

KALEIDOSCOPE

EXPLORING THE MANY FACETS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Spring 2017



The Red Herring of Fake News

by Chris Lukach, APR

We don't have a problem with fake news. We have a problem with critical thinking.

Communicators today are bemoaning with intensity the seemingly out-of-nowhere rise of fake news. It's a real phenomenon, but not a new one. Fake news is as old as satire itself. It's the media landscape that has changed. In fact, for fake news, it's as fertile it has ever been.

Consider this:

Nearly half of consumers consider social media a primary news source; nearly eight in 10 millennials say the same.

Nearly six in 10 Facebook users claim to have shared content (thereby giving said content a boost of validity) without actually having clicked through to read and, more important, to validate the content.

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Honors and Awards

AKCG WINS "BEST IN SHOW"

AKCG took home "Best in Show" honors at the 48th annual Pepperpot and Achievement Awards, sponsored by the Philadelphia chapter of the Public Relations Society of America. The event recognizes outstanding public relations campaigns and tactics submitted by chapter members across the Greater Philadelphia region.

The firm's entry, judged the best among a total of 110 submissions, was in the Public Service category for work with our client **Ralston Center** on a program called, "Ensuring Older, Underserved West Philadelphians Thrive Independently." The campaign launched a robust service initiative, driven by primary research, to enable older adults to thrive in their communities.

The initiative kicked off with a press conference and community event that engaged dozens of community-partner organizations, elected officials, other supporters and many of the seniors the initiative aims to help.

In addition to the Best in Show honors, AKCG received a first place Pepperpot for the press conference kicking off the Ralston Center initiative, and a second place ladle for a multicultural communication campaign, "Successful Cultural Integration of a Senior Living Community," in partnership with client **Wesley Enhanced Living**.

Also given at the event was the annual Anne Sceia Klein Award for Professional Promise. The award recognizes a college junior or senior who is a member of a PRSSA chapter affiliated with Philadelphia PRSA and has demonstrated his or her dedication to advancement in the field of public relations. This year's honoree is Kristen Pietryka, a senior at Marywood University in Scranton, Pa., and president of the school's PRSSA chapter.



At the Pepperpot Awards (L to R): Mike Gross, APR, Jean Papaj (Ralston Center), Darrah Foster (holding the Best in Show trophy) and Chris Lukach, APR.

MIKE ELECTED TO PRSA PHILLY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the end of last year, AKCG COO Mike Gross, APR, was elected a Director-at-Large for PRSA's Philadelphia chapter. Mike is a past president of the chapter and has rejoined the board to provide the executive members with ideas and counsel on engaging with the chapter's 500-plus members. In addition to his board position, Mike will volunteer his time for PRSA Philly's Nancy Bacher Long PR Institute where he will present his "How to write a PR Plan" seminar, as he has done for more than five consecutive years.

STAFF HOLIDAY OUTING

Though temperatures dipped to 17 degrees (F), with wind gusts of up to 45 mph, the AKCG team was not about to let a little blustery weather get in the way of a great holiday outing to Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pa., in December. After a leisurely lunch, the team enjoyed the Christmas trees made



The AKCG family at Longwood Gardens.

entirely of flowers inside The Conservatory (not to mention the nearly tropical feel inside). But most of all they enjoyed viewing the more than half-million lights dotting the grounds. After the stroll around the gardens, the team finished off the outing with gourmet hot chocolates and coffees.

CHRIS ON FAKE NEWS

AKCG President Chris Lukach, APR, led the PRSA Philadelphia chapter's February program, "

Reputation Management in the Attention-Deficit Age" (see *Chris's column on the front page*). During the program, Chris discussed the epidemic of "fake news" and the importance of knowing which communication channels to use and when. He also addressed the importance of social media; nearly half of consumers consider social media a primary news source, while nearly eight in 10 millennials say the same.

DARRAH WORKS ON CAREER EVENT

Senior Associate Darrah Foster is serving on the committee organizing the 2017 Philadelphia Public Relations Association's Careers 101 event to be held on April 20 at Drexel University. Open to students and young professionals in the Philadelphia region, the event offers attendees the opportunity to have their resumes reviewed and professional photos taken, and to meet and hear from PR minds from all areas of the profession.

Client News

AKCG worked with long-time client **AFS-International** to develop a news release and secure media coverage for its first-of-its-kind study called "Mapping Generation Z: Attitudes Toward International Education Programs." The study measured Generation Z's feelings on security and safety abroad, the cost of international study and travel, and their desire to explore other cultures in general. The Study was published by industry trade publications *The PIE News*, *ICEF Monitor* and *Overzeaz*. Information from the study also was re-tweeted by the U.S. Department of State. Generation Z encompasses those born starting in the mid-1990s to the early 2000s; its members also are known as post-Millennials.

Recently, AKCG secured a feature story in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on behalf of AKCG client **Wesley Enhanced Living** about WEL Main Line resident June Robbins. June worked at the Philadelphia Navy Yard during World War II and is on the hunt to find other "Rosie the Riveters" (like herself) through the organization, "Thanks! Plain & Simple." The article has already led to another "Rosie" reaching out to the organization and June.

Over the past year, AKCG has secured placements for dozens of **Mercy Health System** physicians in the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* Sunday health section "Q&A" and "Medical Mystery" columns. The "Q&A" column presents a health-related question answered by a physician.

Health topics covered by MHS physicians have included senior depression, vaccinations, heart attack, cold sores, vitamins and hearing loss, among others. The "Medical Mystery" column presents a mysterious patient case encountered by a physician, and relates how it was resolved. "Medical Mystery" topics covered by MHS physicians have included flu complications, meningitis and broken heart syndrome. In addition, AKCG secured placement of a discussion by an MHS gastrointestinal physician about a recent colon cancer study, in the *Inquirer's* "Diagnosis: Cancer" blog on Philly.com. These placements help further position Mercy Health System physicians as experts in their fields of specialty.

AKCG HELPS MERCY LIFE SPREAD ITS MESSAGE FAR AND WIDE

AKCG client **Mercy LIFE** is a nationally recognized Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) that offers older adults a complete package of services for long-term care. AKCG has worked to highlight several of the organization's programs and is helping seniors and their relatives learn more about the service offerings of Mercy LIFE.

In November, Mercy LIFE–West Philadelphia selected a caregiver to be honored with the 2016 Mercy LIFE Devoted Caregiver Award, recognizing someone who goes above and beyond the call of duty as a caregiver to a LIFE participant. With Mercy LIFE–West Philadelphia staff, the leadership team, program members and special guests in attendance, Health and Medical Reporter Ali Gorman, R.N., from Philadelphia TV station 6ABC, presented the award to Ann Roe, who served as the primary caregiver for her neighbor.



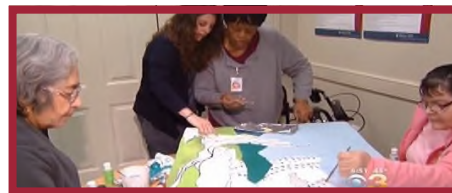
6ABC highlighted the Devoted Caregiver Award ceremony on its Action News evening broadcast.

To help raise awareness of the challenges for caregivers in the region, AKCG placed a bylined Q&A article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in December on behalf of Suzanne Januszkeski, the regional director at Mercy LIFE–West Philadelphia. The Q&A addressed the question, “How can I avoid burnout while serving as a caregiver?”

In January, Mercy LIFE and Mercy LIFE–West Philadelphia became among the first PACE programs in the country to receive the NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for

Healthsystem Elders) designation, and Mercy LIFE–West Philadelphia achieved the Pathway to Excellence redesignation by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. AKCG secured a story about the designations in the *Philadelphia Tribune*.

Also in January, AKCG placed a story on Philadelphia TV station CBS 3 highlighting Mercy LIFE–North Hancock’s mural painting recreational therapy exercise. The mural engaged participants at the adult day center and honored those who have passed



CBS 3’s “Brotherly Love” segment spotlighted Mercy LIFE–North Hancock’s mural painting recreational therapy exercise.

away. The program was so moving that it was later featured on TV anchor Ukee Washington’s weekly “Brotherly Love” news segment, which profiles people who have had a positive impact in their communities.

In February, Mercy LIFE received approval to expand its PACE services into adjoining Montgomery County, Pa. As a result of the team’s efforts, the expansion announcement appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Tribune* and on the Philly.com news website. Mercy LIFE plans to open its first adult day center in Montgomery County in 2018.

During January and February, Mercy LIFE and Mercy Home Health collected cereal, peanut butter, jelly and other food donations for Mercy Neighborhood Ministries. AKCG helped Mercy LIFE and Mercy Home Health colleagues gain recognition for their efforts by getting the donation drop-off featured on CBS 3 and Fox 29.



The Mercy LIFE and Mercy Home Health food collection program for Mercy Neighborhood Ministries was featured on CBS 3.

At Mercy LIFE–Sharon Hill (Pa.), participants learned about refugees in the area and created welcome cards that would be distributed to local refugees. AKCG secured an interview with the *Delaware County Daily Times*, which featured a story not only on the recreational therapy exercise but also on the importance of



A Mercy LIFE–Sharon Hill resident works on a welcome card for a local refugee.

welcoming refugees to the United States. The publication also ran two editorials that highlighted the program’s significance in today’s world. The *Delco News Network*, *The Miami Herald*, *U.S. News & World Report* and numerous other publications around the country also featured the *Delaware County Daily Times* editorial.

AKCG is proud to be working with an organization that not only serves seniors in need, but also gives back to the communities in which it operates.

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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(Continued from front page.)

Oh, and in 2015, the attention span of a human (8.25 seconds) officially dipped below that of a goldfish (nine seconds).

The media landscape is forcing consumers to consume media not to be informed, but to be validated. The way consumers respond to media today is devoid of critical thought, but not of emotion. They feel just as strongly as ever about what they read or see.

Communicating in the attention-deficit age is about being mindful of how the audience responds not just to the content, but to the channel of communication. Facebook, for example, is showing its increasing power to build tribes and communities, but not to foster thoughtful conversation.

We communicators must also connect with our audiences both emotionally *and* logically; the challenge in today's landscape is knowing when to use which, and to be deliberate in our efforts. — *C.J.L.*

Anne Klein Communications Group is a public relations consulting firm based in the Philadelphia region, with clients throughout the United States.

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MORE CLIENT NEWS

AKCG's spokesperson training practice, led by Chris and Mike, has grown by leaps and bounds as it helps prepare thought leaders and subject-matter experts for today's media landscape. Earlier this year, AKCG trained the leadership team of a chemical company based in New Hampshire; the leadership team of a senior living organization going through restructuring; the headmaster and board chair of a prominent preparatory school facing controversy; and a group of scholar students as well as top researchers associated with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The logo for IPREX, featuring the word "IPREX" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. The letter "E" is stylized with three horizontal lines extending to the right.

AKCG is a member of **IPREX (the International Public Relations Exchange)**, one of the world's largest public relations networks.