

minimized crisis. Servando Gonzalez, dpr of Aeromexico, tried to counter sensationalized news coverage with information about reliability of DC-10s and stricter maintenance procedures. His airline threatened a suit if the ban weren't lifted.

Alvaro Gil-Gomez, representing McDonnell Douglas, explained predicament his company faced. They couldn't quickly determine the cause of the accident; besides, authority to investigate belonged to the Federal Aviation Admin, a process which took 8 months. Congressmen and gov't officials with no authority or knowledge of aircraft got into the act. A thousand calls a day were received from all over the world. Special efforts -- which some found inadequate -- were made to communicate with their airline clients. Booklets, in Q&A format, were distributed to 18,000 travel agents throughout the world. One result has been that 33 new DC-10s have been sold, some to new airlines.

Two things to watch out for, said Gil-Gomez: It's difficult to communicate to the press on technical matters; designers and engineers can't express themselves well. And you're on your own -- a pr firm is not likely to be of immediate help. They don't have time to be effective in the short time required.

About 140 practitioners and students attended this ambitious seminar which was organized by Javier Lopez Velasquez, president of Cecorp, and Maria Clara Quintero, its vice president and director of communications & public relations.

LOCAL PUBLICISTS ARE MAJOR INGREDIENT IN CONVENTION NEWS COVERAGE

Local publicists play a crucial role in how much news potential an organization realizes when it holds a convention. Five months before the American Legion convened in Boston last August (see prr 8/25), Frank Doherty began advanced promotion, working closely with the national convention director. Because of his local base Doherty was able to make initial press contacts and invite appropriate news media from the Boston & New England area to a well-attended luncheon held a month before convention. Of the hundreds of calls received, he was able to handle most, relieving convention staff of this assignment. And although he publicized the phone number of the pr headquarters at the Hynes Auditorium prior to the convention, he still received telephone calls at home, sometimes as late as 11 p.m., from media people who wanted to be filled in on the next day's activities. Doherty, who describes himself as a specialist in publicity, promotions & public relations is a prototype of similar specialists in every convention city. A member of the Publicity Club of Boston, he has worked at his craft for 23 years, specializing in small service accounts to which he gives personal attention.

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

RETIRED. Sylvia Sullivan, dir comty rels (Dolton, Ill.) Oct 31 after 11 yrs providing comns between village officials & residents.

AWARDS. Florida Public Relations Ass'n gives President's Award of Honor to Charles Wellborn Jr. (Univ of Florida), Arnauld Fleming (died Aug), Nicholas Gornell (RCI, Inc.) & John Blatt (John Blatt PR & Adv); Outstanding Chapter

President of the Year award to Bob Gernert Jr. (Lakeland General Hosp); Golden Image Awards to Gulf Power (Pensacola), Florida Farm Bureau Federation (Gainesville), Tupperware Home Parties (Orlando), The Florida Bar (Tallahassee), plus multiple winners Sea World of Florida (Orlando) & Florida Phosphate (Gainesville).

PEOPLE. Signetics (Sunnyvale, Calif) names Hugh Morris dir corp comns.

WITH PUBLIC ORDER THREATENED BY DETERIORATING CONFIDENCE, POLICE TURN TO PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS & PROFESSIONALS; LOS ANGELES STARTS \$1 MILLION CAMPAIGN

Police departments are the latest sector of society to recognize the need for public relations. Beset by rioting in Miami and vicious killings of blacks in Atlanta & Buffalo, credibility of police officers is in jeopardy. Police use of violence is an issue that divides communities, often pitting poor & minority groups against their more well-to-do neighbors. "Excessive or deadly force is a community relations problem. As such, it demands a community relations answer," says U.S. Department of Justice official Gilbert Pompa. A big part of the problem is citizens' lack of information about police departments, noted a national consultation conference on the problem last December.

Some cities have established community relations departments in their police organizations. In Athens, Ga. or Boston for example, one sees cruisers labeled in large letters, "PUBLIC AFFAIRS." St. Louis PD has a musical group called "The Blue Pigs." Scottsdale, Arizona's municipal speakers bureau offers a presentation on "Police Work as a Profession." Entering Beckley, W. Va, visitors are greeted by a large sign on police headquarters, next to the public parking lot: "Welcome to Beckley. Police community relations unit."

Biggest program is undoubtedly LA's.

A 3-yr, \$1 million contract has been awarded to Elliott Curson Advertising. Partner Jeff Koopersmith (who was Reagan's nationwide media advisor) describes it in detail for prr readers: "Media coverage of LAPD in the last few years has been pretty one-sided. LA police started becoming labeled "killer cop," "trigger happy" -- which really isn't true. It resulted in some polarization in the community which the police officers themselves considered dangerous. They became demoralized. Certain politicians were using the police as scapegoats for every fiscal crisis they faced. It was a very gloomy time around late spring of this year. That's when we began discussions with them about what could be done. All our programs for them are based mainly in getting the police back in communication with the citizenry, identifying their support groups and working with those who are antagonized as a result of what we consider very slanted, non-objective coverage by the press. We handle the press for the Police Protective League and fund raising for them. We also did an hour long documentary film. It's

COPS BETTER OFF THAN SOME

"The police have a traveling blue billboard cruising up and down Main Street 24 hours a day. When the firemen go to answer a call, all the people think is 'there go those crazy guys driving that big red truck.' The public doesn't know what fire fighters do; our pr stinks."

-- Fire chief addressing
firemen's convention

in final production stage now. It was shot on location on the streets of LA for about 15 days. No acting. Basically what we wanted to do was bring the public into a police car and show them what really happens, not just the SWAT Team and the really exciting events. Just the normal. It previews January 3, in LA -- a benefit night for the police and their supporters. From there it will be shown in schools & community groups and in areas which we've identified as problematic for a rapprochement between police and John Q. Public."

VOLUNTEER ART WORK ON WALLS OF PUBLIC AREAS MEETS SEVERAL PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES

A colorful awareness device, particularly for new or revitalized facilities, has proven effective for Ramada

Inn OLD TOWN (Alexandria, Va.). Artists were invited to participate in a mural painting contest on the walls of the hotel's parking garage. Concrete surface was divided into panels from 8 to 30 feet wide and 9 feet high. \$1000 in prizes were awarded by qualified judges.

Good response by artists revitalized dark, drab garage interior. 46 murals were painted by 50 artists. Done in '78, they look bright & new today, should have long life with minimal care. Garage is underneath hotel; panel in lobby describes paintings, urges visitors who do not park there to have a look. Many do.

Project could be adapted for many types of structures. It can be 1) attention getter, 2) public participation motivator, 3) long term publicity subject, 4) unusual customer relations benefit, 5) grapevine seeder, 6) workplace brightener, 7) community relations vehicle, 8) outreach to special publics, such as cultural community. By adding warmth & interest, it can also help overcome safety fears some people feel about darkened spaces. "Guests will be pleasantly surprised," said contest judge John Bannon. "And at the same time it encourages many emerging artists in the area."

KEY EDUCATOR'S ANALYSIS OF ELECTION'S EFFECT ON SCHOOLS: 1) TAX CREDITS, 2) TAX CUTS ON LESS INVOLVED PUBLIC, 3) DEP'T OF EDUCATION WILL SURVIVE

Michigan, midwest industrial giant, was a key state in the presidential election. Public education has been our bellwether social institution. The two indicators coalesced due to the state's Tisch II tax

cut referendum (pr 10/27) -- which was soundly defeated. Mich. School PR Ass'n scheduled a postmortem seminar day after the vote to hear Phillip Runkle, supt of public instruction, analyze the results. He predicts:

1. Tax credits for non-public schools will be enacted. The Reagan camp supports them. Public schools haven't the clout to stop them. He is opposed, thinks courts may find them unconstitutional, but feels public opinion is ready to accept.
2. U.S. Dep't of Education won't be eliminated despite Reagan's campaign rhetoric.
3. Tisch or similar will pass next time ... "and probably ought to" because educators still don't recognize that "schools belong to the people, all the people." The public doesn't understand what schools are doing, schools don't really involve them.

"Schools miss an opportunity to teach students about educational governance. To explain to this captive audience the roles of school boards, principals & superintendents, how voters control the purse strings, and so on."

4. Reagan is a First Wave person, in Alvin Toffler's categorization from The Third Wave. "This is not bad, but it's looking backward to a former time rather than leadership."
5. Schools will become community centers to survive. "They ought to be open all day & all night. No more stopping senior citizen dances because it might scratch the gym floor." Everybody has things s/he wants to learn.
6. Vastly improved public relationships, and abler practitioners working in the schools, will appear -- or else.

An atypical educator, Runkle uses street language, slurs his speech, leans across the podium, gestures freely. He goes into bars to talk to "real people" about the schools. His creed: "I'm not going to be held hostage by the educational community. I will be held hostage by the people."

PUBLIC RELATIONS IS UNIVERSAL -- DEMONSTRATED AT COLOMBIA, SOUTH AMERICA, SEMINAR

LDC's -- less developed countries -- are keenly interested in advanced public relations thought and

techniques. Otto Lerbinger (Boston University) spoke at an int'l pr seminar held last month in Medellin, Colombia, sponsored by Cecorp (Colombian Public Relations Center). Featured were the social audit and disaster planning lessons of the DC-10 crisis.

Lerbinger said an increasing number of American companies are taking inventories of their social programs and publishing descriptions in social reports. The main thrust of his talk, however, was that public relations, after shifting from an emphasis on crises to issues, is now ready to venture into social management. Practitioners must be able to contribute to management decisions dealing with responses to the turbulence of the socio-political environment.

The social audit is of special interest to Colombian organizations because they engage in many more social programs than their American counterparts. Lunches are regularly served to workers at only token cost. Companies run cooperative recreational parks for workers and their families. Termination pay, e.g., one week for every year employed, is almost standard employment practice.

Another major part of the 3-day seminar was a comprehensive review of pr management by Teobaldo de Souza Andrade, a Sao Paulo, Brazil, lawyer and professor of public relations. A subject of special interest -- a new world order of communications -- was presented by Guido Grooscors, a Venezuelan pr counselor. He expressed the concern of Latin American and other third world countries that the world's wire services and news media, controlled by industrial nations, don't give them enough coverage. He told pr he hoped PRSA and the public relations fraternity in general would become motivated to seek a better world balance in news coverage.

DC-10 Experience Adds Dimensions to Disaster Planning

When an engine fell off a DC-10 near Chicago in June 1979, disaster planning spread to airlines throughout the world. At stake was possibility that this accident might affect people's general attitude toward flying, just as the Three-Mile Island accident influenced public attitudes toward nuclear power.

Varig Brazilian Airlines switched to 707s in its 3 weekly flights to Kennedy Airport and rerouted its DC-10s to Europe. Good press relations, said dpr Fernando Markon,