

Vol.25 No.22
June 8, 1981

Press conference June 3 by "Alternative to the New York Times" Committee drew 600. Although invitations in many forms were given to NYTimes, they did not appear to present their case. Lev Navrozov of the Cmte told prr the Times attributed its absence to not receiving an invitation -- but invitational ads ran in that paper. Cmte is concerned with the lack of diversity in American "big" daily press, aims to establish an adversarial competitor to these dailies & the NYTimes in particular. "End the dangerous cultural-political monopoly of NYTimes" is their theme. Says Cmte's statement of purpose: "Dailies like Wash. Post or Christian Science Monitor have not dissented from NYTimes on a single major political or cultural issue in the past 20 yrs. Nor do they have an international news or cultural staff to be able to compete...." (Copies from prr.)

REAGAN ADMINISTRATION OPENLY COMBINES
"PROPER PERSUASION & PRESSURE POLITICS";
"INFORMATION IS NOT NEUTRAL"

Apparently Republicans, Democrats & the media accept the proper role of public relations in politics. "We feel it is imperative that we carry our message to

the public, to go beyond the Congressional delegations," Edw. J. Rollins, dep ass't to pres for pol afrs, told Nat'l Capitol chapter PRSA. Thus Reagan's pol afrs ofc, headed by veteran practitioner Lyn Nofziger, will be a mechanism for persuading voters, congressmen, media of the benefits of our programs. Agrees Eugene Eidenberg of Nat'l Democratic Cmte: "I'm not troubled by the persuasion/pressure continuum. I think it's healthy for a democratic society."

Gannett News Serv. vp-corp comms Walt Wurfel adds, "It's essential for pr people to get the word out on their programs because there aren't enough reporters to go around." Paul Duke, PBS sr corresp, thinks the Administration's pr strategy is to position the President as an insider in Wash. establishment. "Good pr is more than just luck. It means sensing public's mood & trying to capitalize on it." In this, "the Reagan people are light years ahead of the Carter people."

Eidenberg believes that "in a political or governmental environment information is not neutral." There is "nothing wrong with selling a point of view." But it's "important that the source & its purpose be made as clear as possible."

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

ELECTED. Philadelphia Public Relations Ass'n inducts R. Mitchell Thomas (vp comms & pa, Gino's, King of Prussia) into assn's Hall of Fame...Officers of Automotive Public Relations Council: pres, Donald Dobbs (comms dir, Eltra Corp, Toledo); vp, Frank Sopata (corp comms rep, Federal-Mogul, Detroit); sec'y-treas, Dennis Bender (staff ass't-pr dep't, Champion Spark Plug, Toledo).

PEOPLE. Robert Wood, pres & CEO, also appointed chrm, Carl Byoir & Assocs (NYC) ...Northwest Bancorporation (Mpls) names Josie Corning vp corp comms and Diane Palmer vp gov't rels.

With this issue appears the questionnaire for prr's Annual Survey of the Profession, now in its 17th year. Please fill it in now before you put it aside to "do when you have time." Please return by June 30. Reply envelope enclosed.

NETWORKS. 1981 officers of Pinnacle Group: pres, Alvin Busse (A.R. Busse & Assocs, Houston); xvp, Amelia Lobsenz (Lobsenz-Stevens, NYC); treas, Neil Amidei (Hoefler/Amidei Assocs, S.F.).

IN-HOUSE PUBLICATIONS NOT THE BEST EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SOURCE,
IABC STUDY FINDS; GRAPEVINE STRONG AS ALWAYS, A-V SURPRISINGLY WEAK;
OPPORTUNITY FOR PRACTITIONERS IS IN SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

The employee publications get the lion's share of budgets & emphasis, they are neither the top preferred nor the top actual source of information about the organization, finds a new IABC survey. Immediate supervisors, small group meetings, top execs, handbooks & orientation programs rate higher as preferred sources, according to responses from 45,662 employees in 40 U.S. & Canadian organizations.

PREFERRED SOURCES OF ORGANIZATIONAL INFO VS. ACTUAL SOURCES				
Preferred		Info Source	Current	
Rank	Considered Major Source By:		Rank	Considered Major Source By:
1	90.3%	Immediate supervisor	1	55.1%
2	58.6%	Small group meetings	5	28.1%
3	50.0%	Top executives	12	11.7%
4	48.4%	Employee handbook/other booklets	3	32.0%
5	45.9%	Orientation program	11	12.5%
6	44.7%	Regular general employee publication	6	27.9%
7	44.3%	Annual business report to employees	7	24.6%
8	44.2%	Regular local employee publication	8	20.2%
9	41.4%	Bulletin board(s)	4	31.5%
10	33.8%	Upward Communication programs	15	9.0%
11	28.9%	Mass meetings	9	15.9%
12	27.7%	Audio-visual programs	13	10.2%
13	21.8%	Union	10	13.2%
14	11.4%	Mass media	14	9.7%
15	10.7%	Grapevine	2	39.8%

-- IABC Survey co-sponsored by Towers, Perrin, Forster & Crosby



The informal communication system, better known as the grapevine, is the 2nd most active data source. Since the most preferred sources are not those usually operated by in-house editors & communicators, study suggests a shift in emphasis -- or risk becoming obsolete. 93% of IABC members in '79 poll listed "writing & editing for publications" among their duties.

Immediate supervisors lead both the actual & preferred lists (see chart). Top execs are 3rd in preference -- but 12th in current rank, below unions. This suggests public relations counsel & dpr's should urge more employee interaction by top brass. Small group sessions are popular, 2nd in preference; but not used enough, ranking 5th as a current info source. Surprisingly, in face of telecommunications revolution & constant statements about its rising use, a-v is 12th preferred & 13th actual info source. People apparently still prefer face-to-face or print communications in the workplace.

Employee publications are cited as believable by 89% of respondents, but thought to be one-sided in coverage by 50%. Subjects of interest to their readers are 1) future plans, 2) personnel policies and practices, 3) productivity improvement & 4) job related information. Birthdays, anniversaries & other personal news draw little interest, ranking last (and 25 percentage points below the next item).

IABC pres. Lynda Stewart says the study will be repeated every 2 years "in response to an ever-growing demand for measurable, reliable data about the effectiveness of internal communication programs."

While not a scientific sample, age & job distribution approximate the population. Males & professional/technical workers are somewhat overrepresented. 16% of respondents are Canadians. Organizations may participate in 1982 study for \$425 fee + 60¢ per completed response. (Clara Degen, IABC, 870 Market St, SF, Calif. 94102)

CONTROVERSY OVER RADIO DEREG RAGES ON
EVEN AFTER FCC ORDER; ONE RESULT MAY BE
SWITCH TO LOCAL PSAs FROM NATIONAL

dereg of radio broadcasters, several sources tell pr the effect on public service activities on-air has been minimal. Some paperwork has been eliminated for stations, but "market factor" & "social responsibility" are cited as reasons to continue airing PSAs, keep logs, perform ascertainment studies as always. Observations:

¶Might mean increase in local PSAs over nat'l. (Jim Hulbert, svp-b'casting, NAB)

¶Stations prefer 5-10-20-30 sec PSAs now instead of 60 sec. But many are not well written or produced, and some in pr community are writing ads under guise of PSAs. Stations continue to use professionally prepared PSAs and to air them at prime hours. (Chuck Vance, dpr, Nat'l Safety Council, Chi)

The powerful groups including Nat'l Council of Churches, U.S. Catholic Conf. & Nat'l School Public Rels Ass'n are still campaigning against FCC's April 3

Pithy description of benefits to radio comes from gen'l counsel to Nat'l Ass'n of Broadcasters: "We say goodbye to the Commission's cod liver oil treatment of non-entertainment programming, mechanistic ascertainment rituals & Byzantine logging requirements." NAB pres. Vincent Wasilewski also hailed FCC's new "postcard approach" to license renewals, now a 5-question form. NAB urges member stations to continue logging commercials -- tho it is voluntary & PSAs need not be included. 8,000 AM & FM stations assure heavy competition, which credits need to satisfy local interest groups.

¶Station managers responded 97% positively to statement that dereg is "not too likely or not at all likely" to alter their use of PSAs. "There was some indication, however, that more emphasis would be given to community PSAs altho the overall number aired would remain the same." (Market Research Bureau, Wash, D.C., in survey of radio in 4 major markets)

¶Use of company-sponsored PSAs probably will diminish, such as safety & health messages. (Elaine Falk Katz, co-chair, Chicago PRSA seminar on subject)

¶"Never has been a requirement to carry PSAs. Was one question on old renewal form asking if ran them & how many. Our stations have increased news & consumer material because radio is a local medium -- and people want to know what is going on in their community." (Jim DeCaro, pres & gen mgr, WFIL/WUSL, Phila, to local PRSA luncheon)

Round 2 Will Be Senate Legislation S.270 would provide indefinite terms for licenses, which U.S. Catholic Conf. calls "first step toward private ownership of (public) radio frequencies." S.601 would establish a random selection process for tv licenses, or "lottery," instead of awarding license to best qualified. S.270 does same for radio. Neither present dereg or Senate bills eliminates Fairness Doctrine, equal time requirement or non-discrimination rule.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶Minority annual report was issued by concerned utility shareholders. Calling themselves Stockholders for Corporate Responsibility, group circulated 4-pg printed piece featuring graphs, cartoon, quotes from media coverage of Public Service Co. of N.H. At issue is PSCo's financial plight, attributed to "high interest rates and an unsympathetic regulatory environment" plus skyrocketing costs vs. reduced benefits of Seabrook nuclear plant. Separate report is necessary, says the group, because company "glosses over" its money problems in official report -- even tho they've been front page news for weeks. Another persuasion model used is to cite other utilities who've backed off from new nukes in favor of conservation, coal & renewable energy sources. However, resolution to drop Seabrook and switch it to other fuels each garnered only 6% of vote.

¶Colleges are requiring more business background for public relations students. Univ. of Miami (Fla.) offers new Master of Arts degree in communication. Public relations emphasis requires 9 credits in School of Biz Adm. Ferris State College (Big Rapids, Mich.) locates its new public relations program directly in School of Business. FSC believes "putting public relations in the business school will lead to graduates who have a better grasp of the business world than persons coming from other disciplines." However, pr is a subset of advertising curriculum.

¶International Centre for Societal Advertising (pr 3/2) held its founding convention May 14. Termed an "overwhelming success" by exec dir Jean-Marie Allard. 225 attended from across U.S. & Canada when only 100 were expected. Since announcement of its formation in October, Centre has 150 members and more than 400 requests for information from all over the world. Convention schedule included election of 41-member board of directors, orientation workshops for action committees. Seminars are planned on corporate, gov't, social & political advertising to be held throughout Canada during the coming year. Organization aims to "come to grips with non-commercial advertising, try to put light into it & promote research on it." (Info from ICSA Secretariat, 666 Sherbrooke St. West, Ste. 1608, Montreal, Quebec H3A 1E7; 514/842-3491.)