

news & views

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February 2002

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MONTHLY PROGRAM

Wednesday, February 13, 2002, 6 - 9 p.m.

LOCATION

Holiday Inn Select, 5 Blossom Street, Boston (@ Cambridge St.)

PROGRAM

February Program: Overcoming Spokesperson Roadblocks

COST

\$45 members; \$55 non-members; \$20 Students.

RESERVATIONS

Advance registration is required. RSVP by February 11th, 2002. Send a check, payable to PRSA/Boston Chapter, to Paul Wetzel, APR, Chapter Administrator, 45 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02109, no later than Monday, December 10, or, email: wetzelpaul@msn.com. Master Card and VISA are accepted.

Special thanks to Kyle Potvin from Vorhaus & Company for serving as editor *and* guest editor this month. With Valentine's Day around the corner, Kyle found some surprising ideas about the power of love in - of all places - *Fast Company*. Don't miss *Love is the Killer App: Author Tim Sanders Says Good Guys Do Finish First*. She also invited Schneider & Associates to tell us about their Sweethearts in, *Sustaining Sweet Success: NECCO and Its Top-selling Sweethearts®*.

Here's the rest of what you'll find in this month's issue:

- Crises and Spokesperson Training: We've Got Both!
- Coming in February: Overcoming Spokesperson Roadblocks

PRSA Boston Accepting Applications for Second Annual Grant Program for Communications Students and Researchers

PRSA Boston is accepting applications for its 2002-2003 Grant Program, which provides financial support for a worthy college student or researcher in the communications field.

Undergraduate and graduate students attending a college in eastern Massachusetts are eligible, as are individuals conducting communications or public relations research. Additionally, the

- Crisis Management in the Age of Terrorism
- Solo Act: Ann Getman - *A Logical Transition*
- PRSA Boston Accepting Applications for 2nd Annual Grant Program
- Tech 2002 Conference -- Not Just for Techies Anymore
- New PR Certificate Program at Emerson
- Give us 15 minutes, We'll give you a more relevant chapter
- Call for Presentations for the PRSA 2002 International Conference
- February Connections

grant can be used by a student working in an unpaid internship at a nonprofit organization. Worth at least \$500, the grant(s) will be awarded based on financial need and academic merit.

The number of grants awarded and the dollar amounts will be based on qualified applicants and the income generated by the PRSA Boston endowment fund.

Last year's \$1,000 grant was won by Pamela Mae Borland, a senior at Emerson College and president of the college's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter.

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Crises and Spokesperson Training: We've Got Both!

**By Jeff Seideman,
APR, President, PRSA Boston**

I'd like to claim some prescience for the Chapter on the selection of recent program topics, but I doubt anyone would believe me (frankly, they were selected months ago). Nevertheless, this month's program, an interactive Spokesperson Training Workshop, combined with last month's topic, Crisis Communications, plays perfectly into what appears to be a flood of recent high profile news stories.

The Spokesperson Workshop is Wednesday, February 13th, at the Holiday Inn Select in Boston, featuring Suzanne Bates, Bates Communications, Inc., former WBZ-TV anchor and speaker coach; Sandy Lish, Principal, The Castle Group; Diane Saunders, VP Communications & Public Affairs, Nellie Mae Education Foundation. (See below for all the details.)

A wise PR person should be able to filter out the underlying issues for an objective analysis of how well the people and organizations involved are applying the rules of crisis communications (minimizing the negative and getting back to business-as-usual) and media training (helping senior execs carry the organization's branding and reputation ball). I'm sure we'll have a program on reputation management (creating and promoting the good stuff) in the upcoming months to complete the trilogy of strategic issues management.

How would you handle these current situations based on lessons learned at last month's crisis communications program and what do you think this month's Spokesperson Training program will cover? Cardinal Law's problems arising out of the John Geoghan sex abuse matter; Ken Lay of Enron, who resigned in the wake of his company's collapse (his wife and kids were giving extensive interviews on the "Today" show, trying to shore up his reputation); Arthur Andersen vis-à-vis Enron; the problems facing American Muslims since Sept. 11th; Mike Tyson's attempt to regain his boxing license following his meltdown at his

press conference with Lennox Lewis; and the government's handling of detainees at Guantanamo Bay.

With these and what seem like a hundred other crises in the news these days, it would be easy to forget that most of what PR practitioners do is mid-level, meat-and-potatoes publicity, media relations, investor relations, etc., that has little to do with crisis communications. But heaven help us if the dam breaks and we're not prepared to handle it.

We're making good progress on our membership survey, which you should be seeing in your email inbox in the near future. Former President Ann Getman is heading up the effort and has begun with a small focus group to make sure we're asking relevant questions.

The point of all this is to make sure your leaders are driving the organization in the direction it ought to be going in and not...well...where we just assume it ought to be going. Meetings with large agency presidents have already indicated we have been under serving this very important group (they sign the checks!). As a result, we're looking into developing an executive-oriented parallel program track that will look at addressing agency and general business issues. We'll keep you informed.

So, please make sure you fill out and send in the member questionnaire when you get it. It's important.

Finally, The Florida legislature is considering implementing a services tax, which would include public relations services. The Sunshine Chapter (Florida) of PRSA is neutral on the matter, with its board split. Debbie Mason (dmason@masonstrategic.com) of the Board is soliciting any materials that have already been created to fight OR support such a tax, including background studies, Q and A sheets, or any other helpful materials. If you have any such materials and are so inclined, send them Debbie's way. She'd appreciate it.

February Program: Overcoming Spokesperson Roadblocks

Are your key spokespeople, your CEO, clients, board members or technical experts clear, dynamic and unflappable when they speak on air or in print, or are they anxious, inconsistent or easily distracted?

This interactive workshop is designed for mid-level agency and in-house practitioners and those who are themselves spokespersons for their organizations.

Using case studies, anecdotes and small group dynamics, an expert panel with agency, spokesperson and journalist perspectives will review the art and science of training spokespersons.

Suzanne Bates, former WBZ-TV anchor and President and CEO of Bates Communications, Inc., will speak from her 20 years as a reporter coaxing stories from reluctant speakers, and overcoming the most common problems in providing media training;

Sandy Lish, Principal and founder, The Castle Group, will address the value of and rationale behind training speakers, how to maximize the experience for the trainer and trainee, and how to customize training to address individuals' specific needs;

Diane Saunders, VP Communications & Public Affairs, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, will share her experience as a spokesperson on national and local network TV and radio, and tips on identifying who should - and should not - speak on behalf of your organization.

WHEN: Wednesday, February 13, 2002, 6-9 PM. Networking and Buffet: 6-7 PM, Program 7- 9, including Q&A

WHERE: Holiday Inn Select, 5 Blossom Street, Boston (@ Cambridge St.)

Cost: PRSA members: \$45; Nonmembers and guests: \$55; Students \$20. Advance registration is required before end of day Monday, Feb 11.

Send registration information to Paul Wetzel, 45 Broad Street, Boston, 02109 or fax to 617-423-7812 or e-mail wetzelpaul@msn.com. Master Card and Visa accepted. NOTE: no-shows will be billed.

New Public Relations Certificate Program at Emerson College

This March, Emerson College is launching a new graduate Public Relations certificate program. The program is a fourteen-week (25 class) comprehensive program for students who have entry-level public relations or communications experience and are looking to advance their careers and/or sharpen their skills.

The program's approach is interactive, fast-paced and practical - providing students with the advanced skills needed as public relations professionals. The program consists of dedicated classes on the core functions of public relations and incorporates a comprehensive capstone project. Students will learn basic business and marketing concepts to understand the role and support function of public relations. Students will be exposed to industry experts, case studies, writing assignments, practical applications, role-playing, brainstorming and problem solving.

An open house is on Thursday, February 7, at Emerson College, 80 Boylston Street in the Emerson Room, 6:00-7:30pm. PRSA members can expect to receive a mailing and postcard on the new program. For more information or to schedule an in-house discussion on the program, please contact fellow PRSA member and program coordinator Janice Foley at 508-541-0087 or janif@mediaone.net.

January Program: Crisis Management in the Age of Terrorism

Boston University's Professor Otto Lerbinger, APR, Fellow PRSA, guided a room full of Boston-area PR pros through a highly interactive workshop and crisis "competition" last month. The program, combined plenty of audience participation, a crisis case study competition featuring four brave (and very smart) volunteers, and lessons drawn from Dr. Lerbinger's many decades of experience as a crisis management consultant, author and teacher.

The unusual program was the brainchild of PRSA Boston board members Nancy Sterling and Jack Jackson. Judging from the "buzz" after the program, members and guests enjoyed the opportunity to observe and judge the real world simulations put together - and torn apart - by Dr. Lerbinger.

One crisis management team was presented with a product boycott launched against Kraft Foods and the other a grassroots anti-"Fabreeze" campaign facing Procter and Gamble. Following a thirty-minute lecture and overview from Dr. Lerbinger, the teams re-

turned to the ballroom and presented their recommendations.

Guided by Dr. Lerbinger, the teams and audience were quickly confronted with difficult questions. What factors did you use to determine if this situation was an isolated incident or a genuine crisis? How did you calibrate your responses so as not to "shine a spotlight on a firefly?" (Thank you Diego Sanchez.) Did your decision to notify mass media unduly empower your critics or protect your organization? Did thorough knowledge of the strength and history of the opposition groups - or best guesses - guide your responses? Did your organization have early warning and monitoring systems in place? Did you cultivate credible third parties for support? Did you exploit the two-way capabilities of the Internet to anticipate, manage and respond? How did 9-11 influence your decisions? How much did you consider the needs of your internal audiences?

Who won? The Procter & Gamble team (in a very close vote) the audience, and hopefully, the organizations whose reputations we help build and defend.

Solo Act: Brief sketches of Boston PRSA's top sole practitioners

A Logical Transition By Peter Golden

How to put Ann Getman into context? Think seasoned PR pro; think warm friend and professional colleague. As a former PRSA Boston chapter president, Ann's understated sense of humor and gentle style have endeared her to many. In the not-for-profit, government and institutional worlds on which her practice has centered for past twenty years, Ann is the go-to person for big issue strategy and program development. But listen to Ann herself for a moment:

"What I thought I was going to do in 1980 when I first got into this business was make a logical transition out of academe and into communications. As a sociologist I was fascinated how under certain conditions, people would act against their own best interests. In the world of communications, this translated into something different: what did people think they

knew and what kind of information would help them make better choices?"

After graduate school Ann worked in community organizing. Then, as a communicator, to her delight she found she could still work in public service advocacy, yet reach more people through the media without the grind of leafleting and ringing doorbells.

Her first assignment? At a small ad agency producing public service campaigns for clients like the US Forest Service, Medicare and the Humane Society of the U.S..

"Six years of creative advertising work in public education was great," she says, from her office in Cambridge, "but I increasingly found myself interested in public affairs. I wondered how they would play themselves out on the other side of the street from the one I was used to working. In other words, in the business world."

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(Solo Act-Continued from page 4)

That revelation led to six years in a corporate public relations firm. And that's where Ann got lucky. She found corporate culture no less fascinating than the social environments she had studied in graduate school. She was acting as a bridge between the community and corporations on significant issues.

Once firmly settled in the world of public relations, Ann made her next big career move, setting out on her own as a sole practitioner in 1992. "I wanted to get more choices in what I was doing and to cut down on the barriers between the client and myself that can occur in the agency world," she says.

What holds Ann's attention these days? "Counselor's Academy and the Sole Practitioner's Collaborative in PRSA" she says, "I'm really enjoying myself because I have great clients. These are people who can take my counsel and run with it. I've been able to work in a way that lets me get my hands on the information I need to shape the big picture."

If you've ever wondered how to go about defining a market niche for your own public relations practice, Ann's style is worth observing. "I look for organizations in change," she says, "where leadership is facing a crisis or contending with eroding market share. I evaluate their communications programs through research designed to reveal stakeholder perceptions and factors blocking management messages."

For a short definition of an effective branding process, Ann's methods

are worth noting: "I find out what's getting in the way of positive perception by evaluating messages, relationships and delivery methods. Are they effective? Are strategies working to build identity? That's branding, but in plain English!"

Playing in top form in a game at which she is an acknowledged master, Ann looks back over a career which has included such diverse clients as the Peace Corps, Raytheon and the University of Michigan Business School. And she's still looking for more!

"I love this business because I learn something new every day. I'm privileged to serve great organizations with dynamic leaders who have their eyes on the future. Can you imagine? Frankly, I just can't wait for tomorrow."

(Grant Program-Continued from page 1)

The grant application is available now. **Applicants can obtain a copy by contacting Boston chapter administrator Paul Wetzel, APR, at 617-292-0470 or wetzelpaul@msn.com.**

The deadline for applications is March 15, 2002. The winner(s) will be announced at a chapter meeting later this year, and the 2002 grant(s) will be paid in September.

For more information, please contact Henry Stimpson 508-647-0705, hstimpson@StimpsonCommunications.com.

Call for Presentations for the Public Relations Society of America's 2002 International Conference

The most dynamic gathering of professionals in the public relations industry! We want the best presentations from the most vibrant speakers who can teach, inspire and motivate our attendees. If you're one of these speakers, you're invited to submit your proposal for PRSA's 2002 International Conference in San Francisco, November 16 - 19. For more details, go to www.prsa.org and click on the "2002 International Conference Call for Presentations" button.

This year, we've made it easy for you to submit your proposal online. The on-line submission form is a simple 2-page form. If you do need to submit your proposal by mail, you can download and print the Call for Presentations. If you would like an application mailed to you, contact genevieve.delaurier@prsa.org.

Our Call for Presentations deadlines are earlier this year due to the overwhelming responses from last year. Our review process is extensive and will require more time this year in order to give each proposal the attention it deserves. The firm deadline for receipt of submissions by mail is Friday, February 15, 2002, 5 p.m. EST. The firm deadline for E-mail is Friday, February 22, 2002, 5 p.m. EST. Online submission is preferred.

Recent Reading

Love Is the Killer App: Author Tim Sanders Says Good Guys Do Finish First

Got to love a guy who quotes the Beatles. In his “Love Is the Killer App” article running in *Fast Company* (February 2002), Yahoo Chief Solutions Officer Tim Sanders reminds us that in business all we need is love. It’s about time. In today’s volatile environment, it’s actually the good guys who finish first.

Adapted from his forthcoming book, *Love is a Killer App: How to Win Business and Influence Friends*, due to be published February 14, 2002, Sanders’ article reinforces the importance of developing a powerful knowledge base and solid relationships to share the wisdom with, generously.

“Love is the act of intelligently and sensibly sharing your knowledge, networks, and compassion with your business partners,” Sanders writes. “The secret to being a high-impact leader and the essence of individual and corporate success: Learn as much as you can as quickly as you can and share your knowledge aggressively; expand your network of people who share your values and connect as many of them with each other as possible; and perhaps most important, be as openly human as you can be and find the courage to express genuine emotion in the harried, pressure-filled world of work.”

Sanders adds, “Behave this way not because you expect something in return - a quid pro quo - but because it’s the right way to behave. The less you expect in return for acts of professional generosity, the more you will receive.”

Sanders is a true proponent of learning. He credits his recent read of *Net Gain* by McKinsey consultant John Hagel and Arthur G. Armstrong as the key to winning the Victoria’s Secret business launching the now infamous fashion show webcast. He says, “To be an impact player in business, you simply have to know more than other people know.”

He explains that this means avid reading, appreciating the power of ideas and being able to organize a system for the learning.

Further, passion is what separates the ordinary from the extraordinary. “People who love what they’re doing, who love to learn new things, to meet new people, and to share what and whom they know with others: These are the people who wind up creating the most economic value and, as a result, moving their companies forward.”

For more words of love from Sanders, visit www.fastcompany.com to read the entire article.

February Connections

Full-time Opportunity with Boston Harborfest.

The ideal candidate will have excellent writing/editing skills, be amazingly organized, have boundless energy and enthusiasm, and have the burning desire to learn everything there is to learn about an internationally-renowned event that draws nearly 2.5 million people from around the world to Boston annually during the 4th of July timeframe. The position is partially office administrator...producing various documents, letters and other correspondence as part of the daily activities of this tiny organization (staff counting this position 2-3)...and partially public relations guru/guess...producing press kits to send to media outlets around the world, responding to media inquiries, assisting in organizing and coordinating activities comprising the week-long family-oriented festival, etc., etc.

Send cover letter with resume to: Susan Park, President, Boston Harborfest, Inc., 45 School Street, Boston, MA 02108. Telephone: 617-227-1528; fax: 617-227-1886.

To learn more about the Boston Harborfest: www.bostonharborfest.com

PRSA Tech 2002 Conference: Not Just for Techies Anymore

Early Bird Registration Deadline Extended to February 8, 2002

PRSA's fifth annual Tech Conference, "Relevance and Resiliency in a Changing World," will be held March 3 and 4, 2002 at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel and Towers.

Registrants receive significant cost savings for registering by February 8, 2002; visit <http://www.tech.prsa.org> for rates, specific programming information and to register online. The Sheraton Seattle Hotel & Towers is nearly booked solid. Reservations must be made by February 4, 2002. Phone 1-800-204-6100 and ask for the PRSA Tech Conference room rate.

With a focus on strategic and high-level issues, topics offer value to all communications professionals, regardless of industry. For example, one of the four tracks (with four seminars in each track) examines "Strategies for PR Professionals" with an emphasis on succeeding during these challenging times.

There are 24 seminars and workshops crammed into two days. The Monday luncheon/media panel is outstanding with representatives from The Wall Street Journal, TechTV and CRN and the Northwest's witty moderator, technology industry analyst, journalist and author, FrankCatalano.

Presenters include the top echelon of the country's corporations and agencies, including Intel, Xerox, AT&T, Weyerhaeuser, IBM, Microsoft, RealNetworks, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Blue Cross Blue Shield, as well as Greg Simon, former Chief Domestic Policy Advisor to Vice President Al Gore. Intel's Tracy Koon and Gail Dundas will be discussing "Good Corporate Citizenship" on a global scale. Xerox's Erin Isselmann and HP's Beth Quartarolo, in a separate seminar, will be looking at that issue on a local community basis and how it ties into corporate business objectives.

In the Public Affairs track, Bill Oliver, VP, who is one of AT&T's top corporate communicators, will discuss strategies to bring a campaign focus to public policy issues. Alan Hilburg, a counselor to CEOs, will explain the critical importance of a burgeoning field, "litigation communications" gained from developing programs in more than 40 trials. Weyerhaeuser's VP of communications Montye Male has a perspective about what it takes to win and keep public support, gained from challenging experiences in Forest Products and technology industries.

With such leading edge presentations, you'll be pleased to know that PRSA members are being offered the lowest registration fees: \$325 for members of the Technology Section and Puget Sound Chapter, and \$350 for PRSA members - if registering by February 8, 2002.

Tech 2002 is sponsored by Portent Interactive, Edelman Public Relations Worldwide, Text 100, Activate, Business Wire, Waggener Edstrom, Weber Shandwick, Bacon's Information, Inc., Biz360, DWJ TV, Horn Group, Inc., PRNewswire, Vocus, NAPS,

Sustaining Sweet Success: How New England Confectionery Company Relies Solely on PR to Market its Top-selling Sweethearts® Conversation Hearts

Sweethearts Conversation Hearts, manufactured by the New England Confectionery Company (NECCO), are the country's top-selling Valentine's Day treat - eight billion hearts are sold each year in the six week period between January 1 and February 14. Since 1997, Boston-based Schneider & Associates has been responsible for generating media interest and consumer demand for the sugary shapes through an aggressive annual campaign. This is no simple task considering that NECCO spends nothing on consumer advertising to promote the product and relies solely on public relations strategies to compete against the multi-million dollar marketing budgets of confectionery giants such as Hershey's and M&M/Mars.

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(Sweet Success-Continued from page 7)

STRATEGY

Having garnered hundreds of print and broadcast feature stories about Walter Marshall, NECCO's "King of Hearts," the wordsmith behind the heart sayings, Schneider & Associates needed to find a way to spark media excitement about the candy in 1998 and beyond. The agency recommended that NECCO host an annual press event in the NECCO factory to announce ten new themed sayings every January. (The factory is closed to the public so this behind-the-scenes opportunity has consistently made news.)

Schneider & Associates has worked with NECCO over the past four years to make these press conferences a beloved Valentine's Day tradition. Here are some highlights on how creative public relations programming has helped NECCO put its words in the media's mouths.

1998 -The first NECCO press conference is held in the factory's cafeteria. Giant versions of the popular candy are produced to showcase the new sayings. Walter Marshall's grandchildren present the new sayings that reflect a youthful approach to old favorites like "I Love You." They include: "Cool Dude," "Yeah Right," "Hello Friend," "Sister Friend," "Be My Icon," "You Rule," and "Web Site." Walter Marshall appears on "The Rosie O'Donnell Show" presenting her with a heart that reads "You Go Girl." Over 180 television broadcasts and 170 news stories also featured Sweethearts.

1999 - "Conversation Hearts Salute Popular Songs And Sentiments -- now and then" - "Love Me Tender." "My Way." "I Got U Babe." "Let It Be." "Walk On By." Also "You Rock," "Let's Do Lunch," "I Wonder," "1-800 Cupid," and "As If." The new sayings are unveiled along with celebrity look-alikes of Cher, Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra. Sweethearts are featured on CNN and "Donny & Marie." Sweethearts are also promoted in *Glamour*, *Jane* and *Gourmet* magazines.

2000 - King of Hearts Walter Marshall retires with a "Salute to Sweethearts Through the Ages." New sayings include "2000 Kisses," and "Amore," "Romeo," "Angel," "Swing Time," and "In the

Mood." Agency partners with *American Girl Magazine* to find additional sayings including: "Got Love," "Girl Power," and "Time Out." Press conference includes "sweethearts" who were engaged or married on Valentine's Day. NECCO is featured in segments on "Good Morning America," "The Today Show" and "Martha Stewart Living."

2001 - New sayings celebrate Universal Love. Press conference moves from the NECCO factory to the Museum of Science in Boston. Dr. Mae Jemison, NASA's first female African American astronaut serves as emcee. New sayings include: "Odyssey," "Moon Beam," "URA Star," "Venus," "Star dust" and "Rising Star." Press conference results in 139 television news segments. NECCO featured in the February issues of *Fast Company*, *Seventeen* and *Real Simple* magazine.

2002 - New sayings celebrate "Sweethearts in Fashion." Press conference held at the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. Students create fashions featuring the new sayings and compete for \$5,000 in scholarships. Leon Hall of Entertainment Television serves as emcee. New sayings include: "Vogue," "Dress Up," "In Style," "That Smile," and "Diva." Press conference results in over 100 television news-casts without video news release distribution.

RESULTS

"The increased awareness of our product has been phenomenal! This campaign has definitely helped us get in front of new retail customers, opening up distribution channels we've never had before. Bottom line? We see a huge impact on sales of NECCO candy".

*Domenic Antonellis
President, New England Confectionery Company*

**Give us 15 minutes,
We'll give you a more relevant chapter**
In early February you'll receive a 20-question e-mail survey from PRSA Boston. Please take the time to tell us what you think. You just might get something more from your membership