

PRspectives

A Quarterly e-Newsletter for the San Francisco Bay Area Public Relations Community



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



AS president of PRSA-SF for 2006 I'd like to introduce you to an exciting year of events and services that address the full spectrum of professional and business needs of members. Some of these are:

THE BAY AREA SILVER ANVIL AWARDS COMPETITION

The San Francisco Chapter is re-branding the Bay Area Compass Awards to mirror the national Silver Anvil event at the regional level. Call for Entry literature is available now at www.prsasf.org. Entries are due March 31st and the awards ceremony will be in June.

WORKSHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

This most popular of the chapter's programs will be held November 16th and will feature more than 25 clinic-style workshops taught by local senior practitioners in a single evening.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Our well-attended breakfast and luncheon programs are held on the fourth Thursday of each month and feature major public figures in business, the public sector and the communications profession, addressing current issues in public relations.

CHAPTER SURVEY

We'd like to find out what's working for you and what you'd like to see the chapter doing. To that end, PRSA-SF's Communications Committee is developing a comprehensive membership survey that will compile as much information as possible from members while not taking long to fill out. When you get the survey, please make every effort to complete it.

In addition, the chapter sponsors the popular **Young Professionals** group that has its own governance and series of programs geared to newly minted public relations practitioners in their first five years of practice. YP is inexpensive to join and includes chapter membership.

At the other end of the professional continuum we have created a **Senior Advisory Council** of communications veterans from corporate, agency and non-profit sectors who will provide input to the chapter on a variety of issues relating to the profession.

We've also launched two new areas of focus and have created special board positions with committees to drive them. Our **Diversity Committee** is exploring working with San Francisco public schools to develop a curriculum or workshop for high school students to introduce them to the PR profession as a way to eventually recruit talented young people from diverse backgrounds into the profession. I personally am very committed to this initiative and am a working member of the committee. Our **Networking Committee** is creating exciting new networking experiences at a variety of San Francisco venues designed to help attendees plug in

to the Bay Area PR community and thus support members' business development and career advancement objectives.

We've recently introduced new **differentiated pricing** that enables members to enjoy all the benefits of PRSA-SF at more deeply discounted rates compared to non-members. We also have **new membership packages for agencies and corporations** as well as **nonprofit/government rates**. Agency and corporate public relations executives should consider the many benefits available through these membership packages including training for their younger professionals, contact and networking with their peers, recruitment, business development and other bottom line enhancers.

For these and many other reasons, I'm very proud to be leading your chapter this year. I've been in the public relations profession for more than 25 years, the last 12 of which I've spent laboring in the San Francisco market. During that time, I've watched this chapter and the profession experience ups and downs, but I can proudly say that your San Francisco chapter is as active, fiscally sound, and as alive as it has ever been. If you're not a member, this would be a great time to join (and by the way, it's easy to do online at www.prsasf.org). If you are a member, I encourage you to attend more events and to consider becoming involved in leadership through one of our committees. Thanks for your support of PRSA-SF. Your chapter will work hard to meet your needs, both corporate and individual.

Curt Olsen, APR
President – PRSA-SF

COMPASS AWARDS BECOME SILVER AND BRONZE ANVILS IN 2006!

By Hatti Hamlin, APR, Fellow PRSA – Awards Co-Chair



Sponsoring Chapters:
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Oakland/East Bay
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California Capital

FOR the first time, the Northern California Awards program recognizing outstanding comprehensive programs and communications components (tactics) is being brought into direct alignment with the PRSA national Silver and Bronze Anvil Awards programs. Awards will take the Silver and Bronze Anvil names and judging criteria will mirror national standards.

The change offers tremendous benefits to participants who will be able to create one entry for use in both the regional and national programs without significant revisions. Participants intending to enter both programs also can benefit from feedback from the judging for future award entries. And, winners will enjoy the greater prestige associated with the highly regarded Silver and Bronze Anvil designations.

NEW EMPHASIS ON DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURAL PROGRAMS

Over the past several years, we have had a multicultural program category. This year, however, to better reflect the importance of diversity and multicultural communications needs, we are asking judges to consider this element when reviewing all award entries. Entries will benefit from specifically mentioning and documenting how their programs addressed or reflected this need.

2004 AND 2005 PROGRAMS ACCEPTED

As the 2005 Compass Awards program did not take place, this year's program will accept entries from either 2004 or 2005.

A call for entries form and award information is available for download at www.prsasf.org.

Please read entry forms and specifications carefully. This year's committee is providing greater specificity and guidance regarding what judges are looking for in a winning entry.

Good luck!

SAVE THESE DATES:

Call for Entries Deadline

March 31, 2006

Late Entry Deadline

April 13, 2006

(Late Fee Applies)

Silver/Bronze Anvil

Award Dinner

June 29, 2006

For more information or to volunteer for the Awards Committee, please contact Awards Co-chairs Hatti Hamlin, APR, Fellow PRSA at (925) 872-4328 (hattihamlin@aol.com) or Victoria Sanchez DeAlba at (650) 557-5711 (victoria@dealba.net).

SAN FRANCISCO
PRSA
Event Calendar

March

- 23 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Breakfast—Bureau Chiefs (*Wall Street Journal*, *East Bay Business Journal* and *eWeek*)
- 31 Northern California Silver/Bronze Anvil Awards Early Deadline

April

- 6 PRSA-SF First Thursdays
- 13 Northern California Silver/Bronze Anvil Awards Final Deadline
- 27 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Luncheon—Corporate Social Responsibility

May

- 4 PRSA-SF First Thursdays
- 25 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Breakfast—New Media Technologies

June

- 1 PRSA-SF First Thursdays
- 22 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Luncheon—Strategic Marketing Communications, PR & Special Events
- 29 Northern California Silver/Bronze Anvil Awards Gala

July

- 27 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Breakfast—Global PR Practices

August

- 24 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Breakfast—New Corporate Communications Strategies

September

- 7 PRSA-SF First Thursdays
- 21 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Breakfast—Strategist Roundtable

October

- 5 PRSA-SF First Thursdays
- 26 PRSA-SF Monthly Program: Breakfast—Diversity

November

- 2 PRSA-SF First Thursdays
- 16 Workshop 'Til You Drop

December

- (TBD) PRSA-SF Holiday Party

“Things Which Concern Us Dearly”: The Rise of Ethnic Media and its Implications for Public Relations

By Peter Magnani

ON the recommendation of our Diversity Committee, the San Francisco Chapter purchased a table at the recent 7th annual Ethnic Media Awards sponsored by New California Media. Dubbed “the ethnic Pulitzers,” NCM’s program highlights some of the remarkably high quality journalism that is coming out of the thousands of newspapers, radio and television stations in California that are owned by and serve the diverse communities of the “new California.” The next awards presentation will be held in Washington, D.C. because New California Media, responding to the intense interest in its activities from around the country, has reconfigured itself into New America Media.

So a number of us were on hand when Julie Gruenbaum Fax, a reporter for *The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*, accepted the award for best reporting on religion and spirituality and talked about her friends who frequently ask her when she’s going to give up community media and get a job on a “real newspaper.” She recounted some of the stories she’s worked on and the intensity of her readers’ response to her work, concluding, to enthusiastic applause from the hundreds of journalists in the audience, “This is as real as it gets.”

Her comments captured the passion and perspective of many of the presentations and acceptance

speeches made that evening. And they speak to changes taking place in the communications landscape that have profound implications for both journalism and public relations.

It is no secret that mainstream American journalism is in crisis, whether you’re talking about confusion over its mission, concerns about its quality and credibility, or doubt about its very economic survival in an era where news on the Internet commands a rapidly growing audience and an increasing share of advertising dollars. Scandals have rocked some of the nation’s most respected newspapers and news magazines. Print continues to lose ground to broadcast media, where the lines between journalism and pap have become so blurred we’ve had to invent words like “infotainment” just to describe its core product. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press found that fewer than one in four individuals believe all or most of what they read in the newspapers or see on the TV news. Here in our own market, the Hearst Corporation’s *San Francisco Chronicle*, once the region’s unassailable stalwart, is bleeding red ink; while its main competitor, Knight Ridder, publisher of both the *San Jose Mercury* and *Contra Costa Times*, is on the auction block.

A much better kept secret is the fact that the downward spiral of the so-called “mainstream” media

is mirrored by the rapid ascendancy of ethnic media. A national multi-lingual survey of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Arab American and Native American adults in the United States conducted last year by Bendixen & Associates for New California Media produced such astonishing results that NCM titled its report on the study “Ethnic Media in America: The Giant Hidden in Plain Sight.”

Forty-five percent of respondents, representing 29 million Americans, said they prefer to get their news from ethnic radio, television and print outlets. In addition to these “primary consumers,” the study found that the ethnic media regularly reach 51 million adults – one-fourth of the U.S. population. Moreover, while most respondents said they continue to look to mainstream media for coverage of politics and government, they assign very high credibility to the news they consume from their community outlets – in sharp contrast to the Pew study’s findings about mainstream media.

Given these results, we might restate the current crisis in journalism as follows: What’s going to happen to mainstream journalism now that America no longer has a mainstream?

As for public relations, the energy and commitment that was everywhere present at the NCM awards

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banquet provided cause for hope. The ethnic journalists themselves appear to share the outlook of their consumers. These are not jaded cynics disconnected from their readers or viewers, convinced that their reporting won't create more than a ripple in the status quo and fearful that their resources will be cut back, their company sold out from under them, or their very jobs eliminated in the relentless quest for profits. They are people who know their readers and care deeply about the things their readers care about.

Moreover, they tend to share with their readers an outlook common to American immigrant communities throughout our country's history — an outlook that forms the very basis of our most distinguishing, but increasingly diluted, national characteristic: that things will get better if we work at it.

Okay, I'm generalizing. But the fact is, ethnic journalists are intensely interested in, and therefore open to, many of the things that public relations practitioners are seeking attention for and that mainstream journalists tend to discount. They actually care about things like health care, housing, financial services, consumer products, educational opportunities, community service and philanthropy.

This commonality of interest between reporters and their audiences has characterized ethnic journalism in America since its very beginning in 1827, when John B. Russwurm and Samuel E. Cornish founded *Freedom's Journal* to provide an African American perspective on the slavery issue that was dividing the country. The often-quoted mission statement

published in their first issue speaks to why the ethnic media continue to elicit such a powerful response from their readers and viewers:

We wish to plead our own cause. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations in things which concern us dearly. Who but we could give a clear and distinct voice to our own struggles and accomplishments?

It is that sustained focus on "things which concern us dearly" that keeps the ethnic media on an up-

ward curve despite the challenges facing mainstream media. Understanding and addressing those things should be a high priority for public relations practitioners and their clients.

Peter Magnani was President of the San Francisco Chapter of PRSA in 2002 and 2004 and chair of the national Audit Committee in 2003-2004. He currently leads the San Francisco Chapter's Senior Advisory Council. He is SVP-Corporate Communications at Bank of America.

Join our team of contributors today!

PRspectives is looking for articles that focus on "hands-on" content, PR strategies that stress the tactical and practical, and key industry trends. If you are interested in contributing to *PRspectives*, please send a query to Diane Glazman at inkwritersf@comcast.net.

Reprints of articles will also be considered. Please submit the article in its entirety and include location and date of previous publication. Reprinted articles must be authored by the person submitting them.

Letters to the editor should be 200 words or less and include your name, address, telephone number and e-mail.

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RECORD TURNOUT FOR 2005 PRSA-SF WORKSHOP 'TIL YOU DROP

MORE than 150 Bay Area public relations professionals participated in the PRSA-San Francisco Chapter's Fall 2005 Workshop 'Til You Drop, a record turnout for this event. The Bay Area public relations community demonstrated tremendous support for the profession and in building programs for up and coming PR students through its involvement in this popular professional development program.

Workshop 2005 featured engaging and energetic speakers from all over the world, who shared their expertise and their time. Subjects covered included PR Ethics: An Oxymoron or Just Good Business?, Writing to Make a Difference, The Best Media Training Workshop Ever!, Growing PR Professionals into Superstars, Five Keys to Pitching Success, Managing the Media in a Crisis, PR Plans that Work, Taking the Mystery Out of Blogging, How to Earn All A's All the Time from Your Clients, plus how to work effectively from home, build personal alliances, work with ethnic media, simplify your work life, and use research to drive and evaluate PR, among others.

PRSA-SF wishes to thank the following speakers:

Keynote: Eric Lamoreaux, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

Workshop Sessions:

Angie & Chris Lawing, Mercury Multimedia

Marianne O'Connor, Sterling Communications

Nann Miller, Consultant

Dr. Dennis Wilcox, School of Journalism & Mass Communications,
San Jose State University

Peter Hillan, Zeno Group

Tom Alderman, MediaPrep

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Liz Guthridge, Connect Consulting Group

Claire Tompkins, Consultant

Brian Glover, Biz360

Kelly McPartland, Thomson Financial

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Workshop —Continued from page 7

Workshop sponsors provided needed financial support and services to keep attendance costs low. Tremendous thanks are given to these valued sponsors:

PG&E as *Presenting Sponsor* and host for the second year. We gratefully acknowledge the special support by Kim Walsh, Virginia Stefan and Jason Alderman.

Fleishman-Hillard, *Platinum Sponsor*, responsible for the look and feel of all promotional materials, program and signage.

Porter Novelli, *Gold Sponsor*

Thomson Financial and **Chiron**, *Silver Sponsors*

BusinessWire, *Bronze Sponsor*.

PRSA-SF Chapter members Christine Moravec, Pat Harden and Joan Trezek, provided leadership on speakers, food, and logistics/set-up. Chapter communications team members Jennifer Giambroni, Diane Glazman, Cynthia Borcena, Stefanie Stockton and Michelle Aschwald coordinated promotion of the event throughout the year in our various chapter vehicles:

PRspectives, Friday Focus, and the Web site, and Janet Lynn provided the services of BusinessWire for the event. Additional support was supplied by Stacy Pollicino, Chapter Administrator, for handling myriad details, and Hatti Hamlin and Rhonda Silva who laid the foundation for the 2005 Workshop by running a great 2004 event. The 2005 PRSA-SF Board provided yearlong support on all aspects of the program. And, Copymat Digibranch and Left Coast Catering provided discounted services on printing and catering, such that we could realize as much revenue for our student-support coffers as possible.

YP Graduates "First Class" of Officers

PRSA-SF's Young Professionals program experienced a major milestone this past month when a new slate of officers was sworn into office following the February program. In addition, out-going co-presidents, Dariana Lau and Sarah Shvil, were honored for three years of hard work while the Young Professionals program got off the ground.

YP was founded in 2003 with the goal of becoming a place for young professionals to network, hone PR skills and transition into the PRSA-SF chapter. From a handful of members, it has grown to become a successful section of PRSA-SF, now come into its own under the tutelage of Cathy Morely Foster and Hatti Hamlin. YP programs focus on tactical knowledge to help young PR professionals gain skills they need to advance their careers. The February program, featuring Ketchum VP of Business Development Sandy Praff, was very well attended, proof of the strength and vibrancy of the YP program.

In-coming Young Professionals Officers

President: Stephanie Scherbak, Manning, Selvage & Lee
Vice President/ Programs: Luke Macaulay, U.S. Attorney's Office
Treasurer: Stefanie Stockton, Allison & Partners
Secretary: Amy Grady, Zeno Group

Congratulations to all!

And remember, April 6th will be a joint First Thursdays/ YP mixer.

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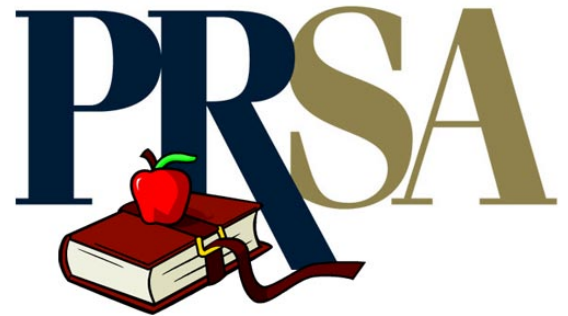
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PRSA-SF Supports San Francisco Unified School District's School-to-Career Summer Internship Program

By Heidi Hall
Internship Coordinator
School-to-Career/ SF Unified School District



HIGH SCHOOL internships are an important part of the career exploration process. Students make real-world connections to their classroom learning through workplace experiences, helping them understand the relevance of their education and better preparing them for college and work.

The **School-to-Career (STC) Summer Internship Program** places high school juniors in a 6-week paid internship at a local business. Participating students are part of career pathway programs in the public high schools that integrate job readiness and career exposure into the academic cur-

riculum. Students are prepared for the workplace and can make a productive contribution to your business, and they are eager for the experience. A teacher supervises the student throughout the summer program.

STC is recruiting employer partners for the 2006 Summer Internship Program. We invite public relations professionals to participate by sponsoring a high school intern in your organization this summer.

Providing an internship is a great way to partner with local schools and expose students to the public relations profession. We hope you can participate in this program. Please return the Employer Application or speak with the STC

Office by **March 15, 2006**. For a complete description of the Internship Program and FAQ, visit <http://www.magnetmail.net/images/clients/BOMAsf/attach/SummerInternProg.pdf>

For an Employer Application, visit <http://www.magnetmail.net/images/clients/BOMAsf/attach/EmployerApp2005.pdf>

For more information, contact:

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GENE P. GIBSON

VETERAN PROFESSIONAL SPEAKS TO AND FOR LOCAL VETERANS

How'd you like to have the President of the United States as your national CEO? For Gene P. Gibson, it's all part of the job. As Public Affairs Officer for the San Francisco VA Medical Center, Gene oversees internal and external communications for one of the City's top 20 employers – encompassing 1,600 employees, 600 volunteers and approximately 70,000 patients.

Gene got her start in public relations as many of us do by being in the right place at the right time – we caught up with Gene, a new PRSA-SF board member, to discuss her career, favorite moments and how PRSA plays a part in her continuing professional development.

ON GETTING STARTED IN PUBLIC RELATIONS:

I had been working as the executive secretary to the Chief of Staff (head doctor) of the San Francisco VA Medical Center for about seven years when a public affairs technician position became available and I decided to make a move.

Since then, I was reclassified as a public affairs specialist and moved up the ladder in grade and pay. Upon the departure of the Public Affairs Officer in 1997, I was offered the position and

have been responsible ever since for PR activities and communications at the San Francisco VA Medical Center.

My primary role is as conductor of communications. I make sure all external and internal communications are crafted to maximize the understanding and awareness of what the San Francisco VA Medical Center does. Additionally, I ensure that when we are questioned by news media, public organizations, the community and others, we provide the clearest and most helpful response possible.

WHY PUBLIC RELATIONS:

I have always had the highest admiration for communications skills and saw my opportunity to get into public relations, or as the VA calls it, public affairs, as that rare and lucky moment when everything changes. As an art major in college, I have always been passionate about the art and skills of communicating. I see PR as a natural extension of art, essentially giving the practitioner a blank canvas to create something new and unique. I have never once regretted my decision and still pinch myself once in a while just to make sure it is real.

COMMUNICATING DURING TIMES OF CHANGE:

It was my good luck to get into a position as challenging and rewarding as PR at a time of major changes for the VA. A brand new war certainly creates a whole new demand for the services VA provides to veterans returning from combat duty. There is never a dull moment in VA when your national CEO is the President of the United States.

MOST REWARDING PART OF THE JOB:

I love the give-and-take I experience producing internal communications materials and messages for employees,

veteran patients and other stakeholders. It is of supreme importance that these folks have a very clear understanding of the San Francisco VA Medical Center's mission, vision and values. It is my duty and pleasure to work on behalf of all of these groups. Our employees are the very reason we succeed and they deserve my dedication to opening the lines of communication between them, management and the public.

FAVORITE PUBLIC RELATIONS ACHIEVEMENTS:

While there are a number of events and situations I recall fondly, there are a couple that stand out:

The first was when we had the Moving Wall at our facility on Clement Street. The Moving Wall is a half-scale model of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC that travels around the country to different venues for display. When we landed the Wall, I sent out letters of invitation to a variety of VIPs for the viewing. To my happy surprise, Mayor Willie Brown came out one evening and acted as keynote speaker. On a second night Representative Nancy Pelosi spoke before the gathered crowd. KPIX-TV and KCBS Radio covered the story and later Herb Caen carried an article about the Wall, our event and VIPs in his column.

Another memorable event was when I coordinated the dedication for our new VA outpatient clinic in San Bruno. I had invited VA Secretary Jim Nicholson – more as a formality than anything else – but was pleased when he agreed to be a keynote speaker for the dedication. It was the first time the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs attended a dedication ceremony of an outpatient clinic and we received coverage on KPIX-TV, KCBS Radio and in *The San Mateo County Times*.

continued on next page

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PRSA

I joined PRSA in 2000 because I knew that it was important to connect with other professionals in the San Francisco area. The networking and educational benefits of PRSA at the chapter level are top notch. The PRSA-SF Board of Directors is a dynamic group of people who work tirelessly on behalf of practitioners and ensure that the chapter is always one step ahead of trends and issues. I have attended the past two "Workshop 'Til You Drop" sessions and found them to be excellent. I try to never miss the monthly professional development programs and always enjoy the panelists and presenters.

Since joining the PRSA-SF Board of Directors, I have had an opportunity to see how the chapter functions from the inside and am impressed by the dedication and hard work of this small group of people who make it all happen. I am honored to work alongside the other board members and hope that I bring value and a fresh federal government perspective to the board and the chapter. This year I will be working with the board and other PRSA-SF members to coordinate the "Workshop 'Til You Drop" program. I look forward to contributing to this wonderful education and networking opportunity.

FOR NEW PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS:

As I said, I came into PR by moving from one career track to another. I think it is very important for those who are getting into the business to know the variety and differences available in PR careers today. I would recommend doing your homework and investigating all possibilities. And, most importantly, knowing what you're good at is the best place to focus your energies in seeking a position that will best utilize your talents. The true benefit of landing a position where you get to do what you love is immeasurable.

I know that I made the right decision and love what I do. Quite simply, I can't imagine doing anything else—I'm having too much fun.

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10 REASONS TO JOIN the San Francisco Chapter of PRSA

1. PRSA-SF serves as a respected forum to address key issues, trends and media requirements impacting the San Francisco Bay Area PR professionals.
2. We provide top-rated monthly programs, professional development seminars, APR accreditation exams, insightful publications and great networking opportunities.
3. PRSA-SF is your link to the world's largest PR organization with extensive national resources.
4. We serve as your primary "voice of the profession" in the San Francisco Bay Area.
5. Our organization is committed to professional growth and the advancement of ethical standards.
6. Public relations practitioners at all levels of experience find value in PRSA-SF activities.
7. Attendance at our meetings enables you to absorb wisdom from senior practitioners, compare challenges with peers and learn the best practices in our field.
8. We offer an ideal environment for honing communications skills, refining strategic thinking and mastering leadership techniques.
9. Historically, participation in our events has resulted in invaluable alliances, career advancement and lifelong friendships.
10. We are one of the most active and innovative chapters in the country.

**To join PRSA-SF
or to update your contact
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jennifer_byrd@usw.salvationarmy.org**



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*We dedicate this issue
of the newsletter to the memory of
Alex Curyea, co-editor of PRspectives.*