

# Byword

## Copywriting tips on tap

Want to learn about the differences in writing for print and broadcast? Are you interested in effective copywriting tips? Be sure to attend the IABC-Tucson lunch meeting Thursday, Nov. 6, held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. at McMahon's Prime Steakhouse, on the southwest corner of Fort Lowell and Swan.

Guest speaker Tom McMahon, president of McMahon Creative, Inc., will provide tips to make you a more effective communicator.

The cost is \$18 for members, \$25 for guests and members without reservations, and \$14 for student members. No-shows will be billed for reserved meals. A vegetarian option will be available.

Reservations, which must be in by noon Nov. 3, can be made by emailing Mimi Gibson at [mimiv@trico.org](mailto:mimiv@trico.org) or calling Mimi at 744-2944 Ext. 1363. You can also pay online via credit card by going to [www.tucson.iabc.com](http://www.tucson.iabc.com).

## Primary mission may be secondary communication

### Tucson Sidewinders stress community involvement to boost attendance

**By Elena Acoba**

Sometimes the way you put your organization in the public consciousness is to not communicate your primary mission.

Take Tucson's Sidewinders minor league baseball team, for example.

"We're not selling baseball, we're selling entertainment," Sergio Pedroza, the club's director of community relations, told the audience attending the August chapter meeting. "We have to look at the entertainment value of the ballpark."

Of course, the organization exists as a farm team to the Arizona Diamondbacks, but drawing crowds often means thinking outside the batter's box.

Because most players don't stay with the Sidewinders very long, it's hard to depend on fan loyalty to keep attendance figures up. "You have to create your own market," Pedroza said.

That means, for instance, adding promotions such as Mariachi Mondays, Military Appreciation Night and DARE/GREAT Day for graduates of an

anti-drug and anti-gang program. They bring in folks who have an extra incentive to go to Tucson Electric Park for a night of camaraderie.

The organization also works to be a good community partner.

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*'We take our involvement in the community seriously. We are nothing without the support and interaction of the community.'*

—Sergio Pedroza

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The Sidewinders host many nonprofit groups at games, allowing them to set up fundraising and informational tables and announcing their causes over the public address system, said Pedroza.

Ballplayers fan out into the community, making appearances at hospitals and schools and working with kids in their Baseball Buddies program.

"We take our involvement in the community seriously," Pedroza said. "We are nothing without the support and interaction of the community."

## Don't believe everything you read in the newspaper

### By Steve Pender

As many of you know, I'm a vegan. That means I don't eat eggs. However, I do occasionally have to wipe one off my face. And right now I have yolk dripping from my cheek.

The reason? If you happened to read the Letters to the Editor section of the *Arizona Daily Star* on August 19, you may have noticed a letter entitled: "UA should hire local talent." The letter, under my name, politely took UA Athletic Director Jim Livengood to task for hiring an Atlanta PR firm, Inacon, to develop the department's crisis communications plan. The hiring of the Atlanta firm was reported in the *Arizona Republic* and the

Tucson board was alerted to it by some of our friends in IABC/Phoenix. My letter protested Livengood's action and reminded him of the quality of the communications professionals here in the Old Pueblo.

As it turned out, there was only one problem: The article in the *Arizona Republic* turned out to be false. Greg Hansen's column in the August 31 edition of the Star contained the following quote from Chris Del Conte, UA's associate athletic director for development: "The *Arizona Republic* was in complete error in that story. We had the Inacon people in to give us a two-day seminar, but that is the extent of it. They wanted to see, through

their relationship with Jim Livengood at the NCAA basketball tournament, if their program was applicable to a major university's athletic department. It is not. We didn't sign a contract with them or pay them a cent."

I apologize to the University of Arizona and to Athletic Director Jim Livengood and his staff. I do feel it's part of our responsibility to speak up for IABC members in particular and Tucson's communications community in general when the circumstances warrant. As it turned out, this was not one of those times. I promise we'll double-check our facts in the future. And triple-check them if the story originates in the *Arizona Republic*.

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## Byword

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# What would you do if...

For each newsletter, Byword will pose a question about the communications field. Some questions may be related to current events; others will of a more general nature. The editor will select a few responses to run in the newsletter. Here is this issue's question:

**You are the spokesperson for a major charity that has had a financial scandal a few years back. A disaster has just hit and your organization's financial resources are depleted. Under these circumstances, how would you convince the public of your organization's credibility so they will be willing to donate cash for disaster relief?**

If the scandal involved the mishandling of funds, I would make it clear in all calls for donations how money will go directly to disaster relief. I would place the spotlight on those in need rather than my organization, and find a spokesperson/champion who is well-known, trustworthy, and has never been tainted by scandal to make the appeal. I would be prepared to report in publicity and thank you letters from the spokesperson how the donations helped — with photos.

**Karen Dahood**  
**Writer**

I would suggest putting together your Crisis Communications Team, which should include your CEO and top management, Board of Directors, top constituents including volunteers and of course your communications staff. You would need to win back the trust and credibility you

lost with the public by demonstrating the benefits of your organization to the community. You also need to demonstrate the value of the services your organization provides. By using the media and through the interaction of board members with key

community leaders, you should be able to have some success. However, it depends somewhat on the fallout from the previous incident.

**Carolyn Smith**  
**American Cancer Society**

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# Member profile: Laura Hagen Fairbanks

Laura Hagen Fairbanks has worked in the communications field for 13 years. She currently holds the position of Community Relations Specialist for the Pima County Wastewater Management Department where she has overseen the development and implementation of a national award-winning public information program. Laura holds a Masters degree in Management from the University of Phoenix in Tucson, Arizona. She also earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Foreign Languages from Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania. Laura and her husband, Marvin, stay busy meeting the challenges of parenting three sons – two of whom are adolescents. In spite of the challenges this creates, they have opted not to take up heavy drinking.

## What's your communication philosophy?

Tell the truth.

## How did you come into the communication profession?

I had worked in the mental health and social services field for 13 years before I made the switch to communications. Although I found my previous work rewarding, it became increasingly diffi-

cult to raise a family on that type of salary. It was also difficult to know that each year program funding could be cut which could leave me out of a job. Prior to making the change, I enrolled in the University of Phoenix and got a Masters Degree in Management. With my degree and with the communication experience I acquired in the field of social services — writing brochures, Public Service Announcements, volunteer training manuals, etc.

— I had enough experience to be hired by Pima County.

## What is your current position?

My title is Community Relations Specialist. I work with individual residents and neighborhoods and also act as Wastewater Management's PIO (Public Information Officer). In addition to overseeing public information programs, I also write brochures, quarterly and annual reports, and employee newsletters.

## What do you like best about your current position?

I enjoy the variety my position provides. In a single day I might be interviewed by local

media outlets, talk to residents who are bothered by sewer odors, and work on a brochure or report.

## How do you spend your free time outside of work?

I have three children, ages 10, 13, and 16. I have no free time! I do spend a lot of time chauffeuring, refereeing between feuding

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*It drives me crazy when communication is not open and direct.*

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siblings, and otherwise carrying out the duties of "mom."

## Read any good books lately? If so, which ones?

My husband and I have enjoyed the *Earth's Children* series by Jean Auel. She wrote two or three books in short order and then took several years to put out the next one in her series. She finally finished it last year and we are hopeful that her subsequent books won't take as long to come out.

## Tell me about a time when you acted first, then got permission later?

During the first days of the sinkhole emergency on Speedway last year, I spent a lot of time doing interviews with the media. The time it took to receive updates, "translate" the engineering language into normal English, and do the interviews was impacting my ability to work directly with the area's residents. During that first week I decided that the person who reports to me should do the interviews. At that time he had been with the depart-



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## Write On!

The Name: **Steve Pender**

The Game: **Writing, Directing  
Producing — for Video,  
Multimedia, the Web**

## Member profile

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Continued from page 4

ment less than a year and had not yet done an interview. But prior to coming to Pima County, his background had been in journalism so he certainly understood interview process. The department has a rather strict protocol about who can speak with the media and who cannot, but I assigned the media piece to him without first checking in with the director. It made sense for me to work with neighbors in the largely Hispanic neighborhood because I speak Spanish and he does not. In the end, it worked out well.

### **What types of jobs have you had?**

In high school and college I was a waitress. Talk about hard jobs! To this day I am a very good tipper! I have also worked as a social worker with migrant and seasonal farm workers and with developmentally disabled and seriously mental ill adults. In addition, I was a nurse assistant and a manager in a meals-on-wheels program. Prior to being promoted to Community Relations Specialist, I was the assistant to the person who held my current position.

### **What drives you crazy professionally?**

From time to time I will need an engineer or a manager to speak to the media because of the technical nature of the topic. Often they can be distrustful of the press and do not answer questions in a direct manner. This is unnecessary because we do good work and have nothing to hide. I believe that being direct is always the best policy. If there is a problem, we need to clearly explain the situation and describe

what we will do to fix or improve a situation. Sometimes there is no easy answer or solution. If that is the case, we have to say so. With very few exceptions, everything we do is public record. It drives me crazy when communication is not open and direct.

### **How do you keep up with current trends and professional development?**

I attend IABC meetings and read *Communication World*.

I also look at other professional materials that come across my desk.

### **What can't you say "no" to?**

My youngest son has autism. Whenever I am asked to serve on the Board of Directors of an agency that serves him, I cannot seem to decline. I am currently a member of the Board of Directors of Arts for All/Third Street Kids, an agency that provides after

school care and summer programs to children with developmental disabilities. I also have never turned down a request to talk to groups about children with developmental disabilities or mental illness.

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*The biggest benefit of IABC is our chapter's members. They are a very diverse and interesting group of people and are a great resource.*

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### **What are the benefits about IABC membership?**

The biggest benefit of IABC is our chapter's members. They are a very diverse and interesting group of people and are a great resource. I also find the monthly meetings and the seminars that are held from time to time to be very valuable. I have been able to apply what I learn through IABC to my job.

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## Media coverage of Iraq war falls short, says Sharkey

By Michelle Marie Dupray

In early March the United States media devoted most of their news coverage to the upcoming war in Iraq. However, as UA Journalism Dept. Head Jacqueline Sharkey told IABC members at the October chapter meeting, the coverage that was given was not always complete.

According to Sharkey, the major TV networks covered the events leading up to the war mainly from the point of view of the Bush Administration. The

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*One media outlet that did an excellent job of war coverage from different segments of society, in Sharkey's opinion, was MTV.*

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print media discussed more of the implications of a possible war while NPR did one of the best jobs of covering the war among all the media outlets by covering how the war would affect all segments of society.

One media outlet that did an excellent job of war coverage from different segments of society, in Sharkey's opinion, was MTV.

"They gave cameras to bunch of Iraqi kids ages 16 to early twenties," said Sharkey.

The kids used the cameras to show what was happening to the Iraqi people after the war started.

"The kids were saying comments like, 'Bombs are going off and I'm so scared,'" said Sharkey.

MTV also had a camera crew train with National Guard troops, giving viewers the opinion of the war from a soldier's perspective. They also made a documentary

on the history of the United States — Iraq relationship whose con-

tent Sharkey labeled as "excellent."

## IABC connections help Steve Pender land video job for cancer benefit

IABC-Tucson President Steve Pender recently wrote, directed, and produced a public service announcement designed to raise funds for the National Foundation for Cancer Research. The PSA featured Jamie Farr, best known for his portrayal of Corporal

Klinger in M\*A\*S\*H. Farr was the celebrity host of the Golf Tournament and Gala Dinner benefit for the Arizona Cancer Center, held at the Westin La Paloma Sept. 5.

Pender's IABC connections were key to his landing the job. When the PR firm handling publicity for the event asked Rob Raine, Media Relations Coordinator for the Cancer Center and IABC-



**Steve Pender (he's the one not wearing a dress) with Jamie Farr.**

Tucson Membership Director, to recommend a local video producer, he suggested Pender Productions.

Pender wrote the script, hired the crew, and arranged to shoot the spot in a meeting room at the Westin. He also supervised the editing of television and radio versions of the PSA, which will air sometime during the coming year.



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# Austin was a hit; don't miss Phoenix

**By Mark Flint**

Four IABC-Tucson members made the journey to Austin Oct. 1-3 to see what they could glean from "Communications in Concert," the annual district conference.

For those who haven't been to one, a district conference is a three-day experience in gaining new job skills, meeting new friends in the profession (and renewing old friendships) and sampling a bit of the flavor of the host city.

In Austin, the local flavor was the city's music scene and watching the bats fly (and fly and fly) out from beneath the Congress Street Bridge at dusk. Several of us also took advantage of the lag between the end of the conference and our flights to tour the Texas State Capitol, where we picked up some interesting historical information about the state that has been under the flags of six nations.

Susan Guererro, Kay Lehman, Donna Breckenridge and I made the journey this year. Donna and I got in a day early to attend the District 5 board meeting, held the morning of the first day of the conference. Rather than recap any of the sessions, it might be more instructive to sample the highlights as experienced by Susan and Donna in a simple Q&A format.

## **What was the high point of the conference for you?**

**Susan Guererro:** Seeing all my friends again; making new friends; looking at successful marketing campaigns and seeing all the hard work to do it (in particular the keynote by Ginger Hardage, VP of Public Relations and Corporate Communications

at Southwest Airlines.

**Donna Breckenridge:** I have to admit that the high point was "dine-around" night. I went with a small group to a "down-home" type restaurant near the hotel. The food and conversation were great, and even better was that afterwards, I stayed outside until 10 p.m. listening to two bluegrass bands who were playing there.

## **What are the two or three best gems you picked up during the sessions?**

**Susan Guererro:** My 2 favorite sessions were on "phister" sham web sites and how to deal with them and the newest updates from five Intranets (not Internets!) and how to combine them with Internets.

**Donna Breckenridge:** A couple of the sessions I attended dealt with public speaking, and of course the speakers knew what

they were doing! The best part was their enthusiasm, as well as all the tips they gave (will try to bring a handout to the next meeting). One speaker, who was actually a speech writer and had written for Bob Hope at one point, was SO enthusiastic that he was literally running around the room and turning red in the face — we thought we might have to call the paramedics at any minute! He definitely illustrated how to keep your audience's attention!

## **Did you get any benefit from networking?**

**Susan Guererro:** I love networking — we've even got another Professional Development speaker lined up for the spring.

**Donna Breckenridge:** Yes. I've recently had two phone calls

*Continued on back page*

## *Web Design That*

# **Works!**

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IABC involvement pays off  
in video contract for  
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## District conference gets rave reviews

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and also received a videotape  
from Bob Losure, a former CNN  
anchor who was a keynote  
speaker at the conference. He's  
also an 18-year survivor of tes-  
ticular cancer and wants to come  
speak at the Arizona Cancer

Center. I'm hoping we can work it  
out because he's a very inspiring  
speaker!

**What would you say to an IABC-  
Tucson member who was debat-  
ing whether to go to a district  
conference?**

**Susan Guerro:** Go. You will  
never regret it.

**Donna Breckenridge:** Don't  
debate - just do it! Next year's  
conference is in Phoenix, so it will  
be an easy drive, and you'll gain  
so much information and meet  
some great people!

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