



Jack O'Dwyer,
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

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PUBLICIS ACQUIRES SCHWARTZ

Publicis has acquired tech and healthcare PR firm Schwartz Communications, the 21-year-old, No. 10 independent in the country with more than \$25M in revenue and 180 staffers last year.

The French ad/PR conglomerate said Waltham, Mass.-based Schwartz, including its San Francisco, Stockholm and London operations, will be folded into MSLGroup under the name Schwartz MSL. Publicis said MSL becomes the largest agency in Boston with 100 staffers after the deal. It also claims to be No. 2 in San Francisco tech PR.

MSLGroup chief Olivier Fleurot said the deal strengthens Publicis' PR network in a number of fields, singling out technology and especially healthcare, which, Publicis noted, is expected to grow by more than 50% through 2020.

Clients for Schwartz include GEO Healthcare-Americas, SimplyHired.com, Epocrates, and Accuray.

Publicis said in July that organic growth at its PR operation was up five percent in the second quarter with its U.S. operations bolstered by social media and healthcare assignments. The company has made several PR acquisitions this year focused on Asian markets.

MWW FUELS SUBARU PR

MWW Group has picked up agency of record duties for New Jersey-based carmaker Subaru of America.

Michael McHale, director of corporate communications at SOA, said the company liked MWW's consumer and automotive experience, as well as the firm's social media savvy.

The independent firm has worked with BMW motorcycles and Volkswagen of America.

SOA announced last week that it hired former Volkswagen corporate communications manager, Sheriece Matias as manager of corporate comms.

Brushfire, another New Jersey-based firm, handled the account for the past four years.

MWW's New York office, under the management of executive VP David Herrick, leads the account with assistance from the firm's Los Angeles outpost. MWW's lifestyle marketing unit will promote the car brand among lifestyle media and cultivate Subaru's community of owners and enthusiasts in digital media.

MWW CEO Michael Kempner said his firm's efforts to tell the company's story "will harness Subaru's spirit of adventure, cultural currency and passionate community."



QORVIS BRANDS PALESTINE

Qorvis is handling the U.S. branding campaign for Palestine ahead of the anticipated United Nations vote this month to grant nationhood to the Palestinian Authority. The U.S. is attempting to head off that vote.

The three-month \$90K pact involves PR, advertising, direct mail, social media and outreach to opinion makers and policymakers.

The D.C. firm is serving as subcontractor to Ellam Tam, the Ramallah-headquartered ad/PR shop. The Palestinian American Chamber of Commerce is bankrolling the effort.

The campaign is to foster a better understanding of Palestine and its people. The PACoC also is looking to promote trade and tourism.

The drive seeks to "break the many myths and misconceptions surrounding Palestine and help people recognize the great promise of growth, prosperity and peace that can arise from this land and its people," according to Qorvis' federal filing. It notes that Palestine has a 95 percent literacy rate and that its universities graduate 45,000 people a year.

Qorvis, which represents Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Bahrain, has assigned John Deschauer, Tina Jeon, Sol Levine, Sam Dealey and William Dempster to the Palestine account.

Britain's Bell Pottinger, which frequently teams with Qorvis, is doing PR work for the Palestine Liberation Organization.

FDA PLANS PR RFPs

The Food and Drug Administration is planning two solicitations this month for PR programs funded under the 2009 law that imposed new warnings and regulations on tobacco products and gave the FDA authority over the sector.

Both RFPs are intended to select pools of firms to compete for and handle communications projects over the next five years for assignments related to the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act passed in January 2009. That law gave the FDA the authority to address both tobacco dependence and its use by young people, nearly a decade after the Supreme Court said in 2000 that the FDA didn't have such power.

One RFP will be geared for large-scale, national PR efforts, while the second focuses on targeting at-risk and underserved populations.

The FDA said the RFPs will be released on or before September 30. The resulting contracts will be with the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products.



MERCK DEFENDS GARDASIL

Merck is pushing back against repetitive shots aimed at its HPV vaccine Gardasil, which has become a political football in the Republican presidential primary race.

The New Jersey-based drug maker circulated a lengthy statement and fact sheet Sept. 13 after Rep. Michele Bachmann suggested in national TV appearances that Gardasil, typically administered to teenage girls, can cause mental retardation.



“The facts about Gardasil are clear,” Merck said in a statement, tying the drug to prevention of cervical cancer. “The efficacy and safety of Gardasil was established in clinical trials in thousands of patients.”

Bachmann in a Sept. 13 debate on CNN said a woman approached her crying to say her daughter “suffered mental retardation as a result” of an HPV vaccine. “There are very dangerous consequences,” Bachmann said, before repeating the allegation on NBC’s “The Today Show” on Sept. 14.

The Minnesota Congresswoman has sought to leverage the vaccine against front-runner and Texas governor, Rick Perry, who mandated HPV vaccines for young women in his state. He also took donations from Merck and his former chief of staff lobbies for the company.

Edelman and Cohn & Wolfe/GCI have worked PR for Merck’s Gardasil business since its approval in 2006.

KETCHUM LANDS AUSTRALIA

Ketchum has landed Tourism Australia’s PR account for the Americas, following an RFP review.

Fleishman-Hillard was the three-year incumbent.

Ketchum’s Los Angeles office locked up a three-year contract which started on Sept. 9 to guide PR programs covering the U.S., Canada and Latin America.

Tourism Australia’s VP of the Americas, Daryl Hudson, said the Omnicom unit showed a solid understanding of the business as well as “the future of public relations,” adding a desire to capitalize on the digital realm. He said F-H did a “great job” over the past three years, including the rollout of its current campaign, “There’s Nothing Like Australia,” and playing a key role in Oprah’s PR blockbuster visit last year.

Ketchum’s three-year pact has a year-long option.

MSL’S HUGLEY TO WEBER SHANDWICK

Allyson Hugley, senior VP of MSLGroup’s insight creation unit, has move to Weber Shandwick as executive VP of its measurement and analytics practice.

In a 14-year PR career, Hugley has counseled Partnership for a Drug Free America, GE Medical Systems, Philip Morris Youth Smoking Prevention and AARP.

Before working at the Publicis Groupe shop, Hugley was research manager at Scholastic Inc., publisher of children’s books.

Hugley serves as vice chairman of the North American chapter of the Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communications.

FTI RETIRES FD NAME

FTI Consulting has dropped the FD name for its strategic communications division, five years after its acquisition in a \$260M deal.

West Palm Beach, Fla.-based FTI said in January that it was adopting a “One Brand” strategy across its five business units and FD is the latest. The push has coincided with a major marketing effort to put FTI’s name among the so-called Big Four of business consultancies.



Ed Reilly, CEO of the strategic communications division, said the change is particularly timely given volatility in global markets. “Operating under the FTI Consulting brand ensures that we can advise our clients through whatever critical event they may face,” he said.

FD revenues were up 7.5% in the second quarter to \$53.6M as the firm counseled 122 deals in the first half.

The firm took its name from predecessor Financial Dynamics, which itself was a relatively small London-based agency when it absorbed Morgen-Walke Assocs. in 2002 under Cordiant Comms. Upper management led by Charles Watson bought FD from Cordiant in 2003.

FTI, which paid \$260M for FD in 2006, counts corporate finance/restructuring, forensic/litigation consulting, technology, and economic consulting as its other main units alongside strategic communications.

C&W HIKES DIGITAL SAVVY

Cohn & Wolfe has named Brad McCormick, who was executive VP/global digital director at Porter Novelli, senior digital strategist and executive VP/managing director of the firm’s Austin outpost.

Brooke Hovey, who had led Austin, is upped to executive VP/digital practice-Americas. She is to oversee digital recruitment and push the WPP’s social media and thought leadership strategy.

Hovey has handled clients such as ExxonMobil, Dell and MasterCard. She reports to Chad Latz, global digital practice president.



Kelley, Hovey

McCormick was with Ruder Finn in the senior VP/digital client services post before moving to PN. He has worked on key accounts like BP, Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble and U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security.

C&W also recruited Katy Kelley, VP-corporate communications at Ruder Finn, for the VP-global marketing and communications post. She reports to Jill Tannenbaum, chief marketing officer. Prior to RF, Kelley was VP at social media shop Carrot Creative and communications manager at digital agency HUGE.

CEO Donna Imperato says her top strategic priority is to transform C&W globally from a company with digital experts to a company where digital is embedded in every aspect of the organization.”

ESPN DEPORTES ADDS NEWLINK TO PR TEAM

ESPN Deportes, the Spanish-language sports network for the U.S., has picked Newlink America as its agency of record for PR and social media, following a competitive pitch process.

Gabriela Nunez, associate manager of communications for ESPN International, told O'Dwyer's that the firm will be managing all media relations while supporting its social media team on different projects.



ESPND's 'Nación ESPN'

Nunez said the network previously worked with Conexion PR.

Jorge Ortega, a veteran of The Jeffrey Group, and former DDB and Ogilvy adman Eduardo del Rivero, head Newlink America, part of the Newlink Communications group of agencies focused on the Latin American and Hispanic market.

ESPND reaches 5.3M U.S. Hispanic households.

BLOOMBERG TEAMS WITH SAUDI BILLIONAIRE

Bloomberg has agreed to provide five hours of daily financial and economic news programming to Alarab, the 24-hour satellite TV channel that Saudi billionaire Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal plans to launch next year to compete with Al-Jazeera.

Bloomberg-branded reports will focus on the MENA markets and include features on business leaders from Saudi and Gulf region business leaders.



Alarab

The media giant also will provide technical assistance to Alarab.

The new channel promises a menu of objective reporting on political, economic and social events in the Arab

world.

"Our alliance with Bloomberg and its credible source of financial and economic data, together with its extensive media experience, will provide the Alarab news channel with a strong and comprehensive economic platform to accurately cover Saudi Arabia, and the rest of the Arab world," said Prince Alwaleed in a statement announcing the deal.

The headquarters for Alarab has not yet been selected. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Beirut and Manama are cities under consideration. Al-Jazeera is headquartered in Qatar.

Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi, media advisor to Saudi Arabia and former editor-in-chief of Al-Watan, will lead Alarab. He's a frequent commentator on the BBC and Voice of America.

Alarab is not affiliated with Prince Alwaleed's Kingdom Holding Co., which holds investment stakes in News Corp. and Citigroup.

NYT TAKES AIM AT INDIA

The *New York Times* has launched India Ink, an website featuring news about politics, business, culture, sports and lifestyle developments in India.

India Ink is edited by the NYT staffers in India and *International Herald Tribune* staffers in Hong Kong.

Heather Simmons, who covered the Subcontinent for the past four years, is lead writer of the site, which is at nytimes.com/IndiaInk.

She is buttressed by correspondent Lydia Polgreen, New Delhi bureau chief Jim Yardley, Mumbai-based reporter Vikas Bajaj and ex-Delhi head Somini Sengupta.

Jill Abramson, executive editor of the NYT, called India a "vibrant country with a wealth of urgent news and compelling stories."

MURDOCH TO TESTIFY AGAIN

James Murdoch, News Corp.'s deputy chief operating officer, has been asked to reappear before the British parliamentary panel that is probing the phone hacking scandal.

The culture, media and sport committee has also recalled Les Hinton, the former Dow Jones CEO who once headed News Corp.'s U.K. newspaper division.

Earlier this month, two News Corp. executives testified that Murdoch was aware that the phone hacking scandal involved more than one reporter. That contradicts Murdoch's July testimony.

John Whittingdale, the Conservative MP who heads the committee, wants Murdoch to reappear due to the "different accounts of what we heard."

It may be "that he comes and says he simply disagrees. But obviously that would be something that it would be helpful to hear direct from him," he said.

A News Corp. spokesperson said Murdoch is happy to appear once again before the panel.

FCC VET JOINS COMCAST

Rebecca Arbogast, managing director at Stifel Financial, joined Comcast Sept. 19 as VP-global public policy. She is based in Washington.

Prior to Stifel, where she handled legal and regulatory matters concerning media and technology companies, Arbogast served as chief of the Federal Communications Commission's international telecommunications unit.

She also worked in the Justice Dept.'s office of legal counsel.

At Comcast, Arbogast reports to Kyle McSlarrow, president of Comcast/NBCUniversal.

FOX NEWS HITS ROAD

Fox News has penciled in a six-city tour to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the News Corp. property.

The month-long caravan began Sept. 19 when "Fox and Friends" broadcasted from Orlando.

Other stops include Las Vegas ("Studio B" and "The Fox Report with Shepard Smith" on 9/27), Chicago ("Your World with Neil Cavuto" on 10/3), Atlanta ("Hannity with Sean Hannity" on 10/6), Boston ("The O'Reilly Factor" on 10/11) and Phoenix ("On the Record with Greta Van Susteren" on 10/20).

JUICE MARKETERS FIGHT ARSENIC CLAIMS

Apple juice producers and marketers have launched a PR defense after a syndicated TV program said this week that tests on apple juice detected high levels of arsenic.

Dr. Mehmet Oz of “The Dr. Oz Show” reported Sept. 14 that a New Jersey testing lab found elevated levels of arsenic in apple juice in several brands, including Minute Maid, Motts, Apple & Eve, Gerber and Juicy Juice. It suggested increased use of ingredients from China, a top arsenic exporter, could be a cause and the report sparked a flurry of stories about juice safety and spate of blog posts and online discussion, particularly among parents of children who drink apple juice.



The Food and Drug Administration issued a consumer update on Sept. 13, ahead of the show’s airing, defending the safety of apple juice. “There has been publicity recently over the amount of arsenic in the apple juice that many children drink, but the Food and Drug Administration has every confidence in the safety of apple juice.”

The food safety regulator said it has been testing for arsenic in apple and other juices for six years since foreign producers gained market share and said there is “no evidence of any public health risk.”

The Oz show said no representatives from the juice makers, nor anyone from the FDA, would agree to appear on the show. It posted letters from the juice makers defending their products on the show’s website.

The Juice Products Association, a trade group that is managed by New York-based PR and consulting firm Kellen and Company, called the Oz report “misleading” and “not appropriate.” Juice makers argue that Oz measured total arsenic count, which could include natural (harmless) arsenic.

The group had its toxicologist, Gail Charnley, refute the show by noting lab reports from The Dr. Oz Show indicated the laboratory did not use the FDA’s approved test method for fruit juices.

“The results of tests for arsenic in apple juice that were shared by the Dr. Oz Show with the Juice Products Association should not be interpreted as fact,” she said.

But FOX commentator Dr. Manny Alvarez echoed many who voiced concerns when he said of the Oz report and industry response that “arsenic levels in apple juice – at any level – especially levels that supersede acceptable levels that have been set by FDA itself should not be tolerated.”

The Oz show, produced by Oprah Winfrey’s Harpo Studios, seemed to relish the PR response, issuing a press release promoting the show and noting the JPA and FDA criticism ahead of its airing.

“We are not saying that apple juice is contaminated or causes cancer, but we are saying that it’s in the public’s interest to adopt stricter and universal standards for arsenic levels,” Oz said in a statement.

In July, consumer advocacy groups Food & Water

Watch and the Empire State Consumer Project kicked off a campaign to urge the FDA to look at apple juice contamination by heavy metals like arsenic, particularly from foreign producers. They singled out Mott’s brand Apple juice at the time for showing an elevated level of arsenic.

Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, which markets the 169-year-old Mott’s brand, blasted the reports in a statement Sept. 13.

“Recent media reports regarding the presence of arsenic in apple juice have been irresponsible and have needlessly alarmed parents in the name of ratings,” the company said in a dispatch titled “Get the facts about apple juice safety.”

Mott’s, which is part of the Juice Products Association, said the FDA tested its Williamson facility last month finding its products safe and operations “sound.”

Oz plans a follow-up show on Sept. 21 and has not backed down from the criticism, telling ABC News that he wants to bring attention to dangers in the food supply.

GANNETT'S DUBOW TAKES MEDICAL LEAVE

Gannett CEO Craig Dubow is taking a medical leave and has turned over his duties to Gracia Martore, COO of the publishing combine.

The 56-year-old Dubow took a four month leave in 2009 to deal with back and hip problems.

Duncan McFarland, presiding director of Gannett, says the board has “confidence in Gracia and our very capable management team to run the day to day operations of the company.”

DISNEY'S LIGHTCAP RESIGNS

Carolina Lightcap, president of Disney Channels Worldwide, has stepped down after a two-year stint. Gary Marsh is her replacement.

Bloomberg reports that Lightcap is leaving as some of Disney's cable channels are enjoying record viewership.

The 11-year Disney veteran ran marketing in Latin America before assuming the president post. Marsh was DCW’s entertainment and creative chief.

FINSBURY, SARD SING PRAISES OF MUSIC DEAL

Finsbury and Sard Verbinnen & Company are working PR for BMG Rights Management’s acquisition of Bug Holdings, a Nashville music publisher with rights to legendary collections and up-and-comers like Johnny Cash, Muddy Waters and Kings of Leon.

The parties did not disclose the terms of the deal but Reuters pegged it at around \$300M.

BMG, a joint venture of Bertelsmann AG and Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, tapped Finsbury’s New York office, while Los Angeles-based Bug Holdings’ co-owner Spectrum Equity Investors works with Sard’s San Francisco office.

BMGRM CEO Hartwig Masuch noted Bug’s “vast collection of evergreen and contemporary compositions” in praising the deal.

Bug’s catalogs include Willie Dixon, Woody Guthrie, Ryan Adams and Iggy Pop. The company also has a joint venture with songwriter Kara DioGuardi.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**DDCA GRABS BLUEFRONT**

DDC Advocacy, the tech-savvy Washington, D.C., firm, has acquired PA consulting shop BlueFront Strategies, the firm of former White House political director for President George W. Bush, Sara Taylor Fagen.

Fagen, owner and founder of the Alexandria, Va.-based shop, joins DDCA as partner and will serve on the firm's board of directors.

DDCA CEO B.R. McConnon III cited Fagen's "deep knowledge of integrating technology into campaigns" as key to the move. "As we move into the upcoming legislative battles on Capitol Hill and the 2012 election cycle, we can make Sara's expertise available to clients in our efforts to advance their objectives," he said.

DDCA was founded by McConnon in 1996 as Democracy Data & Communications.

PR PRO TARGETS SHORTER ENGAGEMENTS

Amid economic uncertainty and apprehension from large agencies to engage short-term or small-scale projects, New York PR pro Mike Paul said he is offering clients a two-hour counseling session below his standard hourly billing rate.

Paul, an independent advisor for nearly two decades via MGP & Associates after working at Burson-Marsteller, told O'Dwyer's he typically bills at \$850 per hour but is offering an advisory session he likens to a PR version of "visiting your therapist" for less than \$1,000.

"Traditionally, agencies give away the farm for free in an initial consultation," he said. "This session gives them a chance to 'test drive' our advice on improving a reputation or work toward a solution to a problem, while also compensating us for our time."

Paul said he also seeks to engage clients that seek short-term or immediate advice and are weary of lengthy retainers. "People have smaller situations that many agencies won't touch," he said, noting concerns over smaller fees or conflicts with larger clients are often cited as rationale for turning away such business.

Paul added that his two-hour counseling sessions play to PR's roots in psychology with the intention of changing ineffective or harmful – to a reputation – behavior.

KEKST DEFENDS CRACKER BARREL

Kekst and Company is bolstering the media defense of Cracker Barrel Old Country Store Inc. as the company's largest shareholder mounts a PR offensive to land a board seat.

Sardar Biglari, who heads a San Antonio-based investment firm that owns 9.3% of Cracker Barrel and has a reputation for turning around the Steak n Shake restaurant company, launched EnhanceCrackerBarrel.com on Sept. 13 and released a letter to CB shareholders hitting company leadership as lacking "accountability, transparency, and stock ownership" and pitching himself for a board seat.

Biglari also took a shot at the company for hiring Kekst among a spate of "the most expensive lawyers and financial advisors."

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York**

5W PR, New York/Frames, Manhattan bowling alley, restaurant, and bar, for PR.

Workhouse, New York/Matthew Modine, filmmaker and actor, for a comprehensive PR plan for personal and project publicity, charitable initiatives and events.

Definition 6, New York/Locomotive Distribution, for a multi-tiered campaign for the new feature-length hip hop horror film executive-produced by Spike Lee, "You're Nobody 'Til Somebody Kills You."

East

Topaz Partners, Woburn, Mass./Bronto Software, marketing platform for online and multi-channel retailers; Dartware, a developer of mapping and alerting software; Millivision, full-body scanners; SystemsExperts, security and compliance consulting, and PROS, pricing optimization software.

French/West/Vaughan, Raleigh, N.C./Disney Channel's Brandon Mychal Smith, as marketing and PR AOR. Twenty-two-year-old Smith has roles in "Sonny with a Chance," "Phil of the Future" and "So Random."

MMI PR, Raleigh/Welty Building Company, 66-year-old commercial builder and contractor focused on healthcare, education and non-profits, as AOR for PR.

Southeast

Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta/Snapfinger, remote web and mobile ordering and pre-payment service for the restaurant industry, to manage PR.

Cheryl Andrews Marketing Communications, Coral Gables, Fla./Tourism Development Company Limited for Trinidad and Tobago, for PR following a review. The firm has handled the account for the past 16 years. Its new deal spans three years and adds a sales and e-marketing component.

Southwest

Griffin Communications Group, Houston/The Conrad Foundation, for strategic planning and collaboration, communications planning and overall management and operational support of the non-profit, which aims to give students the chance to design, develop, and commercialize innovative products using science and technology.

Preferred PR, Los Angeles/KISS By Monster Mini Golf, amusement attraction themed after the rock band KISS, for PR and media relations.

Midwest

Maccabee, Minneapolis/RedBrick Health, health technology company, for national PR, corporate communications and social media/online marketing.

West

Nadel Phelan, Scotts Valley, Calif./ HelpSTAR, helpdesk software, as AOR for PR.

JS2 Communications, Los Angeles/Golden Road Brewing, for PR. The firm reps Tony's Darts Away and Mohawk Bend, which, along with Golden Road, have the same owner, beer expert Tony Yanow.

Europe

Cohn & Wolfe, London/ Tesco, for U.K. and Ireland PR for www.tescodiets.com, its online weight loss service, following a four-firm competitive pitch.

— Greg Hazley

NEWS OF SERVICES**PAGE TAPS IBM'S IWATA**

Jon Iwata, senior VP of marketing and communications at IBM, was elected chairman of The Arthur W. Page Society, starting January 1, 2012.

Iwata will take the reins from Bill Margaritis, senior vice president of global communications and investor relations at FedEx, who served as chair for two years.

Iwata heads IBM's marketing, communications, and citizenship organization; market development and insights; communications and corporate affairs; and oversees stewardship of the IBM brand.

Iwata said he looks forward to helping Page members during the "historic change" in which corporations operate as chief communication officers are at the forefront of "understanding and embracing" the changes.

He received the Society's 2009 Hall of Fame Award.

The Society also said it elected two new trustees, starting in January: Elise Eberwein, executive vice president, people, communications and public affairs for US Airways, and Wendi Strong, executive vice president of corporate comms. for USAA.

PRIME RESEARCH EXPANDS IN NY

PRIME Research, New York, has relocated to a larger space at 301 Madison Avenue, an expansion, the company said, is a result of rapid growth and "strengthened" management.

CEO Mark Weiner said the firm's social and traditional media measurement capabilities have fuelled growth, as well as flexibility to work across multiple markets.

Weiner said PRIME, which started as an academic institute in 1987, has a team of 50 consultants and analysts in Ann Arbor, Chicago, and New York.

AD SERVICES FIRMS MERGE

Marketing Support Inc., Chicago, has purchased the business operations and related assets of Windy City firm GSP Marketing Services, a 34-year-old advertising, video production and photography shop with 20 staffers.

GSP clients include MB Financial Bank, Follett Corp. and the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Dave Weiner is CEO and founder of MSI.

BRIEF: The Clinton Global Initiative has tapped **PR Newswire** to provide communications and marketing services during 2012 as the seventh annual event kicks off in New York Sept. 20-22. PRN will handle news distribution, multimedia content and web engagement platforms to the event and participants.

EVENTS: "Google+ & PR: What does it mean for you and your organization?" PRSA/NY, Sept. 27, 2011, 6-8 p.m. at Ketchum, 1285 Ave of the Americas-4th FL; \$60.00 members, \$80.00, non-members, \$25, students. Info: <http://odwpr.us/pGWOPC>. ...43rd Annual Thoth Awards, hosted by PRSA/NCC, Sept. 22, at the National Press Club in D.C. Tickets: member \$90; DC Ad Club or WWPR member \$90; non-members \$110; student/retiree \$65. Info: <http://odwpr.us/pr1fzg>.

PEOPLE**Joined**

Melanie Gordon-Felsman, VP of marketing and comms., Cantor Fitzgerald, to 5W PR, New York, as a VP. She managed marketing and comms. for Reuters' collaboration group and was senior product manager for Net2Phone.

Heather Hopkins, director, strategic communication for the U.S. Army in the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs at the Pentagon, to Qorvis Communications, Washington, D.C., as a managing director. She was a Bush administration aide, including special assistant to the president and senior director for legislative affairs at the National Security Council in the White House. She served two tours in Iraq, most recently for Ambassador Khalilzad as his senior adviser for communication at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Syd Steinhart, associate director of communications, Fordham University, to New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies, as director of PR.

Joe Feese, president of Heyday PR and former chief writer at Nyhus Communications in Seattle, to Griffin & Company, Washington, D.C., as a VP. He was previously a science and technology producer for ABCNews.com.

Erica Hiar, A/E, Howard Consulting Group, to Environics Communications, Washington, D.C. as an A/E in the firm's health sciences unit. At HCG, she handled the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), guiding traditional and digital media relations, development of collateral materials, and directing messaging to members of Congress. Previously, she worked in the government affairs department of Boston Scientific Corporation.

Melanie Fridl Ross, formerly the director of the University of Florida's Health Science Center news & communications office, to Shands at the University of Florida, Gainesville, as chief communications officer for the health center.

Walter De Gregorio, a 46-year-old Swiss sportswriter, to FIFA, Zurich, as director of communications & public affairs for the world soccer governing body. Nicolas Maingot, who had been acting director, will be his deputy.

Promoted

Nick Shapiro, assistant press secretary at the White House, to senior policy advisor to the assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism, John Brennan. He is a former staffer of Deveney Communications.

Brad Van Houte to associate, Lambert, Edwards & Associates, Grand Rapids, Mich., in the firm's financial comms. practice. He joined in January as an intern.

**Van Houte****Named/Elected**

Scott Widmeyer, chairman and CEO of Widmeyer Communications, Washington, D.C., to the National Education Writers Association's board of directors.

APCO ALIGNS WITH CONDI RICE'S FIRM

APCO Worldwide has struck a partnership with the firm of former Bush administration cabinet and security aides Condoleezza Rice and Stephen Hadley.

Rice, the former Secretary of State and national security advisor, set up RiceHadley Group with her NSA replacement Stephen Hadley, and State Dept. political aide Anja Manuel in 2009 to advise corporations and executives on expanding to emerging markets like China and the Middle East.



Rice, Hadley (Photos: NATO)

APCO CEO Margery Kraus said the deal will add to her firm's "business diplomacy" offerings aimed to help clients navigate "the political risks and challenges" of the global business scene.

Hadley and Manuel will serve as senior counselors in APCO's Global Political Strategies unit.

Rice in a statement said her firm sees an opportunity to grow its scope with APCO, while Hadley noted the firm's "on-the-ground" resources in 20 countries.

Page Society Honors Kraus

The Arthur W. Page Society last week honored Kraus, founder of APCO, with its 2011 Hall of Fame Award.

Bill Margaritas, Page chair, said Kraus is a "true trailblazer" and "exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit of the PR industry."

Kraus, led a management buyout of APCO in 2004. The firm registered \$113M in fees last year, earning it the No. 2 position on O'Dwyer's rankings of independent PR firms. It has more than 600 staffers and 30 offices.

The Page Society also cited APCO's international advisory council and global political strategies group, offerings that combine the knowledge of more than 60 former diplomats, politicians, business leaders and academics.

Kraus is the fourth woman to receive the Hall of Fame Award. Beth Comstock (GE), Charlotte Otto (Procter & Gamble) and Marilyn Laurie (AT&T) are the other winners.

TRILLIANT PLUGS INTO EDELMAN

Trilliant, which develops smart grid know-how to more than 200 worldwide utilities, has tapped Edelman to promote how the Silicon Valley company can enhance efficiencies, lower operating costs and integrate renewable energy resources.

In his statement, Rob Conant, chief marketing officer of Trilliant, said Edelman was chosen for its "deep understanding of the industry, broad-based experience and global capabilities that could work in unison with the core team."

Trilliant also sees a great cultural fit with the largest independent PR firm.

Kimberly Kupiecki is senior VP at Edelman and leader of its clean technology practice.

U.S. SOYBEAN GROWERS SEEK AFGHAN PR

Soybean growers in the U.S. are planning a PR blitz targeted at Afghan consumers and farmers to increase soy consumption in that country.

The American Soybean Association released an RFP on Sept. 10 for a firm to develop a public awareness education and media campaign within Afghanistan from mid-October through September 2013.

Budget is set at \$174K.

The St. Louis-based ASA, which represents 22,000 growers, has shipped tons of soy flour to Afghanistan under its decade-old World Initiative for Soy in Human Health with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture which aims to promote the U.S. crop globally.

ASA has also partnered with Shelter for Life to train 1,000 Afghan farmers to grow soybeans rather than the country's top cash crop, poppies.

Download the RFP at <http://odwpr.us/o5mJ1T>.



Afghanistan has been a focus of the World Soy Foundation, the humanitarian arm of the ASA.

PADRES ENLIST PR, MILITARY RELS. EXEC

The San Diego Padres have brought in former presidential aide and D.C. insider Sarah Farnsworth as senior VP of public affairs for the Major League Baseball franchise.

Farnsworth joined the team on Sept. 12 overseeing communications, community relations and military affairs.

The California native exits Washington after nearly two decades, most recently as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Community and Public Outreach at the Pentagon, where she was the department's primary liaison with veterans and military service groups.

The Padres organization is close to the large San Diego military community and was the first professional sports team to create a military affairs unit in 1995.

In a statement, Padres COO Tom Garfinkel noted Farnsworth's extensive experience in strategic communications and public affairs, adding that her "extensive knowledge of the political and military landscapes will help us elevate our efforts to support and honor those who serve our country."

Sue Botos was promoted to VP/community affairs in February by the Padres, overseeing corporate and player philanthropy, Latino affairs, fundraising and charity, in addition to military affairs and community outreach.

Farnsworth was chief of staff and senior advisor to President Obama's National Security Advisor, Gen. Jim Jones, who she worked with previously at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 2007. She was also senior VP and chief of staff at the USO World Headquarters for six years, overseeing strategic planning and external relations, and was an aide to President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton.

PR OPINION

PRSA's new practice of conducting "teleconferences" in "listen-only mode" stands the definition of "conference" on its head.

It mirrors what is the general current practice in PR.

Almost all organizations insist on e-mail-only contact with reporters in which the "dialogue" can be recorded and subjected to vetting by legal and other departments.

Free-wheeling conversations with reporters whether in person at lunch or on the telephone have largely gone the way of the Dodo bird.

The Society's adoption of "listen-only" mode puts it in sync with general corporate PR practice.

Reporters going to organizational websites mostly find the only way to pose a question is in a box addressed to the PR staff in general.

In those instances where names of PR staff are given, assistants answer the phone and subject the reporter to grilling.

The response from a PR pro will almost certainly come in the form of an e-mail. The name of the head of the department is usually nowhere among the "press contacts."

Ten Questions Fiske et al. Don't Want to Hear

A delegate who asked Fiske about the "O'Dwyer allegations about executive pay" on a teleconference precipitated the new PRS policy. PRS leaders can no longer trust questions that might be asked by their most loyal members.

Here are ten questions leaders/staff will not permit to be asked:

1. What are the pay/benefits of COO Bill Murray in 2010-11 and in his new 2012-14 contract?
2. Why is it taking so long to publish IRS Form 990 for 2010 that has pay/benefits and other information not in the audit? (Originally due May 15 and withheld from the last two Assemblies).
3. Why isn't Murray, the president and chief spokesperson for the Society, constantly making speeches promoting the Society's "Business Case for PR?"
4. Why did leaders talk about a "pay freeze" but pay/fringes rose in 2010 and in Q1 of 2011 (up 3% in 2010 to \$5.5M and up 8% in Q1 to \$1.3M.)
5. How can you justify having only one national conference in New York in 23 years when New York has the biggest potential audience and travel, room & board for up to 35 staffers is not needed?
6. Why can't we know who is on the staff of about 55? All but seven names have been removed.
7. Why can't members who want it have a PDF of the full membership list since no printing or postage would be needed and it would be fully up-to-date? Members have enough things to look up on the web without having to do that for fellow members.
8. How can nearly 300 people have a teleconference which you say may replace the in-person Assembly?
9. Why don't you use the secure Cornell e-mail voting system to poll the members? You e-mail blast them

twice a day but have never mentioned the dues increase. You champion "democracy" but neither national nor any chapter will conduct such a vote on anything (www.cs.cornell.edu/andru/civs.html).

10. Why don't you copy ABA, AMA, and AICPA whose "assemblies" meet twice a year, run their own meetings, and tell their boards what to do; whose balance sheets have large amounts of deferred dues, and who wouldn't dream of interfering with press coverage?

Talkative Fiske Condemns "Persecution of Journalists"

Fiske has gotten more ink for herself and PRS than the last five PRS chairs combined. More than 100 media pickups of Fiske's remarks are on the PRS website including statements on alleged ethical misbehavior of PR people, letters-to-the-editor of publications, interviews with media, and awards won (Hispanic PR Assn. names her "PR Professional of the year"). She has only appeared before two chapters in person based on the public record (Miami and Atlanta).

Fiske condemned on Feb. 4 "the persecution of journalists and their basic freedoms of the press in response to the unprecedented physical attacks on journalists and the detention of reporters by the Egyptian government..." She has forgotten that this writer is under verbal and written threat of being beaten "to a pulp" by an Assembly delegate. At least one national director knows who the assailant is.

A large, blonde male rushed up to us screaming obscenities while we were standing in front of the Washington Hilton on Oct. 16 last year.

Our offense? We air-kissed new director Marissa Vallbona when she passed in front of us in the hotel lobby. She had been a "friend," trading 47 e-mails with us.

A "Flash Mob" of 20 delegates interrupted our interview with Art Stevens at the Assembly to give us hotel pens signifying that we were psychotic like John Nash as portrayed by Russell Crowe in "A Beautiful Mind."

PRS Supporters Spew Venom

Fiske, since she sees "freedom of the press as a vital component to building and sustaining democratic societies" and says that reporters should not be "intimidated," ought to look at some of the names this writer is being called by PRS leaders/members and staff.

E-mails to *Advertising Age*, *Ragan's PR Daily* and blog sites, commenting on the false charges that we had "hacked" into PRS teleconferences, called us "unethical," "a pig," "have a lifelong compulsion to tear down the Society," "is positively unhinged where the Society is concerned," "publishes outright lies," "publisher of false and defamatory statements," "a scoundrel," "exhibits reprehensible behavior," "reports twisted version of the news without truth entering the equation," "makes up things he reports," a "noisemaker and not a journalist," and "constantly acts upon warped, false and misleading information."

Such critics seem to forget that PRS made hundreds of thousands of dollars selling O'Dwyer articles and those of other authors without permission.

— Jack O'Dwyer