

AN APOLOGY

Anyone familiar with the tight production schedules governing daily and even weekly news publications knows that occasionally a misspelled word, a dropped line, or even a few poorly printed copies of some particular issue will somehow get by everyone undetected. But there can be no excuse for distributing to subscribers several hundred ink-smearred copies of a publication such as ours. Yet that's what we did last week. We apologize to those who received unfit copies, and will be more than glad to replace them upon request.

But while there can be no excuse, there must be a reason. And so to cheer up others who may recently have had everything fall apart too late for salvage, here's what happened:

1) There was this New, Young Press Operator.... 2) His supervisor checked the first 100 copies of PR REPORTER, made some adjustments, then checked the second hundred. 3) Satisfied that the printing was at quality level, he returned twice more to spot-check, then was called to the telephone. 4) The New, Young Press Operator thought the inking was a little thin, so gave the automatic inking wheel an extra turn. Now the PRR copies looked better, so he gave the wheel two more turns and went off to the men's room.

Well, sir, 5) the unattended press kept rolling, the automatic inker kept adding its own increment to the extra ink bountifully supplied by the New, Young Press Operator, and pretty soon there was "Reporter Blue" all over the place. However, 6) the supervisor finally got things back in shape and told the NYPO to throw out all those messed up PRRs and start over again. Then everyone went out to lunch. 7) When they got back, all those messed up copies were gone. The supervisor thought the NYPO had tossed them out, and vice versa. A whole new second run was immediately started.

But 8) somehow all those messed up PRRs got folded, cartoned and dispatched to our offices instead of thrown out. So naturally our mail room went to work on them. 9) A dozen random copies from one carton looked fine; and so, even though the rulebook says check every carton, 10) everything nevertheless had been put through all the machines and into the mail bags before anyone could say "What rule?" So of course both the good and the bad copies already were en route to subscribers when, to the mail room's horror, the second run arrived with apologies for being late and the explanation that the first run had been scrapped.

THE LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD: HOW ITS PR DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONED DURING THOSE TWO FRANTIC MONTHS FOLLOWING ROCKEFELLER'S UNFORESEEN PLEDGE

The press practically lived with the Long Island Rail Road's public relations department during those two hectic months following New York Gov. Rockefeller's bolt-out-of-the-blue pledge August 7. That's when he promised the carrier's 90,000 daily

commuters that within two months the broken-down, disaster-ridden railroad would be "the best in the country." It was hard enough on the Long Island's PR department before that...hard enough that the State-owned line was admittedly coming apart at the switches, that angry commuters felt they were risking their lives every time they rode the thing to work & back, that newspapers ran a daily Scoreboard showing how many train cancellations, how many accidents, how many no-shows, how many late arrivals today and to date. As the company's spokesman and - in theory, at least - the people's representative, PR had long been in the middle of a fast-deteriorating situation. Now the Governor, without warning, had pledged the impossible.

Two complicating moves followed within 24 hours: The Governor's ombudsman arrived in the public relations office for the duration; and a new president was installed on the railroad. Mr. Edwin J. Ferenbach's job, as Gov. Rockefeller's representative, was to make sure there was dialogue between management and the unions, and management and the commuters. Mr. Walter Schlager's job, as new head of the carrier, was to make a railroad out of what had been passing for one. "And my job," Dir.Pub.Rel. Hank Boerner told PR REPORTER on D-Day Oct.7, "at least for the first two weeks, was to keep the press away from the president." Mr. Schlager, formerly executive officer-operations & maintenance for the NYC Transit Authority, needed time to hammer out some agreements with the car repairmen & others. And time to think and plan.

"Someone glib and fast with the answers could have handled all three at once," Mr. Boerner said. "But Schlager hadn't had much contact with the press. His answers are slow and deliberate, because he thinks them out first. So we kept him isolated in the beginning, but promised the newsmedia they'd get their interviews just as soon as things began to roll." By late August they'd begun to roll, so a series of interviews were set up around the railroad's service area with radio-TV stations, daily newspapers, then weeklies. Accompanying Messrs. Schlager & Ferenbach were Dr. Wm. J. Ronan, head of the governing Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Mr. Boerner; Mgr.Press Rel. Dennis Leavy; and Mgr.Bcast.Rel. Lou Duro. "We went on the offensive," Mr. Boerner told this newsletter, "and no holds were barred."

The series of meetings carried through most of September. Meanwhile, back in the PR office, telephone calls from press & public soared as revised operating procedures substituted long trains for short ones, permanently cancelled others, replaced non-operating old cars with non-operative new ones, and in general raised hell with established schedules. At mid-point in the 60-day countdown, 18 telephones were constantly ringing in the PR department, including a direct wire to the ombudsman so commuters could report deficiencies instantly. Private lines to key radio-TV stations had been installed so they could get through without delay. On-line papers like Newsday were devoting at least two pages every issue to the railroad's progress & problems. And from PR flowed a daily selection of reprints, news releases, special reports, press kits and photographs for commuters, employees and the press.

Came D-Day, and with it, the announcement by Gov. Rockefeller that "on this day we have become, officially, the finest commuter railroad in the country." None of the commuters could quite swallow that, nor could the press. But commuter & press alike conceded that the Long Island Rail Road, while still chugging through the woods toward a some-day clearing, had done a tremendous job during the 60 day countdown.

Of related interest: One by-product of The Long Island Story was a series of articles about the railroad's PR department which appeared in the influential Suffolk (County) Sun. Excerpts from the concluding article: "One approaches the LIRR PR department with intent to scoff, but finds oneself reluctantly remaining to praise. For under its new director of public & community affairs the LIRR seems to be expressing a new intent, to really serve the beleaguered Long Island commuter. . .The LIRR, of all places, seems to have begun to pull itself together with, of all things, its department of public relations."

ASKS LEGAL LIMIT TO LENGTH & COST OF PROXY FIGHTS Proxy contests "are the public's guardians against complacency, against managements that get mired down in the past, against managers so preoccupied with their own compensation and perquisites that they fail to provide for the needs and future of the business," Thomas J. Deegan Jr. said the other day in an address before the Federal Bar Assn. But, added the chairman of Thomas J. Deegan Co. (NYC), there should be legal limitations on proxy fights and on takeovers - some clear-cut ground rules to protect the public. Mr. Deegan was chief of staff to the late Robert R. Young when the latter won control of the NY Central System in 1954, and has since played a key role in the M-G-M and numerous other major proxy contests, as well as in several mergers & acquisitions.

Ideally, Mr. Deegan contends, a proxy fight should be held to a period of two to three weeks in which each side would be given time to prepare a single statement and to have a single solicitation. "Perhaps this could be stretched to a statement and a rebuttal," he observed in his address, "but not to endless rebuttals and counter rebuttals." As for costs, "there must be some workable formula on limiting the dollars spent, based on the sales or size of the company. And it should be possible to make this work through honest reporting, in the same way that the income tax is made to work." The Deegan Co. was founded as a PR firm shortly after Mr. Young's death, but has since broadened into management consulting.

Of related interest: Most corporate annual & quarterly reports to shareholders are falling on deaf ears today because they "speak in the past tense, when investors and professionals hunger for present-tense information and future-tense plans, problems & trend indicators." That's the opinion of Pres. Theodore H. Pincus of The Financial Relations Board Inc. (Chi.). "The definition of an annual report, for example, has always been 'a review of our company's past year'," he points out, "but this concept is terribly outmoded by today's investment needs. Most annual reports are issued two to three months after the close of a fiscal year, and nothing turns off a broker or analyst faster than the prospect of wading through reams of historical copy on events that took place 10 or 15 months prior."

ON CAMPUS REVOLUTIONS: MAKE HASTE SLOWLY, COLGATE HEAD WARNS In an inaugural address which should be of particular interest to hundreds of campus PR men groping for answers, Pres. Thos. A. Bartlett of Colgate University (Hamilton, NY) pointed out that "the genius of America has been its ability to be revolutionary beyond any other society," but that "such revolution is made by incessant tinkerers with pliers & screwdrivers, not by heroes with sledge hammers." Noting that the great question today among universities is, "How far can we go in using campuses as arenas of social action before we lose conditions essential to productive scholarship and education?", Dr. Bartlett said two conditions must be met if the question is to be answered positively.

"Campuses must steadily improve their means for building a sense of community, particularly processes of communication and compromise," the Colgate president declared, and "problems of society - war, the draft, priorities for social change - should not be so peculiarly arousing to a campus community." Noting that the entire conception of educational life must be reshaped, Dr. Bartlett warned against trying to do too much too fast. "In this period of adjustment and realignment of priorities," he said, "we must proceed urgently and yet draw upon the experience of those before us. It will be tragic if we repeat old mistakes because we're more anxious to be quick than to be wise. We can still be both."

End Free Presentations, PR Counselor Urges Except under very special circumstances, PR counselors should stop giving potential clients "free" public relations programs, Vice Pres. Gene Wortsman of Kal &

Merrick (DC), contends. He points out that when lawyers are approached by a possible client "they don't outline a legal program before being retained," and that "physicians don't treat an individual for an illness before the patient decides whether or not he likes that physician." He maintains - as many have before him - that "it's extremely wasteful of manpower & talent to spend hours or days preparing a program" for a potential client "who then may reject it or put it to his own use." The client should either retain the PR firm and then receive the recommended program, he says, "or pay in advance for a program which the firm later may be asked to execute."

NEWS BRIEFS: A complete TV production studio which can be transported in a station wagon has been introduced by Raytheon Learning Systems Co. (Michigan City, Ind.), a unit of the Raytheon Co. (Lexington, Mass.). The portable studio includes two studio cameras, tripods, dollies, a control console with two monitors, two microphones, and an audio mixer. Sells for \$8,500, ready to plug in.

Beveridge, Penney & Bennett Inc. has untied the merger effected in 1967. Beveridge Organization Inc. will again maintain its own offices in Chicago & NYC, and also an office in Penney & Bennett's headquarters in Los Angeles. The latter firm will also have a NYC office.

That term 'public relations' certainly gets bandied about. "Napoleon Had an Excellent Sense of Public Relations" is the heading on an editorial page feature piece in the Albia (Iowa) Union-Republican of Sept. 11. In fact, says the article, "much of the monumental splendor of Paris is due to his astute PR sense." Why? Because the Arch de Triomphe and many other monuments large & small were built so no one would forget him. This, then, is PR!

PEOPLE: John W. Moorehouse now MPR of Midland-Ross Corp. (Cleve.)...G. Greg Weingardt named to new post of PR & adv. coord, for Alcoa Conductor Products Co., a division of ALCOA (Pitts.)...Charles R. Allen Jr. appointed dir. corp. PR for CPC International Inc. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ)...Joseph P. Flynn named VP at James F. Fox Inc. (NYC)...Allen Turner named DPR for Film Corp. of America (Jenkintown, Pa.)...Paul James from news ed. at Hunter College-CCNY to chief of public info., New York Public Library...Charles Mandel now DPR&A for "Cavalier Magazine"...Robert W. Zelnick to Riegel Paper Corp. (Milford, NJ) as mgr. commcns...Gerald R. Sanders named to new post of dir. commcns. for Equity Funding Corp. of America (Beverly Hills)...Charles B. Wolfe to Roy Duffus Assocs. (NYC) as a VP...David D. Lewis to Walden Public Relations (NYC) as VP...William G. Beyer elected VP of Public Communications Inc. (Chi.).

Also, E. Earl Llewellyn is now an acct. exec. in Dallas Office of Ruder & Finn...William J. Catrow has joined Pittsburgh Office of Burson-Marsteller as a sr. acct. supvr...Samuel L. Gifford has been named an acct. exec.-PR at Rumrill-Hoyt (Roch.)...John L. Normoyle, formerly dir. press info. at Bonsib Advertising, has been named mng. ed. of "Laboratory Medicine", new monthly magazine of American Society of Clinical Pathologists (Chi.)...Larry S. Palmer has joined Palmer-Kennedy Organization (Dallas)...Ray Eisbrenner is now with P/R Assocs. (Det.) as VP...James F. Moffet has been elected a VP & dir. of Padilla, Sarjeant, Sullivan & Speer (Mpls.).

PR FIRMS & ACCOUNTS: Dallas-based Thomas J. Tierney & Assocs. opens NYC office at 555 Madison Ave...Shareholder Perspectives Inc. formed by John P. Kehoe, James K. White & Jack G. Milne for corp., fin. & investor rel. (551 Fifth Ave., NYC, and 9841 Airport Blvd., L.A.)...The Selz Organization now Selz, Seabolt & Assocs. (Chi.). It's opened a NYC office at 501 Fifth Ave...Formation of Granco-Media Inc. (1040 Ave. of Americas, NYC) announced. Will handle fin. & corp. PR and adv. ...Hal Copeland Co. (Dallas) retained for Grand National Bass Bonanza...Paul Buier Assocs. (NYC) retained by Syracuse University...American Music Conference to The Public Relations Board (Chi.)...Systems Audits Incorporated to Riedl Assocs. (Clifton, NJ)...Jay DeBow & Partners (NYC) named by Halco Chemical Co.