

BLUE RIDGE

PRSA Public Relations Society of America



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

January/February 2008
Vol. 18, No. 1

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February 2008 Speaker, Jeff Marks on "Keeping Up With Rapidly Changing Trends In TV"

The television market is changing so rapidly it is getting harder and harder to keep up. On February 14, Jeff Marks, President and General Manager of WDBJ7, will give an analysis of the current state of the TV market and the trends and developments that will shape all aspects of the industry.

Jeff will answer the most significant questions facing today's executives as they seek to plan their marketing strategy for 2008.

By examining the key trends for the television marketplace including On-Demand TV, HDTV, IPTV and Mobile TV, we will learn just how quickly the TV industry is adapting to new technologies and how these innovations will change the television landscape.

Jeff Marks brings a very impressive resume. He is the 4th general manager in the 57-year history of WDBJ7, taking the helm in 2007 after two years as president and general manager of its sister station in Augusta, Georgia.

In seven years with Cablevision Systems Corporation, Jeff founded News 12 New Jersey, one of Cablevision's 24-hour cable news

channels, and served as vice president for training and network coordination.

He spent 12 years with the Maine Broadcasting System, rising from news director for the station group to vice president and general manager of its Bangor outlet. He is also a past chairman of the Radio-Television News Directors Association and has written and lectured on news ethics and First Amendment issues.



Jeff Marks and his wife, Roxanne, live in Roanoke and, when time allows, Peaks Island, Maine.

This program is sponsored by the Thomas Becher Agency.

Message from the President

By: Amy Whittaker

Greetings Blue Ridge Chapter – Happy New Year! I trust that everyone had a delightful holiday and is now ready to dive into 2008! I'm excited about the fresh beginning that comes with a new year and especially for what lies ahead for our PRSA chapter.

I'd first like to take a moment, though, to recognize Jennifer Faulkner. Through her leadership this past year, our chapter leaped over the 100-member mark, making ours a medium-sized chapter. What great success we had in 2007, paving the way for our chapter to have another successful year in 2008. Thank you, Jennifer, for your dedication to the Blue Ridge Chapter.

Annual Planning Retreat

The 2008 Executive Board and committee chairs met in November to share ideas and make plans for activities, programs and professional development as well as identify new opportunities. Our board is a great mix of new and veteran members, making it full of energy, creativity and fresh ideas. I look forward to working with this talented team.

Surveying

Our chapter has grown considerably in the past couple of years. While we will continue to grow our membership, our main focus in 2008 will be retention. Each of you joined PRSA for a reason. Whether it's networking opportunities, resources, job announcements, professional development or camaraderie amongst colleagues, there is great value in your membership.

Our board has devised several surveys that you will see in the weeks to come. I'm not going to say that it is critical but it will be helpful and, in the end, most beneficial to you to complete these surveys. Plain and simple, we want to know what you think. What do you expect to gain from your membership? What are your opinions and advice?

We will be looking to gain insight from newcomers about their expectations and on what brought them to our chapter. We will survey the membership on what professional development programs are found to be most beneficial for advancement in the profession. We will also conduct a survey about the Awards program and the recognition received.

From these surveys our respective committees will glean valuable information to make 2008 and beyond what you expect for your membership investment.

Professional Development

Mark your calendar for the professional development luncheons in 2008. A variety of excellent speakers, great food and opportunities for networking is at your fingertips. Program Chair, Beth Kolnok, has been busy securing programs on topics that will be most useful to you as a practitioner. Professional Development Chair, Nancy Simmons, has also been busy planning for a great half-day seminar that you will hear more about in the coming months.



Amy Whittaker, BRC-PRSA
2008 President

Don't wait to register for the luncheons. The most convenient is the pre-payment option. For those members who pre-pay for luncheons for the year, the cost is \$20 per lunch or \$120 for the year. Not only do you save money on the pre-pay option, but if for some reason you can't make a luncheon, you can send a colleague, guest or a student in your place. An invoice and deadline is featured on page 6.

Please make note of the change in a couple of the luncheon dates. Due to a conflict with hotel scheduling, we had to choose an alternate date in December. We also changed the April date because of an opportunity to partner with AdFed on a professional development program.

New Items

You will notice in this issue that we have a couple of new items. "View from the Newsroom" is a rare opportunity for us to have local reporters, editors and news directors dish on Public Relations

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View from the Newsroom: News We Can Use

By: Karen McNew, WSLs 10 On Your Side

This new feature, "View from the Newsroom," will offer insights from area journalists on P.R. Our community's hard-working reporters and editors can teach us plenty by sharing how they see P.R. practitioners and the profession.



There is no question that "P.R. People" and "News People" have a lot in common.

We all have deadlines. We all write "stories." We all want to help people in our local communities have access to information we believe can be helpful and life changing.

That being said from a journalist standpoint at WSLs 10 On Your Side, I have come up with "10" points that I believe would make our relationships with each other that much better.



Karen McNew, WSLs co-anchor and Ten On Your Side Health Team leader

10. Develop Trust –

Know who you are dealing with. If you have worked with a reporter on several occasions and they have been true to their word, give them the benefit of the doubt on issues before assuming they have misquoted or taken something out of context.

9. Focus on local effects with news releases – Tell me in the first sentence why people/viewers/readers in our area care about what is being announced.

8. Let us know when you are out of town and who to contact in your place if there is a need.

7. Simplify news release wording – Television writing is "conversational." The easier it is to

"translate" a news release the easier it is to get it on the air.

6. Know news deadlines – Noon, 5 p.m., 5:30 p.m., and 6 p.m. are rarely good times for news conferences. Planning your event mid-morning or early afternoon may be your best bets. Once we gather the information you have given us we need to have time to get it on the air.

5. Give me people to interview – If your announcement is going to affect people locally provide me with someone to talk to about your announcement. Ideally it would be nice to interview someone the competition will not have

on their broadcast. I understand that is not always possible.

4. Make it visual – Give our photographers something to gather along with the information. People don't just want to hear about news they want to see it too. A room full of people listening to the announcement doesn't make for very interesting news.

3. Give and take – Reporters try to work with you as much as possible but we have bosses too.

2. Access – Cell phones are a must these days. Please call us back in a timely fashion. Even if you have nothing to tell us it is nice to know you got the message and you are checking on the information.

1. Off the Record – We know what it means. We live by it. Using it can avoid a lot of confusion and additional questions.

Thank you for indulging a reporter's top 10 list. I hope at least one of the items on the list is helpful. Here's to a great 2008.

BRC-PRSA Member Spotlight



Name: Nancy Campbell Simmons
Age: 30
Title: Communications Coordinator

Company: National College
PRSA Member Since: 2006

Career

Why did you choose PR as a career choice?

It kind of chose me. I had to pick a major during enrollment and I thought I would go into broadcasting which is why I chose Communications... but then I soon realized that with my shy personality, I wouldn't make a good journalist. It wasn't until I graduated and started working that I developed a passion for the profession. I was working for the MS Society in the fund raising department and quickly learned that many people don't know the difference between MS and MDA. I frequently found myself explaining that they are two different diseases. So in addition to my duties as an event planner, I created a new role for the Blue Ridge Chapter that focused on PR and MS awareness. That is how it all began for me!

What have been the highlights of your career?

I have enjoyed working with the media to air feature stories about people with MS. Just out of college, it took a couple attempts to effectively pique the interest of the media but I eventually learned different pitching styles and the importance of relationship building with media personalities. It was great to see people with a disability get a sense of empowerment while in the spotlight.

Personal Low Down

Where were you born?

I was born in St. Charles, IL which is just west of Chicago. I wish my memories were as exciting as that sounds but unfortunately I don't remember a thing about my time in the windy city. My family moved to the Huntington, WV area shortly after my first birthday.

College?

Virginia Tech – GO HOKIES! I have a bachelor's in Communications with an emphasis in Public Relations and a minor in Marketing Management.

Married, single, divorced?

I celebrated my 10th wedding anniversary this year!

Pets?

Our "first" born... Chip is a chocolate lab but thinks he is human. We rocked his world when we brought Noah home from the hospital but he has been a great big brother.

Children and ages?

This is my FAVORITE thing to talk about... I have two boys. Noah is five and just started kindergarten this year and William (aka Willie) is 18 months. Between getting Noah to basketball practice and keeping William out of cabinets and off the kitchen table, I am always on the move!

Hobbies/Interests?

I love to walk, especially hike! With the two young boys, I can't seem to find the time that I once used to have to devote to this hobby. I also like to travel and see new places. I love to just pick up and go on a road trip but my husband is not a fan of my spontaneity so that doesn't happen often.

Favorites

Food?

Mmmm... My biggest weakness in life. I LOVE food. I love just about anything my mom cooks except for brown beans. I don't care for seafood either. I enjoy eating at new restaurants and trying new foods.

Musicians?

I am always embarrassed to answer this but I'll do it anyway – I love the 80s! My dad enjoyed music and we would listen together when I was a young girl. In addition to the classic 80s hits, he introduced me to Elton John and the Eagles which I still enjoy. I also listen to adult contemporary, classic rock, and some of the milder pop songs.

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Message

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practitioners and our profession. From tips and advice to rants and raves, this column will certainly be one that is a must-read. We also have added a "Professional Development Tips" feature. We can always use some pointers to stay ahead of the curve in our profession. This will definitely offer some insightful information for us.

PRSSA Join Incentive

In this issue is featured a new incentive we have made available for PRSSA members. I encourage all PRSSA members to check it out. It is one you will surely want to get in on.

Accreditation

The chapter has recently purchased online study courses, thus encouraging candidates for APR. The Accreditation committee is readily available for members who want to earn this mark of distinction. See the article in this issue that explains more.

Involvement

There are many opportunities

for you to become more involved in the chapter. The membership committee will be planning a one-of-a-kind social that no one will want to miss. The Public Service committee needs more members to support our valuable partnership with Literacy Volunteers. The Awards committee will soon be hard at work planning for another exciting Gala which showcases some of the region's best work in Public Relations. Please let the committee chair, or me, know if you have a particular interest and we will get you plugged in.

We have much to look forward to in 2008. I'm excited to have the opportunity to guide this chapter into another successful year. My challenge to you will be to get involved, stay involved and make your membership what you want it to be.

Again, Happy New Year! I look forward to seeing you all at our first luncheon in February.

Member Spotlight

Continued from Page 4

Vacation Spot?

Some might say this is boring but I thoroughly enjoy the beach... any beach. I have been to big cities and I have been to the mountains (which I have enjoyed) but when I need a true and relaxing vacation, I mostly enjoy the beach. Nothing is more relaxing to me than lying on a towel in the sand and hearing the crashing waves.

Fun & Bizarre

If there were reincarnation and you had a say in the matter, what would you come back as?
My dog – he has it made!

What's your most embarrassing moment?

I am very klutzy and sometimes socially challenged so there are too many moments to list. The one that comes to mind at this moment is tucking my skirt in my pantyhose... I was working in retail at the Christiansburg mall and I can only imagine what people thought before I noticed!

SPECIAL PRSSA MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION

In celebration of the 40th Anniversary of PRSSA, the Blue Ridge Chapter of PRSA would like to offer a Special Membership Promotion.

Beginning January 1, 2008, The Blue Ridge Chapter will waive its Local Chapter dues for PRSSA Members who join PRSA National (Associate Member, PRSSA Graduate \$60 per year).

PRSSA Members can join PRSA up to five months before their graduation. The membership promotion will be offered to the First Ten PRSSA Members who join PRSA National.

To join PRSA & our Blue Ridge Chapter, just go to www.prsa.org, and click on membership. The Blue Ridge Chapter will reimburse the Local Chapter dues (\$53 per year) to the First Ten PRSSA Members who join.

If you have any questions, please contact Elaine Bays, ebays@rvtv.org.



Blue Ridge Chapter 2008 Pre-Pay Invoice

Dear Blue Ridge Chapter PRSA Member:

As a value added membership benefit, a pre-pay Professional Development Luncheon discount is offered to Blue Ridge Chapter members. Choosing the pre-pay option secures your registration for the six Professional Development Luncheon programs in 2008. In addition to saving money with the pre-pay option, if for some reason you can't attend a program, you are more than welcome to send a colleague, guest or a student in your place. In addition to great food and networking, the luncheons will feature a variety of key speakers and topics as related to the public relations industry and ones that we feel will be most useful to you as a practitioner. Due to an upcoming luncheon program in February, deadline for pre-pay is on Friday, February 8, 2008. Please remit this invoice with payment. If for some reason you can't not process the request before the deadline, please advise the Hospitality Chair, Lauren Hassenpflug at LHassenpflug@footlevelers.com prior to the deadline.

Pre-pay Professional Development Luncheon Invoice

6 Professional Development Luncheons (\$20.00 ea -Prepay Option)	\$ 120.00
Total Enclosed	\$_____

(Deadline for prepay option is February 8, 2008)

Member Reservation:

Name: _____
 Title: _____ Company: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, ZIP: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____
 Mobile: _____ E-mail: _____

Do you know anyone who may be interested in membership?

Name: _____
 Title: _____ Company: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, ZIP: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____
 Mobile: _____ E-mail: _____

Please make check payable to Blue Ridge Chapter-PRSA and submit with this form. Chapter Federal ID number is 54-1643833. Questions? Call (540) 345-0008 ext. 3063.

Mail to: **Lauren Hassenpflug, PRSA Hospitality Chair**
P.O. Box 12611
Roanoke, VA 24027

Welcome New PRSA Member

By: Elaine Simpson, Membership Chair



Jen Ward and her son, Killian

Jennifer K. Ward

Jen K. Ward is currently serving as the Director of Marketing and Communications at Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council in Roanoke. While her college and masters degrees are in Criminology, Jen has been working in the PR and Marketing field since 1999.

After working in law enforcement in criminal investigation and VIP Security since 1992 while her husband served as a nuclear submarine officer in the US Navy, Jen worked in various locations from Walt Disney World in Orlando to Kmart Corporation in Hawaii. She also worked as Director of Campus Safety, overseeing the campus police department at a college in Connecticut.

At the college, Jen was asked to be on the team appointed to the creation of a new website for the college due to her experience in web design. This eventually led to a wonderful opportunity to make a career change through a

new position where she developed a new department at the college working within College Relations. In this position, Jen directed and designed the new college website, branded a new image for the college, coordinated special events on campus, and worked with the local media. She loved it so much that she has never looked back!

Today, working for the Girl Scouts, Jen supervises a team who is responsible for the design and production of all council publications and printed materials, branding and marketing direction of the council, special events, and serving as the official spokesperson for the council working with local media throughout the 36 counties the council serves in southwest Virginia. She also has been running her own graphic design and marketing business on a part-time basis, Blue Filly Productions, since 2002.

In her spare time, Jen is an avid horse enthusiast who loves to ride competitively or just spend time with her horses or those in need of rehabilitation or medical assistance. She also serves as the President of Botetourt County Horseman's Association.

Jen lives in Botetourt County on Sun Shines Farm, a beautiful 176 acre farm in Eagle Rock, with her husband, Thad, her son, Killian, and the rest of her family of fur and feathers which includes horses, ducks, chickens, cats, and the newest member, their Border Collie puppy Graycie. In February 2008, they will welcome another new addition to the family, who is choosing not to market whether they are a little boy or girl yet.

PRSSA Student Spotlight



Professional Development TIP

The Blue Ridge Views will now feature a development tip to help public relations practitioners stay on top of the profession's issues and trends. For the first tip, we consulted Rodger Roeser, APR, immediate past President of the Cincinnati Chapter of PRSA and host of www.thatMarketingShow.com.



Rodger challenges practitioners to maximize a company's publicity to make sure it is seen by the right people. He says,

"Most public relations professionals may think their work stopped when the publicity opportunity they secured ran. Hogwash -- that's when the work begins for the true professional. Leverage that hit by creating a professional clip on PDF, and mail it or email it to the brand champion/influencer list. We use a program called METHOD to do this seamlessly and automatically, but it's good practice to leverage that 'hit.' Don't ever assume the target saw or read or understood the article."



Name: Kristina Ticknor
Age: 21
PRSSA Member Since: 2005
College: Virginia Tech

What is your career dream for the future?

Making it far in the PR world and eventually getting my masters either in public relations or social work.

Personal Low Down

Where are you from?

Chantilly, VA

Pets?

A black tabby cat named Zucchini Rose.

Outside interests/hobbies?

Hobby- As a former ballet dancer, I now enjoy working out and going for long walks; Interests- Traveling the world; I visited 5 countries during my stay in London this past summer, and 10 in my lifetime.

Favorites

Food? Does ice cream count? If not, shrimp fettuccini alfredo.

Music? Soft rock or alternative; anything with a lot of piano

Vacation Spot? Any European country or Caribbean island; next place on the list to visit is the Croatian islands... a good combination of both.

Fun & Bizarre

If there was reincarnation and you had a say in the matter, what would you come back as?
A cat – nothings better than sleeping-in late and lying around in the sun all day.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

My father yelling at me and my friends when we were little for pretending to run away during a thunderstorm when really it was my mom's April Fool's joke idea.

College and Career

Why did you choose PR as a major?

Originally planning on majoring in graphic design, I made a last minute switch into Communication, drawn to the visual aspects. PR then won me over during my introductory courses.

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

Getting to know my current best friends and moving into my very own townhouse with them this past fall. Also studying abroad in London for 10 weeks doing a PR internship for a famous London fashion designer, Matthew Williamson.

December Luncheon Highlights, Member Recognition and Award Recipients

By: Jennifer Faulkner, Immediate Past President

The December Blue Ridge PRSA luncheon was packed full of awards and recognition presentations.

"The Sparky" and "The Illuminator" Awards

The Sparky Award began years and years ago and has been passed around to many members of the Blue Ridge Chapter. This little spark plug has graced many PR desks over the years. The person who receives this award is a member of the chapter who adds a spark to the organization, keeps things running, and is really 'plugged' in to the group.

This year's award was presented to **Elaine Bays**, Cable Access Director with Roanoke Valley Television. A veteran member, Elaine has been very active during tenure with PRSA. As Membership Chair, Elaine has brought the Blue Ridge Chapter from a small chapter status to the new and highly celebrated medium sized chapter. In addition to her amazing recruitment ability, Elaine ensures that we have a current membership directory; name tag for each member, regularly communicates with PRSA National, and the list goes on and on.

The Illuminator Award is given to a member of the chapter who is a bright spot in the group, who lights up the organization with their positive attitude and shining smile, always shedding a bit of light and insight to things, has lots of bright ideas. Beth has certainly illuminated THIS year and I guarantee she will continue to shine as President-elect in 2008.

This award was presented to Treasurer, **Beth Kolnok**, Director of Marketing & Business Development for Vistar Eye Center. Beth is a long-standing member with our chapter and has held various positions over the years. She played a vital role as Treasurer and kept our budget at its best in chapter history. Beth has also been a contributor to the Blue Ridge Views newsletter, pitched in on the Awards Committee by assisting with the judging of our partner chapter, served as the Professional Advisor for the Virginia Tech PRSSA Chapter, and the list goes on and on.

Please join me in congratulating Elaine and Beth on their contributions to the Blue Ridge Chapter.

Membership Anniversaries

The executive board presented certificate of achievements to members who reached milestones in their PRSA membership. The following members were honored:

5 YEARS

Bridget Baylor, Blue Ridge Community College
JoBeth Brown, USDA Forest Service
Stacie Reedy Vest, Cox Communications
Andrew Williams, Virginia Tech

10 YEARS

Todd Burns, Appalachian Power
Teresa Gereaux, APR, Roanoke College
Jay Moore, Bassett Furniture

15 YEARS

Anne Marie Green, APR, County of Roanoke

2007 Executive Board and Committee Chair Recognition

The 2007 members of the executive board and committee chairs were recognized for all their hard work and support this past year. Our achievements would have never become reality without this fantastic team.

Opportunities for APR candidates in 2008

By: Shelly Whitaker, APR, Accreditation Chair

APR is a mark of distinction for public relations professionals who demonstrate their commitment to the profession and to its ethical practice, and who are selected based on broad knowledge, strategic perspective, and sound professional judgment. Accreditation is gained through two steps: a rigorous computer-based exam administered by the Universal Accreditation Board and through an oral presentation to fellow APR members. The APR accreditation is the only professional certification program open to public relations professionals.

At the February 14th luncheon, a brief information session will be presented prior to the main program to explain the steps and process for achieving your APR.

The Blue Ridge Chapter Board of Directors also approved the purchase of five online study courses that are offered through the Universal Accreditation board. The APR Online Study Course is designed to help public relations professionals study at their own pace for the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.

This course is ideal for candidates who travel frequently, cannot attend in-person study sessions, are not located near in-person study sessions, or simply want another opportunity to practice their skills.

The ten-module online course includes information on the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) covered in the Readiness Review and the Examination and was designed based on the topics and exercises included in other UAB study materials. In order to register to receive one of the free online study courses, you must first register to take the APR exam. More information about the APR process can be found at www.praccreditation.org.

If you are interested in more information about APR, please contact Shelly Whitaker, APR at shelly.whitaker@Advanceautoparts.com.

2008 Luncheon Speakers

Thursday, February 14

Jeff Marks, President/General Manager of WDBJ7, on "Keeping Up With Rapidly Changing Trends In TV"

Wednesday, April 16*

Gayle Turner, Catch Your Limit Consulting, on "Branding...The Modern Day Gold Rush" (Ad-Fed Co-Op)

Thursday, June 12

Kimberly S. Templeton, Director of External Affairs at the Art Museum of Western Virginia

Thursday, August 14

Chuck Steenburgh, Director of Communications at the National Business College

Thursday, October 9

Mark Owczarski, Director of News & Information University Relations at Virginia Tech

Thursday, December 4*

National PRSA Representative

** Note change in regularly scheduled date.*

The Blue Ridge Chapter
Public Relations Society of America presents



Jeff Marks
President and General Manager of WDBJ7
"Keeping Up With Rapidly Changing Trends In TV"
Sponsored by the Thomas Becher Agency

Thursday, February 14, 2008
Noon Luncheon Meeting, Hotel Roanoke

Fees & Information

Chapter Members: \$22
Students & Interns: \$17
Non-Members: \$30

Note: There is a \$5 LATE FEE for reservations made after Monday, Feb. 11.

Parking at the Hotel Roanoke is \$3 for self-parking, \$5 for valet. Parking on Wells Avenue is free.

Please make check payable to Blue Ridge Chapter - PRSA

Mail reservation form and money to:
Lauren Hassenpflug
P.O. Box 12611
Roanoke, VA 24027
or
540-345-0008 ext 3063

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: _____

E-mail: _____

Number of members attending (\$22 ea): _____

Names: _____

Number of students attending (\$17 ea): _____

Names: _____

Number of non-members attending (\$30 ea): _____

Names: _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

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