

PRSA*notes*

An electronic newsletter by and for the 200+ members of the Central Iowa Chapter
November, 2002

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November topic: media relations on a fast track!

Tom Kroeschell, assistant athletic director and athletic media relations director at Iowa State University, will be featured presenter at Central Iowa Chapter's Thursday, Nov. 21, meeting at the Downtown Holiday Inn.

Managing the athletic department's reputation in the eyes of the news media, both on and off the field, is Kroeschell's responsibility. He will talk about the fast-paced world of athletic media relations, how the university manages both the good and bad news while interacting with reporters here at home and half-a-world away.

Success gets attention, and that's truly the case when it comes to Iowa State University athletics. ISU is home to top-ranked men's and women's teams, competing in a variety of sports—from gymnastics to wrestling, from basketball to football, from golf to tennis. In all, hundreds of Iowa State University athletes participate in nearly 20 different sports, with activity spanning every month on the calendar.

This fall, the school has been cast into the national spotlight once again, thanks in large part to a top-ranked football squad led by Head Coach Dan McCarney and Heisman Trophy candidate Seneca Wallace. This high-profile success has captured the attention of

the national media as the school competes in one of the nation's most prestigious conferences, the Big 12.

Kroeschell will talk about the university's efforts to promote a Heisman candidate and provide tips for establishing and maintaining successful working relationships with the news media, applicable to any professional, company or organization.

Those expecting to attend should respond electronically via the [online registration form](#). Registrations must be received no later than Friday, Nov. 15.

By Aaron Putze, APR

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Opponents air gaming referendum views

"Yes" or "No." Those are choices residents in 10 Iowa counties will have to choose from when they go to the polls Nov. 5 and cast a vote on Iowa's Gaming Referendum. October's Central Iowa PRSA luncheon featured a balanced and timely discussion from those involved on both sides of the issue. And while their communications strategies, messages and activities may differ, they're both working toward one goal: election-day victory.

Tom Coates, executive director and co-founder of Consumer Credit of Des Moines, is perhaps one of the referendum's greatest critics. As a member of the "Save our State" campaign, he is passionate about the negative impact gaming has on families, businesses and communities. He and other campaign members know the fight won't be easy.

"We have fewer resources than the opposition, so grassroots is the way to go when it comes to communicating our messages," Coates said. He and other SOS campaign participants have distributed yard signs, delivered presentations and participated in local radio, TV and newspaper interviews.

But their most effective campaign strategy to date has been to put a face on the issue of gaming. To do so, SOS campaigners have invited people directly involved in gaming-related tragedies to articulate personal stories of loss and suffering. "That's what's had an impact," said Coates.

Those supporting gaming in Iowa also have personal stories to tell, like lower taxes for property owners and a source of entertainment that Iowans can be proud of. Connie Boesen, president of the East Des Moines Chamber of Commerce and co-chair of Prairie Meadows "Vote Yes" committee, said their communications effort has included a variety of tactics and tools.

Utilizing a budget of nearly \$200,000 (compared to an SOS budget of \$5-6,000), the "Vote Yes" campaign has taken to the streets and airwaves encouraging nearly 228,000 registered voters in Polk County to renew Prairie Meadows' license. Activities and tools

have included direct mail, billboards, yard signs, radio and print advertising and public speaking. Campaign participants have also volunteered their time to call voters urging them to vote "yes."

"Prairie Meadows is a vital resource. We're going to promote that key message in all that we do. In the end, it will be the voters that decide," Boesen said.

By Aaron Putze, APR

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Institute Theme: 'Winning a Seat at the Strategy Table'

(Here's a preview of the 2003 Central Iowa PRSA Institute prepared by Joanna Schroeder, APR, who heads the sponsorship committee for the event. Amy Pint serves with her. Rob Schweers, APR, president-elect, is in charge of institute planning. Others on his committee are: Kevin Waetke, APR; Paul Kluding; Antoinette Bernich; Sarah Rasmussen; Jane Keairns, APR; Megan Tehel; Bev Corron, and Katie Boes, ISU intern.)

We're ramping up for the 34th annual Central Iowa PRSA Institute. This year we're launching a new format and the committee is excited. The most dramatic change is our expanded invitation list. We're inviting the whole midwest and chapters from Iowa, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri will be contacted. This will give you the best networking opportunity you've ever had in your own backyard!

Mark your calendars. The date has been moved to April 3, 2003, to avoid past conflicts with college spring breaks and Iowa State's Veishea celebration. In addition, because of past years' low response, we're no longer having the Trade Show Gallery but are replacing it with a PR Services Kit. For a quick reference, the kit will come with a service category summary and description of the participating company's products and services.

We've also moved the Prime Awards to the end of the day and the luncheon program will feature a keynote speaker. In addition, we're moving to the Web where you'll be able to get updated speaker information, information on submitting entries to the Prime Awards, information on our sponsors, and register online for next year's event.

This year's theme, "Winning a Seat at the Strategy Table," was designed to reflect on the trend that public relations professionals have been left in the dark until a crisis situation emerges. In order for us to do our jobs effectively, we need a permanent seat at the strategy table and this year's institute is going to teach you the skills to earn your spot next to the CEO.

We're happy to announce that The Principal Financial Group is presenting this year's event but we still need additional sponsors. We'd also like to thank Solutions Inc., which is donating the graphic design services, and Taylor Graphics, which is donating all of our printing.

To get more information about sponsorships, or to learn how your company can be included in the PR Services Kit, contact Joanna Schroeder at 515/991-5656 or via e-mail at jschroeder@apercucommunications.com.

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'Technical Review' evaluates new APR testing materials

During October, three central Iowans have been involved in "technical review" of multiple-choice questions for the new examination for accreditation, scheduled to be introduced next year.

As part of the test development process, persons regarded as experts in the subject matter are enlisted to review all the questions. Members of PRSA's College of Fellows were recruited for this duty. Among those participating were Ferne G. Bonomi of Ames, Carol Bodensteiner of West Des Moines and Rich Ridgway of Storm Lake, all APR and all Fellows.

Over a period of two weeks, they worked in teams of six to nine, by conference call. Simultaneously, they were logged into a web site on which the computer screen of the facilitator appeared, so they could review each question, one at a time, look at the multiple choices and see if they agreed on the correct answer or answers. Sessions lasted three or four hours.

They were asked to consider clarity, application in the "real world" of the public relations practitioner, and appropriateness for the skill and knowledge level of the five- to seven-year practitioners who are the most likely candidates for accreditation. To paraphrase the parallel drawn by the facilitator: "We are looking for questions which present a three-foot hurdle. We don't want questions like a one-foot hurdle, which a beginner could jump. We don't want five-foot hurdles suitable for a senior practitioner, which the mid-level person could not be expected to be able to jump. We do not want questions which anyone could answer simply by studying a textbook. We are looking for judgment. We want every question to be significant and valid as a pass/fail indicator for the candidate."

Further, the reviewers were to decide if each question met one of the 45 objectives in the test structure.

By mutual decision, reviewers had the option of editing questions, revising choices, discarding questions, or moving them to another objective. Sometimes they processed 10 or 11 questions in a session; sometimes 30 or 40.

This process is the last stage before the beta test of the examination early next year. About 50 reviewers were involved. Reviewers worked on 450 questions. Approximately 150 will appear in each of two final versions of the accreditation examination. The test developers want 150 in reserve, to replace those which may be discarded after the beta test, or later, if they prove not to adequately discriminate between those who pass or fail

the overall test. For example, if 90 percent of those who fail the exam get a question correct, it will be discarded as too easy. If less than 25 percent of those who pass get a question right, it will be discarded as too difficult.

Source: Ferne G. Bonomi, APR, Fellow PRSA, who participated in more than 20 hours of technical review.

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Central Iowa Chapter's 2003 book drive aims to promote reading

In order to strengthen literacy in the Greater Des Moines community, the Central Iowa Chapter is sponsoring its first "PRSA Promotes Reading" book drive that will kick-off in January 2003. The book drive will benefit the Child Development Center, a program of the nonprofit Children and Families of Iowa.

The Child Development Center, located in Des Moines, provides quality childcare for approximately 200 local children aged two to 12 years old. As part of the program, each child receives a book to bring home to encourage family literacy. Children and Families of Iowa is a United Way affiliate and has received national accreditation for excellence in childcare. (Visit www.cfiowa.org for more information.)

Chapter members are invited to participate in "PRSA Promotes Reading" by donating new and/or used books appropriate for children aged two-12 years old. Children's books and monetary donations will be collected at the January, February and March PRSA luncheons. The Child Development Center has asked participants to avoid religious books and books with violence. Cash donations will be used to purchase additional books.

Books should be brought to the registration table at the January-March luncheons. For every book (or \$5 donated) participants will be entered into a drawing for Barnes & Noble gift certificates. An announcement of the book drive results and gift certificate winners will be made at the April 3 PRSA Institute.

For more information, members are advised to contact Student Liaison Elizabeth Grote at 279-0387, e-mail b.grote@lycos.com, or PR Officer Murray Williams at 226-7957, e-mail murrayw@ia-icul.org.

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The Principal offers recognition opportunity

Terri Shell, media relations consultant at The Principal Financial Group, offers Central Iowa Chapter members an opportunity to gain national exposure for their company or a client. She said The Principal has once again launched a nationwide search for companies that excel at providing employee benefits. The winners, selected by an independent panel of judges, will be recognized as The Principal 10 Best Companies for Employee Financial Security.

Last year's winners received extensive national and local media attention the Wall Street Journal, Cnnfn, CNBC and were featured in a nationally distributed booklet about best practices in benefits.

To nominate a company, go to

<http://www.principal.com/theprincipal10best/nomination.htm>

For more information about the program visit

<http://www.principal.com/theprincipal10best/index.htm>. Or contact Terri Shell, The Principal, shell.terri@principal.com, 515-283-8858.

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Greater Des Moines Partnership honors Essman/Companies

The Essman/Companies (Essman/Associates and Essman/Research), headed by Central Iowa Chapter member Denise Essman, received The Greater Des Moines Partnership 2002 Community Champion award for outstanding community involvement. The company won in the small business category (fewer than 50 employees).

Essman/Companies provides a diverse array of services to more than 12 non-profit organizations either pro-bono or in-kind totaling 700 hours last year. It also donates 30 percent of pre-tax profits to local organizations.

Essman/Companies employees are also involved both professionally and charitably in a total of 41 professional, trade, civic and charitable organizations.

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Job Shadow Day coincides with November chapter meeting

Central Iowa chapter has organized a Job Shadow Day for Thursday, Nov. 21, scheduled to coincide with the November luncheon meeting. It follows on the heels of PRSA/PRSSA Relationship Month in October-the month designated to help practitioners and students learn from each other and share knowledge about the practice of public relations. Iva Sprague, professional co-liaison with the Iowa State University PRSSA chapter, said more than 50 enthusiastic and interested students from Drake, ISU and Simpson are looking for a glimpse into the world of public relations practice. Sprague had hoped to be able to match up students and professionals by Oct. 25.

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Elizabeth Grote is new student liaison

Elizabeth Grote was selected this spring as Central Iowa chapter's student liaison for the 2002-03 program year. A senior in public relations and management at Drake University,

Elizabeth manages a very hectic schedule. Along with her course work and student liaison duties, she is treasurer of the Drake PRSSA chapter, active in her sorority, and a public relations intern at Iowa Health System. In addition, Elizabeth is recently engaged and planning for a wedding next summer.

Elizabeth serves as a non-voting board member to develop media coverage for the chapter and its members, helps create a new community involvement project for the chapter, provides an additional communication link to student chapters, and assists other committees as needed.

She reports to the board's PR officer, Murray Williams, and is the second student liaison for the chapter.

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Member Notes

Lori Schulte (Iowa Telecommunications Association) has stepped in as co-chair of the Professional Development committee, joining Bev Corron (International Association for Food Protection) to lead the effort. Lori replaces Penny Schramm (American Cancer Society) who recently adopted a baby and is also planning for her maternity leave.

Tim Hackbart (Iowa Methodist/Iowa Lutheran Hospitals), PRSA treasurer-elect, and his wife welcomed their third child, a boy, in October.

Murray Williams (Iowa Credit Union League) was listed as an "up & comer" in the Sept. 30 Des Moines Business Record. The paper noted that Williams managed the creation of a "paperless" office for the league, which now operates on an integrated Web, e-mail, FAX and membership database system.

Rochelle Williams has been promoted to communications analyst with Sears, Roebuck and Co., and will relocate to company headquarters in Hoffman Estates, Ill. Rochelle has been with the company for two years, responsible for public relations and communications at the Sears Operations Center in West Des Moines.

Ryan Hanser of Hanser & Associates will take over next year as president of the Young Professionals Connection, founded in 2000 by the Greater Des Moines Partnership. As quoted in the Oct. 24 Des Moines Register, Hanser said: "I think there's a lot of discussion about the brain drain and how we keep our young people in Des Moines. Our goal is to promote, attract and retain those people."

Lore McManus Solo, APR, vice president of public relations at Strategic America, was featured in the "Did You Know" column in The Des Moines Register's Oct. 23 Business Section. Previously she had worked in public relations for the Iowa Department of Human Services and the Historical Society of Iowa.

Allan Urlis, APR, has become manager of media relations for Iowa Methodist Medical Center and Iowa Lutheran Hospital. His move to the new position became effective Oct. 23. His e-mail address is urlisag@ihs.org and his telephone number is 515/241-6168. Urlis formerly was strategic communications specialist with Wixted, Pope, Nora & Thompson.

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PRSA people

Getting to work . . .

How do you most often travel to work? Your own car? Some kind of ride-share? Bus? Bicycle? Walk? One quick reason why.

Send your response-and other *PRSAnotes* items-to wdavis@iastate.edu.

Of the eight respondents to last month's query about lunch habits, five eat at the office to save time and money, two go out for a break and to meet friends, and one goes home . . . his dog expects him!

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Job Opportunities . . .

PR Account Executive

3+ years of experience in PR program planning and implementation-especially media relations. Strong writing, strategic thinking, list building, and Internet research skills required. Product launch/corporate marketing experience in the consumer products, healthcare/medical or financial industries a plus. The intangibles self-starting, service-orientation, creativity, persuasiveness, confidence, tenacity, team player, and passion to do great work are important, too.

Beyond competitive salary, compensation package includes health plan, on-site fitness center, incentive bonus, career development allowance, and retirement plan, to name a few. West Des Moines-based Hanser & Associates is an international PR firm with affiliated offices worldwide. Ranked among the top 20 independent firms in Midwest cities, Hanser & Associates embraces a simple results-oriented philosophy: serve clients' needs for communications solutions. Learn more at <http://www.hanser.com> today.

Send your resume to Bonnie Hanser, Principal and COO, Hanser & Associates, 4401 Westown Parkway, Suite 212, West Des Moines, IA 50266. E-mail: bhanser@hanser.com. FAX: 515-224-0991.

Internship Opportunity

Part-time non-paid opportunity (approximately 10-20 hours per week) Flexible hours available based on intern's own schedule.

The International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) is a non-profit educational association of food protection professionals. The Association provides members with an information network and forum for professional improvement through its two scientific journals, Journal of Food Protection and Dairy, Food and Environmental Sanitation, an educational Annual Meeting, and workshops. Start date anytime after Dec. 1, 2002.

To support the public relations and marketing functions at the International Association for Food Protection. Assist with the research, development and implementation of a new product marketing plan. The product is a set of food safety icons for use by retail food outlets to aid their employees in proper food handling techniques. The marketing plan will encompass methods of distribution for the internationally recognized food safety icons. For immediate consideration please forward resume or letter of application to Bev Corron, Public Relations, IAFP, 6200 Aurora Ave., Suite 200W, Des Moines, IA 50322; Phone 515/276-3344; or e-mail bcorron@foodprotection.org.

Communications Specialist

Sears, Roebuck and Co. is seeking an outgoing individual to develop, implement, coordinate and evaluate the communications programs at its West Des Moines Operations Center. The main responsibilities of this position include overseeing all internal and external public relations/communications initiatives locally. Duties will include working closely with business partners to provide employee communication programs to help meet company goals, and serving as a resource for community outreach programs and special events.

Qualified candidates will possess a four-year degree in public relations, marketing or communications, and related experience. Excellent written and verbal communication skills are required. Knowledge of Microsoft applications is also required. We offer an excellent benefit package including medical and dental plans, 401(k), associate stock purchase plan, short term and long term disability, paid holidays, and a merchandise discount at Sears retail stores.

If you would like to be considered for this position, please send your resume and cover letter to Sears Operations Center, Human Resources, 7100 Westown Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266 or by e-mail to crhrdes@sears.com.

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