

public relations update

News journal of the Public Relations Division of AEJMC

•March-April 1994

Litigation Public Relations

Litigation Public Relations is Topic of Atlanta Convention Panel

By Barbara K. Petersen and Kathy Fitzpatrick
University of South Florida and Southern Methodist University

"Litigation blackmail is being committed in the U.S. every day, aided and abetted by journalists, lawyers and public relations professionals," according to a recent *New York Times* article. The writer argues that the integrity of the legal process is being seriously undermined by the trying of lawsuits in the court of public opinion, rather than the court of law. "It is not the function of the press, or those who disseminate news and information....to allow the merits of individual cases to be argued or promoted outside due process."

These issues will be addressed at the Atlanta convention session on August 10 (2:45 - 4:15 p.m.) entitled "Litigation Public Relations: Reputation Management in the Court of Public Opinion." Public Relations Division member Barbara K. Peterson (South Florida) will be the session moderator. She will present an overview of the emerging practice of "litigation public relations."

Public Relations Division member Kathy Fitzpatrick (Southern Methodist) will be one of the three panel members. Fitzpatrick will discuss "Communicating Outside the Courtroom: An examination of the Legal Rights and Ethical Obligations of Public Relations and Legal Counsel."

Continued on page 3

Establishing the Constitutional Argument for Litigation Public Relations

(without making a federal case of it)

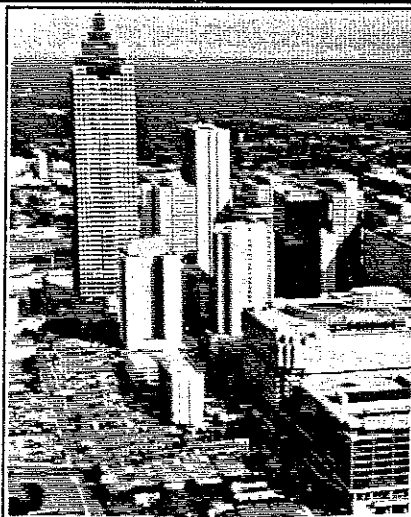
By Richard A. Stack, Esq.
The American University

The Constitutional guarantee of free speech is the cornerstone of the communications profession. In a tongue-in-cheek reference, it has been called a "right to work" law for public relations practitioners. With a handful of exceptions (i.e. national security, public safety, obscenity) the First Amendment is the governing principle of American society. It is a constant. Those who cherish freedom strongly advise against tampering with the tenant. The rest of society must adapt and accommodate to the First Amendment. The question presently is, can the U.S. justice system adapt and accommodate?

Some legal experts contend that the media actually has little impact on the outcome of trials. "I don't care what's going on outside the courtroom. The only opinions that matter," according to Eric Naiberg, attorney for Amy Fisher, "are those of the twelve jurors."

Naiberg, addressing a workshop at the 1993 AEJMC convention discounted the significance of the court of public opinion. "What goes on outside the jury box is a distraction. My focus must be on the decision-makers in the courtroom."

Continued on page 4



Mark Your Calendar! 1994 AEJMC Convention, Atlanta, Georgia

Pre-convention session:
Tuesday, August 9

Convention dates:
Wednesday, August 10
to Saturday, August 13

Post-convention session:
Sunday, August 14

Photo left: Skyline of Atlanta, GA.

Conference Hotel:
Hyatt Regency Atlanta

PLAN YOUR BUDGET!

Single: \$90
Double: \$110
Triple: \$120

Quad: \$140
**All rooms subject to
13% room tax

SEE PAGE 7 FOR
MORE ON ATLANTA

Contents

Names in the News.....	2
Litigation PR.....	3
Litigation PR.....	4
Litigation PR and Ethics.....	5
PRFORUM.....	6
News from around Divison: A MidYear Review.....	7
Book Reviews.....	8



NAMES IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to the following members of the Public Relations Division

(PRD) upon their nomination to national committees:

Professional Freedom and Responsibility:

Jo-Ann Huff Albers, Western Kentucky University
Currently a member of the PF & R committee, she went to WKU after 27 years in daily newspapering. She teaches in the areas of law, reporting and editing.

Research:

Dan Berkowitz, University of Iowa
Has served as research chair for the Radio-Television Journalism Division and his research interests focus on the sociology of newswork, especially related to local television news. He teaches courses in computer-assisted reporting, public relations, research methods, and sociology of news work.

PR update

A news journal published by the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Public Relations Division members examine and analyze scholarly, pedagogical and other issues relating to public relations practice and education. We serve educators, practitioners and others who recognize the important contributions made by public relations to an informed society.

Edited at The American University by:

Editor-in-Chief.....Susanne Roschwalb
Editor.....Valerie Otten
Printer.....Kinko's

We seek short, provocative articles and commentary; book, video, software and database reviews; photographs; and other news of interest.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS, COLUMNS, VISUALS TO:

Susanne Roschwalb *PR update*
Associate Professor
School of Communication
The American University
Washington, D.C. 20016-8017
Phone: (202) 885-1890
Fax: (202) 885-2099
E-Mail: sroschw@american.edu

Carolyn Cline, University of Southern California
Currently a visiting professor of journalism, she has taught at Alabama, Texas, and South West Texas State Universities chiefly in public relations. Within AEJMC she has served as divisional research chair three times.

Ali Kanso El-Ghori, Kansas State University
His teaching and research interests in addition to public relations include research design, advertising, marketing, and international communication. He recently received a grant for an advertising project in Finland and Sweden.

Charles Salmon, Michigan State University
The current chair of AEJMC's Standing Committee on Research, Salmon previously was research chair for the Public Relations Division. He worked as a visiting scientist for the Centers for Disease Control's National AIDS Information and Education Program.

Teaching Standards:

JoAnn Valenti, Brigham Young University
She served as College Graduate Coordinator for the University of Florida's Public Relations Department before joining BY. She has taught science writing, public relations, mass communications and society, and environmental communication courses.

Congratulations to Judy VanSlyke Turk Incoming President!

Currently dean, professor, College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the U.S.C.

Announcement

A new edition of Reed's Worldwide Directory of Public Relations Organizations, compiled and edited by AEJMC member John M. Reed, is now available from Pigafetta Press, P.O. Box 39244, Washington, D.C. 20016. This, the fourth edition, is the only complete source of information on nearly 300 professional PR societies, associations and groups in 87 countries. The price of the 160-page volume is \$110, postpaid. This directory is a valuable reference and working tool for persons interested in international public relations, for teachers and schools of public relations and communication, and for private and public sector practitioners. The directory lists the names, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, officers, publications, membership, history and purposes of a wide variety of public relations bodies, from Algeria to Zimbabwe, and including 88 groups in the United States alone.

Litigation Public Relations

How a Law Firm Benefited from Someone Else's Crisis

By Maggie Lyons

Speiser, Krause, Madole & Lear

"It is conceivable that investigatory journalists perceived the firm, with its focus on crisis issues and investigatory discovery, as an acceptable alternative to more traditional authoritative news sources such as police stations and courts."

When USAir Flight 405 crashed at New York's La Guardia Airport on March 22, 1992, the disaster triggered a successful media campaign by the aviation plaintiffs' litigation firm of Speiser, Krause & Madole. It was successful because it espoused a prime media interest - negative news and conventional news values and because its objective (to establish a portfolio of media exposure) was easily evaluated. The ice-related crash offered the firm an opportunity to initiate a media relations program and expand recognition for its expertise beyond the confines of the legal community. Professional ethics were not in jeopardy since no clients and no case had thus far materialized.

From the beginning, media coverage cited improper de-icing of the aircraft as the probable cause of the accident. This implicated the Federal Aviation Administration and exposed an inadequate federal de-icing policy. The classic components of controversy, fault-finding, government policy and consumer interests rapidly developed into a full-blown media agenda item. Government and industry officials are discouraged by the National Transportation Safety Board from speculating on crash causes; industry officials, in any event, represent their side of the issue. It was, then, no accident that the media welcomed the role the litigation firm offered to play in the ensuing debate. The firm's attorneys were easily accessible, articulate sources of information, unencumbered by industry bias. It is conceivable that investigatory journalists perceived the firm, with its focus on crisis issues and investigatory discovery, as an acceptable alternative to more traditional authoritative news sources such as police stations and courts. Furthermore, the attorneys met reporters' needs for quick, straightforward and unambiguous quotes and information. Significantly reporters sought technical information on the subject of aircraft icing and federal de-icing policy, not points of law.

Undoubtedly timeliness and proximity were also factors in gaining media attention and may have been more influential than the media's perception of the firm as an authority. It is arguable that because of the immense speed of the firm's reaction to the initial disaster announcements, it was ahead of efforts by other potential news sources and thus received first attention. With offices in Washington, D.C. and New York, it was physically well-positioned to handle inquiries from most national media reporters. Ninety percent of the media inquiries came from the D.C. media or D.C. bureaus of the national media, evidence of the media convention that local news/news sources are awarded priority.

The USAir 405 campaign captured tangible media exposure for the firm. Could the firm have done better? This was the firm's first venture into media relations. Would an established relationship with media representatives prior to the disaster have produced more media exposure for the firm? Did the climate of vigorous lawyer-bashing existing at the time of the USAir crash affect the number of reporters willing to grant credibility to the firm?

References: Bohle, R. "Negativism as news selection predictor," *Journalism Quarterly*, 63 (Winter, 1986): 789-96

Gans, H.J. "Deciding What's News," Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, New York, April 1980

Litigation Public Relations is Topic of Atlanta Convention Panel

by Petersen and Fitzpatrick
(Continued from cover)

Two panel members are public relations practitioners who specialize in litigation public relations. James Lukaszewski, President of The Lukaszewski Group, Inc. in White Plains, NY, will discuss "Managing Litigation Visibility: Developing Constructive Communication Strategies your Attorney will Support." Lukaszewski's firm specializes in corporate crisis communication, including civil, criminal, personal injury, and product liability litigation visibility support to companies involved in labor, environmental, health care, and public policy disputes.

Marti Mackenzie, President of Professional Profiles, Inc. in Orlando, FL., will discuss "High Profile Legal Cases: Proactive Public Relations for Lawyers and their Clients." MacKenzie specializes in conducting media relations for criminal defense and personal injury lawyers.

Her most notable high profile case management assignment was representing Edward Humphrey, an early suspect in the 1990 murders of five University of Florida students. She also represented Robert Montgomery, the lawyer for the late Kimberly Bergalis, in promoting issues which he hopes will make HIV testing reportable.

Because of the 1991 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Gentile v. State Bar of Nevada*, there is uncertainty nationwide regarding exactly how far attorneys may go in discussing judicial matters outside the courtroom. Additionally, litigation public relations practitioners may be criticized for attempting to influence the outcome of a trial, thus interfering with due process and potentially damaging the integrity of the court system. Members of the Public Relations Society of America are bound by its Code of Ethics in this area, which states that "a member shall not engage in any practice which has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communications or the processes of government." These issues will be central to the discussion on August 10.

• PR update/Mar. - Apr. 1994/3



Litigation Public Relations

Establishing the Constitutional Argument for Litigation Public Relations

By Richard A. Stack, Esq.
(Continued from cover page)

Naiberg, whose client was the subject of three made-for-TV movies, appreciates the revenue such media fascination can generate. "Amy will leave jail very well off," Naiberg admits. The attorney believes he can turn pre-trial publicity to his advantage in other ways. Exposure to sensational coverage becomes a litmus test for impartiality. "During voir dire, if a prospective juror says he can remain unbiased in the face of overwhelming media stories, this is the person I want sitting on the jury," observes Naiberg.

Alan Dershowitz, a Howard law professor and First Amendment lawyer with vast experience representing high profile defendants, believes the media does influence the outcome of trials. Once the television camera focuses on guilt, the public verdict penetrates all levels of the criminal justice system.

Dershowitz, in a televised interview, stated that "the media gives the public its first sense of whether it is to root for or against the defendant in a criminal case." Dershowitz adds, "the way the media covers a case and a defendant has an enormous impact on jurors, on judges - trial judges and appellate court judges - and even on the U.S. Supreme Court."

The influence of pre-trial publicity is a phenomena that has been labeled "the opening statement before the opening statement." Steven Bull, the founder of Court Cable TV, explains the educational value of gavel-to-gavel coverage as a way of allowing citizens to draw their own conclusions without the filter of a biased press.

Bull notes the images of the criminal justice system that most of the public sees on the mass media. First they witness the crime scene, "the ambulance, the cops, the blood on the sidewalk. The next visual image is the suspect being arrested. The bad guy. A rain-coat over his head. The prosecutors hold a press conference, hold up the guns or the drugs. American flag on the wall....Next thing you hear is that the bad guy gets off. You say, "Something went wrong. These people must be crazy."

Bull is quick to add that when viewers have access to what actually happens in a courtroom, "at least now you get to see what the jury saw. That the jury is not a bunch of crazies. That the judge did not stop at the ACLU for instructions on the way to court. That maybe they got the wrong guy."

Referring to the power of television, defense attorney William Kunstler cautions, "the visual impact is a strong one." Kunstler, whose clients have included Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Abbie Hoffman, Jack Ruby, and the American Indian Movement, warns, "people in America who do pride themselves on fair trial, due process, equal protection

of the law, have to make a conscious effort to not let those flickering images so mindset them that when they go into a jury box they automatically feel these people are guilty."

Juries have long been influenced by outside elements -- racial prejudice, class prejudice, war fever. Some would argue that television is just another factor in the mix.

Kunstler, however, suggests there should be some safeguard against the presumption of guilt in the media. "There ought to be some sort of regulation," Kunstler contends, "that the television industry has a responsibility to give some time, maybe not equal time, to those people who are in high profile cases, where the prosecutor has had a field day with the media."

Enter litigation public relations. Who better to make the case to the media and help argue the matter in the court of public opinion than a professional communicator? Dershowitz underscores the point when he states, "woe unto the lawyer who doesn't understand that we live in a modern age when the media has an impact on justice. Woe unto that lawyer and even more woe unto his client."

Dershowitz discusses his defense of trial by TV by demonstrating how the media can be used to his client's advantage. Analyzing his media/legal strategy for Claus Von Bulow, Dershowitz notes, "aside from a few 'Clausettes' who will favor him in front of the courthouse, everyone in America thought Von Bulow was guilty and deserved to spend the rest of his life in jail. We purposely put him on television. Had him agree to a Barbara Walters' interview. Had him agree to a number of press interviews."

Adds Dershowitz, "We were very anxious to show the other side of Claus Von Bulow, to make it possible for the judges in Rhode Island to be able to come home to their spouses and say 'you know, I reversed Claus Von Bulow's conviction today! And the spouse wouldn't say 'My God! How could you do that? We'll never be able to go to our country club again.'"

Five key Supreme court cases have framed the contemporary context in which litigation public relations functions. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, writing in *Patterson v. Colorado*, stated: "Conclusions to be reached in a case will be induced only by evidence and argument in open courts and not by outside influence, whether private talk or public print." Balancing Holmes' declaration, meanwhile, the First Amendment assures the press the freedom to publish information about the crime from indictment through trial and on to appeal. This guarantee stems from the fact, as determined in *Craig v. Harney*, that "a trial is a public event. What transpires in the courtroom is public property."

Sherbert v. Verner established that the rights of the press may be restricted only when the judge determines that "no alternate form of regulation would combat such abuses" as the media might generate for a fair trial. To safeguard the fairness of the proceedings for the accused, the Supreme Court put forth regulations of media

conduct in *Sheppard v. Maxwell*. The decision mandated measures trial judges can take to minimize media influence. As a result of the ruling in *Sheppard*, the Supreme Court ordered judges in future trials to take precautions to avoid a prejudicial atmosphere generated by the media. There precautionary steps included continuance, change of venue, rigorous voir dire, jury sequestration, gag orders, and silence orders. These measures changed the way the press was permitted to cover court proceedings.

Justice William Brennan in *Nebraska Press Association v. Stuart* affirmed the freedom of the media to cover trials: "Commentary and reporting of the criminal justice system is at the core of the First Amendment values, for the operation and integrity of that system is of crucial importance to the citizens concerned with the administration of government." Thus, under the American system of governance, the media is a watchdog of the police, prosecutors, and courts. Therefore the media has a responsibility to monitor the activities of the public representatives.

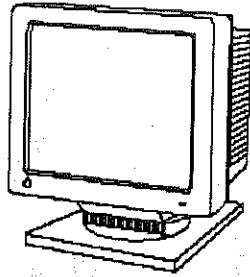
With this historical backdrop, litigation public relations is ready to take its place in the court of public opinion. Applying the ethical concepts of full disclosure and symmetry, the discipline is strategically positioned between the best interests of society and those of the litigant. This is a choice location from which to aid in the service of justice.

References:

- Bruce Sanford, Keynote address, PRSA conf., Phoenix, AZ, November 1991.
- Comments at AEJMC conf. panel "Practicing PR on the Courthouse steps," Kansas City, MO, Aug. 11, 1993.
- Interview on Arts and Entertainment channel, "Investigative Reports - Trial by TV,"
- Schwetz, Janice and Snedaker, Kathryn. *Communication and Litigation*, Southern Illinois U. Press, 1988.
- Span, Paula. "Court TV, Tried and True," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 12, 1994, D1.
- 205 U.S. 454 (1907)
- 331 U.S. 368 (1947)
- 374 U.S. 398 (1963)
- 384 U.S. 333 (1966)
- 427 U.S. 539 (1976)

PRFORUM: The Public Relations Cybercommunity

By Jeff Springston
School of Journalism
Indiana University



Construction on all four lanes of Vice President Al Gore's Information Super Highway may be far from complete, but the service road is already here. This "pavement" is commonly known as the Internet. PRFORUM is one of its most recent electronic destinations. I established this discussion forum for anyone interested in public relations or corporate communications. However, before outlining the specifics of PRFORUM, some background information is in order for those new to the roadway.

In many respects, Gore's analogy of a highway is appropriate. The interstate highway system was originally devised as a means for the military to quickly transport munitions and equipment across the country in the event of military threat or national emergency. In a similar vein, the Internet grew out of an information system that revolved around the national defense. It consists of many computers that link users around the globe. During the Cold War these systems allowed government, universities, and corporations involved in military research to quickly move data and information anywhere in the world. The focus has changed in the post Cold War. In recent years access to the Internet has been eased. Today it is estimated that over 12 million users are on the Net.

Computer discussions are not new to many public relations professionals. Practitioners and scholars have been able to electronically converse with other PR professionals for a number of years via regional computer bulletin boards. For those new to the concept of computer discussion groups, a bulletin board commonly refers to a single site computer in which individuals dial a specific phone number via modem. Due to the cost of long distance fees, these bulletin boards are traveled almost exclusively by local or regional subscribers. National discussions have also been possible for subscribers of on-line commercial services such as Prodigy or CompuServe. However, only paying CompuServe customers can access its PR and Marketing Interest Group discussions. To the author's knowledge, PRFORUM is the only Internet list specifically devoted to public relations and corporate communications. My major motivation for starting this list is to provide members of this eclectic field a common place to meet.

The diversity of public relations is evidenced by the wide array of existing associations and conferences. Logistic and financial realities dictate that individuals restrict their membership choices. Few academic departments or corporations could fund attendance to all the annual meetings and conferences, e.g., AEJMC, SCA, PRSA, IABC, ICA, etc. It is my hope that PRFORUM can provide a no cost/low cost means for professionals to interact. PRFORUM requires no fee to join, so most academicians and students will incur no expense. Those linking in from a commercial service will only pay for the time on line.

PRFORUM was created in early January of this year. To date, there are approximately 150 subscribers from eight countries including Australia, Canada, Japan and Germany. I typically receive four or five inquiries a week for more information about the list, and the subscription rate is growing daily. Most of the current subscribers are academicians. About 20 percent are PR practitioners or journalists. Given that professors are more likely to be active on the Internet, this ratio is not surprising. However, as word spreads I expect the number of subscribing practitioners to grow.

Even though PRFORUM has only been operational for several weeks, there has already been an interesting dialogue. The most recent discussion has centered on public relations ethics. List members have also commented on such topics as techniques for establishing international client contacts, the potential of telecommuting, and the impact of academic research on the PR profession. Job notices have been posted, and members have solicited advice on everything from computer software to bibliographic citations. Any topic relevant to public relations is appropriate.

As recent stories in the Public Relations Journal and Fortune indicate, the number of individuals and organizations linking onto the Internet is growing exponentially. The business community is beginning to recognize the enormous potential of this medium. This technology offers public relations scholars and professionals an unprecedented opportunity for interaction and collegiality. In the lexicon of the 'Net, "Join the bus and avoid being road kill on the information super highway."

If you are interested in subscribing and you have a Bitnet account send a message to: LISTSERV@INDYCMS

If you're on Internet, send the message to:
LISTSERV@INDYCMS.IUPUE.EDU

Leave the subject line blank. On the text line type:
SUBSCRIBE PRFORUM <first name> <last name>

Example, SUBSCRIBE PRFORUM Jeff Springston

You will receive a short message confirming your subscription.

News From Around The Division: A MidYear Review

By **Maria P. Russell**

Public Relations Division Head
Fellow, Public Relations Society of
America

Convention Programming: By now, I hope you have had a chance to review the preliminary schedule of sessions offered by the public relations Division at the annual meeting of AEJMC, August 9-13, and have marked your calendars and budgeted your dollars. It will be worth your time, thanks to the efforts of **Richard Alan Nelson** (Kansas State University, soon to be of Louisiana State University) and a long list of our members who submitted excellent ideas with top-notch speakers and panelists. Special kudos go to **Barbara Petersen** (University of South Florida) and **Kathy Fitzpatrick** (SMU), and to **Suzanne Heck** (Central Missouri State University). These members not only developed excellent programs ("Litigation Public Relations" and "Native Americans Respond to Media and Sports Teams Stereotypes"), but their proposals were allocated \$2,000 in funding to support the travel expenses of their non-AEJMC-member guest speakers. And, we're fortunate to have **Glen Cameron** (University of Georgia-Athens) so close to the convention site -- his rolodex of prominent contacts within the Atlanta public relations community has been invaluable in lining up speakers and interesting off-site locations.

Multiple Paper Calls should bring in the very best of your research and writing. As usual the postmark deadline is April 1; announcements have been sent of the wide array of competitive sessions (4 research paper sessions; top teaching papers session; joint advertising and public relations interactive session; joint session with Minorities and Communications Division on issues surrounding Native Americans and stereotypes in the media; and our sixth annual working paper session on gender issues). Our chairs for these competitions have lined up judges using your self-nominations at last year's convention in Kansas City. If you're still interested in judging you can contact **JoAnn Myer Valenti** at Brigham Young University (research); **Dennis Wilcox** at San Jose State (teaching); **Suzanne Heck** (Central Missouri State (Native American issues); **Maria Russell** at Syracuse (Advertising/Public Relations issues); or **Carolyn Cline** at the University of Southern California (gender issues working paper session) for possible judging slots.

Student Papers get a boost this year with the introduction of a special post-convention session modelled after our long-standing working papers session on gender issues. Working with the Graduate Education Task Force, we will host a Sunday morning invited session for graduate students to share their work with faculty mentors and to get critiques. **Lynn Zoch** (University of South Carolina) is coordinating this session as well as our traditional student paper competition. By the way, we've encouraged student authors to seek out their faculty advisors for the appropriate procedures and quality standards sought in academic paper competitions. Please give them your time and expertise in learning the intricacies of paper submissions.

Our chairman of Nominating, **Dean Kruckeberg** (Northern Iowa) reports receiving no nominations for the 1994-95 slate of officers despite a special opportunity in a recent mailing. Dean and his committee will develop a slate of candidates for a mail ballot to be sent to you later this spring. Officers will be announced at the August business meeting. Dean also has an update for us on the special project he is coordinating on our behalf with the educators "Directory of Public Relations Educators in the United States" which will include profiles of members from all three groups, including their teaching specialties, research interests, and speaking and consulting expertise.

I've asked our Delegates-at-Large **Mark McElreath** (Towson State) and **Cornelius Pratt** (Michigan State) to work with me on developing a strategic plan for the Division. Our plan is to present a preliminary draft of your review this summer. In the meantime, please pick up the phone or drop a line to me if you have any thoughts on special emphases for the Division.

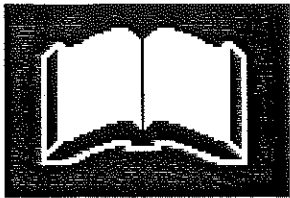
Bill Adams (Florida International) continues to practice what he preaches on our behalf as our Professional Liaison. Bill has worked extremely hard to create our Division's offering at AEJMC's April 7 - 8 "Media and the Environment" conference in Reno. Hopefully, a good representation of our members will be on hand to hear his panel of professional communicators and journalists as they speak on "Communicating with the Environmental Community: Media, Government and Activist Public." Also doing yeoman's work for the conference is Division member **Sharon Yoder** (Cal State - Chico), who coordinated the paper call and judging.

In the next issue, we'll continue this round-up of committee progress reports. I hope the members will agree with me that some very hard working colleagues are making this a very good year for our Division!

New Members Invited to Convention Breakfast

New public relations division members are invited to a continental breakfast Thursday, August 11 from 7 to 8:30 a.m. in Atlanta. Plan on becoming acquainted with the public relations program and officers when you first arrive. Information will be available for those who are interested in specific project efforts. **Bonita Dostal Neff**, PR Membership Chair, will be on hand to "meet and greet" and answer questions. A comparison of the membership report indicates an increase from 339 members on 7/22/93 to 417 for the 3/9/94 printout.

PR division wishes to welcome **Thomas Healy** (Endicott College), **Bill Smith** (Northwestern University), **Donald Fishman** and **Willis Robert** (Boston College), **Dean Baker** (Boston University), **Thomas Mickey** (Bridgewater State College), **James Beverly** (U. of New Hampshire), **Donald Aver** (Eastern Connecticut State U.), **Harris Lawrence** (Quinnipiac College-CT), **Barbara Straus-Reed** (Rutgers U.), **Theresa Russell-Loretz** (Millersville University - PA.).



Book Review

By Richard Alan Nelson, Kansas State University

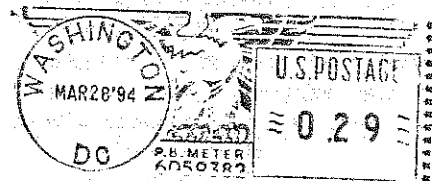
Social, Political, and Economic Contexts in Public Relations: Theory and Cases, by Hugh M. Culbertson, Dennis W. Jeffers, Donna Besser Stone, and Martin Terrell (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1993); 322 pages.

Culbertson, one of the great master teachers of public relations, and his co-authors have produced a tour de force. This is one of the best - and most significant - books in public relations and persuasion to appear in a longtime. Public relations practice is a form of integrated communication whether we like it or not. To minimize risk in a highly technological and sophisticated society, we have to develop a broad understanding of the interdependence between organizations and their growing roster of stakeholders. We can no longer operate in a vacuum, yet too often we approach a public relations challenge in terms of publicity without taking fully into account its social, political, and economic (SPE) contexts. Even experienced educators and practitioners will learn much from reading this impressive summary and integration of what we know from public relations theory and case study experience. This volume successfully bridges the gap between problem, methodology, execution, and analysis - reinforcing the growing recognition that the Bernays' social science tradition of issues management will continue to dominate future public relations development. The authors discuss how qualitative and quantitative research techniques should be understood as part of a coordinated approach to problem solving. Each case study includes a situation analysis taking into account both narrow local and broad national perspectives. This is followed by discussion of how formal and informal research methods were selected and the findings applied. Students have a chance to "talk back" by comparing their ideas and arguing for or against the reasoning behind recommendations found in each case. This comprehensive integration of theory and practice is useful for courses in Public Relations Cases, Public Relations Theory, and even Contemporary Management Issues. Rather than belabor the point, buy the book. This is a must read study that makes clear it's time for all of us to go back to school.

Influencing Public Attitudes: Direct Communication Strategies that Reduce the Media's Influence on Public Decision-Making (Leesburg, VA: Issue Action Publications, 1992), 64 pages, \$14.95; and **Executive Action Crisis Management Workbook**, 1993/1994 edition (White Plains, NY: The Lukaszewski Group, Inc., 1993), 111 loose-leaf pages, \$50, and accompanying **Executive Action Crisis Management System Video Cassette**, 60 minutes, \$40, all by James E. Lukaszewski, APR and Fellow, PRSA.

Lukaszewski is one of America's leading business strategists, an advisor to many of the country's largest corporations. A specialist in crisis communications, he is frequently retained by senior management to directly intervene in bad news situations. One of Lukaszewski's distinguishing characteristics is that he really is a philosopher as much as a practitioner of business, frequently coming up with innovative and thoughtful approaches to problems of public communication. He continues to be an active author, with a growing body of important works in issues management and media relations useful for students and experienced professionals alike. His free quarterly newsletter, *Executive Action: Urgent Information for Executive Decision making* is chock full of handy tips and a must read for those of us interested in strategic management of public relations. His books are easy to read and deceptively simple. Actually they are practical guides in the highest sense, since each is grounded in theory and experience. Lukaszewski argues that unfiltered, direct communication with people who count is the new public influence paradigm. *Influencing Public Attitudes* is filled with sage advice on getting messages out directly to critical audiences in order to balance or even by-pass the media. By talking and listening directly to those most affected by an organization's actions, the media's agenda - setting power to select or define the issues is reduced. The *Executive Action Crisis Management Workbook* takes the reader step-by-step through the crucial process of data collection, analysis and plan development. The user-friendly loose leaf format features many specially designed work sheets and other easy-to-follow forms. Lukaszewski's one-hour video, taped before a live audience, complements the Workbook to explain exactly how to go about the process of developing a plan based on a scenario involving a current situation. Both are perfect for a graduate course in crisis communications/managing bad news, modeled along the line of one taught by Lukaszewski as an Adjunct Professor of Communications at New York University's Management Institute.

PR update, PR Division of AEJMC
The American University School of
Communication
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016-8017



RECEIVED
MAY 10 1994
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC 20016-8017