

# PRSA Voice

The "Voice" of the Memphis Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America

[www.prsamemphis.org](http://www.prsamemphis.org)

March/April 2005

## President's Letter

Hello PRSA Members,

Happy Spring!

Last month, I wrote that your board and committee chairs would be meeting to plan for the remainder of the year, as well as for years to come. That meeting was postponed. The new meeting will be held Wednesday, April 13 – the morning of our luncheon. Next month's PRSA Voice will report our progress – so stay tuned. This month, I want to thank Amy Thomas, our Vox chair, for a great job thus far in planning and coordinating the Vox gala. As you may know, the Vox committee elected to bring judges in town this year to critique the entries rather than shipping them to another chapter. During the judging weekend, one of the judges died in his hotel room. Amy and her committee handled the tragedy very professionally – talking to police, media, and the gentleman's employer. She did this while also coordinating the events surrounding the judging process. So Amy, as well as the Vox committee, I thank you for your hard work, professionalism and dedication! Speaking of Vox, please reserve your tickets now by contacting Samantha Jernigan, PRSA coordinator, at [sj@midsouth.rr.com](mailto:sj@midsouth.rr.com). The event will be held April 22 at the Racquet Club. Once again, our own Vox Allstars will rival *American Idol* contestants with their toe tapping tunes! Don't miss this great event! I look forward to seeing all of you on Wednesday, April 13.

Stephanie Wilson Nichols, APR  
President, Memphis Chapter  
Public Relations Society of America



## April Speaker

For many Memphians, the prospect of homeownership remains an elusive dream. But one local non-profit recently celebrated its tenth year working to empower low-to-moderate income families, and as a result, build a healthier - and wealthier - community for all of us. Tim Bolding, founding executive director of United Housing, Inc. will be the guest speaker for the April 13 meeting of the Public Relations Society of America, Memphis chapter.

Bolding will share the dynamic story of UHI, and discuss the marketing and PR strategies which the agency has used over the past decade. UHI was founded by United Way of the Mid-South in 1994, and incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1995. Its dedication to the renewal of Memphis neighborhoods has produced a \$38 million impact through the revitalization of over 600 homes. The agency has helped to educate and counsel over 3,500 first-time homebuyers since its inception.

## Get Ready for "A Night at the Vox"

It's almost time to put on your

favorite party attire and head out for "A Night at the Vox," the 13<sup>th</sup> annual PRSA Vox Awards Gala. The Vox Gala will be held on Friday, April 22 at the Racquet Club of Memphis, 5111 Sanderlin. The night will begin at 6 p.m. with cocktails and appetizers. Dinner and program will start at 7 p.m. The annual PRSA Vox Awards Gala honors outstanding work by public relations professionals from all business sectors in the Memphis area: agencies, corporations, media and non-profit organizations. More than 180 entries were judged by six experienced PR professionals outside the Memphis area. Winners in 50 categories will be announced at the event. First place winners are awarded a Vox Award and the runner-up will receive the Gold Award

Back by popular demand are

PRSA's own band of rock 'n' rollers, The Vox All-Stars. The awards presentation is being designed this year by Running Pony Productions, courtesy of chapter member, Rod Starns and his team. Amy Thomas of Thompson and Berry Public Relations serves as this year's Gala chair. Tickets purchased before Friday, April 15 are \$55 per person and \$45 per PRSA member. Member's may bring one guest at this discounted price. Reserved tables of ten can be purchased for \$450. Cash and checks are accepted. Tickets are \$75 per person after April 15. Contact Samantha Jernigan at 409-0619 or [sj@midsouth.rr.com](mailto:sj@midsouth.rr.com) for reservations. Ticket order forms also are available online at [www.prsamemphis.org](http://www.prsamemphis.org).

ADVANCING THE PROFESSION  
AND THE PROFESSIONAL.

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## EVER SO BRIEFLY...

### Spring is Here!!

Spring is here and the flowers are blooming (along with the pollen <sneeze>). If you've been gardening or grilling, submit a photo or recipe and share the fun with us.



## PRSA Membership Updates

### \* Taste of PRSA Promotion – February/March \*

To date we have 202 new 'Taste of PRSA' members from 72 different Chapters. The offer officially runs through 3/31, but we'll accept applications into early April.

**REMINDER:** there are incentive awards for **1)** Chapters that bring in the most new members specifically from this promotion, and **2)** Chapters that grow the most, overall, during this offer. Awards will be given based on chapter size: 200+ members, 100-199, 50-99 and 49 and under. Thanks to all of you for your support. This is a great offer – tell all your prospects! **Chapter Membership Stats – Coming Soon \***

We will be making month-by-month membership numbers by Chapter available to you in the next few weeks to help you in your planning. Stay tuned. The following resources are available at [www.prsa.org](http://www.prsa.org) under Chapters/Chapter Resources, or click the direct links below...\* **New: Chapter Resources Quick Guide** Access this handy 4-page guide to see details of all services that National offers to Chapters in the areas of leadership, membership and programming. Click:[http://www.prsa.org/Chapters/resources/pdf/quick\\_guide.pdf](http://www.prsa.org/Chapters/resources/pdf/quick_guide.pdf) to view the guide.

### \* 2005 Promotions Calendar \*

A one page calendar of 2005 National membership promotions is posted at [http://www.prsa.org/Chapters/resources/pdf/2005\\_promo\\_cal.pdf](http://www.prsa.org/Chapters/resources/pdf/2005_promo_cal.pdf).

### \* Best Practices – submit yours, you could win! \*

We are eagerly collecting examples of programs, practices and tactics that help to recruit and/or retain members, to share with other chapters. Share your Chapter's best membership programs and practices with others, and view our small but growing library of them at <http://www.prsa.org/Chapters/resources/bestmempractice.asp>. \*\* Names of those who submit a best practice by April 30 will be put into a drawing for prizes from the PRSA Store. \*\*

**So act now!**

## Tips from our Media Relations Seminar

Planning a media pitch?

Although you cannot always be guaranteed your story will be picked up, by observing a couple of practices you'll be ensured of earning the respect of your media public and being viewed as a reliable resource, which will pay off in the long run.

Look for the human interest slant or unique angle, understanding what's newsworthy and timely to those outside your company.

Do a little research to learn if the media you're pitching prefers fax or email.

Send releases to the right editor. Don't tease, send everything at once. By sending a news tip, media advisory and news release at separate intervals, you are creating extra work for the editor.

Never expect a promise of coverage.

These were among many best practices shared at the PRSA's first professional development seminar of 2005 held March 29 at the Central Library.

A panel of local media practitioners discussed *Media Pitching: Understanding the Media Mindset*. Experts included Caroline Cody, Assignment Manager, ABC 24 / UPN 30; Anetra Gaines, Executive Producer, Fox 13 WHBQ; Terry Hollahan, Managing Editor, Memphis Business Journal; Leanne Kleinmann, Assistant Managing Editor, The Commercial Appeal; Tom Moo, Assistant News Director, WREG TV and Peggy Phillip, News Director, WMC TV. Be watching future issues of PRSA Voice for information concerning future professional development seminars.

## Administration Rejects Ruling on PR Videos

### GAO Called Tapes Illegal Propaganda

By Christopher Lee, Washington Post Staff Writer  
Tuesday, March 15, 2005

The Bush administration, rejecting an opinion from the Government Accountability Office, said last week that it is legal for federal agencies to feed TV stations prepackaged news stories that do not disclose the government's role in producing them.

That message, in memos sent Friday to federal agency heads and general counsels, contradicts a Feb. 17 memo from Comptroller General David M. Walker. Walker wrote that such stories -- designed to resemble independently reported broadcast news stories so that TV stations can run them without editing -- violate provisions in annual appropriations laws that ban covert propaganda.

But Joshua B. Bolten, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Steven G. Bradbury, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General at the Justice Department, said in memos last week that the administration disagrees with the GAO's ruling. And, in any case, they wrote, the department's Office of Legal Counsel, not the GAO, the investigative arm of Congress, provides binding legal interpretations for federal agencies to follow.

The legal counsel's office "does not agree with GAO that the covert propaganda prohibition applies simply because an agency's role in producing and disseminating information is undisclosed or 'covert,' regardless of whether the content of the message is 'propaganda,'" Bradbury wrote. "Our view is that the prohibition does not apply where there is no advocacy of a particular viewpoint, and therefore it does not apply to the legitimate provision of information concerning the programs administered by an agency."

The existence of the memos was reported Sunday by the New York Times. Supporters say prepackaged news stories are a common public relations tool with roots in previous administrations, that their exterior packaging typically identifies the government as the source, and that it is up to news organizations, not the government, to reveal to viewers where the material they broadcast came from.

Critics have derided such video news releases as taxpayer-financed attempts by the administration to promote its policies in the guise of independent news reports.

Within the last year, the GAO has rapped the Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of National Drug Control Policy for distributing such stories about the Medicare drug benefit and the administration's anti-drug campaign, respectively.

## Congratulations!

**Running Pony Productions** won 10 awards in the 26th annual Telly Awards, a highly respected national competition for video and film productions. Running Pony captured a coveted Silver Telly for a capital campaign video for the Memphis Humane Society.

Running Pony won Bronze Awards for videos produced for Wilson Air, MLGW, Elvis Presley Enterprises, Southwest Tennessee Community College, Matthews Brothers, TruGreen/Chemlawn, the Memphis Redbirds (2 awards), and the University of Memphis. Running Pony Productions is a video and media communications firm owned by former WMC-TV employees Rod Starns, Jonathan Epstein, and Gary Blankenship.

Running Pony Productions of Memphis has been named as one of five finalists in its category of the Small Business Awards. More than 100 Mid-South companies were nominated for the annual awards bestowed by the Memphis Business Journal.

Finalists were selected based on criteria including company growth, strategy, innovation, customer service and community involvement. Winners will be announced during a ceremony May 19th at the Peabody Hotel in downtown Memphis.

## Vox Gala Supporters

The Vox Gala is proudly supported by platinum sponsors Baptist Memorial Health Care, Running Pony Productions, Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare; gold sponsor Caesar's Entertainment; silver sponsor Whippet Creative Works; and bronze sponsors Business Wire, Hollywood Casino, Howell McQuain Strategies, First Tennessee, Mimeo.com, and Fast Signs. Additional Vox judging sponsors are The Carter Malone Group and Corky's.

## Agency Contest Leads to National Account Win

**archer>malmo** today announced the company has been named agency of record for Markwins International, a global cosmetics company headquartered in City of Industry, Calif.

**archer>malmo** has been tapped to lead advertising efforts for the Wet 'n' Wild, Tropez and Black Radiance brands.

**archer>malmo** will provide strategic and creative brand development for all three brands, including national advertising and non-traditional marketing initiatives. "It's time for our company to step up our investment in the development and marketing of our brands," said Eric Chen, chairman and CEO of Markwins International. "With their entrepreneurial spirit, depth of resources and strategic capabilities, **archer>malmo** is the perfect partner to help us achieve our goals."

Markwins became aware of **archer>malmo** after reading about the agency's "Big Apple Contest" in the *New York Times*. The winning team had developed a marketing strategy and advertising campaign for Markwins' Wet 'n' Wild brand. For their victory, the team won an all-expense paid trip to New York for Advertising Week last September.

"When we read that a company in Memphis, Tenn., had created an ad campaign for the Wet 'n' Wild brand, we were very interested to see what they'd done," said Shawn Haynes, senior vice-president of Markwins Beauty Products Inc. "We were blown away by the wealth of knowledge **archer>malmo** brought to the table. They came in with a real understanding of our category, our competition and the challenges we face as a company."

After an informal review which included five other agencies, Markwins selected **archer>malmo** to serve as agency of record for its top three brands. Estimated annual billings are \$3-5 million.

"We are extremely impressed by the marketing team that Markwins has assembled to continue the growth of the company," said Russ Williams, president and CEO of **archer>malmo**. "We see great potential to capture more value from their brands."

Markwins International marks another key win for **archer>malmo** whose clients include national consumer brands, such as Terminix, Merry Maids, TruGreen Chemlawn, Murphy Oil Soap and MAAX Pearl baths.

*About Markwins International:*

**Markwins International is a global consumer products company based in City of Industry, Calif. Its cosmetic product brands, marketed in over 70 countries worldwide, include: Wet 'n' Wild, Black Radiance, Tropez, Jonel, Bratz and The Color Workshop, among others.**

**Markwins Beauty Products Inc., a subsidiary of Markwins International, oversees the marketing and manufacturing of Wet 'n' Wild, Black Radiance, Tropez and Artmatic.**

## PRSA's Health Academy

If you are in the healthcare communications field, you should consider joining PRSA's Health Academy. In addition to networking opportunities with members from PR agencies, pharmaceutical/biotech companies, hospitals and professional organizations, membership to the PRSA Health Academy allows access to the following resources and opportunities:

\* Health Academy Annual Spring Conference - Held each year in Washington, D.C., (May 4-6, 2005) the

Conference features the industry's leaders as speakers, addresses the latest health care issues and allows members to network and learn from each other.

Click here for more details on the Conference and to register:

<http://www.healthacademy.prsa.org/conf05.asp>

\* Health Academy Teleseminars - Combining telephone and Internet presentations, the

teleseminars bring professional development into your office in an efficient, stimulating and cost-effective manner for you and your team.

\* Publishing and Leadership Opportunities - The Health Academy Press is available to help professionals like you publish books and monographs of interest to the health care field.

\* Health Academy Annual Awards Competition - Showcase your skills in

health care communications and receive important recognition from your peers. The annual awards competition recognizes excellence and best practices in our field.

If you have any questions regarding membership with the Health Academy, please contact PD Manager, Professional Interest Sections Alissa Marisch, who provides staff assistance to the Health Academy at 212-460-1461 or [alissa.marisch@prsa.org](mailto:alissa.marisch@prsa.org). The Health Academy maintains a Web site at [www.healthacademy.prsa.org](http://www.healthacademy.prsa.org)

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Things to do to your co-worker while they are on vacation...



## A safety reminder

Many fire departments encourage people to change the battery in the smoke detector when they change their clocks, because it can be so easy to forget otherwise.

A working smoke detector more than doubles a person's chances of surviving a home fire

More than 90 percent of homes in the United States have smoke detectors, but one-third are estimated to have worn-out or missing batteries.