

Kansas Professional Communicators

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Dear Mark,

Here is the May edition of the Kansas Professional Communicators newsletter.

Have a good weekend, and Happy Mother's Day on Sunday!

Quick Links

KPC Website
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We Need a KPC Treasurer

We need a member to write a few checks, record our income, and report how we are sticking to our budget. Most of the activity falls during March and April during preparations for our annual conference. We just finished the 2015 annual conference. We have a few months to help you transition into this job. It

As Communicators, We Have Skills to Offer the Best Professional Organization

From Carol Hockersmith:

In taking a look at the website for HigherEdJobs.com, I found an article "Why Join a Professional Association?" The author, Kelly A. Cherwin, communications editor for HigherEdJobs, has some points we should consider.



As she fleshes out her three points, she provides good reminders of what KPC should be offering members. Here are Cherwin's three reasons to take part in a group like Kansas Professional Communicators:

Enhance your network.

She says we should share ideas, ask advice, and participate in chat groups or discussion boards. Members of professional organizations should use peers as sounding boards. Who among our members would help set up such a chat group or discussion boards on our KPC website?

will look good on your resume!

Contact Carol Hockersmith, at carol.hockersmith@gmail.com

Wanted: Website developer/content manager

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Our Kansas Professional Communicators [website](#) is in need of an overhaul. If you have the passion for designing websites (or working with templates in a content management system), please consider volunteering. For more information, contact President Carol Hockersmith at carol.hockersmith@gmail.com.

We could easily discuss grammar questions and get feedback about new technology. Why aren't we? Who will take this on as a project?

We can always have video conference webinars to share ideas. We could throw out a topic and have a few members lead a discussion for a statewide virtual professional development event. I have access to the video conference system. I can provide a poll to find a time best for most. Who will volunteer to gather a couple for friends and collaborate for an hour video conference presentation? Take charge of your career.

Cherwin says professional organization can assist members through job listings, career resources on effective resumes or cover letters, job searching strategies, and negotiation techniques. We should have a place on our website to post "best practices" to give our members the edge in finding and keeping a job. Who will help us job security tool on our website?

Broaden your knowledge.

Cherwin credits professional organizations with providing access to case studies, articles, white papers, books, scholarship information, and awards. We need a place on our website to link to professional resources that could benefit our membership. Who among us could get us started with suggestions for the best links concerning training about how to credit quotes or how to look your best in front of the camera or how to enhance a PowerPoint to name a few ideas?

We had a great conference, yet we can do more professional development in more ways that face-to-face. I tell you, Kansas Professional Communicators is a great place to hone your communication skills and build your resume. You could be the one to set up our discussion board. Another one of you could design a video conference roundtable discussion. Another member could begin a section with links to webpages that would help us all. You could be adding it to your resume to show you are active in your professional organization and trying new things. Our current webmaster is ready to move into action to plan national conference, and she needs other members to assist with the website. Who out there could assist KPW to make our website current, viable, and the center of our organization? I want to hear from several of you. Contact me at carol.hockersmith@gmail.com.

Carol Hockersmith

President and acting treasurer
Kansas Professional Communicators

Gloria Freeland of Kansas State named top communicator

A Kansas State University professor and promoter of community newspapers received the highest coveted award by the Kansas Professional Communicators April 24 during the organization's annual spring conference.

Gloria Freeland was awarded the 2015 Communicator of Achievement (COA) award. Freeland has taught in Kansas State University's journalism and mass communications program for 32 years. She coordinates the internship program and directs the Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media. In addition, she writes an award-winning blog, "Kansas Snapshots." Freeland was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador and co-manager of "The San Jose News" in Costa Rica. She also worked on several Kansas weeklies. She received her B.A. in journalism and MBA from K-State.



Freeland will represent the state of Kansas for the national COA title in mid-September at the National Federation of Press Women's (NFPW) conference in Anchorage, Alaska. The COA is the highest honor bestowed by NFPW upon members who have distinguished themselves within and beyond their profession. The recipient, chosen from nominees selected by state affiliates, is recognized for exceptional achievement in the communications field, service to NFPW and to the community.

The Kansas COA and communication contests state award were presented during a banquet, following a day full of education, skill development and interaction with communication professionals. Seminars and speakers

focused on building professional skills in researching large projects, digital tools for today's communicators and news events of today in Kansas.

For more information about KPC, visit www.kansasprofessionalcommunicators.org.

For more information about NFPW, visit www.nfpw.org. More details can be obtained from Wilma Moore-Black, CO Director for Kansas Professional Communicators at 316.978.6113.



2015 Kansas Professional Communicators Communicator Of Achievement Gloria Freehand, center, is joined by former KPC Communicators of Achievement. Front row, left, Jeff Goudie, right Gwen Larson; back row left, Pris Chansky, Elizabeth Kennedy, and Jennifer Latzke. (KPC photo.)

KPC Winners

Congratulations to all of the winners who earned awards at the KPC conference in April!

You can find a complete list of winners [here](#).



Winners of the 2015 KPC Communications Contest gathered for a photo at the convention April 24, at Rolling Hills Zoo, Salina. Front row, left, Jeffrey Ann Goudie; Gwer Larson, Monica Springer, and Jessica Marston. Back row, left, Jennifer Latzke, Gayle Donaldson, Angela Gaughan; and Macy Becker. (KPC Photo.)

Sessions

Here are notes from Dave Bergmeier about the speakers at the KPC Conference!

"The Nuts and Bolts of Researching Large Projects"

Pat Ackerman, a professor of language arts at Kansas State University, Salina, Kan., published a book "Marymount College of Kansas: A History." Her project involved extensive research to capture the story as her research took her not only from Salina, but to the Sisters of St. Joseph, Concordia, who knew there was a need for Kansas' first all-women's college, particularly for promoting education a long term goal of the Catholic church in the western frontier days

In doing her research she learned to:

Keep an open mind, let the story take it to where it needs to go and refine as you need; be tenacious and let it be an opportunity to accomplish good; allow yourself to be inspired by the success of others; if you have a vision listen to it. Although writing a book is difficult, it is an opportunity to create your own legacy.

Practical advice about writing in general, "write, submit; write, submit; write, submit." She said do not fear rejection

as it happens to all writers. The art of writing involves deadlines and every piece of writing can be rewritten but deadlines are a part of the profession.

She encouraged writers to create habits that allow them to develop patterns. They should be passionate readers themselves be passionate and persistent.

Lessons learned from her own experience included taking time to double check facts and anecdotes; be open minded be willing to share undiscovered documents with hosts.

She advised listening to the publisher's insight. While it may seem formula style in some ways, their success speaks for themselves. She also said be open to comments and criticism from readers and respond to requests to visit with them, whether in person, email or telephone.

"Stop Stinking at Social Media"

Presenters were Mark Vierthaler and Monica Springer and they both work at Servi-Tech Inc., Dodge City, Kan. Mark is director of communications and Monica is a communication specialist.

Social media is important for companies, members of the media and freelancers. Social media can help increase brand recognition, boosts branding and opportunities to attract more business. Even freelance writers are a brand and social media needs to be treated as a way to augment it. Social media is not designed to do away with traditional advertising, but rather to augment marketing efforts. Traditional media still commands respect and authority and credibility is an important aspect. People who use social media need to take it seriously. Do not look at as a way to silence critics (within reason) but as a way to respond to criticism, which can improve the product or service or address a misperception. Mistakes made by some companies have included only allowing positive experience and on purpose deleting it negative ones. The experts said was important to be real or authentic.

Social media allows for an increase in inbound traffic flow o information and can allow for affordable marketing opportunities.

They suggested that freelancers have their own websites, too, as a way to build their own credibility. They need to keep it updated with multiple ways in which they can be reached by traditional telephone and email to social media.

They reviewed Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn (which is important for professional development and they both urged members to use it); Instagram, blogs, Pinterest, Snapchat, Vine, and YouTube.

They told members who have not been involved with social media to take it one step at a time, take notes and ask questions. Optimize your opportunities.

They encouraged members to enjoy social media opportunities but also to be aware of responsibilities and pitfalls. Common sense should be the rule. "When in doubt, don't post."

Get multiple viewpoints, if necessary, on a proper response
Never attack or call out someone. Humor can be effective if it is fun and not offensive. Don't become associated with bots or "feed the trolls" (those just wanting to stir up controversy.) Listen to even in the harshest critics, but remember you control your own responses and sometimes the best response is to ignore.

Chat rooms in certain communities can be something to monitor and be useful.

Here is the slideshow: [Stop Stinking at Social Media](#)



Behind the Scenes: You can't make this stuff up

Olaf Frandsen, editor/publisher of the Salina Journal, talked about his experiences handing the news behind the scenes

Frandsen talked about covering baby Jessica's fall down a well in Texas in 1987, beating the competition within the competitive media market, as well as other topics.



KPC Kudos!

From Carol Hockersmith:

Kudos to Jennifer Latzke, past president, for coordinating speakers for the April 24 conference of Kansas Professional Communicators and preparing the Eventbrite website, agenda, bios, and budget handouts.

Kudos to Dave Bergmeier, communications contest chair, and his mentor Gayle Donaldson, secretary, for pulling together the communications contest awards ceremony. Congratulations to all winners, and to Monica Springer for sweeping the contest with the most awards. Donaldson put together a fine PowerPoint presentation of winning entries.

Kudos to Wilma Moore-Black, chair for Communicator of Achievement, for coordinating the search for our 2015 Kansas Communicator of Achievement. She did great in finding us Gloria Freeland to compete for Kansas in the NFPW COA competition.



Kudos to Cori Dodds, scholarship chair, for working with University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Wichita State University, and Fort Hays University faculty to find our 2015 KPC Scholarship winners. Each scholar will have \$500 towards college expenses next fall.

Kudos to Becky Funke, vice-president of bylaws, for getting us lined up for a bylaws change. Even though Becky was required to be in a training session about websites for her workplace, she got us what we needed ahead of conference to make our vote about turning our scholarship program into a professional development funds to benefit professional members.

Kudos to Gwen Larson, vice president of membership, and Jennifer Latzke, past president, for coordinating the Silent Auction for us. They made bid sheets and collected the money.

Kudos to all members who provided Silent Auction items and kudos to members who bid on items. We garnered \$148.50 to add to our professional development fund account at the Topeka Community Foundation.

Kudos to Jeffery Ann Goudie, historian, for her research about the service of past-president Carol Francis, upon the death of Francis, and her communication with Francis's daughter.

Kudos to Monica Springer, newsletter chair, for recapping it all in a timely newsletter. She was a great conference speaker, too.

Kudos to Monica Springer for offering to chair the 2016 Kansas Professional Communicators spring conference. We are looking forward to it.

Scholarship Fund Replaced by

Professional Development Fund

From Jenni Latzke:

At the April 24, 2015, KPC Annual Membership Meeting, the members present voted to strike the long-standing Scholarship Program from the By-Laws and replace it with a "Professional Development Fund."

Now, this decision to strike the Scholarship Program did not come about lightly. It was the product of at least three years of discussions with Scholarship Chairmen, KPC Board Members, and Members. This was the final step in that long process.

In speaking with members and with former Scholarship Chairmen, there was a call to either reform the Scholarship Program or strike it completely and replace it with more member development opportunities.

On the reform side, members and the board bandied about ideas, such as: reducing the number of scholarships given and increasing the size of the award to encourage students to apply; increasing the number of schools eligible to apply for the awards beyond the four of KSU, KU, WSU and FHSU; and offering membership to scholarship winners to encourage their participation in KPC.

On the striking side, reasons to stop the program included: the increasing amount of time spent by members just to find funding for the scholarships and a call by members to spend more time on dues paying members' professional development.

In the summer and fall of 2013, the KPC Board formed an exploratory committee to come up with options for the scholarship program, including the Scholarship Chairman Deb Umberger, Gwen Larson and Becky Funke.

They came back to the board with several options, which the board decided to present to the KPC membership at the 2014 KPC Annual Membership Meeting in Hutchinson. The membership voted at that time to direct the board to figure out the By-Laws changes necessary to discontinue the Scholarship Program, create a plan for a Professional Development Fund, present those to the members before the 2015 KPC Annual Membership Meeting, and to give the four scholarships one last time in Spring 2015.

That brings us to this spring and the By-Laws change that was approved striking the Scholarship Program. The change appeared before members in the newsletter before Conference, according to By-Laws. It was passed with a 2/3 majority of the members present.

The next step is to flesh out the Professional Development Fund in the KPC Handbook. The Handbook, unlike the By-Laws, only requires board approval to change.

The KPC Board already has some ideas on how the Professional Development Fund will be formed and used. The board is asking members to give their input over the next few months so that by our Fall Board Meeting we have an idea of what you, dues-paying members, wish to see in the way of professional development for your membership.

We know that this was a difficult decision, but in looking ahead at the future of KPC, we, the Board, think it's vital that we put members needs first right now. We see more freelance members joining us, and we need to provide them professional skills development as well as a networking opportunity with others in the field. We see the opportunities of perhaps using this fund for a fall skills development session, or to offer some web-based learning opportunities. There's an opportunity to use this fund to create mini-grants for members to use for skills development and to bring those educational opportunities back to the members as speakers for conference.

Together, we are looking forward to what benefits our members-how we can improve the benefits they receive from membership in KPC. Now and in the future of this great organization.

NFPW Comes to Kansas in 2016

From Gwen Larson:

Plans are moving full steam ahead for the 2016 NFPW conference hosted by Kansas Professional Communicators in Wichita. Each member of the steering committee is in charge of a piece of the conference and is putting together her task team now. Don't be surprised if you get an email or phone call from:

- Gwen Larson, conference co-chair, tours
- Becky Funke, conference co-chair, finances
- Beth Chiles Hershberger, program
- Monica Springer, communications
- Alicia Rangel, design

Obtaining sponsorships to offset costs are key to keeping the registration price low and ensuring the conference is profitable. It's the major fundraiser for NFPW and the host affiliate.

We are looking for a sponsorship chair for conference - someone who will put together a team to identify potential donors and develop the ask. These sponsors are not limited to the Wichita area; in fact, statewide entities are even better. (South Carolina drew Duke Energy and the state tourism board.) Sponsor levels range from \$250 to \$5,000.

If you're interested in working on sponsorships, please contact Gwen Larson at gazettegl@yahoo.com or Becky Funke at rfunke@cox.net.

Keep Up to Date with NFPW

Highlights from the Spring issue of Agenda, the newsletter of the National Federation of Press Women
(<http://www.nfpw.org/pdf/currentissue.pdf>):

Strategic planning - your national board meet in Las Vegas for some intense planning for the future of our organization. We emerged with four key strategic areas and action items. These areas are conferences, membership, contest and advocacy.



Alaska conference - is coming up quickly: Sept. 10-12, 2014! Planned tours include visits to Fairbanks and Denali National Park as well as a glacier tour of Prince William Sound.

First-timer grants - members of NFPW who are attending their first national conference can apply for grants from the NFPW Education Fund, which will pay for registration (\$395 value). The deadline is July 15 to apply.

Want to Save Money on Airfare to Alaska?

From Gwen Larson:

Consider applying for an Alaska Air credit card from Bank of

America and using miles to purchase your ticket. Once accepted for the card, you'll be billed the \$75 annual fee and handed 25,000 miles (no minimum spend required). Many routes to Anchorage are available for 25,000 miles round trip (plus \$38).

Caveat: Before you get the card, check that trips from your favorite airport are available for points. Flights from Wichita using miles are getting scarce, although Kansas City still seems to have plenty of selection (as does Oklahoma City, that's an option).



Sincerely,

Monica Springer
Kansas Professional Communicators

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