

PRSAnotes

A newsletter by and for the 200+ members of the Central Iowa Chapter

April 2000

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See you at the....

PRSA Institute 2000

Thursday, April 20
Hy-Vee Conference Center
West Des Moines, IA

'Bridging the Gap' with 2000 Institute

"Join your Central Iowa colleagues Thursday, April 20, for a day of education, new ideas and fun at the 29th annual Institute," says Kelly Sankey, APR, who chairs the institute committee. "For this day-long event, we bring in renowned speakers from across the country to address issues that are important to you and your organizations. Institute 2000 will help you bridge the gaps of time, communications and technology," she added. Speakers will share their knowledge to help attendees turn their daily challenge into an opportunity to increase their organizations' credibility.

"Join us for the entire day, half day or PRIME Awards luncheon at the Hy-Vee Conference Center, 5820 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines," Sankey urged.

Roundtable discussions

Begin the day at 7:45 a.m. with an optional roundtable discussion. Join peers for informal discussions on public relations issues and challenges. Space is limited, so come early. Continental breakfast is available for all Institute attendees beginning at 7:45 a.m.

Registration

For more specific information, view the [call for entries PDF](#). You also received a hard copy of the call for entries the first week in February. Submit your entries by 4 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 29 to Brenda Wiarda at CMF&Z. Cost for members is \$30 (first entry) and \$20 for each subsequent entry. Winners will be announced at the Public Relations Institute at the HyVee Conference Center April 20.

Those not participating in the optional roundtable discussions may register between 8:30 and 9 a.m. PRSA and Ad Pros members can enjoy an entire day at Institute (including lunch) for just \$80 by registering by March 31. (See registration materials for details.) Contact Kevin Stittsworth, 515.557.3917 or kevin.stittsworth@amerus.com, for registration information.

Speakers

Paul Leinberger, senior vice president and managing director of Roper Starch Worldwide, New York, will reveal public relations implications of customer research in "Year 2000 Public Opinion Research...New Implications for Public Relations." (This speaker is sponsored by [Hanser & Associates](#).)

Learn about strategies and hear examples during the presentation "Safeguarding Your Brand During Times of Crisis" by Nadine Sudnick, senior vice president, communications, GE Capital Rail Services, Chicago. (This speaker sponsored by Ad Pros.)

"Energizing and Engaging a Multi-Site Workforce" will be discussed by Lisa Best, president, Best Communications Inc. and former employee communications manager with USWest, Denver.

Debbie Smith, vice president Midwest Region, PR Newswire, Minneapolis, will provide insights into using the Internet in her presentation "Media/Public Relations Practices in a Wired World – Utilizing the Internet to Tell Your Story."

PRIME Awards Luncheon

The PRIME (Public Relations Institute Mark of Excellence) Awards luncheon offers a chance to see the impact of public relations work. Winners of the PRIME Awards Competition will be announced, as well as awards honoring outstanding individuals for service to the chapter, the profession and the community. The first ever "Best of Show" will be unveiled.

Trade Show

Attendees are encouraged to visit with local vendors for all their printing, merchandise and other needs. Attendees will be eligible for several great prizes.

Special thanks go to Dutcher & Associates, L.L.C., corporate sponsor for the 2000 PRSA Institute. (John Dutcher, APR, can be reached at jdutchapr@aol.com or 515.334.3464.)

For more information about Institute 2000, contact Kelly Sankey, 515/248-3815 or sankey.kelly@principal.com.

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10 chapter members judged Michigan contest entries

Ten chapter members teamed up for a three-hour session on March 10 to judge campaigns and tactics submitted for awards by the Central Michigan chapter based in Lansing. That chapter is returning the favor by judging Central Iowa chapter's PRIME awards contest.

Each of 35 Michigan entries was reviewed and scored by two judges, on criteria for research, planning, execution and evaluation. They then aligned their opinions for the final result.

Chairing the activity were Brenda Wiarda, APR, and Jennifer Perry, who co-chair the awards committee. Other judges were Bill Roach, APR; Mike Palmer, APR; Joe Smith, APR; Lore Solo, APR; Tim Hackbart; Cami Tyler; Ferne Bonomi, APR, and Wayne Davis, APR. Brenda reports that 74 entries were received in the PRIME awards contest, and have been shipped to Michigan. Winners will be announced at the institute April 20.

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What's occupying our professional attention?

What's occupying your professional attention as the new year, century and millenium open? What's otherwise new with you? These questions were posed to a number of Central Iowa PRSA chapter members recently and responses from several of them appeared in recent Newsletters. Now here are some more:

Denise Essman, CEO of Essman/Associates, said she's . . .

"Coordinating World Food Prize Day at the Capitol. Norman Borlaug, WFP Council of Advisors, John Ruan, Ambassador Ken Quinn and seven Youth Institute interns met with

the Senate, House and Governor Vilsack. We also held a news conference that resulted in good media coverage."

"Working on an upcoming, June 27th, Farms, Food and the Future Conference that focuses on the challenges and opportunities of adding value to Iowa's commodities."

"We did numerous projects prior to the Iowa caucuses. NBC-TV covered one of our projects which resulted in our focus group facility appearing on the Today Show."

"I've been appointed to the Governor's Small Business Advisory Council and Census 2000 Committee and elected to the Iowa State University Foundation Governors. I also serve on the ISU Alumni Association board of directors and the Council of Advisors to the College of Business. I chaired the Marketing Transition Committee for the Greater Des Moines Partnership, and am on the Leadership Committee for Choose Des Moines Communities.

"Spoke recently at the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute breakfast on 'Communicating in a dot.com world'."

Daryl Lewis writes:

"As of Feb. 21, I am the Director of Communications for the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau, with responsibilities for helping promote the greater Des Moines area primarily to audiences outside the state. Our goal is to entice as many conventions and tourists to the Des Moines area as possible."

"Specifically, my role is in creating opportunities for visibility for Des Moines and its attractions and events; conceptualizing, designing and implementing promotional programs and materials, public relations programs and tracking advertising and PR results. The travel and tourism industry is fascinating and fun!"

"I had been an account executive for Hellman Associates, Inc., an advertising agency based in Waterloo. Prior to that, I had headed the marketing and communications area of the Iowa Bankers Association for 10 years."

"Here are my current vitals:

Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau
Two Ruan Center, 601 Locust Street
Suite 222, Des Moines, IA 50309 www.desmoinescvb.com
Direct Line 515/699-3433
Fax 515/244-9757
Email dlewis@desmoinescvb.com"

Anne Zimmerman reports:

"For anyone who pays close attention, I've changed the name of the company several times. The latest The Zimmerman Company became official about two years ago, when

Kent and I discovered we were regularly working together. His marketing and my PR backgrounds have turned out to mesh very well. We are also a true consulting firm, not an agency. In fact, one of the things we do is help clients choose the best resources for their needs, including agencies."

"But most interesting is a new direction we've taken. Through his work with the community of Perry, Kent developed a model for successful small towns. Helping communities sort through issues, pull together, and head in a positive direction has become somewhat of a mission for us. Our professional experience and "classic" marketing approach (listening to people and translating what we hear into action and programs) really enable this work. Right now we have assignments from two Iowa counties and several towns."

"Of course we continue to work with longtime clients such as the Hotel Pattee where we keep our hand in national and regional marketing and PR. We've also joined a firm of Chicago consultants to continue our connections in the Windy City and beyond."

"We're mostly about business, though we sold the money pit and moved to a super townhouse on the south side of Des Moines. Life is good!"

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Three Central Iowa board members participate in Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute class

Three PRSA Central Iowa Chapter board members, coincidentally, are also members of the class of 2000 for the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute.

Tina Jacobsen, APR, communications administrator for Metro Waste Authority; Margaret Gowan Mester, manager of marketing communications for Engineering Animation, Inc., Ames, and Kelly Sankey, APR, employee communications and editorial services manager at Principal Financial Group, all were nominated last summer by Leadership Institute graduates and screened for admission into the prestigious 18-year-old program.

The class was developed for "leaders in training" to teach them about the community and to further develop their leadership knowledge and skills by exposing them to programs presented by numerous community leaders. Tina, Margaret and Kelly will work this spring with their 40-plus classmates on a community service project for Easter Seals' Camp Sunnyside.

Graduation for the nine-month-long program is scheduled in early June.

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Thinking about accreditation?

A prep course for accreditation will be under consideration this spring. The class could start this fall, possibly in September, to prepare for the March exam. Customarily, the course has been 36 contact hours, in 12 three-hour units. Sometimes two units are scheduled on a Saturday. Other sessions are usually in the evening, starting at 5:30 or 6 p.m.

If you know you are interested or would like more information, please contact Chuck Seel, APR, accreditation chair. E-mail him at seel.charles@mcleodusa.net. If there is sufficient interest, an orientation session can be arranged, probably just before or just after the May chapter meeting. That session would give you information about costs, process, text and the nature of the exam.

Jackie Goettsch, APR, coordinated the coaching for the last class. A cadre of accredited chapter members conducted the sessions, using a curriculum developed by Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow, for national distribution by PRSA. Ferne participated in the coaching.

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February program gave merger PR advice

Why, and how, do communications efforts go awry during mergers? At the February chapter meeting, Keith Hartje listed half a dozen factors, including:

- Difficult logistics
- Last-minute notice
- Narrow focus
- What about me? syndrome.

In addition, Mary O'Keefe, APR, cited the temptation to treat a merger as a project -- focusing on the wedding rather than the marriage.

Both spoke from substantial experience.

Hartje is senior vice-president and chief administrative officer of Mid-American Energy Holdings Company, the outgrowth of five mergers in ten years. From a regional Iowa gas and electric utility, it has become a global operation with employees on four continents.

O'Keefe is senior vice-president for corporate relations and human resources for the Principal Financial Group, which originated as a life insurance company in Des Moines. She listed seven recent acquisitions or joint ventures, with firms in Australia, India, Brazil and Japan as well as the United States.

As objectives in merger communications, Hartje cited:

- Create initial and continuing favorable market reaction

- Build an airtight case for the merger, to minimize the potential of third-party interventions
- Lay groundwork for support from shareholders, the financial community, employees, customers, regulators, communities, politicians and other opinion leaders.

The main strategy is to define the value of the merger to each of those target audiences, he noted.

Among his tips for integration:

- Identify a decision-maker
- Begin with the outcome in mind
- Act quickly on organization and staffing issues
- Prepare for staff turnover
- Focus on the customer

"Remember that integration is a full-time job, not a project," O'Keefe emphasized.

A communications plan should be developed during the "due diligence" phase of the venture, she advised. Social issues are important -- name, location, management structure, reporting relationships. Key organizational issues need to be defined, and expectations clarified. Uncertainty is debilitating. There will be questions on the level of brand integration, including name equity, customer expectations, shared values and reputation," she reported. And it is important to identify synergies.

"Have people work together to solve a business problem," she suggested, listing projects in employee communication, media relations, the Internet and marketing materials with shared profiles.

Her list of tips:

- Insist on "face time" -- meet regularly with people in the other organization.
- Use white papers to understand each other.
- Don't over-integrate.
- Develop integrated communication strategies
- Maintain forums for dialogue and interaction
- Translate and explain the acronyms and terms you use
- Research customers and employees

And "embrace change," she advised. Quoting the current best-seller "Who Moved My Cheese":

- Change happens
- Anticipate change
- Monitor change

- Adapt to change quickly
- Enjoy change
- Be ready to change quickly and enjoy it again.

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Web site carries membership directory

A reminder from Ryan Hanser, webmaster, says the chapter directory lives on the Web at <http://www.prsaciowa.org>! Members can edit their directory profile anytime and searching for info on other members is a snap, he says. However, the directory is password protected. Members who weren't issued a password (or have *misplaced* it) can call Ryan at 515.224.1086 or send him email at ryan@hanser.com to get access.

(Also notify Todd Behrends, APR, membership chairman, tbehrends@ncmic.com, of directory changes so he can change the chapter mailing list.)

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PRSA member seeks house seat

Long-time Democratic party activist and Des Moines native Janet Petersen, 29, has announced her bid for a seat in the Iowa House of Representatives. Sen. Elaine Szymoniak of Des Moines will chair her campaign for the open seat being vacated by Rep. Jack Holveck after the 2000 legislative session.

Petersen is a senior public relations account executive for Strategic America (formerly known as Schreurs & Associates), a marketing communications firm in West Des Moines. She recently completed her term as communications chairperson for the Polk County Democrats and serves on the executive committee for the 21st Century Forum, a group of young professional Democrats.

Last fall she married Brian Pattinson, a portfolio strategist for Invista Capital Management. Petersen's candidacy is the result of years of personal and professional exposure to public service. "My passion for public service began early. My mother was a lobbyist much of my childhood," explains Petersen. "As I was growing up, she instilled her enthusiasm for public policy in me."

Petersen has strong roots within the district. She was born in the district and returned after graduating with honors from the University of Northern Iowa with a B.A. in Communications/Public Relations.

Petersen has worked in the communications field for nearly a decade. Her first job out of college was on the 1992 Clinton-Gore campaign as a constituency coordinator.

Healthcare is an important issue on Petersen's campaign platform. She spent four years working for the American Heart Association, educating Iowans about health care issues and lobbying for clean air and to keep kids from using tobacco. In addition to clean air and tobacco control measures, Petersen plans to fight to improve Iowa's long-term care conditions for older Iowans. She also is a strong supporter of the HAWK-I program, designed to ensure Iowa children have access to health insurance.

Petersen obtained her M.A. from Drake University in the spring of 1999 while working full time. She is an active member of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

Petersen's involvement in community activities also includes Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Des Moines Arts Festival Board of Directors, and American Heart Association.

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Niebauer will leave Iowa State for Northern Michigan

Dr. Walter (Wally) Niebauer, associate professor of journalism and mass communication at Iowa State University in Ames, will leave at the end of the semester to take a similar position at Northern Michigan University at Marquette. He will teach public relations courses there.

Niebauer has been at Iowa State for 17 years and has been a member of the Central Iowa Chapter PRSA since 1984. He has served several years as faculty advisor for the ISU PRSSA chapter. Niebauer told the Iowa State Daily that "homesickness" was a factor in his decision to leave Iowa. "I just really miss the north woods and now have the opportunity to go back and teach the same things that I am here," he said.

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Kathi Woods changes positions at Meredith

Kathi Woods has transferred from the Corporate staff to the Broadcasting Group at Meredith Corporation. She'll still be based in Des Moines, but now will focus her public relations work on helping the company's 12 television stations with their media relations and employee communications.

"The entire media industry is undergoing incredible change as we incorporate the Internet into our businesses," she said. "I am really enjoying this opportunity to help drive the transformation, the public's perception of it and the way employees understand and adjust to it."

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Drake PRSSA studies crisis management

Drake University PRSSA chapter president Christy Durand reports that the student chapter hosted a "crisis management" case study on February 24 featuring Lucinda Stevenson, APR.

Stevenson, Corporate Relations vice president for Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, focused on Wellmark's crisis communication strategies during the 1993 Iowa floods.

Mike Palmer, APR, is professional advisor for the chapter.

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Sankey recruits nominating committee, candidates

Any member who is interested in serving on the chapter nominating committee should contact Kelly Sankey, APR, at sankey.kelly@principal.com or 248-3815 no later than April 3.

The nominating committee will recommend a slate of officers for board positions for 2000-2001. Members will vote on this slate at the June business meeting. Anyone interested in serving on the 2000-01 Central Iowa PRSA board of directors should contact Sankey.

The following positions are available:

- President-elect (then becomes president, then scholarship committee chairperson)
- Treasurer-elect (then becomes treasurer)
- Program chairperson
- Secretary
- Director (3 year term, 1st year membership chairperson)
- Delegate (3 year term, must be an accredited member)

A slate of candidates will be presented to all Central Iowa Chapter members by May 15.

There are lots of other ways to become involved besides serving on the board of directors. If you'd like to serve as a committee chairperson or on a committee, contact Sankey. Committees include Accreditation, APR Recognition, Awards, Job Network, Newsletter, PRSSA Liaisons (Drake, ISU, Simpson), Professional Development, Professional Interest Groups, Public Relations, Social and Technology. Committee chairs are approved by the board.

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Iowa State PRSSA chapter plans PR Week April 3-7

Iowa State University's PRSSA chapter is organizing "PR Week" April 3-7, which will feature presentations by public relations professionals.

Chapter members also are working on a case study as part of a national competition. The case study deals with organ donations. The Iowa State chapter meets twice each month. John McCarroll, APR, is professional advisor.

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10 PR lessons we can learn from Kurt Warner

1. The public likes great performance. They crave it if it is coupled with decency and humility.
2. Spreading credit around to other contributors creates even greater acceptance.
3. The media relish authenticity. In the long run, being yourself is a safer bet than contriving something new and untested.
4. Sometimes, the simple things (stocking grocery shelves) can make a great story.
5. There is no substitute for being prepared when opportunity knocks.
6. Saying the right thing is important; living what you say is the real test.
7. Performance must come before press conferences; results before releases.
8. Most household names are not forged in six months... but six years wouldn't be bad, either.
9. One loss (even three) does not make a total story.
10. Most great successes had help along the way. Are we willing to accept it?

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Job opportunities . . .

Public Relations Senior Account Manager

Public relations is a challenging occupation. From employee relations to crisis communications, public relations professionals must think strategically and be prepared to handle any situation. If you have experience in PR and are looking for a position that will allow you to work with a diverse client base and use all of your communications skills, then TCP&A wants to hear from you. We are looking for a senior account manager who has 8-10 years of experience, possesses strong writing and verbal communication skills and enjoys working in a team environment. If this sounds like you, please contact Annette Halbur at 515.221.4900 or ahalbur@tcpa.com.

Employee Communications Associate

The Corporate Relations department of the Principal Financial Group is looking for a creative, self-motivated professional to add to their team. As an Employee Communications Associate, you will serve the employee communication needs of the Pension business unit by cost-effectively supplying employees information needed to understand the company, its business directions and their role in its future success. Successful candidates will possess a Bachelor's degree in journalism or related field.

Additional qualifications include:

- 4-6 years of writing/editing experience
- Knowledge of employee communications desired
- Ability to determine methods to best meet client needs, present proposals and implement procedures
- Interviewing, writing, editing and communications consulting skills
- Ability to work well individually and on a team
- Experience with delivery of communications via the Web preferred
- APR preferred

Send resume to the Principal Financial Group, HR Employment
ADR0307, 711 High St., Des Moines, IA 50392-0550.

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What's Happening?

Send news about yourself, your business, your job openings, etc., to [Wayne Davis](#) for the next Central Iowa chapter Newsletter.

[end](#)

Posted 03.31.2000 by [Ryan Hanser](#) of [Hanser & Associates](#).

EDITORIAL NOTE: Ryan also plays saxophone in [Hot Lunch](#) – a new Des Moines funk band – and urges PRSA members to support local art and music.