

PRSA*notes*

An electronic newsletter by and for the 200+ members of the Central Iowa Chapter
March, 2003

In this issue:

- [Media panel will discuss 'Pitching With Purpose' at March meeting](#)
- [Excitement builds for April 3 Institute](#)
- [Horner's 'purple ketchup' campaign used military operation techniques](#)
- [74 members participated in chapter survey](#)
- [President suggests useful web links](#)
- [Central Iowa Chapter's 2003 book drive winds up in March](#)
- [Member news . . .](#)
- [PRSA people . . .](#)
- [National news . . .](#)
- [Job opportunities . . .](#)

Media panel will discuss 'Pitching With Purpose' at March meeting

According to the book *The fall of advertising and the rise of PR*, publicity is the most effective way to develop brand awareness and help an organization achieve its mission. And it was on that premise that Aaron Putze, APR, program chair, arranged for a panel of media representatives to discuss the issue at Central Iowa Chapter's March 20 luncheon meeting.

Putze explained that one important responsibility of the public relations practitioner is to serve as the liaison between his or her company/organization and the media, and added that proactive public relations includes pitching stories to assist the organization including its shareholders, customers and employees in achieving its goals. He noted that competition for publicity is fierce, made even more challenging by the fact that news holes are shrinking at a time when media outlets are downsizing.

The panel, scheduled to include Jim Boyd, news director, WHO Radio; Craig Black, senior editor, Better Homes & Gardens, Meredith Publishing, and Cal Woods, news director, KDSM-TV, will discuss keys for successfully pitching and working with the media. Participation by all the panelists has been confirmed.

Topics to be covered include planning the pitch, finding the story, thinking like a reporter, and becoming a valued resource for media representatives. Panelists also will

provide tips for how public relations practitioners should prepare their pitches, and keys for successful targeting of important audiences.

The meeting will be held at the Downtown Holiday Inn from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The menu will consist of Pork Loin Dijonnaise, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Carrots, Dinner Salad and Apple Pie. A vegetarian entree is available upon request. Cost is \$18 for PRSA members, \$23 for non- members and \$13 for students. (A \$5 fee will be added to late registrations.)

Those planning to attend may register by logging on to the Central Iowa Chapter web site: www.prsaciowa.org, click on "Upcoming Meetings" and complete the on-line registration form. Registration deadline is Monday, March 17.

[Return to top](#)

Excitement builds for April 3 Institute

Excitement is building for the Central Iowa Chapter's 34th Annual Institute, slated for Thursday, April 3, at the HyVee Conference Center in West Des Moines. Winning a Seat at the Strategy Table, presented by The Principal Financial Group, begins with registration at 8 a.m., and ends with the PRIME Awards at 2:45 p.m.

Rob Schweers, Institute chair, says "speakers include PR pros from General Motors, ExxonMobil, Fleishman-Hillard and Wells Fargo, sharing their insights on how to reach the highest levels of your organization (or make you an invaluable resource to clients)." "If you're watching your expenses, be sure to register before March 21 for only \$60. The fee goes up to \$75 after March 21, and \$100 if you wait and register onsite April 3," Schweers said. He added that the chapter extends a special note of appreciation to its sponsors for the event, including eWatch a service of PR Newswire, PR Newswire, Solutions, Inc., and Taylor Graphics.

For more information on Institute, including registration information and a map to the HyVee Conference Center, visit www.prsaciowa.org.

[Return to top](#)

Central Iowa Chapter members from Strategic America in Des Moines posed with Jack Horner, APR, after his presentation Feb. 20. Horner's agency and Strategic America are partners in the Worldcom Public Relations Group. Pictured from left to right are Melissa Simpson; Lore McManus Solo, APR; Nicole Slater; Horner; Amy Kearns, and Kim Sporrer.

Horner's 'purple ketchup' campaign used military operation techniques

"If you're not having fun, you're doing it wrong!" That's the philosophy that carried Jack Horner, APR, president of Jack Horner Communications in Pittsburgh, Pa., through the successful launch of Heinz purple ketchup and led to his firm's earning both a Silver Anvil and Bronze Anvil for the effort.

In a presentation to the Central Iowa Chapter PRSA Thursday, Feb. 20, Horner detailed the process he followed in the campaign and spiced up his remarks with personal anecdotes connected with it.

With a product aimed at children between 8 and 12 years of age, Horner set out to create a nationwide and continuing buzz and his exploratory research involved kids to determine their preferences for colors and shapes. But an article in Advertising Age forecasting the news forced an early launch and caused Horner to change strategies in mid-stream. "Instead of a food story, we had to repackage it as a business story," he said.

Work on the campaign became like a military operation, employing code words and imposing strict confidentiality. He expanded his account team to stay in the news for an extended period and generated 1,929 print stories and 1,040 television stories for an ad equivalency of \$6.4 million. There were interview requests from the United States, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and Hong Kong, besides many others.

"We succeeded in positioning Heinz as an innovator, and the campaign had more of an impact on Wall Street than on the grocery shelf," Horner said.

The Heinz company was so well pleased with the results that Horner's firm was assured of the assignment to launch the next ketchup color, and featured the campaign in its annual report. At the conclusion of his presentation, Horner noted that his firm has an Iowa connection with Strategic America in Des Moines because both agencies are partners in Worldcom Public Relations Group. (Lore McManus Solo, APR, of Strategic America, explained that Worldcom is the world's largest network of independently owned PR firms. She said Worldcom serves national, international and multi-national clients needing in-depth marketing and communications support from professionals who understand the language, culture and customs of the arenas in which they operate. The Worldcom network comprises nearly 100 partner firms and 108 offices in 35 countries across the world. "We meet once a year in the the Americas and once a year in either Asia-Pacific or Europe," she said.)

The meeting was held in the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation auditorium in West Des Moines and Aaron Putze, APR, program chair, reported very favorable scores from the meeting survey responses.

"As we anticipated, the results were extremely favorable! In all three categories (program, meal and facility), rankings averaged a 4.3 or higher (out of a possible 5). All average responses set a new 'high' for the program year. On a scale of 1-5, the program ranked a 4.8 (compared to 4.6 in January and 4.4 in October, 2002), the meal ranked a 4.3 (up from 2.8 in January) and the facility ranked a 4.6 (compared to 3.1 in January)," he reported.

[Return to top](#)

74 members participated in chapter survey

Central Iowa Chapter's board extends thanks to all members who completed the chapter survey distributed during January 2003. Forty percent (74) completed the survey.

Members of Central Iowa PRSA's board of directors and committee chairs are reviewing the survey results and will discuss chapter and program enhancements at the March board meeting. An overview of the survey findings will be included in a future edition of PRSAnotes. All members who completed the survey were eligible for a restaurant gift certificate drawing. Winners of the certificates are Ferne Bonomi, Bonomi & Company; Sara Wille, Principal Financial Group, and Murray Williams, Iowa Credit Union League.

[Return to top](#)

President suggests useful web links

Chapter President Mike Palmer, APR, suggests that these links might be of interest to members:

A link to a message for the new national PRSA president that outlines national's goals for 2003...

http://www.prsa.org/_News/leaders/byrum020403.asp

Link to info on the benefits of national PRSA membership...

http://www.prsa.org/_Membership/benefits/index.asp?ident=index0

Plus more detail on insurance benefits...

http://www.prsa.org/_About/overview/insurance.asp?ident=over9

[Return to top](#)

Central Iowa Chapter's 2003 book drive winds up in March

Murray Williams, PR officer, reminds Central Iowa Chapter members that the book drive that got underway in January and will conclude in March 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 take 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 may participate in "PRSA Promotes Reading" by donating new and/or used books appropriate for children aged two-12 years old. The Child Development Center has asked participants to avoid religious books and books with violence. Cash donations will be used to purchase additional books.

So far, Williams said the chapter has collected a large box of books and approximately \$30 in cash. Books should be brought to the registration table at the March luncheon. 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. Or click on [PRSA Book Drive \(PDF\)](#).

[Return to top](#)

Member news . . .

Hanser & Associates promotes two, hires another

Ronald Hanser, APR, president of Hanser & Associates, has announced the promotion of two staff members and the hiring of a third.

Ryan Hanser, vice president

Jodi Schlafer, account manager

Kelly Moore, Account Executive

Ryan Hanser was promoted to vice president. He joined the firm in 1999 and previously was an account manager. Prior to joining Hanser & Associates, he was a corporate relations officer with Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa and USG Annuity & Life Des Moines subsidiaries of ING Group's North American retail financial services operation. During his two years at Equitable, Ryan managed media and investor relations and internal communication.

Before Equitable, Ryan held four public relations internships while earning a communications degree at the University of Northern Iowa. He interned with the Greater Des Moines Chamber of Commerce (now known as Greater Des Moines Partnership), Iowa Health System, Essman/Associates and the Better Business Bureau between 1994 and 1996.

Ryan serves as treasurer for the central Iowa chapter. He is president of the Greater Des Moines Partnership's Young Professionals Connection and serves on the Partnership's community development board. Ryan has served on the publicity committee for the Iowa State Fair Blue Ribbon Foundation. He was profiled in the "Did You Know" column of the Feb. 17 Des Moines Register.

Jodi Schlafer was promoted to account manager after having served previously as account executive. Before joining Hanser & Associates, Jodi was a PR account executive with another major communication firm. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in public relations from Drake University. Her community service in the Des Moines area includes serving as a fund raising and communications volunteer for Ruth Harbor, a non-denominational Christian home for young women facing unplanned pregnancies. A native of Sheridan, Ill., Jodi lives in Waukee with her daughter, Bailey.

Joining the firm as an account executive, **Kelly Moore** previously was an account executive at The Integer Group. She is a graduate of the University of Iowa School of Journalism and lives in Des Moines with her husband, Jedd.

The Principal promotes three chapter members

The following Central Iowa Chapter members recently received promotions at the Principal Financial Group:

Chris Riedel-King, senior community relations consultant

Terri Shell, senior media relations consultant

Kelly Sankey, APR, assistant director - employee communications

[Return to top](#)

PRSA People . . .

Computer work

Do you do most of your computer work on a desktop, laptop or handheld device? One quick reason why.

Send your response (and other items for PRSAnotes) to wdavis@iastate.edu.

Only Jill Spiekerman, APR, responded to last month's query about "words." She said: "I keep Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary at my desk. Also Roget's Thesaurus, Copperud's American Usage and Style, Hale's Wired Style and the AP Style book. So many things are not in the computer dictionary. I find the electronic versions don't help me use the right word."

[Return to top](#)

Latest news from PRSA National . . .

Mike Palmer, APR, president of the Central Iowa Chapter, has passed on the following news from national headquarters.

Join PRSA's Newest Section

Independent Practitioners Alliance will provide resources and a virtual gathering place for independent practitioners, whether they work alone or in teams, from home, small or shared offices. The Alliance will enable independent practitioners to network and share information with, and seek advice from, other PRSA members who share their entrepreneurial spirit. The Section's purpose is to strengthen the independent sector of the PR industry, advocate for independents within PRSA, advance their business opportunities and create tailored professional development opportunities. Anticipated Section resources include an active e-community with a listserv; a database or directory of members to facilitate meeting, mentoring, marketing, teaming and information sharing; national teleconferences; and an increased presence at the International

Conference. This Section is open to any PRSA member who is an independent or considering becoming one, or who would like to learn more about this growing sector of the PR industry.

For information about membership, please contact Rosa Paulsen at 212/460-1490 or via e-mail at rosa.paulsen@prsa.org. If you'd like further information about the Independent Practitioners Alliance, please contact Chris Tearno at 212/460-1420 or via e-mail at chris.tearno@prsa.org.

New APR Exam Set to Launch in July

The Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations is less than five months away from the July 1 launch date. The UAB board continues to press the reengineering process forward to provide an exam that is improved, relevant, and tests the skills, knowledge, ability and professional body of knowledge needed by professional public relations practitioners to succeed in today's environment. The Beta Exam will be offered between March 6 and 31, 2003, and the final steps in the examination development process will occur thereafter. The examination will "go live" by July 1. Four UAB resource teams (including Ferne Bonomi, APR; Fellow PRSA) are finalizing all of the materials needed for candidates, Accreditation chairs and Readiness Review panelists. These materials will be ready and available online by May 5, 2003. For more details on the UAB's progress, read the update in the March issue of PR Tactics.

Save the Date - 2003 International Conference

Mark your calendars now for PRSA's 2003 International Conference, "Building Credibility, Confidence and Respect," to be held Oct. 25-28 in New Orleans. Complete details on how to register will be available soon.

College of Fellows Applications Available Soon

Nominations are currently being accepted for the College of Fellows class of 2003. In order to qualify to become a Fellow, the applicant must be an Accredited member of PRSA and have at least 20 years experience as a public relations practitioner or educator. Applicants must have personal and professional capabilities that serve as a model for others in the profession and have advanced the profession through exceptional contributions to the field of public relations.

To request an application when they are available, please contact PRSA's Committee Project Manager, Brady Leet, at 212/460-1464 or via e-mail at brady.leet@prsa.org. Prospective candidates can also receive help in completing their application from a GoodFellow by contacting GoodFellow Committee Chair, Joan Capelin, at jcapelin@capelin.com. The deadline for applications and supporting materials to PRSA is Thursday, May 1.

New Chapter Benefit-Conference Calling

Connect-US, in a preferred vendor agreement for PRSA members, offers an easy and flexible way with its basic service, ConferenceAnytime! to audio conference with your clients or committees 24 hours a day, without having to make a reservation or go through an operator. Connect-US also offers PRSA members EventCall!, operator-assisted audio conferencing, and WebAnytime!, a feature that incorporates computer visuals with your phone conferences. To learn more about this service and the special rates for PRSA members, or to sign up immediately, contact John Weber, Connect-US, at 866/397-9247 or via e-mail at jweber@callconnect-us.com.

[Return to top](#)

Jobs and internships . . .

Communications Consultant

As a Communications Consultant with the Principal Financial Group , you will be responsible for consulting with clients to meet their communication needs, with the goal of helping the company meet its objectives. This includes planning and developing communication strategies to further the understanding and perception of client policies, procedures, programs, and/or issues. You will determine the communication objectives and may execute against plan, which includes conceptualizing, gathering information, writing, editing and designing print, and/or audiovisual materials. This position also focuses on meeting the client's web communication needs.

Qualifications:

- College degree or equivalent, plus 4-6 years work related experience required;
- Must have excellent organizational, problem-solving, presentation, and oral and written communication skills, along with strong basic analytical skills;
- Ability to take an integrated communications approach to solve complex communications issues required;
- Must be committed to dedicating the time needed to get the job done and consistently meet deadlines;
- PC skills are required with the ability to maintain a high degree of accuracy and pay strict attention to detail;
- Must have HTML experience;
- Knowledge of Dreamweaver, Knowledgebase, Fireworks, Photoshop or other graphics programs preferred;
- Must be able to consult with clients and maintain a high degree of confidentiality.

At the Principal Financial Group, we offer a competitive total compensation package and a comprehensive benefits package to meet each of your needs. If you are looking for the opportunity to get ahead in your career...apply today! Please send your resume and cover letter to: Principal Financial Group, HR-Employment W**19968, Des Moines, IA 50392-0550. AA/EEO.

Internship Opportunity-Corporate Communications

EMC Insurance Companies has an internship available in corporate communications to assist in proofreading, editing, writing and disseminating employee and corporate information. Candidates should be a junior or senior working toward a degree in journalism/mass communications. Strong writing skills, knowledge of personal computers, Word, graphic design and layout requested. Approximately 6 to 8 hours per week.

If interested, send your resume to: Lisa Scaglione, EMC Insurance Companies, 717 Mulberry, Des Moines, IA 50309. Fax: 515/280-2564; E-mail: Employment@EMCIns.com. EOE.

Internship-Metro Waste Authority

Looking for an internship that's not a waste of time? Metro Waste Authority is looking for a communications intern for the summer of 2003 and possibly longer. The intern will gain experience in copywriting, media relations, community relations, government relations, special events coordination, presentations, strategy sessions and general administration. Applicants need to have strong writing skills, some public relations experience and to be entering their junior or senior year of college. Experience with QuarkXPress, Front Page and other Microsoft Office programs is preferred but not required. Pay rate is \$8/hour. Applicants can forward a resume and two writing samples to: Sarah C. Rasmussen, Public Relations Manager, Metro Waste Authority, 300 E. Locust, Suite 100, Des Moines, IA 50309-1864. E-mail: sra@mwatoday.com; fax: 515/244-9477. Deadline for applications is April 15, 2003.

[Return to top](#)