

Letter from the President

Rachel
BENAVIDEZ



Crisis is inevitable. Chaos isn't. It's why the time-tested Scouts motto—"Be prepared"—feels custom-made for communicators.

September is National Preparedness Month. But in our world, where preparedness is at the heart of our profession, its lessons hit home almost every month. We're the ones asked to bring clarity when the details are foggy, to steady the ship when the current gets swift, and to deliver facts with urgency and accuracy. When crisis strikes, communication leads.

In my years as a reporter and editor directing team coverage of everything from hurricanes to politics, I have found that preparation isn't about predicting every scenario; it's about building muscle memory, so the right actions are automatic when it counts. When the proverbial water rises, an actionable communications plan is like the lifeboat you hope you'll never need—but you keep stocked, fueled, and at the ready.

Preparedness can shape your response from being just rapid to also being responsible. The difference often comes down to who's guiding the message. The strongest teams have a calm, clear, and prepared communicator ready to lead. Is that you? Is that your team? If you're part of this PRSA community, chances are the answer is yes—and we're here to help you make that "yes" even stronger.

A Quick Preparedness Checklist

As you turn the page into fall, take one hour with your team to:

- Update your crisis roster: confirm 24/7 contacts, cell numbers, backups, and decision rights.

- Refresh core templates: first statements, social holding lines, media Q&A, internal talking points.
- Run a brief tabletop: choose one scenario (cyber, weather, product, personnel) and time-box a 30-minute drill.
- Check accessibility and language access: ensure messages are clear, readable, and ready in languages commonly used by your audience or required for compliance in emergency communications.
- Rehearse your spokespeople: 10 minutes of practice now saves 10 hours later.
- Align with your values: revisit your ethics framework so speed never outruns integrity.

September 26: Learn With Us — And Give Back

I want to personally invite you to join us on Friday, September 26, from 12:00–1:30 p.m. for a special virtual lunch webinar. We're bringing together voices from technology, media, and public service for a candid conversation about what it takes to deliver clarity when it matters most. These are the people who have been in the trenches—navigating cyberattacks, breaking news, and public emergencies — and they'll share lessons we can all put to work right away.

This is your chance to strengthen your own crisis communications playbook and support a worthy cause at the same time. Every registration helps fund Kerrville Flood Relief efforts. Please register today and encourage a colleague or two to join us.

All proceeds support Kerrville Flood Relief following the devastating July floods—because preparedness isn't just professional; it's personal and regional. When our neighbors are hurting, communicators help mobilize information, resources, and hope.

Register today: <https://prsanantonio.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php?id=222&ts=1758041420>

- PRSA Chapter Members: \$30
- Future Members/Guests: \$40
- PR Retirees & Students: \$15

Seats go fast—secure yours now and invite a colleague who could use a readiness refresh.
Thank You, PRSA Family

Thank you for the work you do every day to keep people informed, safe, and connected. Your professionalism turns uncertainty into understanding and transforms rapid response into responsible response. That's the difference our profession makes—and it matters.

See you online September 26.

Until then, stay safe.
Rachel

P.S. Got a preparedness tip, template, or case study you're proud of? Send it our way — we'll highlight member resources in next month's newsletter so we can all learn from one another.

CRISIS IN REAL TIME

COMMUNICATING WHEN EVERY SECOND COUNTS



STEPHANIA JIMENEZ
REPORTER
ANCHOR
KSAT/KSAT.COM



BRIAN DILLARD
VICE PRESIDENT
OF INNOVATION/TECHNOLOGY
VIA METROPOLITAN TRANSIT



BELINDA WILLIS
STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT
DFW STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

WEBINAR
NOON-1:30 PM
SEPT. 26

HOSTED BY

PRSA

San Antonio Chapter

REGISTER AT [PRSANANTONIO.COM](https://prsanantonio.com)

Imagine a cyberattack disrupting services, a breaking news headline spreading faster than facts, or a public emergency where confusion reigns. Who steps up to deliver clarity? Communicators.

In this powerful discussion, specialists from technology, media, and public service will explore how each plays a critical role in delivering reliable, timely information when communities need it most. You'll leave with lessons to strengthen your own crisis communications playbook.

Join us for a lunch webinar on September 26th! All proceeds benefit Kerrville Flood Relief efforts.

[Register Today!](#)

Welcome New Members

- Alan Sale
- Amanda Sotelo
- Brianna Marie Silva
- Crystal Garcia
- Heather Adkins
- Jennifer Mendez
- Joanna Foy
- Jocelyn Sandoval
- Joshua Collins
- Lindsey Gomez
- Lisa Rivas
- Mark Austin
- Melinda Garza
- Nick Nelson
- Norma Rabago
- Robert Richard Fike
- Shannon Salmon
- Sydney Colwell
- Teri Diaz
- Trista Moxley

Not a member yet? Become a member today and start building your network.

Member Spotlights

Achievements

This month, we're thrilled to shine the spotlight on one of our outstanding members — Ana Flores, Senior Public Information Officer at San Antonio International Airport. Ana has been a valued part of PRSA San Antonio since 2018, and this year she's shared her creativity and organizational talents as our VP of Awards on the PRSA San Antonio board. We're so grateful for her contributions and leadership!

Take a moment to get to know Ana a little better in our quick Q&A below.

If you could give your younger self one piece of career advice, what would it be?

Embrace the bumps along the road; they'll teach you more than you know.

What advice would you give to someone entering the profession today?

If you love communications, be open to wherever your career takes you. You may do some of your most rewarding and life-changing work where and when you least expect it.

What skills do you think are essential for success in modern communications?

Being a strong writer has helped me succeed in various aspects of communication, from writing magazine articles to press releases to crafting clever captions for social media. Being adaptable is also key in the constantly evolving world of communications—there's always some new technology, platform or trend to stay ahead of.

What's the most rewarding aspect of working in PR?

The storytelling aspect is the most rewarding part of working in PR. I love the opportunity to get to know people and/or organizations and develop their stories into compelling narratives that capture attention and win hearts and minds.



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Professional Development PRSA Conferences & Webinars

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P R E S E N T S

Your Next Crisis Will Start on Social Media – Be Ready to Handle it with this 5 Step Plan

with Fran Stephenson APR, Fellow PRSA

Tuesday, Sept. 30
Noon - 1 p.m. CDT
via Zoom



Southwest District Presents: Your Next Crisis Will Start on Social Media

Get ready to learn how to navigate the unpredictable waters of social media during a crisis at this upcoming online event! Join us for insightful discussions, practical tips, and real-life case studies on how to handle crises that start on social media platforms. Don't miss out on this valuable opportunity to enhance your crisis management skills and protect your brand's reputation.

PRSA San Antonio's own Fran Stephenson, APR, Fellow PRSA, is presenting this discussion. She was part of a team awarded a PRSA Silver Anvil Award of Excellence for the "No Trash November" campaign in 2024, among numerous regional and local awards. She holds a Master's Degree in Communications Studies from St. Mary's University and a Bachelor's Degree in Consumer Science from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

[Register today!](#)



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This must-attend annual Conference provides PR, communications, and marketing professionals with unmatched networking and professional development. Inspiring keynote speakers, informative breakout sessions to countless opportunities to connect with peers, makes ICON the place to be!

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FUTURE CON Nov. 5-7, 2025

Designed for executive, C-suite and management level communicators, this future-forward event will bring together industry leaders and innovators to share the latest trends, data and insights shaping communications and public relations.

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COMMS WEEK Nov. 10 - 14

Communications Week is the **BIGGEST** week in communications. Ragan's annual event brings together communicators across industries and borders through a powerful mix of education, inspiration, mentorship, and meaningful connection.

You're invited to be part of the 11th annual CommsWeek, November 10–14, 2025 — featuring Ragan's Future of Communications Conference and the Zenith Awards Celebration on November 12-14 in Austin at the Hyatt Regency, plus regional gatherings in cities like New York, London, and Los Angeles, and virtual events connecting communicators worldwide.

Whether in person or online, Communications Week will help you lead with more impact, work with more purpose, and build lasting connections with fellow communicators.

Use code PARTNER for \$200 off.  [Register here](#)

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A Grad's
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of a PRSA
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Impact

Marilyn Potts Scholarship Fund

Marilyn Potts Scholarship Fund

PRSA San Antonio is proud to support the next generation of communication professionals through the Marilyn Potts Scholarship Fund.

Applications for 2026 will open December 1, 2025, and close February 24, 2026. Please share this opportunity with students who may qualify!

Application Requirements:

- Open to current high school seniors pursuing higher education or college students seeking a bachelor's degree Attend a four-year Bexar County or South Texas university
- Be a communications or related major (PR, journalism, digital media, etc.)
- Demonstrate financial need
- Hold a minimum 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale)
- Enroll (or plan to enroll) in at least 9 credit hours per semester
- Reside in the U.S. and be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Submit a completed application with all required documentation

A heartfelt thank you to our 2025 donors for making this scholarship possible including: Scott Huddleston, Monica Faulkenbery, Lorena Pulido, and Teno Villarreal.

If you would like to help support future communication students, consider making a donation to the Marilyn Potts Scholarship Fund. Your contribution helps open doors and create opportunities for the next generation of PR professionals.

 [Click here to donate](#)



SEPTEMBER MEGA-MIXER

BIG thanks to our partners at the American Marketing Association and American Advertising Federation San Antonio chapters for co-hosting the end-of-summer MegaMixer on September 4. It was a great event with new connections made, ideas shared, and a renewed energy for the work we do together.

Pictured above (L-R): Terry Ellis, Melissa May, Fran Stephenson, Ana Flores, Melissa Sorola, Dawn Robinette, and Rachel Benavidez.



Trust & Ethics Month

September is Trust & Ethics Month for PR professionals — a reminder that credibility and transparency are the foundation of our work. As communicators, how share information, navigate new technologies, and respond under pressure directly impacts the trust we build. Explore more in the Strategies & Tactics September 2025 issue [here](#) for insights on leading with integrity and strengthening ethical practices in today's landscape.

**When the
trust is high,
communication
is easy,
instant
and
effective.**

Stephen Covey

Bulletin Board

Career Opportunities



[Trinity University - Social Media Specialist](#)

[Trinity University - Creative Producer](#)



[City of San Antonio - Communications Director](#)



[The Greater San Antonio Chamber -
Communications Intern](#)



[University Health \(Community First Health Plan -
Corporate Communications Coordinator Public Relations](#)

About

PRSA San Antonio Chapter

The mission of the San Antonio Chapter of PRSA is to advance communication professionals by providing career development opportunities and fostering a collaborative community where individuals can strategically and ethically practice effective public relations.

This year, the PRSA San Antonio Board of Directors' goal is to bring maximum value to PRSA Members.

To learn about PRSA-SA and how to get involved, email PRSA-SA 2025 President [Rachel Benavidez](#)

Have an idea for an article you'd like to submit to Byline? Or news to share? A promotion or a job change? Please email Vice President of Communications, [Shelbi Young](#).

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