

CPRS Manitoba 2005/06 Board Reports

President's Report

Charllene Pedersen, President

It has been a wonderful experience being the CPRS Manitoba's President this past year. The CPRS Manitoba 2005/06 Board is comprised of an amazing group of talented communication professionals dedicated to the ethical practice of Public Relations. The executive participated in a Board Liability Seminar presented by local lawyer Priti Shah. This was an excellent experience and motivated us to secure a Postal Box for our chapter mail and CPRS Manitoba email addresses for board members.

My primary goal this past year was to improve communication between all CPRS Manitoba Board members and our National Office. CPRS National hosted monthly president council telephone meetings that representatives of the Manitoba board and I attended. Information from these meetings was regularly discussed at our board meetings. As well, Membership Chair, Everett Martin has developed an excellent relationship with the National Office.

My secondary goal was to improve communication with CPRS Manitoba Board and Chapter members. Our Communication Co-Chairs resurrected and produced two issues of a chapter newsletter. Our CPRS Manitoba by laws have been updated and distributed to all members. The website is currently being reconstructed and will be launched in the fall of 2006. Members will be given their own user id and password and will be the only users with access to our chapter by laws, membership directory, board meeting minutes, luncheon speaker presentations, and job postings.

An overall board goal was and continues to be to enhance the relationship of CPRS Manitoba members with our National organization. We have started this process by hosting CPRS National President, Colleen Killingsworth as our luncheon speaker at the January 2006 event. CPRS National has agreed to host a 2007 National Board Meeting in Winnipeg thus giving our chapter the opportunity to host a Mini Conference on February 9th, 2007. Many National Board Members will be the presenters at this one day conference. This will be an excellent educational and networking opportunity for CPRS Manitoba Members and Non Members.

This past year our theme has been to energize our members and our chapter. The board members all rose to this energize challenge with the Program Co-Chairs and Professional Development Co-chairs excelling at providing excellent educational opportunities to our members. The Communication Co-Chairs have done a fantastic job keeping our members informed and connected to the latest CPRS Manitoba information and initiatives via regular emails, a new newsletter and updating our current website. Our Membership has grown by 19%. Two CPRS Manitoba members achieved their APR.

New to the CPRS Manitoba Board are student representative board members from Red River College and the University of Winnipeg. CPRS Manitoba has enhanced its relationship with these two educational institutions and their PR Programs. This year we awarded two – two hundred and fifty dollar scholarships to two students graduating with a PR major from the Red River College Creative Communication Program and two students graduating from the University of Winnipeg Public Relations Diploma and Management Certificate.

A special thank you to Wendy Fox, Past President, for once again chairing the judging of the AASCIF Communication Awards. Wendy presented this opportunity to our chapter last year and made a two year commitment for our chapter to judge these North American awards. In return our chapter was paid \$3500 USD last year and will once again this year be awarded \$3500 USD. This has been a wonderful opportunity for CPRS members who participated in the judging to get ideas from communication professionals throughout North America while earning revenue for our chapter.

Thank you to all the CPRS Manitoba 2005/06 members for your dedication and commitment to CPRS Manitoba this past year. We have had a wonderful productive year and I wish the 2006/07 board all the best.

Adam Dooley & Everett Martin, Program Co-Chairs

We enjoyed a very vibrant and well attended luncheon speakers' series this year. Our theme this year was "Energizing Communications." We secured speakers from many different industries and many different skill sets to bring us their perspectives on different aspects of how our members could energize their communications.

With the exception of our January luncheon, we tapped our local market for speakers. We're very pleased to report that three of our luncheons attracted more than 30 people. We attracted many non-members as well as a few lapsed or former members. This was a major factor in our ability to recruit new members.

The luncheon series continues to play an important role in our chapter. It is one of the key ways we communicate with and bring value to our members. The series offers professional development as well as networking opportunities to the city's communications professionals, which helps strengthen our industry here.

We are pleased to report that we received many compliments from members and non-members for our luncheon series this year. They told us they found our topics very compelling because they mined our own market for interesting real life lessons in public relations.

This was our second year at The Fort Garry Hotel and we are very pleased with the service we received. The rooms have been very good and the food excellent. The hotel is also very accommodating of even last minute requests and the costs have been very competitive.

As outgoing program chairs, we recommend continuing to use The Fort Garry Hotel for the 2006-2007 luncheon speakers' series.

2005-2006 Luncheon Speakers' Series

September – Barry McArton, Executive Director, CancerCare Foundation (est. attendance 54)

Barry spoke to us about the phenomenal success of Bears on Broadway, outlining the preparation that went into this event as well as the many communications challenges he and his team had to overcome.

October – John Graham, Public Affairs, Canada Safeway

(est. attendance 45)

John gave us an insider's account of the battle to build the new Safeway store in Osborne Village, how the company handled its communications and community outreach and the lessons they learned.

November – Vicky Burns, Executive Director, Winnipeg Humane Society

(est. attendance 22)

Vicky is well-known in Winnipeg for her role as media spokesperson for the Humane Society. She gave us her views on what it takes to be an advocate in the media.

December – Holiday Reception on the Esplanade Riel

(est. attendance 15)

Curious to see what a Nip tastes a few metres above the Red River, we held a holiday reception at the new Salisbury House on the Esplanade Riel.

January – Colleen Killingsworth, President, CPRS National

{est. attendance 50)

This luncheon attracted many new faces as we welcomed many students from both Red River College and the UofW. Colleen gave us a well-informed presentation on the state of PR in Canada.

February – Richard Martin, Senior Manager Web Services, Assante Canada

(est. attendance 24)

Richard gave us a presentation on latest trends in using Intranets for internal communications. This highly informative session also covered how to use research and Web tracking tools to continuously improve your Web sites.

March – Vera Houle, Director of News and Current Affairs, APTN

(est. attendance 49)

Speaking on the topic of communicating with Aboriginals in the 21st Century, Vera brought us her perspective as the head of the country's only television channel devoted to First Nations.

April – Bruce Leslie, VP of Community and Public Relations, CanWest Global

(est. attendance 30)

Bruce brought us his very interesting perspective of what it takes to run public relations for a company that has a global reach. He gave us many insights into how he uses media relations to spelling bees to communicate CanWest's core values and key messages to widely varied audiences.

Professional Development

Gail Granger and Jennifer Verch, Professional Development Co-Chairs

Secrets to Spectacular Speech Writing Workshop

A half-day workshop presented by the Canadian Public Relations Society, Manitoba Chapter was held on Thursday, October 27, 2005. From 8:30am until noon, 15 participants picked up tips from professional speechwriter Lee Crawford at the Fort Garry Hotel. Cost was \$70 for members and \$80 for non-members.

The workshop included:

- Find the right message and tone for your audience
- Channel the voice of your speaker as you write
- Bridge and transition through a long speech
- Use writing devices to engage and hold audience attention
- Avoid the most common pitfalls
- A practical exercise

All respondents said the content was useful and the instructor was excellent, according to a survey following the workshop. Participants found it inspiring (“a creative stimulant”) and “very high-level”. They said it could have been a full-day session and had several suggestions about other seminar topics, including social marketing, life’s balance, media relations (how to prepare your spokesperson for interviews), and “anything where a similar expert in his/her field can share knowledge and wisdom.”

Communications Report

Bonnie Gauthier and Carolyn Pierce, Communication Co-Chairs

CPRS Manitoba continues to communicate its initiatives to members and non-members through a variety of mediums. Notices of upcoming luncheons and events, job postings and new developments within the Society are e-mailed on a regular basis, and this year the Society has undertaken two very exciting projects. The first is the creation of a tri-yearly newsletter and the second is the re-design of the CPRS Manitoba Web site.

The launch of our newsletter in January was a tremendous success and the feedback we received from that issue and the latter in April was very positive. Comments ranged from the newsletter’s clean design to the strength of its content. Our April newsletter also announced the winning entry for our “Name the Newsletter Contest.” Over thirty names were suggested, with the chosen name being, “Insight.” Each edition of *Insight* will include industry trends in Winnipeg, membership updates, luncheon reviews and much more. The next newsletter is scheduled for distribution in the fall.

The re-design of our Web site is progressing very well and the expected launch of the new site will take place this fall. The site is being designed by Relish Design and will be user-friendly and content driven. It will feature information about CPRS Manitoba, professional development, as well as a section intended for members.

Membership Report

Everett Martin, Membership Chair

Full members

At the beginning of August 2005, CPRS Manitoba was comprised of 46 members, and had lost 10 members during the previous year, while adding only two.

I am pleased to report that things are looking up since then. Between August 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006, CPRS Manitoba has grown from 46 to 55 members. That's an average of one new CPRS member per month over that period, a rate of growth that I intend to maintain or exceed as I enter my second year as membership director. Ideally, I would like to have CPRS Manitoba strongly represented by 70 full members by March 31, 2007, which will represent a 50% increase in membership over 2 years, assuming all current members renew on a yearly basis. For the coming year, only one member has indicated that she will not be renewing going forward.

In an effort to welcome and get to know our new members, their profiles and pictures are now a regular feature in the CPRS Manitoba newsletter, Insight. Not only is this feature interesting and informational for all members, but doing it allows the membership director the opportunity to "break the ice" with people who speak primarily with national head office in their early CPRS dealings.

Increased access to benefits for CPRS members began to play a stronger role this year. The member area of our website, CPRS.MB.CA, was expanded to include offerings like job postings, member lists, and recaps of past luncheons. This was done on a limited scale, as a much more robust and user-friendly version will be launched as part of the upcoming overhaul and redesign of our entire site for Fall 2006.

Student members

CPRS Manitoba added six new student members in 2005-2006. This number is relatively low compared to some previous years. However, it is indicative of our shift from recruiting individual student members to offering benefits to all students, with the realization that they will be the future of the PR industry in Manitoba.

As the first major initiative, the Board created two new student director positions, which were held by Rhiannon Leier and Rob Wozny. They represented Red River College and the University of Winnipeg, respectively, and sat as voting members on the Board. It was through their involvement that a number of new endeavors were made possible, such as increased scholarship amounts for both schools, and a student meet-and-greet at the new Red River campus in the Exchange District.

For the 2006-2007 year, all students at the University of Winnipeg's Continuing Education PR Diploma Program will be receiving a CPRS student membership as part of their enrollment. A similar arrangement is anticipated in the near future with Red River College.

Conclusion

It is my pleasure to get to know the members of CPRS Manitoba, and to serve as your Membership Director. I look forward to another year of growth and innovation, and you will no doubt see that there has never been a better time to be a CPRS member. With this in mind, I hope that you encourage your colleagues and co-workers to join you, and us, in 2006-07.

Accreditation Report
Carolyn Rickey APR, Accreditation Chair

Two members of the Manitoba Chapter of CPRS achieved their accreditation in 2005. They were Warren Preece who works at the Workers Compensation Board and Brenda Bazelewski who works at the Manitoba Egg Marketing Board. Our chapter had not sent anyone for accreditation for the past couple of years, and so it was a pleasure to have two accredit this year. As it stands, there will not be anyone going for accreditation in 2006.

I have resigned from the position of Accreditation Chair on the Board of Directors, as I have taken over the job of Regional Examiner for Accreditation for the Prairie Region from Robin Alford. Robin had been Regional Examiner for three years, but a change in his job status had made him unable to continue his duties at this time. Robin did an outstanding job as Regional Examiner and should be commended by our Chapter for a job well-done.

Red River Student Representative Report
Rhiannon Leier, RRC Student CPRS Board Representative

2005 marked the first year a student representative from Red River College was invited to sit on the CPRS Manitoba board and I was honoured when I was selected as the student to fill that role. I felt my addition to the board helped strengthen the connection between Red River College's Creative Communications Program and CPRS Manitoba.

During my eight-month term I had the opportunity to voice a few concerns on behalf of my classmates. Some of the issues included analyzing student membership benefits, shifting some of the CPRS events to the evenings so that more students could attend and more promotion of CPRS Manitoba to students. I also helped facilitate a tour of Red River's Princess Campus for CPRS board members where they had the opportunity to explore the facilities and meet with future public relations students.

Being a student member of CPRS Manitoba is a great opportunity for students to network with public relations practitioners and hopefully the 2006/2007-year will facilitate more student connections and opportunities.

**University of Winnipeg Public Relations Diploma/Management Certificate Program
Representative Report
Rob Wozny, U of W Student CPRS Board Representative**

The University of Winnipeg's fledging Public Relations Diploma and Management Certificate entered its third year with an endorsement of support from CPRS Manitoba. CPRS President Elect, Adam Dooley, solicited applications for a student director at the beginning of the 2005/2006 school year. After reviewing a number of qualified candidates, the board voted to select Rob Wozny as the first ever student director from the University of Winnipeg.

Rob Wozny along with CPRS President, Charllene Pedersen and Adam Dooley worked together to create a workshop for the students. "Successful Strategies" featured Charllene Pedersen (The Winnipeg Human Society) and Michelle Bailey from Manitoba Telephone System. The two communications professionals generously shared their experience and objectives for their respective campaigns with the students.

The upcoming year promises to be a groundbreaking year for CPRS and the University of Winnipeg's Public Relations Diploma/Management Certificate Program. The university has committed to purchasing CPRS memberships for all its full-time students in the 2006/2007 intake, further establishing the relationship between the university and CPRS.