

Citizen soldier shared his experiences during January luncheon

Senator Erik Wells, a member of PRSA-WV Chapter, kicked off our first luncheon meeting of the chapter's 32nd year.

This PR consultant, state senator and Navy reservist shared captivating experiences from his recent military service in Afghanistan.

Wells, a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserves, joined the service in 2001. His current journey started last summer at Fort McGrady, South Carolina, with the Navy Individual Augmentee Combat Training. He was stationed in South Carolina for 17 days, and completed training focusing on weapons, combat first aid, IED recognition and cultural sensitivity.

From Fort McGrady, he traveled to Germany and Kuwait on his way to Afghanistan and his final destination of Camp Eggers in Kandahar. Wells was serving as part of an international force. His roommate was a member of the British Air Force. His best friends quickly became his firearm and his body armor.

Wells said literacy is the key to communications with Afghanistan's residents. "While I was in Afghanistan, I learned that literacy is a major issue for the country," Wells explained. "Only 43.1 percent of men and 12.6 percent of women are literate."

Wells' mission was to work with the Afghan Ministry of the Interior, which oversees the

Afghan National Civil Order Police and other security forces, on issues involving the public affairs division. He taught a public affairs school, including video editing and basic journalism techniques. He shared with Afghans the importance of standardizing press releases and implementing a duty phone system in the public affairs division. The international force also provided local contacts with "public affairs kits" including cameras and laptops as part of their education efforts.

Wells highlighted the need for flexibility in one's short, medium and long range communications plan when working in combat.



Join now and save \$50 for 2012

When you join PRSA National during February and use promotion code FEB12, you will receive a free one-year membership to the PRSA-West Virginia Chapter, a \$50 value.

This free Chapter offer is open to new members and reinstating members who have been inactive for at least one year and rejoin as regular members. (Associate and renewing members

are not eligible).

PRSA will be offering new Associate Members joining with less than two years of PR experience a free one-year membership in the New Professionals Section. Details are available online at www.prsa.org.

Invite a colleague to join during February and help us achieve our goal of 25 new members for 2012!

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FREE February PRSA Webinars

Visit www.prsa.org/learning to register for these webinars, free to PRSA members.

- *Getting Ready for the Readiness Review: Increase Your Chances of Being Advanced*
Feb. 14, 3–4 p.m. EST
Michael Tullier, APR, manager, development communications and marketing, Office of Development, Auburn University
- *Demonstrating the Value of the*

Work You Do: Barcelona Principles Overview/Principles 1 and 7 – Part 1

- Feb. 21, 3–4 p.m. EST
David Rockland, Ph.D., partner and CEO, Global Research and Ketchum Pleon Change
- *Creating Your Own Measurement Dashboard: Identifying the Right Metrics and How to Display Them*
Feb. 16, 3–4 p.m. EST
Angela Sinickas, president, Sinickas Communication, Inc.

We're clicking, not concentrating

Online multitasking makes it hard to think, making it harder for readers to concentrate when reading your copy online.

A 2005 study by the Institute of Psychiatry at the University of London showed that online multitasking temporarily lowers your IQ more than smoking marijuana.

In *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*, Nicholas Carr surveys the research on Web brain. Among the findings:

Links limit learning. More than 20 years of research shows that links cause Web visitors to:

Click instead of concentrating. Readers of hypertext often ended up clicking “through pages instead of reading them carefully,” according to a 1989 study.

Click instead of finding. Participants in a 1990 study who searched for the answers to a series of questions in print outperformed those who searched Web pages.

Click instead of comprehending. The more links in-

cluded in a passage, the less people understood, found a 1999 study by Erping Zhu. Readers have to devote more of their brain power to evaluating the links and deciding whether to click them.

Click instead of remembering. Readers of hypertext often “could not remember what they had and had not read” in a 1990 experiment.

So how do you write to get the word out online?

- Get to the point faster: Don't expect readers to read even the first paragraph to get your point.
- Chunk it up: Break your message into more, shorter pages.
- Write tight: Aggressively use all of the tools you use to condense copy for print.
- Lift ideas off the screen: Make copy easy to scan with micro-content or online display copy.
- Cut the fluff: Drop the adjectives, adverbs and hyperbole.
- Make it friendly: Engage readers with a conversational, me-to-you voice.

From Wylie's Writing Tips, Dec. 2011

50 for \$50

Join this list of PR professionals today in supporting students and other professionals and promoting statewide education through the West Virginia Chapter of PRSA.



Donors

Linda Arnold
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Helen Matheney APR
Kelly Merritt
Cindy Miller
Emily Seuffer
Diane Slaughter CAE
APR, Fellow
Debbie Starks
Lisa Wharton

Member news

Joe Long, APR, has established Lookout Public Relations, based in Charleston. He can be reached at 304.984.2779 or lookoutpr@frontier.com.

Leah Payne has assumed new duties as director of public affairs for the Marshall University School of Pharmacy and Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine. She can be reached at Marshall University School of Pharmacy/School of Medicine, 1600 Medical Center Drive, Suite 3410, Huntington, WV 25701, by calling 304.691.1713 or by emailing edwardl@marshall.edu.

Two public relations and advertising companies, The Manahan Group of Charleston and Stadelman Consulting of Elkins, are merging effective today. The merged firm is named The Manahan Group. The organization has 17 communications professionals.

George Manahan is chief executive officer of the merged company, **Chris Stadelman** is vice president of public relations in the merged company and **Kelly Stadelman** is vice president and manager of the Elkins office.

Emily Seuffer has been named a marketing officer for City National Bank. She can be reached at 304.769.1138 or Emily.Seuffer@CityHolding.com.

February meeting notice

Lobby tips for the PR professional

It's that time of year again. The Legislature is in session. There are many issues and many bills facing legislators, so how do you get your message heard? Veteran government relations professional Nancy Tonkin



will discuss the legislative process in general. She will give specifics about the appropriate role for a PR staffer to help their business have the most impact with legislators, including plans for timing and messaging.

Tonkin is president of Tonkin Management Group, a consulting firm specializing in government relations, association management and public relations, focusing on health care and human service issues. Her 30-year career has included successful work for the WV Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons, the WV Physical Therapy Association, the WV Human Resources Association and the WV Hospital Association, in addition to the WV Healthy Kids Coalition.

The Marriott Town Center Hotel will be hosting this noon luncheon meeting in the Hawks Nest room. Reservations for this meeting must be received by Friday, February 10. Cancellations after the deadline will be billed. The cost for the meeting is \$17 for students and members and \$22 for guests. You can register and pay online at www.prsawv.org.



Yes, I will attend the noon luncheon meeting on Wednesday, February 15.

Name _____

Company _____

Email _____

Guest _____

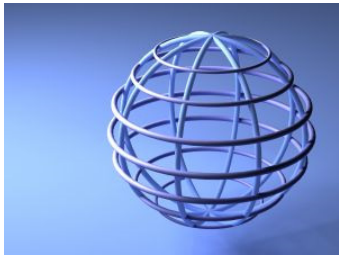
Company _____

Check enclosed for \$17 per student or member and \$22 per guest (\$_____)

Reservations are required for this meeting and must be received by Friday, February 10. Register by mail or online at www.prsawv.org. Make check payable and mail with reservation form to:

PRSA-WV Chapter
PO Box 13604
Charleston, WV 25360

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February 15, 2012
Lobby tips for PR pros
Nancy Tonkin

12:00-1:30 p.m.
Marriott Town Center Hotel
Board Meeting
10:30 a.m.



President's Corner

Debbie Starks

This is a great time of year for future and current members of PRSA and the West Virginia Chapter!

Your board has set a goal of recruiting 25 new members during 2012, while retaining 85 percent of our current members. By claiming over 100 PRSA members, our chapter would have two votes at PRSA's annual Assembly.

You can help us achieve these goals in three ways. First, please renew your dues in PRSA and the West Virginia Chapter when you receive your dues statement this year. Second, invite a colleague to join you at a monthly chapter meeting. Finally, you can encourage

your colleagues to join PRSA and our chapter during February. New members joining through www.prsa.org, and using the code FEB12, will receive one free year of chapter dues, a \$50 value. Associate members will receive one free year of membership in PRSA's New Professionals Section, a \$20 value.

Another value we are now offering to young professionals, and senior professionals, is a chapter mentorship program. Complete details and a registration form can be found on www.prsawv.org or by emailing we.are.pr@prsa.wv.org.

Mentors and mentees will work together for up to one year

at a schedule and in a manner they choose. You'll be matched based on areas of employment and responsibility, and all questions and discussions will be confidential. The mentees will gain insights based on the wealth of the mentor's experience. Mentors will have the opportunity to share their knowledge, experience and advice with those just starting in our profession. Mentees can be college seniors, graduate students or professionals with less than five years of experience.

See you in February!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah S. Starks".