

BLUE RIDGE



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

May/June 2007
Vol. 17 No. 3

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“What is a regional magazine and do you have a story for it?”

By: Amy Whittaker, Programs Chair

Whether it's traveling the parkway, stopping at a quaint bed and breakfast, sampling southern cooking or enjoying the sounds of mountain music, there is much to explore here in the heart of the Blue Ridge mountains. So, before you plan your next trip through Appalachia, check out the latest issue of Blue Ridge Country, an international award-winning regional magazine with a readership of 425,000.



ANSTEY HODGE
ADVERTISING GROUP

Join us June 14 as Cara Ellen Modisett, editor of Blue Ridge Country, speaks about the uniqueness of regional magazines, and how they keep regional personalities, traditions, histories, places and events alive that might otherwise disappear.

She will also discuss the relationship between magazine editor and public relations professional, the anatomy of magazine content and how to and how not to get your story in.

Modisett joined Leisure Publishing Company in 1998 after graduating from James Madison University with a B.A. in English education and a B.M. in piano performance.

Under her editorship, Blue Ridge Country has twice been named top



Cara Ellen Modisett

magazine in the state by the Virginia Press Women, has created national-award-winning Web content, added every-issue environmental reporting to its content and launched two magazine/radio collaborative series.

Modisett has received more than 35 state and national writing, editing and radio production awards.

She co-founded and co-produces a weekly arts program on WVTF/Virginia Public Radio and has reported for West Virginia Public Radio, interviewing Joan Baez, Ralph Stanley, Rodney Crowell, Ted Koppel, Sam Donaldson and many others.

She performs frequently as a pianist in the Roanoke area, where she lives with her husband, Phil Atkins, and their two cats. ♦

The program is sponsored by Anstey Hodge Advertising Group.

Message from the President

By: Jennifer Faulkner

Greetings Blue Ridge Chapter.

We are the Hokie Nation.
We are Virginia Tech.

It is with tremendous sadness that I express my deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims of the tragedy at Virginia Tech.

As a graduate of Virginia Tech who lived in the residence hall system, these events hit very close to home for me. I know that the university community, the alumni, the Commonwealth and the nation will pull together to heal and try to understand this horrible tragedy.

Of course, we remember the PRSSA students at Virginia Tech. We stand with each of you as you deal with this loss. Please also keep the Blacksburg-area PR professionals in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with the international media onslaught. They are extraordinary public relations professionals and are to be commended for their strength.

As the chapter representing Hokie Nation, we will do whatever is necessary to help Virginia Tech and its students, faculty, staff, alumni and PR professionals recover from this travesty.

“When we do the best we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another.” - Helen Keller.

I hope to see you on June 14 for our next luncheon.

All the best,
Jennifer Faulkner
BRC-PRSA President



Blue Ridge PRSA
Professional Development
Seminar

8 a.m. to noon
Thursday, Sept. 13
Holiday Inn Tanglewood

Come hear Margo Mateas,
nationally recognized as
the media relations maven,
in this three-hour, hands-on
seminar on taking
the panic out of pitching.

Watch your e-mail inbox
for more details.

Questions?
E-mail Tracy Greene at
tracy@visitaccesspr.com.



We won!

By: Elaine Bays, Membership Chair

The Blue Ridge Chapter of PRSA achieved the Greatest Growth of National Members in 2006, in the Small Chapter Category (50-99 members).

The average national growth for small chapters was 5.5 percent, and our chapter increased its national members by 28.9 percent to a total of 98 members.

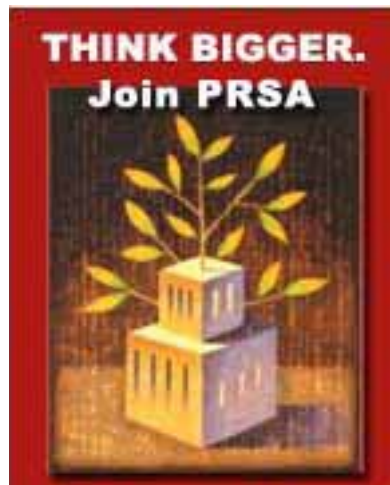
The Blue Ridge Chapter will be awarded \$250 towards Professional Development expenses for its membership growth. Thanks to everyone for helping us grow! ♦

Think Bigger membership promotion

By: Elaine Bays, Membership Chair

New members who join the national PRSA organization during May and June as regular members (sorry, no associate memberships) receive a free first-year chapter membership to our Blue Ridge chapter.

For more information, check out the PRSA Web site at www.prsa.org.
Join today and SAVE! ♦



2007 Gala and Summit Awards

6 p.m. Cocktail Hour and Jazz Band
7 p.m. Dinner and Summit Awards
Friday, November 2
Hotel Roanoke

Look for a June mailing (designed by Roanoke agency Neathawk Dubuque & Packett), a call for entries ad in the Blue Ridge Business Journal as well as details on our Web site on how to enter the Blue Ridge Chapter PRSA Summit Awards this summer.



Join the Director of Public Relations for two dynamic cable networks — DIY Network and Fine Living — to find out more about building your personal and your company's ROI through your public relations efforts.

Gary McCormick, APR and fellow PRSA, presents "Public Relations Return to the Bottom Line" showing how to take yourself on as your best client and maximize exposure inside and outside the company.

noon
August 9
Hotel Roanoke

The Blue Ridge Chapter
Public Relations Society of America presents

Cara Ellen Modisett
Editor

Blue Ridge Country
Sponsored by Anstey Hodge Advertising Group

Thursday, June 14, 2007
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, April 9.

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:
Tiffany Bradbury
Education Information Specialist
City of Roanoke Fire/EMS
713 Third Street, SW
Roanoke, VA 24011

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.

Welcome new PRSA members

By: Elaine Bays, Membership Chair



Will Carter

Will Carter is a recent addition to Cox Communications – Roanoke’s public relations team. Will relocated to Roanoke from Richmond earlier this year to work in the newly-created Communications Specialist position. He is responsible for several interoffice communication channels as well as Cox Roanoke’s online presence.

Prior to his move to Roanoke, Will worked as a freelance writer and editorial assistant for the Richmond Times Dispatch. Originally from Martinsville, Will earned his graduate English degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond before becoming an instructional designer with Crestar Bank.

He brought a wife and two daughters with him to Roanoke. They are all thriving in their new surroundings. In his spare time, Will enjoys traveling with his family, or planning to travel, or even just reading about someone else’s travels.



Elizabeth Fletchall

Elizabeth is a 2000 graduate of Roanoke College with a B.B.A. and a concentration in written communications. She returned to HITT Contracting Inc.-the Washington Metropolitan area’s largest interior contractor-where she had interned as a student.

After two years with HITT’s award-winning marketing team, Elizabeth left to pursue her master’s degree at The George Washington University. While working towards her degree in higher education administration and student affairs, Elizabeth served GW as a graduate assistant for new student orientation and student involvement. Just before graduation, she joined The Catholic University of America as an admissions counselor, where she was quickly promoted to assistant director.

Wanting to be closer to their families, Elizabeth and her husband moved to the Roanoke Valley where she is a marketing specialist with ITT Night Vision.



Catherine Fox

Catherine is Tourism Director for the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, which she joined in 1988. A native of Roanoke, she graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Travel and Tourism Management.

She is a member of several organizations including the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance and the Society of American Travel Writers. She is Past President of the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association and the Blue Ridge Parkway Association. Catherine is the current Tourism Chairperson with the VA Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau.

BRC-PRSA member spotlight



Name: Melinda Mayo
Title: Public Information Officer
Company: City of Roanoke
PRSA Member Since: 2006

CAREER

Why did you choose PR as a career choice?

I didn't choose PR; it chose me! I started my career as a writer and magazine editor. When I moved to Roanoke in 1997, I started working as a freelance writer while looking for real job. While writing a series of articles for The Roanoke Times Neighbors Section, the Neighbors Section editor called me and told me about an opening for a part-time Public Information Specialist with the City of Roanoke. I applied for it, and was hired on the spot. The rest is history.

What have been the highlights of your career?

Even though I didn't start out with the goal of working in PR, my time working for Roanoke's Office of Communications has been the most rewarding part of my career. I never realized how important public service was until

I became involved in it. Knowing that I have a part in making Roanoke a better place for people to live and work means a great deal to me.

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

There have been twists and turns in my career path that I did not anticipate, proving that the old adage, "God laughs when men make plans" is so true. Accepting those detours to the original course of my life has been difficult at times, but those changes have also led me to a better place.

What is your greatest accomplishment so far?

After many years of hard work, being recognized for my service and promoted from within the ranks of the city's Office of Communications to serve as the Public Information Officer.

What is your career dream for the future?

I could be happy in almost any communications position that allows me to do some of what I love most: write. Aside from that, I want to always be in a job that makes a difference in the lives of others.

What is your PR philosophy?

It's more of general philosophy of life: Try to make a connection with people—show them you care and that you hear what they're saying. If you can accomplish that, you will be successful both in public relations and in human relations.

PERSONAL LOW DOWN

Where were you born?

Poplar Bluff, Missouri – but my family moved around until I was six years old, when they finally settled in Pensacola, Florida.

College?

Pensacola Junior College, A.A. in Music; Florida State University, B.A. in English, minor in Music; Hollins University, M.A.L.S. program, working on my master's degree.

What brought you to SW VA?

In 1997, my husband accepted a job offer as Minister of Music at Melrose Baptist Church.

Married, single, divorced?

I have been married for 31 years to the love of my life.

Children and ages? none

Pets? none

Outside interests/hobbies?

Music – I play the piano and organ, and have sung in college choirs, community choruses, and church choirs. I also love to read, and I'm a heck of a Pinochle player.

How do you describe your personality?

Down to earth, what you see is what you get.

FAVORITES

Food: Chocolate, homemade bread!

Musicians: If I say the Beatles and the Carpenters, will I be showing my age? More contemporary favorites are Michael Buble and Chris Rice.

Vacation Spot:

Beech Mountain, North Carolina – we visit there once a year in the fall to enjoy the leaves.

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Member spotlight

Continued from Page 6

What is your perfect day away from work?

I love to curl up with a good book and read. No interruptions!

Community Involvement?

I am very active in my church and its music program (of course).

FUN & BIZARRE

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

I'd like to be a cat. Cats seem to have simple, uncomplicated lives: sleep, eat, play and soak up their owner's affection.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

Trying to climb over a seat to change rows in a movie theater after I saw a friend do it. I made a scene – fell on the arm of the chair and broke two ribs. All eyes were on me.

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

As a child and teenager, I would have been more interested in learning. When I was growing up, I liked school more for the social interaction (although I made good grades). But I never appreciated the enjoyment of learning new things and expanding my mind.

What is your earliest childhood memory?

At five years old – I remember dropping every one of our Chihuahua's puppies on their heads, after Mom told me not to pick them up. (Boy, was I in trouble!)

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

I hate the color red. My husband especially loves to tease me about not eating red M&Ms but, hey, everyone knows they taste different than the other colors! ♦

Scrabble teams have a blast, support Literacy Volunteers

By: Todd Burns, Public Service Chair

BRC-PRSA's entrants in the Literacy Volunteers annual Scrabble tournament fund-raiser jumped out to a commanding lead in the competition. Then, when the other teams actually put words on the boards, those leads vanished. "Respectable" would be the best way to describe the PRSA teams' play!

The two teams, Word Pushers (Michael Quonce, Bree Brostko and Todd Burns) and Alphabletologists (Vincent Hazelton and Michelle Brauns), played two rounds recording scores in the 125 to 160-point range. Unfortunately, and amazingly, winners turned in scores near 400 points. The poorest scoring teams, whose scores were not revealed, received copies of Webster's Dictionary.

It was a fun atmosphere, with some entrants wearing outfits covered in letters and Scrabble earrings. The most important part of the evening, though, was that approximately \$12,000 was raised to help combat adult illiteracy in Roanoke.

More more than 25 percent of the adult population in Roanoke is functionally illiterate. BRC-PRSA has chosen Literacy Volunteers Roanoke Valley as its public service project for the last four years. Our volunteers helped promote the scrabble tournament through media contacts and are working on Literacy Volunteers' "Year of the Tutor" campaign by developing new materials, updating the LVRV Web site and developing new communication materials. If you are interested in joining the public service team, contact Todd Burns at tfburns@aep.com.

Egle earns APR designation

By: Shelly Whitaker, APR, Accreditation Co-Chair

The Blue Ridge Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America is honored to announce that Don Egle is now fully accredited in Public Relations (APR).

Egle is the university spokesperson at James Madison University, where he is responsible for leading the organization's public relations efforts, which include media relations, crisis communications, community relations, and issues management. He has been a member of PRSA and the Blue Ridge Chapter since 2004.

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. It is a mark of distinction identifying those who prove their commitment to the field and to its ethical practice.

Prior to joining James Madison University, Egle was the director

of university relations at Liberty University. There, he was responsible for media relations, web communications, creative services, and photography.



Egle received his B.S. degree in public relations and M.B.A. from Liberty University. He is also a member of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). He serves as the professional advisor for Liberty University's Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter. ♦

Join Our Blue Ridge PRSA Accredited Members

With Don Egle's addition to the list of accredited BR-PRSA members, about 20 percent of members have the APR mark of distinction. As membership continues to grow, we want our APR numbers to continue to grow as well. Our chapter offers resources to members interested in seeking accreditation, in addition to all the resources available at the national level.

To find out more about becoming accredited, please contact me or any of our APRs. We are all excited to help more of our members become accredited!

Shelly Whitaker, APR

Shelly.whitaker@advanceautoparts.com
540-561-8452

CURRENT BLUE RIDGE

APRs:

Thomas Becher
Margaret Boyes
Michelle Brauns
Doug Cochran
Jeff Douglas
Don Egle
Teresa Gereaux
Anne Marie Green
Vincent Hazleton
B. Don Johnson
Terri Jones
Heidi Ketler
John Lambert
Michelle Lurch-Shaw
Patricia May
Linda Staley
Thomas Urtz
Shelly Whitaker
Donna Wilson

APRs make more money. Interested now?

Approximately 20% more, according to the 2005 *PR Week/Korn Ferry* Salary Survey, which revealed that Accredited public relations professionals' yearly salary averaged almost \$17,000 more than their non-Accredited counterparts — very interesting, indeed.



To find out the value of APR — personally, professionally and financially — contact your Chapter Accreditation chair or visit www.praccreditation.org.



PRSSA student spotlight



Name: Tanya Hedrick
Age: 21
PRSSA Member Since: 2004
College: Liberty University

COLLEGE AND CAREER

Why did you choose PR as a major?

At the end of the day, I can never claim it was dull! The lure of PR is its exciting and demanding nature; aspects I will enjoy the rest of my life.

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

I've loved the opportunity to participate in a broad range of passions. From professional organizations like the PRSSA all the way to salsa dancing, I've enjoyed it!

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

My greatest challenge is definitely finding time for all I want to do. Between classes, work and other responsibilities, I admit I have to set aside time for spontaneity!

What is your greatest accomplishment so far?

I've kept growing and continued on a path of strong studies. Nearing the end, it's a huge temptation to slack off, but I've been able to continue and am constantly growing in persistence.

What is your career dream for the future?

To work for a large corporation focusing on external PR and offering a deep understanding of the blending lines of technology, marketing, communications and business. With my upcoming internship I'll be able to find my niche and develop a more defined career path.

What is your PR philosophy?

First and foremost, services based on honesty and integrity. With these ideals and devotion towards knowing the client and benefiting all parties and the public, positive results are inevitable.

PERSONAL LOW DOWN

Where were you born?

Homestead, FL

Where do you live?

Lynchburg, VA

Pets?

Only if goldfish count!

Outside interests/hobbies?

Pleasure reading, vacationing, salsa dancing and of course, time with my family and friends!

How do you describe your personality?

Fun-loving, focused, diligent, practical and buoyant!



FAVORITES

Food: Steak and vegetables

Musicians: Random assortment from pop and Latin to classical

Vacation Spot: The ocean

Thing to Do: My best

What is your perfect day away from school?

Sleep in late, read a book in the sun, cook an elaborate dinner followed by an evening out and sleeping to the sound of rain...

Community Involvement:

PRSSA and work with my local church

FUN & BIZARRE

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

A frog so I can eat flies in public and get away with it...

Do I have your attention yet? I'd really just like to be myself because I am proud of who I am and who I am going to become.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

I've certainly had plenty, but for the sake of saving face, I'll resist!

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Member spotlight

Continued from Page 10

What is your earliest childhood memory?

My first day of Pre-K.

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

I can't say that I'd change anything. My life has developed who I am and without hardship, I would not be the person I am today.

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

Even at my age, I still have the tendency to sleepwalk. After unconsciously falling off the top bunk a few too many times in my dorm, I now have the bottom bunk and get many chores done in my slumber! ♦

Liberty PRSSA inducts new officers

By: Tanya Hedrick, Liberty University PRSSA Incoming President

Liberty University has named its 2007-2008 executive board:

President – Tanya Hedrick
Vice President – Mollie Richards
Promotions Director – Andrew Molina
Public Relations Director – Adam Privett

We are all anticipating attending the planning day in September and are looking towards learning a lot about chapter growth from our sister programs at Virginia Tech and Radford.

VT PRSSA inducts new officers

Virginia Tech has named its 2007-2008 executive board:

President - Kate Lehmkuhler Secretary - Brittney Asbury
Financial Director - Ben Redden Webmaster - Neal Turnage
Promotions Director - Kristina Ticknor
Chapter Relations Director - Jocelynn Yoerges
Firm Director - Kayleigh Turner
Special Events Coordinator - Chelsea Smith

RU PRSSA inducts new officers

By: Alicia Gallimore, Radford University PRSSA Outgoing President

At a ceremony April 20, the Radford University chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America inducted new officers and recognized the outgoing executive board. The banquet, held in the Muse Banquet Hall on Radford's campus, was an intimate affair with plenty of time to socialize and remember the past year.

The new executive board promised to keep the momentum of the 2006-2007 leadership going strong, and the night ended with an inspirational speech by Tyler Leveski, the incoming president. The 2006-2007 PRSSA executive board would like to wish the new board members good luck in the coming year!

Radford University's new PRSSA officers for the 2007-2008 academic year are:

President – Tyler Leveski	VP – Alex Payne
Secretary – Lauren Keller	Treasurer – Brittany Stewart
Director of PR – Rachel Agustin	Historian – Sara Blankenship
Firm Director – Melissa Brown	Social Chair – Christine Johnston

Professional Advisor – Shelly Whitaker, APR

Faculty Advisor – Kristin Froemling