

newperspective

In this issue

President's Message • Torchia Scholarship Now Receiving Applicants • A Profile on AVW-TELAV • How Well do You Manage Your Online Identity? • A 180-Degree Career Turn • The Online Newsroom • Brown Bag PD Event Nets Expert Insights • Advice For Anyone Who Wants to Start a Blog • Award-winning Communications Campaign Prevails Over Peanuts Crisis

Leadership is Communications

By Ani Chakmakian



CPRS Toronto President, Martin Waxman, APR, with CPRS Toronto 2011 CEO of the Year award winner, Jim Leech, president and chief executive officer of Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.



CPRS Toronto presented its 18th annual CEO of the Year Award to Jim Leech, president and chief executive officer of Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. During his distinguished career, Mr. Leech became known for his expertise in the private equity industry and developed a solid reputation for building strong businesses and an exceptional investment track record. Under his leadership, the pension plan's private capital department became one of the world's leading investors.

He credits much of his success to the importance he's placed on communications over the years, demonstrating why he's this year's award recipient.

"Communications has always been one of my top priorities, especially as a people manager, regardless of my level within an organization," Mr. Leech reflects.

"The way I look at it: overlook communications at your peril. You can't keep your finger on the pulse of the organization from afar. You can't assume you know what people are thinking, saying or feeling. You have to ask them, listen to them, work alongside them."

Mr. Leech recognizes that leadership in communications is more than saying the right thing at the right time.

"It's also important to lend the necessary executive support to your organization to ensure that everyone can do the same," he continues.

And when it comes to reaching out to external stakeholders, Teachers' philosophy is to maintain a commitment to open and honest communications.

"I want every one of our stakeholders to know that we are not an anonymous monolith, but a living, breathing

group of professionals who strive to be best in the world at what we do on members' behalf," Mr. Leech notes.

As its president and CEO, Mr. Leech has effectively refined and communicated Teacher's strategies and vision with an enviable breadth and depth of sustained strategic communications programs.

Teacher's is example of how top companies manage their reputations systematically and with deliberate care through building positive relationships with stakeholders over time through proactive and sustained strategic communications programs. In this way, success is translated into business terms, as we've seen with this year's awards recipient.

Ani Chakmakian, Senior Communications Advisor, Communications Branch, Ministry of the Attorney General.

ACE... And All That Jazz!



Nineteen years ago, the Achieving Communications Excellence (ACE) Awards were established by the CPRS Toronto Society to salute outstanding public relations

campaigns and the contributions of exceptional public relations professionals. "The ACE Awards continues to be one of the year's most anticipated industry affairs run entirely by a dedicated committee of volunteers who help to organize, judge and host the gala," explains Chantelle Bernard, ACE Awards Chair for the CPRS Toronto Chapter. "This year, the gala returns to the Acadian Court to honour our 2011 winners and offer public relations professionals an opportunity to network with some of the best in the business."

"Entries for the ACE awards have increased more than 70 per cent in the past two years,"

The growing popularity of the ACE awards is reflective of the significant increase in submissions. "Entries for the ACE awards have increased more than 70 per cent in the past two years," said Heather Agnew, ACE Awards Co-chair. "This demonstrates the value Toronto practitioners are placing on the ACE Awards. We're looking forward to seeing the best PR campaigns practitioners in Toronto have to offer."

...continued on page 6

President's Message:

Public Relations in Transition

By Martin Waxman, APR



I'm not going to say goodbye – at least not yet. However, I am, as I am sure many of you know, heading into the final months of my term

as president. These days, I measure it by ebcasts and right now I have about three left...

Much has happened in the nearly two years I have been serving CPRS Toronto. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone and say how much I've enjoyed meeting and hearing from you – and learning!

When I became president in May 2009, the economy and our industry were slowly starting to rebound from what we now call the Great Recession. No one can say it wasn't a challenging time, however among the positive outcomes are the fundamental changes we've experienced in our profession.

Gone are the days when media relations – or should I say publicity, for those of you who read my blog – reigned supreme. We have, as an industry, begun to understand and embrace social media. Of course, some grudgingly accepted it. But all of us know what a game changer it is and many of us are integrating it into our communications programs.

I am an optimist and I hope that we've come to see social media as a relationship-builder it is.

It enables us to return to basics in the best possible way. And we can rid ourselves of needless jargon, superfluous news releases, and an overabundance of communications that we used to distribute just because we could.

We've learned to think more strategically and analytically. Tell better stories. Understand that not everyone wants to hear from us. Tailor our news to the people who do.

CPRS Toronto is in transition too. Over the next couple of years, we have an opportunity to redefine the organization in such a way that it engages young, middle and senior practitioners with ideas, knowledge and friendship. I guess that's a challenge for the new president and board.

I hope you'll enjoy the latest edition of our newsletter. We're profiling AVW-TELAV, one of our sponsors, presenting highlights from our recent CEO Award lunch and offering a perspective on the key elements of an online newsroom.

Thanks again to the volunteer newsletter team for all their efforts. And, as always, thanks to Lois Marsh and the rest of the CPRS Toronto board.

I hope to see all of you at the ACE Awards; to reconnect and celebrate our milestones together.



Torchia Scholarship Now Receiving Applicants

The Torchia Scholarship, honouring a student who has chosen to study public relations/communications in one of Canada's two official languages that is not his/her first language or mother tongue, is now accepting applications. The student must be entering his/her second year of undergraduate study in public relations/communications at a Canadian university or college, in either a degree program or a multiyear diploma or certificate program that meets recognized standards of education. The scholarship is valued at \$1,500 and is for one year only.

Send applications to the Communications and Public Relations Foundation, Suite 1515, 73 Widdicombe Hill Blvd, Toronto, Ontario, M9R 4B3. A jury chair and three bilingual public relations professionals and/or educators will review submissions and determine a successful candidate. The jury may require a telephone interview in either English or French. Deadline for applications is April 30, 2011.

For more information please contact: foundation@prmediaconnection.com

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A Profile on AVW-TELAV

By Maryjane Martin, APR



AVW-TELAV technicians keep abreast of the latest in presentation technology



Today, there are more ways to communicate than ever before. That's why, when planning an event, you need an audiovisual partner who understands the changing technology and how to make the most of it.

CPRS Toronto gold sponsor, AVW-TELAV, is recognized as an innovator of audiovisual technology and a leader in the meetings and events industry. This September, the company launched its newest audiovisual solution offering, *ImaginAction™*, which debuted to rave reviews at the Canadian Society of Association Executives' (CSAE) annual meeting in Quebec City.

"*ImaginAction* is the latest in multi-media technology that combines multiple projectors and other display devices with standard computer and network technology to give presentations maximum impact and dimension," explained Heidi Welker, VP Marketing, AVW-TELAV. "While a wide, multi-screen display fills much of the audience's peripheral vision and immerses the viewers in the presentation, rich, extreme-resolution images add to the impact of the presentation and create a sense of interactivity. In fact, *ImaginAction* can literally take audiences anywhere in the world—or beyond—by creating a dynamic 'virtual set' for presentations of any size, any shape or form," said Welker.

"As a strategic partner, AVW-TELAV works with public relations practitioners to provide key messaging platforms to reach their audiences," said Mark Hartshorn, Account Executive, AVW-TELAV Toronto. "We can suggest solutions to help transform a meeting room to suit the theme of your event."

Hartshorn explains with an example. "We know that by using two key ingredients, you can create almost any theme, in almost any ballroom," he said. "Colour and texture are the two key elements of control. For example, if we light a room with fall colours, and use gobos of branches and leaves in a colour representing sunlight, we can create the illusion of a nice fall morning, under the shade of trees filled with changing leaves."

AVW-TELAV provides a complete range of audio visual and presentation technology services throughout North America. These services include audio visual and computer equipment rental, event staging, simultaneous interpretation, digital services including presentation management, audience response, video capture and webcasting, multi-microphone discussion systems, exhibit and tradeshow solutions, press conferences and technical coordination for meetings, conventions, corporate events and trade shows. The company can also design and install permanent audio, visual, and videoconferencing equipment for your location.



Heidi Welker,
VP Marketing,
AVW-TELAV

For more than 50 years, AVW-TELAV has built a reputation on integrity and professionalism. Last year, the company was awarded InfoComm International's (the global trade association of the professional audio, visual and information communications industries) Green AV award for implementing environmentally sustainable business practices, and was also the only Canadian company to qualify for Systems Contractor News' (SCN) industry-recognized-and-anticipated Top 50 Integrators 2010 list.

For more information on how AVW-TELAV can help you engage your audiences and give your presentations maximum impact and dimension, visit its website at www.avwtelav.com.

Maryjane Martin, APR, is Principal at MJ Martin and Company. Contact her at mj@mjmartinandco.com.

How Well do You Manage Your Online Identity?

By Joanna Nicholson



Social media has changed the world of communications. Most of us are swimming in a sea of Tweets, Diggs, Podcasts and wall posts (plus thousands of others, many of which we haven't heard of yet). It's clear that social media helps organizations create a cohesive brand, easily generate an online presence, deliver messages efficiently and allow for dialogue with almost any desired audience. But there are challenges. For instance, how do you successfully manage an online identity? Like any identity, it needs to be monitored and protected. Here are some tips to help you cultivate your personal and professional identities and secure your reputation.

Get Online

Consider your professional and personal online presence as a resume. Be careful what information you share—and remember that anyone can access it. Buying a dot-com domain name can help you centralize yourself or your brand. Services such as Go Daddy offer the option to easily purchase web domains for a low cost and offer templates to help you start building your brand with little technical knowledge.

Gain Online Visibility

Social media tools are one of the most effective ways to gain online visibility—and they're cost-efficient too. Danielle Kelly, APR, has found social media tools useful when it comes to establishing her personal brand. "Establishing and maintaining an online brand is critical for today's communicators as more companies are considering experience with social media to be a requirement, rather than an asset," she said. "I increased my use of social media to enhance my personal reputation for my job search. By expanding my LinkedIn profile and connections, regularly Tweeting and following other PR professionals and commenting on news articles and blogs, I've established myself as a person of credibility and interest."

It's a good idea to create an account in at least one of every major category—such as Twitter for microblogging, YouTube for videos, Delicious for links and LinkedIn for a profile. It's an easy, effective way to gain presence and establish your brands. When contemplating an account name, KnowEm is a helpful resource. It allows you to check for the use of your brand, product, personal name or username in a large database of emerging social media websites.

Funneling these services through a life-streaming tool, such as FriendFeed, allows you to use each of your social media personas in one convenient place. These tools are also useful for participating in discussions that are relevant to your brand and marketplace. For example, if you work in communications, follow the industry bigwigs on Twitter and tap into conversations with them (#PR20 is an excellent one to follow on Twitter).

...continued on page 5

A 180-Degree Career Turn

By Christian Hasse



Have you ever asked yourself, "Is this really the career for me?" If you have, you are not alone.

People from all walks of life are asking themselves the same question everyday regardless of their age, seniority level or profession.

Sure, making a career transition at any stage in life can be a daunting task. It means: letting go of the past, the "neutral zone" where the past is gone but the new isn't fully present, and making the new beginning.

Introspective questions arise: "Can I really do it? What will my peers, family, friends think of me for leaving a secure position to pursue my passion? What do I need to do to make the change? Where and how do I begin the process?"

But, as an example of how commonplace transition is these days, William Bridges, the internationally-known expert on business and change, has suggested that in the future our "careers" will really be a series of ongoing projects.

Sound confusing? It's not supposed to. There is no one formula anymore. This can be incredibly liberating. My advice to anyone considering a career change is first, know what you're passionate about, take inventory of your skills, align them with your values, and begin the process of designing your life – free from the constraints of the opinions of others, no matter how well meaning they may be. Remember, this is your life, your career, and your journey. Don't let others deter you from following your ultimate dream.

If you, or someone you know, are thinking of a Career-180 degree turn, keep the following in mind:

Prepare now

In addition to long-term savings, plan now to build a cash reserve equal to about six months' salary. This will take some sacrifice but will give you more options.

Network with people within your newly targeted area of interest. Who you know is just as important as what you know.

Broadly define yourself

If you work in PR, your new career may use old skills in a new way. Do you do something as a hobby that could become a job?

Add training

Your savings may allow you to go back to school with only a part-time job. Don't be afraid of the temporary struggle. "Short-term pain for long-term gain," is the mantra that bears repeating. A fulfilling new career is worth the sacrifice. It's wise to check with the school's counseling center, or by doing your own independent research, to ensure your field has job growth potential.

Market yourself

Be confident and be creative. What do you have that others need? How could you make an already successful business more successful? Is there a market need that no one is addressing? Your training and enthusiasm can convince a smart investor to give you a chance.

Modify expectations

Be willing to modify your expectations as you begin a new career. Things need not turn out exactly as planned to be successful. Give your new job a chance. Put up with the things you do not like in order to enjoy those you do, and be hopeful; many are finding new midlife careers the most fulfilling yet.

Remember, there may be some bumps along the way but in the end, if you decide to pursue your ideal role, the journey will have been well worth the ride.

Christian Hasse is the Principal at Competitive Edge Consulting – www.ceconsulting.ca He made the successful transition from a 12-year PR practitioner to owning a Career Coach/Counselor and Outplacement agency. He is also an industry guest speaker at various educational institutions and CPRS events.

The Online Newsroom

By Maryjane Martin, APR



The importance of your online newsroom cannot be underestimated – it is a journalist's main source of credible, timely information about your organization. According to one survey, by TEKgroup International, Inc., 90 percent of journalists visit an online newsroom for breaking news during a crisis. An online newsroom also creates more traffic to your overall website (key to increasing search engine optimization (SEO)). So what do journalists expect?

Easy navigation – make it easy for journalists to find the newsroom. If possible, put it on the main navigation bar. Also, include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section to help journalists quickly find the information they need about your organization.

Background information – including facts about your organization, its history and timeline. Link financial information from investor relations to your newsroom.

Contact information – more journalists are requesting cell phone numbers for media relations contacts. Also, they want access to you – or someone from your team – 24/7.

News releases and events calendar – journalists want news releases organized by type of news. They also want details about your organization's upcoming events.

Searchable news release archives – the ability to search for content is the top feature of online newsrooms. Journalists want to explore archives, but they want more than a keyword search function. They want more targeted parameters such as date range, topic and language.

News coverage – if possible, include access to past editorial coverage. What have other news outlets written about your organization?

Downloadable images from stories, logos – ensure your photographs and images are high-resolution. Provide a searchable gallery with most recent photographs first.

Video and audio – in formats that journalists can use.

Executive biographies – nearly 90 percent of journalists surveyed in the TEKgroup survey said that executive biographies were important.

Social media – how can they sign up for your Twitter feed, visit your Facebook page, read your corporate blog?

Maryjane Martin, APR, is Principal at MJ Martin and Company. Contact her at mj@mjmartinandco.com.

How Well do You Manage Your Online Identity?

...continued from page 1

Protect Your Image

While social media can greatly assist in projecting your image to the world, it needs to be managed accordingly. "In any of my communication online or offline, I ensure that I abide by the CPRS Code of Professional Standards," Kelly said.

An easy way to protect your image is to use tools like Google Alerts. Google can crawl the Web and inform you how your online identities are being discussed, within minutes of the discussion. This is a great way to help mitigate negative media and react quickly to the discussion. Even better, positive news can be leveraged quickly.

It's also important to review the privacy policies of sites such as Facebook. Once you click "upload" most information you share becomes the property of the site. It's always good to know who holds the copyright.

As communication professionals, social media has given us some amazing tools to reach audiences in new and exciting ways. It has also given us a new list of responsibilities and methods to ensure identities remain protected and, most importantly, so you keep control of your message.



Joanna Nicholson currently works in communications at Industry Canada. She can be reached at: Joanna.nicholson@gmail.com

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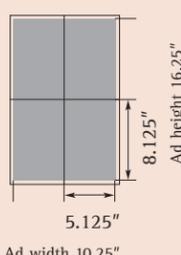
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Brown Bag PD Event Nets Expert Insights

By Christine Smith



Twelve CPRS Toronto members spent their lunch hours on December 16 in a novel way. From the comfort of their own offices, they participated in a

“brown bag” PD event via a teleconference that explored how social media strategies can enhance traditional media relations.

Ablly moderated by member Natalie Bovair, APR, the event featured speakers Stephanie Fitch of Fleishman-Hillard and Ernie de Wal, business development and sales at Cision Canada. At the end of the hour-long event participants learned it pays to include social media tactics. In fact, according to the featured presenter, it’s a rare organization that doesn’t include some social media tactics as part of its media outreach.

“In this day and age, it’s becoming more and more important to have visibility online. It’s almost an oddity to be a large company without an online presence,” said Fitch. She described how she incorporated these tactics during an awareness campaign about Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) for the Lung Association. “We created a Social Media Release (SMR)

that functioned both in the online space and the traditional media relations space.”

Throughout this campaign, and another that focused on Crohn’s and Colitis, Fitch still paid attention to the planning principles of effective media relations:

- working closely with her client;
- determining the core messages;
- deciding how the audience is to receive the messages;
- determining what behaviors/attitudes the PR tactics aim to change.

Communications Environment Changing

Increasingly, as PR practitioners plan their campaigns, they must consider the changing nature of the communications environment. de Wal pointed out that, with traditional media sources diminishing and web-based publications increasing, media strategies have to change. “New communications sources are being generated by way of bloggers. They’re not traditional media, as professional writers or journalists. But, in some cases they’re actually more knowledgeable than some journalists.”

For the Crohn’s and Colitis campaign, Fitch worked with Rob Hill, a Crohn’s sufferer who raises awareness by climbing mountains. He’s actually set his sights on climbing the seven highest peaks on seven continents. In addition, he has a strong online presence and actively tweets, blogs and posts videos of his exploits. “It was a natural decision for us to include Rob as part of our SMR.” Because he visits children’s camps to talk about living with his condition, we decided to target adventure and outdoor bloggers – people who are well versed in the area of mountaineering. “It made sense to introduce them to Rob to tell our story.”

According to Fitch, a standard SMR might include a news release, one or two videos, one or two photographs, a couple of audio clips and supplemental web links. Depending on whether they need to be created or already exist, basic SMR costs can range from \$800 to \$2,000, depending upon the broadcast method.

As with any news release, targeting is essential. Creating a database of the “right people to reach out to” is critical, says de Wal. “You need to look at who your influencers are in the online media space. This is not a case of how

many followers they have; it’s a case of how often they blog. The online marketing tools that are valuable these days are the ones where you can get insight into the ‘currency of the content’ and the true status of the online influencer.”

Fitch concurred and stressed that when it comes to online influencers, PR practitioners can’t use the “throw the mud on the wall and see if it sticks” approach. “There are millions and millions of people online who are talking and not talking. Always know your audience. Go online first and do your research.”

“The changing nature of the environment means media relations are a bit more exciting these days,” says Fitch. Flexible blogger deadlines, reporters sharing beats, and different ways of measuring results contribute to the excitement. “I would say we’re learning all the time. Every situation is different. So, just knowing your audience, knowing the landscape and what you’re trying to achieve is important. The more targeted you are, the more successful you’ll be, especially in the online space.”

Christine Smith, principal, Christine Smith Communications. Contact her at: ChristineSmith@bell.net.

Advice For Anyone Who Wants to Start a Blog

By Parker Mason, Manager, Community Cultivation, Radar DDB



Recently, a friend of mine, currently in PR school, asked for advice about what to do for the blog she was obligated to write for one of her classes.

My recommendation? Avoid starting a blog altogether. Instead, I told her she should start a Facebook page. Right from the start, she can populate this Facebook page with information about herself (or her project) and what the page is about.

Since I’m pretty sure students in these PR classes are encouraged to read each others’ blogs, she can then ask her fellow students to ‘Like’ the page (a much easier task than subscribing via RSS).

Instead of daily blog posts, she can write daily status updates for the page. Facebook’s newish tagging ability makes it easier to link to other pages, and isn’t really that different than the traditional HTML links you’d include in a blog post. These tags have the added ability of ensuring your post is visible on the page that you tagged, potentially increasing your audience. Interactions on these pages (Likes, Comments, etc.) will be spread across her social network, encouraging further interaction and becoming much more visible than if these same interactions were made on a blog.

If she does all this, she’ll have the framework for a ‘blog’ that has the potential to be more popular than



any of her classmates. She’ll also learn a lot about an increasingly relevant tool in the communicators’ kit.

She’ll still have to ensure her posts are interesting, resonate with her audience and encourage interaction. A supporting website with basic contact information and direction to ‘Like’ the Facebook page couldn’t hurt, either.

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Award-winning Communications Campaign Prevails Over Peanuts Crisis

By Kathleen Garrett, APR



How do you maintain a client's reputation in the face of the largest food recall in North American history, highly confused consumers and heavily unbalanced media coverage? On Wednesday, December 15, 2010, more than 40 PR practitioners and students listened with rapt attention as Daniel Tisch, APR, FCPRS, answered this question at a CPRS Toronto professional development event on crisis communications and issues management.

The presentation was based on the campaign that won the 2010 CPRS ACE Best Campaign of the Year award. It highlighted the successful crisis communications campaign Argyle Communications implemented on behalf of the American Peanut Council (APC) after an outbreak of salmonella in a small brand of peanut butter in January 2009 caused an unprecedented national recall and was linked to nine deaths and almost 700 illnesses. APC is the trade association representing all segments of the US peanut industry.

The campaign was driven by a variety of strategies, from internal communications capacity-building to engaging food safety experts and establishing a unique and ubiquitous online presence. Part of that online presence included an innovative tactic to launch a list of products that were unaffected by the recall, after the FDA predictably launched a list of products that were affected. This gave consumers a simple, straightforward way to find out whether their favourite products were safe.

"This was one of the first major crises of the social network era," Dan said. "Thanks to the Internet, the news cycle



Guest speaker, Daniel Tisch, APR, FCPRS, President of Argyle Communications, and Chair-elect of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communications Management.

has never been shorter, but the legacy of news has never been longer. That's why PR professionals need to be sophisticated listeners who can move quickly to use what we learn to choose the right channels and messages for each audience."

A major strategy that set the campaign apart, and set it up for such success, was engaging industry players in a session to develop a post-crisis recovery strategy at their annual general meeting. Dan counts the success of this meeting as a source of particular pride for the Argyle team, because its results benefited both the industry and the consumer.

"Building consensus for a post-crisis recovery strategy was a huge challenge, given the diverse roles and perspectives represented within the peanut industry, from growers to shellers to manufacturers," Dan explained. "But good crisis management often means enunciating a case for change. If change is going to come, try to lead it."

By all measures, the campaign was a success. Within three months of the crisis, 60 per cent of Americans had resumed purchasing peanut products and peanut butter sales reached a new all-time high by year-end. The post-crisis strategy session produced sky-high member satisfaction ratings and, more important, an industry-wide consensus to review agricultural and manufacturing processes, enhance FDA collaboration and improve training and education.

Encompassing all the basic tenets of a successful crisis communication campaign, with a particular emphasis on learning from the crisis and facilitating positive change, there are definitely some lessons to be learned and some ideas to be inspired by in this campaign. More information about this and other crisis communications and issues management case studies is available in the CPRS National Resource Library.

Kathleen Garrett currently works in communications at the Education Quality and Accountability Office. She can be reached at kathleen.m.garrett@gmail.com.

ACE... And All That Jazz!

...continued from page 1

This year's judging co-chairs are Leslie Wood and Lawrence Stevenson, APR. In January, the ACE Committee hosted a webinar with the help of Humber student, Kelsey Ingram, to provide tips on how to create a stellar submission. Leslie and Lawrence are in the process of assisting 23 volunteer judges – senior practitioners from a variety of fields – in choosing the winning campaigns.

While the submission deadline for campaigns has passed, there is still time to nominate a colleague who has made outstanding inroads as a leader within the PR industry for one of the following Leadership Awards:

Public Relations Student of the Year:

Awarded to a student member of CPRS Toronto that has a solid academic record and encourages future talent in the industry.

Young PR Professional of the Year:

Awarded to a professional who has been in the PR industry for less than three years and has made significant achievements.

Public Relations Professional of The Year:

Recognizes an individual PR practitioner with significant accomplishments throughout the year.

Mentor of the Year Award:

Awarded to an public relations professional who volunteered to mentor students and young professionals, guiding newcomers in the field.

Volunteer of the Year:

Recognizes a member volunteer who has given their time to serve on various PR committees.

Awards nominations are due March 11th. Visit CPRSToronto.com to enter or for more details.

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Maryjane Martin, APR, Editor

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