

BLUE RIDGE

PRSA Public Relations Society of America



A membership publication of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America

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The Never-ending Feeding Frenzy: The Changing Nature of Media Relations in Politics

By: Jennifer Faulkner, President-Elect, Program Chair

Take any complex issue or problem. Throw in a dash of government, legal matters, public relations and media. Stir well. Many times this approach leads to inefficiency and confusion. Yet it happens over and over again. Companies hire a law firm to handle legal matters, a public relations team to spin news reports, lobbyists to work with government officials, and an investor relations professional to calm shareholders. Inevitably, they end up with confusing and contradictory opinions. "Lay low!" say the legal folks. "Speak up!" say the PR pros.

*The program is sponsored by
Radford University Corporate and
Communication Program.*

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RADFORD
UNIVERSITY



Paul J. Reagan

Paul Reagan was the Communications Director for former Governor Mark Warner. Before working in the Governor's office, he spent almost twenty years as the spokesperson for four different members of Congress from Virginia. Join us on Thursday, June 8, 2006 as he reflects on the changes he has witnessed in the coverage of politics over the past 24 years, both at the national level and within Virginia. Mr. Reagan is currently Senior Vice President for Issue Advocacy at McGuire Woods Consulting in Richmond.

Working out of both Richmond and Washington, D.C., Paul assists a broad spectrum of clients with

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Professional Development Save-the-Date!

By: Beth Kolnok,
Professional Development
Chair

Join us Thursday, September 7, from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon as Byron Sabol, internationally recognized public relations and marketing consultant, conducts a half-day workshop with members and guests at the Roanoke College Colkett Center.

In two 90-minute presentations, entitled "Communicating Effectively With Difficult and Challenging Personalities" and "The Platinum Pyramid: The Seven Step Process For Maximizing The Value of Business Relationships," Mr. Sabol will address important communications issues and marketing strategies.

Look for more information headed your way in the near future. Event contact: Beth Kolnok at (540) 855-5139 ext 4615 or via email at bkolnok@vistareye.com.



**September 7,
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

Message from the President

By: Christopher Finley

Greetings Blue Ridge Chapter members! I hope each of you are doing well as we approach mid-year. You'll find this issue of *Blue Ridge Views* jammed pack with information about ongoing chapter activity and information about upcoming programs, professional development opportunities and awards as well as updates on accreditation, public service, membership, PRSSA and national news. I continue to be amazed by the ongoing support and dedication of your committee chairs and executive officers. With that said, on behalf of the membership, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for all of your hard work and everything that you do.



2006 Leadership Rally

Your President-Elect, Jennifer Faulkner, has registered for the 2006 Leadership Rally scheduled for June 9-10 at PRSA headquarters in New York. This two-day seminar is designed to train incoming chapter leaders on how to manage their chapters effectively, discuss best practices and plan for their respective term. If you would like for Jennifer to check into any national initiatives, please let her know as soon as possible. Jennifer plans to give members a report after the event.

PRSSA News

Congratulations to the newly elected officers of the Liberty University, Radford University and Virginia Tech PRSSA chapters. I have been in touch with the new officers as well as professional advisors and everyone is very eager to get started and continue strengthening our partnerships, respectively.

The Second Annual PRSSA Leadership Retreat for all three chapters' executive committees, professional and academic advisors is set for Friday, September 8, 2006 at Roanoke College. The purpose of this forum is to bring together leaders from each chapter to brainstorm, share ideas and develop fundraising plans for the upcoming year. The 2005 retreat was a great success and we expect to continue the tradition this fall. Chapter members are invited to participate. If you are interested, please let me know. Pizza and drinks will be provided.

PRC Search

Have you taken advantage on an incredible tool available to you as a member? Answers to your research challenges are at your fingertips with PRC Search. You can search and retrieve answers to your most challenging PR research questions from PRSA's proprietary electronic database of full-text articles from award winning publications *Tactics* and *Strategist* and hundreds of award winning case studies from Silver and Bronze Anvils. For additional information, please visit the "Resources" section online at prsa.org.

Best Regards,
Christopher Finley
BRC-PRSA President

Public Service Update

By: Todd Burns, Public Service Chair

Literacy Volunteers Needs

BRPRSA continues to support Literacy Volunteers Roanoke Valley as its 2006 public service project. The organization needs some immediate PR help. Let Todd Burns, tfburns@aep.com, know if you are able to help with any of the following needs:

- Flyer Design – Design an 8 ½ x 11 flyer template so the staff can update and use as needed for promotional events
- Retractable Display – Provide a project outline to help secure a professional looking display – establish budget, evaluate suppliers, and develop design.
- Window Statics – Establish budget, evaluate suppliers, design window static for tutors' vehicles, identifying them as such.

Book Sale Reminder

Literacy Volunteers will hold its annual book sale June 3 and 4 at the lower level of Towers Mall, beside Hallmark. This is the final book sale, the event is being replaced with the Scrabble tournament.

First Annual Scrabble Tournament

In March, Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley held its first ever Scrabble tournament fund raiser. The event drew close to 150 participants and raised nearly \$12,000. PRSA was represented in the tournament by chapter president Chris Finley, immediate past president, Shelly Whitaker, and public service chair Todd Burns.

With more than 44 teams entered, some sought to differentiate themselves from the crowd, like this team that donned pajamas and feathered boas. ♦



Paul J. Reagan

Continued from Page 1

government relations and communications at the federal and state levels. Paul brings a wealth of experience in garnering support for important issues, a comprehensive understanding of the legislative process, and the ability to draw upon key media contacts.

Paul has been involved in politics for more than 20 years. Prior to joining McGuire-Woods Consulting, Paul served as communications director for Governor Mark Warner where he helped to shape the Governor's successful message on budget, education and government reform issues.

At the federal level, he worked as chief of staff to U.S. Congressman James P. Moran, communications director for U.S. Representatives L.F. Payne, Rick Boucher and Owen Pickett. A graduate of the College of William and Mary and George Mason University School of Law, Paul also served as counsel to the House Science Subcommittee under Representative Rick Boucher. ♦

Awards Program

By: Shelly Whitaker, APR, Immediate Past President, Awards Co-Chair

The Spokane chapter of PRSA wants to thank our many members who generously gave of their time to help judge the chapter's annual SPARC awards. Like our own Summit Awards, the SPARC awards celebrate the outstanding public relations completed in their region. The Spokane chapter received 126 awards in numerous award categories. They sent half of their entries to us and half to Milwaukee. With the help of 17 Blue Ridge chapter members (and quite a few pizzas), our chapter completed the judging of 63 entries in a little more than a week's time and helped the other chapter keep to a very tight schedule.

We, too, would like to thank our volunteer judges who included the following members:

Heather Browning
Terri Jones, APR
Pam Feese
Jennifer Faulkner
Christopher Finley
Maggie Boyes
Linda Staley, APR
Jeanne Kennedy
Kris Landrum

Don Johnson
Donna Wilson
Bobby Parker
Beth Kolnok
Elaine Simpson
Laura Atchison
Todd Burns
Shelly Whitaker, APR

To show our gratitude, our chapter put all the volunteers' names into a raffle for a free ticket to our upcoming Summit Awards gala, which will be held October 27 at the Hotel Roanoke. The winner was Kris Landrum. Congratulations, Kris!

On behalf of the awards committee I just wanted to thank each judge, we could not have done without the contribution of each one of you.



In other awards news, the new Summit Award was revealed at the April Luncheon meeting and is pictured here. As mentioned earlier, entrants can now compete for a Gold Summit award or a Silver Summit award in each category. As it turns out the trophy that had been used since the beginning of the awards program was discontinued. The new awards will be identical in style, with a nine inch version for Gold and a smaller six inch version for silver. The mountain logo that was originally created will still be used, but the shape of the actual award is taller and has four sides, instead of three. The awards committee and board of directors are very excited about this new award and so far the new styles have received rave reviews. The new award will also be

featured prominently on the Call for Entries piece, which will be hitting your mailbox in early July! If you have any questions about this year's awards program, please contact me at 540-444-2127 or swhitaker@angelssofarssi.org or a committee member. ♦

Summit Awards 2006 Categories

Annual Reports:

Average budget; Modest budget

Community Partnerships:

One budget category

Issues and Crisis

Management:

One budget category

Interactive/Audio-Visual:

Average budget; Modest budget

Internal Communications:

Average budget; Modest budget

Lin Chaff Creativity:

Average budget; Modest budget

Magazines:

Average budget; Modest budget

Media Relations:

One budget category

PR Campaign:

Average budget; Modest budget

Print Publications:

Average budget; Modest budget

Special Events:

Average budget; Modest budget

Web Site Development:

Average budget; Modest budget

Mark your calendar!

Summit
Awards Gala

Friday, October 27

Welcome New Chapter Member

By: Elaine Simpson, Membership Chair

Matt Hankins

Matt Hankins, a Tazewell County native, has served as communications director for the City of Martinsville since November 2001. Hankins oversees the city's public relations efforts, managing its media relations, its television channel, and website. His other areas of oversight include the city's cable franchise relations and legislative affairs, and he serves as team president of the city's Coastal Plain League baseball franchise, the Martinsville Mustangs.

Prior to joining the city, Matt previously worked for Media General as editor of Tazewell County's two weekly newspapers, the Richlands News-Press and Clinch Valley News from 1997 through 2001. During his editorial career, he won a variety of top Virginia Press Association awards for excellence in news reporting, page design and layout, editorial writing and photography. He started his career as a sportswriter at the Bristol Herald Courier in 1994.

Hankins left the Herald Courier to serve as a senior legislative aide to Delegate Barnes Kidd in the Virginia House of Delegates and to manage Kidd's re-election campaign. After public service, Hankins joined Tazewell Community Hospital as PR director until leaving a year later to edit the two newspapers.



He is a 1994 graduate of Emory & Henry College where he has been named Outstanding Male Senior (1994), Young Alumnus of the Year (2002) and a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors and the association's Executive Committee. He has served as the college's football stadium announcer since 1991.

Previous professional affiliations include the American Society for Health

Care Marketing and Public Relations and the City-County Communications & Marketing Association (3CMA). He is married to the former Leanne Scaf. The couple lives in Martinsville with their three children, ages 13, 8 and 3. They are members of Forest Park Country Club, and have coached soccer and softball. Hankins plays softball for the city's industrial league team. ♦

www.prsa-blueridge.org

By: Andrea Price, Website Chair

We are working on a redesign of our chapter website. We are anticipating a launch near mid-May. The new design will feature convenient drop down menus, condensed content and new photography. As a reminder, agency sponsorships are available. If you have an interest or any other suggestions for the website, please contact me at aprice@roanokechamber.org. ♦

2006 Program and Sponsorship Update

By: Jennifer Faulkner

Mark your calendars! In addition to our June program, following is a list of confirmed speakers for the remaining 2006 professional development luncheon programs. Many thanks to our program sponsors! If you have any questions about any of the programs planned for the rest of the year or if you have any ideas for future topics, please let me know.

August 10th

Steven Gosset,
Editorial
Manager -
Feature News
Service, PR Newswire
Sponsor: Anstey-Hodge



October 12th

Dan Wheeler, Director of Digital
Media, The Roanoke Times
Sponsor: The Roanoke Times

THE ROANOKE TIMES
roanoke.com

December 14th

Heather Browning,
Community Relations Manager,
Town of Blacksburg
Sponsor: The Willard
Companies
Topic: Extreme Home Makeover
Experience



The Blue Ridge Chapter
Public Relations Society of America presents

Paul J. Reagan
Director of Communications, McGuire Woods Consulting

Sponsored by:
Radford University Corporate and Communication Program

Thursday, June 8, 2006
Noon Luncheon Meeting, Hotel Roanoke

Fees & Information

Chapter Members: \$22.00
Students & Interns: \$17.00
Non-Members: \$30.00

Note: There is a \$5.00 LATE FEE
for reservations made after
Monday, June 5.

Parking at the Hotel Roanoke is
\$3.00 for self-parking, \$5.00 for
valet. Parking on Wells Avenue
is free.

Please make check payable to
Blue Ridge Chapter - PRSA

Mail reservation form and
money to:
Linda Scarborough
Community Relations Specialist
Roanoke County Public Schools
5937 Cove Road, N.W.
Roanoke, VA 24019

RSVP online at:
www.prsa-blueridge.org

If you require a special meal (e.g.
vegetarian) or have a food allergy,
please indicate this when making
your reservation.

Your Name: _____

Company: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Number of members attending (\$22.00 ea): _____

Names: _____

Number of students attending (\$17.00 ea): _____

Names: _____

Number of non-members attending (\$30.00 ea): _____

Names: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please check if this is your first BRC-PRSA meeting.

BRC-PRSA Member Spotlight



Name: Todd Burns

Age: 37

Title: Corporate Communications Manager

Company: Appalachian Power

PRSA Member Since: 1997
(PRSSA member in college!)

CAREER

Why did you choose PR as a career choice?

Well into my magazine journalism sequence, I took a PR class from an energetic and knowledgeable retired corporate PR director. He had more fun at what he did than most other people I came into contact with at an influential point in my college life. I added the PR sequence to my curriculum. I did an internship with a PR department at a hospital and liked it. When I graduated, I got a PR job producing a monthly magazine! Perfect for a journalism major with a PR emphasis!

What have been the highlights of your career?

I first put my journalism degree to use as a reporter and photographer for the Herald Dispatch, a daily newspaper in Huntington, W.Va.

I worked a few other jobs -- ad agency, marketing and photographer -- until I got my first big break and was hired by Kentucky Power Company (Ashland, Ky.) in 1991.

My first challenge was to turn around a tired old in-house publication and put to use all the journalism skills I had recently acquired. I had to convince a conservative company (with a retired IBM vice president who was over IT) that I needed a Macintosh computer to do things right. With more than 20,000 employees, there wasn't a single Mac in the company. I succeeded, and with a new Mac I published the magazine and all other Kentucky Power publications for about four years.

Between 1995 and 1997, I bounced around in corporate reorganizations living in Roanoke and Charleston, W.Va., and enhancing my resume adding critical experience in handling external issues. In mid-1997, I got PR responsibility for a \$300 million, 100-mile electric transmission project. It was controversial, high profile and desperately needed. From 1997 to 2003, it was a communications full-court press as we sought permits to build the project. By 2003 we had approval to build the line, and this June we'll energize it!

Between 2000 and 2006, as a result of a lot of corporate restructuring, my opportunities and responsibilities for Appalachian Power grew beyond the power line project to include corporate communications support for all of AEP's Virginia operations -- new construction, customer service, internal communications, etc. (Appalachian serves the western third of the state with nearly 500,000 customers).

What's been the greatest challenge you've faced in your career?

The power line project had been around for six years when I got the helm. The communications effort lacked focus and the project was

beginning to lack credibility. With sound research and good communications tools, I helped the company regain control of the issues and ultimately gain approval to build the project. As the approval process came to an end, surveys showed that a majority of people responded that the power line project "was an acceptable solution to meeting the region's energy needs."

What is your greatest accomplishment so far?

The most publicized accomplishment has been coordinating the communications efforts for the power line project. It's won several BRPRSA Summit Awards over the years (that helped gain credibility in-house). Through systematic and thought-through communications efforts we were able to increase acceptance of the project in the communities where it was ultimately constructed. It was an award-winning communications project, a great project team, and ultimately the power line will benefit Virginians for decades.

Another significant accomplishment came in 2004, when Heartland USA picked up a freelance article I wrote on fly-fishing. I've published hundreds of publications myself, but for some reason, placing a freelance article on something that I love to do was special.

What is your career dream for the future?

In many ways I'm living my career dream. I have real responsibility, and I have an ability to influence change and get things accomplished. I have access to new and emerging communications tools to help enhance the product I deliver and expand my professional horizons. On a daily basis I get to make a real impact and indirectly deliver a product --

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Member Spotlight

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electricity – that helps improve the way that people live their lives. That's gratifying.

What is your PR philosophy?

I despise the word "spin". I really despise it. It implies that as PR practitioners we're directing people away from something, perhaps the truth. I see my job as a facilitator, communicator and educator. I put people in touch with information and make sure that it is understood.

In that regard, keep it simple. Tailor your messages for your audience, distribute it and evaluate your results.

PERSONAL LOW DOWN

Where were you born?

Beckley, W.Va.

College?

Marshall University, W.Va.

What brought you to SW VA?

Transferred with the power company.

Where do you live?

Roanoke.

Married, single, divorced?

Married, to a beautiful California girl who keeps me grounded and compliments me in every way.

Children and ages?

Two wonderful, energetic young boys, Mitchell 4 and Gavin 2.

Pets?

Two old dogs –Shepherd/Lab mix and a Rhodesian Ridgeback mix, and two cats.

Outside interests/hobbies?

Avid outdoorsman. Love to fish, canoe, camp, hike. I also work on old cars. Current vehicles include 1932 Pontiac, 1934 Pontiac, 1949 Dodge,



1951 Mercury and a 1962 Willys Utility Wagon. The 1934 Pontiac was the first car my family ever owned. We found it 30 years after it was sold. My father and I restored it, then ran it across the country three times in the Great American Race, a cross-country road rally.

How do you describe your personality?

Outgoing, even keeled. Dependable. Ok, and a touch type A.

FAVORITES

Food:

Food: Seafood. Blackened, grilled, stuffed with crab. Also a fan of most ethnic foods – Mexican, Japanese and Indian are my current favorites. (Although with two young boys, I eat more pizza than anything else!)

Musicians:

Showing my age here – I'm a retro rocker – Aerosmith, VanHalen, and the like. And, old country, Keith Whitley, Merle Haggard, etc.

Vacation Spot:

Vacation, What's that? Lake Tahoe

Thing to do:

Fish. Camp. Be with family.

What is your perfect day away from work?

A cup of black coffee at daybreak on a riverbank; as the mist rises from the water I ease my canoe into the

river. After a while, the morning silence and the mirror-like surface of the water is broken as a 5-pound smallmouth bass explodes to engulf a top-water fly. In the mid-day heat, we swim and watch wildlife, then crack open a chilled watermelon, and a bottle of homemade wine. We fish and float until dusk, then retire to the campfire where the glow of the embers lights the faces of family and friends.

Or chasing my kids around the back yard all day playing hide and seek, and eating ...pizza.

Community Involvement:

Literacy Volunteers Roanoke Valley, Vice President and PR director, Roanoke Jaycees Foundation Board Member, PRSA public service chair.

FUN & BIZARRE

If there was reincarnation and you had a say in the matter, what would you come back as?

I'd come back as one of my wife's pets. They have it soooo good.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

Usually, it is a recurring one. I'm really bad at calling people by the wrong name, (but I do it with confidence in my voice!) I apologize in advance if I do it to you!

If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be?

I guess if you have to think on this one for a while, you must not need to change anything.

If you were to share something that would shock me, what would it be?

Most people are surprised if they see me away from work. When I'm out of the suit and off the clock, I go back to my roots. I love the outdoors, listen to country music, work on old cars, and drive a pick up truck. It's a contradiction. I know. ♦

From Internship to New Career Path: How Virginia Tech's PRSSA Helped Guide My Way

By: Cam Lucas, Intern, Office of Public Information for Roanoke County, VT Student



From the start of my freshman year, I was nothing short of excited. When I was accepted into a university, I thought that with my college diploma anything was possible. But as a communication major I quickly realized that getting that diploma would not be easy. I was intimidated by the out-going nature of most of the students and the social expectations of my professors. I soon realized that I was not here to simply graduate and be handed a job, but rather to build skills to further my experience because a diploma was not the only thing an employer expected me to present when I finished my undergraduate degree.

Not even a month after beginning my introduction into communication studies, I was bombarded with the reality that I needed internships and a portfolio to accompany the skills I would develop in school. As I proceeded with my education, I had the opportunity through Virginia Tech PRSSA to attend Communication Connections, a one-day conference that presents students with ideas, opinions and experiences from communication professionals.

At the conference I participated in a session with Teresa Hamilton Hall, Public Information Officer for Roanoke County. She spoke of her

transition from news media to public information and I was immediately intrigued. I had heard many times that having an internship in both the mass communication and public communication fields were beneficial because of the relationship that exists between the two professions. What could be better than working with a professional that had experienced both sides? Because she worked in my hometown I asked if I could join her over my holiday break to gain a better idea of the public relations field. She agreed and I was on track to building my resume.

Before beginning the internship, I had my sights set on pursuing a career in sports marketing. It seemed like an interesting field and I thought that Virginia Tech was the perfect place to perfect the skills needed to promote a sports team. However, my goal would soon change in a most unexpected way.

When you think about working in local government, the words fast paced and full of surprises probably don't come to mind. Yet that was exactly what I found. For a young person looking to learn, my timing could not have been better. When I began my internship, Roanoke County was dealing with a full-blown communications crisis. County officials were preparing to build a new regional jail. As you might expect, citizens did not want the development on or within proximity of their property. The existing jail was stretched to capacity and County officials had a narrow window within which to act or they could lose much needed state funding for the project.

The first few weeks of my internship were somewhat of a whirlwind. I attended meetings as county officials decided how to proceed with the project against growing citizen

opposition. The only option was to provide the public and media information as quickly as possible. In the first few weeks I tagged along as county officials and the media visited potential sites, as the county held community meetings and finally as citizens expressed concerns to the supervisors during a board meeting. After watching events unfold, I was pleasantly surprised and decided that local government was the place for me.

From the start, one of the most beneficial experiences was the acquisition period. Throwing one's self into a community of people with established norms and relationships takes anyone out of their comfort zone. Beyond the basic social skills an internship allows a person to foster, it was crucial that the principles I learned in classes were put to work. There are no classes that can possibly prepare a student for facing an actual crisis or planning and executing an event. The only way to master the art of thinking on one's feet and saying the right thing to the right person is to do it daily.

The internship process provides more insight, understanding and appreciation than any other college experience. It welcomes the advancement of a student's goals and abilities. Through my internship I gained not only an appreciation for my courses, professors and their personal experiences but also found myself and began to decide on a career path that I hope to fulfill. ♦



PRSSA Student Spotlight



Name: Ashley Hess

Age: 20

PRSSA Member Since: 2004

College and Career:

Double major in Communication (PR) and Spanish at Virginia Tech, and an Intern at Luna Innovations Incorporated

COLLEGE AND CAREER

Why did you choose PR as a major?

I was originally interested in mass communication because I was really involved in journalism in high school. However, once I took my first PR class, I knew I had to switch over to the public side. I love to write, interact with people, plan events, design things, be creative, etc., so it seemed like a great choice for me.

What have been the highlights of your college experience so far?

I studied abroad in Mexico for seven weeks during the summer of 2005. I lived with a Mexican family and traveled throughout the country, improving my Spanish and learning a lot about the culture. I got to attend

the PRSSA National Assembly in Dallas, Texas, where I met some amazing people and learned a lot about other PRSSA chapters across the U.S. Currently I am interning at a great company, learning way more about PR than I thought I would. Finally, I was elected President of PRSSA for my senior year.

What's been the greatest challenge you've faced in college?

My greatest challenge was deciding whether or not I should graduate early. I have enough credits that I could graduate one semester ahead of my classmates. That sounds great, but I went back and forth for months on what I thought would be best for me. In the end, I weighed the pros and cons and decided that I did not want to give up half of my senior year with friends as well as my presidency in PRSSA. I decided that I want to take full advantage of my last two semesters at Virginia Tech.

What is your greatest accomplishment so far?

I received a study abroad scholarship through the Department of Communication to go to Mexico.

What is your career dream for the future?

In addition to my PR major, I have a second major in Spanish. My ideal career would incorporate both of my majors. I would love to do something in International Relations, where I can use both my PR skills and my Spanish skills to either communicate with people in other countries or reach out to the Latino population in the United States.

What is your PR philosophy?

Public Relations builds beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics, and also within the organization itself. It can be a very valuable tool to any organization because it maintains a favorable image of the company in the public

eye, as well as good morale among the employees. Good PR makes both internal and external relations a lot easier.

PERSONAL LOW DOWN

Where were you born?

Alexandria, Virginia

Where do you live?

My parents live in Springfield, VA, but I will be living in Blacksburg over the summer to intern at Luna.

Pets?

I have a dog. He is a beagle/sheltie mix named Sinbad.

Outside interests/hobbies?

I am obsessed with email, I like to surf the net, listen to music, watch movies, and read when there's time.

How do you describe your personality?

I am friendly, hardworking, sometimes outgoing and sometimes shy, silly, understanding, and open-minded.

FAVORITES

Food:

I love authentic Mexican food. Sometimes the local restaurants just don't cut it. I also love chicken, macaroni and cheese, and pepperoni pizza with ranch on the side.

Musicians:

I listen to tons of different musicians. My favorite rock bands include Nickelback, Creed, Revis, and Train. I also like Spanish artists like Reyli and Juanes.

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Member Spotlight

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Vacation Spot:

Definitely Mexico. But not the touristy parts of Mexico like Cancun (although it is beautiful). I prefer places like Xalapa and Puebla, where I got to travel last summer. In those cities you can witness true Mexican culture.

Thing to Do:

I love just being with friends, whether we go to the movies or just sit and talk. I am happiest when I am with good friends.

What is your perfect day away from school?

My perfect day away from school is sunny and warm, but not too hot. I sleep in really late. Then, I spend half the day with my best friend, shopping and just talking about everything. I spend the rest of the day with my boyfriend. We take a walk outside, go to a funny movie and then stop and get ice cream on the way home.

Community Involvement:

I have participated in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life for the past two years. Next semester I hope to get involved in YMCA by teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to members of the Hispanic community in Blacksburg.

Other activities include:

I am an ambassador for the College of Liberal Arts & Human Sciences. As an ambassador, I volunteer two hours per week working on websites for the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. I am also a member of Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, and a member of Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship.

FUN & BIZARRE

If there was reincarnation and you had a say in the matter, what would you come back as?

I'm not completely sure about this one, but I might want to come back as a bird. I don't know what kind of bird, but I have always wanted to be able to fly.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

I can't pick out a most embarrassing moment, but I do have an embarrassing moment that happened recently. I had been interning for about a month and I had never met the big boss. One day my supervisor was out of the office so I was answering her phone for her. A man called whose voice I didn't recognize, but he seemed to know who I was. He proceeded to ask me how things were going in the office and if everyone was treating me well. I played along like I knew who I was talking to, even though I had no idea. I didn't realize until after I got off the phone that it was the big boss, the man that I had never met. I was a little embarrassed that I didn't know it was him, but it got worse when I told another man in the office what had just happened. He decided to call the big boss and tell him that I had no idea I was talking to him just a moment ago. They both got a good laugh out of it. Fortunately, I finally got to meet the big boss a few days ago.

What is your earliest childhood memory?

Well, my parents got married when I was four, so fortunately for me I got to be the flower girl in their wedding. However, the only part I remember is that I threw a fit because I didn't want to wear a flowery headband they had gotten for me. So, it ended up sitting on my flower basket as I walked down the aisle.

If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be?

I would change how I ended a couple of relationships that I had years ago. Because I did not use my best judgment at the time, today I don't have a couple of friendships that I probably could.

If you were to share something that would shock me, what would it be?

Most people are shocked to find out that I have not tasted a lot of seafood. My family didn't really eat seafood while I was growing up, so I never became accustomed to the taste. Eventually I just wouldn't try it when I was offered. Finally, my friends were able to persuade me. So, I had my first taste of crab about a year ago, my first piece of shrimp about six months ago, and to this day I have never tried lobster or fish. However, I am slowly trying to build myself up to trying more seafood. ♦



PRSSA Students Fight to Find a Cure

By: Alyssa Brown, Assistant Firm Director, RU COMM

The American Cancer Society's Relay For Life is an overnight celebration of life and cancer survivorship. The Relay was originally created as a 24-hour event because cancer never sleeps. Someone who has cancer battles it 24 hours a day. Teams of people from all walks of life have fun while raising much-needed funds to fight cancer, and raise awareness of cancer prevention and treatment.

Relay is a moving celebration of cancer survivorship. The event begins with a Survivor's Lap in which cancer survivors take a victory lap around the track, cheered on by their supporters. Each cancer survivor is introduced and all survivors complete the first lap around the track before being joined by the other participants. The Survivor's Lap is a great reminder of why we participate in Relay For Life.

For the newly diagnosed, Relay is a healing experience that offers a chance to meet others who have claimed victory over cancer. For caregivers who give time, love, and support to those who face cancer, Relay provides hope and understanding.

After dark, a Luminary Ceremony takes place. Bags with candles are placed around the track. Each one is dedicated in honor of a cancer survivor

or in memory of someone who has passed away from cancer. The luminaries surround the track and light the way as Relay For Life participants walk throughout the night.

With the help of PRSSA students, there were 44 teams who participated in this year's Radford Relay for Life. RU COMM, the PRSSA student run firm at Radford, has done several things to ensure that this year's Relay for Life was a success, including holding two rallies/information sessions on campus, distributing flyers around campus, and submitting press releases to the Tartan, the RU student newspaper. In addition, RU COMM also recorded a public service announcement and had a table set up in the Heath circle to raise money for the event.

In addition to being in charge of marketing and public relations on campus for the 2006 Relay For Life, several students from PRSSA also formed their own team. The students hosted a spaghetti dinner to raise money for their team. All members of PRSSA, as well as faculty and friends, were invited to come out for a \$2 plate of spaghetti to support the PRSSA Relay For Life team. The team raised over \$175 during this particular fundraiser.



Every year there is a Relay for Life theme. This year the theme was TV shows. Teams were encouraged to dress up as characters from their favorite TV show. There were several fun filled activities related to this theme during Relay For Life. Some of the activities included an "American Idol" Karaoke contest, a "Star Search" Kids Talent Show, "Let's Make a Deal" Junk Drawer Games, "Rachel Ray's" Healthy Dish Contest, and a "Grey's Anatomy" Clinic.

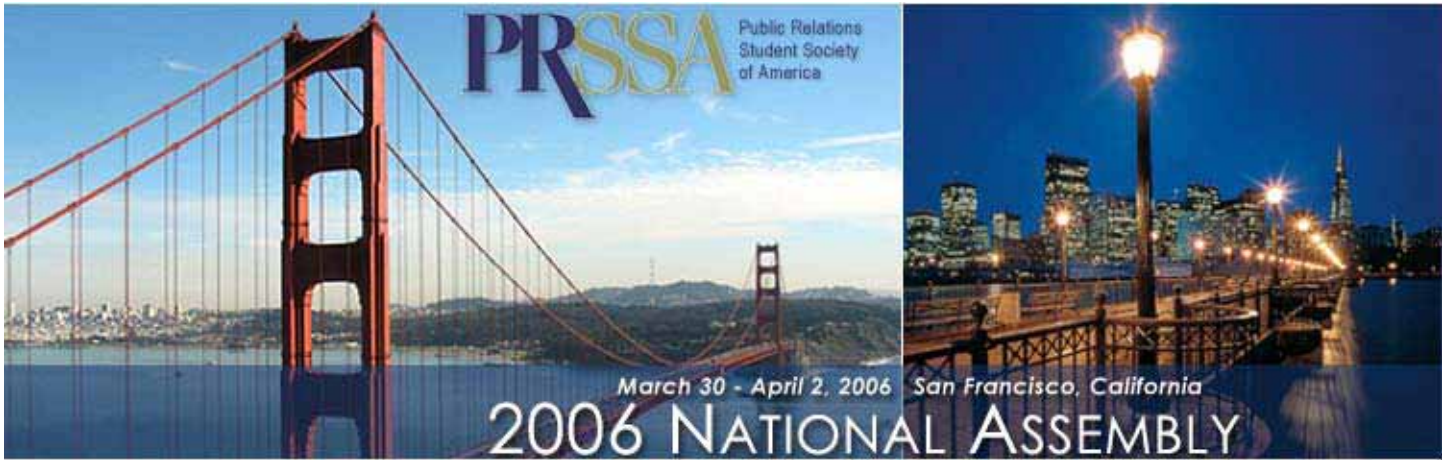
The American Cancer Society Relay For Life represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that one day cancer will be eliminated. This is the firm's first year and Relay For Life was a great opportunity for RU COMM. It allowed students to gain valuable experience in the public relations field, as well as contribute to this great cause. Through the help of PRSSA, The American Cancer Society is one step closer to finding a cure. ♦

RU COMM Public Relations

The Mission of RUCOMM is to provide PRSSA members with the opportunity to utilize classroom knowledge in conjunction with real public relations experience in a supportive learning environment to better our community.

Goals:

- Provide hands on public relations experience to members
- Help clients achieve goals
- Establish a positive reputation through quality work
- Increase interest in PRSSA
- Provide a valuable service to the community
- Advance towards the National Affiliated PRSSA student-run firm standards
- Adhere to the PRSA code of ethics



PRSSA Takes You Farther Than You Can Imagine – Both Geographically and in Your Career

By: Kate Lehmkuhler

I first heard of PRSSA in my Principles of Public Relations class with Professor Williams, who coincidentally is the Virginia Tech chapter's faculty advisor. As a Marketing and PR double major, I was intrigued and began attending meetings. Although I didn't know anyone prior to joining, I quickly became drawn into the group. I attended the weekly meetings, worked on committees, and soon realized that this was an organization I wanted to become far more involved in.

Soon thereafter, the president of our chapter, Jessica Cooper, announced that National Assembly was being held in San Francisco and that we were in need of a delegate to represent our chapter. I was shocked that no one else had volunteered; at first glance alone it is a trip to San Francisco! After the meeting I eagerly approached Jessica and the next day found myself confirming my role as the Virginia Tech delegate to 2006 National Assembly.

I have always been one to travel at any opportunity and, at the time, had never been west of Indiana. To hear that I was going to San Francisco was overwhelming to me, it being

such a fascinating city and atmosphere. Flying alone cross-country did not faze me; I had a good feeling that this trip would be invaluable.

Upon arriving in California I immediately found myself networking – on the Super Shuttle at the airport. I happened to meet another delegate on board, and that was how I spent the duration of my time. Whether or not I was participating in the activities, I was constantly striking up conversations with people I did not know and simultaneously creating connections to be used in the future. More importantly, however, I made a handful of quality friendships both during the conference and in our free time. I met and instantly became attached to people from all over the country – Nevada, Washington, Wisconsin, Illinois, other parts of Virginia, and many other states. Had I not attended National Assembly, I never would have had the chance to meet these individuals who have come to mean so much to me.

Aside from the friendships, the National Assembly itself was quite memorable. Professional in all aspects, I got to participate in leadership activities that enhanced the skills of all participants, engage

in discussion groups that focused on chapter improvement, and attend speakers of the highest credentials. Furthermore, I gained experience with representing my school in a parliamentary-style assembly through both participation and by studying the related materials provided. I became sincerely interested in the welfare of PRSSA, and did my part to contribute to it.

I cannot express how beneficial this trip was for me. Attending a professional event of that level provided me with valuable insight for the future that I would not have otherwise. Now, as the 2006-2007 Chapter Relations Director for Virginia Tech's chapter, I am thrilled to have the chance to maintain a more prominent role within PRSSA. I look back on my experience with fondness and gratitude, and look to the future with excitement and anticipation of what is to come. ♦

RU PRSSA Inducts New Officers

**By: Shelly Whitaker, APR,
Immediate Past President,
Awards Co-Chair**

At a ceremony on April 20, 2006, the Radford University Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America inducted new officers. The event was held in the Norwood Room of the Bondurant Center in Radford Virginia.

Guest speaker Thomas Becher, Vice President of John Lambert Associates, gave advice to graduating students and talked about his particular career path. The outgoing executive officers were recognized and then new officers were inducted. New officers for the 2006-2007 academic year are as follows:

President - Alicia Gallimore

VP - Tyler Leveski

Secretary - Ashley McCaleb

Treasurer - Dave Rogacki

Director of PR - Jo White

Historian - Christine Johnston

Firm Director - Michelle Ward

Social Chair - Alicia Bell

Professional Advisor -
Shelly Whitaker, APR

Faculty Advisor -
Kristin Froemling

*Photo: Incoming and outgoing
RU PRSSA executive boards,
Academic Advisor - Kristin
Froemling and Professional
Advisor - Shelly Whitaker, APR*

PRSSA National Assembly Report

By: Alicia Gallimore, Incoming RU PRSSA President

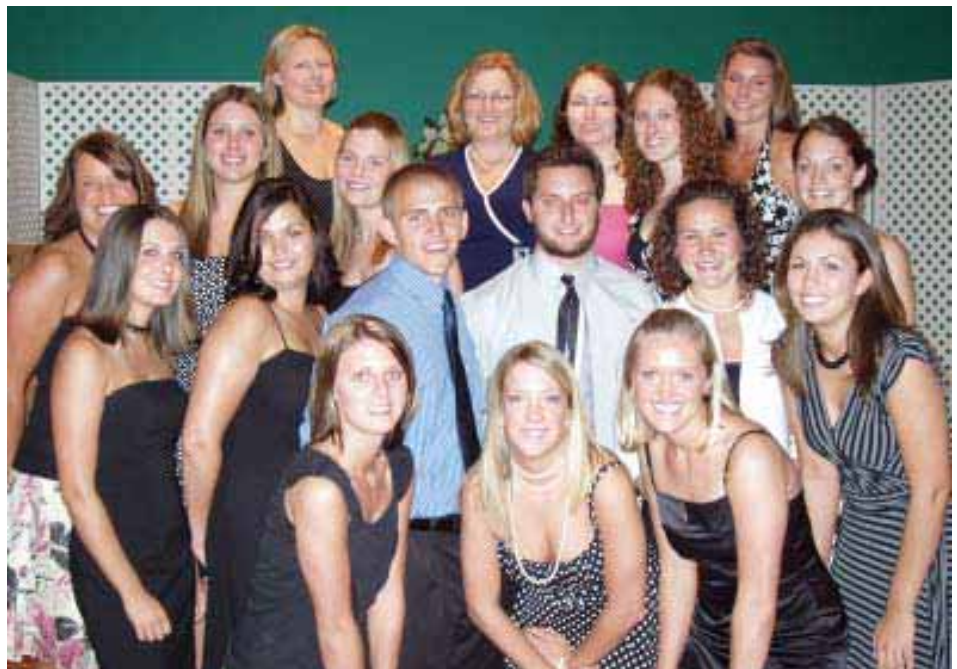
This Spring, I was elected to represent the Radford University PRSSA chapter at National Assembly. I was honored to be an official delegate for my chapter and excited to learn about other chapters across the country.

This year, National Assembly was held in the beautiful city of San Francisco. My roommates were from Michigan and Texas, and both had very different backgrounds in PRSSA. We spent much of the first night enthusiastically sharing our diverse experiences and plans for the conference.

For me, the most beneficial component of the conference happened the first full day during a roundtable discussion for presidents, vice presidents, and firm directors. I was fascinated by the range of ideas and methods different chapters employed across the United States. I learned many new tactics to implement at RU for recruiting and retaining members. Some chapters struggled with remaining active while others had fully-developed firms with paying clients and many activities on- and off-campus. I was inspired to plan new goals for my chapter that will enable our members take full advantages of all of our resources and benefit from exciting new activities.

I was also able to share my own experience as Account Executive in RU's PR firm. I instructed would-be firm directors on how to start a firm and solicit clients. I explained that the firm was one of the best experiences for me thus far in PRSSA and invaluable to my chapter's impact on its students and the community.

The rest of the conference presented many more opportunities for collaboration with my PRSSA colleagues. I am more inspired than ever to lead my chapter in new projects to ensure that each member can contribute their full potential. ♦



PRSA National News

PRSA Career Services for Members

Career Tools™ is an Internet-based product to help members with their job search or to evaluate their skills. The service also offers a comprehensive collection of job search and career management resources including links to job sites at no cost to members. Career Tools™ is a service of Execuplanet, a Lee Hecht Harrison company. Visit MemberNet at <http://members.prsa.org/> and click "Member Benefits."

Mentoring: Request a mentoring session with a seasoned professional — a member of PRSA's College of Fellows. Visit the College of Fellows Web page at www.prsa.org.

JobCenter: Add a valuable link to your Chapter Web site — link to PRSA National's JobCenter. In addition to the job listings that many Chapters offer, members can also search job listings or post their resume at www.prsa.org.

New Gay/Lesbian Affinity Group

PRSA is pleased to announce that the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Affinity Group (GLBT) was approved in October. This is PRSA's second Affinity Group (the first group being New Professionals). The GLBT group strives to provide resources and programs, such as teleseminars and networking opportunities, for GLBT members, and all practitioners working within organizations that support or provide services/products for the GLBT community. PRSA members who are interested in more information about the group should contact membership@prsa.org or call Member Services at 212-460-1490.

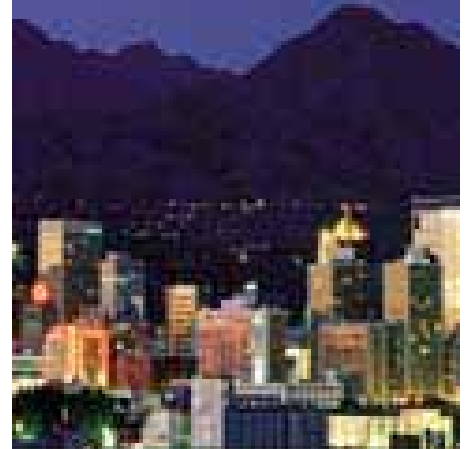
Online Dues Renewal

Renew 24 hours a day, seven days a week — our credit card payment service makes renewal quick and easy. Members may renew, add or change any or all of their memberships — National, Chapters, Professional Interest Sections and/or Affinity Groups — with just a few taps on their keyboards. Visit MemberNet, our secure, members-only Web site at <http://members.prsa.org>. Select "My Billing" and renew. Members can update their contact information at "My Profile." Forgotten your MemberNet login or password? Click the option to have it e-mailed to you. Have questions or problems with MemberNet? E-mail our help desk at membernet@prsa.org. ♦

Save the Date!



2006 PRSA
International Conference
Salt Lake City, Utah
November 11 - 14, 2006



Spring Ahead with PRSA

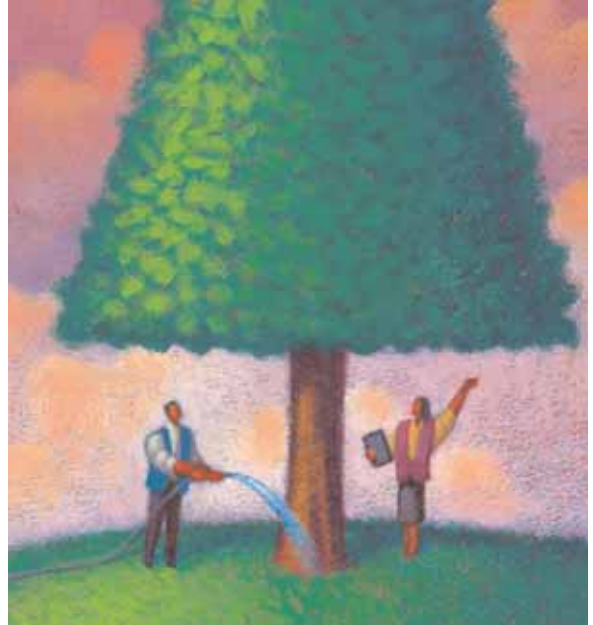
Join PRSA* by May and June 2006 and get a one-year membership to your local PRSA Chapter for free!

(*for \$290: \$225 dues + \$65 initiation fee)

PRSA National and Chapter memberships give you:

- access to a broad spectrum of local and national professional development opportunities
- local and national networks to help you in your career
- valuable information services through National's Professional Resources Center
- complimentary subscriptions to the award-winning publications *PR Tactics* and *The Strategist*
- career development resources and tools
- opportunities to develop your leadership skills
- access to Professional Interest Sections and Affinity Groups
- and much more

For a list of Chapters, or to access Chapter Web sites, visit www.prsa.org and click Chapters



This offer is valid for:

- 1) Members joining at the full member rate of \$290 (\$225 national dues plus \$65 initiation fee).
- 2) Former members who have been inactive for at least one year.

(Individuals joining as Associate members are not eligible for this offer.)

How to join and receive the one-year free Chapter membership:

A) Return the enclosed application.

OR

B) You may also join using the online or PDF application at www.prsa.org under the "Membership" button. If doing so, please be SURE to indicate promotion code **Chap2006** to receive the special offer. (The adjustment for Chapter dues will not appear on the online form, but will be made by PRSA staff.)

For details on PRSA member benefits, refer to last page of application or visit www.prsa.org

ADVANCING THE PROFESSION AND THE PROFESSIONAL.