



## Dear Southwest Florida chapter members,

I am SO excited about March! It's our very own version of "March Madness," and tell me you don't feel like you could use a little [Harlem Globetrotter](#) acrobatic skill during this point in our season. Another thrill this month is that this our new Newsletter Chair Diana Rodrigues's first issue of imPRESS. What a fabulous job! Check out the stories below and click through to add your thoughts to the mix by leaving a comment on our blog. Each story has it's own page and fray, and we'd love to hear you weigh in on the many topics we cover this month.

Building bridges to you,  
Kathleen

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### **March Program: Building Bridges for Mutual Benefit**



Guest speaker Jack Levine will address the most critical challenges facing Florida as seen through the lens of the four major age groups and will offer public relations strategies to help meet those challenges at the March FPRA meeting on Monday, March 8, 2010, at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre's Cafe Cabaret. Networking and buffet lunch begins at 11:15 a.m. [Reserve your seat](#) on our Web site now.

Jack Levine is a communications and public policy consultant and founder of 4Generations Institute whose expertise is in developing and delivering messages to the media, public officials and a diverse network of advocates. He helped found Voices for America's Children, a national advocacy network, and served for 25 years as the president of Voices for Florida's Children. His 4Generations Institute promotes intergenerational conversation, a commitment to volunteerism and provides counsel for public policy and private sector initiatives for improving family and community life. For more information, visit [www.4Gen.org](http://www.4Gen.org).

[Continue to article and get in on the conversation](#)

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## **February Program: Building Bridges between You and Your Boss or Client**



Photo: **Wendy Iverson, Jessica Clark, Rochelle Cherniawski, Kathleen Taylor, Art Stevens**

PR "storyteller" Art Stevens, APR, Fellow, PRSA added a new perspective to the employee/boss and service provider/client relationship at February's [FPRA Southwest Florida](#) chapter meeting held at the Broadway Palm in Fort Myers. His reference to

building bridges is more than figurative. In his own career, the act of building a bridge literally built a bridge between him and his boss, skyrocketing his career at a young age.

Stevens has had a very successful career spanning over four decades in public relations, which he says came about, "by accident." After majoring in English at City College of New York envisioning a career as a top-notch editor, his actual meager beginnings as an assistant textbook editor grew through building some very important bridges. After helping his friend write a successful job application dubbed "Ode to Personnel" for Prentice Hall, he was returned the favor when his friend helped him get a position as assistant to the Director of Public Relations.

The CEO of Prentice Hall at the time was John Powers, who had developed a great interest in Japanese art and culture. Powers was creating a beautiful park near the Prentice Hall offices in New Jersey, which was to include an authentic Japanese Benkei-bashi bridge. The construction of the bridge was a major project. The young PR assistant Stevens suggested a dedication ceremony and was given the go-ahead. He took the lead role on the project, contacting dignitaries and making plans for the event. One day when the CEO, John Powers was asking for a special update on the event, Stevens was called in to provide details. Powers took note of the talent and work done, and asked to be updated personally by Stevens throughout the planning and execution of the event. Following the successful bridge dedication, he summoned Stevens to his office.

Powers asked Stevens how he would handle the public relations efforts on behalf of Prentice Hall, if he were given the opportunity. Although weak-kneed and very nervous, Stevens responded quickly and adeptly with much of his response crafted from the Cutlip and Center textbook he had been studying. Powers must have liked what he heard, since his next act was to promote the 25-year old Stevens to Director of Public Relations and to reassign his (former) boss to another position in the company. It was the beginning of an exciting career in public relations, which still continues today.

Stevens boils down his experiences in building bridges with bosses or clients into six lifelong lessons:

1. Know thy boss or client. Be aware of their career path and interests.

2. Volunteer. Don't be passive in your job.
3. Anticipate. Be aggressive, intuitive and ahead of the curve.
4. Don't be afraid to speak your mind and tell it like it is. Be sure to know the whole picture and absorb all you can.
5. Always approach your boss or client with well-thought-out new ideas.
6. Always provide honest feedback on how things went – good or bad.

Thanks to Art Stevens for your enlightening discussion and also, thanks to [Shell Point Retirement Community](#) for sponsoring the luncheon meeting.

[Click here](#) for another interesting article about Art Stevens being honored by PRSA with the Patrick Jackson Award for Distinguished Service.

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### **President's Word:**

*By: Kathleen Taylor*



Have you reached the top in your career? What helps you get there? How does FPRA work for you and your goals?

Do you look for ways to make the most of your professional development opportunities? Are you reaching out and sharing your knowledge with others?

Are you seizing the moments and celebrating the times when all your hard work comes together? Are you content to just scrape by?

Have you heard of all the chances in March to take action in your career?

1. Have you heard of our next business meeting speaker, [Jack Levine](#), on effectively reaching four generations with your messages?
2. Do you have your Image Award entry or entries coming together by [March 11](#)?
3. Are you thinking of going to Annual Conference for all the great networking and workshops, but aren't sure if it [fits in your budget](#)?
4. Are you on board for giving back to our community at PR Pro Bono Day in the most professionally skilled way we can on [March 26](#)?

Is it possible that I wrote this entire President's Word in questions? Are they making you think about that ways, perhaps, that FPRA (on both the local and state level) challenges you and provides you with avenues and inroads that can distinguish you in your career?

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**FPRA T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE NOW!**



Special thanks to Lucy Costa of Promotional Incentives (pictured) for helping the [FPRA Southwest Florida Chapter](#) get its first official SWFL Chapter t-shirt! We have ordered and are offering a ladies cut casual modified scoop neck and a traditional style t-shirt. They will be \$12.50 each (sizes S-XL; XXL are \$2 additional) and are available for purchase at our next meeting on Monday, March 8th ([Register](#) and save your seat now!).

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### **Chapter Members: Create a SWFL FPRA account for access to exclusive benefits!**

Where can I find a current membership list? What in the world did I do with that last [imPress](#) email? How can I get my job posting out to experienced public relations professionals?

These are just a few questions that can be answered very simply – just visit the Chapter Web site at <http://www.fpraswfl.org/>! Great resources, such as a current membership list, archived issues of the newsletter, meeting presentations and minutes, job postings and more are all just a couple clicks away. You can also catch up on our chapter blog, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts just by clicking the icons at the bottom of the homepage!

To make sure you have access to all the Web site has to offer, visit <http://www.fpraswfl.org/>. Under the Members Access tab, navigate down to “Create Member Account,” and fill out the form. Here, you’ll create your own username and password and be on your way to making the most of your membership! When you submit your form, it will be reviewed and promptly approved for all current members. If you are not already a member, you can apply to [join our chapter](#) and begin receiving these exclusive benefits.

We are constantly working to improve our presence on the Web, so if you have any questions or comments regarding the site, please contact Web site Chair Erin Comerford at [ecomerford \(at\) flylcpa \(dot\) com](mailto:ecomerford@flylcpa.com).

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### **Image: Important Dates & Information**



**Entry Deadline:** Thursday, March 11 at 5 p.m.

Entries can be dropped off at the Monday, March 8 FPRA Business Meeting or be mailed or dropped off anytime at Southwest Florida International Airport (3rd Floor, Attn: Public Relations) by March 11 at 5 p.m.

Image Judging for Central West Coast Chapter entries: Tuesday, March 23  
Thanks to all of our chapter volunteers for judging!

**Local Image Awards Banquet:** Wednesday, April 14  
Location TBA!

**Thanks to our Local Image Sponsors!**



We are still on the lookout for more sponsors and/or giveaways for the event!  
Please contact Erin Comerford at 590-4504 or [eecomerford @ flylcpa.com](mailto:eecomerford@flylcpa.com).

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### **SAVE THE DATE: 2nd Annual Pro Bono Day**

**What:** A community service provided by the Southwest Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association for those wanting to learn more about effective public relations practices.

**Where:** Lee County Elections Center, 13180 S. Cleveland Avenue, Fort Myers, FL 33907

**When:** March 26, 2010, 12:30pm – 4:30 p.m.

**How:** Register at <http://www.fpraswfl.org/>

**Cost:** FREE

## **Expert panel discussions and topics to include:**

### **Communication and Branding**

- Sponsorships and Media kits – Karen Ryan, APR, CPRC – LCEC
- Media Interviews/How to get your CEO camera-ready – Susan Bennett, APR, CPRC – Susan Bennett Marketing and Media, L.C.
- Customer Service and Surveys – Debbie Webb, APR – Hope Clubhouse
- Branding Self and Business – Christin Collins – Norman Love Confections

### **Media and Publications on a Small Budget**

- Elements of Effective Graphics – Scott Quorllo – Pearl Brand Communications
- Media Buying Basics – Wendy Payton-Enriquez – Pearl Brand Communications
- In-Kind Media Donations – Cindy Burgess – The News-Press
- How to Make Your Package Print and Production Ready – Josh Walker/Scott Cornish – Chico's

**Contacts:** Vicki Collins – 533-6335 or Joni Schopke – 533-6320

If you are wondering how you might be able to help with our PR Pro Bono day, we have just the ticket! Would you be willing to personally donate 5 hours of your time to a lucky organization to assist them with their PR needs? This could be a great way to expand your network and extend a helping hand to an group who could really use a person with your expertise. Please call Vicki Collins or Joni Schopke if you could share your time. Thanks!

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## **APR Candidates: Feel More Prepared**



Study sessions are beginning soon to help candidates prepare to sit for the APR exam.

Are you eligible? Do you know candidates who are?

Accreditation co-chairs Mary Briggs, APR, CPRC and Kara Winton, APR, CPRC, have scheduled two sessions to help APR candidates prepare for the Readiness Review: February 16 and March 2. Then, a planning session is scheduled for March 16 for candidates to learn more about the remaining part of the APR process and to give their input on the best meeting day/time for the study sessions, which will begin soon after.

Mark these dates on your calendar and let [Mary](#) or [Kara](#) know if you are interested! And if you are already accredited, please encourage a friend to start the process!

[You will be glad you did it: learn more about getting those credentials here.](#)

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## **Fresh take on Social Media: Watch your Mouth**

*By: Samantha Scott*

Earlier this month Tampa was the host for a social media conference called [Social Fresh](#) (see Twitter [@sofresh](#) for info on this and other events they are coordinating around the country).

The relatively young organization/event host gathered speakers from [GM](#), [InterContinental Hotel Group](#), [Brains on Fire](#) and more. These are some of the major engines running successful social media (from a marketing perspective) and they were all together for one enlightening event.

### **Overarching Theme**

It's about communication not advertising. Spike Jones of Brains on Fire put it brilliantly, "Advertising is the tax that you pay for being an unremarkable brand." This is not to say that advertising is bad or unnecessary. His point was, advertising had a job – to keep the company in front of it's consumers, but if the brand/company is interesting, engaging, dynamic and creates passion then buzz/viral will happen organically. Social media is about communication and Word of Mouth, or WOM. Bottom line - advertising is for awareness. WOM is for credibility.

Supporting information for the statement, average ROI for advertising is less than 4 percent. It's no wonder, because as Spike pointed out, if you talked to people in real life like you do in advertising, you'd get punched in the face.

### **The Facts**

90 percent of WOM is offline and 80 percent of Twitter accounts are inactive. This is crucial when considering how to leverage social media in communication efforts. We should already be thinking about our target audience and where they are online, but this adds a different dimension. Likewise, we have to remember social media will never replace face-to-face interactions.

### **Watch your Mouth**

Are you preaching and selling or are you talking and having a conversation? The difference could mean your success or failure. Spike explained our perception of the interaction as the first place to start.

So often the term campaign is used to describe an effort or plan we're enacting. Why? It's war vocabulary. No wonder people don't trust us. Spike recommends the term movement instead. Relate to fans, inspirations, kindred spirits, grassroots, passion, love, etc.

The content you're putting on these platforms becomes editorial. It's not advertising anymore. It has an expiration date. It will have high read-through's and clicks for a while, then it will drop off. You need to plan fresh material regularly, keeping in mind what readers/consumers want and need – not necessarily what you want to sell them.

### **The Buy In**

The core concept in using social media for business is relationships. We have to offer added value to our client's consumers. This could be special offers or just useful information. If they wanted to be sold to they'd watch commercials and study magazine ads. This requires a buy in on their part. For a movement to really take hold it has to engage the consumer and stir a passion within them. Passion drives action.

### **The Art and Science of Scaling Social Media**

Maggie Fox of the Social Media Group, a Canadian firm with international clients, hit the nail on the head. Social media is a science. You don't just throw it all out and see what happens.

Understanding this, we have to create a strategy. We have to remember that brands are now capable of being their own media. They have channels, communication tools at their disposal – i.e. Websites, blogs, Twitter accounts, etc. Sometimes hard to swallow, be sure to acknowledge your social media ecosystem, where everything about you is not necessarily created BY you.

### **Use What You Have**

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the time it takes to be active in social media. It's equally easy to forget to use what we have on hand. Cassandra Jeyaram, PhD, with InterContinental Hotel Group reminded the group that sometimes user-generated content is best – for more than one reason.

Using what you have, or what your fans, followers and consumers have not only engages them in your efforts, it also saves money. IHG's use of members' pictures increases revenue... They used pictures from IHG Confidential members in promotional material and on their site, leading to a 24 percent incremental lift in revenue for these promotions. Plus, they saved money by not having to hire photographers and set up shoots.

### **Factoids and a Reminder for Filing Away**

- "Above all, find a way to be RELEVANT to your consumer."
- Movement - All the rules of friendship should apply. You don't MAKE your friends do anything. They will tell you the truth.

Get involved in the conversation. [Click here!](#)

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**FPRA State Conference Scholarships Available**



By: Pamela Cox-Nulman

You don't want to miss The BIG Picture: Bringing PR Leadership and Strategy into Focus. August 8-11, Naples Grande Beach Resort

You have probably heard the saying Either Go Big or Stay home. Well this year we get to do both as members of the FPRA Southwest Florida Chapter with the 2010 FPRA [Annual State Conference](#) "The BIG Picture: Bringing PR Leadership and Strategy into Focus" being held August 8 – 11, right in our own backyard at the beautiful [Naples Grande Resort](#).

This year our Chapter is offering three full conference scholarships to members. The scholarship covers the registration fee for the entire conference and events, however, recipients are responsible for their own personal expenses such as hotel and transportation.

If you are interested in applying for a conference scholarship please submit a short essay (two or three paragraphs) covering the following:

- Involvement in FPRA (past and present)
- Financial Need for scholarship.

Applications should be emailed to [Pam Nulman](#), APR, CPRC, by March 26, 2010. Scholarship recipients will be announced at the Image Awards the evening of Wednesday, April 14.

Catch the latest information on "The BIG Picture" on the annual conference [Facebook fan page](#) and on the [FPRA You Tube](#) channel.

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**Member Spotlight: Kelly Ann Packard, Hillgate Communications**



Kelly Ann Packard is account manager at [Hillgate Communicatons](#), a full-service communications and marketing support agency located on Sanibel Island. Kelly graduated from the University of Florida with a master's degree in Mass Communication in May 2009.

In the last two years, Kelly completed several public relations-focused internships at Haven Hospice, Shands HealthCare, University of Florida Student Health Care Center and University of Florida Office of Technology Licensing.

[Kelly is an awesome new member! Click here to learn more about her.](#)

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### **CPRC Tip: 5 ways to craft a media release that's worth a million bucks**



*By Tina Haisman, APR, CPRC*

Media releases have gained tremendous strength in recent years as search engine optimization has gained steam. Now, just by writing a news release and posting it online, you can drive visitors to your website – IF you do it right!

I learned a lot by writing and distributing the Million Dollar Coupon media release last year, so I thought I'd share a few tidbits about writing SEO releases with you in this column.

1. Write a fantastic, newsworthy release that is rich with key words targeted to your audience. Keep it short – around 500 words.
2. If you can, give your release a unique URL on your website, using key words.
3. Write a short summary to go under your headline – just one or two sentences – using as many of your key words as possible.

4. Include web page links to other pages on your web site – keep it to a maximum of one link for each 100 words in your release.
5. Take advantage of multi-media – add a downloadable photo and/or a short video. This gives journalists all the tools they need to write a story.

Although you can pay hundreds of dollars to have your SEO release distributed, there are many free and inexpensive news release distribution services out there today. You have nothing to lose by trying it!

Local PR Pro Susan Bennett, APR, CPRC told me about <http://www.prlog.org/>, and a local colleague of mine, Tara Geissinger, co-founded <http://www.onlineprnews.com/>. Check them out to learn more about how SEO releases can work for you!

[This topic is bound to start a great conversation. Chime in when you click here!](#)

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### **Mark your Calendars! All upcoming chapter events in one list.**

**March 2nd:** Mary Briggs, APR, CPRC and Kara Winton, APR, CPRC, have scheduled a sessions to help APR candidates prepare for the Readiness Review. Let [Mary](#) or [Kara](#) know if you are interested!

**March 8th:** Monthly Business Meeting - "Building Bridges for Mutual Benefit" presented by Jack Levine, a communications and public policy consultant and founder of 4 Generations Institute. Mr. Levine was a featured speaker at the FPRA annual conference in 2009.

**March 11th:** Submit your local Image Award entries by 5 p.m. today.

**March 16th:** Planning session for candidates to learn more about the remaining part of the APR process and to give their input on the best meeting day/time for the study sessions, which will begin soon. Contact [Mary](#) or [Kara](#) for more information.

**March 23rd:** Judging takes place today for the local Image Awards.

**March 26th:** 2nd Annual Pro Bono Day from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Lee County Elections Center, 13180 S. Cleveland Avenue, Fort Myers, FL 33907. Especially useful for non-profits or small businesses who may or may not have a full time PR professional on staff. Chock-full of tips and advice! Register at <http://www.fpraswfl.org/>. Cost: FREE.

**April 14th:** Image Awards banquet. Location TBD.

**May 4th:** Monthly Business Meeting - "Bridging Politics and Public Relations: Trends & Strategies that Can Make or Break a Campaign" presented by Lee County Commissioner Tammy Hall and Lee County Supervisor of Elections Sharon Harrington.

**May 12th:** FRPA-AdFed Mixer event is in the works. More details to come.

**June 8th:** Monthly Business Meeting & Media Breakfast. Details coming soon.

**July 13th:** Monthly Business Meeting & FPRA Annual Meeting.

**July 14th:** FRPA Media Day - Open to the first 25 FPRA members to register (watch for details). This event will feature a full day of training and interaction with news executives from both The News-Press and NBC-2.

**August 3rd:** Monthly Business Meeting - "Bridging Yesterday with Today: Lessons Learned from a Rutbuster" presented by Myra Daniels, founder, chairman and CEO of the Philharmonic Center for the Arts and the Naples Museum of Art. Myra will also bring copies of her book for sale.

**August 8th – 11th:** FPRA's Annual Conference. The Association's Most Anticipated Professional Development Events of the Year. Held at the [Naples Grande](#), in Naples Florida. [Registration](#) Fee: \$595/pp

- For four days, FPRA members, as well as other PR professionals around the region, join together for one common goal — to enhance their career through professional development seminars led by nationally recognized speakers and networking opportunities.
- By offering experts on a variety of industry-related topics, FPRA's goal for Annual Conference is to present tools, tactics and strategies that its members can immediately apply and implement in their jobs.

**September 7th:** Monthly Business Meeting.

Register by visiting <http://www.fpra.org/>.

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*Next Membership Business Meeting will be at Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Cafe Caberet – Monday, March 8, 2010, approx. 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

*Next board meeting will be at the Elections Office across from the Bell Tower Shops in Fort Myers – Wednesday, March 17, 2010, 8:30 a.m.*

*Kathleen Taylor, APR*

President, Southwest Florida Chapter

Florida Public Relations Association

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