



Jack O'Dwyer,  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

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## BERMUDA REVIEWS TRAVEL PR

Bermuda has launched a review of its North American PR account with the expectation of awarding a three-year contract through March 2017 as the island getaway looks to reverse a trend of declining visitors since 2006.

The Bermuda Tourism Authority released an RFP on Dec. 4 for the \$675K-a-year work covering the U.S. and Canada. It wants an objective evaluation of Bermuda's current communications situation with an eye on "more effective, sustainable solutions that deliver meaningful business," reads the RFP.



The Authority said overall visitors have decreased by 4% since 2006 as air arrivals plummeted 29% and cruise arrivals fell 11%. For Q3 of 2013, visitors arrivals ticked up 2.4% to nearly 83K, but cruise arrivals fell 12.1% to 157K.

Proposals are due Jan. 17 but a notice of intent to bid is required by Dec. 18.

Lou Hammond & Associates is the incumbent after defending the business in a protracted review last year.

Georgette Tinsley of the BTA is point of contact (gtinsley [at] bermudaturism [dot] com).

## TECH-SAVVY HARRIS TO LEAD GRAYLING US

Grayling has recruited MSLGroup's Peter Harris to become U.S. CEO at the start of 2014 as the Huntsworth-owned firm sets a technology-focused course.

Harris, reporting to global CEO Pete Pedersen and starting Jan. 1, will be based in New York. Chris Boehlke previously led Grayling's U.S. PR operation as CEO before sliding to a GM role in San Francisco.

Harris was a senior VP at MSL focused on corporate and technology and recently led its corporate tech practice. He also led the United Technologies account. Previous stints included Ketchum (SVP) and its Access Communications operation (managing director), as well as Peppercom (partner). He came up through Porter Novelli and Brouillard Communications.



Harris

The hire comes as the firm streamlined its U.S. operations – including the former DutkoGrayling public affairs and lobbying unit -- under the Grayling banner this fall with a renewed focus on tech.

Global CEO Pedersen joined Grayling from Edelman in March on the exit of Michael Murphy.

## NEWS CORP TAPS KENNEDY FOR COMMS

Jim Kennedy, a top Sony corporate communications exec and PR advisor to Bill and Hillary Clinton, will join News Corporation on Dec. 9 as its chief communications officer.

He exits the senior VP for strategic communications post at Sony Corp. and will report to News Corp. CEO Robert Thomson.

Julie Henderson held the chief communications officer post at News Corp. before its June split into two companies. Henderson took the top slot at 21st Century Fox.



Kennedy

Kennedy was spokesman for President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, and Sens. Hillary Clinton and Joe Lieberman. He was also a White House aide and later served as communications director for the William J. Clinton Foundation.

Ashley Huston, formerly of Dow Jones and *The Wall Street Journal*, is deputy head of communications for News Corp.

Kennedy joined Sony in 2005, serving in Culver City, Calif., before moving to New York in late 2011.

## SNOWDEN INVESTIGATOR HIRES DC FIRM

U.S. Investigations Services, the background check operation that vetted former Booz Allen & Hamilton whistleblower Edward Snowden, has hired Podesta Group to handle oversight and legislation related to government security clearance processes.

USIS, which handles about two-thirds of federal checks, is fighting to remain on Uncle Sam's payroll.

A federal grand jury is probing whether it rushed background checks without a proper investigation, while the Justice Dept. has joined in a separate whistleblower case in which the company is charged with cutting corners. Congressional Republicans and Democrats have called for investigations into the Snowden mess.

USIS claims it has overhauled management and heightened security measures and the Office of Personnel Management, which has oversight of the security clearance system, had given USIS a clean bill of health.

Well-connected Democrat Tony Podesta heads Team ISIS, which includes David Marin, ex-press sec. for Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA); Josh Holly, former comms. dir. for the House Armed Services Committee, and Andrew Kauders, ex-senior advisor to Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), among others.

Sard Verbinnen & Co is advising USIS on PR.

## **BROADWAY PR FIXTURE TO CLOSE DOWN**

Broadway PR fixture The Hartman Group said it will close down on Jan. 5, ending a four-year run representing some of the Great White Way's long-running hits like "Wicked" and "Rock of Ages."

CEO Michael Hartman said he is returning to Texas with his husband to run chain eatery Amy's Ice Creams, started by his Univ. of Texas classmate Amy Simmons.

"It has been a privilege to work in an industry that I love and I owe a debt of gratitude to my clients and colleagues over the past 21 years for an absurdly vibrant life as a Broadway press agent in New York City," he said in a statement. "I am a very lucky man."

Hartman, 48, co-founded Barlow Hartman PR in 1999 with John Barlow, another veteran Broadway publicist now in entertainment consulting. The two shuttered that firm in 2009 with Hartman forming The Hartman Group, one of only a handful of top Broadway PR shops alongside firms like O+M and Boneau/Bryan-Brown.

Hartman, who started out in PR in 1993, reps upcoming shows "Romeo & Juliet," "Rocky" and "Little Miss Sunshine," and the Chicago run of "Big Fish," among others. His Broadway credits include hits like "The Producers," "A Chorus Line," "The Graduate," and "Little Shop of Horrors," among others.

The firm closes up with about a dozen staffers.



**Hartman**

## **MCCOURT CREATES NEW PR POST**

New York real estate investment firm McCourt Global has brought in agency vet Matthew Rose in the new post of managing director, communications.

McCourt Global, which sold the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2012 and developed Boston's Seaport, is led by chairman and CEO Frank McCourt Jr.

In addition to 360 Tenth Avenue in New York and Chavez Ravine in Los Angeles, McCourt Global owns and is credited with revitalizing the Los Angeles Marathon.

Rose, a former executive VP for MWW and managing director of Ketchum's Emanate unit, heads corporate reputation, messaging, internal comms., media relations and philanthropy, among other areas for the firm.

McCourt, whose \$131M divorce in 2011 fueled headlines for two years, donated \$100M to Georgetown University in September to endow the McCourt School of Public Policy.

In a statement, McCourt said Rose will "elevate McCourt Global's communications activities and add meaningful value to our business strategy."

Abernathy MacGregor Group reps McCourt Global.



## **AMC CASTS PR SUPPORT IN \$370M IPO**

AMC Entertainment Holdings, the Kansas-based, Chinese-owned movie theater chain, has engaged ICR for PR and financial communications counsel ahead of its \$370M initial public offering.

AMC, the No. 2 theater company with 343 outposts in the U.S. behind Regal Entertainment Group, said Dec. 2 it plans to offer more than 18.4M shares in the \$18-20 range.

ICR senior VP Jessica Liddell and senior managing director Brad Cohen handle the AMC account at Norwalk, Conn.-based ICR.

China entertainment company Dalian Wanda Group bought AMC in 2012 for \$2.6B.

AMC slates a New York Stock Exchange listing under the symbol AMC.



## **TOLK TAKES FH ATLANTA**

FleishmanHillard has installed Edelman alum Jerry Tolk as partner and general manager of its Atlanta office.

Tolk takes the Atlanta reins from Karen Kaplan, who retired from the Omnicom firm this year after 15 years.

Tolk, a healthcare specialist and a biology graduate of the U.S. Army College of Medicine, was at Edelman's Zeno Group unit and then New York GM for Edelman before moving to Atlanta for the firm in 2008.

Earlier agency stints included Gavin Anderson and Euro RSCG.



**Tolk**

## **PORTER NOVELLI UPS MACAFEE IN ATLANTA**

Porter Novelli has upped Brad MacAfee, managing director/Atlanta, to North American president effective Jan. 1. The 13-year veteran, who remains in Atlanta for the Omnicom firm, served as global technology practice leader and interim head of San Francisco and Chicago.

MacAfee joins PN's Sally Ward (EMEA), John Orme (Asia-Pacific) and Karen Oveseyevitz (Latin America) as regional presidents under the leadership of CEO Karen van Bergen. PN is part of Omnicom.

## **EDELMAN DIGS ENGLER**

Glenn Engler, former CEO of Digital Influence Group, has joined Edelman in the new director of corporate strategy post and chief of staff to Richard Edelman.

Edelman expects Engler's social media savvy will help drive the firm's worldwide strategy of advancing research, digital, creative partnerships and new media relationships. He is to work across Edelman to foster new working relationships and synergies.

The largest stand-alone social media creative shop, DIG, is part of high-tech guru Larry Weber's empire and has done work for IBM, AT&T, GE, and Reebok.

Earlier, Engler headed Digitas' Boston office, where he was responsible for more than 900 people in three offices.

**NY MAGAZINE CUTS FREQUENCY**

*New York Magazine* in March will be published on an every-other-week basis, down from its 42-week schedule in an effort to save money (\$3.5M) and cope with the decline in print advertising. Three special issues (best doctors, annual gift guide and food & drink) will supplement the revised schedule.

The cost savings will be used to bolster NYM's digital issue, where traffic is up 19 percent during the last eight months to 9M unique visitors a month.

The magazine's print subscriber base is in the 400K range. Ad pages are down 9.2 percent

Adam Moss, editor-in-chief, told the *New York Times* the revamp was under consideration for some time.

He said the challenge is "trying to balance making something that people want to read immediately but still want to hang on to and take home."

He plans to hire 15 staffers to step up online content and sales.

Wall Street investors Bruce Wasserstein bought NYM in 2004. He died five years later.

**CHAMPION SHIFTS TO WEATHER CHANNEL**

Weatherman Sam Champion, a fixture on ABC for the past 25 years, is moving to the Weather Channel as host of a new morning show to debut in 2014 and managing editor in its Atlanta headquarters.

He joined ABC's WABC New York flagship and moved to "Good Morning America" in 2006.

At GMA, Champion broadcast more than 1,800 forecasts and traveled the U.S. for coverage of weather events such as Florida hurricanes, Hurricane Katrina, Joplin (MO) tornado and Superstorm Sandy.



Champion

Ben Sherwood, president of ABC News, thanked Champion via a memo for his "countless contributions to our news division" and wished him the best as he pursues a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity.

Dave Clark, TWC president, called Champion "one of the top names in morning TV, as well as one of the country's most respected and trusted weather reporters."

**NEWSHOUR'S BELLANTONI TO ROLL CALL**

Christina Bellantoni is returning to *Roll Call* as editor-in-chief following a two-year stint as political editor of PBS' Newshour.

She's in charge of all print and digital platforms with the mission to drive audience engagement and enlargement. Bellantoni will do a blog and make live appearances at CQ Roll Call events.

She had been political associate politics editor at RC before decamping for Newshour.

Earlier, Bellantoni worked at Talking Points Memo and the *Washington Times*.

*CQ Roll Call* is part of the Economist Group.

**PEARSON UNLOADS MERGERMARKET**

Britain's Pearson is selling The Mergermarket Group provider of corporate financial data and analysis to investment firms, hedge funds and companies for about \$550M in cash.

John Fallon, Pearson CEO, said proceeds from the divestiture will help fund his company's drive into the fast-growing education market and accelerate the push into digital learning.

Pearson's FTGroup acquired Mergermarket in 2006 for \$140M plus earnouts. The group includes Debtwire, XportReporter, Wealthmonitor, Mergermarket and Dealwire. It reported revenues of \$140M and earned \$35M during the past year.

BC Partners is buying Mergermarket. Nikos Stathopoulos, managing partner of the \$17B in assets fund, called the new addition "a global market leader with an attractive business model, strong growth and loyal customers."

CEO Hamilton Matthews is expected to remain at the helm of Mergermarket after the BC transaction closes during the first-quarter of 2014.

Pearson has retained ownership of *Financial Times* and the 50 percent stake in The Economist Group.

**BELO MAY SELL PROJO**

A.H. Belo is exploring the sale of *The Providence Journal* to concentrate on growth of its hometown *Dallas Morning News*.

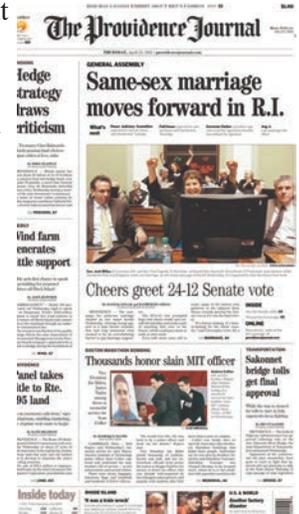
The sale "would allow the company to continue to focus resources and management time and attention on its core Dallas market," said a statement from the company.

ProJo proceeds would "buy advertising and marketing services companies to grow and diversify revenues and to finance further share repurchase in the future."

Belo bought the 184-year Providence daily in 1996.

Howard Sutton, CEO of ProJo Co., said, "Ownership of our news organization may change, but the mission of The Providence Journal remains unwavering: to operate an independent and profitable news organization of unquestioned integrity devoted to the dissemination of excellent journalism in Rhode Island," according to a report in his Dec. 4 paper.

Belo is using Stephens Inc. to broker a deal for the paper, which is the oldest continuous published daily in the U.S.



## **MEDIA NEWS**

### **BASHIR QUILTS MSNBC AFTER PALIN REMARKS**

MSNBC host Martin Bashir resigned on Dec. 4, following incendiary comments about former Gov. Sarah Palin last month.

Bashir on his week-day afternoon show in November called Palin a “world class idiot” for comparing the U.S. borrowing money from China to slavery, and suggested she eat excrement, a slave punishment. He previously apologized after the comments sparked outrage, and was on paid leave at the network.



“It is my sincere hope that all of my colleagues, at this special network, will be allowed to focus on the issues that matter without the distraction of myself or my ill-judged comments,” Bashir said in a statement announcing his resignation.

MSBC chief Phil Griffin thanked Bashir for his three years of work at the network: “Martin is a good man and respected colleague – we wish him only the best.” Palin told Fox News Channel on Dec. 5 that she accepts the apology and wants to “move on.”

### **ROLLING STONE SLATES COUNTRY SITE**

*Rolling Stone* parent Wenner Media is planning to unveil a country music outlet, Rolling Stone Country, by the second quarter of 2014, according to *Ad Age*.

Gus Wenner, who heads *rollingstone.com*, said the site will aim to cover the country music scene in a similar vein to RS’ coverage of rock and pop.

A Nashville office is on tap with 10-15 editorial staffers, Wenner told *Ad Age*.



### **ADVANCE MULLS NJ NEWS CONSOLIDATION**

Advance Publications is considering consolidating its New Jersey news properties including the *Star-Ledger* and NJ.com in a bid to reconsider its “strategic director.”

*Star-Ledger* publisher Richard Vezza told the paper that changes in frequency of publication or home delivery are not under consideration. He cited “channel conflict” between Advance’s properties in the state.

“We’ve got a big daily newspaper, some smaller dailies and several weeklies and an online company,” he said, noting Advance wants to find ways for the properties to work together.

Combining sales forces and reorganizing news operations are among moves being considered.



### **CHINA MEDIA CRACKDOWN ROILS BIDEN**

Vice President Joe Biden ripped Chinese treatment of media on Dec. 5 in a visit to the country, telling the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing that innovation “thrive[s] where people breathe freely, speak freely, are able to challenge orthodoxy, where newspapers can report the truth without fear of consequences.”

Media traveling with Biden reported that the vice president raised the issue with President Xi Jinping and other officials of dozens of U.S. journalists who will have to leave the country because their visas have not been renewed.

“We have many disagreements, and some profound disagreements, on some of those issues right now, in the treatment of U.S. journalists,” Biden told the business group.

The *New York Times* said the paper and Bloomberg, which have covered Chinese corruption scandals in recent months, have nearly two dozen journalists with visas that expire next month, adding China has declined to act to renew the documents.

Biden told reporters that the Chinese president “appeared unmoved” and insisted reporters are treated according to Chinese law.

### **ATLANTIC TAPS BRANDED AD SPECIALIST**

Sam Rosen, VP and director of social content for DigitasLBI, has joined The Atlantic in Washington as VP of marketing.

Rosen, who joined the publication Dec. 6, will lead brand strategy and oversee its integrated marketing team, which develops custom ads.

Publisher Haley Romer said Rosen was an early innovator and is a leader in branded content.

He previously ran his own shop, Evolution.is.

### **BUNKER TO NBC’S SILICON VALLEY AFFILIATE**

Peggy Bunker, anchor of morning and 11 a.m. news at KOMO4 Seattle, has moved to NBC Bay Area in San Jose, Calif., as anchor/reporter.

She anchors the station’s midday newscast at 11 a.m. serves as general assignment reporter and fill-in anchor for its morning show, “Today in The Bay.”

### **BERLINROSEN STOKES FAST FOOD STRIKES**

New York firm BerlinRosen helped to stoke national strikes and protests at fast-food restaurants on Dec. 6 aimed to build support for raising the minimum wage.

The firm, which works with the Service Employees International Union and is advocating union membership for low-wage workers, says walkouts are planned in 100 cities with scores of rallies protesting the \$7.25 federal minimum wage and urging adoption of a \$15-an-hour mark.

*USA Today* reported on protests in Washington, New York and Detroit, noting the events are in a similar vein of recent statements by Pope Francis and President Barack Obama.

The paper quoted advocate Arun Gupta: “It’s more a show for the media than something that will hit the bottom line of these employers.”

**NEWS OF PR FIRMS****EYELOCK WINKS AT WEBER SHANDWICK**

Eye-scanning technology developer EyeLock has awarded global PR duties to Weber Shandwick as the seven-year-old company eyes a wider profile in sectors like education, retail and enterprise.

The New York-based biometrics company, which is privately held, previously worked with KCSA Strategic Communications.

WS' scope covers media relations, content development via its publishing platform, Mediaco, as well as strategic counsel.

EyeLock CMO Anthony Antolino said the company is at a "critical inflection point" and will lean on WS to "articulate" the company's message on a global scale.

EyeLock's technology includes iris-scanning devices that are used for security, access control, border control and identity management. It forged an agreement with Black & Decker's Stanley Security Solutions earlier this year for SSS to be the exclusive distributor of its products and technology in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

**LHA IN ISRAEL IR DEAL**

New York-based LHA Investor Relations has formed a joint venture with Israel PR and IR firm GK to help to Israeli-based private and public companies looking to U.S. markets.

Keith Lippert of LHA said Israel has one of the largest and most sophisticated groups of technology and healthcare companies in the world, presenting enormous opportunities for U.S. investors.

Under the agreement, GK and LHA will jointly provide Israeli companies with communications counsel.

**LEVICK UNVEILS MONTHLY MAG**

Washington-based Levick has started a digital magazine, Levick Monthly, offering PR-centric perspectives on issues affecting companies, markets and countries around the global.

The publication is produced by the firm's digital engagement unit and can be viewed via the web, iPhone or iPad.

iTunes: <http://bit.ly/1iPLTJo> | Site: <http://prn.to/1cwbDpd>.

**BRIEFS:** **Luc Beauregard**, founder of Canada's **National Public Relations** and Res Publica Consulting Group who died in August at 71, was honored posthumously on Nov. 22 with the title of Officer of the Order of Canada at an official investiture ceremony presided over by the Governor General of Canada. His wife, Michelle Beauregard, received the insignia of Officer of the Order of Canada in the presence of his daughter, Valérie Beauregard, executive vice-president, and Jean-Pierre Vasseur, president and CEO, both of Res Publica. ...Irvine, Calif.-based **Bolt PR** is eyeing an outpost in Dallas as the firm seeks to tap into the Dallas/Fort Worth-area's "vibrant economy and countless opportunities in North Texas," said founder and president Caroline Callaway. Bolt has recruited Shawn Paul Wood from HCK2 Partners in the area as it looks for office space. He was previously with Burson-Marsteller and Texas megachurch, High Point Church.

**NEW ACCOUNTS****New York Area**

**Horn**, New York/DataCore, enterprise storage software, as communications AOR in North America, including strategic counsel, media and analyst relations, thought leadership, social media, and interactive services.

**WordHampton PR**, East Hampton, N.Y./Bagby Restaurant Group of Baltimore, for PR and marketing via the firm's Metro Restaurant Marketing unit.

**iMiller PR**, Mamaroneck, N.Y./Open-IX Association, trade group promoting standards for data center interconnection and Internet exchanges, for an integrated marketing communications program.

**East**

**Calypso Communications**, Portsmouth, N.H./Seacoast Sports Clubs, owner of several health and fitness facilities in New Hampshire's Seacoast region, for social media, branding, and creative services.

**Southeast**

**TWsquared**, Orlando/Space Coast Office of Tourism, as AOR on a two-year pact worth \$400K. The region includes Cocoa Beach, Melbourne Beach, Palm Bay and Titusville, the Atlantic Coast region 35 miles east of Orlando, including Kennedy Space Center and Port Canaveral, among other attractions.

**On Ideas**, Jacksonville, Fla./Jacksonville Jaguars, NFL franchise, for marketing strategy, branding, creative services and PR/community relations. Billionaire Shad Khan of Flex-N-Gate Corp. bought the struggling team in January 2012.

**South**

**Blue August**, Jackson, Tenn./MantaRails, maker of cover accessories for AR-15 firearms, for editorial relations and branding as the company eyes a wider consumer presence.

**Midwest**

**Haberman**, Minneapolis/Amery Regional Medical Center, western Wisconsin healthcare system, to revitalize its brand and develop a new marketing campaign.

**Mountain West**

**Blakely & Company**, Colorado Springs/University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, for comms. and marketing for the new Lane Center community healthcare clinics opening in February 2014.

**Verde PR & Brand Communications**, Durango, Colo./G-Form, impact protection technology for athletes, as the brand known in the bike, skate and snow sports realm looks to branch into soccer and hockey.

**Southwest**

**One7 communications**, Las Vegas/MCC Hospitality Group, for marketing, advertising and PR for its restaurants including Morels Steakhouse & French Bistro at The Palazzo and d.vino Italian Food & Wine Bar and Dragon Noodle Company at Monte Carlo.

**West**

**Ballantines PR**, Los Angeles/Sunset Marquis, luxury West Hollywood hotel, for media relations and overall PR strategy on a local, national and global basis.

**Canada**

**DDB PR**, Seattle/The Woodmark Hotel, hotel/resort on Lake Washington, as AOR for PR, following a competitive pitch with three agencies.

## NEWS OF SERVICES

### PRIME RESEARCH BOLSTERS PR

Brittany Luse, former marketing coordinator for Harley-Davidson of New York City, has moved to PRIME Research, New York, as marketing manager for the communications research firm.

She handles external and internal communications as the company led by Ketchum and Delahaye alum Mark Weiner expands globally.

Weiner said Luse's hire comes at a time of "substantial" growth at the firm, which has operations in South America, Europe and Asia, in addition to the U.S.

### PEDERSEN, GOV'T COMMUNICATOR, DIES AT 91

Wes Pedersen, a veteran government communicator and public affairs counselor whose prolific writings on PR, policy and grammar were well-known to readers of the *Washington Post* and O'Dwyer's, died from a heart ailment Dec. 4 in Bethesda, Md. He was 91.

A Nebraska native, Pedersen started out as a reporter for the *Sioux City Journal* in Iowa after graduating from Upper Iowa Univ., and served in the Air Force during World War II. He joined the federal government as a writer and correspondent in the 1950s, moving to the U.S. Information Agency in the 1960s and '70s writing publications, content and producing special projects from presidential biographies to dispatches on nuclear tests.

He left the public sector in 1980, when he was named director of communications for the Public Affairs Council, the trade group for PA pros, where he worked until the mid-2000s.

"At heart he was a writer — a witty wordsmith who never lacked for robust opinions," the *Washington Post*'s Richard Leiby wrote of Pedersen. "He peppered the Washington Post's letters pages with missives on political history, martinis and the misuse of words (never write 'from whence,' he instructed, just 'whence')."

In one of his last columns for O'Dwyer's, Pedersen exhorted PR pros to "up their game" with nine axioms for the profession, including a request for every practitioner to represent the industry: "Recognize that you can have a winning role in bolstering the reputation of your chosen field of work," Pedersen wrote. "Teach PR at colleges of your choice. Write op-eds. Do a video for high school kids contemplating entry into public relations. When critics in the media insult public relations and its practitioners, respond with positive rebuttals to the misguided and to their editors."

Pedersen is survived by his wife of 65 years, Angela, a son, Eric, and two granddaughters.

**BRIEF:** U.K. mobile behavior services firm **RealityMine** has acquired **USA TouchPoints**, a consumer data firm for the media planning industry formerly operated by Media Behavior Institute. USAT offers the mobile phone-based eDiary, which sees participants recording their media behavior at 30-minute intervals over a 10-day period to show consumer media habits.



Pedersen

## PEOPLE

### Joined

**Abbe Goldstein**, senior VP of IR and corporate comms. at National Financial Partners, to publicly traded bond insurer Ambac Financial Group, as managing director, IR and corporate comms. New York-based Ambac, which emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy in May after being hobbled by the 2007 financial crisis. She takes over for **Michael Fitzgerald**, the treasury and IR managing director who is retiring at the end of December. Goldstein was senior VP, IR and corporate comms., Revlon and associate director of IR at Willis Group Holdings after stints at Thomson Financial and The Carson Group, among others. Ambac filed for bankruptcy in 2010 amid pressure from the IRS and a heavy debt load after its guarantees on mortgage securities and credit default swaps went south.

**Jody Sowa**, A/D, M&C Saatchi PR, to Stanton & Company, Los Angeles, as PR director, overseeing strategic planning and targeted press outreach on behalf of clients and business development with a focus on sports, entertainment, lifestyle and fitness. PR Manager Leah-Vail Soloff was promoted to PR supervisor.

**Frank Benenati**, principal, Precision Strategies, to the White House Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C., as press secretary.

**Andrew Powaleny**, deputy press secretary for the House Energy and Commerce Committee, to The Herald Group, Washington, D.C., as a director. He counsels clients and serves as media relations manager. He was previously at CRAFT | Media/Digital.

**Jay Jones**, who ran PR and marketing shop Jay Jones Music, to the Country Music Association, Nashville, as director of media relations. He oversees the group's media initiatives, digital PR and development of relationships with media, publicists and CMA partners.

**Stephen Strong**, VP of marketing, ParkWhiz, to Zocalo Group, Chicago, as executive VP and exec. director. He was an interactive developer for Unilever and senior VP at Draftfcb. Zocalo is part of Omnicom's Ketchum.

**Rebecca Waits**, VP of people services, Rosetta Marketing, to PMK•BNC, Los Angeles, as executive VP of people services to head HR. She focuses on recruitment and development of the firm's staff of more than 250. Waits was previously senior director of HR for LEVEL Studios and earlier held posts at Razorfish and Deloitte Consulting.



Waits

**Tim Williamson**, an agency vet in Europe and Asia Pacific, to Cognito, New York, as managing director for the Asia Pacific region, based in Singapore. He was an associate partner at Brunswick in London, VP for corporate at Weber Shandwick in Australia, and a financial reporter at Bloomberg and the BBC in London.

### Promoted

**Isaac Brown** to partner, 38 North Solutions, Washington, D.C. 38 North was spun out of QGA Public Affairs in 2012. The firm has also added Sustainability Accounting and Standards Board and MIOX Corp.

## **WALMART EXEC TO HEAD 3M COMMS**

Sarah Williams, a speechwriter and director of executive communications for Walmart, will join 3M in January as chief communications officer for the Minnesota-based maker of products from Scotch tape to stethoscopes.

Williams spent the last two and a half years at the top retailer penning speeches for CEO Mike Duke and top executives. That followed stints writing for the chancellor of the Univ. of California, Davis, and California Gov.

Arnold Schwarzenegger.

She takes the top 3M post on Jan. 1, leading its global communications team and reporting to Ian Hardgrove, senior VP, corporate comms. and enterprise services. The Fortune 500 company had 2012 revenue of \$29.9B and profit of \$4.4B.

Williams entered the speechwriting realm from journalism, serving as an editor for the Sacramento Bee and reporter for the *Seattle Times*, among other outlets.



**Williams**

## **HYUNDAI PR CHIEF TO JOIN BGR PR IN DC**

Frank Ahrens, VP of global corporate communications for Hyundai Motor, is slated to move to BGR PR in Washington in January.

Ahrens, a former reporter and editor for the Washington Post, has been posted in Seoul for the past three years for Hyundai.

A rare non-Korean on the company's executive board, he created the carmaker's first English-language corporate media site and worked closely with its government affairs operations in Washington and Brussels while overseeing a PR staff of about a dozen.

BGR PR president Jeff Birnbaum said the firm's clients "will be well served by Frank's experience as a reporter, editor and advocate."

Ahrens spent 18 years at the Post before departing for the PR side at Hyundai in 2010.

Former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour is founding partner of BGR.



**Ahrens**

## **JEFFREY TABS RICE TO HEAD LATIN AM TEAM**

Teri Rice, an agency pro with experience in multicultural and Latin American PR, has moved to JeffreyGroup in Miami as a managing director.

Rice, who leads JG's Latin American regional team, was a managing director for IGC, the former Izzo+Guadelli Communications. She also spent 10 years at Burson-Marsteller in Miami, serving as managing director and regional chair of its tourism and investment promotion operation and handling the Mexico Tourism Board, among other clients.

COO Brian Burlingame pointed out Rice's experience in Mexico and Brazil, the firm's two largest markets. JG clients include Facebook, Bayer and T-Mobile.



**Rice**

## **UTAH WANTS FIRM TO BRING 'BRAND' GLOBAL**

The Beehive State has cast a net for an agency to promote its established tourism slogan, "Utah: Life Elevated," on a national and global scale to expand its use to areas like economic development and create an "integrated global brand."

First introduced by the Utah Office of Tourism in 2006, the state wants to expand the Life Elevated pitch to business prospects, tourism/film/economic development organizations, media, and social media audiences, as well as its own citizens.

Utah reviewed its tourism PR account earlier this summer, tapping New York and Denver-based Turner PR.

"In creating an integrated global brand, we seek to differentiate Utah for its great quality of life, amazing year-round outdoor recreation, as well as arts and culture," reads an RFP released last week.

Gov. Gary Herbert is behind the "brand expansion" bid to build out the Life Elevated campaign.

The move follows neighbor Colorado's August roll-out of its first state brand, a move to unify marketing, economic development and PR there.

Proposals are due Dec. 20. Three finalists will be expected to pitch in Salt Lake City in January.

The RFP is available via the state's online procurement portal.

## **DMC PUSHES FOR US BASE IN THAILAND**

The government of Thailand, which has been rocked by violent protests, has hired Davenport McKesson Corp. to push the Pentagon to build a naval air defense base in that southeast Asia country.



**A U.S. Air Force C-130 departs Utapao International Airport in Thailand in 2008.**

Photo: USAF

The U.S. and Thailand have discussed operation of a joint military hub south of Bangkok for disaster relief purposes.

The Air Force had based B-52 bombers in Thailand through the 1960s and 1970s.

DMC is working to pitch Congress about the strategic importance of the South China Sea and promote greater awareness of Thailand's role in the region.

The U.S. has been expanding its military footprint in the region as part of President Obama's "Asia pivot" and as a means to counter China's build-up.

Thailand is determined to establish a "safe harbor zone around its waters" and wants DMC to help it establish more trade representation centers here, according to the Boston-based firm's federal filing.

Thailand, which has a history of military coups, is now experiencing its bloodiest anti-government clashes since 2010 when a military crackdown led to 90 civilian deaths in Bangkok.

Protesters seek the ouster of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, replacing her regime with an unelected "people's council."

## PR OPINION

**The new set of guidelines for lowering cholesterol, released in November** by heart organizations and which could about double the number of people taking statins, already a \$30 billion market, has touched off a barrage of criticisms and resulted in increased media attention on diet and health.

Medical and nutritional experts, including Dr. David Perlmutter, author of *Grain Brain: Your Brain's Silent Killers*, have not only said the new guidelines are too inclusive but question the advisability of statins for anyone except those with known heart conditions.

Among those also advocating a switch from grains to "healthy fats" is Dr. Frank Lipman of New York who told the NYT Dec. 5 that "gluten and sugar are the devil" and that "junk food is modern-day cigarettes: they're the same thing."

He's against any grains—even those that are "gluten-free."

Some menus are sprouting the words "gluten-free" on certain foods and some restaurants are posting signs in the window promising "gluten-free" entrees.

### Heart Groups Have Credibility Problem

Referring to the barrage of stories about the new guidelines, heart specialist Dr. Peter Libby said, "We're surrounded by a real disaster in terms of credibility."

He is chair of cardiovascular medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

The Nov. 17 NYT article quoting Dr. Libby was headlined "Risk Calculator for Cholesterol Appears Flawed." Reporter Gina Kolata said doctors told her that many people are "already leery of statins" and that the public would "lose trust in the guidelines of the heart associations."

Dr. Perlmutter's view of the heart groups is that they are funded by the companies selling statins and many other types of heart medicines.

Perlmutter likens it to rating services such as Fitch, S&P and Moody's that gave high grades to investments that later proved to be flawed, plunging the U.S. into a steep economic decline starting 2008.

The funding of the rating services came from companies being rated.

Among critics of the guidelines are Dr. Paul Ridker and Dr. Nancy Cook of the Harvard Medical School who said the "risk calculator" used in the new study overpredicted risk by 75% to 150%.

Many young adults are taking statins and just about everyone over 65. Atorvastatin, the generic Lipitor, is \$155 for thirty 20-mg capsules at Rite-Aid drugstores in New York or \$1,860 a year.

Simvastatin, a similar drug, is \$53.99 or about \$650 yearly.

### Eggs & Bacon Get Boost

Egg producers and their PR firms are getting a healthy boost from nutritionists who say that eggs have been unfairly demonized for decades.

According to Dr. Perlmutter, the brain is 80% "fat" and needs cholesterol in order to function properly.

Edelman handles the American Egg Board and American Egg Farmers and Coyne PR has Egghand's Best, which is called the "No. 1 branded egg in the U.S." Coyne's work in 2012 garnered 558 million impressions in national and local media.

"Eggs are quite possibly the world's most perfect food," says Grain Brain. They contain "all of the essential amino acids we need to survive—vitamins and minerals plus anti-oxidants known to protect our eyes."

### Grains Foundation Urges Balanced Diet

The Grains Foods Foundation, at the request of the O'Dwyer Co., examined the criticisms being made about grain consumption and said grain-based foods should be part of a "healthy, balanced diet."

Christine Cochran, executive director of the Foundation, said the grains industry has been dealing with "anti-carb diets for decades beginning with the Atkins diet in 1972 and a revival of the diet in the late 1990s."

Said Cochran:

"The study of what we eat and how it impacts our bodies is long and complicated. There is no shortage of books, diet products, diet programs, supplements, fads and trends all promising to help people lose weight, achieve wellness and avoid scary health conditions."

Diet and weight-loss industry products such as books total some \$20 billion in sales annually, she noted, quoting John LaRosa at Marketdata and the National Weight Control Registry.

About 108 million people try to follow some sort of diet, she said.

She added that grain has been "a vital part of the human diet for millennia" and that trying to associate one single food and especially a staple like grain with single diseases, conditions, and weight gain in general "should be viewed with a healthy dose of suspicion."

Grain foods provide many of the essential vitamins, nutrients and compounds that everyone needs to be healthy and stay active for the long term, she added.

The Grain Foods Foundation "celebrates our products and the sound science that supports the inclusion of grain based foods in a healthy, balanced diet, she said.

Consumers must make their own choices and the Foundation refrains from "disparaging others," she concluded.

### Genetically-Modified Foods an Issue

Dr. Perlmutter says, "Modern food manufacturing, including bio-engineering and specifically hybridization, have allowed us to grow structurally-modified grains that contain gluten that's less tolerable than the gluten that's found in grains cultivated just a few decades ago... modern gluten-containing grains are more problematic than ever."

Ogilvy PR won the Anvil of Anvils of PR Society of America this year, besting 846 other entries and 143 other finalists, for its campaign for "Food Security" which says genetically-modified foods are needed to support a population that will grow from the current seven billion to nine billion by 2050. — Jack O'Dwyer