



The Canadian Public Relations Society

CPRS-Hamilton >> 2008 - 09 annual report

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2008-09 CPRS-HAMILTON
BOARD OF DIRECTORS >>

Liliana Busnello
President

Michael R. Marini, APR
Vice President,
Chair, Membership

Carleen Carroll, APR
Past President,
Co-chair, Pinnacles,
Chair, Student Liaison

Rick Mauro, APR
Treasurer

Janine Westera
Secretary
Chair, Promotions

Deirdra A. Redden-Watson
Chair, Humbug
Co-chair, Events

Nancy Hutton, APR
Co-chair, Pinnacles

Brenda Sweeney, APR
Chair, Accreditation

Liisa Morley
Co-chair, Events

Ginny Jones, APR
Chair, Mentorship

Keisha Barrett
Chair, Newsletter

Michael DeDonato
Co-chair, Electronic Communications

Zoe Siskos
Co-chair, Electronic Communications

Al Lutchin, APR
Chair, Sponsorship

Joanna Roberts
Student Representative

Devin Shyminsky
Student Representative

Liliana Busnello

It has been both a stimulating and a rewarding first year in my role as President of CPRS-Hamilton.

The activities of the year were guided by a strategic plan review that took place in September 2008. Two years earlier, the CPRS-Hamilton Board of Directors at the time conducted a strategic planning session to outline the mission, vision and values of the society for the two-year period from 2006 to 2008. The 2008-09 board of directors convened to review and update the next phase of the strategic plan from 2008 through 2010.

While some of the goals have been and continue to be met through this past year's successes, such as an excellent Pinnacle Awards program, a strong and engaging Mentorship program, and the accreditation of two of our local members, the 2009-10 year promises to expand on opportunities for professional development. Our members told us that they are looking for increased resources for members, joint events with other societies/associations and opportunities for informal networking groups, and those will be some of the areas of focus in the upcoming year.

In the past year, I have had the opportunity to represent the society and promote the profession by participating in the President's Council as well as the National Conference in Halifax, by visiting local colleges and university open houses, and by liaising with leaders of sister societies and similar associations. In November 2008, I participated in the judging panel of the CPRS-Ottawa PuRe Elements Awards program, and attended their gala event.

I would like to thank the 2008-09 board of directors for their hard work and dedication to the society this past year. I would also like to thank members who have participated in the activities of the society, and welcome all members to become engaged at any level of interest – whether that be writing for the newsletter, assisting with event planning, or becoming a mentor/mentee. Any suggestions that would improve our society are always welcome.

In closing, I would like to say that despite numerous challenges – as in any leadership role – I have enjoyed this past year, and I look forward to serving another year as President of CPRS-Hamilton.

Nancy Hutton, APR and Carleen Carroll, APR, Co-Chairs

On April 7, 2009, CPRS-Hamilton members and guests enjoyed a sold out event held at the Old Powerhouse Restaurant in Stoney Creek, Ontario. Keynote speaker Terry Fallis, author of *The Best Laid Plans*, shared his quick wit and his unique experience of podcasting his book, a chapter at a time, while trying to find an interested publisher. The evening was a great celebration of the excellent work of our society members, with winning entries recognized by Pinnacle Awards and Awards of Merits, and individuals recognized by the board of directors for their individual accomplishments in the public relations field. Congratulations to both our winners and entrants for their hard work and dedication to public relations.

The Special Awards honourees are as follows:

- > Bill Cockman Memorial Award of Excellence in PR:
Jane Allison, APR -- The Hamilton Spectator
- > Student Award of Excellence:
Elise Auger -- Niagara College
- > CPRS-Hamilton PR Professional of the Year:
Tim Dobbie
- > CPRS-Hamilton Mentorship Award:
Heather Pullen, APR -- Hamilton Health Sciences
- > Dr. Louis J. Cahill Distinguished Service Award:
T.A.G. Watson, APR -- TAG Watson & Associates
- > Lorelei Kilgour Memorial Outstanding Practitioner Award:
Joanne Emerson, APR -- JEM Communications

The Lorelei Kilgour Memorial Award was sponsored by Hamilton Entertainment and Convention Facilities Inc. (HECFI) in memory of the loss of one of their valued team members. The inaugural award was presented by HECFI's CEO Duncan Gillespie in the presence of Lorelei's family and colleagues.

As always, we are very grateful for the support and dedication of those that volunteered their time to help make this event an evening to remember. We'd like to thank our judges for their time and commitment in evaluating the entries against the stringent criteria, determining the winning submissions and providing valuable feedback for the entrants. A heartfelt thanks goes to our sponsors as we look toward another successful event in 2010.

Carleen Carroll, APR

In 2008-09, CPRS-Hamilton welcomed student members from Niagara College's public relations program and Sheridan College's corporate communications program. Both schools had student representation on the board of directors: Devin Shyminsky from Sheridan College and Joanna Roberts from Niagara College. The board would like to thank Devin and Joanna for their contribution to CPRS-Hamilton.

The Student Liaison Chair engaged in outreach to the public relations programs at the University of Western Ontario, Conestoga College and Mohawk College. Members of CPRS-Hamilton made presentations at all these colleges as well as our member colleges. While several attempts were made to conduct student-centered events at Niagara College and Sheridan College, the timing of the curriculum and schedules prevented these events from happening; however, a number of students from each college were actively involved in the CPRS-Hamilton mentorship program.

At the end of the 2008-09 term of the board of directors, Brenda Sweeney, APR and Keisha Barrett, in consultation with our student members, presented a proposal to the board that would more effectively engage our student board members and clarify their roles and responsibilities.

Again, thank you to our student members and to the administrators of the Niagara College and Sheridan College public relations programs for their continued support of CPRS-Hamilton.

Brenda Sweeney, APR

We are proud to acknowledge the hard work and success of this year's candidates in earning their Accreditation in Public Relations (APR). Congratulations to Michael Marini, Marketing Coordinator, Economic Development & Real Estate Division, Planning & Economic Development Department, City of Hamilton and Greg Medulun, Director of Communications, Fallsview Casino Resort and Casino Niagara.

Both Greg and Michael did extremely well on all three components of the accreditation process: the work sample, written exam and oral exam.

CPRS-Hamilton is committed to helping its accreditation candidates succeed in their studies. The society offered a variety of resources to help candidates in the 2008-09 study year, including:

- > Reviewing application packages and work samples prior to submission to CPRS National;
- > Offering study group support from June to October to prepare for the written and oral exams;
- > Delivering an online exam preparation webinar (through CPRS National);
- > Providing a resource library with key public relations texts and study binders; and
- > Arranging small group study sessions with industry experts.

Accreditation is a rewarding process – for both the candidates and the volunteers. This year, we wanted to acknowledge the support of: Carleen Carroll, APR; Fran Gregory, APR; Sarah Jones, APR; and Monique Vezina, APR. Their contribution to the study sessions, grading, accreditation council and other accreditation processes was invaluable to the success of the program locally and nationally. Thank you.

Accreditation offers a rewarding, low-cost and completely customized opportunity to improve your professional practice in public relations. Of the top 10 reasons cited by successful APRs, the primary benefits include: professional recognition, enhanced ability to practice public relations, and increased recognition from employers regarding professional competence.

In 2009, the annual accreditation application deadline is December 1, 2009. If you are interested in finding out more about accreditation, please contact the Accreditation Chair or go to www.cprs.ca/accreditation.

Liisa Morley and Deirdra Redden, Co-Chairs

It was a successful year for events for CPRS-Hamilton, with great turnouts and enthusiasm from both members and guests alike. And even a little income! One professional development session was held in addition to four networking events, including the Pinnacle Awards.

The 2008-09 season kicked off to a good start with the second annual Summer Social held on August 27, 2008, at the London Tap House in Hamilton. The evening proved to be a good chance to catch up with colleagues and get back into the swing of things, while lounging in a hip new environment.

An intimate group was able to take part in a power simulation breakfast with internationally acclaimed media relations and conflict resolution expert Dr. Allan Bonner on November 4, 2008. The session was aptly named Tough Love at the Table after Bonner's recently published book. Participants were engaged in a live, real-time simulation in which they had to make decisions and take actions; it contained valuable lessons.

The annual Happy Humbug event took place on November 27, 2008, at Paradiso Restaurant in Burlington, Ontario. Approximately 50 local public relations practitioners and students, as well as other invited guests were in attendance. Our society's President Liliana Busnello was the talk of the town following her concert debut, providing the entertainment for the evening. Overall, the event was extremely well attended and a huge success.

Sponsorship donations included invitation design courtesy of Concept Solutions, and prizes donated by London Hydro, Acuity Options and Concept Solutions. Many thanks go out to the board members for their assistance with online and in-person registrations, and for all their feedback and support in staging this event.

Overall, all events were well attended and received positive feedback from participants. The society made a slight profit from events this year that will be used toward future professional development events and/or programs to benefit members.

Please stay tuned for our 2009 feature webinar, Going Green and Staying Green, in May 2009. As well, please look forward to the third annual Summer Social as we can toast the beginning of another season of programming.

Al Lutchin, BA, APR

The sponsorship program is currently under review in order to find the best strategy for our member society moving forward. Various models have been tried over the years with limited results. We wish to find a solution that will provide continuous funding, assist with helping to reduce costs and fund some specific initiatives. One of the challenges of sponsorship is the time commitment required to manage the process and source prospective sponsors year to year. The model now being researched is sourcing someone on a professional basis who has the interest and skill level to develop a sponsorship program, make the pitches and manage the accounts. We are in the early stages of this search and I would encourage any feedback or ideas.

Ginny Jones, APR

The mentorship committee is delighted with the progress the program has made during 2008-09. Last September, we set four goals for the program year:

1. Recruit more **senior** practitioners as mentors.
2. Recruit more **senior** practitioners as committee members.
3. Grow to **15 mentors:15 mentees** in 08/09; grow to 20 mentors:20 mentees in 09/10. Note: There were 8 mentors:8 mentees in 07/08.
4. Provide **quality programming** via events and the mentorship newsletter with helpful tips; great speakers, etc.

We surpassed all our goals and in fact, succeeded in attaining next year's growth goal a year early with a total of 40 participants! (Last year's inaugural group featured 16 members - 8 mentors: 8 mentees – so we had a 110 per cent increase.) Much interest in mentee applications (20) spurred us on to find a mentor for everyone!

We added an advisory committee of senior practitioners – Joanne Emerson, APR, Grace Diffey, APR and Joy Shikaze, APR – who helped us recruit senior practitioners as mentors. We also welcomed Bruce Stock, APR, to our extremely hard-working and fully committed mentorship committee. On the programming side, we issued five mentorship newsletters, each full of material on mentoring that served as both a prompt for the pairs to connect, as well as topics for discussion during the calls. Four events were held: a mentorship kick-off, a speed mentoring evening, an expert panel on working in the various sectors of PR and a final social event that included a feedback component for the program.

Research conducted in March 2009 revealed that two-thirds of the mentorship teams were satisfied to very satisfied with the relationships and were regularly engaged. The remaining one-third complained that either the mentor or the mentee had 'dropped the ball,' which had made the program less satisfying. Next year, we will be taking a look at how to ensure both parties follow through on their commitments.

The committee added a new tool this year – a mentorship workbook – for use at the initial meeting and as a reference guide for the monthly contacts between the mentor and the mentee. Feedback from the final session will be used by the committee to fine-tune the program for 2009-10. We have an excellent roadmap in place that we can take forward.

Special thanks to our amazing mentors who so generously gave their time and shared their invaluable insights, connections and wisdom with our mentees. A huge thanks to our mentees for their commitment to professional and personal growth, and for sharing their wisdom and insights with our mentors, too. It has been a rewarding and enriching experience for the entire mentorship committee. We would like to thank the board and our sponsors – TDL Group Corp. (Tim Hortons) and AMEC Environmental – for their support.

Mentorship Committee:

Keisha Barrett, Deirdra Redden-Watson, Dave Rowney, APR, Bruce Stock, APR.

Michael Marini, APR

Efforts by the board of directors in 2008-09 resulted in a strengthening of our membership network; achieved chiefly through the creation of greater linkages with practitioners from across the Golden Horseshoe and a new strategic plan that places added emphasis on attracting new members and retaining existing members.

When the 2008-09 board of directors' term began in Spring 2008, membership (as of March 26, 2008) stood at 76 members (includes one lifetime member). Now that this term of the board is drawing to a close, membership (as of March 27, 2009) stands at 73 members (includes one lifetime member).

Although the membership level has remained relatively stable, it is anticipated that increased outreach activities (through our mentorship and student programs) to our student members will soon generate increases in full-time memberships once they are past their "post-graduate" status. These outreach efforts will also continue to provide our students with valuable professional development opportunities as they make the transition from student to full-time members.

For more CPRS-Hamilton membership information, please visit:

<http://cprs-hamilton.ca/index.php/membership/>

Keisha Barrett

For the 2008-09 year, CPRS-Hamilton's membership newsletter, PR Link, went through some changes: adopting the tagline – Share and Explore; duplicating in a HTML version that was sent bi-monthly to members via e-mail; receiving a facelift with a new design; and adding an exclusive section, A View from the Other Side, featuring business reporter Stephen Arnold from the Hamilton Spectator. With a total of four installations, Arnold answered questions that focused on the relationship between a reporter and a practitioner.

These changes were made in order to address the needs of our membership. According to a CPRS-Hamilton newsletter survey in 2005, members wanted to keep a focus on quality writing but also wanted more edgier and controversial articles that would stimulate dialogue. I believe PR Link continues to fulfill these needs by examining the trends, news headlines, events, and activities of local practitioners in the public relations industry.

Thank you to Liliana Busnello, Michael DeDonato, Deirdra Redden-Watson, Stephen Arnold and all who submitted content to PR Link this year.

RICK MAURO, APR

CPRS-Hamilton
 2008-09 Annual Financial Statement
(prepared March 31, 2009)

Bank Balance as of March 31, 2008 **\$ 11,503.95**

Revenue:

Membership	5,643.75
Student Memberships	2,230.00
Website Ads	750.00
Interest Income	345.00
Events	10,999.88

Total **19,968.63**

Expenses:

Event Expense	7,466.02
Student Awards	-
Design and Printing	218.00
Accreditation	-
Mentorship	1,056.50
Donations	750.00
Phone	354.00
Postage	131.45
Liability & Directors Insurance	2,570.40
Website	252.00
Bank & Credit Card Fees	468.84
Miscellaneous	887.65

Total **\$ 14,154.86**

Excess Revenue **\$ 5,813.77**

Special "Legacy" Fund **\$ 15,000.00**

Total Assets as of March 31, 2009 **\$ 32,317.72**