

Northwest Arkansas Public Relations Society of America

January 2010

Advancing the Profession and the Professional

Suggestions?

E-mail: nwaprsa@gmail.com

Also, check out our Web site:
<http://www.nwaprsa.org>

Board Members:

President – Leigh Allison
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APR
Public Relations, Web site and
Chapter Regulations - Dave
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APEX Awards - Cydnee
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SW District Liaison - Dixie
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PRSSA Liaison – Beth Goodwin
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APR
Social Media – Jennifer Boulden

**Featured PR
Professional
of the Month:
Wendy
Burkeen, APR**



Each month our newsletter publishes a Q-and-A feature that spotlights a different chapter member.

What is your title and what does that really mean?

My latest business card says Manager, Communications Walmart Information Systems Division. My job is primarily to manage an internal communications team inside the exciting high tech world of Walmart's Information Systems Division (ISD). We work with some of the smartest people around who are using technology and data to solve problems and make the shopping experience better for our customers and members. There's a guy three pods down who has changed the world, I kid you not. Ask me about it at the next meeting. It's a great story.

I don't know what these big brains are talking about half the time, which is why I believe I'm here. It's my job to help ISD associates do a better job of communicating. If they can't explain to me what they are trying to say, they can't possibly be effective in delivering messages to their counterparts across the table, across town or across the globe. I'm here to help them communicate simply and clearly.

How long have you done the job?

I have been with Walmart since July of 2007. I left a career in television and a wonderful job as the Director of Public Relations for KHOU-TV in Houston to return home to Rogers to be close to my aging parents.

What are you working on lately?

I've been preparing the Chief Information Officer for several presentations and speaking engagements, which include videos I've written and produced for Board of Directors presentations.

What makes for a particularly successful day in your job?

When my team has a great day, I have a great day. When we uncover a story within our division where an ISD team has developed a solution to a problem and we write a compelling story and support it with pictures and a solid tease that drives traffic to our website, I am proud. Rinse, lather, repeat!

What book (s) are you reading now?

I can only read one book at a time. I'm currently reading a book by Kerry and Chris Shook called, "One Month to Live."

(Continued on page 2)

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PR Professional of the Month: Wendy Burkeen, APR (Continued from page 1)

What's your favorite pastime?

I love finding, buying and collecting antiques. It's a treasure hunt every weekend. I have been buying and collecting antiques for years. I collect all sorts of stuff including antique teddy bears, tiny German Christmas trees, female team sporting photos, Halloween collectibles.... I could go on and on. In fact, my house is so full of the stuff; I have a booth in a local flea market to rid of the overflow. It is really an excuse to buy more. In fact, my illness is so severe; I only know how to BUY on eBay. Someone please help me!

What's on your iPod?

I love Taylor Dane, Sheryl Crow... chicks who can get down, but I can't write with music in my ears.

January Meeting Features State Lottery Official

Julie Baldrige, director of public affairs and legislative relations for the Arkansas



Scholarship Lottery, will be the featured speaker at the chapter's first regular meeting of the new year. The meeting will be at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 27, at the Arkansas World Trade Center (UA Global Campus) at 3300 Market St, Suite 402, in Rogers.

Before joining the lottery staff when it started up last year, Baldrige served in several significant positions. She has been the assistant dean of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Bowen School of Law, a district director for U.S. Rep. Ray Thornton, communications director of the UA System in Little Rock, project director for the Old Main restoration campaign at the UA in Fayetteville, press secretary to Gov. Bill Clinton, the Answer Please columnist at the *Arkansas Democrat* and an editorial staffer at the *Arkansas Gazette*. She holds a bachelor's degree from Arkansas Tech University and was a graduate student in English literature at the UA in Fayetteville.

We Grew; They Noticed

The Northwest Arkansas chapter recorded a growth rate of 13.9 percent during the national organization's membership promotion period last year, which was enough to garner recognition as having the greatest overall growth among all small chapters during the promotion. PRSA divides chapters into categories of large, medium, small and boutique.

We also win a prize for our growth. The Northwest Arkansas chapter will be entitled to a free teleseminar. We'll let you know when that will be offered to our membership. And thanks for joining!

Future Meetings and Events Being Planned

The chapter leadership is still planning events and meetings for 2010, but here's what has been settled so far so you can mark your calendars:

Feb. 24 – 11:30 a.m., Fayetteville Town Center. Guest speaker: Michael Cherenson, Chair and CEO, Public Relations Society of America and Executive Vice President, Public Relations, Success Communications Group. Each chapter is entitled to one expense-paid visit by a board member visit every three years.

May (date to be determined) – APEX awards.

October (date to be determined) – Communications conference.

A Letter From the Chapter President

Friends and Colleagues,

It's hard to believe 2010 is already here and we're half way through January. I'm sure that sentiment is resonating through the halls of your offices as it has been in mine. As we kick off the year, I'd first like congratulate Jami Lamontagne and the 2009 board members on an outstanding job and thank them for their time and service to our chapter. We had a very successful year full of excellent speakers, our first Blogger Boot Camp, the successful Apex Awards program and the first ever Communications Conference! The 2010 leadership team has a solid foundation to build on. Thank you!

During this next year, be on the look out for the addition of networking events, community outreach programs and engaging speakers, among other things. Also as the year progresses, please remember this is *your* PRSA chapter. As your leadership team, we would love your feedback and input on things to fix and opportunities to make your PRSA experience better. It's going to be a great year and I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at our January meeting!

Cordially,
Leigh Allison

Boulden to Serve as Social Media Chair

Jennifer Boulden has graciously agreed to serve as our social media chair for the coming year. She will be in charge of our Twitter account and Facebook page. Jennifer works for the Fort Smith Convention and Visitors Bureau. She helped with the Communications Conference last fall and we're excited to have her on board. Be sure to follow us on Twitter for chapter information at [nwa_prsa](#).

April District Meeting in Oklahoma City

Details are still to come, but the PRSA Southwest District will hold its annual conference April 15-17 in Oklahoma City with the theme of "You Network Is Your Net Worth." Watch the District's web site at <http://prsasw.org/> for more information.

Job Listings Online

Our chapter Web site posts job opportunities at <http://nwaprsa.org/pages/job.html>. Take note of the information on the page on how you can use the site if you're either in search of a job or in search of a new employee. Chapter members and PRSSA members may post their resumes on the chapter's Web site for three months. There will be no charge; the service will be a benefit of membership. PRSSA members may use their free three-month period up to a year after graduation. Northwest Arkansas Chapter non-members may post their resumes on the site for three months for a fee of \$50. Companies and organizations wishing to post job listings on the site may do so for three months for a fee of \$50 per listing.