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# O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

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## TEXAS HEALTH RECORDS PUSH SEEKS PR

Texas is reaching out for PR help as it works to sell its citizens on an electronic healthcare information exchange in the state, a bid to make health record sharing more efficient through digital technology.

The Lone Star State set the groundwork for the exchange with a \$28.8M, four-year federal grant in 2010. The exchange, known as HIETexas, is being deployed by the Texas Health Services Authority, which has released an RFQ for public communications and awareness support of the exchange.

The THSA wants to reach the general public with information about how the exchange works and will improve the "quality, safety and efficiency" of healthcare in the state.

An agency must have five years of PR or marketing experience and is preferred to have some experience with healthcare or health IT campaigns.

Submissions of qualifications are due by Feb. 8. View the RFP: <http://bit.ly/14p3MUT>.

The health information exchange is not to be confused with health insurance exchanges being set up by many states under the Affordable Care Act.

## AIG RETURNS TO LOBBYING SCENE

AIG, which cut Washington lobbying activity after its massive federal bailout in 2008, has retained Patton Boggs to clear approval for its \$5B divestiture of the bulk of its International Lease Finance Corp. aircraft leasing arm to Chinese investors.

The *New York Times* (Dec. 9) called the transaction "one of the biggest acquisitions of a U.S. company by Chinese investors."

The Committee of Foreign Investment in the U.S. is scrutinizing the sale to the group that includes New China Trust and China Aviation Industrial Fund.

PB is in line for a \$120K retainer from AIG. Tommy Boggs spearheads the push for clearance of the transaction.

He's assisted by Jeff Turner, head of PB's public policy, administrative and regulatory department. On its website, PB bills Turner as the lobbyist who is most involved in "bet the company" projects.

AIG claims U.S. taxpayers made a \$22.7B profit on the \$182.3B federal bailout of the New York-based insurer.

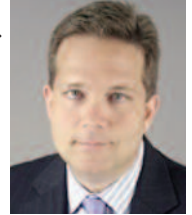


## OGILVY NAMES DC CHIEF TO NA CEO SLOT

Ogilvy PR has promoted Washington president Rob Mathias to CEO of North America for the firm.

Mathias, who continues to lead the firm's largest office in Washington and first joined the firm in 1988 in San Francisco, will report to global CEO Christopher Graves and Ogilvy & Mather chairman/CEO John Seifert.

Graves said the D.C. office has become a "best practice" for the firm worldwide for its client service, growth, staff education and development. He said Mathias will work to "unite" the firm's North American operations.



Mathias

Mathias took a leave from Ogilvy during George H.W. Bush's administration in the Dept. of Energy.

## Law Shifts to Burson

Michael Law, who led Ogilvy PR's western operations as managing director, is leaving for the U.S. president slot at Burson-Marsteller.

Both firms are owned by WPP.

"He is a man of vision and decency who gave us 22 wonderful years of his career," said Ogilvy CEO Graves, who added that Law will still be working with the firm through joint WPP accounts.

Law, who moves to Burson on Feb. 1, held several posts in two decades at Ogilvy, including president of Southeast Asia with postings in Hong Kong and Singapore. He was also a senior VP in its Washington public affairs unit.

Ogilvy said Chicago managing director Nathan Friedman has expanded his duties to include regional managing director, Ogilvy PR West, until a Chicago replacement is found.

Dave DenHerder is U.S. CEO of B-M, which named Don Baer CEO in July to replace Mark Penn.

## LOCKHART RETURNS TO GLOVER PARK

Joe Lockhart, the former Clinton White House press secretary who oversaw Facebook's global communications for a year and half, is returning to Glover Park Group, the Washington, D.C., and New York PR firm he co-founded.

Lockhart takes a senior advisor slot at GPG, led by CEO Chip Smith.

He left Facebook in October after joining in July 2011 to handle corporate, policy and international communications teams.

He was a journalist before moving to Bozell Sawyer Miller and working in Democratic politics.

WPP acquired Glover Park in 2011.

## **EARTHQUAKE INSURER SHAKES UP PR**

A program supported by the privately funded organization that provides catastrophic earthquake insurance to Californians is on the hunt for PR and marketing pitches with an RFP process through mid-February.

The California Residential Mitigation Program, which helps Golden State homeowners protect their dwellings against earthquake damage, wants PR support for its retrofit campaign that provides incentives for homeowners to bolster their homes, targeting the Sacramento, San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles regions.

The program is run by the California Earthquake Authority, which issues earthquake insurance, with support from the state's emergency management agency. The Sacramento-based authority, funded by insurance sales and investments, is running the RFP process.

A state-wide campaign, including digital and social media, PR and media relations, research and development of a logo are included in the scope of work.

Proposals are due Feb. 14. View the RFP (PDF): <http://bit.ly/X8qLyU>.

## **EX-SEN. TAKES INSURER LOBBY POST**

Ben Nelson, who decided not to defend his Nebraska Senate seat in November, has taken the CEO/chief spokesperson slot at the National Assoc. of Insurance Commissioners.

The Democrat is to handle outreach to federal and international bodies, as well as state government associations, consumers and the insurance industry, according to the NAIC.

Prior to representing the Cornhusker State on Capitol Hill, he served as its governor. Earlier, Nelson was CEO of Central National Insurance Group, and chief of staff of the NAIC, which is the standard-setting body of the regulators of the 50 states.

Nelson also has taken a senior advisor post in Washington for PA firm Agenda, which is based in Albuquerque.

## **FTI PLAYS ATARI CHAPTER 11 FILING**

FTI Consulting is handling the Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing of Atari, the videogame pioneer that produced the classic "Pong" game.

The move follows the failure of key shareholder and lender BlueBay to find a buyer for its ownership position that had been up for sale in October 2010.

Though Atari reported operating profit for the past two years, it says that BlueBay's decision to pull the plug on future outlays has made it "starved for funds."

CEO Jim Wilson said in a statement: "In light of the current situation with BlueBay, we have decided to take what we think is the best decision to protect the company and its shareholders."

He expects the sale of the company or Chapter 11 reorganization to be completed within three months.

Founded in 1972, Atari bills itself as the "original innovator of video gaming."

FTI senior VP Guillaume Granier and media relations consultant Nicolas Jehly are handling Atari.

## **ANNIE'S ORDERS PIZZA RECALL PR**

Annie's, the publicly traded organic packaged foods marketer, has ordered PR support after it recalled seven types of frozen pizza on Jan. 22 over concerns of metal fragments.

The Berkeley, Calif.-based company, which is working with Kekst and Company's San Francisco office, said that it has not found any metal fragments in the finished product nor received customer complaints, but noted the possibility after a fine metal mesh screen failed at a third-party flour mill and small pieces were found in flour and pizza dough.

Kekst associate Donald Cutler handles the account. The Blueshirt Group supports investor relations for Annie's, while Haberman Inc. works consumer PR.

Annie's, which went public last year, said it is getting flour from a different supplier and is working with the FDA and USDA. It expects a quick resolution of the issue.

Shares of the company fell five percent in trading on Jan. 23, the day of the announcement, to \$36.38. Its 52-week range is \$31-\$48.87.

Revenue for fiscal 2012 was \$141.3M on net income of nearly \$9.6M.

## **HAMMOND DEFENDS BERMUDA PR**

Lou Hammond & Associates has defended Bermuda's North American PR account, following an RFP process.

The New York-based firm handled the business from 1999-2007 and regained it after a review in 2010.

The Bermuda Dept. of Tourism, which bases its North American operation in New York, called for pitches last May covering PR in the U.S. and Canada.

LHA is charged with outreach to business, travel trade and leisure travel markets.

Eighty percent of Bermuda's travelers come from the U.S. The island, a British colony, works with Publicis in the U.K. and Ireland.

## **ASHFORD TO WEBER SHANDWICK**

Cori Ashford, a veteran of healthcare specialist Chandler Chicco Agency, has joined Weber Shandwick in Chicago as senior VP.

For the past dozen years, Ashford has worked in the oncology, cardiology and metabolic and autoimmune disease categories.

She led the CCA team on Bristol-Myers Squibb's Orenicia rheumatoid arthritis medication through pre-launch, launch and lifecycle management phases.

Ashford also spearheaded the team responsible for Janssen's advanced prostate cancer treatment, Zytiga.

Laura Schoen is president of the Interpublic's global healthcare group.

CCA is a unit of InVentiv Health.



**NOTRE DAME STAR ADDS CRISIS PR TO TEAM**

The star Notre Dame football player enmeshed in a scandal over his apparent relationship with a fictional woman has engaged crisis specialist Hiltzik Strategies.

The Notre Dame linebacker, Manti Te'o, fell into the media crosshairs last week after Deadspin.com published a thorough examination of Te'o's relationship with a woman –

widely reported as an inspirational story because of her recovery from a car accident and battle with leukemia – it found did not exist.

He has denied knowledge that the woman and story were fabricated through social media. Notre Dame's influential athletic department has backed his denials.

Hiltzik Strategies, the firm of former Democratic political operative Matthew Hiltzik, has worked crises for high-profile personalities like Katie Couric, baseball star Ryan Braun and singer Justin Bieber. He is representing Te'o and his family.

Couric has landed the first sit-down interview with Te'o since the scandal broke, which aired Jan. 24.

Te'o spoke to ESPN this month in an off-camera interview, his first since the scandal broke, saying he was not part of the hoax.

The *New York Times* reported that Hiltzik set parameters agreed to by ESPN, including that it be off-air, “in an intimate setting without cameras or a group of technicians” and limited to two minutes of audio used on air. ESPN chief of news Vince Doria said there were no limitations on questions.

Hiltzik helped guide Bieber through an accusation and paternity suit in 2011 and helped Braun weather a suspension by Major League Baseball for alleged use of performance enhancing drugs, which was reversed on appeal.

**LEONSIS LAUNCHES MONUMENTAL NETWORK**

Ted Leonsis, majority owner of the Washington Wizards (NBA), Washington Mystics (WNBA), Washington Capitals (NHL), and Verizon Center (D.C.) has launched the Monumental Network sports and entertainment online hub to provide fans original programming and video content.



**Leonsis**

“We will produce and broadcast unprecedented coverage of our teams as well as coverage of other sporting and entertainment ventures, making Monumental Network a comprehensive source for sports and entertainment news and features,” said Leonsis in a statement.

The opening line-up includes “Monumental Today” (“inside” look at the teams and events at the Verizon



Te'o with Katie Couric last week.

Center), “Scouting Report” (coverage of opposing teams), “Coaches Corner,” “Get to Know” (player profiles), “Press Row” (fan discussion with broadcasters, beat reporters and editors) and “Monumental Memories” (highlights of past games/players).

There will be a mobile and tablet version of Monumental as well as social login capabilities via Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Yahoo.

**NYT BUYS OUT GEDDES**

The *New York Times* is losing managing editor John Geddes after the 61-year-old decided to take a buyout package as part of the paper's transition to new leadership. The NYT has offered packages to 30 staffers.

Geddes joined the Times in 1994 as business editor. He spent 13 years earlier at the *Wall Street Journal* in Europe and New York.

At the Times, he served with Dean Baquet as managing editor under executive editor Jill Abramson.

In a statement, she called Geddes the “consummate newsman with suburb instincts for stories and people.”

In a good-bye note, Geddes wrote that he went into journalism because he “wanted a job without repetition, a chance to deal with something new each day. Geez, Louise, I got what I asked for. I've had fun, and even on the bad days couldn't imagine not coming into work.”



**Geddes**

**CUMULUS COVERS NYC**

Cumulus Media has launched a country music station in New York, the first such music format in the city in 17 years.

Under the NASH platform, Cumulus is introducing a mix of radio stations, magazines, websites, social media sites, concerts and TV programming.

The NYC station is at 94.7 FM.

Cumulus CEO Lew Dickey called country music a “lifestyle that is rich with content and marketing opportunities.”

The firm is committed to “serving this significant lifestyle segment that stretches from coast-to-coast by creating a full complement of content on the radio, in print, online and on TV.”

Atlanta-based Cumulus owns 525 stations in 110 cities.

**OBSERVER GETS CEO**

Jared Kushner, owner of the *New York Observer*, has named his brother-in-law Joseph Meyer as CEO of the Observer Media Group.

Prior to joining the Observer, Meyer worked at hedge fund Elliott Management and Michael Dell's investment arm, where he focused on investments in the media, telecom, healthcare and financial sectors. He is “a trusted member of my family,” according to Kushner's memo.

At NYO, Meyer is in charge of day-to-day operations and acquisitions that will bring the Observer's “fresh voice to new markets.”



**MEDIA NEWS continued****RODALE HIRES CONDE NAST'S DIGITAL GURU**

Rodale has hired Bobby Chowdhury, who was Conde Nast's VP-engineering & digital technology, for the chief technology officer post. He will split time between corporate headquarters in Emmaus, Pa., and New York.

Chowdhury is to oversee expansion of Rodale's web properties and help guide its e-commerce platform slated for a spring launch.

He reports to Anthony Astarits, senior VP digital and brand development, who expects the new hire to "help us turn our IT infrastructure into a strategic asset."

Prior to a four-year stint at CN, Chowdhury spent 15 years at United Media & Scripps Ventures in the CTO position and two years as co-CTO at E.W. Scripps "Shop at Home" unit.

Rodale publishes *Men's Health*, *Runner's World*, *Prevention*, *Organic Gardening* and *Bicycling* magazines as well as books such as Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth," and "Eat This, Not That!."

**PR PRO SUES FISHBOWL DC FOR LIBEL**

Wendy Gordon, who runs Flash PR in Washington, D.C., has sued Mediabistro news and gossip blog *FishbowlDC* for libel, alleging it intentionally set out to portray her as "self-promoting, attention-seeking, loose party girl/cougar" at the expense of her reputation and business.

Gordon, former corporate director of food and beverage PR for The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co., filed the civil action in D.C. superior court on Jan. 17 against the blog, Mediabistro, parent

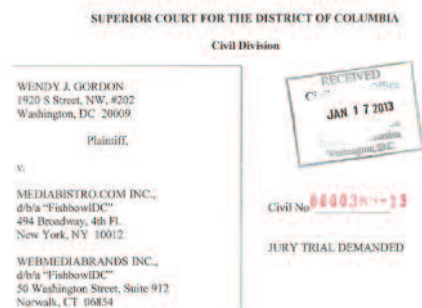
WebMediaBrands, and writers Peter Ogburn and Betsy Rothstein, charging defamation and false light invasion of privacy.

She seeks at least \$2M in punitive and compensatory damages.

She alleges an "unprovoked, online smear campaign" by the blog, alleging publication of "false, defamatory, malicious, nasty, and tasteless statements" which harmed the PR pro's reputation, business and "overall well-being," according to the suit.

FishbowlDC did remove some of the content after a complaint by Gordon's lawyer last October, but the suit says not all of the pieces were removed and the blog declined to retract the series or apologize. "While we cannot comment on the specifics of pending litigation, we do not believe that there is any merit to the claims and plan to defend against them vigorously," WebMediaBrands EVP and general counsel Mitchell Eisenberg told *Legal Times*, which first reported the suit.

The blog published one of her letters to the site in November.



The complaint stems in part from a weekly series by the blog called "Wendy Wednesday," which featured photos Gordon posted to her Facebook page. Gordon claims the site never contacted her for copyright consent or comment.

One Fishbowl DC post cited in the complaint reads: "It's our weekly look at D.C. publicist Wendy Gordon and the insane pictures that she posts of herself on the Internet. Today, we have a classy Wendy at a party. That is, if your definition of classy is wearing a low cut a dress that allows your boobs to spill out ..." The post later suggested she was looking for sex.

Gordon, who says she is a PR professional and not a public figure, claims the blog continued the alleged attacks despite requests from her and others to stop and rebuffed a demand for a retraction, "despite their knowledge that what they had written about her was completely false."

Gordon says she lost business opportunities because of the coverage.

**NEWSWEEK/BEAST'S MILLER TO THR**

Mark Miller, who was editorial operations director at *Newsweek/Daily Beast*, has moved to *The Hollywood Reporter* for the deputy editorial director slot. He reports to Janice Min, editorial director.

Miller edited *Newsweek's* digital operation while it was owned the Washington Post Co. In addition, he was responsible for establishing ethics/editorial standards, budget and labor negotiations.

He began at the weekly print magazine as a D.C.-based reporter before shifting to head the Los Angeles bureau. Miller also served as editor of the *Texas Tribune*.

Min said Miller will play a key role as THR's "coverage continues to expand in print and digitally across business, lifestyle, fashion, style and legal topics connected to entertainment."

**FOX CUTS PALIN, RE-UPS ROVE**

Fox News Channel has split with former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin and re-signed ex-Bush II White House advisor Karl Rove.

The News Corp. property signed Palin to a \$1M a-year contract that began in January 2010. It also installed a studio in the Wasilla home of Alaska's half-term governor to allow her to make regular appearances on the air.

There were reports of tension between Fox News chairman Roger Ailes and Palin, who announced her plan not to run in the 2012 presidential race on a conservative radio network.

Bill Shine, FNC's executive VP programming, said the network thoroughly enjoyed its association with Palin, whom he wished "the best in her future endeavors."

Of future plans, Palin told Andrew Briebart's site that "the door is wide open." She believes the "country needs more truth-telling in the media and I'm willing to do that."

Rove's contract was extended through the next presidential election.

Rove signed on at Fox in 2008.

## **NEWS OF PR FIRMS**

### **INSIDER TRADING GETS 'SOCIALIZED'**

Insider trading has entered the age of the Facebook generation and become more complex and "socialized," according to a study to be published by New York-based Montith & Co.

President Montith Illingworth, a former financial reporter, said the forthcoming analysis of 76 insider trading cases since 2009 shows relationships between individuals charged, and their patterns of communication, appear to be a socialized networking model as evidenced by expert networks.

While social networking didn't cause those charged to engage in insider trading, Illingworth said the research shows the behavior was similar to that seen on social networks.

"Every generation commits crimes in its own, unique way and when you look at the people who engaged in insider trading today you can see that patterns of what we term intra-social networking," he said. "This is insider trading in the age of the 'Facebook Generation.'"

The study analyzes the 76 cases brought since the appointment of U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York Preet Bharara, including the large cases involving Galleon and individuals connected to SAC Capital.

Illingworth, who is developing a social-based compliance solution with digital firm EchoDitto, noted that while the insider cases of the 1980s were focused on investment banks, the study showed 11 different types of organizations involved in the recent cases -- hedge funds, banks, corporations, and expert networkings, among other entities.

Illingworth said the 1980s cases were driven by individual "masterminds" while the recent insider trading cases show a greater level of complexity involving numbers of people across multiple corporate affiliations.

### **AIRFOIL ADDS LONDON PARTNER**

Airfoil, Southfield, Mich., has formed an affiliate relationship with London-based tech and telecom firm Babel PR.

Airfoil co-CEO Janet Tyler said clients typically had two choices for hiring a global partner for their communications: global agencies or networks. She said after experiencing both Airfoil is forming a network of affiliates.

Under terms of the Babel deal, global programs managed by either firm will be sourced to the other pending a joint review of the clients' requirements. Campaign activity will be delivered by teams working primarily in Silicon Valley, London and Detroit.

### **REVIVEHEALTH GROWS 6 PERCENT**

ReviveHealth said its 2012 revenue grew by six percent to push \$5M on the strength of several major new clients.

The firm, which relocated its base to Nashville and added "Health" to its name, also added senior staffers Bob Berra (chief strategy officer) and Phil Stone (COO) to its executive team under CEO Brandon Edwards.

Revive added 34 new clients last year with strong growth in health services and healthy living sectors.

## **NEW ACCOUNTS**

### **New York Area**

**Redpoint Marketing PR**, New York/Morey's Piers and Beachfront Waterparks (Wildwood, N.J.); Outrigger on the Lagoon, Fiji; The Essex Hotel & Resort (Essex, Vt.), and The Water's Edge Resort & Spa, (Westbrook, Conn.).



**Morey's Piers**

**Stuntman**, New York/Panache Beverage, as AOR for PR on the launch of Alibi American Whiskey, in collaboration Engine Shop Agency.

### **East**

**Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications**, Boston/Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, to tout the Fairfax, Va., area to tech companies in the Boston area which are looking to expand.

**Abel Communications**, Baltimore/Metropolitan Regional Information Systems, operator of the Mid-Atlantic Multiple Listing Service (real estate), as AOR for PR, including strategic communications.

**Environics Communications**, Washington, D.C./Inmarsat Government, telecommunications for the U.S. military and civilian organizations, for marketing comms, including strategic planning, traditional and digital media outreach, analyst relations, trade show support, and new product launches.

### **Southeast**

**Diamond PR**, Miami/Sun International, to handle North American PR for a collection of African hotel properties, including Sun City, Table Bay Hotel (Capetown), The Royal Livingstone (Victoria Falls, Zambia) and newly opened The Maslow Hotel (Sandton, Johannesburg).

### **Midwest**

**PACO**, Chicago/Chicago White Sox, as Latino AOR, including strategic planning and PR.

### **West**

**BLAZE**, Los Angeles/Spa Nautica at The Ritz-Carlton, Marina del Rey, for PR for the spa slated to open on March 1.

### **International**

**Davies Murphy Group**, Hook, U.K./MDNX, managed network services provider, as AOR for the U.K., following a competitive pitch.

### **MARYLAND REVIEWS ROADS PR**

Maryland is reviewing its communications and PR account covering road safety and other outreach for a three-year term.

The Maryland Transportation Authority released an RFP on Jan. 25 covering a swath of disciplines related to communications, including PR, crisis communications, social media, news monitoring, media planning and writing, among other tasks.

More than two dozen agencies have taken an interest in the RFP since its release.

The resulting contract, which maxes out at \$1.2M a year, carries a two-year option in addition to its three-year term.

MTA's director of communications oversees the account.

Proposal deadline is March 5. RFP: <http://bit.ly/XGo8md>.

## NEWS OF SERVICES

### PR RECRUITER EYES MIDWEST, BAY AREA

PR executive recruiting firm PR Talent, based in Huntington Beach, Calif., has added staffers focused on the Midwest and Bay Area/northwestern U.S.

Angie Graf, a nine-year recruiting vet and senior recruiter for Sage Human Capital, joins as VP of Bay Area and northwest recruiting.

Sheri Scott, VP of U.S. recruiting for Edelman, signs on as VP for Chicago and Midwest at PRT.

President Jim Delulio said demand for PR talent is growing as corporations beef up communications departments and require more PR agency support to guide social media and digital tools.

### ETHISPHERE ASSEMBLES PR BOARD

The Ethisphere Institute, the New York group which tallies the World's Most Ethical Companies list, has set up a nine-member communications advisory board of PR luminaries to help companies both aspiring to the recognition or which have already achieved it.

The institute said the group will serve as a "real-time think tank."

Members include:

- Paul Argenti, professor of corporate comm. and corporate responsibility, The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth

- Roger Bolton, President, Arthur W. Page Society

- Ben Boyd, global chair, corporate practice, Edelman

- Barry Caldwell, SVP of PA and comms., Waste Management,

- Ana María de Chiquilani, VP of corporate affairs and ethics officer, Panama Canal Authority

- Ray Day, VP of comms., Ford Motor Company

- Paul Gennaro, SVP and chief comms. officer, AECOM Technology Corp.

- Laura Kane, VP, corporate comms., Aflac

- Gary Sheffer, VP, corporate comms. and PA, General Electric

Alex Brigham, executive director of the institute, said "robust" communication programs that emphasize ethics are key enablers of an ethical business culture.

The board includes six corporate comms. execs from companies that have earned WME recognition.

**BRIEF:** Africa press release wire **The African Press Organization**, based in Senegal, said it has renewed a retainer pact with the African Development Bank Group. APO said its Africa Wire service reaches 25,000 media contacts, bloggers, social networks, redistributing content to more than 50 African websites. ...**PRSA/Georgia** has elected Alicia Thompson, VP of comms. and PR for Popeyes Louisiana Chicken, as president of the chapter. Neil Hirsch, manager of North American comms. for Novelis, was named president-elect; Alison Ilg, who runs Ilg Comms., becomes secretary, and Stephen Brown, EVP and MD, Cohn & Wolfe, Atlanta, is treasurer. Directors at large are Jason Anthoine; Julie Turner Davis; Mary Dugenske; Elyse Hammett; Cindi Kurczewski; Elizabeth McMillan; Kim E. Miller; Kristen Obarane; Stephanie Stinn, and Alison Tyrer.

## PEOPLE

### Joined

**David Shane**, former VP of corporate communications for Juniper Networks, to Hiltzik Strategies, to open and head a Los Angeles outpost for the New York-based firm. He was VP/corporate comms. at H-P and a VP at Weber Shandwick. Previous roles included ICM, TiVo and Comcast.

**Nick Lanyi**, managing director, LMG Inc., to Porter Novelli, Washington, D.C., as senior VP in charge of its public affairs practice. Lanyi was as a freelance speech-writer for a year and spent eight years at "Louis Rukeyser's Wall Street" in the senior managing editor and executive editor slots.



Lanyi

**Lynda Tran**, comms. director, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to 270 Strategies, a new D.C. firm of Obama campaign vets Mitch Stewart and Jeremy Bird, as a partner. She was previously press secretary for Organizing for America, part of the Democratic National Committee.

**Christine Danuser** and

**Eric Swayne** to directors, GolinHarris, Dallas. Danuser handles accounts like PetSmart and Red Bull and rejoins the firm from Dr Pepper Snapple Group, where she was manager of



Danuser, Swayne

brand and corporate PR, and was previously with Hill & Knowlton Los Angeles. Swayne, formerly of M/A/R/C Research and Rockfish, leads the region's strategist community and digital advances to its Delta Set measurement framework.

**Rahul Mehta**, branch head, Corporate Voice | Weber Shandwick, New Delhi, to Fleishman-Hillard, as senior VP and general manager in the city. He was previously with Genesis Burson-Marsteller, Good Relations and Max New York Life Insurance.

### Promoted

**Debbie Miller** to head of the Chicago office of Sard Verbinen & Company. Miller, who joined the firm in 1995 from Morgan Stanley, takes the reins from **Brad Wilks**, who has left for MSLGroup. SV&C also named **Bryan Locke**, who joined from Citadel in 2011, a managing director.

**Tim Fry** to chair, global technology practice, Weber Shandwick, Sunnyvale, Calif. He is a 16-year veteran of the firm with experience on Microsoft, Motorola Mobility, and Samsung, among others. WS named Brad Williams, president, NA tech, and Julianne Whitelaw, senior VP and corporate practice lead in no. California. **Tony Hynes**, who had oversight for no. California, is leaving the firm to be a comms. consultant. WS also promoted **Michelle Maggs** to EVP and general manager of the Seattle office.

**Robin Kiely** to head of comms., Ryanair, Dublin. He joined the low-fare, high-profile airline in April 2012 and takes over for Stephen McNamara, who takes over PR for the Irish Rugby Football Union.



## **TAIWAN TAPS GEPHARDT, NICKLES**

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office has hired Gephardt Government Affairs to a one-year contract worth \$300K.

The firm of former Majority Leader and Democratic presidential candidate Dick Gephardt is to provide TECRO with “analyses and interpretations of political, financial, commercial and sociological developments in the U.S.,” according to its contract.

It will use that information to suggest a course of action designed to improve relations between U.S. and Taiwan.

GGA promises to work “diligently to exhort members of Congress and the U.S. Senate to act favorably on matters of interest and benefit to Republic of China (Taiwan)” and encourage Members of Congress and their staffers to visit there.

TECRO says it will give additional assignments to GGA on an as-needed basis with compensation to be decided upon mutual agreement.

It also has hired GOP-heavy The Nickles Group to complement Gephardt’s efforts.

Oklahoma’s former Republican Senator Don Nickles’ firm inked a \$240K one-year contract with TECRO. He’s joined on the account by Don Kent (ex-chief of staff to Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin) and Jeff Choudhry (former staffer to Arizona Congressman Trent Franks).

After 24 years in the Senate, Nickles founded his firm in 2005. He chaired the powerful Budget Committee, Energy/Natural Resources Committees.

TNG also represents Korea. During the six-month period ended 9/27, TNG contacted Senators Mitch McConnell, Jon Kyl, Dick Lugar, Saxby Chambliss, Rand Paul, Kelly Ayotte, Scott Brown and Marco Rubio on behalf of the Koreans.

## **MARKETING EXEC GETS PAPA JOHN’S PR REINS**

Papa John’s International, the pizza chain honing its image after a political dustup, has promoted partnership marketing exec Steve Higdon to the new role of VP, global communications.

Higdon, who was senior director of partnership marketing since joining the Louisville-based company last year, is a former real estate exec and was CEO of Louisville’s chamber of commerce, with past stints at UPS.

At Papa John’s, he oversees internal and external communications and will be the primary point of contact for media relations and crisis communications.

Papa John’s has worked with Sitrick and Company to burnish its image after drawing criticism from CEO John Schattner’s remarks critical of Obamacare during the presidential campaign.

Andrew Varga has been chief marketing officer of the company since 2009. “Steve’s wide breadth of executive leadership and managerial experience coupled with his significant impact and involvement within the community make him uniquely qualified for this exciting position,” he said.

Tish Muldoon is senior director, PR, and Darryl Carr is director of corporate comms. and events.

## **BLUNTZER TRADES ENERGY FOR PAWN GIANT**

Rick Bluntzer, who led regulatory and government affairs for NRG Energy, has landed at Austin-based EZCorp, the publicly traded pawn shop and payday lending giant, in a top corporate communications and public affairs slot.

EZCorp runs 1,350 company-owns pawn (EZPawn) and payday loan locations in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and holds investments in U.K. lenders and pawnbrokers. It also provides services like prepaid debit cards. Fiscal 2012 revenue was \$987M on net income of nearly \$144M.

Bluntzer takes oversight of the company’s messaging, PR and government affairs, reporting to president and CEO Paul Rothamel.

He was previously a managing director of Austin-based Public Strategies, now merged with Hill+Knowlton Strategies, and held posts at the Lower Colorado River Authority after starting out in the Texas legislature.

## **LIPOSCIENCE GOES PUBLIC WITH ICR**

LipoScience is working with ICR for investor relations and financial communications on its \$45m initial public offering Jan. 25.

Shares of the Raleigh-based diagnostic medical test maker, which were offered at \$9, rose more than seven percent in its first morning of trading on Nasdaq.

LS makes an FDA-approved proprietary test for cholesterol to assess heart disease risk. The company said it will use \$38.6M from the offering to hire sales and marketing personnel, among other expenditures.

ICR senior VP Bob Yedid handles the LS account.

## **MILITARY CORPORATE PA PRO DIES AT 87**

William Greener, a former White House press secretary and Pentagon spokesman during the 1960s and ‘70s, died Jan. 11 from congestive heart failure at a Virginia hospital. He was 87.

The retired Air Force lieutenant colonel flew combat missions in World War II and was recalled to active duty during the Korean conflict. He then worked public affairs in Vietnam in 1968 before moving to the Pentagon. He later was an assistant press secretary for President Gerald Ford – and chief of communications for Ford’s presidential bid – after PA stints at the Internal Revenue Service and Dept. of Housing and Urban Dev.

Greener was one of four prominent PR execs who reportedly met with CIA director Bill Casey in the 1980s and gave him 25 ideas to win public support for the Contras in Nicaragua, counsel which raised an ethics debate in the PR industry. Greener headed public affairs and was chief spokesman at the time for pharmaceuticals company G.D. Searle, which was led by CEO Donald Rumsfeld.

A native of Memphis, he earned degrees from the Univ. of Missouri and Boston Univ.

Greener retired in 1990 and consulted for Searle successor Monsanto and Fleishman-Hillard. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Charlene McPheeters Greener, five children, 15 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

## PR OPINION

**About 200 job-seeking students will pay up to \$80 each** to attend an all-day “Real World” career fair Feb. 22 in Atlanta at which national PRSA chair Mickey Nall will speak.

Another 100 regular chapter members and guests will be at the lunch when Nall speaks on “Navigating the multi-generational workplace.” Veterans, Boomers, Xers and Nexters are all working side-by-side and have different values and needs that must be tended to for maximum client service, he says.

This is a laudable effort on the part of the Society’s Georgia chapter but we find a lot of gaps in the program and wonder how much real job-getting information and tips the students will get.

One session will consider “PR Niches,” meaning specialties such as “food & beverage” and “healthcare.”

That just scratches the surface of the PR specialties which have skyrocketed in size and breadth over the past two decades.

The O’Dwyer Co. has tracked the growth of 12 PR specialties since 1992, publishing more than 500 such rankings in 2012. While corporate and institutional PR departments have been shrinking for decades, often focusing mainly on internal communications, the agencies have been racking up double-digit gains in revenues and staff sizes for many years.

The world’s biggest PR firm, Edelman, had net fees of \$660 million in 2012, 4,600 employees, and leads in 11 of the 12 categories. The defensive nature of much corporate PR was captured last year by *New York Times* columnist David Carr who wrote that what he typically encounters at companies is “a wall of communications operatives” who block access to the CEO. He said they deliver “slop” meant to “obscure rather than reveal.”

Corporate PR vet Tim Cost has said that “Corporate PR experiences a press call as a drive-by shooting.”

Unacknowledged and unreturned phone calls and e-mails are epidemic in PR, journalism, business and even among average citizens.

A Jan. 28 *New Yorker* humor piece by Colin Jost titled “Automatic Reply” tells of one person pretending not to have access to e-mails and phone calls when actually he is downloading his e-mails every few minutes and endlessly checking his voice mails.

### Literature Table Needed

Chapter president Alicia Thompson of Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen said there are no plans at the moment for a literature table but she and others will think about this. We hope that decision will be changed because not having one will be an injustice to the students who will attend.

We would donate ten copies *O’Dwyer’s Directory of PR Firms* that has 1,600+ firms including 43 in Georgia; subscriptions to the O’Dwyer website and newsletter, and subscriptions to the monthly magazine. We would send several sets of 12 magazine issues, each one focusing on a PR specialty.

One of the magazines will be the January

*O’Dwyer’s PR Buyer’s Guide* with data on more than 100 firms offering nearly 1,000 PR products and services. There are lots of jobs in the PR services industry.

Products of the other PR trade publishers should also be on display.

Students, many of whom will graduate owing tens of thousands of dollars, need all the information they can get without limit or politics.

### Book Describes Reality of Agency Life

Since “real” is the theme of the conference, the literature table should display copies of “Army of Entrepreneurs” by Jennifer Prosek, who heads the \$12.5 million Prosek Partners of New York, a gem of a book that captures the go-go atmosphere of a PR firm.

Agency PR is wildly different from corporate/institutional PR as students will learn from this book.

The more than 50 Prosek staffers have been taught for years to prospect for new clients wherever they are including the person next to them on a plane or a bus, fellow exercisers at a gym, friends at a barbecue, former classmates and girlfriends, boyfriends, ex-roommates, relatives, etc.

Counselors should always fly First Class since that is where business prospects might be, she and others advise.

Prosek herself snagged a major client by contacting her former high school boyfriend who had landed a big PR job at Mercedes-Benz Credit Corp. She called him ten years later.

Prosek Partners pays 5% of client fees to whomever brings in an account for the life of the account. Employees are also told to constantly look for new services that can be provided to clients. Those also generate finder’s fees. Staffer new biz activities and contracts signed are constantly reviewed. Workshops in such activities are also held. New biz experts are not born but are trained, says Prosek.

### Lots of Personal Service in PR

Textbooks don’t often cover it but helping clients with personal issues and problems is a major part of PR.

Another book that should be on the literature table is “Always Live Better than Your Clients” by *New York Times* reporter Isadore Barmash.

It’s a 1983 book but far from outdated.

Ben Sonnenberg became perhaps the richest PR counselor in New York by zeroing in on what is in clients’ “heart of hearts.” He found that making more money was not their problem but rather dealing with a wayward offspring, or a son or daughter who needed a career or a job, or is trying to get into college, or a bored wife who wanted to get into the right clubs.

He helped them with such problems 24/7. An anxious client once called him at 3 a.m. and demanded he come to his apartment. Sonnenberg did so and found a father who was distraught because his son wanted to go into the theater.

Don’t worry, Sonnenberg advised, breaking in is so tough your son will soon give up. He was right.

— Jack O’Dwyer