



# exposure



## December PRowl: A Time of Networking and Giving Back to the Community

On Dec. 10, 15 members from the DP/PC Chapter of FPRA gathered for a time of networking at Ruby Tuesdays in Bartow, followed by filling buckets for Polk County's homeless children at the Polk County School Board for Project "Fill-A-Bucket."

Thanks to members Shirley Whitney and Teresa O'Brien, the event garnered a significant amount of media coverage -- including an article in the Ledger, News Chief and a feature on Fox 13. As a result, the local community stepped up to the challenge -- filling more than 600 buckets with various items, such as toothbrushes, soap, stuffed animals, towels, deodorant, books and more. In addition, the DP/PC FPRA Chapter members sought donations from area businesses - resulting in more than \$10,000 in donations. The buckets were delivered to Polk County's homeless school children just in time for the holidays.



**Photo left:** Ashley Hall, DP/PC Member, during the PRowl Event at the School Board; **Photo above, right:** DP/PC Members at Ruby Tuesdays during the PRowl; **Photo below:** Kelly Healy, representative of Riverside Bank (left), Cindy Rodriguez and Dee Dee Wright, Polk County Public Schools Hearth Specialist.

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## President's Message

by Cindy Rodriguez

### Season's Greetings,

As we approach the end of the year, it offers an opportunity to reflect on the many challenges and opportunities public relations professionals have seen within their respective organizations. The economic crisis has left virtually no type of business completely untouched, so whether you work for a non-profit, an agency, government or private industry, you've most likely seen changes and had to adapt. And you probably had to accomplish lofty goals with fewer resources.

But times such as these also provide great opportunity for public relations professionals to model the way for others

by demonstrating how well creativity and flexibility work in tandem with solid research, planning and implementation to achieve goals at ALL times -- good or bad. Hopefully you have seized the opportunity and, in doing so, proven how valuable you, and a strong public relations effort, are to your organization.

As an FPRA chapter, we have much to celebrate this holiday season. We just concluded an incredibly successful "Fill-A-Bucket."



(cont'd on pg. 5)

# The Press Box

## Tips and tales from Polk County's local media

by S.L. Frisbie, IV, *Publisher of Polk County Democrat, The Fort Meade Leader, and Polk County Times*



In 1958, when I went to work at the Florida State University News Bureau, which was part of the Public Relations Office, my boss Clif (with one F, short for Clifton) Paisley told me that our job was, "To get out all the good news, and to get out the bad news first."

At any major university, there will be an occasional suicide or other tragedy, and Clif's practice, when one occurred, was to go to the office in the middle of the night and notify the wire services and other major media. He wanted them to hear it from him first.

The event would not put the college in a favorable light, but the candor and speed with which FSU — through its News Bureau — got the news out made the best of a bad situation.

Contrast that attitude with one that I heard from a "public information officer" for a Florida sheriff (not a Polk County sheriff, I am glad to say) a number of years ago, who told me, "My job is to make the sheriff look good." He did not know I was a journalist, but I suspect the journalists in his county were aware of his sycophantic job description, and I doubt that he had much credibility with them.

What's worse, this guy was being paid by the taxpayers of his county to polish his boss's image. It's guys like him who inspire some journalists to treat all PR professionals with disdain, and to refer to them in unflattering terms.

That is just as unfair as asserting that all politicians are crooks, or that all media are biased. But the bad that can be accomplished by one member of a craft can far outshadow the good that can be accomplished by 10 others.

In 45 years in the newspaper business (more than 50 if you count my job as a newspaper carrier, and three years at The Tallahassee Democrat in my college years) I have dealt with a lot of PR professionals. Over the years, I sense that the trend in the field has been more toward the Clif Paisley model and less toward the model of that unnamed flack (that's one of those words I alluded to) for a Florida sheriff. But both are found in the craft.

Contrary to popular belief, journalists are human too, and we are likely to deal more enthusiastically with PR operatives who are just as candid when the news is bad as they are ebullient when the news is good.

I am realistic enough to know that the PR person is not always well informed, or authorized to speak, on troublesome issues like labor strife, workplace deaths, or regulatory admonishments.

But they can, and should, be quick to put the press in touch with someone in the corporate hierarchy who has the information and the authority to release it.

Spinmeisters who view their mission as "to make the boss look good" no matter what the circumstance have little credibility with the press.

The more productive approach, I submit, is the one taken by Clif Paisley:

"Our job is to get out all the good news, and to get the bad news out first."

S.L. Frisbie is publisher of The Polk County Democrat, The Fort Meade Leader, and Polk County Times, and is past publisher of The Lake Wales News. He will retire on Dec. 31 of this year after 45 years at The Democrat, a newspaper founded by his great-grandfather and grandfather in 1931 and which has been managed by four generations of the Frisbie family over the past 78 years.

Note: This information does not necessarily reflect the opinion of FPRA leadership, but is provided for you to consider and take that which is useful to you and your organization.

## Welcome New DP/PC FPRA Professional Member

The DP/PC Chapter of FPRA welcomes Colleen Burton, the executive director of Polk Vision.

A 16-year resident of Polk County, Colleen has volunteered extensively and served on the boards for a number of school-based and non-profit organizations. She is a graduate of Leadership Lakeland Class XIX, Leadership Polk Class I and is currently a member of the Tampa Bay Partnership's CEO Direct Program.

In addition, Colleen has been married to her husband, Brad, for more than 29 years and they have three grown children.



## Member News



**DP/PC FPRA Chapter Member, Heather Smith,** communications specialist for the Polk County Board of County Commissioners, and her husband, Kevin, welcomed their first child on Nov. 16. Teagan Sage Smith was born weighing 8 lbs, 9 oz and 21 inches long.

Congratulations to the Smith family!

# Member Profile: Ken Nelson, APR

## AIM Engineering & Surveying



Ken Nelson, APR, is no stranger to Polk County's local media. In fact, many reporters throughout the county have his number on speed-dial and continually rely on his expertise in the various roles he serves throughout the county. Whether he is stirring up publicity for one of the many community organizations he is involved with, or serving in his official capacity as the public information officer for AIM Engineering in Bartow, he has a reputation for being thorough, straightforward and on-time.

Early in his career, Ken learned to practice the true definition of public relations – to develop mutually beneficial relationships with your various publics. In his current role at AIM Engineering, he is passionate about getting information to a variety of audiences. It's a normal day for him to knock on neighborhood doors to let residents know about a particular road project that might affect their day-to-day living. Then later in the same day, he may have to straighten his tie in preparation for an interview by a major news station in order to get the word to the masses. "I strongly believe in targeted PR," said Ken, "and with today's technology, including social networking sites, it's even easier to reach segmented markets."

Many of his colleagues ask his secret to getting "published" in the local news so often. His advice is simple: get to know your local reporters and find out what they are interested in writing about. He also noted that in years past, publications had a separate reporter for just about every beat. However, in today's economy, news companies rely on fewer reporters who are responsible for reporting just about every section of the news. "If you send a well-written, interesting press release, your chances for getting it published "as is" are high," said Ken.

Throughout his career, Ken has held the PR Code of Ethics as the standard for reporting information to the media. "To me, there is no compromising when it comes to being honest and forthright in dealing with the media and the public. You can be adept at blogs, technology and all the other bells and whistles, but if you don't have a reputation for integrity, nothing else really matters."

This year, Ken celebrated his 27th anniversary as a member of FPRA. Ken enjoys the invaluable networking and professional development opportunities today as much as he did during his early days as a member of the chapter. When he thinks of the mentors he has had through FPRA, such as Bill Fenton and FPRA founder Lt. Colonel John Dillon, APR, CPRC, he feels a strong responsibility to give back to the profession just as they faithfully gave to him.

To contact Ken, email him at [kenjnelson@yahoo.com](mailto:kenjnelson@yahoo.com).

## Statewide FPRA Annual Conference

The association's most anticipated professional development event will take place August 8 - 11, 2010 at the Naples Grande in Naples, Florida. The registration fee is \$595. If you would like to start paying for conference, the state office is now accepting payment installments. Reserve your hotel room today! Log on to [www.fpra.org](http://www.fpra.org) for more information.

**Register now:** Registration forms are ready! Not sure if you'll have the budget for AC next year? Have some \$\$ left over in your 2009 budget? Take care of it now and relax! Go to [www.fpra.org](http://www.fpra.org) to download your registration form.

### Great Speakers Confirmed:

The conference committee has already confirmed the general session speakers for the upcoming conference. They include: Jim Lukaszewski from the Lukaszewski Group who will speak about "Developing a Strategic Mindset: How To Become a Trusted, Strategic Advisor." In addition, Lisa Malone from NASA will address PR strategy regarding the the Space Shuttle program, and Deirdre Breckenridge from PFS Marketwyse's keynote topic is "Putting The Public Back In Public Relations." Other breakout session sessions include the following topics:

- Building a Strategic Plan
- Launch of the Disney Parks Blog
- How PR Pros Avoid Legal Woes
- What Your Boss REALLY Wants But
- Hasn't Told You
- Polishing Your Professional Reputation

## Happy Anniversary!

The following members joined FPRA during the month of November:

**Angela Ellison**, 8 years

**Donna Gabriel**, 3 years

**Philip Attinger**, 3 years

**Janet Bartuska**, 2 years

**Jennifer Denham**, 2 years

**Chad Neuman**, 1 year



“When I joined FPRA I was new to Polk County and Florida and this group helped make a very tough transition much easier. I had been active in other PR organizations in Georgia, and hoped I would be able to find that support and professional development in my new work environment. DP/PC FPRA far exceeded my expectations. I truly appreciate this group of caring, intelligent and talented PR professionals. They motivate me, encourage me, and make me want to be the best PR pro I can be.”

- **Jennifer Denham**, United Way of Central Florida



“It’s hard to believe it’s been three years with FPRA! I haven’t found many professional organizations as involved in the needs of its members as this one. When a member needs people to help with a big event, like Sun ‘N Fun, other members step up. FPRA helps its members achieve professional goals and makes even more time to join in local causes to help people in need. What a group!” - **Philip Attinger**, American Red Cross

## Job Bank

Looking for a great public relations, communications, or marketing job opportunity? Visit our web site for the latest postings. Many of the top companies in the area post their jobs with us. Job listings are updated frequently, so please check back often while on your job hunt. To see the latest job postings,

[Click Here](#)

# APR

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

### You asked for it!

In a recent newsletter survey, a member suggested that we include sample questions from the APR exam. The board agreed that this was a great idea! You want it, you’ve got it! As you decide whether or not you are ready to take the APR test, quiz yourself with these sample questions. And if you are already an APR – have fun with these questions and see if you are still on top of your game!

#### **In issues management, what is the most proactive approach to addressing negative or misleading information posted online about your organization?**

- A. Buy domain names that could be used by opposition groups.
- B. Post anonymous comments on blogs to combat this information.
- C. Prepare a news release that discredits the inaccurate information.
- D. Make policy changes to address complaints highlighted on these sites.

#### **Why should a successful public relations counselor continually review present and future realities for an organization?**

- A. to develop a vision statement
- B. to interpret trends for management
- C. to interpret the organization’s business plan
- D. to consider the role public relations might play
- E. to know what path the organization should pursue

#### **Which two factors have the strongest influence on the public relations department’s standing with the organization’s dominant coalition? (Choose two.)**

- A. the number of staff assigned to the public relations department
- B. the training and experience of its most senior public relations practitioner
- C. the tenure of the most senior practitioner in the public relations department
- D. the public relations department’s position on the company’s organizational chart
- E. the public relations department’s ability to demonstrate business and financial literacy

## 10 Strategies PR Pros Can Use to Earn a Position on the Management Team

*as told by Joseph Curley, APR, CPRC, to the DP/PC FPRA Members at the December Monthly Meeting*

"PR is Not Always Loved by Management: Here's How to Get the Romance Started," said Joe Curley, APR, CPRC, at the December monthly meeting on Dec. 16 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lakeland.

We can develop the very best PR plan, but without dedicated support and involvement of executive management, we can't be totally successful. In many organizations when the management team huddles in the planning boardroom, why are we still sitting in our office unaware of the situation? How can we get our top executives to understand the importance of public relations counsel during the decision making process?

### **10 Strategies to earn a position on the management team:**

1. Don't wait to be asked -- be proactive when it comes to helping your CEO
2. Know what keeps the CEO up at night -- what vexes the CEO vexes the organization
3. Analyze the big picture, not just the snapshot. Present the CEO with tomorrow's issues, not yesterday's news clips
4. Get involved in the company's policy making progress. Don't just apologize to your audiences for bad management decisions later
5. Lead the function of "Environment Scanning" to detect early signs of emerging issues/trends
6. Serve as the conscience of the organization to preserve established relationships and forge new public alliances
7. Develop and present action-orientation "decision-making" information to management and forward-thinking strategy rather than activity reports. CEOs expect it and manage by it.
8. Know everything you can about your company's operations -- You're the story-teller. If we don't know it, we can't communicate it or plan for it.
9. Monitor the direct competition and the marketplace. We can't develop plans without factoring in the outside world.
10. Focus your PR activities with objectives that clearly support the organization's business plan and contribute to the bottom line.



Joe has practiced public relations in Florida for more than 35 years. He was the co-founder and president of one of Florida's largest PR firms, Curley & Pynn Public Relations Management in Orlando and currently serves as a PR consultant at his own firm Stingray Solutions, Inc.

## President's Message

(cont'd from pg. 1)

ners, including Polk County Fire Rescue, Riverside Bank and the School Board, we provided basic personal hygiene items for the growing number of homeless children in Polk's public school system. We can all feel really good about our contributions, knowing that over 3,000 items were donated through our efforts. I thank each and every one of you who participated, promoted or helped implement this campaign, with special thanks going to Shirley Whitney, our Community Involvement Chair and Teresa O'Brien, Vice-President and Shirley's faithful co-collaborator. In case you missed it (and if you did, well..you missed a great time), we ended the project with a PRowl at Ruby Tuesday's in Bartow and moved from there to the School Board offices to actually assist with filling buckets slated for delivery before Christmas break -- very rewarding, indeed!

To start 2010 off with a bang, at our January luncheon meeting, Josh Hallett will provide valuable insight about how to measure the results of your social media efforts and campaigns. And results are the name of the game when "selling" any new concept or message distribution channel to management. Don't miss Josh's presentation. Invite a professional colleague and encourage them to join FPRA while you're at it. We want every Polk County public relations professional to have access to the professional develop-

ment and networking opportunities available only through membership and participation with our chapter.

January will also kick off our next exciting community involvement project when we partner with Florida Southern College and TOMS shoes to provide shoes to needy children both here in Polk and elsewhere around the world. We've identified three local organizations to receive the shoes for the children they serve. They are the Lake Wales Care Center and, in Lakeland, Lighthouse Ministries and the Salvation Army. Be sure to sign up for one of the "Style Your Sole" events and help the kids decorate their new canvas shoes.

And, as a final 2009 reminder, it's not too early to make plans to enter all of your fabulous projects in the Local Image award competition, and certainly not too early to make plans to attend conference this summer. Both are valuable to you, your career and your employer! You'll be hearing more about these events after the holidays,

And, speaking of the holidays, whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanza, Christmas, something else particular to your culture and family tradition, or all of the above, I wish you precious time with loved ones and all the blessings of the holiday season.

Merry Christmas one and all!

# Save the Dates: FPRA Events

**January 14** - Board Meeting  
8:30 a.m. - Colonial Bank in Bartow (2nd floor) All members are invited to attend

**January 20** - Chapter Meeting  
Hilton Garden Inn  
11:30 p.m. - Networking  
12 p.m. - Lunch and Speaker  
RSVP to Jennifer Baker at  
jbaker@watsonclinic.com

**February 11** - Board Meeting  
8:30 a.m. - Colonial Bank in Bartow (2nd floor) All members are invited to attend

**February 17** - Chapter Meeting  
Hilton Garden Inn  
11:30 p.m. - Networking  
12 p.m. - Lunch and Speaker  
RSVP to Jennifer Baker at  
jbaker@watsonclinic.com

**February 17** - "Tom's Shoes" Community Involvement Event. After our monthly luncheon meeting, the DP/PC FPRA Chapter and Florida Southern College is

partnering with Lake Wales Care Center, Lighthouse Ministries, Inc., and Salvation Army-Lakeland to provide white, canvas Tom's Shoes to preschool and grade school children. For more information, see article below.

**April 16** - FPRA Roast 'n Toast Fundraising Event at the Bartow Civic Center. The honoree is Sheriff Grady Judd. For more information, see article below.

**August 8 - August 11** - 2010 Annual State Conference in Naples, FL  
For more information, see page 3.

## FPRA and "Tom's Shoes" will Make it Count for Polk's Local Community

The Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) and Florida Southern College are partnering with Lighthouse Ministries, Inc., Salvation Army-Lakeland and Lake Wales Center to provide white, canvas TOMS Shoes to preschool and grade school children.

TOMS Shoes, Inc. was founded by Blake Mycoskie on a simple premise: With every pair you purchase, TOMS will give a pair of new shoes to a child in need. By the end of 2009, TOMS will have given over 500,000 pairs of new shoes to children in need all around the world, including at home in the U.S.

Blake has been profiled in People, The Oprah Magazine, Reader's Digest, TIME, Vogue, US, In Style, Lucky and many other media outlets.

The DP/PC Chapter's anticipated goal is to provide TOMS shoes to children in the three Polk County shelters listed above and TOMS will provide an additional pair to children in the U.S. or internationally. Most children in developing countries grow up barefoot and their primary mode of transportation is walking, thus, as is proven, more illnesses and infections are picked up by bare feet.

Blake will be speaking to Florida Southern College students on February 17, about the "One for One" business model and will be encouraging young business entrepreneurs to make a successful business while also giving back to the community. After speaking to FSC students, he will visit our local shelters as children paint and decorate their new TOMS canvas shoes.

For more information about this DP/PC Chapter Community Outreach, please contact Shirley Whitney at [rwhitney1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:rwhitney1@tampabay.rr.com) or Teresa O'Brien at [teresa.obrien@polk-fl.net](mailto:teresa.obrien@polk-fl.net). To learn more about Tom's Shoes, go to [www.tomsshoes.com](http://www.tomsshoes.com).



## DP/PC FPRA Fundraising Event: to Roast 'n Toast Sheriff Grady Judd

The DP/PC FPRA fundraising committee has been hard at work on an exciting event that will take place this April -- a Roast 'n Toast. Excitement is in the air and I'm sure you have already heard all about it. What? You haven't heard all the details? Well let me update you!

On Friday, April 16, our chapter will host a Roast 'n Toast, honoring Sheriff Grady Judd. The event will be held at the Bartow Civic Center, 2250 S Floral Ave, Bartow. A reception is planned at 6 p.m. to include a silent auction. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m., and the Roast and Toast will follow.

There are opportunities for table sponsors, and a portion of the proceeds will go to the charity of the Sheriff's choosing.

There have been several DP/PC roasts in the past. Honorees included Golf Pro Andy Bean, several past presidents of Polk State College, formerly Polk Community College. Hmm, was that the reason for the name change? But, I digress. And Bob Gernert was a former honoree. Quite the history!

Help make this event historical!  
Mark your calendars now!

Don't click away -- stay tuned to the DP/PC FPRA website, Facebook page and newsletter for updates.

