

ETC.

vol. 11 * no. 7 * July 1991

International
Association of
Business
Communicators

Brazos Valley
Chapter

Internationally
Award-Winning
Chapter

Inside this Issue

President's Perspective	2
Focus Group Provides Insight	2
Membership Update	4

Mass Media: Changes for the Public Relations Professional

Dr. Charles Self, professor and head of journalism at Texas A&M University is the guest speaker at the July 18 IABC/Brazos Valley luncheon meeting. He will address the implications of recent changes in the mass media for public relations professionals and for journalism education and discuss how changes in communication technologies have restructured mass media and what those changes imply about the role of media in society. He will then discuss how Texas A&M and other universities are responding.

Prior to coming to Texas A&M, Dr. Self was head of journalism at the University of Alabama and has served as graduate coordinator, mass communication coordinator, and magazine sequence coordinator at Alabama. He has been Visiting Distinguished Professor of Journalism at the University of Missouri and has taught at the University of Iowa.

His professional background includes work for United Press International, the Mobile (AL) Press Register, and the Louisiana (MO) Press-Journal. He also was reporter for *Pacific Stars and Stripes* newspaper during the Vietnam War and editor of two other U.S. Army newspapers.

His scholarly interests include international public policy and new

communication technologies, communication theory, news credibility issues and new reporting and editing issues. He has conducted research throughout the United States and on multiple trips to England and Japan.

Author of one book, 23 articles and scores of scholarly papers, reviews and lectures, Dr. Self co-founded the *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, now in its 15th year of publication at the University of Iowa. He is currently at work on a second book and several scholarly articles.

Join Dr. Self on Thursday July 18, to learn more about the changes in communication technologies and how they affect us. This regular luncheon meetings begins at noon in the College Station Ramada Inn. Costs are \$8 for IABC members and their guests, \$11 for non-members and \$7 for full-time students. Reserve your place by noon Tuesday, July 16, with hospitality Chair Therese Schaley at 845-3923. IABC policy requires payment from no-shows.

Program Evaluations Provide Invaluable Information

"Wonderful Speaker!!" "One of the best speakers ever at the IABC/BV Chapter." These comments were made about Les Potter's May program - the highest rated program this spring. Since the introduction of monthly

continued on page 2

E T C.

Etc. is a monthly newsletter for members of the Brazos Valley Chapter of the International association of Business Communicators.

Editor, Joanna Fritz, 845-8161

1991-92 Board Members

President
Suzanne Hyden
847-9318/774-7044

Vice President
Exa York, 845-5828

Secretary
Gerry King, 845-0325

Treasurer
Edna Smith, 845-2961

Past President, D5 Sr. Delegate
Deborah Furman, 845-6237

Brazos Bravo
Laura Nowlin, ABC, 845-5510

Community Relations
David Jones, ABC, 845-0369
Elaine Saunders, 693-4358

Hospitality
Therese Schaley, 845-3923

Communications/Etc. Editor
Joanna Fritz, 845-8161

Professional Development
Bob Billberry, 779-7700

Program
Bernie Fette, 845-2623

Publicity & Publications
Kay Claybourn, 260-6200

Student Relations
Doug Starr, 845-5374

Program Evaluations, cont'd

program evaluation cards, members have provided a wealth of invaluable information. The average response rate (members completing surveys) over the 4 months was 77 percent of the total meeting attendance.

More than 90 percent of responses for speaker ratings fell into either the "excellent" or "good" category. Les Potter's May program received the highest overall ratings, followed by the April, June and March programs. Hospitality and all program topics were rated either "excellent" or "good". The May program at the Hilton received more favorable marks than the Ramada for "location," but the food and service were rated lower.

In the comment section, several members indicated preferences for evening meetings and for more informal, interactive programming. Other helpful suggestions included the following future program topics:

- Handling Printers-Handling Deadlines
- Communications Planning
- Crises management
- Good design; Desktop publishing design tips
- Magazine writing; Communication strategies; Handling difficult P.R. situations
- Taking better photographs (for newsletters)
- Designing/Executing Surveys
- "Surveys" as a follow-up to "Focus Groups"

President's Perspective

This column is brought to you today from a new president and a new perspective. In fact, you'll find many new perspectives in this month's newsletter. The next article provides results from the focus group conducted for us after last month's luncheon meeting.

As varied as opinions and sugges-

tions are, the overall perspective of IABC/Brazos Valley is overwhelmingly positive. That reflects well on our chapter's past and bodes well for the future. From my perspective, we owe many thanks to outgoing president, Deborah Furman; the executive board; all of their committee volunteers; and all who have contributed the same outstanding service and leadership before them.

In the coming year, we'll celebrate the tenth anniversary of our chapter's incorporation. We'll compete for our third consecutive award as international small chapter of the year. And we'll face the ongoing challenge of meeting individual member needs. You know what you want out of IABC. Call me or any of the new board members listed in this newsletter. We'd like to hear your perspective.

--Suzanne Deatherage Hyden
President, IABC/Brazos Valley

Focus Group Provides Insight for Member Retention, Recruitment

Keeping abreast of the changing needs and expectations of a larger chapter is a new challenge. One way to meet this challenge is to provide opportunities for membership feedback. Monthly meeting surveys have proven effective for evaluating programming. Additionally, a focus group was held on June 20, following the luncheon meeting, to explore critical issues for membership retention and recruitment. Hank Smith from Kamstra Communications was the moderator.

More than 60 percent of our members joined IABC within the last 3 years. This group was targeted for the focus group session. Former executive board members were not included in the selection process. Nine members representing the 3-year membership range, participated in the focus group inter-

view. Of the nine participants, five had been in communications for 10 or more years and the other four had been communicators for 3-5 years. Objectives for the focus group were to:

- identify member needs
- provide feedback about current chapter service/benefits
- suggest new ways to meet member needs and recruit new members

The session was recorded and the tapes transcribed. Some of the specific questions and comments/suggestions are listed below.

Reasons for joining IABC

- comradery
- meet people in communications fields
- looking for business
- networking
- find a job
- professional development
- combat isolation at work

Benefits of IABC

- networking
- peer support
- professional expansion
- peer evaluation (providing feedback about work)
- professional support (providing resource people with expertise in specific areas)
- *Communication World*

Comments about programming and newsletter

- program diversity is a plus
- programming was not the primary reason to attend luncheon meetings. Networking with other members was more important
- most preferred hands-on skill building programs vs. programs dealing with personal and professional development, organizational skills and trends. Program topics outside of communications was thought to be redundant of other associations and magazines

- more informal, evening programs for "sharing" ideas and peer review of work
- include regular reports during programs and in *Etc.*, about executive board business and committees
- provide overview/highlights of luncheon program in *Etc.*, for members unable to attend meeting
- timeliness of *Etc.* is important. Need to receive it as early as possible prior to meetings
- highlight meeting dates and times in a box within the article

Suggestions for new services

- more opportunities to critique and evaluate each others work
- informal evening meetings to interact-to get to know one another
- mentor program for trial and 1st-year members
- provide information packages about local chapter benefits, similar to international's package
- expand trial membership to include a sponsor for each trial member
- provide information about workshops which other Texan chapters are sponsoring

Ways to recruit new members

- advertise more. Many local businesses do not know we exist
- get involved with local schools and with community based-organizations
- encourage members to invite others to regular meeting

This input from the focus group members will be valuable as we seek to improve and expand member services. The new 1991-92 board members will use this information to develop a full membership survey to ensure that Brazos Valley IABC continues to be the best it can be.

Dateline

Sept. 19-20

IABC District 5 Conference, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Apply for chapter grants now.

Nov. 7-9

IABC Chapter Management Forum, Dallas. No registration fee; discount travel arrangements to be announced.

Brazos Bits

John Suddath, Texas Forest Service, presented a 1 1/2-hour seminar on "Issue management using databases" at the IABC International Conference. Four other local members also attended the conference, June 9-12, in Washington D.C.: Ann Cole, Suzanne Hyden, Beth Leschper and Exa York.

Contribution Continued

In May the board authorized our chapter's second annual contribution to the IABC Research Foundation. The funds will support "Excellence in Public Relations and Communications Management" and other major research projects. A sum of \$285 -- \$5 per chapter member -- was contributed.

Current Trial Members

Presently, IABC/BV has 12 trial members who are considering international membership—

Carla Beals
Mary Elizabeth Betz
Rhonda Brinkman
LouAnn Englemann
Helen Flynn
Gayle H. Gray
Jo Ann Goforth
Susan Hulse
Leah A. Johnson
Kathy Mason
Karen D. Kiesling
Brenda Sims

Membership Update

The current 56 international members and one student member in the Brazos Valley Chapter of IABC represents a 21% increase in membership over June of 1990. Thanks goes to all international members in IABC/BV for recruiting this outstanding group of communicators.

"My job was easy as marketing and membership chair during the past year," said Estelle Buffa. "The support of our active membership, the professional programs and opportunities that IABC/BV offers, and the wealth of highly motivated communication specialists in the Brazos Valley supplied the initiative, drive, and completion of the 1990-91 membership program. Now, we face the challenge of maintaining this thrust as we begin another year in the young life of the Brazos Valley chapter," she continued.

Guests are always welcome at the monthly luncheon meetings and you are urged to continue inviting your friends and colleagues. Out of 75 guests who have attended the monthly meetings since July 1990, 33 guests have joined as trial members.

To encourage members to invite and nurture potential international members into IABC, we are continuing to provide a complimentary luncheon for the IABC international member who sponsors each new member who joins at the international level. This is one small way the chapter wishes to thank its members for the active interest and support that

you continue to provide. Ann Alsmeyer, Barbara Kasper, Gerry King, Elsa Mazzullo, and John Suddath have received complimentary luncheons for sponsoring new members.

IABC/BV also offers the "Extended Payment Plan" to assist with paying the international fees. Present members must begin paying three months before the expiration of their current membership. Then, fees may be divided into three payments of \$75, \$50 and \$50. New members fees include a one-time initiation fee. These members have the option to pay \$105, \$50, \$50 over a three month period. For further information on membership, contact any of the new board members listed on page 2.

Rise to New Heights at the D5 Conference in Colorado Springs

"Rise to New Heights" personally and professionally by attending the 1991 IABC D5 conference in Colorado Springs! Gain valuable new insights and inspiration at this September 19 and 20 conference hosted by IABC/Southern Colorado.

Keynote speaker, Judith Cushman, Pres. of Marshall Consultants West, in Seattle, Washington, will share her perspectives on market trends in the communications industry.

Don't miss the opportunity to "Rise to New Heights" in altitude and in success!

E
T
C.