

Professional Development continued...

PRSA has allocated funds for at least five 1985 Forum Series seminars developed by the National Professional Development Resources Committee. This committee has asked two chapters to test pilot programs, and it will select three other chapters sponsors from among the applications received.

The Central Ohio Chapter will do the first one, entitled "On Target: Getting Your Message to Your Audience," featuring John Mather, senior vice president and director of marketing and research, Ketchum Communications of Pittsburgh, PA.

The second Forum series pilot seminar will be sponsored by the San Diego County Chapter on June 21, 1985 at the Hyatt Islandia. Edward Bernays, APR, will discuss "Public Relations Professionalism: What Direction?" Profession Allen H. Center, APR, distinguished resident lecturer, San Diego State University, will serve as moderator.

These Forum series are open to all PRSA members, not just members of the sponsoring chapters, and to non-member public relations professionals.

For additional information contact Jaci Locker, director of member services/professional development, PRSA, 845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022 (212-826-1750).

YANKEE CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP PASSES THE 50th MEMBER MARK!

Membership in the Yankee Chapter just recently increased to 52, and one of the lucky new members will be honored as our 50th at the June Annual Meeting. However, because of the importance of each of our new members, you will have to come to that event to find out how we are going to celebrate our expansion!

The Newsletter will publish a special edition for June which will provide you with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of our newest members and any changes from present members. If current members have any changes, please forward them to Anni Miller, APR, News Editor, at 34 Belknap St., Dover, NH 03820, or to Linda Chestney, Membership Chairman, at 427 Chester Road, Auburn, NH 03032.

P.S. TO PATRICK JACKSON'S SPEECH "What is the TRUE Role and Power of the Media" on March 25, Nashua:

DEAR READER:

If the mass media are severely limited in their ability to persuade (or even accurately inform) -- as the wealth of research now amassed on the subject shows -- why do they seem so powerful and important? Because of the phenomenon known as the "3rd person effect".

When scholars study the impact of media on target publics, they find it minimal as a rule. But if they study the impact of the same material on senior managers whose organizations are involved in the media coverage, a completely different result occurs.

Executives tend to be media watchers -- or have it watched for them. Topics relevant to their organizations and others they are familiar with which get media coverage, inevitably come to their attention. The circles in which these movers and shakers travel are populated with fellow movers & shakers. They notice the coverage, good or bad, which they and their peers get -- and mention it to one another. These "3rd person" comments imply the media coverage has power.

The assumption is that if their friends have seen the story, everybody has. This is understandable: we're all victims of thinking what is important to us is important to others. But it is inaccurate. And dangerously misleading.

Existence of the "3rd person effect" places a responsibility on public relations practitioners. It is our task to bullet proof management against it by educating them on the true role and power of the media. They need to know the news media are not powerful because of any persuasive ability...but because executives mislead each other into thinking media are powerful.