Cheerios and train them to defend themselves.

Ireland, souvenir mousepads and Cheerios. Personally, I don’t believe we
poker, decency, conscience, facts, knowledge, success, Texas, America,

MEETINGS
Next at Greater Fort Worth PRSA
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IABC local update: Kevin Davis, executive social media program manager
at Trend Micro, will discuss “Best Practices for Aligning Social Strategy with
Your Company’s Financial Goals” at the IABC Dallas luncheon Tuesday, Jan.
12, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at UT Arlington, 306 Coates Hall. Registration is
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/iabc-dallas-luncheon-tickets-209656331887

PRSA local update: Immediate past president Ellen Hale, for 10 years the executive vice president of communications at The Associated Press
until her retirement last month, will share behind-the-scenes reflections from
the largest news organization in the world at the PRSA Dallas monthly
meeting. And a handsome list it is:

• Increased the number of Worthy Award entries 65 percent.
• Increased membership 10.1 percent.
• Increased the number of media/strategy/planning, media panel, and personal brand development.
• Held meetings on the top three topics requested by members: social
mediation/mediating, planning media, and personal brand development.
• Implemented a post-luncheon survey to gather immediate feedback on
how programs are meeting member needs.
• Instituted a Past Presidents Club to give former presidents the opportunity
to provide guidance and counsel.

STRAIGHT STUFF
Writer/teacher Michelle Clark, APR, updated chapter members on the successes of 2015 at the December meeting. And a fine set it is:

• The unborn, children, the disabled and the elderly; Medicare, Social
Security, the old, the infirm, the poor.
• Rich people, poor people, the middle class and Satan; Wall Street,
stereotyping to create characters at the next Writers’ Guild of Texas
writersguildoftexas.org

When LBJ Declared a Different Kind of War, He

proclaimed in his State of the Union address that he was declaring “war on
poverty” and preparing legislation to lead the fight. He said:

“Our aim is not to restrain the symptoms of poverty, but to curb it and
break its power to mold the destiny of the poor. It is not only not need that
should be ended, but the sense of need. Poverty is a state of mind, an
attitude that can no longer be taken for granted. Toward that end, he proposes
a set of best practices based on effective, sustainable journalistic
engagement.

How we’re faring on this fiscal front is a subject of great debate (and income
level). But one thing is certain: When the president announced the war on
poverty, he opened the door for dozens of other “wars” to be declared.

In the decades since, politicians, pundits and the aggrieved of every stripe
have been all too quick to call us to arms. Occasionally, they themselves
declare war on something, but most of the time, someone accuses
people say war is being waged:

• Christmas, cancer, crime, solar energy, car dealers, oil.
• Teachers, education, Asian carp and independents; gang, drugs,
and space junk.
• Marriage, traditional values, tolerance and homosexuality; liberals,
atheists and nutrition.
• Farmers, gun owners, trial lawyers and religion; Christianity, Islam,
and poverty.
• Blacks, whites, minorities, racism and diversity; women, men,
and cancer.
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Despite our incessant faux hawk yammering, the U.S. is reluctant to declare actual war. The first instance was the War of 1812, and the last was when President Roosevelt declared war on Japan — 11 times total. Otherwise we conduct “extended military engagements,” which sounds like something sold on Travelocity.

I don’t want to start a fight, but maybe we’re too eager to use the W word. These days, anyone who opposes our view on anything is waging war on it. This discourages meaningful dialogue and greater understanding. Why does it always have to be a “war”? Couldn’t it occasionally be just a campaign? Or maybe even a good old-fashioned mud-slinging?

People who know real combat are far more cautious about tossing around the term, as evidenced by Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson. “It is painful enough to discover with what unconcern they speak of war and threaten it,” he said. “I have seen enough of it to make me look upon it as the sum of all evils.”

Stonewall was right: Try to envision a mother writing her son who’s serving in Afghanistan: “Son, this terrible war on solar energy drags on. Just last week, thugs vandalized the Robertsons’ rooftop panels and spray-painted ‘We ♥ oil slicks’ on their car. It was disturbing to see.”

I’m so sorry, Mom. I’ll have some flowers sent.

As PR pros, we have a responsibility to carefully consider every word we use. We also are in position to counsel colleagues and clients alike in their use of the language; hyperbole may grab headlines and arouse anger, but it seldom helps settle differences.

So for the New Year, let us negotiate a communicative armistice. When we discuss, let it be healthy discussion; when we disagree, let it be respectful disagreement. It is good for our profession. Heck, it’s good for us. And when we encounter people who call for war at every slight, every opinion misalignment, every stomach upset in the body politic — and thus diminish the courage of those who truly know military conflict — let us gently guide them to heightened awareness in their choice of words. And if that doesn’t work, we’ll hit ‘em with everything we’ve got.

Worthy Awards Gala lights up the night
Greater Fort Worth PRSA honors top work at Fort Worth Club

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GET A JOB

Applications close Jan. 5. For 40 hours/month from-home contract position with MediaFlourishing verifying a weekly, digital and print newsletter, DIA or DFW edition. Requirements include knowledge of the media business, especially new forms of journalism and digital media, experience with blogging platforms, particularly WordPress.com. BlueSky Software, a fast-paced technology company in Richardson, DIA, is seeking a social media editor to help build an innovative multimedia publication. Gatehouse Media has a regular reporter at its downtown Austin newspaper, the Round Rock Leader. Brownwood Bulletin publishes six days a week (Monday to Saturday) in and near Brownwood, Texas. Contact managing editor John D. Stickley at dstuckly@brownwoodbulletin.com.

PRESIDENT’S COLUMN

On behalf of Greater Fort Worth PRSA, welcome to 2016! I’m sure many of you have set personal and professional goals for the new year, and I will tell you that freedom more involved in the chapter can help you find what you are looking for.

Join us at a PR After Dark event to network with leaders in the field and maybe even find that great new gig or employee, all while enjoying the company of others who are “in the same boat as you.” Get involved with the 5th Annual Worthy Awards and help honor (and maybe even be honored for) the exceptional work done right here in public relations.

Requirements include knowledge of the media business, especially new forms of journalism and digital media, experience with blogging platforms, particularly WordPress.com. BlueSky Software, a fast-paced technology company in Richardson, DIA, is seeking a social media editor to help build an innovative multimedia publication. Gatehouse Media has a regular reporter at its downtown Austin newspaper, the Round Rock Leader. Brownwood Bulletin publishes six days a week (Monday to Saturday) in and near Brownwood, Texas. Contact managing editor John D. Stickley at dstuckly@brownwoodbulletin.com.

Greg Barge is a member of the Board of Directors of the Society of Environmental Journalists. He can be reached at greg@bigrock.com. https://www.senj.org/about/greg

Now let me join immediate past president Michelle Clark in congratulating the chapter officer team for a job well done. Congratulations to Chair William Moore, President Lisa Anderson, President Elect John Freese, Treasurer Tracy Greene, and Secretary Michelle Clark. Michelle detailed their contributions at the December meeting.

For the retention of the PRSA, it is vital that members be involved. You won’t regret it.