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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

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WELLPET SEEKS PR FIRM

WellPet, which claims to market the “healthiest natural products for pets,” has issued an RFP to build awareness and sales of its line of dog/cat food, supplements and treats.

The Tewksbury, Mass.-based company generates sales of more than \$500M in revenues and is a unit of Berwind Corp., home of Elmer’s Glue.

Its brands such as Old Mother Hubbard, Eagle Pack, Wellness and Holistic Select are sold in independent specialty pet stores.

The firm is looking for media relations, product placement, social media, trade show support among other duties.

The firm has a new marketing executive as New Zealander Camelle Kent joined from Timberland, where she was global brand marketing chief, last month. Earlier, she was director of the global shave care business at Gillette.

WellPet expects to select four candidates by Christmas with final presentations on tap for January. Its PR reps were not reached.



VIRGINIA REVIEWS ELECTION PR

Virginia's bipartisan election agency has kicked off a review of its PR and media relations account.

The Virginia State Board of Elections, grappling with a new voter ID law, just oversaw the contest that tapped Governor-elect Terry McAuliffe, but a recount is likely in the race for attorney general, which sits with a 154-vote margin.

The Commonwealth wants a firm to handle development of integrated PR and communications to guide new voter recruitment and burnish the Richmond-based board's image.

An RFP released Nov. 12 says a two-year pact with three one-year options is expected. Budget is about \$400K.

Proposals are due Dec. 19.



HUNTSWORTH REPORTS REVENUES DIP

Huntsworth reported a 0.9 percent dip in first-half revenues due to continued declines at its Grayling flagship, which accounts for 45 percent of group activity, and consumer-oriented Red (eight percent of business).

They posted fall-offs of 5.4 percent, and 3.9 percent, respectively. Those declines were partially offset by a 7.7 percent advance by Citigate financial (13 percent) and a 3.3 percent rise at Huntsworth Health (33 percent).

COO Sally Withey noted the “early signs of recovery in the financial and specialist divisions.” A rebounding financial sector “normally is the first to recover” from economic downturns, according to Withey.

Huntsworth is confident that its 2013 financial performance remains on track to meet management expectations. The firm has reduced its past dependence on the U.K. and Continental Europe market, which once accounted for 60 percent of revenues, and stepped up investment in the faster growing U.S., Middle East and Asia-Pacific sector.

A revitalized Grayling, under the new leadership of Edelman alum Pete Pedersen, has revamped operations with an emphasis on Big Data analytics.

CEO Lord Chadlington also has high hopes for China with the October completion of a sale of 19.8 percent to Blue Focus Communications Group, which is listed on the Shenzhen Stock Market.

Huntsworth is working with the U.K. Trade and Investment unit of the British Embassy to develop business opportunities inside and outside of China.

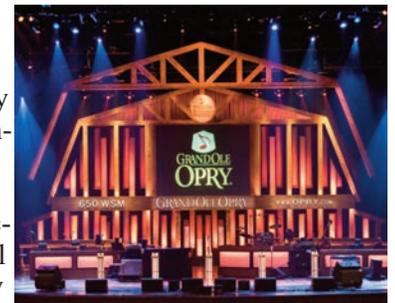
GOLINHARRIS STARS AT GRAND OLE OPRY

Interpublic’s GolinHarris has scooped up the Grand Ole Opry, Nashville’s country music mecca, for travel and tourism PR.

Handled from Atlanta, GH will coordinate activities with Schmidt PR, which handles entertainment matters.

Dan Rogers, director of marketing/communications at GOO, said GH’s “unique insights” and “creative tactics” would spark interest in the Opry and Nashville as “authentic, music-filled destinations.”

Lillian Ansley, executive director at GH, will head the outreach. Kathy Cosgrove is managing director of the Atlanta PR outpost.



NH AWARDS OBAMACARE PR PACT

The Granite State has awarded a \$1.9M pact to promote the statewide offerings under the federal Affordable Care to Concord-based Louis Karno & Company, following an RFP process.

Implementing the ACA was an uphill battle in New Hampshire as legislators attempted to block the state from accepting federal funds to implement. It is now in a partnership that has the federal government running its insurance exchange while plan management and consumer assistance are handled by the state.

LK&C, led by PR pros Jayme Henriques Simoes, president, and Bree St. Clair, partner, is charged with designing and executing a media campaign to education residents about choices available on the exchange.

In a statement, New Hampshire Health Plan executive director Mike Degan cited the firm's expertise related to the ACA and consumer outreach across N.H.

NHHP, which received \$5M from the federal government under the cooperative agreement, released an RFP in September for the public education assignment.

LEVICK SNARES GRAYLING VET

Leslie Wolf-Creutzfeldt, who served as managing director of Grayling USA to help the British PR operation gain a foothold here, has gone to Washington's Levick.

Mark Irion, Levick's president and former head of Dutko Worldwide, which was acquired by Grayling's parent Huntsworth, admires Wolf-Creutzfeldt's "seemingly effortless ability to connect clients to top-tier media analysts and business partners."

Prior to Grayling, Wolf-Creutzfeldt led Interpublic's life sciences investor relations unit and headed the technology unit of Thompson Financial. Her new job is to build Levick's New York presence.



Wolf-Creutzfeldt

JOELE FRANK ADVISES REDBIRDS RESCUE

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher is providing PR counsel to a deal reached last week to rescue minor league baseball's Memphis Redbirds, the St. Louis Cardinals farm affiliate which defaulted on millions in tax-exempt bonds in 2009.

Joele Frank private equity client Fundamental Advisors bought up the bond debt of the team and its \$80M ballpark, AutoZone Park, in 2010. FA, along with the not-for-profit that runs the team, the Memphis Redbirds Baseball Foundation, announced a deal for the Cardinals to acquire the team, while the City of Memphis acquires the stadium.

New York-based FA, a specialist in distressed municipal bond-backed assets, has agreed to retire the original bonds and take a hit on the original principal amount.

"The time is right to turn the stadium back over to the great city of Memphis, and to leave the team in the hands of the world-class St. Louis Cardinals organization," FA CEO Laurence Gottlieb said via Joele Frank. "We will be cheering from the sidelines."

COONEY WATERS TEAMS WITH RUSSO

Cooney/Waters has teamed with Russo Partners to form Clearpath Health Communications to provide holistic PR support to companies through the lifecycles of businesses and products.

The entity melds C/W's marketing strengths with Russo's corporate and financial communications savvy. Tim Bird, president/COO of C/W, and Tony Russo, CEO of RP, told O'Dwyer's Clearpath's expected nimbleness and ability to execute on a dime will be advantages enjoyed over larger PR offerings. That's important as clients make accountability a top priority.



Bird, Russo

They've known and admired the work of each other for at least a decade.

The goal is to offer one-stop to clients as they move from early stage development through commercialization. C/W is part of the Cooney/Waters Group, which ranked as O'Dwyer's No. 4 healthcare firm in 2012 with fees of \$18.9M.

The Corkery Group and Alembic Health Communication are sister units that are owned by Creston Group.

Russo Partners, in operation since 1988, was formerly Noonan/Russo Communications.

FALLEN COP. FIREFIGHTER GROUP TAPS 5W

The National Law Enforcement & Firefighters Children's Foundation has tapped 5W Public Relations to bolster awareness of the organization just ahead of its key Thanksgiving Day event.

The New York PR shop will support NLE&FCF's annual Thanksgiving Day Parade breakfast at Bryant Park Grill that will attract 1,300 children and families of police and firefighters who were killed while on duty. They will enjoy front-row seating to watch the Macy's parade.

The organization provides scholarships/grants to families of fallen first-responders and financial aid to those facing tough economic times.

Alfred Kahn, president of NLE&FCF, said 5W was chosen because of its "exceptional track record of creating results for non-profit organizations."

In September, NLE&FCF, hosted its first corporate hero award gala that honored Cisco CEO John Chambers.

NLE&FCF was created in the aftermath of 9/11.

FORBES GOES ON AUCTION BLOCK

Forbes Media is mulling the sale of its 96-year-old business magazine flagship that has battled declines in revenue and circulation, according to a memo from CEO Mike Perlis.

He told staffers that *Forbes* has "has received more than a few 'over the transcom' indications of interest" and Deutsche Bank has been hired to organize the process to test the waters regarding the sale."

He said FM "expects interest from numerous suitors."

Elevation Partners, which is backed by U2 singer Bono, bought a 45 percent stake in FM in 2006.

Perlis noted the company has a thriving conference and licensing business and solid digital growth.

"I'm proud to say that we've accomplished what no other traditional media company appears to have done: established a huge digital audience by efficiently creating quality content at scale, and we're innovating around new business models to maximize that relationship," he wrote.

Print circulation, however, is down 12.3 percent during the first-nine months of 2013 and ad revenues are off 45 percent since 2008, according to the Publisher's Information Bureau.

B.C. Forbes launched the magazine in 1917 and his son, Macolm, put the magazine on the map. Steve Forbes, former CEO, ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 1996 and 2000.

COMCAST TAKES OVER SPROUT KIDS TV NET

Comcast has taken full ownership of kiddie cable TV network Sprout from PBS and HIT Ventures, an investment of Apax Funds.

Launched in 2005, Sprout offers 24-hour programming for the pre-school crowd, featuring shows like "Lazytown," "Noodle and Doodle," "Tree Fu Tom," "The Sunny Side Up Show," and "The Good Night Show." It also has access to the "Sesame Street" library.

Sprout reaches into more than 60M households and its online and on-demand platforms have generated more than 1.5B views.

Sandy Wax, president, said the network is "committed to creating the highest quality series for our viewers and the opportunity to help drive the company's kids and family strategy will continue to fuel our content creation engine."



Sprout is part of Comcast's NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment portfolio that includes USA, Bravo, Oxygen, Esquire Network, E! and Syfy.

AL JAZEERA AMERICA PLUGS IN COMMS CHIEF

Al Jazeera America has brought in Time Warner alum Dawn Bridges to head corporate communications for the expanding U.S. push of the Qatari news network.

Bridges was senior VP of communications for TW's Time Inc. and executive VP of corporate communications and partnership marketing for its Warner Music Group division.

She also held senior communications posts at EMI Group and PolyGram, now part of Universal. She has run her own New York shop for the past two years since leaving Time Inc.

**Bridges**

At Al Jazeera, she reports to interim CEO Ehab Al Shihabi. The New York-based network last month announced an "accelerated" growth plan in the U.S., including additional staff, more news bureaus, wider distribution (including Time Warner last month), and more investigative reporting.

It hired PBS' Ray Suarez as a host and *ex-Popular Science* editor-in-chief Jacob Ward as a correspondent this month.

TRIBUNE CO NABS EX-CNN COMMS HEAD

Christa Robinson, who led communications for CNN Worldwide, has moved to Tribune Company as chief communications officer.

She takes the communications reins handled by senior VP of corporate relations Gary Weitman. Robinson is based in New York, while Weitman works from Chicago.

First-year Tribune president and CEO Peter Liguori praised Weitman's 13-year run and said he'll be "a terrific partner to Christa as she comes aboard."

Tribune emerged from bankruptcy last year and is mulling the sale of its newspaper assets, including the *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*.

Robinson was a CNN PR hand since 1999, handling communications and PR for the cable news giant's networks and digital platforms before taking the senior VP of PR post in 2003 and later moving to a global role.

She was previously director of communications for the White House Domestic Policy Council during the Clinton administration.

**Robinson**

BRIEF: Salon Media Group reported a third quarter loss of \$500K, down from \$800K a year earlier as revenue climbed to \$1.6M. Salon.com generated \$1.4M in ad revenues for the quarter, a 75% increase over 2012.

MEDIA NEWS

STUMBLING IN SOCIAL ERA OF TRANSPARENCY

Tony Hayward, former BP chief and the Nov. 12 *Wall Street Journal* cover boy for his oil drilling work in human rights-challenged regions of the world, gets a shout-out in Havas Worldwide's just-released report about how trust and dynamism drive brand success.

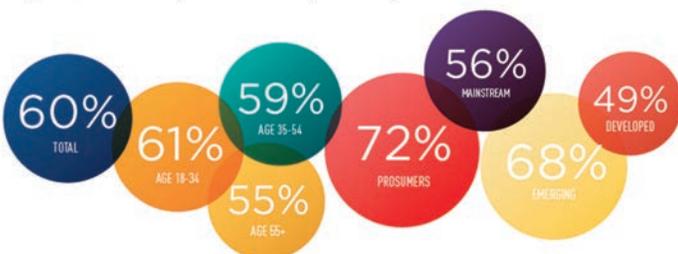
In the "How Transparent is Too Transparent," section, Hayward is remembered for his infamous post-Gulf Oil spill whine about wanting to get his "life back." As Havas noted, 11 workers lost their lives following the explosion and millions of gallons of BP oil spewed into the waters destroying the livelihoods of thousands.



Havas cited other notable foot-in-mouth statements: Abercrombie & Fitch's Mike Jeffries in 2006 on his marketing strategy: "We go after the cool kids. A lot of people don't belong and they can't belong. Are we exclusionary? Absolutely." The quote coupled with A&F's refusal to stock larger sizes implies that only skinny kids can be cool.

Most recently Guido Barilla of pasta fame triggered calls of a boycott after he told Italian radio that he only wants heterosexual or "classic" families in his ads. Havas' takeaway: "Sometimes it's best to let your products do the talking for you."

"In general, I trust brands' promises more than politicians' promises"



The French firm's white paper, "Building Brands that Matter: The Sweet Spot Between Trust and Dynamism," covers how social media has created a world of radical transparency that gives customers the clout to hold companies accountable, according to CEO David Jones. It also shows that loose lips sink ships.

BLOOMBERG CUTS EDITORIAL STAFF

Bloomberg is laying off 50 staffers mostly on the sports, arts and entertainment beats.

That cut accounts for about two percent of Bloomberg's 2,400-member editorial staff. It comes as Bloomberg trimmed its TV unit by 10 staffers earlier this month.

The global financial meltdown and ensuing Wall Street consolidation has hit Bloomberg's financial data segment.

Bloomberg has fine-tuned in financial push to focus on the faster growing economies in the Asia-Pacific region. The company employs 15K.

Reporter Suspended

The *New York Times* reported Nov. 17 that Bloomberg reporter Michael Forsythe has been suspended after a Times piece on Bloomberg's work in China claimed the news organization spiked coverage over fears of getting expelled by the Chinese government.

The original Times story cited unnamed Bloomberg sources and noted Forsythe co-authored a Bloomberg story on a Chinese tycoon with ties to Communist Party leaders.

ROSEN JOINS OMI DYAR VENTURE

Social media guru Jay Rosen is joining the investigative journalism start-up that is being bankrolled by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar.

The New York University professor unveiled his plans on his PressThink blog, saying the new entity will work to ensure that "independent, ferocious and investigative journalism" is brought to the attention of general audiences so that it can "actually create a check on power."

Dubbed NewCo, the venture will follow the "personal franchise model in news" staffer by "journalists who have their own reputations, deep subject matter expertise, clear points of view, an independent and outsider spirit, a dedicated online following, and their own way of working," according to Rosen's blog.

His role is to advise Omidyar on "building the company and participate in planning discussions as it takes place."

Rosen is currently working on a part-time schedule and will shift to full-time duty with his planned NYU leave next year.

WASH POST COMPANY TO TAKE NEW NAME

The Washington Post Company will change its name to Graham Holdings Company later this month, following the sale of its flagship *Washington Post* newspaper.

The company will also take a new ticket symbol, GHC, on the date of the name change, Nov. 29.

The switch follows Jeff Bezos' acquisition of the paper and its publishing businesses in October.

Graham Holdings will include education giant Kaplan, several TV stations, The Slate Group, social marketing unit Social Code, home health operation Celtic Healthcare, and combustion monitoring unit Forney Corporation.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**KETCHUM ACQUIRES SINGAPORE SHOP**

Ketchum has acquired the Singapore office of its five-year affiliate ICON International Communications.

ICON's Australian and Indonesian operations will continue as Ketchum affiliates owned by Phil Burford and Chris Gray.

The Singapore office will be renamed Ketchum ICON. Ketchum CEO and senior partner Rob Flaherty said the firms have collaborated on some of Ketchum's largest and most geographically diverse clients in the Asia-Pacific region, noting the acquisition "enhances our combined ability" to serve clients.

The Singapore deal follows other moves in China, India and South Korea since 2011.

Eight-year-old ICON is led by John Bailey, who now reports to Ketchum international CEO Jon Higgins. Bailey said ICON had established itself as one of the leading mid-sized shops in a "very crowded market," adding that the Ketchum deal will help it grow "even further."

GOV'T SHUTDOWN DOWNS GLOBAL AVIATION

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher is handling the Chapter 11 filing of Peachtree City, Ga.-based Global Aviation Holdings, which partly blames the federal government shutdown for its bankruptcy.

As the No. 1 commercial air charter provider to the military, GAH traces its financial woes to the "military's decision to immediately curtail its cargo expansion flying" and "shutdown of the U.S. government in October 2013."

On tap: a 16 percent slash in workforce during the next 90 days.

CEO John Graber says the cutbacks are needed to align cost structure with the realities of market demand.

GAH's owns passenger charter North American Airlines, which was founded in 1989, and cargo/passenger carrier World Airways (launched in 1948).

JK's Michael Freitag and Aaron Palash work the bankruptcy.

FEAREY SELLS SEATTLE FIRM TO STAFFER

Pat Fearey, chairman and CEO of Seattle-based The Fearey Group, has sold the firm to president Aaron Blank, who adds a CEO title.

Fearey said she gave 33 years to building the firm and saw the importance of assuring the next generation of leadership.

Blank, a former radio reporter and Edelman/Seattle exec, joined the firm seven years ago. "Aaron shares my passion and commitment to excellence, and I admire his integrity, creativity and strategic leadership," said Fearey, who credited Blank with growing revenues by 25% and adding 15 clients in 2013.

The firm, part of the PR Global Network of agencies, counts clients like UnitedHealthcare, Puget Sound Bank, Safeway and the Port of Seattle.

Added Fearey, who will keep an of counsel role: "With the company experiencing a sharp uptick in business, it's a good time to step away."

– Correcting item from 11/04/2013.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York Area**

Sharp Communications, New York/Tourneau, watch retailer, as AOR for PR for the Tourneau watch brand and its 30 retail locations in the U.S.

Spring O'Brien, New York/Visit South Walton, north-west Florida coastal region, for PR, following a competitive search.

Montgomery Communications, New York/On Foot Holidays, self-guided European walking tour specialist, for PR.

Rubenstein PR, New York/Ideal Properties Group, Brooklyn-based real estate brokerage; HAP Investments, real estate investment group, and Rutherford Place, condo development in Manhattan's Stuyvesant Square, for PR.

GCI Health, New York/Itamar Medical, Israel-based medical device maker, for PR in the U.S. supporting its arterial function testing aimed to prevent heart attacks.

Broadford & Maloney, New York/Coloredge, visual imaging and branding services, for marketing and PR.

Corbin-Hillman Communications, New York/European Wax Center, franchise waxing centers; K-10+, canine vitamins and supplements, and Stoddard + Partners, marketing holding company. Former client Peter Max Studios has returned for a new series of works based on Marilyn Monroe.

JB Cumberland PR, New York/FederlegnoArredo, Italian federation of wood, cork, furniture and furnishing industries, for a PR project in New York.

CPR Strategic Marketing Communications, Elmwood Park, N.J./Retired Brig. Gen. Becky Halstead, for a PR push for her forthcoming book, "24/7: The First Person You Must Lead is YOU," (January 2014).

East

Furia Rubel Communications, Doylestown, Pa./Chamberlain Hrdlicka; First Federal of Bucks County; Hope C. Lefeber, LLC; Newman ADR; Panitch Schwarze Belisario & Nadel, and Veritext Legal Solutions, for PR and marketing in the legal sector.

Midwest

Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus/Savannah College of Art and Design, as AOR, including content marketing, branding, digital, social media and media relations, following a formal search with more than 20 firms.

AutoCom Associates, Detroit/ The National Automotive History Collection, established in 1953 as part of the Detroit Public Library system, as AOR for PR.

Mountain West

202 Communications, Salt Lake City/Viaccess-Orca, content protection, delivery, and discovery solutions for the TV industry, for PR.

West

Access Communications, San Francisco/Blue Diamond Growers, almonds and almond-based products, as its first consumer PR agency of record. Access is part of Ketchum.

Waggner Edstrom, San Francisco/Autonet Mobile, Internet-based telematics and applications service platform provider for factory and dealer install, as AOR for PR.

NEWS OF SERVICES**VOCUS Q3 TICKS UP AMID 'TEMPERED' OUTLOOK**

Vocus reported a 3% boost in third quarter revenue to \$46.6M, while loss from operations was up slightly at \$3.9M.

CEO Rick Rudman said the company made strides in moving toward offering a comprehensive "digital marketing suite" from selling stand-alone products and services.

Vocus said it ended Q3 with 17,484 subscription customers, up from 15,131 a year earlier, inking pacts with Dole Packaged Foods, GoDaddy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, among others.

Rudman said the company is offering a more "tempered" outlook after cutting its small business edition and pricing and packaging changes, but "we are very pleased to see strong growth in Q3 of our digital marketing suite on higher average selling prices as well as another quarter of consistent performance for our PR products."

MARKETWIRED ADDS EVP TO DECK

Toronto-based Marketwired has brought in casino gaming industry executive John Sanchez as executive VP of global operations as the company says it works to move from news distribution to "social communications."

Sanchez, former VP of operations for Hollywood Casino in Maryland and an industry consultant, is charged with overseeing Marketwired's editorial operations, customer engagement and redesign efforts.

CEO Jim Delaney said Sanchez' "exceptional operational skills" will help the company build and maintain strong client relationships.

**Sanchez****PSB'S WIBBERLY TO EDELMAN**

Jonathan Wibberly, VP who led the San Francisco Bay Area for Burson-Marsteller's Penn Schoen Berland research unit, has moved to Edelman Berland as a senior VP in a similar role.

He is charged with building Edelman's Bay Area research business.

Wibberly exits PBS after two years. He was previously client director at The Leading Edge and research director at Synovate before several years at U.K.-based telecom giant BT Group.

Edelman recruited PSB's Michael Berland in 2012.

**Wibberly**

BRIEF: Seton Hall University's Stillman School of Business and West Virginia University's P.I. Reed School of Journalism have signed on to PRSA's turn-key, MBA-level strategic communications course, joining eight other institutions offering the program for 2014. The course can be offered in full semester, mini-semester and seminar formats.

PEOPLE**Joined**

Jeff Ventura, director of corporate communications at CVS Caremark, to Golin-Harris, Washington, as executive director for media. He was a press officer in the Food and Drug Administration's office of the commissioner and communications director at the House of Representatives' chief administrative unit. He also has hospital PR experience, gleaned from stints at media relations chief for Johns Hopkins University/School of Medicine and PA manager at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

**Ventura**

Yuri Kwon, senior publicist, Blake Zidell & Associates, and **Michelle Lauren Addo**, production manager, Appular, to Sayles & Winnikoff Communications, New York, as senior A/E and A/E, respectively.

Rosemary Tokatlian, business development manager for Detroit law firm Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn, to MCCI, Southfield, Mich., as a senior comms. supervisor.

Thomas Bebbington, manager, public and community relations, Long Term Care Partners, to the Diocese of Manchester (N.H.), as director of the office of communication. He was previously with LTCP parent John Hancock Financial Services.

Jamie Foley, VP of travel/lifestyle at M Booth in Los Angeles, to MWW, L.A., as a VP. She was previously a group supervisor with The Zimmerman Agency in Florida.

Devan Meserve, a former intern, joins Calypso Communications, Portsmouth, N.H., as a social media A/C.

Promoted

Michael Feeney to executive vice president of corporate communications, A+E Networks, New York, overseeing global communications, corporate comms. and marketing, and philanthropy and community outreach initiatives. He joined in 2001 and had been senior VP.

Amanda Mulally and **Michael Grela** to directors, Kyne, New York. Mulally is an original employee of the three-year-old healthcare-focused firm, while Grela joined in 2011 to handle its Pfizer/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Biogen Idec Hemophilia accounts.

**Mulally, Grela**

Kristin Heilman-Long to account director, food, beverage and lifestyle, LANE, Portland, Ore. **Claire Castellanos** to senior A/E, consumer and technology. Heilman-Long joined in 2009 while Castellanos signed on in 2012.

Sue Vaccaro, associate government relations director for Kaiser Permanente in California, to Comcast, Livermore, Calif., to the newly-created position of senior director of government affairs for the state. She reports to Mary Stutts, regional VP of external affairs for Comcast California.

MA EYES PR TO WOO CANADIANS

Massachusetts is expected to release an RFP for PR to significantly boost tourism from Canada.

The Commonwealth's Office of Travel and Tourism said last week it plans to post a solicitation for marketing and PR services to boost international visits from the north.

Canada is a key global market for Massachusetts alongside the UK and other western European countries. Its PR roster includes Buss Consulting (Germany), Express Conseil (France) and Therma SRL (Italy). The state wants a firm to "significantly increase the volume of travelers to Massachusetts from Canada with highly cost-effective, results-driven public relations, trade relations, and consumer marketing campaigns," according to a notice released Nov. 7.

Connelly Partners handles the Bay State's domestic travel PR account, defending the work last year in a review. The OT&T is asking interested firms to register in its online procurement portal to receive notice of the pending RFP.

INGERSOLL TAPS COMMS. HEAD FOR SPIN-OFF

Ingersoll Rand, the Ireland-incorporated global industrial conglomerate, has recruited veteran corporate communications exec Susana Duarte de Suarez to head communications for Allegion, the \$2B security unit being spun off next month.

Duarte de Suarez, who has run her own shop, Media Moon Communications, for the past four years, was previously VP of corporate communications for two global building materials giants, Holcim and CEMEX. Previous roles included chief communications officer of The Peace Corps from 2002-05 and assistant director for FEMA.

At Allegion, she leads communications and corporate affairs as VP for the Carmel, Ind.-based company, which makes locks, steel doors and other security barriers and products for residential and commercial applications. Its brands include Kryptonite, Legge and Steelcraft.

Ingersoll Rand moved its corporate base from Bermuda to Swords, Ireland, in 2009. It is slated to spin-off Allegion as a publicly traded entity on Dec. 1.

Allegion plans met with investors Nov. 18 in New York to outline its strategy.

Allegion had previously tapped Ray Lewis as senior VP of HR and communications in August.

KEKST REPS BUYERS IN JENNY CRAIG DEAL

Kekst and Company is working the PR beat for North Castle Partners as the Connecticut private equity owner of the Curves gym franchise snaps up weight loss brand Jenny Craig from Nestle.

North Castle, which focuses on health and wellness companies, said it plans to "revitalize" Jenny Craig. Curves CEO Monty Sharma will add the president/CEO role at Jenny Craig as the two companies are combined to create a "one-of-a-kind wellness company."

Kekst partner Todd Fogarty handles the North Castle work at Publicis-owned Kekst.

Nestle plunked down \$600M to buy Jenny Craig from its private equity owners in 2006.

JF. ICR GUIDE \$2.7B HOMEBUILDER DEAL

TRI Pointe Homes and Weyerhaeuser Company are relying on outside financial PR counsel as TRI acquires Weyerhaeuser Real Estate Company in a \$2.7B deal to create one of the top 10 homebuilders in the U.S.

Phil Denning, managing director for Norwalk, Conn.-based ICR, is leading media outreach for TRI Point on the deal.

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher partners Dan Katcher and Andrew Siegel are working the financial press for Weyerhaeuser.

Irvine, Calif.-based TRI acquires five Weyerhaeuser units in the deal, including Pardee Homes (Southern Calif., Las Vegas), Trendmaker Homes (Texas), Maracay Homes (Ariz.), Winchester Homes (D.C. metro), and Quadrant Homes (Wash. State).

The transaction calls for Weyerhaeuser to spin or split off the real estate unit to be merged with a subsidiary of TRI Pointe, which is putting up 130M shares and \$700M in cash.

DOWNEY MCGRATH PUSHES CARBON TAX

Downey McGrath, the firm of former Congressmen Tom Downey (D) and Ray McGrath (R), is "exploring options for carbon tax" on behalf of the Taxpayers for Common Sense non-partisan federal budget watchdog group.

TCS, a long-time supporter of a carbon tax, would consider the levy as part of an overhaul package as long as it raises revenues, rather than finance other program cuts.

California Senator Barbara Boxer (D) and Vermont's Bernie Sanders (I) have proposed legislation to tax of carbon emissions to fund sustainable energy development.

Their measure would provide rebates to consumers to offset price hikes by the oil, coal and gas sectors.

House Republican leadership, which is dead-set against any tax hikes and see a carbon levy as a job-killer, along with global warming deniers are against the levy.

SMITH BROS. ROLLS MEATLOAF CUPCAKES

Smith Bros. Agency handled the announcement of the introduction of the meatloaf cupcakes at the 32-member Kings Restaurants chain.

The item is topped with Kings' signature bacon jam and "frosted" with creamy mashed potatoes.

Chris Whalen, president of KCS Management, said the cupcake is a way to give consumers a "unique and delicious twist" on a Kings' classic entrée.

"We're so excited to see the overwhelmingly positive response from customers," Whalen said in the PR Newswire-distributed release. "They simply can't believe it's coming from Kings."

Brandi Smith of Smith Brothers has not yet been reached for her take on the taste of the meatloaf specialty.

Kings, which was founded in North Versailles, Pa., has restaurants in the Keystone State and Ohio.



PR exec Kate James, who is leaving the Gates Foundation to be chief corporate affairs officer of Pearson at the start of the year, will bring lots of controversy with her when she delivers the annual Distinguished Lecture to the Institute for PR Nov. 21 at the Yale Club.

Gates, funded by Microsoft founder Bill Gates, and U.K.-based Pearson, are under fire in educational quarters and the media in a number of areas.

Pearson is portrayed by PR Watch and others as a for-profit octopus that has its tentacles around practically every aspect of U.S. education, reaping billions of dollars in revenues.

PRW cites instances of Pearson working with elements of the American Legislative Exchange Council, which PRW says is an organization of 2,000 mostly Republican state legislators and 300 corporate representatives that has an undue influence on state lawmaking. Only one Democrat is among the 104 legislators in its leadership posts, it says.

PRW charges Pearson has undue influence on legislators and improperly funds trips abroad for educators.

The blog bigeducationape says, "In essence, every facet of our public educational system, from teacher preparation, curriculum design and content, and testing/assessments from womb to tomb are now owned by a private corporation whose profits skyrocketed into the billions of dollars."

Pearson, with revenues of \$8.29 billion, is called "the largest education company in the world" and the "largest book publisher in the world" by Wikipedia.

Its properties include the Financial Times Group; 47% of Penguin Random House; 50% of the Economist Group which includes *The Economist* magazine; Prentice-Hall; University of Phoenix (largest for-profit online university system); Connections Academy, which operates online classes in many states, and numerous education-related entities.

James, a native of the U.K. who was chief communications office of the Gates Foundation since 2010, will speak on "The Business of Changing the World." Her predecessor at Pearson, Luke Swanson, who was director of communications since 2003, has left the company as an employee but continues as a board member. Pearson said he is currently "leading the company's program to reorganize its businesses around its global education strategy."

Collins of NYT Raps Pearson

School testing has been turned into "a huge corporate profit center, led by Pearson," *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins wrote on April 27, 2012. "An American child could go to a public school run by Pearson, studying from books produced by Pearson, while his or her progress is evaluated by Pearson standardized tests. The only public participant in the show would be the taxpayer."

Collins' essay, called "A Very Pricey Pineapple," ridiculed a question on a Pearson exam for New York eighth graders that asked whether a pineapple or a hare

would win a race. Forest animals ate the pineapple which was unable to move. State education commissioner John King had the question removed from the test.

Collins says Pearson lobbyists include the top White House liaison with Congress who was involved in drafting the "No Child Left Behind Act" in 2001 and that the Pearson's non-profit foundation "sends state education commissioners on free trips overseas to contemplate school reform."

Pearson Defends Trips

Pearson has answered such charges by saying the trips "make it possible for our nation's education leaders to engage in an exchange with their international counterparts, share experiences, and come home armed with new strategies and ideas to raise achievement, especially achievement for our most struggling students.

"Regrettably, state and local education budgets could never provide the resources necessary for state chiefs and others to travel and collaborate in person with education ministers, reformers and innovators from Finland, Singapore, Brazil, or other nations who are more than willing to share their insights and best practices with us."

This response was on the Pearson website after complaints were made that the Iowa education chief violated ethical codes by going on Pearson trips. NYT reporter Michael Winerip wrote an article headlined "Free Trips Raise Issues for Officials in Education" which focused on the Pearson trips.

PRW takes issue with corporate hosting of legislators at ALEC meetings.

It says member companies cover hundreds or thousands of dollars worth of plane tickets for lawmakers and hotels for them and their families and this "raises serious concerns about such gifts under many states' ethics and lobbying laws."

The spending is called a "scholarship" and filtered through a bank account designated as the "ALEC scholarship fund." This has enabled donors to "maneuver around laws designed to limit improper influence," says PRW, adding that watchdog groups like Common Cause, People for the American Way, Progress Now, and others are calling these practices into question.

The "No Child Left Behind Act" recalls a sorry chapter in PR's history because it was revealed that the Dept. of Education hired Ketchum to promote the Act and Ketchum paid \$240,000 to commentator Armstrong Williams to use his contacts and on-air appearances for that purpose.

A firestorm of coverage broke out that included a 3,000-word feature in the Sunday, Feb. 13, 2005 NYT by Tim O'Brien titled "Spinning Frenzy: PR's Bad Press." Numerous PR figures were quoted but no one would talk to O'Brien from either Ketchum or parent Omnicom.

Among those battling school "privatization" is Diane Ravitch, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education. She is the author of "Reign of Error," which charges that private interests are corrupting public education for the sake of profit.

— Jack O'Dwyer