

## President's Update: Create Memories at the Annual Excalibur Awards by John Senall

Knights, dragons and rogues won't likely show their faces, but you definitely should at the chapter's annual Excalibur Awards dinner on Thursday, June 16, at Salvatore's Italian Gardens.

Why is this dinner so special? It's the one time we gather each year to honor our chapter members' finest work. Plus, it's our annual opportunity to present the Rising Star, Outstanding Executive and Outstanding Practitioner awards to those who have helped shine a light for others to follow in PR practice and support of the profession. We will also present our May Randazzo scholarship to a deserving college student.

Have you considered applying for an award to recognize your own work? No better time than the present. With 38 categories in two divisions, your opportunity awaits. Don't miss our deadline to submit applications: Monday, April 25, by 5 p.m.

Just want to network? The Excalibur Awards—our most highly attended annual event—is the place to be. And the party usually continues at a nearby watering hole after the formalities wrap up.

Please consider making the most of your PRSA experience by joining us on June 16. It is an experience not to be missed, and one you won't soon forget.



Sincerely,  
**John Senall**  
PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter President

## Social Media Brings March in Like a Lion for PRSA by Tony Astran

The PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter double-dipped in March for learning experiences with social media. On March 1, presenters Geoffrey Nason and Newell Nussbaumer discussed tips and challenges for managing comments from online site visitors during "The Seedy Side of Social Media: Hiding Behind Anonymity." Pictured left to right are Nason, assistant online editor at *The Buffalo News*, and Nussbaumer, publisher of *Buffalo Rising*.



On March 24, local practitioners gathered for a PRSA National webinar, "How to Create a Social Media Plan: Build Community and Brand Awareness Through Strategic Social Communications," presented by Deirdre Breakenridge, president of Mango! Creative Juice.

Each event attracted approximately 25 people, some of whom "live Tweeted" with designated "hash-tag" words

like #socialplan and #seedysocial to share information. Members of the e-communications committee also navigated the controls for the official PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter Twitter feed (@PRSABuffNiag). Be sure to join the conversation at future events!

Here are a few of the insightful posts:

- **PRSA Buffalo Niagara (@PRSABuffNiag):** Hootsuite.com lets you monitor various #socialmedia accounts & analytics - for free! #socialplan
- **Tony Astran (@TonyAstran):** Females aged 25-34 create the most social media content. #socialplan
- **PRSA Buffalo Niagara:** We want to move consumers from awareness to loyalty. #Socialmedia helps w/this. #socialplan
- **Kevin Manne (@k3v2):** Be careful when deleting comments. Be prepared to justify it and defend against censorship accusations. #seedysocial
- **Kevin Manne:** Buffalo Rising felt that the tradeoff of good content was worth leaving the anonymous commenting up. Use flagging to moderate #seedysocial

## A Tale of Two Winners: 2010's Best of Show Honorees Share Secrets of Excalibur Success

by Tara Erwin

Excalibur Season is underway, and if you've missed submitting early bird entries by April 15, there's still plenty of time to participate before the final deadline on April 25. And whether you're new to the process or a seasoned entrant, a few tips from last year's top winners might give you some inspiration in these final days.

Mike Barone, director of public relations at SUNY Fredonia, won Best of Show in the Projects Division last year for the school's alumni magazine. By changing how it approached the editorial and publication process, the magazine received a dramatic and lauded facelift while saving the school thousands of dollars in production costs.

According to Barone, Excalibur entries must be painstakingly thorough, leading judges through a step-by-step process of research and results. "The most common pitfall I've seen among entries is not showing enough research at the onset, be it primary or secondary, and/or not enough meaningful results at the end," he said. "Creativity is wonderful and execution is certainly important, but where the Excaliburs differ from many other award programs is that results are critical, and the science behind the project or program is every bit as valued as the initiative itself."



### Quick Links

[Description of Categories](#)

[Editable Entry Form](#)

[Special Honors Editable Entry Form](#)

[Seven Steps to Excalibur Gold](#)

[Join the Conversation on Twitter! #Excals](#)

Lynn Casteel, an executive vice president and managing director for Travers Collins and Company's Investor Relations Practice, was the other Best of Show winner at last year's awards. His winning entry was for the execution of a communications plan that raised investor awareness and confidence in Community Bank System's financial strength amidst a national shaky economic outlook. Casteel said that recognizing what makes a good entry in the first place – as well as collecting the supporting materials as you go – can make a daunting process seem more manageable.

"The deciding factor is usually who is fortunate enough to be working for a company, organization or client with an interesting communications challenge and a willingness to take sound, well-thought-out advice," Casteel said. "We try to identify projects that might be 'Excalibur-worthy' while we're in the execution phase and then collect the research and planning materials as we go. We also try to think outside of the box when it comes to evaluating and presenting the results."

Learn more about the Excalibur Awards at the PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter [website](#).

## Members on the Move

by Tara Erwin

- **Laura E. Jacobs** was promoted to senior account executive at e3communications.
- **Jessica R. Reilly** was promoted to regional marketing specialist at Meritain Health.
- **Marissa A. Wilson** was promoted to communications manager at Perry's Ice Cream Company.

Got news to share? We want to hear from you! Email Tara Erwin at [tara.erwin@gmail.com](mailto:tara.erwin@gmail.com) with your information about new jobs, promotions, awards, marriages, births, etc., and we'll include it in a future column.

**New Member Promotion:** Do you know someone who is considering joining PRSA? New members who join in May will receive a \$25 Visa card. Spread the word! Details available on the [PRSA National website](#).

## Upcoming Programs

### Save the date for the following events!

- April 28 – 11:45 a.m.  
[Measuring the Relationship with Your Publics: A Low-Cost, High-Impact Strategy](#)  
Center for Tomorrow at the University at Buffalo
- May 17 – 7:45 a.m.  
[Media Speed Dating](#)  
Pearl Street Grill & Brewery
- June 16 – 5 p.m.  
[22nd Annual Excalibur Awards Dinner](#)  
Salvatore's Italian Gardens

**Editor:** Kevin Manne **Proofreader:** Tony Astran  
**Contributors:** Tony Astran, Tara Erwin and John Senall

