

PROS

PUBLIC RELATIONS IN OUR SCHOOLS

WHAT'S INSIDE:

2 ASCA Conference Wrapup**4** Meet Grammar Girl**6** March Calendar

Enterprise High School



📍 Enterprise High School March 2.
 📍 President Bush visits Enterprise High March 3.

ROAD TO RECOVERY AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

March 1, 2007 is a date that we'll always remember in Alabama as the day a deadly tornado changed the lives of Enterprise residents forever. The tornado caused severe damage to Enterprise High School and Hillcrest Elementary School. Sadly eight students lost their lives and several other students suffered multiple injuries.

"Our hearts and prayers are with this entire community," said State Superintendent of Education Joe Morton. "The faculty and students did everything they could to make sure everyone was safe and protected from the storm, but sometimes Mother Nature is more powerful than all of our plans and efforts. Grieving and rebuilding will take time, but these schools and this community will be back. I pledge our help and support from the state Department of Education. We will do everything we can to partner with this community and help address the physical and emotional needs of the teachers, students, and their families."

Dr. Morton is requesting that the education community donate to the Tornado Relief Fund that has been established at CB&T Bank in Enterprise.

There are two ways you can donate – by check or credit card.

Send a check made payable to:
 Enterprise Tornado Fund to CB& T Bank
 Attention Derek Bynum
 N. Boll Weevil Circle
 Enterprise, AL 36330.

You can make credit card donations by phone, call 334-347-0081.



2006 ASCA AWARD WINNERS

-NOT PICTURED-
Local School
Communicator of the
Year Award
Bill Griffin
Florence City School
System



**Communicator of the
Year Award**
Judy Caton
Elmore County School
System



Bright Ideas Award
Pam T. Henson
Baldwin County Public
Schools



**N. Joyce Sellers
Superintendent of the
Year Award**
Dr. J. Phil Raley,
former superintendent of
Opelika City Schools



ROOKIE-OF-THE-YEAR AWARD Winner
By Terry Wilhite, Director of Communications
Baldwin County Board of Education

I am most honored to receive this year's Rookie of the Year honor from the Alabama School Communicator's Association. I really like the sound of "Rookie." As gray hair begins to mount (and some dismount), as public relations battle scars linger after more than 20 years in the communications business, rookie is a youthful notion – not quite as nice as a bright red, convertible sports car, but nevertheless, I'm honored to display this designation with pride and enthusiasm.

The part about the honor that thrills me the most, however, is to be associated with a group of professionals as talented as those who make up the Alabama School Communicator's Association. I have much to learn from each member so I would like to briefly introduce myself, and tell you a little bit about Baldwin County.

I came on board as the Baldwin County Board of Education's Director of Communications in May, after 19 years in the electric utility business. For almost two decades I served as a local editor of Alabama Living magazine and in the capacity of running an electric utility's corporate communications department, I regularly attempted to explain there is a direct correlation between the number of light bulbs one turns on and the electric bill associated therewith. After doing that for nearly 20 years, like many of those light bulbs, I had burned out and needed a change. So my wife, Kristi, and I set out to find a new spot to live and we put as our top priority to find a place that our two boys, Aaron (10) and Avery(seven) could enjoy the benefits of a high-quality public education. Little did we know then that an opportunity would open in beautiful Baldwin County, nor did we imagine that the job would not only allow me to have a direct positive impact on my sons' education, but 27,000 other students as well. Can you say "WOW?!"

Baldwin County is an amazing place. It is Alabama's fastest growing county and enjoys an enviable economic prosperity that allows our school system to spend more per student than any other county system in the state. The academic success is a point of

This year ASCA Conference was a huge success with an array of nationally known speakers. Beth Holloway-Twitty, mother of Natelee Holloway, shared her experience with the media and authorities in Aruba when her daughter went missing on a class trip May 2005. Steve Knagg, director of communications with the Garland Independent School District in Garland, Texas, passed along his knowledge of how to deal with the media in chaotic times and how to handle the media wolves. Knagg's years of experience in communications with the Garland School District and a past president of National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) enhanced his presentations with humor and real-life situations. Bob Noyed, director of communications of Wayzata Public Schools in Minnesota, focused on how the role of strategic advisor is imperative to communications and school systems. Susan Dryden Whitson, press secretary to First Lady Laura Bush, spoke on her career from a school teacher at Hoover High School to the White House. Dr. Robert Norton, of Auburn University, informed us of the dangers of some non-profit organizations can sabotage students. Debbie Elmore, Southeast Regional Vice President of the (NSPRA) spoke about the success of the Red Carpet School program in South Carolina.

We also recognized some of our own and the success of their



programs and job duties.
Hats off to
ASCA President Pat Morrow, for such a worthwhile conference.

—Continued—

national pride. For example, collectively last year, our high school seniors won more than \$21-million dollars in scholarships.

My job description can be narrowed to a single word: target. As media spokesman for the Board of Education, I'm a regular on the four major network television stations that cover our area and I'm one of the most frequently quoted sources in the Mobile Press-Register. If my job description can be summed in a single word, the mission of the department can be boiled down to just two words: building relationships. As anyone in a county school system knows, that's an immense challenge on any given day appeasing a multitude of factions, but an especially grand task for a geographical area as large as ours. Our leadership is more than up to the task, however.

As the fastest growing county in Alabama, our board realizes that a new day has dawned where the system cannot do the same things the same ways. Our county commission is estimating population will increase from 160,000 residents to more than 340,000 in just 10 years. This fast-paced environment will further necessitate a solid communications plan, supported with a wealth of resources to keep everyone focused on the real task at hand — providing a world-class education to Baldwin County students.

Dr. Faron Hollinger, Superintendent, a past winner of the ASCA's Communicator of the Year Award, appreciates the importance of our community, government and communications challenges, and so does our seven member board.

But no one is an island and for that reason, I'm proud to be a part of ASCA and to know that a wealth of knowledge is just a phone call away — and so is some fresh seafood for anyone of you who wants to head this way. Thank you for making me feel at home.

Terry Wilbite

ASCA Library

Held in the State Department of Education Communication's Section, the ASCA Resource Library includes books, audiotapes, videos, and DVDs that are available to any ASCA member. The library includes some of the following useful material:

Title	Format	Description
Center for Advanced Media Studies, <i>Mastering TV Appearances: The 5-Star Survival Guide for Effective TV Interviews</i>	Booklet, cassette, and videotapes	How to prepare for TV interviews
<i>Educational Public Relations</i> , by Philip T. West	Book	History and present day public relations for education
<i>School Crisis Management: A Planning and Coordination Conference</i>	Conference notebook from October, 5, 1998 meeting in Birmingham	A guide on how to treat a crime scene, the media's role, making a plan, and the aftermath



WHAT NOT TO WEAR FOR ON CAMERA INTERVIEWS

Hopefully your first TV appearance will be a very exciting experience, and you'll probably spend hours carefully preparing what you want to say. You'll also very likely spend much time preparing what to wear. This is a vital part of the process because TV is primarily a visual medium and how you look is an important part of the package. So, to save you some time, here are the rules:

Don't wear all black. You'll look as though you're disappearing into a hole. This often throws women into a panic, as we love the slimming properties of black, particularly when TV will probably make you look slightly heavier than you are in real life. Black trousers or skirt will normally be fine as a filmed interview will generally concentrate on your top half, but do go for a color on top if you can.

Don't wear all white. It makes TV lights bounce back and you'll look like you haven't seen the sun in years.

Don't wear anything with a very small pattern such as pin-stripes, tweed or polka dots. Again, it has a strange effect on TV lights known as strobing. Men should avoid pinstripe shirts — bring a change of clothes if you're not sure.

No visible logos of companies or brands (watch out for this particularly on sportswear) as this may be regarded as advertising. You may be asked to change if a logo is too obvious.

More wardrobe rules in the April edition of PROS.



TIPS FROM GRAMMAR GIRL

Source: Mignon Fogarty

GRAMMAR GIRL - A QUICK AND DIRTY SUCCESS

By David E. Williams

(CNN) - Grammar lessons often are associated with high school drudgery – diagramming sentences and memorizing obscure rules in between passing notes in English class – but an Arizona technical writer has turned the seemingly dry subject into a popular podcast.

Mignon Fogarty, the woman behind “Grammar Girl’s Quick & Dirty Tips for Better Writing,” has been explaining the finer points of commas, colons, and split infinitives since July.

She recently weighed in on a dispute over apostrophes that divided the U.S. Supreme Court. Grammar wasn’t the issue in the 5-4 decision, but Justice Clarence Thomas referred to “Kansas’ statute” in the majority opinion, while Justice David Souter wrote about “Kansas’s statute” in the minority.

Fogarty said both men were correct, but that she preferred leaving off the extras. “Justice Thomas’ name ends with an s, so you might guess that he is more familiar with the issue,” she told her audience.

Fogarty, 39, said she got the idea for the podcast, sort of an Internet radio show, during a California vacation. “I was sitting in a coffee shop one day in Santa Cruz, California, on vacation and editing technical documents, because I work on vacation, and found so many grammar errors and it just hit me that grammar was something that I had expertise in that would lend itself to a short tip-based podcast,” she said.

The show is currently the 47th most popular podcast on Apple’s iTunes service, right behind “Merriam-Webster’s Word of the Day.” Fogarty said it has been as high as number twom and the shows have been downloaded more than 1.3 million times.

Affect vs. Effect: “Affect” is a verb, and “effect” is a noun. The mnemonics “raven” or “avenue” can help you remember: affect verb effect noun.

Lay and Lie: In the present tense, people lie down or lay something down. You can remember that the Eric Clapton song “Lay Down Sally” is wrong. To say “lay down Sally” would imply that someone should grab Sally and lay her down. If he wanted Sally to rest in his arms on her own, the correct line would be “lie down Sally.” Lay is the past tense of lie.

Who and whom: “Whom” refers to the object in a sentence, and “who” refers to a subject in a sentence. It’s correct to say “Whom does Sarah love?” (“whom” is the object of Sarah’s love) and “Who loves Sarah?” (“who” is the subject of the sentence). It can help to remember that the song “Who do you love?” is wrong.

Can I split infinitives? Yes, it is now acceptable to split infinitives. A “full infinitive” is a verb form that has two words, such as “to go,” and splitting an infinitive means placing another word between those two words. The most famous split infinitive is “to **boldly** go where no one has gone before.”

Fogarty said she's gotten some publicity, but that most of her audience comes from word of mouth. "I get e-mails from people who say 'I just discovered your podcast and I've told everyone I work with' or 'I told every teacher at my school,'" she said. "I get a lot of e-mails like that where people discover it and they just can't wait to tell everybody, which is really cool."

Sara Kearns, a librarian at Kansas State University, has been listening to Grammar Girl since October, and recommended it on the library's blog. "I listen to Grammar Girl in chunks. A couple of weeks may go by and then I'll listen to 10 of them at a time," Kearns said in an e-mail interview. "The genius of Grammar Girl, apart from her ability to simplify grammar, is that she posts the transcripts so that I can stare at a gnarly piece of grammar until it clicks."

Fogarty said her audience ranges from schoolchildren in China to CEOs in the United States. "I try to make it fun. I've even had people say 'I'm not that

interested in grammar, I don't know why I listen.' But I'm glad that they do," Fogarty said. "I think people like that it's short. It's sort of a low-commitment podcast. And yet they learn something that's useful that they can put to use when they write their next e-mail."



The success of the show prompted Fogarty to produce two more podcasts "Mr. Manners' Quick and Dirty Tips for a More Polite Life" and

"Money Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for a Richer Life." She said she's started selling ads and is even getting some interest from book publishers.

One drawback of her work, she said, is that listeners are nervous about writing her. "I feel bad about that, I don't want people to be afraid to write to me, but about half of my e-mails start with some sort of pre-apology for errors they expect to make," she said. She said they shouldn't worry, and that she doesn't send back e-mails with big, red correction marks.

For more information visit <http://grammar.qdnow.com/>

Making the Most of Audiovisual Presentations



Visual presentation has moved a long way from just flip charts and overhead projectors. Last month we gave you 4 tips, here are some more:

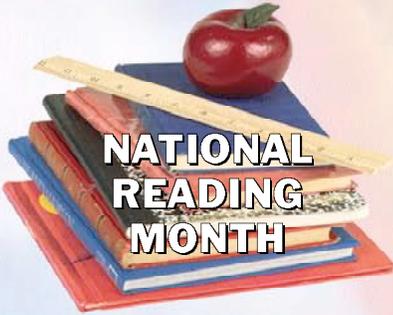
Delivery technology. Use a delivery technology that your audience can access. VHS may be old hat, but many home audiences still have access. Similarly CD-ROM or DVD may be the ideal business medium, but beware that some companies do not have or actively disable them on workstations. The same is true of newer technologies such as USB pen drives, SmartMedia, and so on.

Multimedia usage. To expose the message to the largest audience consider multimedia usage such as video, video clips within PowerPoint, Web usage, business TV applications, and so on.

Production values. Good scripting, photography, graphics, and editing will reflect on you.

Keep your options open. Review and revise your AV periodically including the delivery channels to reflect audience needs and the available technology.

March Happenings



**NATIONAL
READING
MONTH**



**ARTS EDUCATION
MONTH
IN ALABAMA**



**TRANSITION MONTH
FOR SCHOOL SYSTEMS
IN ALABAMA**

**MARCH 1-30
ACCESS**

Contact Mark Ward for more information, 334-242-8038

**MARCH 19-27
ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION EXAM**

(AHSGE) (Form Pilot – selected school systems)
Contact Mark Ward for more information,
334-242-8038

**MARCH 22
STATE BOARD WORK SESSION**
Montgomery



**MARCH 27-30
ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF ATTENDANCE
SUPERVISORS (AAAS) SPRING CONFERENCE**

Perdido Beach
Contact CLAS for more information, 1-800-239-3616

**APRIL 2-13
ALABAMA READING AND MATHEMATICS TEST
(ARMT)**

Contact Mark Ward for more information,
334-242-8038

**APRIL 2-13
STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TEST (SAT)**
Contact Mark Ward for more information, 334-242-8038

**If you would like to submit an article for PROS or have suggestions
for this publication please contact Brooke Thorington
at 334-242-9950 or bthorington@alsde.edu**