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American Education Week (continued from page 3)

States” by Morgan Quitno Press: Lawrence, KS. September 2003.)
 Schools across the nation will also celebrate **Education Support Professionals Day on Wednesday, November 16, and Substitute Educators Day on Friday, November 18.**

Other days to consider as part of your AEW plans are:

- ◆ **Monday, November 14: AEW Nationwide Kick-off Celebration.** Consider officially kicking-off AEW with a high profile event that serves to reinforce our theme and preview the week's activities.
- ◆ **Tuesday, November 15: Invite Parents to School Day.** To emphasize the importance of parental involvement in a child's education, we are encouraging schools to invite parents to step into the classroom for a hands-on experience of what the day is like for their child.
- ◆ **Thursday, November 17: Teacher for a Day.** To underscore the critical role communities need to play in public education.

There are a plethora of ideas for celebrating AEW listed on the National Education Association Web Site at www.nea.org/aew. Here are just a few of last year's activities:

- ◆ A U.S. map was displayed so that each school employee could sign at the location where he or she was born.
- ◆ Third graders wrote essays on, “What I would do if I were principal.”
- ◆ On “Special Persons Day,” grade-school students invited a special person in their life to lunch.
- ◆ Ice cream bars were given to students and teachers just because “school is cool.”
- ◆ School administrators cooked breakfast for staff and handed out travel mugs and lapel pins.
- ◆ Each bus driver was given cookies and ‘thank-you’ cards signed by all students on their route.
- ◆ A gala banquet honored retired teachers.
- ◆ All staff wore suspenders to show “support” for ESPs on their day.
- ◆ School secretaries got fruit baskets with notes that read, “Thanks for ripening our days at

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
WSPRA ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE
NOV. 10-11, 2005 • NEW LOCATION: Regency Suites • Green Bay, Wisconsin.
 Stay tuned for details! ❖

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 WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION



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WISCONSIN SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

Clear Communication is Key to Education Reform

School districts will not be able to introduce and maintain changes being mandated by legislation such as No Child Left Behind without more involvement and buy-in from parents and the community-at-large, Ruth A. Wooden, president of Public Agenda, told a group of school public relations professionals recently.

“The challenges confronting you and your colleagues are steep and real,” Wooden told those attending the National School Public Relations Association's (NSPRA) annual conference in Boston.

It's no secret that in recent years, confidence in leadership across the board—including public schools—has been slipping, Wooden said. “Gaps in honest communication between leaders and the public are many.”

Education is at a point where reform policies are beginning to be implanted “but what is missing is attention to the human element—to the people in the classroom, in the school building, and in the community who are charged with carrying out this difficult work.”

For example, research conducted by Public Agenda, one of the nation's most respected public opinion and citizen engagement organizations, shows that there is widespread support for the underlying values of No Child Left Behind, Wooden said. “But we cannot assume this support will translate into consensus on specifics, especially when the public and parents have very little knowledge or understanding of various aspects of the legislation.”

“As reform moves into new territory, where there is far less unanimity and clarity, misunderstandings and controversies are likely to increase. And misunderstanding and controversy will prevail unless we make some real efforts to close a number of gaps,” she said.

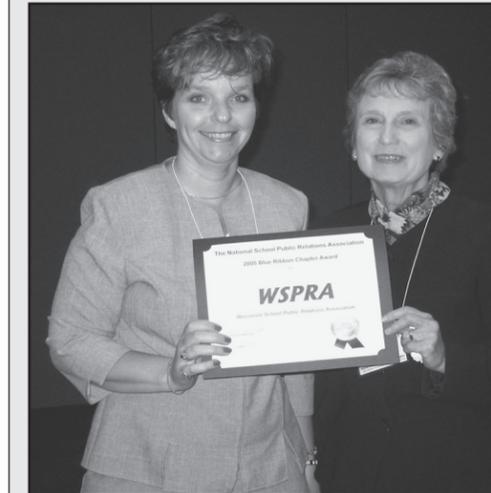
This is where the school public relations professional has a critical role to play, Wooden said. “You are the interface between the schools and the public. What people learn about their schools often comes from you. And you are also instrumental in getting what's on the community's mind on the plates of teachers and principals.

“You can reach out to community and education leaders and talk about the urgency of addressing the human elements in reform. You can drive this home when you make presentations and speeches, when you engage the public through articles, op-eds, or personal interaction.

To help in this effort, Public Agenda has launched a new initiative to help improve communication about the various reform movements that are out there. *Education Insights* will work with national and regional organizations, state and local districts, business coalitions, and national and community foundations to help identify communication gaps and promote broader community engagement and dialogue. “There are no easy answers, and we can't wait for perfect solutions,” Wooden told the NSPRA audience. “But it is important to give people time and opportunity to absorb new information and ideas and to listen to their responses with respect.”

Editor's Note: For more information on Public Agenda's initiative Education Insights go to http://www.publicagenda.org/press/press_release_detail.cfm?list=63. ❖

WSPRA Wins Awards at National Conference



NSPRA President Gay Campbell presents one of two awards bestowed upon WSPRA at the annual conference in Boston. WSPRA President Lori Holly accepted the Blue Ribbon Chapter Award and Distinguished Chapter, Honorable Mention Award on behalf of WSPRA during NSPRA's Annual Meeting.

From the President . . .



Lori Holly

Dear Members,
I hope everyone has had a smooth start to the school year. No doubt you are all in full swing, telling the story of your district, and setting the tone for a successful year.

In that vein, I would like to share with you a Wisconsin School Public Relations Association WSPRA story that I hope will help set a positive tone for the start of our year as an organization.

While attending the annual National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) conference in Boston I had the honor of accepting two awards on behalf of WSPRA—the Blue Ribbon Chapter Award and the Distinguished Chapter-Honorable Mention Award.

I couldn't help but feel proud as I listened to outgoing NSPRA President Jim Dunn refer to WSPRA as "one of our most dedicated chapters. . . . Education leaders, support staff and students across Wisconsin have all benefited from WSPRA's commitment to advancing education through strong school communication."

As I walked up to accept the awards, however, I couldn't help but wish that WSPRA Secretary/Treasurer Mabel Schumacher were there instead of me. It is Mabel, after all, who works tirelessly all year to collect the materials needed to document the work done by many of you on WSPRA's behalf and assemble them into binders that are at least five inches thick! She does an outstanding job telling the WSPRA story! Mabel is also a major contributor to that story, developing programs and resources and presenting numerous workshops on behalf of WSPRA. Of course, she is not alone. Many members volunteer countless hours to help fulfill our mission. Thank you to all!

I hope all of you are planning to attend our annual fall conference, "Creating Winning Relationships" at the Regency Suites in Green Bay, Nov. 10 and 11. Though schedules are busy and budgets tight, we have to remember to take time to invest in ourselves, and our profession. We have worked hard to put together an exciting program in an exciting new venue! And don't miss our special event: "An Evening At

WSPRA Annual Fall Conference "Creating Winning Relationships"

■ Lori Holly, Menomonee Falls School District

Relationships are the heart of education. Whether between student and teacher, teacher and parent, teacher and staff, staff and administration, or district and community—the relationships a school district forms with its publics is key to creating an educational environment where every student can learn and grow. Because building and maintaining strong relationships is so important to everyone at every level of the educational organization, WSPRA has devoted its 2005 Fall Conference to "Creating Winning Relationships." The conference will be held November 10 and 11, at the Regency Suites in Green Bay. Participants will learn from an array of experts how to build and maintain those critical relationships



John M. Jones

— internal and external—that will make their districts true partners with the community.

Kicking off the conference will be Packers CFO John M. Jones, whose work has helped the Packers win the hearts of the Green Bay community by building solid relationships with the schools and public.

Second in organizational command for the Green Bay Packers, John Jones' work for the organization is a testament to his commitment to community. Not only has Jones led the Packers organization to record profitability, he has stayed true to promises to make the redeveloped Lambeau Field a true community resource.

Jones has led efforts to utilize the new facility and expand the Packers' service to the community through Lambeau Field Atrium youth programs such as Spooktacular and Project LEAP, and has partnered with the Green Bay Area School District to help promote health and fitness to students. His story will inspire you and give you the tools to create winning relationships in your community.

Paul Meineke, president of Arketype, a Green Bay-based marketing company, will discuss the concept of "Generational Marketing" in the closing keynote on Friday, Nov. 11.

When it comes to marketing and communications, one size does not fit all. In fact, an ever more savvy public is demanding specialized attention. Only by knowing how the motivations of your district's "customers"—staff, students, parents and community members—are tied to the underlying values of the generation to which they belong will you be able to tailor your communications to their needs. Meineke will show participants how you can use the concept to tailor communications and build relationships in your district.

Participants will also take home strategies for improving internal communications, writing a basic marketing plan, building a community education program, recruiting a volunteer base, strategies for successful referendums, and so much more!

Thursday evening, network with new and old friends at our special event, "An Evening at Lambeau." Don your best Packer garb and join us for a trip to the legendary Lambeau Field for a tailgate party like no other! Green Bay's new double-decker buses will transport participants to Lambeau Field for an exciting evening. Browse on your own through the Packer Hall of Fame and Pro Shop before heading up to the North Balcony overlooking the dimly lit Lambeau Field. Dine on an endless tailgate buffet. Cash bar will also be available. Participants will also have the opportunity to tour Lambeau. (Separate ticket required, \$30. Spouses are welcome. Please include order with registration.)

More information about the conference, hotel arrangements and registration can be found at www.wspra.org. ❖

Celebrate American Education Week

■ Anne Egan-Waukau, WEAC

"A Strong America Starts with Great Public Schools," is the theme for this year's American Education Week which will be celebrated in schools in Wisconsin and across the country during the week of November 13–19. The theme highlights the importance of bringing together teachers, school staff, administrators, parents, students, and communities in a unified effort to build great public schools for all students. This is a great opportunity to tout the successes of Wisconsin's public schools in your community via public service announcements, letters to the editor, news releases and by hosting activities that show how great your schools are.

Wisconsin public schools are among the best in the nation, according to objective measures of educational

accomplishment. Wisconsin's great schools are ranked:

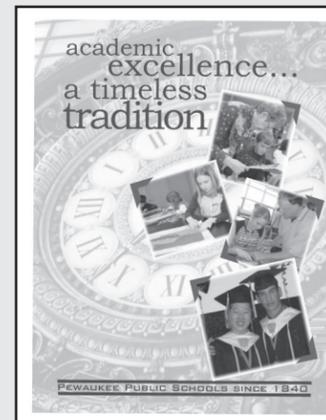
- ◆ **First or second** on the ACT college entrance examination. For 16 consecutive years, Wisconsin high school students have scored 1st or 2nd on the exam. (ACT, Inc. "National and State Scores," 2005.)
- ◆ **First** for the percentage of highly qualified teachers in the nation. In Wisconsin, 98.6% of the teachers meet the standards for being "highly qualified" under the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act. (Associated Press review 2002-03.)
- ◆ **Third** on the SAT. Wisconsin students had the third highest SAT college entrance exam scores in the country in 2004. Wisconsin public schools consistently outscore Wisconsin private schools on the SAT.
- ◆ **One of the eight "smartest states"** based on the quality of public elementary and secondary schools. (Education State Rankings 2003-04: "Pre K-12 Education in the 50 United

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Pewaukee School District

Annually, school districts may submit various communication products to the NSPRA Gold Medallion Awards Contest. Pewaukee School District earned two national awards this year. In this Membership Spotlight, we recognize the communication efforts of the **Pewaukee School District**, and learn a few secrets of success from **Wendy Wong, Pewaukee's public information coordinator**.
- Dorreen Demski, WSPRA vice president
West Bend School District



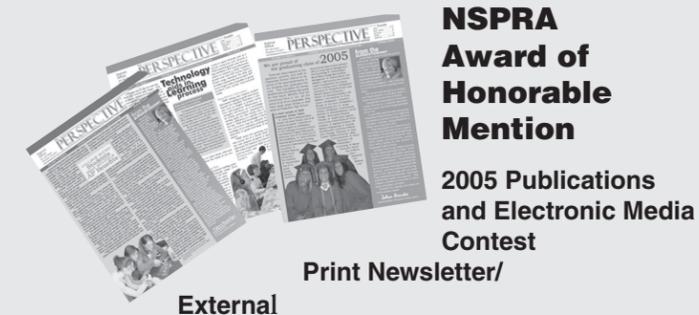
NSPRA Award of Honorable Mention

2005 Publications and Electronic Media Contest/ Annual Report

On the Pewaukee School District office walls, we have several large photographs of students from the 1800s to

early 1900s. These photographs are continually a conversation piece for visitors. The "timeless tradition" idea grew out of this interest shown for the photos, coupled with the fact that the entire community receives the annual report. We thought our readers would enjoy an annual report sprinkled with the history of education in this community. The final publication featured historical photos and facts mixed in with similar scenes from the present. I even found a photo of the 1917 school board members to place with a photo of the present members! It was challenging to dig through photos at the

local museum, and find the correct information to put in the cutlines, but really a fun project to work on.



NSPRA Award of Honorable Mention

2005 Publications and Electronic Media Contest

The Perspective is sent out to the entire community three times a year. It is continually evolving as I try to make it a publication that people read. Design and content are two key factors to draw a reader in.

One of the things I like to do with the design is drop out the background of the cover photo. This takes some time, but it tends to make the subject of the photo pop-out. Also, more type can fit on the page as it can wrap around the edges of the people pictured in the photo. I also try to take action photos as opposed to group shots. On the cover and sometimes the inside pages, I do something a little different with headlines in Photoshop. If you go to "Layer" and "Layer Style" there is a myriad of choices for enhancing type. The type can be saved as a jpeg.

Content is always a challenge. My goal is to find information that goes beyond each school's newsletter. Ideally, I strive to write articles to show the reader the bigger picture and how the story relates to the community.

Finally, I've found that printing in four-color as opposed to two-color costs only a few cents more per printed piece. In years past, the cost almost doubled when going from a two-color to four-color publication. Depending on the printer, that is usually no longer the case. ❖