

# Put Your Chapter in the Public Eye and Reap Big Rewards

BY MARIA INES MARIN

Your chapter offers a vital service to the payroll profession and the community. It not only provides a forum for local payroll practitioners to network and receive first-rate education, it also supplies a vehicle to reach out to the community, public servants, and local businesses to further educate the public about the importance of the payroll profession and the significant role payroll professionals play in their lives.

## The Purpose of Publicity

The meetings and events conducted by your chapter define what your chapter is all about and why your chapter exists. If your events are going to be successful and the chapter is going to grow, it's essential to publicize your chapter's activities, both before and after they take place.

Even small public relations efforts can enhance your chapter's image, strengthen your chapter's credibility, create goodwill toward your chapter in the community, and place your chapter in the public eye. Publicity for your chapter's events achieves three significant objectives:

1. It lets people know about your event so they can participate.
2. It lets people know how successful your event was and helps build more excitement and interest in your chapter.
3. It lets the community know what your chapter has accomplished, plans to accomplish, and how your endeavors will affect them.

## Strategize for Success

To get your message out, there are a number of routes your chapter can take to obtain publicity for chapter meetings and events. APA publishes monthly information on chapter events in both PAYTECH magazine and the EPX e-newsmagazine. Statewide meetings, special awards, NPW celebrations, and the success of chapter CPP/FPC Study Groups are just a few examples of the topics covered in the columns. In both PAYTECH and EPX, the Chapter Network column is reserved exclusively for chapter-related events and news stories.

APA's Members Only Web site also maintains pages for chapter-related information. Your chapter's online profile, contact information, Web site link, and a host of other information can be found there.

Chapter newsletters are another good form of publicity. Newsletters inform your members about what is going on in the chapter, but they will also find their way into the hands of nonmembers. In fact, it's a good idea to suggest to members that newsletters be passed along to colleagues once they are read. Newsletter information should be accurate, timely, and



always upbeat. Your newsletter's goal is to get people excited about your chapter and the prospect of attending a meeting or event, so a positive tone is very important.

## Get Your Message Out

There are a number of ways to obtain publicity for chapters, meetings, and events: PAYTECH magazine, which has a national audience of more than 22,000 APA members; the APA Web site, [www.americanpayroll.org](http://www.americanpayroll.org); your chapter's newsletter; ePayXpress (EPX), APA's monthly e-newsmagazine (located online at [www.americanpayroll.org/epayx/epayxpress.html](http://www.americanpayroll.org/epayx/epayxpress.html)); media advisories; community Web sites; "weekend" sections of the newspaper; public access television and local TV stations; local newspapers; local radio; community Web sites; and national APA mailings.

## Send Media Advisories

Local newspapers are a perfect way to get publicity for your chapter. In advance of your event, find out the name of the events editor or other appropriate editors who would be interested in that information, especially if it pertains to community outreach, charity, and social events (i.e. the features or social editor). Then, write a media advisory to let that editor know about your event. A media advisory contains the following:

**Who:** Start with your desired audience or participants to help draw attendees ("More than 100 payroll professionals are expected to attend..."). Also, remember to mention your chapter as the host of the event and include a list of local sponsors, key instructors, and special guests.

**What:** Name and describe your event.

**When:** Give the date and time of your event.

**Where:** Offer the location of your event and include a street address.

**Why:** Explain the reason your chapter is holding the event and ensure that it's newsworthy. It's best to find an angle that makes your event unique or different to further entice editors.

**Contact:** Always be sure to include the event coordinator's

name, or the name of an easily accessible, reliable, chapter member. List your contact's phone number and e-mail address so readers know where to go "for more information."

### Start Spreading the News

Visit popular community Web sites and consider promoting your chapter events by adding your information online. For the Alamo Chapter of the APA, for example, Web sites such as [www.gosanantonio.com](http://www.gosanantonio.com) or [www.mysanantonio.com](http://www.mysanantonio.com) are ideal. Ask to be listed in the community events or related sections.

Most major daily newspapers publish a "weekend" section, which contains a calendar of public events. Business journals in most major cities also publish calendar items, depending on the type of event. Send a media advisory out to the person in charge of the calendar for the newspaper or business journal.

Public access television "bulletin boards" routinely provide a forum for local business events and meetings. Many local TV stations in your city or town have a community calendar. Send a media advisory out to the person in charge of the community calendar for the local station.

City or town newspapers targeted to a smaller area are ideal for publicizing your chapter's events. Local newspapers often list a calendar of local events. Take digital photos (2 megapixel or greater) during your events and send them to your local newspaper's "social," "local," or "metro" section editor with a synopsis of what took place, especially if it's a repeated or annual event. Editors and writers are generally listed in each section so you can find out what editors, writers, and columnists would be best suited to receive the information.

If your newspaper does not list the proper editors, call and ask for the appropriate names and contact information.

If your chapter's budget permits, contact your local radio station and speak with a sales representative about producing a radio announcement. Radio spots are an impressive and effective way to promote your chapter's event.

Consider sending online announcements and invitations to your meetings. One chapter recently sent an e-vite as a cost-effective and simple way to invite local business professionals, vendors, and prospects to the chapter's events. The invitation is sent directly to e-mail addresses.

### Use APA Resources

APA National electronic mailing lists offer another way of reaching out to payroll professionals in your area. Any APA local chapter can request an electronic mailing list of active APA members in its geographic area. The selected area can be defined by state, city, or zip codes. This is a great way to introduce your chapter to prospective members in the area.

The best way to publicize your chapter event is to share its success with APA members. APA's Chapter Relations Department is ready to write and publish your photos about recent chapter events and special meetings in the PAYTECH or EPX Chapter Network columns.

Send your stories or event details to me at [mmarin@americanpayroll.org](mailto:mmarin@americanpayroll.org). APA will follow up with a brief interview or contact you by e-mail. For public relations tips, please contact APA's Public Relations Department at [press@americanpayroll.org](mailto:press@americanpayroll.org)

## The Greatest Reward of Leadership Is Self-Discovery

BY RAEANN HOFKIN, CPP

Who would have thought when I decided to run for the office of Chapter President it would be such a big, personal growth opportunity? Thinking back on my first year as President in 2005, I was inspired to share my story, in hopes of motivating others to run for officer or board positions in their local chapters.

I am sure all chapters have their own political struggles to overcome, and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter (SEPA) is no exception. Along with the challenges related to those issues, the title of President or any other officer position comes with numerous responsibilities. Some responsibilities are known and others require a learning curve. However, it is the responsibilities that are unknown that make for a wonderful personal growth experience.

During my first year, I have learned that I am capable of public speaking. I am also learning the art of compromise and how to facilitate discussions among those with strong opinions and philosophies. I am learning when to bend and when to take a stand to support the goals of the chapter. I have become a good negotiator, event planner, newsletter editor, Web site designer, study group coordinator,

volunteer motivator, writer, organizer, vendor relations expert, and sometimes even a referee.

The beauty of being part of a chapter is the diversity of its membership, and every person who joins has something special to contribute. Different people join local chapters for different reasons, but my reason was simple. I just wanted to help people. I get a sense of accomplishment by being able to help someone in need. I believed running for office was a way to accomplish this goal. What I found was the same thing that many others who have taken this step have found: I received so much more than I gave.

Some chapter members will run for office, many will consider running for office, and others will be happy just attending meetings. I am hoping to reach those of you who are considering running for office in an APA local chapter. If you have considered it for even a moment, stop again to reflect on what the experience holds in store for you. It's a path of self-discovery and you may recognize that you have many hidden talents. The rewards are both personal and professional, so take that leap. You won't be disappointed.

***Raeann Hofkin, CPP, is President of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Chapter (SEPA).***

## APA Adds a New Chapter in 'The Azalea City'



Left to right: Terri Gresham of MCG Business Solutions (Secretary); Kim Hopper- Member of MCG Business Solutions (chapter member); Delvon Cowans of MCG Business Solutions (President); and Mary Cowan of GA West & Company Inc. (Treasurer).

### To learn more, contact the Azalea City Chapter

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## Wear Your Favorite Pajamas at Congress

When you were a kid, do you remember the excitement you felt before heading over to your best friend's slumber party? You rolled up your sleeping bag and pulled out your warmest (or coolest) pajamas to get ready for a fun night ahead.

Here's your chance to re-live those precious childhood memories! Dress up in your favorite pajamas for the Congress Costume Contest on May 23 and compete for a prize in 10 categories: Best Character, Sports, or Super Hero pajamas; Best Mismatched pajamas; Wildest House Shoes or Slippers; Grandma's Favorite "Muumuu" or House Dress; Most Creative Use of Flannel; Most Glamorous Robe; Best Animal-print or Animal pajamas; Best Use of Blanket or Sleeping Bag; Cuddliest Comfort Toy for Bedtime; and Best-dressed Pajama Party (group category).

Judging will take place in the Exhibit Hall before this year's party, so make plans to change into your costume or wear it all day May 23rd!

## Officer Trainings Scheduled for June, October

Are you an officer of an APA local chapter who is interested in networking with other chapter volunteers and learning more to help your chapter grow? If so, you'll want to attend the 2006 Chapter Leadership Seminars held at the San Antonio Learning Center on Saturday, June 24, 2006 and Saturday, October 7, 2006.

For a registration form, contact the APA Chapter Relations Department at (210) 226-4600 or e-mail us at [chapterrelations@americanpayroll.org](mailto:chapterrelations@americanpayroll.org).

## 2006 Study Groups

### Detroit Chapter (CPP)

Location: Detroit, Mich. • Date: May 11–August 24, 2006  
Meeting Schedule: Thursdays, 6:30–9:30 p.m.  
Contact: Susan Sather, CPP, (734) 462-4400, ext. 5368, or e-mail [ssather@schoolcraft.edu](mailto:ssather@schoolcraft.edu)

### Gateway Association of Payroll Professionals (CPP/FPC)

Location: St. Louis, Mo. • Date: June 1–September 14, 2006  
Meeting Schedule: Thursdays, 6–9 p.m.  
Contact: Candy Reiter, CPP, (314) 256-5006, or e-mail [Candace.m.reiter@erac.com](mailto:Candace.m.reiter@erac.com)

### Susquehanna Valley Chapter (CPP)

Location: Lancaster, Pa.  
Date: June 14–August 16, 2006  
Meeting Schedule: Wednesdays, 5:30–7:30 p.m.  
Contact: Carol Zeigler, CPP, (717) 396-5957, or e-mail [czeigler@armstrong.com](mailto:czeigler@armstrong.com)

### Washington Metropolitan Area Chapter (CPP/FPC)

Location: Springfield, Va.  
Date: July 12–August 30, 2006  
Meeting Schedule: Wednesdays, 6–9 p.m. and Saturdays, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.  
Contact: Lori Brown, CPP, (703) 310-3155, or e-mail [lori.brown@stanleyassociates.com](mailto:lori.brown@stanleyassociates.com)

## 2006 Statewide/Regional Meetings

### 21st Annual Tri-State Conference

Location: TBA • Meeting Schedule: TBA  
Contact: Daniel Dycus, CPP, (703) 854-0955, or e-mail [Daniel.dycus@sunriseseniorliving.com](mailto:Daniel.dycus@sunriseseniorliving.com)  
Conference Web site: [www.wmac-apa.org](http://www.wmac-apa.org)

### California Payroll Conference 10

Location: Marriott Hotel, Monterey, Calif.  
Meeting Schedule: September 14-15, 2006  
Contact: Suzie Bentley, CPP, (408) 566-6591, or e-mail [sbentley@nvidia.com](mailto:sbentley@nvidia.com)

### Illinois Statewide Conference

Location: Marriott Hotel, Hoffman Estates, Ill.  
Meeting Schedule: September 20-22, 2006  
Contact: Christine O'Hara, CPP, (312) 474-3221, or e-mail [christine.o'hara@infores.com](mailto:christine.o'hara@infores.com)

### Texas Payroll Conference

Location: The Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel  
Meeting Schedule: September 21-23, 2006  
Contact: Paul Gill, CPP, (713) 980-2500, or e-mail [pgill@interstaffinc.com](mailto:pgill@interstaffinc.com)  
Conference Web site: [www.txpayrollconference.org](http://www.txpayrollconference.org)

### New York Statewide Payroll Conference

Location: Desmond Hotel and Conference Center  
Meeting Schedule: October 12-13, 2006  
Contact: Brian D. Koons, CPP, (518) 899-8052, or e-mail [brian\\_koons@adp.com](mailto:brian_koons@adp.com)  
Conference Web site: [www.nyscracapa.org](http://www.nyscracapa.org)

### Carolinas Payroll Conference

Location: Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort, S.C.  
Meeting Schedule: November 1-4, 2006  
Contact: Roxanne Gillespie, CPP, (704) 348-8158, or e-mail [rgillespie@hearstsc.com](mailto:rgillespie@hearstsc.com)

For more information, contact Gloria Aranda at [garanda@americanpayroll.org](mailto:garanda@americanpayroll.org).