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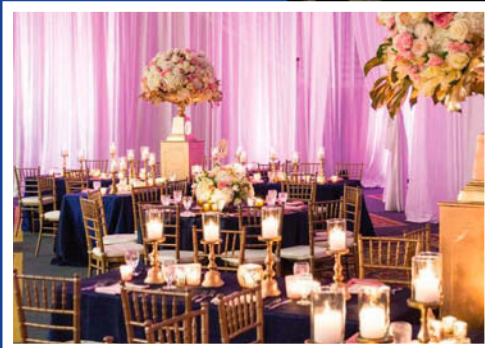
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**Georgia Society of  
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Cover Photo:

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PUBLISHED JULY 2017/

GSA-Q0317/9810

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### Save the Date

To help you plan the remainder of your professional development year, GSAE's current calendar of events is available below. We will offer more than **25 hours** of CAE-matched programming this year. GSAE is a Preferred CAE Provider through the CAE Commission. Our list of events is always available online at [www.gsaе.org](http://www.gsaе.org) (Learn/Calendar View).

Various Shared Interest Group meetings and webinars will be added throughout the year. We look forward to seeing you!

- September 20 – GSAE Quarterly Luncheon, The Abit Massey Lecture Series at the Doubletree Atlanta Downtown; sponsored by Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau.
- November 15 – GSAE's 100th Anniversary Gala. Sponsorship information coming soon.
- December 13 – GSAE Holiday Luncheon, Awards Show & Silent Auction, SunTrust Park at The Battery, Conference Center. Tours will be available. Sponsored by Jekyll Island Authority and Discover DeKalb.

### Annual Meeting Attendees Support GSAE & Local Macon Charity

Thanks so much to our Silent Auction donors and winners who helped us raise \$10,600 to support GSAE's educational programming. Wednesday afternoon's Beer Tastings and Friday's live auction raised \$4,000 for the GSAE Foundation. Thank you to our beer aficionados **Mike Pennington, CAE**, **Russ Webb** and **Lowell Aplebaum, CAE** for hosting the craft beer tastings.

Your generosity also helped us raise more than \$3,000 to support the good work of Loaves and Fishes Ministry of Macon through the 5th Annual GSAE 3K Fun Run/Walk and the Pay the Pig Raffle.

- Congratulations to **Missy Brandt Wilson** on winning the Grand Prize—Disney Park Hopper passes from Map Dynamics, **Amanda Cook** and **Jeremy Minnick**, and the Southwest Airlines gift card, courtesy of the Charleston Area CVB, **Chris Hendrix, CMP**
- 2nd Prize—**Abit Massey, CAE**—Ritz Carlton-Amelia Island gift basket, **Karla J. Yeck**
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## Recognize A Peer Today— GSAE Award Nominations Due

GSAE recognizes excellence by presenting a variety of awards to members. To nominate a member for an award, simply contact Wendy Kavanagh, CAE, President, at [wendy@ggae.org](mailto:wendy@ggae.org). For more information about the awards program, visit the Awards page of the GSAE website. The deadline for nominations is **September 30, 2017**.

Individual Awards include:

The **Clifford M. Clarke Award** is GSAE's highest honor and is presented to honor a member for an outstanding career of leadership and service to associations in Georgia. It is named for the late Cliff Clarke, president emeritus of the Arthritis Foundation and the first Georgian to serve as chief elected officer of ASAE. Any active individual member of GSAE is eligible for the award, with the exception of current officers, directors, staff, members of the Awards Committee and previous recipients. Honorary and retired members who have worked in the Georgia association community within the past two years and former staff members who meet the other criteria are also eligible.

The **Alan R. Johnson Award** was established in 1994 and named in memory of a former Chair of the GSAE Foundation. It is given to an association executive in Georgia who has demonstrated qualities of teamwork (ability to work with and support others), vision (ability to see possibilities for making things happen and communicating this vision to others) and servant leadership (willingness to reach out beyond work and home to benefit the community).

The **Sharon Hunt Emerging Leader Award** was renamed in 2014 to recognize the contributions of Past President Sharon Hunt, CAE. The award is presented to an association executive with 10 years or less of experience in associations who demonstrates leadership through service to GSAE, their own association and to their community. Chief staff executives (CEO, executive director, executive vice president, etc.) are not eligible. Nominees must have been a member of GSAE for at least one year.

The **Peggy Seigler Corporate Member of the Year Award** is presented to the corporate supplier member who has demonstrated outstanding and continuous service to the association community in Georgia. Renamed in 2015, the award celebrates the many contributions of Peggy Seigler, MPA, CDME, a beloved and valued member of the community who died in May 2015.

## Call for Leadership Nominations

The GSAE Nominating Committee is soliciting names of members interested in serving on the GSAE Board of Directors. The Nominating Committee will include Past Chair **David Ellis, CAE**; Chair **Tara Morrison, CAE, CMP**; Chair-Elect **Gene Stinson, CAE, PCED, CECD, HLM**, and several at-large association executive members (to be named by the GSAE Board of Directors).

Four seats for individual association member directors and one seat for a corporate supplier director will be available for two-year terms, beginning January 1, 2018. If you or someone you know would like to be considered, please send the name and a brief description of qualifications to Wendy. All candidates must be members in good standing. Deadline for nominations is **September 30, 2017**.

The slate of nominees will be offered to the membership for review no later than November 10, 2017. Board members and officers will be accepted and installed at the GSAE Annual Business Meeting on December 12.

Relevant Bylaws as of 07/2017:

*At least ninety (90) days prior to the annual business meeting, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee of five (5) persons, each of whom shall have been an Individual member of the Society for at least two (2) years. The chairman shall be the Immediate Past Chair. Others on the committee shall be the Chair, Chair-Elect, and two other members not currently serving on the GSAE Board of Directors. Names of nominating committee members and an invitation for recommendations for candidates for nomination shall be announced to the membership at least sixty (60) days prior to the annual business meeting. The nominating committee shall submit at least one (1) name for each available elective office of the Society and said slate shall be presented, in writing, to the membership at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual business meeting and again, orally, at the annual business meeting.*

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*Published by Colorado Society of Association Executives and Georgia Society of Association Executives*

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**Tuesday, September 12, 2017**

## **Inside Out Marketing for Your Association—Michael DiFrisco**

*Published by Wisconsin Society of Association Executives and Georgia Society of Association Executives*

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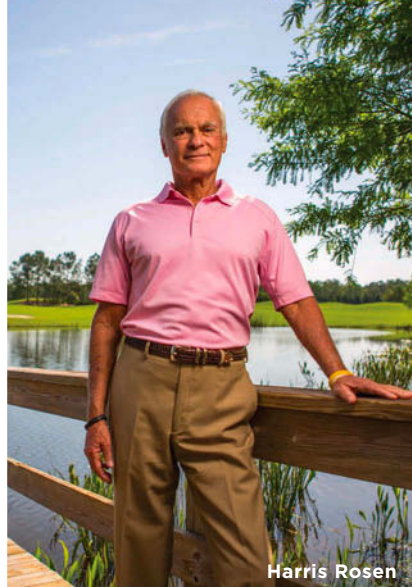
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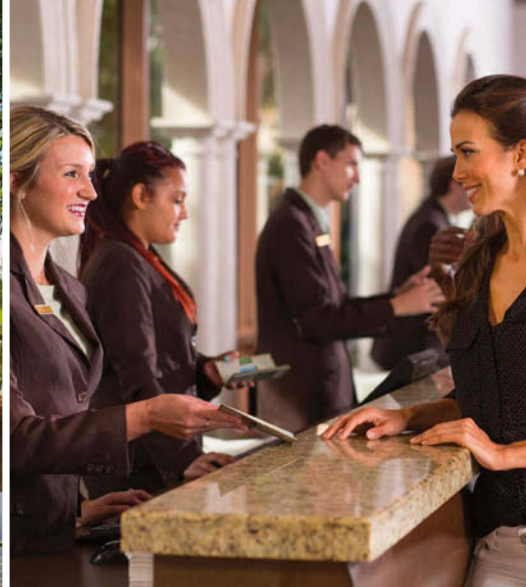
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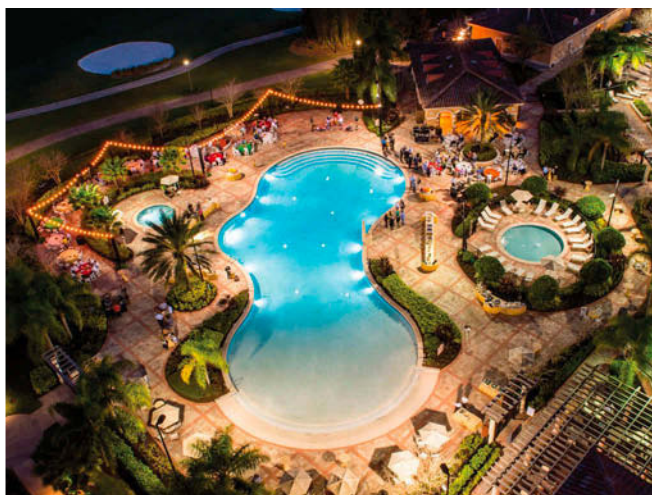




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## Beyond Branding: Forging an Identity for GSAE



"It's finding what the organization is really about, and sometimes what it *should* be about, to make sure that it's in line with what members need."

**LORI K. SPEAR, CAE**, has the unique position of being the first president of GSAE (2009) who also was a former staff member of the organization.

"I've only ever worked in two associations," says Spear, "and that's GSAE, where I was director of marketing and events, and SAIS, which serves and accredits independent schools, which is where I am now and where I was when I was GSAE's president."

For the membership, staff and elected leadership of GSAE, Spear was an easy choice for president. The organization was entering into a period where it was gaining more and more traction and influence, and as a result, had to be able to adjust its internal capacities to adjust to the realities of growth. Someone such as Spear, who was intimately familiar with not only the inner workings of GSAE, but also with its membership, has a unique advantage of "double vision"—in the best possible sense. "I was able to look at both the macro and the micro details," Spear says, "so that was certainly an advantage."

Spear does say that it was a little awkward at first to be the chief elected leader of an organization where she was once a full-time staff member, but she says "the other elected leaders, as well as the staff, made me comfortable and they also made it clear that I was president, which made me comfortable inhabiting that role."

Spear's main strategic objective was in line with her professional

experience: branding. With her deep knowledge of GSAE's audience, she proved an invaluable force of nature during the effort to rebrand the organization.

"I had been involved with GSAE for 20 years, so being able to put all of that history, knowledge and passion for GSAE to use in helping to build GSAE's identity and tell its story is one of the highlights of my career," she says.

During Spear's tenure, GSAE really dug deep into what makes GSAE GSAE. The organization held numerous focus groups, did market research, looked at various logo and identity schemes to refresh its visual image, and continually "listened, listened, and then listened some more" to find out what really makes GSAE valuable to members.

"This to me is the most important aspect of a branding venture or a rebranding venture," says Spear. "Not finding the perfect color scheme or the right logo or the best website—although of course that is all very important. It's finding what the organization is really about, and sometimes what it *should* be about, to make sure that it's in line with what members need."

Beyond the reward of serving as elected leader of an organization she has loved for years, Spear says that the relationships she's built that extend beyond the workplace are the most valuable rewards of her involvement with GSAE. "This place is part of my life; its people are part of my life. GSAE has added a lot to my life." <

## Steady Hands for a New Direction



"I love strategic planning—thinking critically about the challenges of today and the opportunities of the future, casting a compelling vision, developing a plan to move forward that bridges aspiration with an informed understanding of the organization's capacity."

**REBRANDING IS BOTH** daunting and exciting. Stakeholder communication—and lots of it—is critical, not just during the creation and launch of the brand, but especially during its earliest days. **Ragan Cohn, CAE**, chair of GSAE in 2010, was at the helm for its rebranding.

Says Cohn: "2010 was a pivotal year for GSAE—one in which a three-year effort would culminate in the launch of an updated and redefined GSAE brand. We were also scheduled to develop a new three-year strategic plan that year. As chair, I wanted to ensure the fantastic work that had been done on the GSAE brand was embodied and carried forward effectively in the organization's next strategic plan."

Her background in communication and her broad experience in association management made her well equipped to handle the intricacies of rolling out a new identity.

"In 2010, I was vice president of the NCCPA Foundation, an organization I served as managing director when it was founded in 2006 by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA). I have served NCCPA in a variety of roles since 1999, including my stint with its foundation," says Cohn. "Throughout my tenure here I've led NCCPA's communications program in combination with a variety of other departments—all but finance and IT. Today I am the vice president of governance and communications, a role in which I get to work closely with our board of directors, while also overseeing significant outreach efforts to a multitude of stakeholder groups," she adds.

Cohn also says she was happy to serve GSAE during a

time when strategic planning was on the agenda.

"I love strategic planning—thinking critically about the challenges of today and the opportunities of the future, casting a compelling vision, developing a plan to move forward that bridges aspiration with an informed understanding of the organization's capacity," she says.

She notes that when a session with a professional facilitator did not deliver the results that she and the rest of the board hoped for, it was through working with those who knew GSAE best—its staff and members—that true progress came. "At the retreat—as is GSAE's custom—the board was joined by a host of other GSAE volunteers and a professional facilitator who we had prepared to lead us through a series of discussions from which that compelling, aspirational yet actionable plan would emerge. However, the facilitation fell flat, and we left that retreat having brainstormed a host of new ideas but without anything that resembled a plan," she says.

"To get us where we needed to be, I worked closely with Wendy [Kavanagh, GSAE's president] to use the considerable information already available from the just-completed work on the GSAE brand as well as the member survey to draft a vision statement, goals and measurable objectives and then incorporate the best of the strategies brainstormed at the retreat. The smart, dedicated, fun GSAE staff is the heart and soul of this organization. Long before and long after any individual elected leader comes and goes, it's the staff that brings GSAE to life for members day to day and year to year." <





**Bringing them together is where we started.  
Working together is when the magic began.**

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## Answering the Call to Serve



"The life and work experiences people were willing to share was amazing. The candor of personal and professional stories is something I miss and will never forget."

**"I DID NOT** seek to become chair of GSAE; I was asked to serve," says **Karl Kirsch, CAE**, who was chair of GSAE in 2011. "I have never reveled in the spotlight nor particularly enjoyed podium time. It is something I did as a requirement of being in association leadership."

While Kirsch was chair of GSAE, he served as vice president of the Association Management Business Practice for Meeting Expectations, an association management company located in Atlanta. "Prior to my position with Meeting Expectations, I had held manager, director and executive director positions in many of the core areas of association management," says Kirsch. "I have previously been responsible for membership, component relations, technical divisions and special interest groups, governance, and even started up a new conference from scratch. I credit much of my success to learning these core competencies early in my career."

Although Kirsch has an enviable resume, he admits that he initially lamented how much public speaking he would need to do. "As chair, you are required to address the GSAE membership regularly. So that became my challenge," he says. "Don't be a bore in front of a large, influential collection of your peers."

He quelled his uneasiness with some help from another GSAE member, **Jeff Justice**. "Jeff runs Jeff Justice's Comedy Workshope. This program helps aspiring comedians perfect their craft. It also helps regular guys like me learn to use humor in business presentations to more effectively make your point and think on your feet. Well, about six weeks of coursework and one on-stage performance at the

Punchline Comedy Club, and I was ready to be chair of GSAE!"

During his time as chair, not only did Kirsch sharpen his public speaking chops, making him infinitely more comfortable speaking in public, but he also found a good venue in which to test advice he had been giving others for years.

"I have always advised new presidents of associations to pick two or three things they want to accomplish during their term of office," he says. "This is based on seeing so many excited presidents try to do too many things and end up with none of them really done well. I took my own advice to heart as chair of GSAE and picked one thing: take GSAE's good reputation for quality programs to the next level with even higher profile speakers. With great support from our board, staff, volunteers and a significant increase in speaker budgets, we managed to improve the programming to a level that GSAE has sustained ever since. While I would like to take all the credit, **Wendy Kavanagh, CAE**, as president and **Mary Beth Cornell, CAE**, as the professional development chair were instrumental on executing the vision."

Kirsch says he will never forget his time as GSAE chair, noting that above all other factors, open honesty defined the quality of his interactions and the lessons and memories he carries with him. "The life and work experiences people were willing to share was amazing," he concludes. "The candor of personal and professional stories is something I miss and will never forget. While we all experience this through active participation in GSAE, as chair, you have a lot more opportunities to engage in these critical conversations a lot more often."



# A Win/Win Week for Restaurants and Their Customers

BY MARY LOU JAY

**MIDSUMMER IS USUALLY** a slow time for restaurants, but between July 17 and 23 about 100 Georgia restaurants did a brisk business. Those eating establishments were participating in Georgia Restaurant Week, hosted by the Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA) in partnership with Explore Georgia, the state's official tourism agency.

GRA serves as the voice for advocacy, education and awareness for restaurants in Georgia, according to the association's CEO, **Karen Bremer, CAE**. "We make restaurants better for Georgians, and we make Georgia a better place for restaurants," she says. Georgia Restaurant Week serves both of those goals. It provides the public with special deals that enable them to try out new and unfamiliar restaurants or

to revisit old favorites. It gives restaurants the opportunity to attract new guests and perhaps convert them into long-term customers and to entice their regulars to come out and dine.

"It's a great way to promote dining out and culinary tourism in Georgia," says **Rachel Bell**, GRA's director of marketing and communications.

## Encouraging Membership

Georgia Restaurant Week started in 2015, when the Georgia Department of Economic Development, which was heavily promoting Georgia foods that year, requested GRA's assistance in setting up a statewide program. In its first year, Restaurant Week attracted 70 participating restaurants. In 2016 there were

100 restaurants, and GRA expects to top that number in 2017.

Participation in Georgia Restaurant Week is free for GRA's 500-plus corporate members, who represent about 4,000 restaurants throughout the state. Non-members pay \$295 to register; that also entitles them to a year's membership in the association.

"Each year we have had a handful of new restaurants that have signed up. When they see the other benefits of membership in the association they continue to renew it," says Bell.

As part of the registration, restaurants must donate two \$50 gift cards that are used for promotional purposes. "We will use those with our media partners, we will do social media promotions, and Explore Georgia will help us pair the gift cards with hotel stays so that people can make destinations out of dining in Georgia restaurants," says Bell.

During Georgia Restaurant Week, participating restaurants will offer prix-fixe dinner menu items priced at \$15, \$25 or \$35 per person or per couple—the restaurant chooses its price point. The three-course prix-fixe dinner must include an appetizer or starter, entrée and dessert, but restaurants can add more food items if they choose. They may also offer their regular menu during this time and/or offer other special deals.

Participating restaurants could also opt to take advantage of a new promotional scratch-off program this year. They contributed to a special pool of money used to cover the costs of scratch-off cards that





offered diners a percentage off their next meal at that restaurant.

"You can get a whole new audience by doing this, at a slower time of year, at a discounted price, and you're giving them a coupon to come back," says Bremer. "The discounting really adds value to that dining experience. It's been proven that if you deliver an amazing experience during Restaurant Week, you'll get those folks back that will be paying full price for their food."

### Spreading the Word

GRA's target audiences for most of its communications is its members and/or legislators and government officials. But in the months prior to Georgia Restaurant Week, the association makes a concerted effort to reach all restaurants in Georgia and the public as well.

The special Restaurant Week website, [www.garestaurantweek.com](http://www.garestaurantweek.com), serves a dual purpose. Restaurants go there to register for Georgia Restaurant Week, and consumers can search there for participating restaurants. An interactive map helps customers find restaurants close to their location, and they can view restaurants' price points, look at menus and find out how to make a reservation.

GRA reached out to all Georgia restaurants to invite their participation, working with convention and visitors' bureaus throughout the state and with Open Table, which provided GRA with the list of restaurants it represents. GRA has also used phone trees and email blasts targeted to restaurants who have previously participated in local restaurant weeks.

To publicize the week to potential diners, GRA has continued its partnership with Explore Georgia and has partnered with other organizations and media outlets such as Flavors Magazine, Taste of Atlanta, James Magazine, Where Magazine and the various Neighbor publications.



"There's an organization that's starting a waiters' race here in Atlanta, and they're helping us

spread the word as well," Bell adds. "We also placed digital advertisements with the Atlanta



Journal-Constitution. We have found that social media ads are very effective, so we will continue to do some Facebook advertising.

"Closer to the event, we do some media pitches," she continues. "In the past, we have had chefs do demos on Good Day Atlanta, and we'll do press releases, radio spots, etc. Last year we worked with the food blogger at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and she wrote a piece on Restaurant Week, covering all the restaurants that were participating." Other stories have included the Georgia Grown food products featured during Georgia Restaurant Week or the five top peach dishes that restaurants planned to serve.

"We have added more partnerships each year, and we are continuously growing the event and tweaking it to make it easier for restaurants to increase the promotion," Bell said. In 2017, for

example, GRA recruited brewer Samuel Adams. Restaurants that served Samuel Adams products could get a Georgia Restaurant Week glass to hand out at their restaurant during that time.

#### A Win/Win

Bell admits it's been challenging to collect data on the economic impact that Georgia Restaurant Week has for its members. "One of our goals in the future is to look into collecting more accurate data, not only from the restaurant standpoint of how successful their participation was but also from a consumer standpoint. How far are people driving to dine out? Are they returning to restaurants that they have tried or are they going to new restaurants? We'd love to get some of that information," Bell says.

But the feedback from restaurants has been very positive. One owner of an Atlanta restaurant group has

enthusiastically promoted Georgia Restaurant Week to his peers, telling them it's been a tremendous success for his restaurants and has provided a great way for guests to sample their menus.

"I think that one thing that separates us from other restaurant weeks is that we keep this very low cost in terms of registration fees," says Bell. "This is a win/win; we promote them and promote dining out in Georgia, and we get some new members from this initiative."

They also keep those new members; GRA has a retention rate in the high 90s. "I think that after restaurant week, as they are actively reading our e-news every week and getting the update broadcasts that we do from the capital during the legislative session, they see the value of the advocacy work that we do, and why belonging to GRA makes sense," says Bremer. <



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## What's New & Improved?

### Meeting in Macon?

You'll have a new option right in the middle of the proposed \$50 million mixed-use downtown development that's being called the Exchange Block Project. Flying under the Hyatt Place flag, the hotel plans to highlight the city's music heritage, with a façade that will incorporate elements thereof—along with a courtyard to serve as an intimate setting for musical performances. The property will sit prime on Poplar Street, offering 140 rooms, an adjacent garage, a workout facility, lounge area, rooftop bar and, of course, meeting space.

### Updates in Athens

The University of Georgia may be keeping the 1957 footprint of its Center for Continuing Education and Hotel, but its oldest features are about to undergo \$14 million in renovations. Upgrades to the center's "Classic Wing" will go beyond exterior and mechanical to include hotel rooms, corridors



and food services. Lighting, bath fixtures, floors, walls and technology are among the features to be improved upon.

### Doubletree Upgrades in the A-T-L

Fifteen miles from downtown and 30 from Hartsfield, the refurbished DoubleTree by Hilton Atlanta Perimeter Dunwoody is ready to be back on the association radar

following its extensive \$12 million renovation. The property boasts 250 rooms; Southern Grove, a Southern-inspired restaurant; and 12,000 square feet of meeting space. The latter includes the 5,700-square-foot Azalea Ballroom. Complimentary shuttle service to locations within a five-mile radius make off-site events convenient, as well. ◀

## Tech Trends: Virtually There

**THE HEADSETS ARE** getting less clunky. And honestly, most people still haven't even tried it. But virtual reality tech has been making headway at events and even in the realm of telecommuting (you can get that warm, fuzzy cubicle feeling while staying home in your jammies!) and that trend is only going to continue as the tech gets better and more affordable. So how can you begin to integrate it into your meetings?

### Holy Hologram!

After you and everyone you know sends the "Help me, Obi-Wan, you're my only hope"

message, it's time to use this technology for something less frivolous. With 3D imaging getting increasingly better, speakers will likely be doing away with PowerPoints in favor of holographic presentations.

### Site Seen. Sorta.

Imagine being able to eradicate the travel time and expense associated with far-off site inspections! Facilities are already using VR to give planners and clients comprehensive tours of their venues. Sure, in the end you'll need to head out to your final selection, but the

whittling-down process can happen from just about anywhere.

### Teleconferencing 2.0.

A recent *Wall Street Journal* article tackled this topic with aplomb and raised an interesting question: Will avatars at office meetings make people feel more connected? The jury is still out as the tech continues to evolve but it will certainly be a powerful tool, if not an all-out replacement for face-to-face interaction. Experts say as VR gets increasingly "realer," everything from eye contact to body language—even smells and touch—could make the experience eerily accurate! ◀





# 6 Ways to Get the Most Out of Your Media Coverage

BY ERIN LATIMER MEADOWS

**EVEN IN OUR** current fast-paced, exciting digital world that allows anyone to create and distribute news content, media relations is still a valuable public relations tool—and a great way to position your association, and its members, as thought leaders.

Because media relations is considered a third-party endorsement, those of us in association PR and marketing often keep media outreach top of mind when working on strategy.

Last week, my organization placed our president in a *New York Times* article. This is top-tier media coverage for our president, association and specialty.

The day or two after the article ran, we received a lot of emails and comments on social media. It was time to celebrate and move on to the next item on our to-do list.

Not exactly.

Once you've received a key media placement, you find yourself in the very important "phase two" of that placement—where you can stretch the return on your investment in media relations by sharing your coverage with your members, board, donors, staff and other stakeholders.

Here are six simple ways you can maximize your top media placements to ensure you get the most bang for your media relations buck:

**1 Add to Your Website** Make sure you have a specific spot for news on your website and continually add your media coverage and press releases there. This not only increases your ability to share news, it will help with search engine optimization (SEO) as well.

**2 Share via Email** If you are regularly emailing members, volunteers, donors and other stakeholders, work media coverage into your email campaigns. People want to know the missions in which they are invested are garnering attention. This is a

quick, easy and low-budget way to let them know the organization they are a part of is making news.

### 3 Order Reprints

If the piece of coverage is high level enough (i.e., published in top-tier outlet or well-known trade publication), consider purchasing reprints. These reprints can be worked into fundraising materials and used at events and trade shows. And, if the coverage is “wall worthy,” have the reprint framed and displayed in your lobby or boardroom for visitors to see.

### 4 Share Internally

One of the most easily forgotten audiences is your internal audience—your staff. Don’t forget to keep these champions for your cause completely in the loop about media coverage; they will want to celebrate with you. Consistently share media coverage with employees and ensure they

know if and how you would like them to share with volunteers or their own personal networks. (Remember, if you are asking staff to share something, make it easy: Give them content for social media or some email text to share with their volunteers.)

### 5 Share via Social Media

Media coverage should be pushed out via the appropriate social networks. Additionally, make sure you include social sharing options on your website and in email campaigns so those who see your media coverage can pass it along to their networks with the click of a button.

### 6 Share in Your Blog

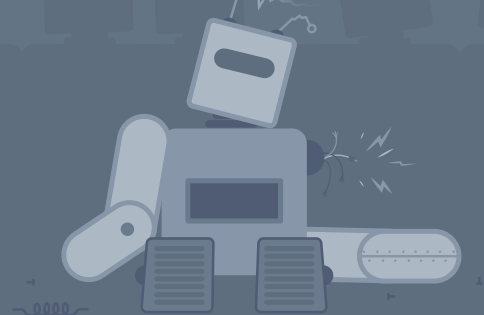
Finally, if you want to really stretch the ROI and usability of a great piece of coverage, use it in a blog. Just write a bit of original copy (make sure you don’t plagiarize the original article) that adds to the angle of

the article itself. Then, link to the media coverage online. A best practice with this is to reach out to the publication to seek permission to link to the article. They will most likely say yes (as linking is just as good for their SEO as it is for yours!), but it is good form to ask.

There you have it—six quick and easy ways to ensure your media coverage lives well beyond the initial publication date. If you take time upfront to set a plan for how and when you share media coverage, these efforts will become second nature and ensure you have a high ROI in media relations. ◀

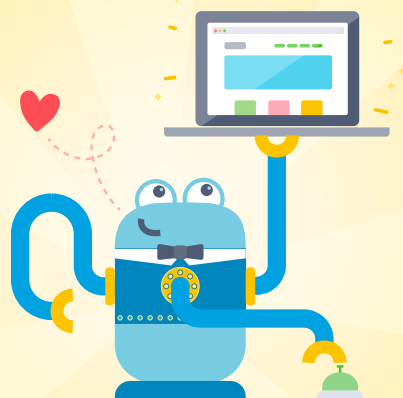
*Erin Latimer Meadows is the owner and principal consultant of Cause Collaboration, LLC, a Georgia-based marcom consulting agency. Meadows is also head of marketing communications for the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases—a Virginia-based medical association with more than 5,000 members.*


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# Standing Out Among the Clutter

BY DAN CURRAN

**ONE OF THE** challenges facing association professionals dealing with the media today is standing out among the clutter of media pitches and story ideas journalists receive each and every day.

Always remember it's about them, it's not about you. Learn how they want to be approached, speak their language and make sure your people are prepared before you even think of pitching a story.

Over the years, Curran PR has secured media placements for clients in outlets ranging from

the Atlanta Journal-Constitution to America's top-rated cable morning show.

Association media relations is unique because you often have to balance the internal and external communications needs, which can be very different. Determining what messages you wish to share internally and externally is an essential first step.

Associations in Georgia tend to have healthy memberships. This means that association PR pros have not only the message of the

organization they can share but the resource of hundreds of stories from their membership.

Reporters want access to real world people whose stories communicate the impact of a message or issue you are talking about. Association PR pros should take full advantage of the ability to tap into their exclusive pipeline of stories. Collecting those stories—and developing a mechanism for gathering them—can be time-consuming but it pays dividends in the long run.

Here are some helpful tips for how to help your association's message stand out among the clutter.

### Media Training

Prior to conducting your media pitch, you should have your designated spokespeople prepared and ready to talk at a moment's notice.

Media training is essential for everyone dealing with the press in 2017. Shorter story lengths, changing personnel and how stories are selected for coverage based on online performance is different than it was in even 2015.

A media training course, which Curran PR offers, can help your people understand why journalists act the way they do and report on the stories they cover. Most importantly, it can teach you how to keep media relationships growing.

### Research

You wouldn't buy a new refrigerator without doing some research. The same is true of working with the media.

Buy a copy of the newspaper you're planning to pitch. Watch several broadcasts of the station you are hoping will carry your news. Listen to the radio program you are planning to pitch.

Only by doing your research will you be able to learn what types of stories your target media outlet likes and the best reporter to approach.

### Planning

Knowing on what day to pitch a story, and at what hour of the day, takes practice.

A general rule of thumb is not to pitch a story right when the station is starting a news broadcast or when the newspaper is going to press.

Do you have pictures that help tell your story? Make sure they are

ready to be shared if a reporter asks for them.

Working with the media takes chutzpah. Do not be afraid to call the media outlet and ask when they like to receive pitches. They, and you, will be glad you did.

### Social Media

Some reporters feel that an organization's social media channels give a more accurate representation of the organization's culture than the official website.

Don't be surprised if they check you out online before they say yes to your media pitch.

Make sure that you have determined before your media pitching starts if your social media channels are meant to appeal to general consumers or only to your membership.

Having your online voice established beforehand will support the role of social media as a validation tool for members of the media who are considering covering your news.

### Representation

Media relations is an art. It can often require a delicate dance that some people do not have the time to engage in or the desire to perform.

When assigning the task of media relations, association leaders need to be sure to select someone who has an engaging demeanor and is quick on their feet. Make sure the person appreciates meeting deadlines but is also very comfortable dealing with plans that can change unexpectedly.

And, the leadership of the association has to understand and acknowledge the pressures facing their communications staff. The organizations who understand that working with the media means being patient and working according to the sometimes crazy timelines of the media, are the ones who enjoy successful relationships with journalists.

Many organizations have found it is more cost-effective, and it gives them access to a more senior practitioner, when they contract with an outside public relations agency.

Many associations contract out for lobbying, association management or financial services. Doing the same for public relations is not out of the norm and should be considered standard operating procedure.

### Evaluation

No matter what form your media relations and PR program takes, it is essential to step back and review it from time to time.

Are you reaching the right audience? Was the information presented in a manner that safeguarded your reputation?

Did your last story come across as defensive or as advocating for your profession? Was this year's board representative comfortable talking with the press or did they seem panicked?

Are your social media channels representing you accurately?

Analyzing the answers to these questions can help you refine your approach and help your PR message stand out from among the many such messages journalists receive each and every day. <



*Dan Curran is president of Curran Public Relations, an Atlanta-based public relations agency that*

*helps organizations increase their visibility and market share through strategic media placements. Curran is a 20-year member of the Public Relations Society of America. A past member of the Empire State Society of Association Executives in New York, he is a long-time member of the Georgia Society of Association Executives. Learn more at [www.CurranPR.com](http://www.CurranPR.com).*



# GSAE Rock Stars Gather in Macon for the 2017 Annual Meeting

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**ATTENDEES GATHERED MAY 31-JUNE 2** in Macon, the city “where soul lives,” to celebrate GSAE’s 100 years of producing association rock stars. The Annual Meeting kicked off with golf and kayaking, along with two beer tastings that benefited the GSAE Foundation. Members enjoyed a variety of educational sessions, including keynotes led by **Beth Z**, Your Nerdy Best Friend, and **Shelly Alcorn**, CAE, Ubiquity University. Members were able to connect with new and old friends, advance their organizational goals and achieve professional success. A big thank you hug to all our volunteers, especially the capable and energetic members of Team GSAE, Team Pay the Pig, Meet & Greet, the Ambassadors, Member Orientation and the Silent Auction committees. Make plans to join us May 30-June 1 in Sandestin, Florida for the 2018 Annual Meeting.



**Mayor Robert Reichert** presented GSAE Chair **Tara Morrison, CAE, CMP** with a proclamation declaring June 1 “GSAE Day” in Macon.



Congratulations to **Missy B. Wilson** on winning the grand prize from **Amanda Cook**, Map Dynamics, and **Chris Hendrix, CMP**, Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. Donations supported Loaves and Fishes Ministries of Macon.



**LeAnne Minnck**, GSAE Foundation chair, presented GSAE Foundation grants to **Karen Bremer, CAE**, Georgia Restaurant Association, and **Mariel Sivley**, Georgia Supportive Housing Association.





Thanks to Georgia Mining Association and Georgia Agribusiness Council for a great golf outing on Wednesday.



Pictured are members of Team GSAE who took on specific roles during the Annual Meeting: **Missy B. Wilson, Ian Webb, Sheryl Ehlers, Holly Wright, Aprell King, Lori K. Spear, CAE, Meg Caldwell, CMP, Myra Jacob, Spence Downs, Karla Yeck and Kimberly Payne-Ward.**



With the help of hosts **Lowell Aplebaum, CAE, Mike Pennington, CAE and Russ Webb**, the Foundation raised more than \$4,000 to fund future internship grants.





# Mark Your Calendar for the 2018 GSAE Annual Meeting in Sandestin

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**GSAE events**

# Summer Luncheon



**WE HELD OUR** first-ever SIG-apalooza for the 2017 Summer Luncheon, which feature a collection of Shared Interest Group (SIG) meetings led by members and organized around areas of interest. Peers with similar areas of interest were able to learn from each other in a small group setting. SIGs included the CAEs After Dark, Supplier Council, Communications SIG, Emerging Professionals SIG, Government Relations SIG, Meetings SIG, Small Association Staff SIG, Fundraising/Development Professionals SIG, Telework SIG and the Tech Ninjas SIG.

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# What's New: Savannah, Jekyll Island & St. Simons Island

## Savannah

Savannah is a charming, Southern escape, where quirkiness materializes through art and period architecture houses trendy boutiques, where ghost stories are set under a veil of Spanish moss and where local cuisine comes straight from the coast. Known as one of the "World's 30 Friendliest Cities" by Condé Nast Traveler readers, this coastal town has a world-class reputation for hospitality and grace. Savannah will draw you in with romantic ambiance and a lively atmosphere long before you leave its flourishing, park-like Historic District.

In recent years, the city has experienced something of a growth spurt. New hotels, restaurants and more have made the city even more enticing for meetings and events.

The new, modern Hotel Indigo, a 252-room boutique property, opened in spring 2016 right in the heart of the Historic District. It has six meeting rooms and 6,000 feet of event space, including an outdoor lounge. The hotel also houses the farmhouse-style Five Oaks Taproom, an upscale restaurant and

bar. Hotel Indigo joins other new hotels in recent years, including The Cotton Sail and B Historic.

On the culinary side, new restaurants include Hitch, which offers Southern upscale bar food, and the Atlantic, where you'll find seasonal bites with fine wine pairings. Or enjoy dinner and a show aboard the Savannah Riverboat Cruises' Georgia Queen, a new 1,000-passenger riverboat.

## Jekyll Island

The oceanfront Jekyll Island Convention Center is an ideal venue for an intimate meeting for 200 or a grand event for 2,000. From catering to AV, it has all of the resources needed to execute any size event flawlessly. And with nearby dining and shopping and unique activities island-wide, Jekyll Island is the beautiful, seaside destination for any group.

And in just a few years, there could be even more options for associations looking to host meetings on the island, as a lease was approved earlier this year for two new hotels—an 118-room Courtyard by Marriott and a

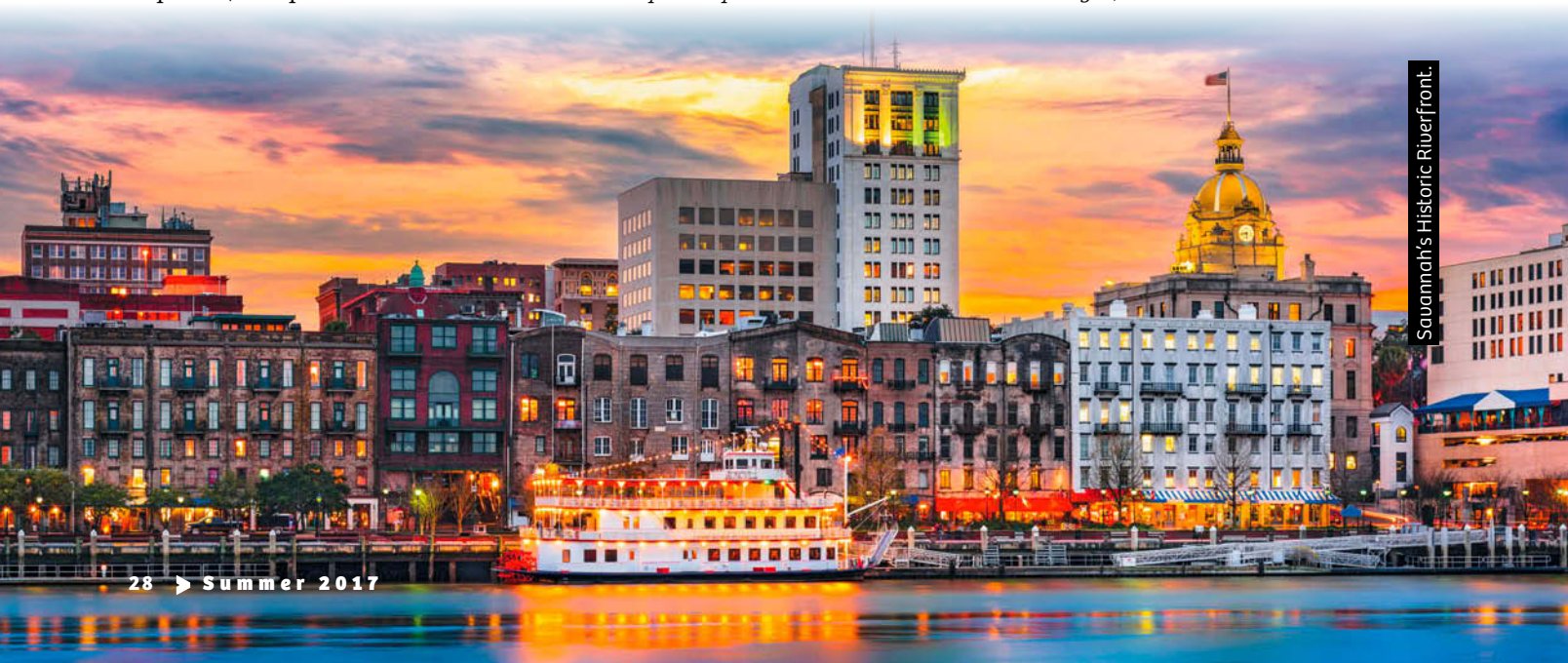
90-room Residence Inn. The two hotels, planned to open in 2019, will share a lobby and services. The hotels will join a number of properties on the island, including the Jekyll Island Club hotel, which recently claimed the No. 3 spot on the Best Hotels list in Southern Living's South's Best 2017.

## St. Simons Island

Speaking of Southern Living, another of Georgia's Golden Isles, St. Simons Island, claimed the No. 2 spot on the list of South's Best Islands. Known for its laid-back atmosphere, friendly locals and picturesque landscape, St. Simons Island is the perfect escape for weekend getaways, summer vacations and low-key events.

Also not to be missed: Southern Soul. St. Simons' BBQ joint reigned supreme on the list, boasting the No. 1 position when it comes to Best BBQ—no small feat. It's a favorite spot for locals and visitors alike. What's good? Anything on their menu, seriously. ◀

*Source: Visit Savannah, Jekyll Island Georgia, Golden Isles CVB*



Savannah's Historic Riverfront

# A Taste for Online Groceries?



BY JOHN P. HARRISON,  
CAE, CMP

**AN ONLINE MOGUL** is buying a grocery store chain. Wow, I know something about this phenomenon and am willing to give you investment advice. For free. Here's how it goes.

Once upon a time I invested in Amazon. I was in an executive MBA program, and my study group decided we'd all open up e-trading accounts for a couple grand each (ouch, but gotta keep up). I proudly researched and decided Amazon was a promising idea, so I bought in at the very beginning. Even got the original coffee mug they sent out to all their early investors—when they made no money. Well, they continued to make no money for so many years, and I played the cold-hearted analyst and considered it unprofitable cost and sold out. All of it.

**Lesson 1: Don't sell behemoth online retailer stock too soon.**

About that time Webvan comes along. You do not remember Webvan, but it was an online grocery service that was a great product. My wife and I were both working and liked good cooking. That requires food. We discovered the technology-disrupting Webvan. Their website was stellar, you ordered all your groceries online, and you could even keep your usual order on file for a starting point the next week. Plus, now get this: they showed up at your door at



the appointed hour, brought the groceries into your house and put them on the counter. Let me repeat that. Some smiling man in a uniform brought the groceries into your house and put the grocery bags on your kitchen counter. One more time: yes, from the van onto your kitchen counter, and no tipping accepted. I was so impressed I bought 500 shares that day. Webvan went bankrupt inside of two years. The analysts said that this idea had been tried before back when you could phone in a grocery order. Apparently, that doesn't last for some reason. The analyst further said that they didn't have anyone with grey hair working at Webvan—only hotshot techno wonder kids who didn't get how to organize and deliver a tangible product. Oh well.

**Lesson 2: Don't buy online grocery store stock too soon.**

All of this was around the turn of this century, and some bubbles were growing inside the stock market; the business professors

were saying some fundamentals were being violated—something to do with dotcoms. During this time, my newly minted MBA put me into a new job as a CFO in an expanding association. One of my many duties was overseeing the small association's reserves—a portfolio worth about \$4 million. The legacy investment advisor and I didn't hit it off, so I had the portfolio turned into cash temporarily and put figuring it all out on my to-do list. The to-do list was huge, and I forgot all about the portfolio, which was no real portfolio at all, just a pile of cash sitting around not doing much. I was busy hiring, firing, procedure writing, and so forth. I would get to the portfolio in due time.

Then, the dotcom bubble burst, and there was a market crash. The president of the association called in a panic, "How much did we lose?"

"Lose?" I said, not sure what he meant.

*continued on page 30*



CHOICES *continued from page 29*

"Yes, lose in the stock market tumble?" It all came back to me, the cash I had forgotten about.

"Oh, well, sir, you know I had analyzed the implications of the variations of the summations and predicted a hypercorrection to an overvaluation. So, I put everything in cash, and we didn't lose a cent. In fact, we have gained some basis points according to the current statement. The \$3 million is now closer to \$5 million than \$4 million," I said something like that while keeping a straight face.

"You are an absolute genius," he said. I have kept silent about this until now.

### Lesson 3: Do nothing, but act smart.

There you have the story of the online moguls meet groceries. I have a feeling the worse part of grocery shopping is driving to the store and hauling all that stuff to the car and from the car to the counter. The time in the grocery store is not so bad, especially if there are little wine tastings, classical music and some free pastry samples. And, if you're an old fuddy dud, you see acquaintances you haven't seen in a while; younger types see cute other younger types and get to silently judge them by what they eat.

Moral of the story: Don't sell Amazon, don't buy into the online grocery idea, just stay the course. And enjoy the tasties, whether they show up in the store or on your kitchen counter. <

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