

## FPRA Lunch 'N' Learn Discloses How to Survive a Media Controversy *by Amy Clark*

As many Bay Area residents may remember, the City of St. Petersburg came under a downpour of media scrutiny throughout 2006 and 2007 when a homeless Tent City community was removed from a designated right of way for fire code issues. It was this public relations nightmare that was the focus of FPRA Tampa Bay's January 2008 program, moderated by City of St. Petersburg Information Specialist **Lindsey Nickel – de la O** at the Sandler Sales Institute on Wednesday, January 30.

A group of chapter members gathered over bagged lunches to hear Nickel – de la O describe how it took a year of painstaking marketing and PR maneuvers for the city to reverse its negative media image.

"Our stance immediately went from action to reaction as we saw events unfold on the news and in the papers," Nickel – de la O explained. "Had our department been made aware sooner that the Tent City was to be dismantled, we could have taken measures to prepare the public. However, the mark of a good PR team is the ability to manage a media crisis and then rebuild an image."

With the influence of digital media, it took only days for the news to make it onto countless computer screens across the virtual world. Before the City of St. Petersburg knew it, what would typically be a problem known only to area residents was being scrutinized by political, news and human advocacy groups thousands of miles away.

Nickel – de la O and her team of fellow PR professionals quickly moved into high gear in an attempt to cushion the blows from the media and to work toward restoring the city's previously pleasant reputation. It took many man hours and a cohesive plan to ensure that team members were writing and disseminating vital information to the masses.

"The key to any crisis management plan is cohesiveness," Nickel – de la O reiterated. "It is important to remember that you and your team should be disseminating the same messages to your respective media."

The program's attendees then came together for brainstorming sessions. Nickel – de la O proposed three similar PR crises through which small groups devised appropriate crisis management plans. Each group may have focused on a different aspect of their crisis to be repaired, as well as different themes for rebuilding a reputation, but in the end, teamwork was the name of the game.



Lunch 'N' Learn attendees brainstorm solutions to crisis scenarios. Goodwill Marketing and Media Relations Manager Chris Ward, Alliance Communications Public Relations Coordinator Laura Bianco and City of Clearwater Public Safety Information Officer Elizabeth Daly-Watts



Four heads are better than one when solving a PR nightmare. USF Director of Media Relations Ken Gullette, PR Specialist Kathryn Rawson, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Director of PR Jill Cappadoro and Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County Communications Director Jamie Cataldo

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### Got News?

Please direct newsletter submissions to **exPRess** Editor, **Amy Clark**, by March 12, 2008.

### Online Job Bank



FPRA Tampa Bay's partnership with Jobing.com is in full swing. Although members and nonmembers can continue to post to the FPRA Tampa Bay website at no cost, you are now given an option to expand the exposure of your listing by posting (for a fee) to the Jobing.com website. This is not only a great opportunity for our job-posters, but it positions the FPRA Tampa Bay website as a great resource for job seekers. To post (or search) for a job, please visit [www.fpratampabay.org](http://www.fpratampabay.org) and click on the job bank link.



## FEBRUARY Program

### Members-Only Media Tour!

Date: Wednesday, February 20, 2008

Location: Bay News 9 Studios  
700 Carillon Pkwy. #9  
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

Time: The tour will begin at 11 a.m.

Lunch and a Q&A session from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

Come and enjoy the 2008 FPRA Members-Only Media Tour of the Bay News 9 Studios. The tour will last an hour and will be followed by a luncheon and a question and answer session with several of Bay News 9's producers and editors.

#### Bay News 9 Media Personalities will include

Jennifer Steffen, On Demand Programming Producer  
Tina Karaginnis, News Producer  
Gina McQueen, On Demand Programming Producer

Cost: Free

RSVP early at [fpratampabay@gmail.com](mailto:fpratampabay@gmail.com)

This tour will be limited to members only! If you are interested in becoming a member prior to the tour, please contact [Diana Clynes](#).

## APR NEWS

### ARE YOU READY FOR APR?

Find out by attending "Getting Ready for your Readiness Review" on February 27th, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Sandler Sales Institute, 4100 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 300. \$5 Members, \$10 non members. Please be sure to bring your own lunch.

### APR STUDY SESSIONS

Want to earn your APR this year, or just want to learn more about PR? **PLAN NOW** to join us for two four-hour sessions that will prepare you for taking your APR exam: **Saturday, March 29th and Saturday, April 5th, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.** The study sessions are **FREE** to FPRA Members and \$25 charge per session for non FPRA members. Classes will be held at Sandler Sales Institute, 4100 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 300.

### WHAT SHOULD I READ??

If you are thinking about getting your APR, here are a few books you should get and begin to read. If you are thinking of attending the study sessions, it's helpful if you read the \*\* text prior to attending. However, it is not required.

- \*\*Effective Public Relations. 9th ed. (Cutlip, Scott M., Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 2006.)
- Public Relations: Strategies and Tactics. 8th ed. (Wilcox, Dennis L., and Glen T. Cameron. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2005.)
- The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law (Goldstein, Norm, ed. New York: Basic Books, 2004.)

For more information on upcoming APR sessions, or to RSVP, please e-mail [Jan Luongo, APR](#), or call her at (813) 978-1992 x. 222.

## Roasted to Perfection - UPDATE

Come and enjoy one of FPRA Tampa Bay's most exciting events, the annual scholarship fundraiser. This year, FPRA will be roasting and toasting Tampa Bay's 10 News Chief Meteorologist **Dick Fletcher**! A parade of Fletcher's friends will say a few words and get in a few digs, all in the name of fun. The event will take place at **The Rusty Pelican at Rocky Point, at 2425 N. Rocky Point Dr.**, on Wednesday, March 19. Festivities will start at 6 p.m. with a silent auction, dinner, drinks and tons of laughs. Tickets are \$50 and proceeds benefit the FPRA Tampa Bay's Scholarship Fund. Space is limited, so purchase your tickets online today at [www.fpratampabay.org](http://www.fpratampabay.org). You don't want to miss this one!

For more information on the event or about applying for the scholarship, please contact FPRA Tampa Bay's Scholarship Chair [Michelle Foley](#).

### ABOUT DICK FLETCHER

Since 1980, Dick Fletcher has served the Tampa Bay area as chief meteorologist at 10 News, where he is responsible for operating the Weather Center and anchoring the weathercasts for the 4, 6 and 11 p.m. news each weekday. Fletcher has earned the American Meteorological Society's (AMS) Certified Broadcast Meteorologist designation. In 1987, AMS honored him with an award for Outstanding Service by a Broadcast Meteorologist.

He few reconnaissance aircraft missions into three hurricanes and penetrated the eye of the storm 15 times. The National Hurricane Conference presented him with the Distinguished Service Award in 2003 for his career leadership efforts in hurricane preparedness. He also received the Media award from the Governor's Hurricane Conference in 1993. Fletcher also works closely with the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless, forecasting the need for cold night shelters.

Fletcher holds a Bachelor's of Science degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and a Certificate of Broadcast Meteorology from Mississippi State University. He studied in the College of Marine Science at the University of South Florida. He lives in the Tampa Bay area with his wife.



Tampa Bay's 10  
Chief Meteorologist  
Dick Fletcher

## Board Member Spotlight TOM DAMICO



**Sponsorships Chair**  
Tom Damico

**Tom Damico** serves as communications assistant for BICSI, a professional association with headquarters in Tampa. BICSI supports more than 24,000 information transport systems (ITS)/telecommunications industry professionals with information, education and knowledge assessment. In this role, Damico is responsible for the day-to-day management of media relations, coordination of BICSI conference and trade show schedule, and communications activities to support implementation of departmental projects.

Damico holds a Bachelors degree in Communications from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va. He is currently serving as the Sponsorship Chair in his first term on FPRA Tampa Bay's Board of Directors, and is preparing for the process of earning his APR.

Born and raised in Virginia Beach, Va., Damico moved to Florida in 2000 and currently resides in the Hyde Park area of Tampa. He enjoys spending time with family and friends, and his extracurricular activities including tennis and cycling.

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## IMAGE AWARDS Update



With the **Call for Entries** distributed, FPRA's Image Awards preparation is officially in full swing. Keep your eyes peeled for the Image Awards "Tip of the Week," distributed by the Image Awards Chair in order to help you assemble your Image Awards entry. All entries are due by **Monday, March 3rd**.

The Image Awards competition is conducted annually by the Florida Public Relations Association to recognize outstanding public relations programs in Florida and to encourage and promote the development of public relations professionalism in our state.

The Image Awards have become a standard of public relations excellence in the state of Florida. Winners demonstrate the very best examples of innovation, planning and design. The awards competition includes four divisions of categories:

- Public Relations Programs;
- Printed Tools of Public Relations;
- Audio/Visual Tools of Public Relations;
- Student Projects in Public Relations.

To qualify for judging, an entry must incorporate sound public relations research and planning. Entries also must meet the highest standard of production, execution and evaluation of results and budget. For more information on Image Awards, please visit [http://fpratampabay.org/html\\_pages/image\\_awards.htm](http://fpratampabay.org/html_pages/image_awards.htm) or contact **Rebeca Searcey**.

## Goodbye and Good Luck!



**Jamie McIver**

FPRA Tampa Bay would like to wish Jamie McIver, a three-year board member of our chapter, the best of luck as she furthers her education in the public relations field. She has been accepted to Seton Hall University's Master of Strategic Communication and Leadership Program, which will begin in March 2008. Jamie's exciting news means that she has had to resign as the Chapter's Vice President of Communications in order to focus her energies on the 18-month program. She will surely be missed.

Jamie, your fellow board members would like to say that it has been a pleasure working with you. We sincerely appreciate the contributions you have made to the Chapter and the profession during your years as a board member. Best of luck to you!



[www.fpratampabay.org](http://www.fpratampabay.org)