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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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PAM EDSTROM OF WE DIES AT 71

Pam Edstrom, 71, partner and co-founder of WE Communications, who was “the commanding voice behind Microsoft’s story” as it grew into a software giant, died March 28 after a four-month battle with cancer.

That summary of her role with Microsoft was **made by *The Seattle Times*** in an obit by Rachel Lerman, who noted that Edstrom was Microsoft’s first PR director before joining with Melissa Waggener Zorkin to launch Waggener Edstrom Communications in 1983.



Pam Edstrom (L) with Melissa Waggener Zorkin ([read message from Zorkin](#))

WE was the third largest firm in last year’s O’Dwyer rankings with \$98.7 million in net fees and 645 employees. It did not take part in the **rankings released this year**.

Edstrom had worked with Zorkin when they both at Tektronix, Portland tech firm. Zorkin then persuaded Edstrom to join her and leave her job as PR director of

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UNIVISION TUNES IN AMIRSHAHI FOR COMMS.

Univision has tuned in Time Warner Cable’s Bobby Amirshahi as senior VP of corporate communications.

Amirshahi, a 20-year veteran, was VP of PR at TWC, where he was the company’s voice for M&A, financial earnings and policy issues. He was previously senior director of public affairs at Cox Enterprises and director of corporate comms. for Viacom/MTV Networks.

At Univision, he is based in New York for the multicultural media giant and reports to chief communications officer Rosemary Mercedes, who praised his experience managing corporate communications “for some of the largest, most influential media companies, giving him a deep understanding of our business and the unique opportunities and challenges faced by our industry.”



Bobby Amirshahi

Amirshahi started out in PR in Washington with the Telecommunications Industry Association before moving to Cox.

ANNUAL PR FIRM RANKINGS RELEASED

Edelman leads **O’Dwyer’s ranking of PR firms** again, posting \$874.9M in 2016 net fees, up 2.4 percent. There was some jostling though at the top with W2O Group (\$122.7M, +33 percent) bumping APCO (\$120.6M, +1 percent) down to third place.

Finn Partners (\$76.7M, +7.3 percent), ICR (\$55.6M, -1.0 percent), and Padilla (\$42.4M, -1.9 percent) are joined in the top ten by newcomers Prosek Partners (\$31.2M, +28.1 percent), Racepoint Global (\$29M, +7.8 percent), Coyne (\$27.3M, +26.9 percent), and Fahlgren Mortine (\$24.4M, +18.9 percent).

Nineteen of the top 25 firms posted year-over-year gains with 12 showing double-digit growth. Overall, 90 of the 121 ranked firms had a positive change.

O’Dwyer’s has the only rankings by PR specialty: agriculture, beauty & fashion, entertainment, environmental & PA, financial & investor relations, food & beverage, healthcare, home furnishings, professional services, sports, technology, and travel & economic development.

Firms are also ranked in 13 key cities/regions such as New York, D.C., Southeast, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Rankings participants were required to submit the top page of the latest corporate income tax return and W-3, establishing them as PR firms rather than ad agencies or other types of businesses. O’Dwyer’s is the **only ranking that requires this documentation**.



NAS SEEKS COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

The National Academy of Sciences **has issued a request for proposal** for communications firms that can help the Washington, D.C.-based science and technology agency promote key messages from a forthcoming study on proactive policing policies.

NAS, which provides independent, objective advice to the U.S. government on science and technology-related matters, produces between 200 and 300 reports each year.

NAS wants an agency that can develop and execute a strategic communication plan for the purpose of increasing awareness among policymakers, law enforcement professionals and the public regarding findings in a June consensus study on policing policies that prevent and reduce crime.

Scope of work would include primary audience identification, message development and formation of a

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PAM EDSTROM OF WE DIES AT 71

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Microsoft.

A presentation by the four-person Zorkin firm to Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, at which Edstrom was present, convinced Edstrom to join the firm.

Edstrom Saw Future

Frank X. Shaw, Microsoft's VP of corporate communications and former president of WE Communications, told the Seattle Times that Edstrom was always thinking ahead, seeking out what would come next. "Pam was just a really creative, energetic, idea machine," he said.

John Markoff, who covered Edstrom as a reporter for InfoWorld and who later joined *The New York Times*, working more than 30 years with Edstrom, told the Seattle Times, "She was the architect, she created the image for Microsoft."

Edstrom believed in bringing reporters in and giving them a sense of the company and its executives, rather than the typical Silicon Valley PR strategy of the time, which was to keep a polite distance, said Markoff. "She saw reporters as her customers."

About 20 members of the national media once visited the Gates' family retreat near Hood Canal and spent a weekend with him.

Surviving are her husband, Joseph Lamberton; daughter Jennifer Edstrom; stepchildren Suzanne Goodman, Todd Lamberton, Bryan Lamberton, Greg Lamberton and their spouses, and her seven grandchildren.

NAS SEEKS COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

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strategic communications and outreach plan, implementing that chosen plan, and the creation of a possible calendar of events and activities.

Proposals should include examples of similar creative work or relevant experience with criminal justice related topics or for clients associated with the criminal justice industry, and a staffing roster with brief statements regarding members' training and background.

Budget for the project is approximately \$100,000, varying on the communications activities undertaken.

Effective commencement date for the communications contract is June 12, with the work to end on December 31.

Proposals are due by May 1.

Contact is Dorothy Yee, subaward administration manager of the NAS's Procurement Services & Subaward Administration, DYee@nas.edu.

PRSA COUNSELORS TO 'MAX AGENCY VALUE'

Sessions at the [PRSA Counselors Academy conference May 7-9](#) in Seattle include "Maxing value in preparation for a sale" and building a "stronger, more profitable agency."

Titled "Sleepless in Seattle," it is billed as "Sixty hours of collaboration and insight to wake up your agency."

Chair of the 2017 conference is Tom Garrity, president of The Garrity Group, Albuquerque, N.M.



PRESIDENTIAL PR IS NOT HOTEL BIZ

By Joseph J. Honick, president of GMA Int'l in Bainbridge Island, Wash.



Have the country, the media and the world overindulged on Trump already? That might be the case if you listen to some editors and self-anointed social media critics.

And it just might be the case if only the POTUS would let it be for just a day instead of demanding his seemingly daily (sometimes twice daily) photo/executive order shot and commentary about stuff from which a Chief Executive should distance himself and let his well-placed staffers handle.

Perhaps he is finally learning that he need not put the "Trump" brand on everything anyone reads, hears or views. That might be fine when he's hardly innocently marketing his luxury hotel in Florida while ignoring the good old Camp David that served well and historically for his predecessors...and the world.

In just a few weeks of putting the Nazi knock on his own intelligence people sworn to prepare and keep almost sacred the nation's most sensitive secrets...threatening his own Republican party folks who don't obey and somehow, maybe...perhaps...telling some guys to meet with Rep. Nunes secretly on the White House Grounds about Russian tampering stuff...it would seem United States President Trump had not learned that his approach to public relations needs to be more than a bit different from being the washbuckling boss of a hotel and country club empire.

So far he has gotten away with the fact media of all kind thrive on almost every presidential comment, conflict, misstep, misquote and anything else, including the doubtful importance that this president actually prefers his expensive steak overdone, as reported recently from Mara Delgado.

And this comes only after Donald Trump has been in office about two and a half months, hardly even close to the repeated "100 days" supposedly used to measure a new president's post-inaugural immediate news impact.

Comes now after a little over two weeks of boasted Executive Orders were overshadowed by defeat of one of his greatest promoted campaign goals: assassination of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare).

And after deflation of his phone tap accusations and a foolishly staged White House grounds meeting to prime a supposedly independent Congressional Committee chair with "information" that might yet divert attention on the matter of alleged Russian election interference.

Confused yet? If not, you are not paying attention.

Mr. Trump's major failures are his temperament, impatience, vengeance and inability to permit the professionals paid by the taxpayers do their jobs so that he does not have to be so personally responsive to the tons of criticism that come his way simply because of his office.

And in these ways, he has violated some or most of the fundamental rules of logic that have dragged him into the very swamps he committed to clean up, while reporters at the daily verbal wrestling matches with presidential spokesperson Sean Spicer have to parse every phrase for contradictions with what his boss says.

[Read the rest of this story on odwyerpr.com >>](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA'S POLITICAL IMPACT QUESTIONED

The vast majority of Americans believe social media has an effect on public policy outcomes in the U.S., but are split regarding whether the role social media plays in informing the public on political matters is a positive or negative one.

According to a recent survey sponsored by Finn Partners that gauged social media's impact on public policy and U.S. voting decisions, 80 percent of respondents — or about four in five — said they think social media plays at least some role in public policy outcomes, be it on matters pertaining to gun control, immigration or trade.



A slim majority — 52 percent — also admitted that social media had some impact on their voting decision during the 2016 election.

However, respondents were divided on whether social media has a positive impact when it comes to informing the public on political matters, with nearly half — 46 percent — claiming that it does, while 32 percent claimed that social channels such as Twitter or Facebook carry at least some negative impacts.

The survey found that those who said they voted for Clinton in the 2016 Presidential election were slightly more likely to believe that social media has a strong positive impact on informing public policy.

Moreover, Democrats, along with college-aged respondents, were also more likely to believe that social media has an impact on public policy outcomes in the U.S.

Finally, Democrats were twice as likely as Republicans to claim that social media had “significantly” impacted their voting decision (28 percent versus 14 percent).

Regardless of political affiliation, respondents agreed on something else: while more than half — 57 percent — said they regularly shared their political opinions on social media, a third admitted to refraining from doing so during the presidential election cycle.

When asked why, more than half — 54 percent — cited a “toxic or negative” environment.

Republicans were far more likely to express this sentiment than Democrats (64 percent versus 54 percent). Nearly half — 48 percent — also said they were “tired of hearing about the Presidential election.”

When asked for the most important resource when it comes to making a decision on a political issue, 34 percent of all respondents cited data and research, followed by “intuition or gut instinct” (24 percent) and friends and family whose opinion they trust (15 percent).

Finn Partners' Finn Futures survey polled 1,000 U.S. adults online in January.

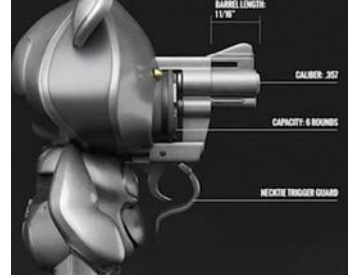
GLOBAL PR SUMMIT SET FOR NYC IN JUNE

Patrick Jephson, former chief of staff to Princess Diana, and Mary Jo Jacobi, former US presidential advisor and former VP of communications at BP America during the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, will kick-off the Global PR Summit June 8-9 with a presentation on reputation management. (www.theworld.com/event/global-pr-summit-new-york).

TEDDY BEAR GUN TAKES AIM AT GUN VIOLENCE

The Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence and ad agency FCB have created the “Teddy Gun,” a non-functioning gun that resembles a teddy bear, to show how much easier it is to bring to market a gun as opposed to a cuddly teddy bear.

The website created for the initiative, teddygun.com, shows a long list of regulations meant to protect children set by the American Society for Testing and Materials International that toy makers must follow compared to a \$150 license required for gun manufacturers by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.



“The Teddy Gun is a profound yet tragically ironic symbol of the absence of government regulations of one of the most dangerous consumer products,” said Colleen Daley, executive director, ICHV. “Our goal with Teddy Gun is to raise awareness and encourage elected officials to support measures that can and will save lives.”

The Teddy Gun will be on exhibit in April at the John Hancock building in Chicago, then travel to Springfield, IL and Washington, D.C.

PR, influencer marketing and social media shop **Current** is handling media relations for the campaign. They have worked with ICHV the past two years.

CORNERSTONE ADDS PR TO SERVICES

Cornerstone Government Affairs, specialist in government relations and lobbying, has expanded client services to include public affairs and strategic communications through the launch of Cornerstone Public Affairs.

Veterans Matt Paul and Jimmy Centers have been brought on to lead the initial effort from Cornerstone's office in Des Moines, Iowa.

Paul most recently served as chief of staff to Democratic VP candidate Tim Kaine of Virginia. He also was state director for Hillary Clinton's winning Iowa caucus campaign.



Matt Paul (L) & Jimmy Centers

Centers also has ties to Iowa, serving as press secretary and communications director for Iowa Governor Terry Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds. He founded Message Delivered, a communications and public affairs shop based in Des Moines.

“In recent years, both in the states where the firm has a presence and in Washington, D.C., we've noticed that adding full-scale public relations services would add value for our clients,” Campbell Kaufman, Cornerstone principal and director of state government relations, told O'Dwyer's. “Individuals today have access to more information than ever before, making cutting through the clutter and reaching an audience at the right time, in the right place and on the right platform more challenging.”

The Museum of PR, in putting the spotlight on PR founder Ivy Lee, is also putting the spotlight on the need for a thorough history of PR.

According to a thesis by California Fullerton grad student Tyrone Steven Bomba, later called “exaggerated” by PR historian Scott Cutlip, Lee came to grief because of his firm’s alleged secret work for the government in the early 1930s.

Carl Byoir & Assocs. worked for the German Travel Bureau and also drew Congressional criticism. An enraged Congress passed the **Foreign Agents Registration Act** in 1938 requiring PR firms to file details of any work for foreign governments or entities under their control.

The few PR firms in existence in the early 20th century days did not ordinarily reveal clients. Some clients could be observed such as Lee’s work for the Rockefeller family.

According to research by sociologists David Miller and William Dinan, published in *A Century of Spin*, Lee met both Hitler and foreign minister Herman Goebbels in 1934 in a meeting set up by Max Illgner of I.G. Farben, the client of Lee. Lee advised Goebbels to stop propaganda efforts in the U.S., according to Prof. Ray Hiebert, author of *Courtier to the Crowd*, a 1966 bio of Lee. Goebbels then made a conciliatory speech to foreign diplomats.

Cutlip, in an extensive examination of the Lee/Nazi government involvement, called the charges against Lee “exaggerated, somewhat distorted.”

Lee died at the age of 57 on Nov. 8, 1934, of a brain hemorrhage while “under clouds of suspicion for representing the German Dye Trust long after Hitler’s Nazi’s came to power,” wrote Cutlip, a professor at the University of Georgia, in *The Unseen Power: Public Relations: A History*, published in 1994.

Cutlip noted that the *New York Times* said Lee was paid \$25K by the Trust and son James, who worked in Berlin, got \$33K. “Rockefeller Aide Nazi Mastermind” headlined *Editor & Publisher. The Jewish Daily Forward* called Lee “an agent of the Nazi government.”

Thesis Focused on Lee and Germans

Details of Lee’s work for the Hitler government are also in Tyrone Steven Bomba’s 224-page master’s thesis “Howling with the Wolves: Ivy Lee and the Germans” published in 1982.

Hiebert and Prof. Burton St. John of Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va., were not familiar with Bomba’s thesis when **this reporter described it to them at the Museum of PR session** on Lee March 29 at Baruch College.

However, both and Shelley Spector, administrator of the Museum, are seeking copies of the thesis so it can be reported on and made part of the section on Lee. O’Dwyer’s is also seeking to purchase a copy from the ProQuest manuscript service since an office copy cannot be located.

Bomba drew on Lee’s own papers and testimony from the Nuremberg trials.

Son James Lee Worked in Berlin

Lee went to at least one mass rally for Hitler, writing it was “a great show,” said Bomba. He met Hitler for a half hour at one point, saying he “is personally an industrious, honest and sincere hardworking individual.”

Lee’s son, James, wrote a 35-page booklet called “Driving Your Own Car in Germany.”

Lee told the U.S. House Un-American Activities Committee that the booklet had nothing to do with politics.

An anti-Nazi rally calling for a boycott of German goods, because of the persecution of Jews in Germany, was held at Madison Square Garden in March 1933 and in 70 other U.S. cities.

Prof. Hiebert said, “In the end, Lee felt deeply misunderstood.” He said Lee was reluctant to write about himself because he thought no one would be interested. Lee felt his role was to present the views of others.

Moderator Fraser Seitel summed it up this way at the March 29 event: “Lee felt he was a failure while PR founder Edward Bernays felt he was a success.” Bernays, who authored *The Engineering of Consent*, felt PR could “control and regiment the masses according to our will without them knowing it.” The approach of Lee, who had a journalism background, was to provide as many facts as his clients would allow with the aim of “shining the light” said Seitel.

Hiebert Mentions “The Wise Men”

Hiebert’s noting that he is aware of a New York group called “The Wise Men” raised the subject of “The Secret Societies of PR” that has been a staple of O’Dwyer coverage for many years. **Membership lists of seven such groups were published in 1970.**

The Wise Men was started by John Hill, founder of Hill & Knowlton, at a dinner party in his apartment in 1938. Forty top PR executives, all male, were listed. Women have been in this group for many years.

Listed by name and title were 150 PR executives who attended the annual meeting of a group called “PR Seminar” which changed its name to Seminar in 2007. Speakers at the four-day meetings at top-level resorts included editors and publishers of major media such as the *New York Times*, *Bloomberg’s*, *Time*, *Fortune*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Business Week* as well as leading academicians and business figures.

Era of Openness Ended

The 1970s through 2000 was a period of “openness” in PR that saw directories of members and their contact points published by PR groups such as PRSA, International Assn. of Business Communicators, National Investor Relations Institute, and Publicity Club of New York, among others.

The Overseas Press Club’s 3,700 members included about 1,500 PR people whose contact points were listed. *O’Dwyer’s Directory of Corporate Communications*, listing contacts at 6,000+ companies, associations and government offices, was published from 1975-2005.

Most of the other directories had ceased publishing by 2005. Membership lists are now available only to members.

While the life of Lee deserves study, an even more compelling need is studying the current state of PR and contrasting how it was practiced from the 1960’s to around 2,000. A leadership role is being assumed by the Museum of PR and those associated with the Arthur W. Page Center at Penn State University who are advocating a more active role for PR in the public arena.

– Jack O’Dwyer