

BLUE RIDGE



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

November/December 2007
Vol. 17 No. 6

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“Successful communications in an era of new media: the new, the next, and the best”

By: Amy Whittaker, Programs Chair

The Blue Ridge Chapter on December 13 will have the privilege of hearing from PRSA National Chair & CEO Rhoda Weiss, APR, Fellow PRSA.

Full of energy and a vast knowledge of public relations, Rhoda will be a speaker you will not want to miss.

Rhoda will share what’s new, what’s next and examples of the best in all areas of public relations, communications and marketing—from trends and best practices in new technology and social media to great ideas for communicating with employees, multicultural audiences, the media, the community and other key stakeholders.

From what to expect in the future to multiple strategies and ideas that organizations of all sizes can implement immediately, Rhoda will share practical, proven, progressive and profitable ideas from her career which includes traveling more than 6 million miles speaking and consulting with over 700 organizations in 49 states and abroad in the areas of strategy, public relations, communications and marketing.

Recipient of the 2007 UCLA Extension Distinguished Faculty Award and past national president of the American Hospital Association’s Society of Healthcare Strategy and Market Development, Rhoda is president of Rhoda Weiss & Associates in Santa Monica, California; a Kellogg Foundation Fellow; recipient of dozens of communications awards and four lifetime achievement awards.

She recently co-hosted a program with the U.S. Department of State for



Rhoda Weiss

members of Congress and their staff at the U.S. Capitol, where she presented ideas on the future of public relations and its international role in public diplomacy.

She has appeared this year in many media, including CNN, the Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Business Journal, Washington Times, Baltimore Sun and more, and is completing her PhD in Leadership and Change at Antioch University.

She is the author of more than 300 journal articles and recently returned from an international conference in South Africa where she spoke on global communications as well as health communications. ♦

Message from the President

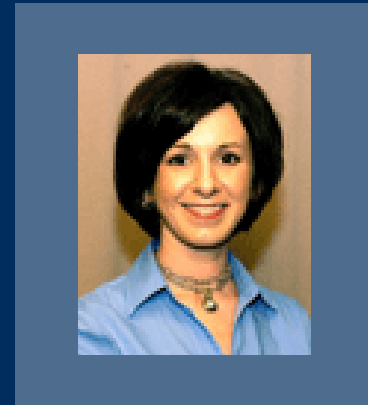
Greetings Blue Ridge Chapter!

I hope this issue of Blue Ridge Views finds each of you well as we approach the end of 2007. As always, you'll find this issue filled with information about ongoing chapter activity and features on the December luncheon program, accreditation, membership, PRSSA news and much, much more.

I have truly enjoyed serving as your president, and I am very proud of the accomplishments we've achieved together as an organization. Since taking office in January, we have added 32 new members to our organization, taking our chapter from small sized status to medium sized status. That is an amazing accomplishment!

We also held a very successful professional development program, featuring national speaker, Margo Mateas. Additional chapter highlights include having more members pass the accreditation exam and achieving the APR (Accreditation in Public Relations), having record breaking luncheon attendance, further strengthening our partnership with Literacy Volunteers, facilitating a successful third annual PRSSA planning retreat and hosting another dynamite Summit Awards Gala, to name a few.

These achievements would have never become reality without the ongoing support of the committee chairs and officers. With that said, I'd like to thank everyone for a job well done. As we close out the year, I hope each of you will join us at the final program in December. In addition, we will be recognizing our five year tenured members as well as honoring our "Sparky" and "Illuminator" award recipients.



Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president; and, I know that you will be in good hands with incoming president-elect, Amy Whittaker and her executive board. In closing, I'd like to take this opportunity to send the warmest wishes for a safe and joyous Holiday Season to each of you and your families.

All the best,
Jennifer Faulkner
BRC-PRSA President



The Blue Ridge Chapter is excited to offer sponsorship opportunities for programs and professional development (PD) seminars again in 2008!

With current attendance of luncheon programs and PD seminars at approximately 60

participants including members, guests and students, the cost of only \$250 is worth every penny to have the exclusive opportunity to speak to the area's finest public relations professionals.

Sponsors also have the benefit of a reserved table at the sponsored luncheon and have the firm's name or logo featured in all marketing materials, including Blue Ridge Views newsletter, press releases and the chapter Web site.

In addition, the sponsor is invited to set up a display or booth at the event, provide

materials for members, or provide material at the Blue Ridge Chapter – PRSA display.

Sponsorships are on a first-come, first-served basis, so contact Beth Kolnok at 540-855-5139, ext. 4615 or email bkolnok@vistareye.com today!

Mark your calendars for our first 2008 meeting:
noon
Feburary 14
Hotel Roanoke

The Blue Ridge Chapter
Public Relations Society of America presents

Rhoda Weiss, APR, Fellow PRSA
PRSA National Chair and CEO
President, Rhoda Weiss & Associates

Thursday, December 13, 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, Dec. 10.

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



Katie Ingram

Born and raised in Franklin County, Katie has a vested interest in the growth and success of the Roanoke Valley region. Recently employed as Account Coordinator with Neathawk Dubuque & Packett, she is looking forward to developing her leadership skills within PRSA.

Katie is a former intern for Congressman Virgil H. Goode, Jr. where she conducted research on various public issues and drafted letters to constituents. She was also employed with the Martinsville/Henry County Economic Development Corporation as an intern to the Director of Small and Minority Business Development. While there, she assisted in the writing of business plans for start-up companies in the region.

Katie received her Bachelors Degree from Ferrum College in 2007 with a major in Business Management and Marketing. At Ferrum, she was President of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), where she managed more than 18 team projects. Katie was the recipient of Ferrum College's Outstanding Leader Award in 2006, and in 2007 was presented with the Outstanding Business Achievement Award.



Cam Lucas

Cam Lucas, a Roanoke, recently graduated from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication. During college, she focused on Public Relations and developed a cognate in Public Information Issues.

Two internships in Roanoke County's Office of Public Information confirmed that Government Relations is the specialty she finds most interesting and exciting. Shortly after graduation, a position opened within Roanoke County as Public Information Office Assistant and she was able to return to the exact office where she previously interned.

Cam currently holds that title and looks forward to furthering her knowledge of governmental practices and developing her Public Relations skills.

Jessica Lane

Jessica Lane is an award-winning recent graduate with experience and education in Public Relations, Marketing, Sociology, Broadcasting and Science.

Jessica graduated Magna cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree from East Tennessee State University where she was a member of several honor societies and served as President of ETSU's PRSSA chapter.



She also served as president of Praxi P.R., a student-run firm, and interned at Theatre Bristol. The Department of Communication selected Jessica for both the Max L. Marshall Award for Outstanding Leadership and the department's most prestigious award, the Outstanding Student Award.

She earned an Associate of Science degree from Northeast State Technical Community College, graduating Summa cum Laude and also won the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award from the Department of Mass Communications.

Jessica currently resides in Christiansburg, Virginia, and is actively working toward joining the local public relations industry.



Melissa Vidmar

Melissa started her career in public relations and marketing in 1998 when she began working for University Unions and Student Activities at Virginia Tech as its Public Relations Manager. She was in charge of all public relations and marketing efforts for the entire department to both the on and off campus community.

She then joined the Virginia Tech Alumni Association in January 2004 and is currently Communications Director in charge of all publications, electronic communications, Web, the Alma Mater and Alumni Travel magazines, public relations and various special events. She communicates with over 200,000 alumni across the world and approximately 26,000 students on campus through her public relations and marketing efforts.



Margaret-Hunter Wade

Margaret-Hunter Wade recently joined Cox Communications' public relations team as a Public Affairs Specialist. In this role, she focuses on community relations, government affairs and public relations.

Prior to joining Cox, Margaret-Hunter served as executive director of The Arts Council of the Blue Ridge. A native of Roanoke, Margaret-Hunter attended Washington and Lee University and graduated with a degree in Journalism and Mass Communications.

Dedicated to her community, Margaret-Hunter is actively involved with Valley Forward, Ronald McDonald House, Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Contemporaries and the local Washington and Lee alumni chapter.

BRC-PRSA member spotlight



Name: William Carter
Age: 39
Title: Communications Specialist
Company: Cox Communications
PRSA Member Since: 2007

CAREER

Why did you choose PR as a career?

I'm another writer without a story. There are only a few places for us to go. I tried being a reporter for a while but sorting through all the press releases from PR folks got on my nerves. I'm having more fun writing them.

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

My memories immediately go to all the little things, things involving deadlines and worried faces. I can't remember exactly what those things were anymore. Other than surviving the little things, the greatest challenge has been maintaining a balance between family, work and dreams.

What have been the highlights of your career?

Following on that mystical balance I

was talking about, I think it's having been a pretty good dad and husband so far. It's harder than it looks on TV. I have a couple watercolors I'm pretty proud of, but they don't seem as important.

What is your PR philosophy?

"Lead with the truth." The effect of delaying my knee-jerk tendency to B.S. a subject to death and instead get right to the heart of the matter never ceases to amaze me. In a negative situation, it douses the fire almost immediately; in a positive one, all sorts of wonderful things happen.

PERSONAL LOW DOWN

Where were you born?

Martinsville, VA

College?

There were a few, but I finished my grad work at Virginia Commonwealth University.

What brought you to SW VA?

Most of my extended family, by blood and marriage, is in the area and the area contains the Blue Ridge Mountains, which are in my blood.

Married, single, divorced?

Yes, I'm married. Do I talk about it too much?

Children and ages?

Two daughters: Alison is 6, Caitlin is 7. I have pictures; hold on...

Pets?

A Sheltie named Eighty Shillings, two cats, Emma and Goldberry, and a varying amount of fish. I suspect the catfish is eating the tetras at night.

Outside Interests/Hobbies?

The list is long. I'm interested in just about everything outside. Those that I pursue more often (fishing, golf, tennis, hiking) are not necessarily

my favorites, they're just easier to arrange than some of the others (kayaking, snow skiing, spelunking, building fairy homes with my daughters).

How do you describe your personality?

I try not to, but in an effort to be accommodating, I'd say accommodating. And, goofy. Or, is that how my wife describes me? I don't know; I get confused.

FAVORITES

Food:

Depends on the day and can range from artichokes to something that starts with z. I do know that some of the most sublime gastronomic experiences I've had involved a simple slab of raw fish perched atop a cake of sticky rice.

Musicians:

With streaming radio and song list creators like Pandora, the list is growing exponentially, but if it gets too busy I return to the classics: Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, the Grateful Dead, and old guys playing Irish drinking songs.

Vacation Spot:

I'd prefer to never visit the same place twice until I'd visited them all, but there are some that have either such a draw or such ease of access that returning is inevitable. Nag's Head and Disney World are destined to receive the Carters again.

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Member spotlight

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What is your perfect day away from work?

Fishing in the morning, golf in the afternoon, online gaming at night with lots of food and beer interspersed throughout. I've never had such a day because I usually feel the need to do something useful like fix broken things or rake leaves. So, I need to throw that in there too.

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

If I could only change one thing, I'd have to go with my socks. They tend to need it the most. If I got any more particular than that, the list would be endless. Don't get me wrong, I like where and who I am. Still, hindsight is 20-20. There were plenty of parties where I stayed too late and some I left too early. And, don't get me started on my dates.

What is your earliest childhood memory?

Warm milk, Dick Van Dyke, and dad grinning through a thick pile of shaving cream.

Community Involvement?

I try to keep it to a minimum. Too much involvement might throw off my balance. Balance helps me live kindly and patiently, which is still challenging at times. However, I am looking forward to helping Blue Ridge PRSA with the newsletter next year.

FUN & BIZARRE

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

If I had to choose today, I'd pick human. The unknown makes me a bit nervous. But, if I'm going to go there, I want to go all the way. I'm pretty sure there are critters running around in one of those other billions of galaxies out there. Call me alien, but I'd like to check that out – as

long as I'm self aware. I like to think about things, even if it is just building castles in the sand. I'd also want there to be plenty of other aliens too – a whole civilization, not just one lonely rose waiting for a little prince to come and visit.

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

My socks. Just kidding, they're not that bad, really. Would it shock you that I once shaved my head and signed up for 100 days at a Zen monastery? It's not very shocking, sorry. But there was a guy with a wooden stick who would walk around the room and whack you on your shoulder while you were trying to nap, I mean, meditate. That was shocking.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

I think I blocked it out. Going with the unspoken parenthetical, "that you're willing to share," there are so many that hit the same point on the EEG chart. They cover the gamut, from dental retainers left on lunch trays to gruesome dents in the parents' cars. So, I'll just pick one: the opening kickoff of the first football game of my junior year in high school. I was playing for Massanutten Military Academy and we were receiving. Our guy caught the ball. I ran up ahead with the rest, charging the oncoming opponents. It's an exhilarating "Braveheart" kind of feeling, that initial, roaring entry into battle. I quickly checked the location of our ball carrier before angling in to block someone. I'm not quite sure what happened next. I saw a flash and then grass. I got up quickly and kept running. People were cheering but some were shouting and waving. They were waving at me, the only one on our end of the field. Somehow I'd gotten turned around while our team ran the ball far the other direction. It was a long jog back, feeling more like Mr. Bean than William Wallace. ♦

2007 BRC-PRSA Summit Award Winners

THE COMPASS AWARD

Becci Emanuelson, executive director
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Roanoke Valley

THE SUMMIT AWARDS

Annual Reports

Silver – Average Budget
Advance Auto Parts 2006 Annual Report

Silver – Modest Budget
Virginia Western Community College President's Report

Community Partnerships

Gold – Modest Budget
Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Campaign, Access PR

Silver – Modest Budget
Arts Build Communities Campaign, Neathawk Dubuque & Packett

Issues and Crisis Management

Gold
South Georgia Wildfire Prevention Team

Internal Communication

Gold – Modest Budget
Communication Plan for Electronic Paycheck Dist, Ray Atkinson

Silver – Modest Budget
The Loop, Cox Roanoke

Silver – Average Budget
ITT Night Vision Internal Video, Neathawk Dubuque & Packett

Lin Chaff Award for Creativity

Gold – Modest Budget
Photo Reward, Access PR

Silver – Modest Budget
Mobile Mountain Brochure, City of Roanoke

Magazines

Gold – Modest Budget
Inside Nielsen, Patricia May

Silver – Modest Budget
FM Magazine, FM Magazine Staff 2007

Gold – Average Budget
Roanoke Citizen, City of Roanoke

Media Relations

Gold
Boys & Girls Clubs / Doris Buffett Event, Neathawk Dubuque & Packett

Silver
Lightkeeper Pro Holiday Campaign, Acces PR / Lightkeeper Pro

Print Publications

Gold – Modest Budget
National College – National News

Gold – Average Budget
Municipal Calendar, City of Roanoke

Silver – Average Budget
PLAY Recreation Catalog, City of Roanoke

Silver – Average Budget
The Friendship Quilt, tba

Public Relations Campaign

Gold – Average Budget
Virginia Museum of National History New Museum Opening, tba

Silver – Average Budget
Arts Build Communities Campaign, Neathawk Dubuque & Packett

Special Events

Gold – Average Budget
Panera Bread Valley View Grand Opening, tba

Gold – Modest Budget
20th Anniversary of Dirty Dancing at Mountain Lake Hotel, Mountain Lake Hotel / Access PR

Silver – Modest Budget
ND&P Holiday Card, Neathawk Dubuque & Packett

Web Site Development

Gold – Average Budget
City of Roanoke Arts Festival, tba

Silver – Average Budget
Franklin County Tourism, Neathawk Dubuque & Packett

Gold – Modest Budget
Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, Access PR / Blue Ridge Area Food Bank

2008 Proposed Slate of Officers

By: Christopher Finley, Immediate Past President, Nominating Chair



President
Amy Whittaker
Public Relations Director
American Red Cross



Director at Large
Allison Moore
Marketing Specialist
ITT Night Vision (2008)



Immediate Past President
Jennifer Faulkner
Public Relations Specialist
Foot Levelers, Inc.



Director at Large
Dean Browell
PR Account Executive
ND&P (2008)



President Elect
Beth Kolnok
Marketing Director
Vistar Eye Center



Director at Large
Shelly Whitaker, APR
Public Communications Manager
Advance Auto Parts (2009)



Treasurer
Thomas Becher, APR
President
Thomas Becher Agency



Director at Large
Melinda Mayo
Public Information Officer
City of Roanoke (2009)



Secretary
Laura Neff-Henderson
Director of Marketing
North Cross School



Assembly Delegate
Michelle Brauns, APR
Dir of Community Resources
Free Clinic of NRV (2008-2010)

PRSSA student spotlight



Name: Kayleigh Turner

Age: 21

PRSSA Member Since: 2005

College: VT, Communication Major (PR focus), Marketing cognate, Professional Writing minor

This past summer, I interned at a hospital marketing department. I went to the hospital, found out who was in charge, called and asked if I could see her about doing an internship and then talking with her. She told me to send her my resume, and she would love to have me as an intern! That was one of the gutsiest things I have ever done. It all paid off because after my internship, they offered me a position when I graduate!

What is your career dream for the future?

I just want to be working somewhere where I feel like I am making a difference and where I enjoy going to work everyday.

What is your PR philosophy?

I would really like people to understand that PR is not just about recovering from a negative situation. It is also about making a new company, product, etc. well known in an area or promoting something. Good PR can make or break an organization or company.

COLLEGE AND CAREER

Why did you choose PR as a major?

I originally wanted to study Journalism, but after taking Intro to the Principles of PR at Tech, I realized that this was something I was even more interested in and would give me a broader range of potential job opportunities.

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

Meeting so many new people and making connections.

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

Trying to balance schoolwork with a job and an internship in Roanoke this semester.

What is your greatest accomplishment so far?

FAVORITES

Food:

Chicken, steak, hamburgers, chocolate chip cookies, etc...it really just depends on my mood!

Musicians:

Sugarland, Rascal Flatts, Brad Paisley, and many more!

Vacation Spot:

Nags Head, NC

Thing to Do:

Shop!

What is your perfect day away from school?

Relaxing and spending time with my family

Community Involvement:

Tri-Cities Workcamp, which I participated in for four summers. We helped fix up people's houses who couldn't afford help.

PERSONAL LOW DOWN

Where were you born?

Prince George, VA

Where do you live?

Prince George, VA

Pets?

One dog, a 13-year-old chocolate lab named Cocoa.

Outside interests/hobbies?

I love doing crafty stuff!

How do you describe your personality?

Bubbly, perky and ALWAYS laughing!

FUN & BIZARRE

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

I would come back as a dolphin because they are such beautiful creatures that are peaceful and elegant and are loved by everyone.

What is your earliest childhood memory?

One thing I remember quite vividly is in preschool these two boys that would always chase me around the playground. I guess back then at that age it meant they liked me, but I sure did hate all that running!

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PRSSA member spotlight

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

I don't think I would change anything. However, if I had the power to change someone else's life, I would help my dad because he has been in a lot of pain recently and has been having a hard time walking as well as other things and doctors aren't quite sure what the cause of it is. If there was something I could do to help ease his pain I would do it in a heartbeat.

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

I have three tattoos, all of which can be hidden though.

What's your most embarrassing moment?

Maybe not the MOST embarrassing, but I was walking up the steps in a building on campus and fell pretty hard, hitting my knee on the step. Not only did people see me, but it really hurt! I got up quickly and kept walking, but I'm sure people were laughing!

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.



2007 Summit Award Winners

October luncheon honors PRSSA chapters

By: Lauren Keller, Radford University PRSSA Recording Secretary

Each year at the October luncheon, the Blue Ridge PRSA chapter is kind enough to award each of its local PRSSA chapters with annual donations of \$300.

At the Oct. 11 luncheon, Radford's president, Tyler Leveski accepted the award from the group's professional advisor, Shelly Whitaker, APR, and Dr. Lisa Baker Webster, the chapter's faculty advisor.

Next up was Virginia Tech's president, Kate Lehmkuhler, accepting the award from the school's professional advisor, Beth Kolnok, followed by an insightful speech by Liberty University's president, Tanya Hedrick.

After giving everyone a brief update on the growing chapter at Liberty, Tanya then accepted Liberty's award from president-elect, Amy Whittaker.

All three PRSSA chapters plan to disperse these awards through various programs and activities.

These activities will range from professional development speakers to socials and extra events that will be used as recruitment tools and ways in which to hopefully maintain and increase membership.



All three chapters are extremely grateful and would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Blue Ridge PRSA chapter for your support.

We are lucky to have such an active and inviting group of PRSA members that we can call our mentors, advisors and friends. ♦