

# BLUE RIDGE



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

January/February 2007  
Vol. 17, No. 1

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## Literacy Awareness: Let's Talk About It

By: Amy Whittaker, President-Elect, Programs Chair

Did you know that 25 percent of the population in the City of Roanoke is functionally illiterate in English? Surprisingly, this statement is true, but there is one group making great strides in decreasing the statistic.

Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley is an organization whose mission it is to teach English literacy skills to adults and to raise literacy awareness throughout the Roanoke Valley.

Join us Feb. 8 as Annette Loschert, Executive Director of Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley, speaks about the value of a literacy program, issues we face in our region and the economic impact illiteracy has on the community.

Literacy Volunteers is a nonprofit educational organization and an accredited affiliate of ProLiteracy America, located in Roanoke, Virginia.

The organization provides free, confidential, one-to-one, small and large group tutoring for functionally-illiterate adults. More than 300 individuals walk through the doors of Literacy

Volunteers each year looking to improve their reading, writing and speaking skills.



Annette Loschert

Eighty percent of the people served are non-native speakers who participate in the English-for-Speakers-of-Other Languages (ESOL) program.

Since 2004, Literacy Volunteers and the Blue Ridge PRSA chapter have collaborated to promote the cause of adult literacy.

Annette will share her insights as to how this unique partnership evolved and how, together, the two groups created a new image campaign for Literacy Volunteers.

# Message from the President

By: Jennifer Faulkner

Greetings Blue Ridge Chapter members and Happy New Year!

I hope each one of you had safe and happy holiday season with family and friends! I am very excited to have the opportunity to guide this chapter into another successful year.

I'd like to start my first column by recognizing Chris Finley and his team for a job well done in 2006 as you led our chapter through another fantastic year! Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the Blue Ridge Chapter, local PRSSA chapters, and our profession.

## Planning Retreat

Your 2007 Executive Board and committee members have already been hard at work. The Red Cross Administration Office set the stage for building some creative energy, sharing of ideas and excitement at our annual planning retreat.

The group outlined the chapter's activities for the upcoming year including programming and professional development opportunities, as well as identified new and exciting opportunities in the areas of ethics, diversity and membership.

Speaking of **membership**, were you aware that the Blue Ridge chapter grew by 31 members in 2006? What amazing growth for our chapter! Membership Chair, Elaine Simpson, has done an amazing job and will remain in

this role for 2007. Membership recruitment, however; is up to each of us. Our chapter is as strong and active as its members want it to be.

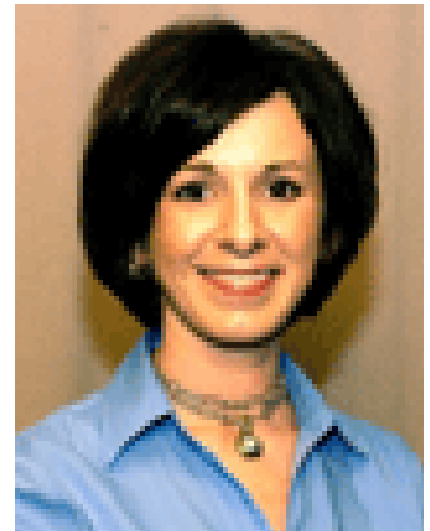
I am very pleased to see so many new chapter members who have taken on new roles as committee chairs while at the same time working with those members who are continuing their service to the chapter after many years.

I look forward to working with this team and bringing you the best return for your membership investment!

## 2007 Luncheon Program

Mark your calendar for the professional development luncheons in 2007! A variety of excellent speakers, great food, and an endless opportunity for networking are at your fingertips. Your Program Chair and President-Elect, Amy Whittaker, is already busy securing programs on topics that will be most useful to you as a practitioner.

Don't wait to register - in fact use the pre-payment option for the most convenient 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 5.



## Get involved!

Getting more involved was one of the best moves I've made since joining PRSA, both professionally and personally.

For those members who have contributed so much time and energy over the years, I thank you. For those who haven't gotten involved, I challenge each of you to get more involved with the organization. Your options are endless.

If you have an interest in a particular committee, your involvement is more than welcomed. If you have an interest, please let me know and I'll put you in touch with the appropriate chairperson.

Again, Happy New Year and get ready for an exciting 2007!

Jennifer Faulkner  
BRC-PRSA 2007 President

# BRC-PRSA Member Spotlight



**Name:** Beth Kolnok  
**Age:** 29  
**Title:** Director of Marketing and Business Development  
**Company:** Vistar Eye Center  
**PRSA Member Since:** 2004

## Career

### Why did you choose PR as a career choice?

After testing out a couple of majors in college, I felt most confident and comfortable in Communications. Once graduating, I expanded my skills to include aspects of both Marketing and Public Relations. Over the past 7 years, I have continued to thoroughly enjoy absorbing as much information and knowledge as I can within the field.

Besides...it's in the blood. My mom is in the Marketing and PR field as well. Our personalities and goals are very similar and I felt drawn to follow in her foot steps no matter how large they felt.

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

My age has been my biggest obstacle. And the fact that I look even younger than my age doesn't help matters. I find myself working very hard at maintaining a strong professionalism and understanding of all aspects of my position and organization in hopes of proving, probably more so to myself, that I am mature enough to handle most any situation.

### What is your greatest accomplishment so far?

My greatest accomplishment has been creating a Marketing department from scratch. Two years ago I came on board with Vistar Eye Center as their first Director of Marketing and Business Development. From the moment I walked through the door, it has been non-stop excitement. I have grown personally and professional more in the past two years than I have over my seven year career. And I look forward to many more challenges and accomplishments with this growing organization.

### What is your PR philosophy?

My PR philosophy is the same as my life philosophy - "Everything happens for a reason." No matter how much we are prepared or think we are prepared, things are going to happen - good, bad or indifferent. It's in our reactions that we are truly judged.

## Personal Low Down

### Where were you born?

Born and raised in Roanoke.

### College?

Virginia Tech

### What brought you to SW VA?

I can't seem to escape.

### Married, single, divorced?

Married to Mike, my high school sweetheart, for almost seven years.

### Children and ages?

Just one, Allie age three going on 13.

### Pets?

One dog, Coco. We did not realize we had actually named her Coco Kolnok until her full name was called at our first vet visit. Embarrassing.

### How do you describe your personality?

I am what you call a laid back, go-getter. I learned at a very young age to pick my battles. If I feel very strongly about something I will fight to the death for it. Otherwise, I will go with the flow.

## Favorites

### Food:

All things Italian, especially if it ends with a cannoli.

### Musicians:

I can listen to just about anything. My music likes and dislikes are mood driven.

Continued on Page 4

# BRC-PRSA Member Spotlight

Continued from Page 3

## **Vacation Spot:**

Every year since I was a little girl the whole family would pack up and head to Myrtle Beach. We are keeping that tradition going with my little girl. At least until we win the lottery and then we will start our annual Hawaii trip on our personal jet.

## **What is your perfect day away from work?**

I am a home-body who loves to redecorate and redecorate my home. My poor husband trips over "misplaced" furniture in our house on a weekly basis. My theory is that if I move things around to new places then I will eliminate to "need" to buy more things for our home.

## **Fun & Bizarre**

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

As odd and as short lived as it may seem, I would want to come back as a little child's favorite blanket. It is truly unbelievable the amount of love, trust and time that goes towards a child's blanket. In utter fascination, I see how my daughter's blanket plays an intricate role in her life. At every moment she must either have it with her or within eye sight. She cradles it while she watches TV. She takes it with her on adventures with friends and family members. Her "night-night" has been to every restaurant, shopping center, to the beach, even to Ohio to visit relatives. She holds it tight while she sleeps.

And she waits impatiently while it is being cleaned. Even though she may eventually outgrow her blanket, I would still want to come back as something that is so loved and so cherished. Beside she may pass her blanket onto her little one the same way I passed mine onto her.

## **What's your most embarrassing moment?**

Let me count the ways.

One of my more embarrassing moments was when I first began dating my husband. I had just turned 16 and my dad gave me a Fiat Spider convertible in what he called "James Bond silver" with tan leather seats. I was certainly "hot to trot." Needless to say, things are not always what they seem. Although the car was very nice to look at in all honesty it was a hunk of junk.

School had just let out for the day and everyone was hanging out in the parking lot. Knowing that I had to give my hot rod a few minutes to warm up in order to get home without incident, I hopped in the driver's seat and revved her up. All of a sudden I hear a loud BAM. I turn around to find all my friends on the ground and my future husband in a cloud of black smoke. Once the fear of gunshots subsided and the reality that my car had just backfired set in, a roar of laughter came from the parking lot. With a red face, I stepped out of the car and did what any completely devastated person would do...laugh hysterically.

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

Absolutely nothing. I have worked very hard to get where I am today. All the good, the bad, and the ugly have lead me to this path. I would be afraid by changing one not so great moment I would change many great moments.

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

Although quite a few years ago, my uncle was voted "Person you want on your side during a bar fight" by the Roanoker Magazine. We were so proud.

## **Welcome Andrew Thomas Becher to the Blue Ridge Chapter family!**

**Congratulations to Thomas and Amy Becher and big brother Phillip for the birth of Andrew, who was born Dec. 12 weighing 5 pounds and 13 ounces and 18 inches long. Mom and baby are doing well.**





# Blue Ridge Chapter 2007 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 2007. 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 3, 2007**. 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, Tiffany Bradbury at Tiffany.Bradbury@roanokeva.gov prior to the deadline.

## Pre-pay Professional Development Luncheon Invoice

<u>6</u> Professional Development Luncheons (\$20.00 ea -Prepay Option) .....	\$ 120.00
<b>Total Enclosed</b> .....	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b><u>(Deadline for prepay option is February 3, 2007)</u></b>	

### 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) 853-5785.

**Mail to:** Tiffany Bradbury, PRSA Hospitality Chair  
541 Luck Avenue, Suite 120  
Roanoke, VA 24016

# Welcome New PRSA Members

## By: Elaine Simpson, Membership Chair



### Linda Burcham

Linda Burcham is the Extension Communications Manager for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech. She manages a group of three graphic designers and one editor who handle the production of print and Web-based educational materials for Virginia Cooperative Extension as well as promotional and marketing materials for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

She also manages the design, development, and maintenance of the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) public Web site and the VCE Intranet. Linda manages marketing and public relations efforts for Virginia Cooperative Extension by developing marketing strategies and tools and providing training for VCE staff.

Linda has a Bachelor's degree in Organizational Communications and Publications from Radford University and more than 17 years experience with Virginia Cooperative Extension at Virginia Tech.



### Allison Drennan

Allison Drennan graduated from Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee with a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications. While at Carson-Newman, she helped lay the foundation for a PRSSA chapter for the succeeding class.

Allison works for Commonwealth Catholic Charities in Roanoke, Virginia as Special Events Coordinator.



### Lori Greiner

Lori Greiner serves as the Communications Manager for Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. She has been in this role since June of 2005.

Responsible for developing strategic communications and marketing programs for the College, Lori works with other university and college communication staff to insure coordination of media and public relations activities. She is the editor of the Connections newsletter, and she serves as the content manager for the College's newly redesigned Web site ([www.cals.vt.edu](http://www.cals.vt.edu)).

Prior to joining the college, Greiner spent six years as the Customer Advocate and Public Relations Coordinator for Virginia Tech's Office of Student Programs. She also served as the Director of Membership Programs for the Iowa Soybean Association in West Des Moines and held positions with the Michigan farm Bureau and the National Provisioner.

Continued on Page 7

## Welcome New PRSA Members

Continued from Page 6

A native of Dexter, Mich., Greiner received her bachelor's degree in Food Systems Economics and Management with a second major in Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications from Michigan State University.



### Robert Tucker

Rob Tucker is Director of University Relations at Radford University, where he has worked since December of 1991. He manages a comprehensive communications program that includes news bureau operations, media relations, web content development, electronic communications, graphic design, publications, marketing, advertising, special events, trademark licensing, interactive multimedia projects, photography, videography and radio station WVRU.

He supervises a talented, award-winning staff of 20 professionals who teach him something new and interesting about communications and creativity every day. The Virginia native is a Marshall University graduate and recovering journalist. He enjoys fly fishing, mountain biking, playing racquetball and exploring the beauty of western Virginia.



### Traci Crockett

Traci Crockett is the Coordinator of Public Relations for Roanoke College. She graduated from Roanoke College in 2001 with a B.A. in English and a concentration in Communications. Traci worked in student affairs at Sweet Briar College for four years, before returning to her Alma Mater in 2005.



### Bree Brostko

Bree Ellen Brostko currently serves as the Director of Development and Communications for Family Service of Roanoke Valley. In this position she oversees production of all publications, promotional materials, and Web sites for the agency. She also directs the agency's annual and planned giving campaigns. Bree relocated to Roanoke a year ago from Charlottesville, where she was working in marketing at the University of Virginia Alumni Association.

Prior to that, she was an event planner with Associated Builders and Contractors in Arlington, Virginia. Bree holds a Bachelors Degree in government from the University of Virginia. In her spare time she enjoys outdoor activities and films at the Grandin Theatre.

Continued on Page 8

## Welcome New PRSA Members

Continued from Page 7



### Kerstin Roan

Kerstin Roan serves as the Director of Communications and Marketing for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech. In this position, Kerstin leads a comprehensive marketing plan that promotes the college to its multiple constituent groups. She also supervises public relations, communications and marketing staff in the College.

Prior to her position with Virginia Tech Kerstin served as the Director of Communications/Student Services in the Office of Student Aid and as Technical Writer at Penn State. Kerstin is bilingual in English/German and is fluent in French and Latin. She is a graduate of the University of Mississippi, the German Academic Exchange Service and Freidrich-Alexander-Universitat Erlangen-Nurnberg, Germany.



### Stefan Babich

Stefan Babich is the current director of advertising and sales for Big Lick U ([www.biglicku.com](http://www.biglicku.com)), an innovative social Web site for college students in Southwest Virginia that launches in February 2007.

With a B.S. in marketing and a B.S. in economics from the University of Utah, Stefan has spent the past five years working as an outside account executive and team leader for The Roanoke Times. While at The Roanoke Times, Stefan worked with a variety of local businesses, helping them to formulate brands, and build their image in the Roanoke Valley. He worked on a variety of projects and was integral in the launch of several newspaper focused products during his tenure with the paper.

Stefan is now the director of advertising and sales for a new spin-off company from The Roanoke Times, named Big Lick U. Slated to launch early next year, Stefan oversees all of the sales and advertising for the site, as well as assists in a variety of PR duties in helping to formulate the marketing and communication strategies of the site to both users and local/national businesses.

Stefan resides in Roanoke County with his wife, and 2-year-old son, Ayden.

# December Luncheon Highlights, Member Recognition and Award Recipients

## By: Christopher Finley, 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 Thomas Becher, APR, Vice President for John Lambert Associates. As a fairly new member, Thomas has been very active during his first full year with PRSA. As Diversity Chair, Thomas coordinated a professional development program with the renowned Rochelle Ford, Ph.D., APR.

In addition, Thomas has taken time to speak at PRSSA functions, has achieved the APR designation and now stepped into the leadership track as incoming secretary for 2007. I'm sure we will see many more things to come from Thomas!

The Illuminator award 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.

Jennifer has certainly illuminated this year and I guarantee she will continue shine as President in 2007.

This award was presented to President-Elect, Jennifer Faulkner, Public Relations Specialist for Foot Levelers, Inc. Jennifer is a long-standing member with our chapter and has held many different positions over the years. She played a vital role as the Program Chair and secured sponsorships for each event.

Jennifer has also been a regular 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 Advisor for the Virginia Tech PRSSA Firm, and coordinated the annual leadership planning retreat.

In addition, Jennifer facilitated two separate board meetings on my behalf due to scheduling conflicts and business travel.

### 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

Christopher Finley

Michael Pedelty

Donna Wilson, APR

#### 10 YEARS

Deborah Brown

Jeanne Kennedy

Courtney Reynolds

### 2006 Executive Board and Committee Chair Recognition

The 2006 members of the executive board and committee chairs were recognized for all their hard work and support this past year.

Each officer and chair was presented with a small token of appreciation for all their dedication and hard work.

Our achievements would have never become reality without this fantastic team.

# Assembly 2006 Report

By Teresa Gereaux, APR, Assembly Delegate for the Blue Ridge Chapter

The annual PRSA Assembly was once again an exciting example of PRSA governance in action. The Assembly was held Saturday, Nov. 11 at the Grand America Hotel. The following day, the PRSA International Conference began and even more PRSA members converged on the two hotels. The conference began with an opening session with two keynote speakers: PBS' Tavis Smiley and Newsweek's Jon Meacham.

As Assembly Delegate for our chapter, I had the honor of representing the Blue Ridge chapter in this annual business meeting of PRSA. Vince Hazleton, APR, Fellow PRSA also attended the Assembly and the international conference in his role as a member of the national board of directors of PRSA. Linda Staley, APR, attended the international conference.



Next year's Assembly and International Conference will be held in Philadelphia, which is much closer for the Blue Ridge chapter members. I attended only part of the conference but I would highly recommend attendance based on the sessions

I had. The level of speakers is top-notch and it's a PR networking opportunity like you've never seen before. Get it on your schedule now (October 20-23, 2007) and work it into your budget. You won't be sorry. More information is available at [www.prsa.org](http://www.prsa.org) and you can already register for the conference and get an early bird discount.

As you may know, several amendments were considered during the Assembly and four amendments to its governing bylaws were approved during the annual business meeting. Chair and CEO Cheryl Procter-Rogers, APR, Fellow PRSA, presided over the meeting, which also included reports on the state of the Society, the PRSA Foundation, the Nominating Committee and the Commission on Public Relations Education.

In total, 261 Assembly Delegates were in attendance and 20 proxies were submitted. The following Bylaw amendments were adopted by the 2006 PRSA Assembly (bylaws amendments require a two-thirds majority vote to pass):

**Amendment #3:** Members of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) will now be eligible to join PRSA as Associate Members five months prior to graduation.

**Amendment #4:** Provides dedicated Assembly representation to PRSA members who reside outside the United States and Canada, effectively creating an International Delegate-at-Large position.

**Amendment #7:** Establishes a two-year term limit for members of the Nominating Committee.

**Amendment #8:** Changes the title of the volunteer leader of PRSA from "President and CEO" to "Chair and CEO" and from President-Elect to "Chair-Elect." The title of the chief employed staff person changes from Executive Director and COO to "President and COO."

Continued on Page 11

## Assembly 2006 Report

Continued from Page 10

The following Bylaw amendments were defeated:

**Amendment #1:** Would have disallowed the use of proxies at the Assembly.

**Amendment #2:** Would have created a new "Emergency Condition" section to Article III (The Assembly).

**Amendment #5:** Would have established the Assembly as the ultimate policy-making body of the Society.

The Assembly voted to refer proposed Amendment #6 back to the Governance Committee for further consideration and resubmission in 2007. This proposal concerned the Directors-At-Large positions on the Board of Directors.

Other actions by the Assembly included passing resolutions establishing a formal resolution process that the Assembly can use to express itself; supporting a letter from the members of the Global Alliance in attendance regarding their recent conference in Brazil; and charging the board of directors with establishing a subcommittee to research opportunities for improved use of technology at future Assemblies.

The Assembly also voted to dissolve three inactive Chapters: Greater Dubuque, Siouxland and Laredo Gateway. This brings the number of PRSA Chapters overall to 109.

"This was an excellent Assembly on many levels," said Chair and CEO Cheryl Procter-Rogers. "Of note were the issues mapping discussion and presentation of the latest report from the Commission on Public Relations Education. I was most impressed by the Assembly delegates, who were fully engaged in the business of the Society, allowing us to move efficiently through the agenda."

The following slate of candidates was voted into office:

President-Elect - Jeffrey P. Julin, APR

Treasurer - Anthony W. D'Angelo, APR

Secretary - Michael G. Cherenson, APR

Director, Northeast District - Christopher K. Veronda, APR

Director, Sunshine District - Leslie J. Backus, APR

Director, Tri-State District - Francis L. Onofrio, APR

Director, Western District - Dennis John Gaschen, APR

Director-At-Large - Thomas E. Eppes, APR, Fellow PRSA

## Blue Ridge Chapter Member Relocation By: Christopher Finley

As announced at the December luncheon, our chapter is losing a valuable member as a result of relocating to Saint Louis, MO.

For more than a decade, Pam Feese, International Marketing Manager with CP Films, Inc., has held multiple positions within the chapter including Director-At-Large, Membership and Professional Development Chairs as well as Co-Chaired the Awards and Recognition Committee to name a few.

Most recently, Pam volunteered to serve as Publications Chair and has dramatically improved the design, content and format of the Blue Ridge Views newsletter. In addition, Pam assisted with judging the Spokane, Washington awards and completely restructured our master distribution list. Pam was presented with a plaque honoring her for her many achievements and contributions to the Blue Ridge Chapter.

While Pam's departure is a huge loss for our chapter, it is a major gain for the St. Louis PRSA organization. Pam has done a phenomenal job for our chapter and she will be sorely missed. Best of luck for continued success, Pam!



## Thomas Becher Awarded APR Designation By: Shelly Whitaker, APR



Thomas Becher, APR

Congratulations to our most recent Blue Ridge PRSA member to achieve the APR (Accreditation in Public Relations) - Thomas Becher, APR!

Thomas received his accreditation in November.

It was announced Jan. 3 that Thomas has taken leadership as president of Thomas Becher Agency, Inc. (tba), a full-service public relations and advertising firm transitioning from the name John Lambert Associates.

Prior to serving as vice president of John Lambert Associates, Thomas served as manager of media relations for Northwest Airlines and director of corporate communications for Atlas Air. He began his career as a reporter and editor with the Associated Press.

Congratulations Thomas, we are proud of you!

## Interested in Exploring Accreditation in the New Year?

The APR distinction is the only professional certification program open to public relations professionals. It is a mark of distinction identifying those who prove their commitment to the field and to its ethical practice. 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 UAB includes nine international public relations organizations and there are currently 4,300 active, accomplished accredited practitioners.



To learn more about the accreditation process and to assist members already prepared to study and sit for the exam, a series of study sessions are designed for Blue Ridge chapter members. Each session will be facilitated by an APR member and will cover topics for every aspect of the oral and written examinations. A minimum of three members must register for these sessions.

If you are interested in participating in these study sessions in the new year, please contact Shelly Whitaker, APR at [shellywhitaker@b2xonline.com](mailto:shellywhitaker@b2xonline.com) and we will set the dates according to member interest and schedules.

## Virginia Tech PRSSA Fall Semester Overview

By: Devin Milton, Special Events Coordinator

VTPRSSA is excited to announce the successes of its fall semester! VTPRSSA started off the semester with an exceptionally strong group of officers who worked to accomplish the goal of developing the chapter's presence within the university and the surrounding community. Their work resulted in a meeting attendance and retention increase that was more than double that of last years'.

Throughout the semester VTPRSSA hosted professional development seminars for its members that covered the topics of resumes and job searching, and featured a resume roundtable critique with four professionals. In addition, they gave their members the opportunity to write for the chapter's newsletter, The Medium, which was published twice this semester.

The chapter's most noteworthy accomplishment of this semester included raising over 600 dollars through two fundraisers. The first fundraiser was the Field of Screams Haunted House. For this fundraiser, members of VTPRSSA had to act in the Salem Avalanche Minor League Baseball team's haunted house/hayride that took place at the Salem Memorial Baseball Stadium.

Continued on Page 14

# Liberty University Kicks Off Its Fourth Year!

By Holly M. Clements, Liberty University PRSSA President and  
Tanya Hedrick, Liberty University Vice President

Wow! What an amazing semester for the LU PRSSA. In the past few months this group has nearly doubled in size and has attained many outstanding goals.

From the very first meeting, which featured an Internship Panel; this semester's members have taken the Liberty Chapter to a level of unprecedented success.

A few things accomplished this semester include:

- \* a Brownie Bake Sale which raised over \$100 for our chapter,
- \* four successfully functioning committees, and
- \* the publication of a monthly newsletter.

Also, we hosted "Come Party for a Cause," which was a Christmas party that featured representatives from World Help to discuss non-profit Public Relations tactics.

Students stuffed six boxes with toys and gifts for World Help's Christmas for an Orphan program.

The LU PRSSA also hosted, for the first time ever, a Speed Interviewing event.

This event allowed students the experience of true-to-life job interviews in a fun setting with professionals from area businesses.

The goal was to prepare students for entry level interviews and allow them to receive interactive feedback from current business professionals.

Comments from the participants affirmed the event was successful in achieving its purpose.

As you can see, this has already been a banner year for our society. But there are still many exciting things in the works for next semester.

The executive team and committee leaders are planning events for topics such as "Job Searching for Dummies" and "Connecting the Dots between College and Career."

Other ideas for the spring include featuring guest speakers from Toastmasters and taking an in depth look into the newest technology that is affecting how PR practitioners do business.

Plans are being made for a hiking trip and a mock press conference.

To read more updates on the Liberty PRSSA, keep an eye out for our new LU PRSSA Web site in full-function next semester!

## Literacy Awareness

Continued from Page 1

Prior to joining Literacy Volunteers, Annette served in various academic administrative positions at Pace University, the University of Miami, and the University of Southern California.

Positions included publications editor and career development programs director at the University of Miami and six years as Assistant Dean for MBA Admissions at the University of Southern California.

From 1999 to 2003, she served as Director of Lay Ministry at Trinity Ecumenical Parish in Moneta.

Annette served as both a basic literacy tutor and board member for the organization before being appointed Executive Director in 2003.

Annette earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing and an M.B.A. in Management from Pace University.

She is vice president of the Virginia Literacy Leadership Council.

## Virginia Tech PRSSA Fall Semester Overview

Continued from Page 12

VTPRSSA members were covered in a variety of scary makeup, masks and costumes for the event. They each had different characters that they portrayed for the evening.

The second fundraiser was a silent auction. There were over 20 items donated for the auction, including a cappuccino machine, scuba diving certification, dinner for two at a bed and breakfast, and a photograph taken by a Virginia Tech professor.

People could even bid to become a character in a book series written by one of Virginia Tech's own English professors.

The semester ended with a winter social at which members of the Virginia Tech chapter and one member of the Radford chapter of PRSSA had the opportunity to share ideas and plan for collaboration next semester.

As the semester came to a close, the chapter reflected on its successes and set new goals for a busy spring semester. In the spring, VTPRSSA will host its annual conference, Comm. Connections, participate in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, and provide additional professional development seminars for its members.

VTPRSSA has an engaged membership that is looking forward to advancing their chapter in the spring months.

## Deborah Brown Receives Distinguished Service Award

By: CCA President Crista R. Cabe, Mary Baldwin College

Deborah Brown, recently retired associate vice president of University Relations at Radford University, has been given the Distinguished Service Award by the College Communicators Association of Virginia and the District of Columbia. The award recognizes her meritorious contributions in the field of college/university communications. The award was presented Nov. 10 at the organization's fall meeting by CCA President Crista R. Cabe.



At Radford University, Brown served with distinction for a total of 34 years in a variety of communications positions. She has been a member of the College Communicators Association since its inception, and she has been a mentor to countless members of the Association for many years. In addition, Brown graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Political Science. She has done course work in the Corporate and Professional Communication program at Radford University and has been a member of Blue Ridge PRSA for over a decade.

"Few individuals, if any, have served the field of higher education communications with greater devotion and distinction than Deborah Brown," said Dr. Ronald Singleton, CCA co-founder and vice president for university relations, communications and legislative affairs at the University of Mary Washington University, and 2004 recipient of the CCA Distinguished Service Award.

During Deborah Brown's career at Radford University as associate vice president for university relations, assistant vice president for communications, and director of public relations, she served as the creative force behind a highly respected communications team that earned more than 250 national, regional, and state writing, publication and public relations awards.

In her years at Radford she also served the university as acting director of development from 1975 to 1980 and played a key role in the establishment of the RU Athletic Association and Freshman Scholars Program. She also provided supervisory leadership to the departments of Alumni Affairs, and Radio, Television and Communication Services, and served as an adjunct professor.

Continued on Page 15

## Deborah Brown Receives Distinguished Service Award

Continued from Page 14

Brown also played an integral role in university fund raising, event planning, marketing, constituent relations, graphic design, and media relations.

Upon her retirement on June 30, 2006, the Board of Visitors at Radford University commended her in a similarly worded resolution for "exceptional leadership and accomplishment," and expressed its sincere gratitude to her "for investing her professional lifetime in extraordinary service to this institution."

The College Communicators Association serves professional communicators employed by accredited colleges and universities in Virginia and Washington, DC through semi-annual conferences as well as special symposia that offer professional development opportunities. More information can be found at [www.collegecommunicators.org](http://www.collegecommunicators.org).

## PRSSA Student Spotlight



**Name:** Kate Lehmkuhler  
**Age:** 20  
**PRSSA Member Since:** Fall 2005  
**College and Career:** Virginia Tech, PR and Marketing  
Double Major with a Minor in Film

### College and Career

#### Why did you choose PR as a major?

I chose to double major in PR halfway through my freshman year of college. I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do in the future and marketing alone wasn't completely fulfilling. Someone recommended I look into PR and once I did some digging I realized it was completely for me! I have always loved writing and communication so PR just fit me very well.

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

I have had such great opportunities being at such a great university, I am very fortunate. I absolutely loved attending the PRSSA National Assembly last spring in San Francisco, though!

It was just such a great experience to travel to San Francisco, and I made so many connections with everyone there. PRSSA has really opened a lot of doors for me and I am so glad I have gotten more involved.

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

My greatest challenge has been to figure out how to be actively involved in everything I want without spreading myself too thin. I am a member of five clubs including PRSSA and am an officer in two of them, volunteer at The Lyric theatre, and work at the New Media Center on campus in addition to my double major and minor. It gets a bit overwhelming at times, so I have had to learn how to manage my time effectively.

#### What is your greatest accomplishment so far?

I really value making good grades and being an officer in two clubs that I love. However, my greatest accomplishment is probably being chosen to work with Dr. Andrew Paul Williams this spring on a campaign for a new film being made by Professor Paul Harrill's Lovell Films.

#### What is your career dream for the future?

I aspire to work for a motion picture company in either New York City or Los Angeles. This is quite a challenging dream so I am currently at work doing everything I can to realize it.

Continued on Page 16

# PRSSA Student Spotlight

Continued from Page 15

## What is your PR philosophy?

PR is a multifaceted industry, with many objectives and aspects to consider. I personally focus upon establishing relationships that, while increasing effective communication between an organization and its publics, also work to shape those relationships with the organization's identity in mind. Conveying the client's personality consistently is essential in building trust and loyalty, and that is just as important to their success as the communication itself.

## Personal Low Down

### Where were you born?

Philadelphia, PA

### Where do you live?

Richmond, VA

### Pets?

I have an adorable Boxer named Gracie and an ancient cat named Tiger that I have had since I was probably four years old!

### Outside interests/hobbies?

I love to sing! One thing I wish I had time for is an a cappella group. Other than that I love watching movies and doing anything spontaneous, really.

### How do you describe your personality?

I am a very, very outgoing person who loves to have a good time. I am also fiercely ambitious, a hard worker, and passionate about my interests.

## Favorites

**Food:** Mexican

**Musicians:** Joss Stone, Amos Lee, Maroon 5, Michael Buble, Toby Lightman, John Legend

**Vacation Spot:** I just love to travel, so anywhere really. I am dying to go to Italy though.

**Thing to do:** That's a hard question to answer. I actually don't know how to choose!

### What is your perfect day away from school?

Either doing something spontaneous like some sort of day trip or just relaxing with friends, a good book or a movie to watch!

### Community Involvement:

I volunteer at The Lyric theatre in downtown Blacksburg every Sunday, sometimes other days as well.

**Other activities include:** I am a member of the Association of Movie Productions here at Virginia Tech and currently their PR Director, I am a member of the Marketing Club, the Virginia Tech Union (VTU) Concert Committee, and the VTU Films Committee. I actually was chosen to go on a trip to New York City at the end of January with the Marketing Club, so I am looking forward to that!

## Fun & Bizarre

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

Some sort of underwater creature. I am fascinated with the ocean and everything that goes on underneath the water.

### What's your most embarrassing moment?

That would probably have to be when I went to Europe with my family and got culture shock in the airport in Manchester, England. It was absolutely ridiculous because they spoke the same language as me, but when I tried to go shopping during our layover I couldn't understand the prices and began to cry!

### What is your earliest childhood memory?

My earliest memory is going to the pumpkin patch as a young child and watching my dad carry thirteen pumpkins out, because they had an all-you-can-carry rate. It was pretty amazing, actually!

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

I am far too indecisive for this question, haha.

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

I am dying to go sky diving! I suppose using dying in that sentence isn't probably the best word choice ...

# It's Time to Help Literacy Volunteers

By Todd Burns

Literacy Volunteers Roanoke Valley, the Blue Ridge PRSA chapter's public service project in 2007, needs PR support right away.

The organization is desperately needing tutors to support the growing backlog of adults wanting to learn to read and write in the Roanoke Valley.

The organization realizes that most of its tutors come from referrals from existing tutors.

In 2007 LVRV would like to implement a year-long comprehensive communications initiative — "The Year of the Tutor".

What LVRV and its small (four person) staff have in dedication and educational experience, they do not have in creativity, public relations, advertising, media relations and layout and design skills.

LVRV needs your help.

The Blue Ridge PRSA chapter has supported Literacy Volunteers Roanoke Valley for three years.

In 2003/2004, the public service committee was instrumental in developing a corporate identification, brochures, posters and a communications strategy that helped the organization spend its limited resources more wisely.

The effort won a Summit Award in 2004 and was recognized nationally by ProLiteracy Worldwide as the only place in the U.S. where public relations professionals had linked with an adult literacy chapter to promote literacy.

Most importantly, the BR-PRSA's public service team had more fun than a barrel of monkeys putting together the award-winning campaign.

Don't miss an opportunity to do something fun, rewarding, constructive and creative.

Let Todd Burns know if you are interested in learning more at [tfburns@aep.com](mailto:tfburns@aep.com).

Literacy  
Volunteers  
of Roanoke Valley

