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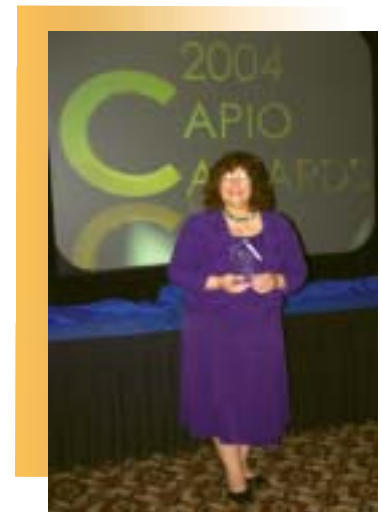
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## Clark Award Winner Named Life Member

Ann Erdman, PIO for the City of Pasadena and 2004 Paul B. Clark Award winner, has been named a lifetime member of CAPIO. Honored for more than 20 years of excellence in public information, Ann joins just 17 other members throughout California to have received the coveted Clark Award, named in commemoration of CAPIO founder and former City of Carson PIO, Paul B. Clark, who passed away in 1987.

“Receiving CAPIO’s highest honor was a complete surprise,” said Ann. “I am grateful to those who nominated me for my 25-year body of work, and to the CAPIO Board of Directors for selecting me.”

Ann has managed the Public Affairs Office for the City of Pasadena since 1991. She and three employees handle media, public and community relations for the city while serving the communication needs of the mayor and city council, city manager and city departments. In addition she serves as city spokeswoman to the media, oversees programming for the government-access television station, and is the editor of the community newsletter *Pasadena In Focus*.



Clark award winner Ann Erdman shows off her prize at the 2004 CAPIO Awards.

Ann works with public and private school groups of all ages, helping them learn how local government works, allowing them to experience first-hand how it feels to be a city leader and decision-maker through role-playing in the Council Chambers at City Hall, and developing “scavenger hunts” so children can appreciate the history and architecture of Pasadena City Hall.

Longtime CAPIO members Judy Rambeau, Scott Summerfield and Tom Manheim, all past Clark Award winners, presented a plaque of achievement to Ann during the 2004 Conference and Awards Ceremony in Monterey.

# Best Practices:

## Lessons Learned Opening the MLK Library in San Jose

by Sharon Russell and Lorraine Oback

Opening the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, the first joint library in the United States between a major university and metropolitan city, was a unique opportunity for San Jose State University and the City of San Jose to introduce their combined library collections and services.

The challenges the project presented were to reach many diverse audiences with a limited budget, explain how this first-of-its-kind library operates, overcome skepti-



cism, and entice non-academic patrons to the imposing building on the campus. At the end of the campaign, awareness and community support of the King Library was widespread. The library exceeded its visitor goals by 45%. The opening celebration communications campaign was a 2004 CAPIO Award of Excellence winner.

So, what did we learn that would help anyone plan a successful campaign? Here's our list of best practices:

***Start earlier than you think you should.***

***Plan your work and work your plan because:***

- ◆ It will keep you focused.
  - ◆ It defines when and what tasks must be completed.
  - ◆ The devil is in the details.
- Don't focus on the budget because:***
- ◆ There will never be enough.
  - ◆ It will halt the creative process.
  - ◆ Donors and dollars always come through.

***Hire consultants (if possible) that are connected to the community because:***

- ◆ They know the donors and volunteers.
- ◆ They know the 'movers and shakers'.
- ◆ They can accomplish things you cannot.

***Spread your mission, vision and values early because:***

- ◆ It will set a positive atmosphere.
- ◆ People will want to be a part of it.
- ◆ It can motivate employees and the public.

***Identify themes and messages early because:***

- ◆ You need them to build your publicity, advertising and outreach campaigns.
- ◆ You want to "brand" the campaign so people remember.
- ◆ You want to build community awareness.

***Recruit and train docents earlier than you think you should because:***

- ◆ It takes longer than you think to recruit and train.
- ◆ It takes longer than you think to plan docent tours.
- ◆ They can practice on staff and

work out the kinks.

***Know your product because:***

- ◆ You can't market what you don't know.
- ◆ When you know all aspects you are prepared to support it.
- ◆ This helps you manage your partners.

***Focus on the positive because:***

- ◆ It energizes you.
- ◆ Others will take care of the negative.
- ◆ You must believe before you can achieve .

***Meet with internal and external stakeholders because:***

- ◆ They can make suggestions and provide solutions you never dreamed of.
- ◆ Engage the community - it's their public building.
- ◆ You want to build community support? Find out what they need.

***Ask for help because:***

- ◆ If no one knows you need it they can't offer it.
- ◆ You really can't be successful alone.
- ◆ No campaign is a one-person show.

*Sharon Russell was the Program Manager for the new Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library and co-manager for the Grand Opening Campaign. Lorraine Oback is the Marketing Communications Director for the San Jose Public Library System.*



# Member News from Around the State

## **San Francisco Department of Human Services**



“Public information officials representing all departments in the City of San Francisco meet in the Mayor’s office once a week. The need to keep all PIOs on the same page is vital. We didn’t want to read in the newspapers what was going on in other departments in our own city. So each person gives a short update about past, present and future projects. It’s working great.”

*- Pamela Tebo, Assistant to the Executive Director*

## **City of Anaheim**



“In order to provide our residents with up-to-the-minute information, the City of Anaheim implemented a Breaking News email where press releases are immediately sent out to subscribers. Anyone can sign up to receive the updates and we now have about 500 subscribers. We send out three to four press releases per week, and we have about half a dozen people signing up per week. The major benefit of the Breaking News email is subscribers understand exactly what we are saying before the information is filtered through the media.”

*- John Nicoletti, Public Information Manager*

## **Riverside County Department of Public Social Services**



“Public information is still somewhat uncharted territory in social service agencies. Many agencies do not have a designated public info/media person. And with tight budgets and declining services, counties are faced with more public and media interest and scrutiny. Our agency designates one of our members each month to be the “duty officer” to serve as a resource for other counties to call upon when questions/situations arise that are beyond their realm of expertise.”

*- Leslie Escoto, Public Information/Media Liaison*

# Using Web Sites for Project Management, Public Outreach and Involvement

by Willi Paul

**D**o you have a big annual event coming up? Does your agency need to develop a plan that involves public participation and buy-in? Or perhaps your Board needs a quick survey of your community concerning an environmental issue? Consider setting up a web site to handle all of the above needs!

One key decision making tool created from the dot com days are low-cost, Internet-based web sites, or project portals, that facilitate group research and writing, education and publicity. A project web site can be password protected (as the CAPIO listserv is) for a small consultant-driven internal team, or open to all citizens! The design of a project portal is just like initiating any non-electronic project management tool: What are your goals? The schedule? And what are the desired outcomes?

## How would you run the following projects from your desktop:

1. A three (3) hour focus group that includes staff and representatives from non-profits and the public.
2. A one (1) week public opinion poll.
3. Collaboration of a new strategic communications plan with off-site team members.

Two leading web-based applications one can use to accomplish these projects are Microsoft SharePoint and phProjekt. The SharePoint portal is a hosted, low cost, “click and go” tool that comes with a vast array of functionality like discussion boards, polls, email notification and password protection. The project leader (“administrator”) can add and customize the look of the web site to personalize the logo and colors of the sponsoring organization. phProjekt has all of the functionality, and more, of SharePoint but is not as graphics friendly. Generally, the SharePoint portal is better for fixed-length public web site projects while phProjekt is a better bargain for internal project management. The one large catch with phProjekt is that it requires specialized technical

knowledge of open source code to install.

## What are some of the advantages of using web sites for project management, public outreach and involvement?

- Fewer face-to-face meetings can equal money savings from less travel-related costs;
- A web portal can help build new associations, business networks and public communities;
- The Internet promotes a new PR channel – as in a downloadable event poster;
- Improving over-all project efficiency. Web-based projects are potentially running 24/7 and accessible from any computer with Internet access!
- Discussions and files are recorded and saved over the life of the project, creating a digital archive for later use and evaluation.

In conclusion, the focus group web site could include a set of directions and resources (i.e.- maps or a budget?) that the participants debate using a discussion board to share ideas and agree on a policy statement. The opinion poll can be set up in a few minutes using an online menu and can be targeted to specific people or to a general audience. And finally, a project portal can facilitate multiple document iterations so common in plan writing for the new strategic communications plan.

It is possible that future CAPIO member trainings and conferences could be run through a web portal right to your desktop!



*Willi Paul is currently the Public Outreach Manager for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission - Alameda Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan.*

# POINT OF VIEW

Elizabeth Emmett, CAPIO Second Vice President

Special districts can't afford to be invisible.

When community residents decide they need services in addition to or at a higher level than their city or county can provide, they can form a special district to perform that service. They can tax themselves to fund the district (a non-enterprise district) or they can establish an enterprise special district, which charges customers directly for the services rendered.

No matter how special districts are funded, we can generalize that they share some common public outreach concerns. Special districts historically tend to be somewhat "invisible" to the communities they serve, unless and until there is an event that focuses the attention of the community and the local media their way. A community floods. There is a rash of crime in neighborhood parks. A wastewater treatment plant is found to be in violation of its clean water permit. A governor and legislature propose to raid the funding that keeps the district operating.

Until fairly recently, most special districts had viewed community outreach as an optional activity, the dollop of ice cream on top of the pie.

No more.

Now more than ever, special districts need to cultivate and nurture the good will and the support of the communities they serve. Residents need to

understand and appreciate the contributions and programs of a special district if they are expected to support the district's interests at the ballot box. Elected officials need to know how planning, land use and funding allocations affect the political and social environments in which special districts operate.

So what can a one-person (perhaps even part-time) community relations staffer do, to increase the visibility and credibility of his or her agency?

Some outreach basics should be the first step:

1) Ensure that your agency has a clear visual identity, including letterhead, envelopes, signage and vehicle markings. If a resident can't recognize your logo at a glance, they will have trouble remembering you.

2) Produce good, basic fact sheets about your agency and what you do. Make them available through any employee who may have contact with the public. The fact sheets don't have to be expensive; they have to be free of jargon and clear about your agency's tie to the community.

3) Create and maintain a Web site.

4) Buy or negotiate for free space in your local phone directory, in the blue community pages.

For a part-time PIO or for a non-enterprise district with limited funds, those minimum steps may be the depth and

breadth of your community outreach. If time and resources allow, however, expand your efforts to include

- a speakers' bureau
- annual reports to the community
- collaborative efforts with community groups whose interests compliment yours (e.g. fishing clubs that use your reservoirs)
- outreach to your local elected officials, aimed at educating them about you. Offer tours of your facilities, and let them talk to your customers and employees. Offer them your analysis of proposed legislation or ordinances that affect you.

Special districts cannot afford to be invisible any longer. Need help getting started? Contact any of your CAPIO Board members or the California Special Districts Association at [www.csda.net](http://www.csda.net).



*Elizabeth Emmett is the Public Information Representative for the Sonoma County Water Agency.*

## *Communicator Deadline*

Do you have a tip that would help others do a great job? We want to hear from you! Send articles for the next Communicator to [Micheline Golden](#) by July 15.