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## Are You an NSPRA Member?

A majority of the membership in the Wisconsin School Public Relations Association has public relations as a secondary duty. If you are one of these members, you may want to consider a membership to the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). A great resource for people who have PR as a full-time job, NSPRA is even a better resource for those whose focus is on other duties. NSPRA's two newsletters, and regular email "alerts" with position papers and *Principal Communicator* newsletter alone are worth your membership dues. For more information, log on to NSPRA's website at [www.nspr.org](http://www.nspr.org).

## Mark Your Calendar!

**2002 WSPRA Annual Fall Conference - 35th Year Celebration!**  
November 6-8 • Heidel House Resort & Conference Center • Green Lake

For Registration Information, watch your mail for details or check WSPRA's website, [www.wspira.org](http://www.wspira.org) under Fall Conference.

To request a brochure contact the WSPRA office, 608-257-2622, [pwelch@wasb.org](mailto:pwelch@wasb.org). ❖



WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

## WSPRA Annual Fall Conference

■ Janay Wittek-Balke, Franklin Public Schools



Mark your calendar for the the 2002 WSPRA conference November 6-8. This conference promises to provide you with the tools you need today to communicate in this rapidly challenging and

changing time. Here is a look at what the conference has to offer.

- ◆ **Gary Marx, CAE, APR**, author of *Ten Trends...Educating Children for a Profoundly Different Future* is a frequent speaker, workshop leader, and advisor on futures issues for school systems, universities, and state, national, regional, and international organizations, including the World Future Society, which includes him in its directory of futures thinkers. He will lead a full-day, interactive workshop on the Trends and how you can prepare to lead your schools into the new century. This is a must attend for superintendents, school board members and anyone who is a school leader!
- ◆ **Becoming Your Brand Educators — Respond to a Changing Marketplace**  
*Presenters: Matt Schlientz and Brenda Vander Meulen, MA, SPHR, of The Image Group, Holland, MI*  
These days, more and more administrators in all levels of education are becoming aware and familiar with the concept of "branding" and "marketing." As competition for students becomes more intense, it is imperative to "stand for something" in the minds of your target audience. During this session you will learn how to look at your own school's branding and marketing efforts through the eyes of seasoned advertising professionals. You will explore the current education culture including competitive forces, clutter and noise, what a brand is, how to create your brand, and ultimately how to become your brand.
- ◆ **35th Anniversary Celebration**  
For 35 years WSPRA has been providing schools with the resources and tools to effectively communicate. The

message changed, the stakeholders changed, and the issues changed, but the need to communicate them all has remained. Please join us to celebrate and remember the accomplishments of our organization over the past 35 years and those who have made it the leader in school communications in Wisconsin. The program will feature a special video presentation highlighting WSPRA over the past 35 years. Following the dinner celebration, join us for more fun as we dance the night away!

- ◆ **Teach Like a School – Market Like a Business. The Subtle Art of Getting Noticed**  
In this session, you will be given a practical and proven ten-step method for preparing a marketing plan for your school district.
- ◆ **Communicating During Difficult Negotiations and After**  
Many school districts across Wisconsin are faced with the challenge of operating without a teacher contract. This session will outline a plan to communicate with your staff and community during this difficult time and beyond.
- ◆ **Using Electronic Communication Tools**  
The information age is upon us and school districts are being forced to use new technology to communicate to their staff and community. This session will provide you with the latest techniques and strategies to effectively use different forms of electronic communication to get your message out. Websites, electronic newsletters, listservs, and email will be a few of the methods discussed.
- ◆ **The "Ten Trends"— How One District Tied Them to a Strategic Planning Process that Generated Action/ Result Driven Goals**  
**Jim Rickabaugh**, District Administrator, Whitefish Bay, will take us through the process they used to create a focused strategic action plan for their district. The process involved all district stakeholders and links back to the "Ten Trends" identified by Gary Marx. Come and learn how this district is looking at the future and how to prepare their students for success.

(continued on page 2)

122 W. Washington Avenue, Suite 400, Madison, WI 53703  
WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION



## From the President . . .



Amanda  
Brooker

Dear WSPRA Members:

Another year of school has started – hopefully safely and smoothly for all of us.

In August, I had the joy of taking my two daughters (ages 8 and 6) back-to-school shopping. As far as they were concerned, we couldn't do it early enough!

Each pen, pencil, folder and article of clothing was chosen with great care. We left Target several hundred dollars poorer, but the excitement on their faces was worth every penny.

On the first day of school, my oldest was up at 5:30 a.m. and dressed and fed by 6:00 a.m. After the annual mandatory first-day-of-school pictures by the giant oak tree in our front yard, they joined eight other equally excited neighborhood kids in our driveway to catch the bus.

I realize how blessed I am to have to healthy children who love to go to school. But working in education, one finds that not all children are healthy, or come from families where going to school is exciting. These unfortunate kids may come to school with so much baggage, that learning is one of the last things on their minds.

With "No Child Left Behind," the intention is good, but the methods are flawed. The staff and students of these schools filled with children who are low-income, English as a Second language, from broken families, etc., will be punished because of what we cannot control — what happens to these children once they leave school. And ironically, Wisconsin's higher standards have punished schools that would pass in states such as Arkansas.

Please, write your legislators to consider all the factors when comparing

## Conference Preview (continued from page 2)

### ◆ How to be a Thriver in a Radically Changing World

*Presenter: Kim Ratz, former educator and motivational speaker*

In a world that's changing radically and rapidly, your ability to be resilient and manage your transitions well is becoming more and more important! Learn about the attitudes and skills needed to be a more productive and valuable worker, learner, and communicator. This is a don't miss session for anyone who is an educational leader! ❖

## WSPRA Treasure of Past Presidents Provides Valuable Insight and Advice Organization's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

■ Howard Gage, WSPRA President, 1981-82 & 1986-87

Thirty-five years ago, a group of educators, realizing the need for a concerted, yet organized effort to tell the story of education in Wisconsin, formed the beginnings of the Wisconsin School Public Relations Association. Since 1967, 31 individuals have been elected as president to lead WSPRA to its present day position of national prominence in the arena of school public relations. WSPRA will celebrate those 35 years as part of the annual fall convention to be held in Green Lake, November 6-8.

As part of the festivities, I volunteered to create a video featuring comments from many of those past WSPRA leaders. The fact that I volunteered is not unusual, understanding the nature of the organization, nor did it surprise me that 17 Past Presidents willingly volunteered to participate. Marge Crawford (President, 1984-85) made my task much easier by organizing three regional get-togethers.

Answers to the eight questions posed to the group amazed even myself, a 25-year WSPRA veteran. Questions ran the gamut from probing for historical background to what the organization should continue to do for practitioners. You'll have to attend the conference to see the video, however, here is a sampling of thoughts derived from the interviews. You'll find that a look at the past also provides a glimpse of the future.

"I think the best thing that WSPRA has done in the past, and continues to do every day, is make its members available to help others." insists Mary Pat Pfeil (1992-93) "I can't think of a problem I've had, or an idea that I've needed, where I haven't been able to go to my WSPRA colleges to seek assistance, advice, and just really good ideas."

Roberta Filicky-Peneski (1988-89) concurs. "I'm no longer involved with community relations, or public relations, but the networks have persevered. In all the affiliations I've had since WSPRA, I have never seen another organization where folks have been so willing to share their information; share their knowledge. I think that's the absolute strength of WSPRA. It's the people of WSPRA that makes it very strong."

Greg Doyle (1994-95) contends that "truth" continues to be the corner stone of good public relations. "What we try to do is to be honestly positive about the things that are going on in the classroom everyday in Wisconsin. If we tell that story well, we're performing an incredibly valuable service for everybody else in education."

"Unfortunately during times when we need public relations the most," states Hjordy Wagner (1997-98), "it's the time when districts are finding they can't afford to keep the people who know public relations. So we have to find other

ways of getting the message out, and that's really the WSPRA challenge to reach out to communities to help them get the message out in newer ways than they did in the past."

One-way WSPRA can meet that challenge is through the building principal, according to Mary Ellen Marnholtz (1998-99), "We need to develop ways to reach out and support building principals in a more significant way. They're the ones, day-to-day, at a building level that are, on a regular basis, interacting far more with the constituencies, and the neighborhoods, and the publics, than those of us who sit at our desks in our central offices. I think we need to provide them with the tools to get the message out about the importance of what happens each and every day in those classroom in those schools."

"This goes back to what WSPRA's been doing all along," espouses Doug Keiser (1991-92) opting for a more global approach, "connecting with the practitioners, the superintendents, the school boards, the principals' associations, the teachers' association, to better emphasize what it is that WSPRA is all about, and how WSPRA has resources and contacts to assist so many people in their day to day jobs.

"There's never a time when we walk into a position that there isn't some curve thrown at us. When you think about the people within WSPRA who come from such varied backgrounds, there's always someone out there who's got some angle or some resolution to the problem you might be facing."

Bill Stimeling (1971-73), who was there when WSPRA emerged as a state organization, is aware of the needs of the smaller districts. "Most of the small school districts are looking for a quick fix, and don't understand that school public relations is first trust, then information, and then verification of the facts, and what you're hearing about the schools is really true. WSPRA has done a really good job of that over the years, and if we're missing anything, it's the fact that small districts don't understand that it's a process, not an event. And, it's a long-term process when you're building public relations."

Stimeling concludes his remarks by commenting on the durability of WSPRA. "I'm amazed that I'm sitting here talking to you about WSPRA (35 years later); that it actually survived. It means that WSPRA's been through the budget battles, and has mutated and morphed into something of real value. I think it's really neat."

To be continued November 6 in Green Lake! ❖

## Scholarship Winner Announced

■ Mark McLaughlin, McLaughlin & Associates, Manitowoc

The first education recipient of the McLaughlin & Associates' Continuing Education Scholarship is Ms. Jennifer Klug. The scholarship pays the registration fee for the 2002 WSPRA

Conference to be held in November. This is the first year the scholarship is being offered.

Klug is the District Communication & Public Information Coordinator for the Beaver Dam Unified School District. As a recent graduate of Marian College, Fond du Lac, Klug has only been involved in educational public relations and communications for about a year. When informed that she had been selected as the scholarship recipient, she explained that this would be her first opportunity to attend the WSPRA conference. Klug stated that the conference has been highly recommended to her so she is excited about attending the educational sessions as well as meeting other school communications professionals.

In support of her application, Brian Busler, District Superintendent wrote, "We would be pleased to send Jen to the WSPRA Conference and will be eager to hear about her experience and how she can use it in her position and also how other in the district can also benefit from her newly gained knowledge." The benefit to the individual recipient and to the recipient's district are important factors in the scholarship award.

The other recipient, representing the healthcare industry, is Ms. Ellen Swan, Director of Community Relations, Monroe Clinic, Monroe, WI. The registration fee will be paid for Swan to attend the Wisconsin Healthcare Public Relations & Marketing Society annual conference to be held in October.

*McLaughlin & Associates is a consulting firm providing strategic planning, market research and marketing consulting services primarily for education and healthcare clients. Company owner, Mark McLaughlin, has served on the WSPRA board of directors for several years and is currently serving as the marketing project manager.* ❖

## Help Wanted: WSPRA Treasurer

WSPRA is looking for an individual to serve as Board Treasurer. "Why should I volunteer for this position," you ask?

- ◆ We provide the software and will train you to use it.
- ◆ WSPRA Board only meets every six weeks, which includes one meeting at the Fall Conference and one meeting at the WASB convention.
- ◆ Part of the two-year term is over (thanks John Hedstrom!)
- ◆ Free National School Public Relations Association membership.
- ◆ You get to know and love a fun-loving Board.
- ◆ Looks good on your resume.

If you're interested, please contact Amanda Brooker, WSPRA President at (920) 448-2025, or email at [abrooker@greenbay.k12.wi.us](mailto:abrooker@greenbay.k12.wi.us). ❖