "no comment" is a comment.
- » Practice. Practice. Practice.

Member Spotlight Daniel I. Curan



What has it been like for you to serve on the board of PRSA Capital Region?

I've been proud to serve as a board member of this chapter since 1997. When I think back over those years, I see all of the faces of the past board members who have made the success of the chapter possible. We've had some lean years, and some very lean years at the beginning, but now that the chapter is on a sound financial footing we

are able to step the chapter operations up a notch, sponsor more professional development events and bring in more industry experts.

One of the main benefits of membership is the opportunity to pursue leadership opportunities. I really enjoyed my two terms as chapter president in 2003 and 2005. Just as today, our board members in those two years really worked hard and delivered some great member benefits. The annual half-day event was held at Time Warner Cable in Albany and it brought another dimension to the event. We made a concerted effort to connect PR professionals with members of the media (no one else delivers that benefit). During one of those terms we were named as a fastest growing PRSA chapter in the nation and our numbers have been increasing steadily since that time.

How has being a member of PRSA benefited your career?

If you look at the Top Ten benefits of PRSA membership you'll see that "Networking Opportunities" is right at the top of the list. I couldn't agree more.

Working in the association or union environment I've found that I'm usually the only or senior-most PR practitioner in an organization. PRSA gives me the opportunity to connect with like-minded people who share a common interest.

Membership has also given me the ability to meet people from outside of the Capital District that I would otherwise not have the opportunity to meet. If I did not belong to a national association I don't really think that I would have been able to invite Rhoda Weiss, APR, of California, national chair and CEO, to be the keynote speaker at our annual event last November.

My membership in PRSA has also enabled me to serve as a judge of the PRSA Silver Anvils awards competition, the association's national awards program, which is a great way to learn from the experts who have submitted entries on a broad range of topics in a variety of competition categories. As chapter delegate to the national assembly, I've made some great friendships with members in other chapters in other cities.

What would you tell people that were thinking of joining?

As of this writing, PRSA national is preparing a promotional video on the benefits of membership. Jeff Julin, 2008 national chair and CEO, asked if I would consent to be interviewed. When he asked that very same question I looked him straight in the eye and said "It's not so much a question of 'Can I afford PRSA membership?' as it is a question of 'Can you afford NOT to be a member of PRSA? What other organization gives you the tools to do your job better, gives you access to the people you need to meet and helps you grow professionally?' Join today.

"But most important of all is the professional development offerings that enable me to keep my skills current and keep a step ahead of the competition."

PRSA

» Dan Curran, Past President of PRSA Capital Region Board, past director-at-large, has worked in governmental, union, advertising and trade association settings. He served as a chapter delegate to the national assembly and secretary of the Northeast district for PRSA. He recently relocated to Atlanta, GA.