

SCPT Launches Second Chapter

The NASBA Center for the Public Trust launched its second Student Center for the Public Trust (SCPT) chapter in Birmingham, Alabama, on November 4, 2010. More than 55 students participated in an interactive leadership presentation made by Alfonzo Alexander, Chief Relationship Officer for NASBA, at Birmingham-Southern College (BSC).

“Students realize the value of belonging to an organization like this, both in the insight and ethical perspective that they will gain...”

The SCPT Chapter at Birmingham-Southern College provides a unique forum for ethics education and an environment for enhancing leadership and professional development skills among its student members. The SCPT also offers a connection between students and professionals that provides students with real-life experience for their transition to the corporate world.

“The enthusiasm about the new chapter at BSC is very exciting,” said Chapter President Clay Malcolm. “Students realize the value of belonging to an organization like this, both in the insight and ethical

perspective that they will gain through our activities and also the statement that it makes to potential employers. I think that active membership in an ethics club like ours can speak volumes as an affirmation of a student’s good character.”

The BSC chapter is lead by Malcolm, along with executive officers David Kelley, Lex Gilmore and Lindsay Brigham. The chapter’s advisor, Sara Robicheaux, is the Associate Professor of Finance at BSC and an alumnus of the college. The chapter will host three more membership meetings during this academic year, as well as participate in the national Center for Public Trust video competition that will take place in the spring of 2011. Birmingham-Southern College is a four-year, private liberal arts institution founded in 1856 and offers five bachelor's degrees in more than 50 programs of study. This fall, BSC enrolled 1,521 students from 32 states and 15 foreign countries, the largest traditional undergraduate enrollment in Birmingham-Southern’s history.

For more information about Student Center for the Public Trust chapters, visit www.studentcpt.org or contact Jenn Bouchard at jbouchard@nasba.org or 615-564-2129. ☆

Good News

CPT Web site Noted

The CPA Journal, the monthly publication of the New York State Society of CPAs, named the NASBA Center for the Public Trust Web site as Web site of the month in its November issue. Author Susan B. Anders noted, “One of the best features of the Web site is the ‘ethics articles’ section, which provides links to a dozen external ethics-related resources, including articles, white papers and videos.”

Football—More Than Fun

Trevor Kinlaw, grandson of Charlie Chewning, past member of the North Carolina State Board of CPA Examiners, has been a shy boy for most of his life. The 13-year-old has autism, and many everyday situations that don't bother most kids, have often been difficult for him. Then he discovered football. Now starting his second year playing for the Consolidated Football Federation's (CFF) Challenger team, being outside has become more fun. "It has been amazing," said Trevor's mom, Gina. "He was always very quiet and reserved; now he's outgoing. The football league has brought him out a lot. "I like football because my grandfather takes me to Duke games," he said. "Football is cool and awesome." Last year, more than 3,500 children, ages 5 to 18 participated. The CFF also has a cheer and dance program. Trevor's sister, [continues on page 5](#)



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Vice President's Voice

My 12-year old son, Christian, got very sick last month and was to be given a dose of steroids to reduce the swelling in his lungs. When the doctor stepped out of the examining room, Christian told me he didn't want the steroids. When queried, he said, "It's not right. I can't take steroids!" I had to have the doctor explain to him that in his case, it was perfectly legal and ethical. Moreover, the type of drug being administered to him was completely different than the type of drug that athletes use illegally. He took his dose but contended that it should be called something else, so kids wouldn't get confused. He even came up with a few names "GTM—Gross Tasting Medicine," being his favorite. A few days later, I asked him again why he was so opposed to taking the medicine. He said, "Mom, one day you're in the doctor's office, the next day you're in the headlines with A-Rod." His point of view just fascinated me—kids don't want to be like the highest paid athletes anymore. Read about TOMS shoes in the "Good News" column and you will be inspired by the young social-minded business man Blake Mycoskie. Our SCPT program is taking off and we hope to report more chapters have launched in the spring semester. It's truly an awesome program—support it and you can impact the future too. You received my Thanksgiving letter last month and I hope you will consider continuing your financial support of the CPT this year. The holiday season is here. I hope yours is happy and healthy.

Warmly,
Lisa Axisa

And the Winner is ... The CPT

The first Center for the Public Trust (CPT) Silent Auction held during NASBA's Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, was a huge success. Held on October 25, 2010, with 112 items donated, the CPT made just over \$44,000. Kudos to the Friends of the CPT, who spent countless volunteer hours coordinating, coaxing, and covering gift baskets, to the donors, who were unbelievably generous with their amazing gifts, the NASBA staff who went the extra mile, and to those relentless bidders.

"What a wonderful evening we all had," stated NASBA President and CEO David Costello. "There was a tremendous energy and excitement in the air. We knew this would be a successful event, but are just thrilled at the amount we have raised."

The proceeds of the auction will support the CPT's initiatives such as: the Student CPT Chapters which are based on college campuses and focus on educating and engaging future business leaders on ethics, accountability and integrity; the Ethics in Action Video Competition which provides a creative means for college students to develop a real awareness of ethical issues and helps to build a moral and ethical foundation for all future endeavors; the Being a Difference Award Program which is a national recognition program that acknowledges individuals and organizations who follow high standards of social responsibility for performance and leadership; and conferences and seminars which promote ethics, trust, leadership, accountability and integrity. ☆





CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Awards Subcommittee Chair Mark P. Harris requests nominations for the 2010-11 NASBA Center for the Public Trust Being A Difference Awards. Each year, the NASBA CPT honors the accomplishments of individuals and organizations that demonstrate exemplary practices of ethics in action, leadership and strong corporate citizenship. The Being A Difference Awards recognize individuals from various categories of professionals serving American business institutions: CEO, CPA, CFO, Attorney, and other professionals (such as educators, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, administrators, etc.).

Nomination forms can be found at www.centerforpublictrust.org and must be submitted no later than April 29, 2011.

Resolving to be Trustworthy

By Larry Bridgesmith, J.D.

The Center for the Public Trust has spent a significant amount of time this past year attempting to more carefully define the “public trust” we seek to advance. Perhaps to a great degree, trust is like the proverbial “beauty is in the eye of the beholder” adage. Can trust be measured? Is public trust only a subjective concept incapable of being quantified? Does relativism creep in and render the idea of public trust illusory? Does it merely lie at the opposite pole of pornography: “I know it when I see it?”

We think not. Individuals who are trustworthy can be recognized by their behavior. Entities that warrant the public trust are identifiable by their practices, their policies and the principles which they do not merely pronounce, but embody in actual fact. Part of the difficulty with assessing public trust lies in our penchant for focusing on the negative. It is far easier to proclaim the absence of trustworthiness than it is to applaud its presence. Like the obsessive mother who only wants the best for her child, we often point out the one “A-” without acknowledging all the “As” that accompany it on the report card.

However, the more perplexing problem in recognizing trustworthy individuals and organizations is the lack of agreement on what constitutes the “public trust.” Is it merely ethical behavior? Public trust certainly demands it. Is it outstanding performance? Without excellence in outcome, what’s to be trusted? Are these two critical characteristics enough? Does public trust require a strong component of courage? Excellent performers who possess great traits of character without the courage to act consistently with their convictions are untrustworthy. Clearly, reducing “public trust” to its irreducible

minimum is a huge task which requires the best thinking on the part of the best thinkers (and doers). The CPT is dedicated to convening and facilitating such conversations and is fully committed to a continuous improvement approach to defining, enhancing and recognizing necessary components of public trust. The CPT is also focused on identifying the purveyors of public trust and enhancing the performance that engenders it in individual leaders, professions and the organizations they serve.

Scandals will occur and frauds will be perpetuated. Self-interest will continue to subvert the public trust. Nonetheless, the CPT commits to expand its circle of influence in order to maximize a positive impact on the larger circle of concern surrounding this critical question. Regulations are not enough. Codes of conduct are only a beginning. Enforcement actions will never guarantee the public trust is restored. Rigorous pursuit of trustworthy behavior is essential if public trust is to prevail.

At the risk of oversimplification or short-circuiting the thorough definition and assessment process to which the CPT is committed, a worthy beginning for 2011 might be to resolve together to instill public trust in our own circles of influence. Like viral contagion, cultural change happens when individuals influence those who in turn influence others. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and other social networking phenomena reveal the incredible power of a single great idea which catches fire. One tells one, who tells another and soon millions are tuned into a concept that resonates with many because it is fundamentally true and consistent with the expectations of most. So it is with public trust.

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Resolving to be Trustworthy

As programming, assessment tools and public recognition awaits robust dialog and development, in our own world of endeavor can we commit that in 2011 we will:

Consider – Most actions that lead to untrustworthy outcomes were not fully thought through. If I pause before I push “send,” reflect before I tell someone off, consider the consequences of my actions before I commit them to history, better results will occur. Our pace of living provides too little boundaries on our pages. Even a nano-second of reflection can turn an “I wish I hadn’t done that” into an “I’m glad I didn’t” moment of grateful accountability. Let’s resolve to restore boundaries to our reactive behavior.

Continue – Successful people and sustaining companies arrived at their level of competence and trust through practices that distinguished them from others in their field. Don’t backslide! The temptation to cut corners and take shortcuts can be overwhelming. Resist it. Remember that what made you great, notable or worth emulating cannot be compromised. Giving any less than “what got you here” will necessarily undercut your credibility and your trustworthiness. Let’s resolve to maintain the levels of performance and character that have distinguished us to this point.

Consistent – Loss of trust occurs when we deliver less than we promised. Even projecting a level of cooperation, support or performance which we fail to provide causes others to question all we claim to be. Make commitments carefully. Promise only what you commit to deliver and then exceed the expectations created. Engaging in “puffery” may get the sale, but not delivering as promised will lose the customer. The marketplace can be very unforgiving. If we realize that our character will be measured by the degree we act consistent with what we profess to be, promise to do, or project that we are, our trustworthiness factor will grow steadily over time. Let’s resolve to act consistent with “our press.”

Concur – Reach agreement on expectations to be measured against and the likelihood of performing consistently will be significantly enhanced. Most conflict results from unmet expectations. Usually those expectations were never articulated and agreement was not reached on the reasonableness of being measured against them. Contract with your superiors, your subordinates, your peers and your customers concerning what you will deliver and your trust factor will be improved significantly. Let’s resolve to reach agreement on what we expect of each other.

Confess – Failing to meet a goal is human and to be expected. Trust is not lost because we were not perfect, but because we failed to acknowledge it. Insecurity leads us to hide our mistakes.

Trustworthiness prompts us to disclose them. The greater crime is committed in the cover-up rather than in the underlying error which engendered the mistake. My trust in someone rises substantially when they admit their error. If I discover it was not acknowledged and owned, trust plummets. If you project that you are error free, I don’t believe you. If you confess your mistakes and commit to lessen the impact of them, my esteem for you grows. Let’s resolve to own our mistakes, promptly address them and seek to remedy the effects of our errors.

“We can improve the public trust – one action at a time. All of us have the capacity to influence a number of others by the way in which we model public trust.”

Courage – Competence and character are critical, but together they are not enough to sustain trust. I need to know you have the courage to act contrary to what appears to be your self-interest in order to advance the interest of others. The ability to put the interest of others above our own is contrary to our current “me first” culture. However, if you want me to trust you, there must be an obvious limit to your self-interest. Unbounded self-interest destroys trust. It takes courage to proscribe and adhere to those boundaries. Let’s resolve to be courageous when our own self-interest comes into conflict with the needs and well-being of others.

Confront – Fear in the face of conflict can lead to unhealthy outcomes. Acquiescing in the deleterious actions of others may make us feel safe, but it destroys the public trust in our own behavior as well as that of the wrongdoer we fail to confront. The public trust demands that we act to protect others from harm. Let’s resolve to address, confront and, when appropriate, report the injurious actions of others.

We can improve the public trust – one action at a time. All of us have the capacity to influence a number of others by the way in which we model public trust. Let’s resolve that 2011 is the turnaround year.☆

Larry Bridgesmith, J.D., is the founding Executive Director of the Institute for Conflict Management at Lipscomb University (Nashville, TN) and the President of Creative Collaborations LLC. www.createcoll.com. He is regularly listed as one of America’s Best Lawyers, one of the Leading Lawyers for American Businesses and over the last several years listed as a Super Lawyer. In 2010, he was honored by Law Dragon as one of the best 3000 lawyers in the U.S. as measured by his peers and clients and awarded honorary fellowship status in the International Academy of Mediators. Mr. Bridgesmith is the current Chair of the NASBA Center for the Public Trust.

CPT Establishes Development Committee

The NASBA Center for the Public Trust has established a Development Committee to promote its advancement and fundraising efforts. Joe Cote, retiring Executive Vice President of NASBA, agreed to Chair the Committee and will continue to do so as a volunteer after his official retirement from NASBA and PCS on January 1, 2011. Committee members include Noel Allen (NC), Larry Bridgesmith (TN), Sharon Daggett (AZ) and Jack Katzenmeyer (OH). At its first meeting on September 17, 2010, in Nashville, TN, the Committee collaborated on writing a mission statement, as well as the objectives needed to fulfill it.



Committee members (left to right) Joe Cote, Noel Allen, Larry Bridgesmith, Sharon Daggett, and Jack Katzenmeyer

Mission Statement - To identify programs and activities to secure resources for the NASBA Center for the Public Trust (CPT).

Objectives

- ◆ Increase awareness of the CPT
- ◆ Raise money from donors and earned income
- ◆ Nurture donor relationships through recognition
- ◆ Create membership programs for the CPT

The Committee spent a significant amount of time during the meeting brainstorming potential fundraising strategies aimed at various markets. More than 150 ideas were formulated. "We had a great first meeting," stated Chair Joe Cote. "Now the hard part will be determining the best markets to target and determining which are the optimum strategies to implement."

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Good News

Emily, 9, is also an important part of the team. Emily has a disability affecting her speech, vision, balance and movement. But that hasn't stopped her from becoming the team's first cheerleader.

Thank You for Vets

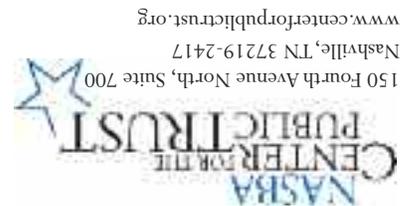
This year, Veterans got a big thank you from companies that provided free meals and discounts in honor of Veterans Day. Restaurant favorites such as Applebee's, Golden Corral and Chili's all offered free meals to Vets, both active and retired, while Outback Steakhouse gave away free Bloomin' Onions.

One for One

In 2006, American Blake Mycoskie befriended children in Argentina and found they had no shoes to protect their feet. He created TOMS Shoes, a company that would match every pair of shoes purchased with a pair of new shoes given to a child in need. Later that year, Mycoskie returned to Argentina with 10,000 pairs of shoes made possible by TOMS customers. He started his company as a for-profit based on a simple model. It wasn't fueled by investment capital, but a deep passion to help kids in need.

Companies Stepping Up to Help Pakistan

One hundred different companies stepped up with aid pledges in response to the historic, devastating floods, in Pakistan, according to the Business Civic Leadership Center (BCLC) at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Many of these companies don't even have significant operations in Pakistan, making the scale of the private sector response even more compelling. Four companies pledged \$1 million or more in cash.



New Year, New Mission

**Center for the Public Trust Mission Statement:
To champion the public trust by advancing ethical leadership
in business, institutions and organizations.**

Every organization has a mission—a reason for being. A mission statement identifies and articulates that purpose. We identified the need for the Center for the Public Trust in 2004--the accounting profession took the brunt of the financial scandals by the media and NASBA President and CEO David Costello, was compelled to create an organization that addressed the issue of ethical leadership, which focused on the great majority of businesses, corporations and individuals who act in an ethical manner. The need continues to exist. By finely honing our mission statement, we hope to more clearly articulate our purpose. We always believed there was a need to focus on the public trust, hence our name; but our original mission statement was not as concise. We understood it: “To engender and foster confidence and trust in American corporations and institutions and the professions that serve them.” But we wrote it and like most authors, we thought it was great. We came to realize it didn’t always resonate with our stakeholders. Our new mission statement is clear, concise and positively states our purpose. ☆

