

To begin taking an active stance, American Ass'n of Colleges of Pharmacy devoted a seminar at its recent convention to public relations. First-ever session was organized by Florence Schumacher, pr staffer at Boston's Beth Israel Hospital. She showed how even esoteric research is eagerly consumed by today's health-conscious readers & viewers -- if properly packaged. She finds scientific items appropriate for general media if they have these features: a) relevant to treatment of patients, b) consider common health problems, c) present new answers or treatments, d) can be stated in lay language.

ITEMS OF CONCERN TO PRACTITIONERS

Top black leaders have been ranked in poll of 1,146 black Americans. Data Black Nat'l Opinion Poll (NYC) found Rev. Jesse Jackson had highest favorable rating, 76.4%. Others in order are Coretta Scott King, Shirley Chisholm, Maynard Jackson, Tom Bradley, Patricia Roberts Harris, Vernon Jordan, Benjamin Hooks, Richard Hatcher, Donald McHenry. Study also reveals many blacks don't recognize these names. (Do you? Can you associate a position, issue or organization with each?)

NY bank is being sued for using gobbledygook. State of NY, which has had plain language law since '78, is bringing first suit -- against Lincoln Savings Bank for its safe deposit box rules. One mind boggling sentence has 122 words. Also under attack for tiny print. Bank chairman says company will be "glad" to make "any valid" changes. Agreement scored 32 in Flesch readability test -- way below required 60 for "plain English."

LETTING THE PEOPLE DECIDE

"I think public awareness of the HMO idea has had more effect than federal action."

-- Health maintenance organization advocate responding to American Medical Assn's recognition of prepaid health plans.

Trend: system that handles consumer inquiries from hearing impaired is being tested by Dep't of Transportation. Teleprinters link hard of hearing to Auto Safety Hotline which receives calls on safety defects & recalls. Equipment in libraries, institutions serving deaf, and in some cases, home units, will be able to make hook-up. Meanwhile, tv continues offering text on screen for deaf viewers.

pr reader says not-for-profits are, however, in "business." Wilson Hulley, exec dir, Foundation for Oregon Research & Education, takes issue with Financial Accounting Standards Board which proposed financial guidelines for "nonbusiness organizations." He writes, "We are in business to provide a service and while that service is 'not-for-profit,' the delivery of it is very important. If we were not doing a good job, we would not be in business."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

RETIRING. Three prominent practitioners have left "regular work" but each plans further prof'l activity. Frank Wylie, 1978 PRSA pres & long time Chrysler exec; Donald McCammond, 1970 PRSA pres &

vp, Va. Electric & Power Co; & Ray Hayes, dir-field ops who joined GM in 1939 under the legendary Paul Garrett, retires Oct.1 -- 41st anniversary date.

Vol.23 No.32
August 18, 1980

REGULATORS URGED TO SLASH UTILITY'S PUBLIC RELATIONS BUDGET TO END "UNTOWARD INFLUENCE" & CUT COSTS: ANOTHER SIDE OF ORGANIZATIONAL FREE SPEECH

Ontario Energy Board will set ominous precedent if it cuts \$3.5 million from Ontario Hydro's public relations budget. Slash is advocated by popular anti-nuke group, Energy Probe. Some functions affected -- public information & public education -- are vital to any organization's relationships, particularly besieged power industry. Another -- nuclear communications -- is understandably an irritant to opponents. Budget would still be \$6.5 million but forced cut bodes ill for free speech & for all practitioners in regulated industries.

Energy Probe spokesman Norman Rubin told Board "Ontario Hydro's pr efforts are extravagant, unnecessarily increasing the cost of power, and in their attempt to influence public opinion represent untoward influence in the democratic process." He charges company with ignoring "balance, fairness and completeness."

He would rather see public education & information under gov't jurisdiction. "Hydro has no right to try to sway public opinion with the people's money," he told prr. Hydro dpr John O'Connor believes request merely reflects Energy Probe's anti-nuclear orientation: "The programs singled out are those that impact directly on what they're trying to do." These are speech-writing, news & planning functions.

As evidence, Rubin cited two "biased" Hydro publications. One reprinted article by Isaac Asimov from a US magazine but dropped tandem anti-nuclear piece by Nobel Prize-winner George Wald. Rubin calls this a "heavy-handed attempt to sway opinion through direct and clumsy censorship." Other target was flyer, "What is Radiation?" Rubin says it "did not mention that radiation can cause cancer or genetic defects." O'Connor explains "it tries to describe in rudimentary terms where radiation comes from. We have other pamphlets that go into more detail."

Issue made p.1 news in Toronto Globe & Mail. Paper quotes O'Connor as admitting utility "had indeed produced misleading public relations material." In interview with prr O'Connor denied making that statement. "This was the traditional mountain out of a molehill. Reporters queued outside my office all the next day, but it blew over by that afternoon."

IS PRESS POWERFUL?
"The majority of people will read a headline and forget it the next day," says dpr John O'Connor. He thinks Globe & Mail coverage probably won't adversely affect Hydro's credibility. Mgr comms svcs Bob Cochrane notes, however, "Globe & Mail is Canada's NYTimes."



Hydro officials defend their budget as balancing massive favorable press coverage media give anti-nuke groups. Says Bob Cochrane, mgr comms svcs, "We don't think we have to tell people 'Gee, nuclear power is really risky' because people believe it's risky in the first place from everything they've been reading. I think we'd be remiss if we didn't inform them of Ontario Hydro's story."

10 PR PITFALLS OF 80s POSTULATED BY H&K FROM REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS AUDITS: CHECKLIST & CARTOONS PROVIDE USEFUL TOOL

Similar findings from communications or public affairs audits conducted over the past few years leads Hill & Knowlton to propose a checklist of

pitfalls. Colin MacLachlan, sr vp, told PRSA audience material is relevant since audits usually include 4 basic categories: 1) management study, 2) staff & functions study, 3) programs & materials review, 4) selected special audiences. How do you rate?

- 1. Management spends too much time defending the organization rather than managing it.
- 2. Organization releases untimely information.
- 3. Organization deliberately withholds information.
- 4. Communicators are kept out of main-stream of internal information; management doesn't trust public relations.
- 5. Firefighting overshadows positive communications efforts.
- 6. Organization takes inconsistent public positions.
- 7. Communications are made ineffective by jargon.
- 8. Employees are unable or unwilling to speak out for the organization; "I only work there."
- 9. Organization generally lacks credibility with public & press; deceptive, inconsistent, self-serving statements contribute to problem.
- 10. Organization has reputation for insensitivity & arrogance; refuses to listen, is overly quick to react, overreacts.

To facilitate persuasive presentation to management, H&K designed series of cartoons illustrating each pitfall. (For copy, write MacLachlan at 633 Third Ave, NY 10017.)

SAY VIDEO TECH STRUGGLE WILL PIT CABLE TV VS. AT&T AND THE NETWORKS; GUESS WHO WILL WIN?

Cable tv is "dead wrong" in expecting to automatically benefit from new technology -- despite the success of Qube. Viewdata, teletext & other home info svcs will not destroy tv networks, as many predict. Instead, the nets will take over teletext, while AT&T uses its financial muscle to dominate viewdata services. Result: "Some observers are predicting that cable tv systems will own nothing but a tangle of copper wire by 1990," reports VideoPrint Newsletter.

This iconoclastic view is based on three assumptions. 1) For home info svcs to succeed requires maximum market penetration -- far more than the household with CATV. 2) AT&T has larger stakes than the cable industry, and will use its unrivaled capital sources to promote rapid development. 3) Tv nets will use their skills in working with advertisers to turn teletext to their advantage. (For free copy of newsletter issue with this analysis write to 30 High St., Norwalk, Ct. 06851.)

IS EXPERIENCE NECESSARY FOR TOP SPOT?

pr recently reported that a 28-yr.-old MBA was promoted to vp, corp & pub afrs without professional experience. We asked whether talent & a year's experience as ass't to chairman could compensate. Here's what readers think:

How much better or worse is it than:

- 1) The Fortune 400 company that fired all its pr professionals and made the corp sec'y (female) vp comms.
- 2) The Fortune 200 company that named its contributions prgm mgr (female) to vp comms over professionals in the department.
- 3) The Fortune 50 company that selected an ad agency acct exec (female) for vp comms over several professionals.

How could a 28-year old executive with no pr experience -- no matter how bright -- possibly possess the background necessary to direct the public affairs operations of a major, multi-national corporation effectively?

More importantly, the fault must lie with those of us who have devoted our entire careers to public relations. Somehow we're not convincing top management of our credentials.

-- Dana Hughes, president McKinney/Public Relations (Phila.)

-- Joseph Graves, Jr., dir, corp comms, Trans Union Corp (Lincolnshire, Ill.)

If she is as bright as you say, she should be given an opportunity to prove herself. I've seen people with little experience but with a keen sense of what is needed come to public relations with fresh ideas and solve situations that had been a problem for a long time.

We think you wouldn't have worried about it had she been he!

-- Sylvia Wagner, supvr, mgmt educ and Suzi Hagen, mgr, empl pubhs, The St.Paul Ins. Cos. (Minn.)

-- Martha Jasper (Kissimmee, Fl.)

WHAT TV CAN DO TO THOSE WITHOUT PR PROGRAMS IS SHOWN BY 5-YR STUDY OF PHARMACY; GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTING SCIENCE TO GENERAL MEDIA

A case study of how media treat an industry, profession or organization that does not have a public relations pro-

gram appears in the May-June issue of Apothecary. Dr. Jennifer Tebbe studied 5 yrs' relationship between "Pharmacy & Tv News." From '74 through '78 pharmacy received only 6 hrs, 44 mins & 47 secs of networks coverage. Not one of 264 stories originated with pharmacists. Subjects reported, therefore, tended to be negative:

- 1. breaking news such as FDA regs, druggists dispensing illegally, etc.
- 2. cancer-causing agents in drugs
- 3. new treatments for disease
- 4. safety & efficacy of drugs
- 5. drug prices including generics
- 6. advertising of drug prices
- 7. abuse of prescription drugs