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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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STAPLES SUCCEEDS KRAUS AT APCO

Brad Staples, APCO Worldwide's international president, will succeed Margery Kraus as CEO of the No. 2 independent firm on Jan. 5. She'll assume the executive chairman slot.

He joined APCO in 1996 to co-manage the Brussels outpost before advancing to CEO of APCO Europe and then pushing the firm throughout the EMEA region. CEO Staples will be headquartered in London.



Staples, Kraus

The Washington-based firm elevated 28-year veteran Neal Cohen from president/COO to vice chairman/president global strategy.

Executive VP and 18-year veteran Evan Kraus moves into the president/managing director of operations post.

Margery Kraus, who founded APCO 30 years ago, said the executive trio represents the "very best of APCO-deep global perspectives, understanding of the changing communications landscape and commitment to the providing the very best thinking to our clients."

She looks forward to APCO's fourth decade of growth.

APCO posted revenues of \$120.3M in 2013.

PALESTINIANS INK \$660K PACT WITH SPB

The Palestinian Authority has signed a \$55K monthly retainer representation contract with Squire Patton Boggs.

The firm will assist the PA in assessing US funding promises to date and help ensure that further commitments of financial assistance are fulfilled and received by the Palestinians.

Squire Patton Boggs also will help manage the PA/US bilateral diplomatic and political relationship.

The firm also will review the 1994 Paris Protocol that established the economic relationship between the PA and Israel.

The one-year contract went into effect Nov. 15. It will automatically renew for an additional year, unless the PA notifies Squire Patton Boggs of its intent to cancel by Oct. 15.

If the scope of the project increases significantly or unforeseen events necessitate additional work, the retainer will increase, according to the agreement.

Squire Patton Boggs partner Gassan Baloul handles the contract. He reports to H.E. Shukry Bishara, Minister of Finance & Planning at the PA.

COONEY/WATERS GROUP REBRANDS

Cooney/Waters Group is now Cooney Waters Unlimited as parent company UK-based Creston plc unveils the Creston Unlimited umbrella to join its various operating units.

The addition of "unlimited" to Creston's name is meant to reflect a common creative philosophy and capability to operate as a group.



The Creston units will continue as standalone businesses offering a range of PR, advertising, social media, research, technology and marketing services.

Barrie Brien, CEO of Creston, said the rebrand also signifies the "thinking without limits" corporate philosophy. "We couple freedom of thought and open minds with a common philosophy and shared values to bring our clients the most creative, innovative and effective answers to the brand and business challenges they face," he said in announcing the revamp.

Tim Bird helms Cooney Waters Unlimited.

HUNTSWORTH GIVES EX-PUB EXEC CHAIR

Huntsworth has named Derek Mapp, chairman and non-executive director effective Dec. 1 to take the spot vacated by Lord Myners after a six-month run.

Mapp, whom Huntsworth calls a "serial entrepreneur," is founder of the Tom Cobleigh chain of pubs and Leapfrog Nurseries. He was booted from his position as chairman of British Amateur Boxing Assn. in 2013 due to political opposition from Scotland, which felt fighters from Wales and England dominated the 2012 Olympic team, according to the BBC. He served five years.

Mapp, 64, also is non-executive chairman of media company Informa and Salmon Developments and chairman of Imagesound LTD.

Peter Chadlington helms Huntworth.

BODNER TO GRAYLING US CONSUMER PUSH

Jennifer Babbit Bodner, deputy general manager for Edelman's southeast region, has moved to Grayling US in a new role as the established tech firm looks to grow a consumer PR business.

The Atlanta-based Bodner leads consumer efforts for the firm's nine US offices. She reports to US CEO Peter Harris, who said the PR pro "has a phenomenal reputation for moving the needle with consumer audiences."

Bodner started out at Carins & Associates before moving through the ranks at Edelman to senior VP of consumer brands and deputy GM with account leadership experience on Starbucks, eBay and Microsoft, among others.

LENO DROPS GUN INDUSTRY GIG AFTER HEAT

Jay Leno has withdrawn from an appearance at a major gun industry event in January after pressure from anti-gun violence groups.

Leno was slated to perform at a "state of the industry" dinner in Las Vegas at the Shooting, Hunting, Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show, a top annual event of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the Newtown, Conn.-based gun industry trade group.

The Newtown Action Alliance, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, Campaign to Unload and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America all pushed Leno to cancel the gig.

Leno told *Mother Jones* magazine Nov. 19 that he canceled the appearance and contacted the Newtown Action Alliance. "I understand it's Newtown, and of course I get it," he told the NAA, according to *Mother Jones*. "It's just sometimes, mistakes get made."

The NSSF said it is "clearly disappointed" by Leno's decision. "He unilaterally cancelled his promised appearance due to pressure from the anti-gun lobby, which included false statements about our industry and its commitment to genuine firearms safety, which we attempted to personally correct with him, but to no avail," the group said in a statement.

The advocacy groups railed against NSSF's criticism and lobbying against attempts to strengthen gun laws in the wake of the Newtown school shooting in 2012. They argued that Leno lending his name to the group helped legitimize the industry's "crass commercialism which values profit over human lives."

REVAMPING SPRINT SHAKES UP COMMS

Doug Michelman, the former Visa communications chief working to build a San Francisco presence for Finsbury, has dialed up revamping telecom Sprint, where he will take the VP of corporate communications and CSR slot next month.

Michelman takes over for SVP Bill White, who is leaving the Overland Park, Kan.-based company after 32 years.

The PR change at Sprint comes as three-month CEO Marcelo Claude shakes up the struggling company. "I'm excited about Doug joining my leadership team and believe his background is a tremendous fit for Sprint's journey to reshape the wireless industry," Claude said in a statement.

Michelman's move aborts a short tenure at Finsbury, which he joined full-time after a consulting stint in September to lead its charge into the Bay Area and Silicon Valley. He is a former chief comms. officer for Visa and partner/West Coast manager for FleishmanHillard. He earned telecom experience with FH client AT&T.

Michelman starts Dec. 1 at Sprint.

The departing White was a PR exec for Centel Corp., which merged with Sprint in 1993.

Sprint chief marketing officer Jeff Hallock is also out.



Leno

CORNISH TAKES B-M/US COO JOB

Nicole Cornish, CEO of Direct Impact grassroots operation, has shifted into the COO slot at Burson-Marsteller's US region, a new position.

Focusing on resource management/operations, Cornish will emphasize talent retention/recruitment.

She'll work closely with Michael Law, CEO of B-M/US.

Connie Partoyan, executive VP at DI for the past five years, is upped to the president post to oversee day-to-day activity, client service and business development.

B-M is evaluating CEO candidates at DI.



Cornish

FED MORTGAGE REFI PUSH STICKS WITH PN

The five-year-old federal program to aid homeowners who owe more than their homes are worth will continue with Porter Novelli at the helm of its ongoing PR push as a key deadline was extended through the end of 2015.

The Home Affordable Refinance Program, administered by the Federal Housing Finance Agency, gave PN a \$305K extension through its office of congressional affairs and communications last week after the deadline for homeowners to apply was extended from Dec. 31, 2014 to the end of 2015.

PN picked up the initial \$329K assignment after a competitive review in May 2013 and its most recent extension ran through late October. The new award keeps the Omnicom unit on the account through the end of 2015.

The firm is charged with educating the public about the HARP program and to encourage eligible homeowners to apply for relief through earned media, opinion leader outreach, social media and other tactics. It has also held events in several cities and supported creation of harp.gov.

The FHFA estimates an additional 300K homeowners are still eligible for the HARP program.

WILLIAM, KATE TAP AMERICAN SPOKESPERSON

Prince William, Kate Middleton and Prince Harry have recruited Royal Bank of Scotland PR exec Jason Knauf as communications secretary.

He takes the role vacated by Ed Perkins in September. Perkins is now with PR agency Portland.

Knauf, a 30-year-old American educated in the UK and New Zealand, led media relations for the UK's treasury in the aftermath of the financial crisis, before moving to the crisis-plagued Bank of Scotland in roles including head of media relations and, presently, director of corporate affairs.

He is slated to join the royals in January, after a planned US trip by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Knauf will be spokesman through the anticipated birth of William and Kate's second child in April.

Prince Charles' apostrophe longtime PR head Patrick Harrison decamped for Weber Shandwick in October.

AEREO FILES CHAPTER 11

Aereo, the three-year-old streaming TV service that lost a key Supreme Court battle earlier this year, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Nov. 21.

CEO Chet Kanojia made the announcement in a blog post titled "The Next Chapter," noting the company's "significant challenges from the incumbent media companies" and Supreme Court June ruling that created "regulatory and legal uncertainty."

"And while our team has focused its energies on exploring every path forward available to us, without that clarity, the challenges have proven too difficult to overcome," said Kanojia.

The CEO said bankruptcy would let the company "maximize the value of its business and assets without the extensive cost and distraction of defending drawn out litigation in several courts."

Aereo has hired crisis and restructuring manager Lawton Bloom, a managing director of Argus, to serve as chief restructuring officer.

Media titan Barry Diller was a key backer of Aereo, but it was a legal challenge from Disney, Comcast and others that brought down its business model of using antennas to take over-the-air TV signals and stream them to individual subscribers.

Virginia Lam is SVP of comms. and government relations for Aereo, which implemented layoffs and parted ways with PR agency LaunchSquad this month.

Time's Alex Fitzpatrick argued Nov. 21 that a TV network should buy Aereo to mount a challenge to Netflix and HBO Go.

**RACUSEN EXITS WHITE HOUSE FOR MSNBC**

White House associate communications director Rachel Racusen is slated to move to MSNBC as VP of communications next month.

Racusen will take the reins Dec. 8 left by Lauren Skowronski, who was elevated to VP of corporate comms. for parent NBCUniversal earlier this year after playing a key PR role the left-leaning network's 2012 "Lean Forward" re-brand.



Racusen

The 18-year-old network is in a ratings slump and reorganizing its operations to combine broadcast and digital under network president Phil Griffin.

Racusen, who started out at Dittus Communications, was a House communications aide before joining the Obama administration as director of PA for the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2010.

She did a brief private sector stint at popular Obama staffer stop SKDKnickerbocker before joining the Obama re-elect in Chicago as deputy national communications director in 2012.

Racusen moved to the White House in May 2013. She joins MSNBC on Dec. 8.

UN TO SPIN OFF NEWS AGENCY

The United Nations plans a 2015 re-launch of its Irin humanitarian news agency as an independent non-profit organization.

A Hong Kong foundation has committed an investment of \$25M over 15 years to help bankroll Irin, which covers the \$22B humanitarian sector in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Publishing in English, French and Arabic, Iran plans to push into China and South America.

Jho Low, spokesperson for the Jynwel Foundation, said its investment in Irin should help kick start it "with a strong enough capital base that they don't have to worry about money," according to a report in the *Financial Times*.

Irin will continue to get some funding from the UN, donors and advertising. It has syndication deals with Al Jazeera and UK's *Guardian*.

The FT compared Irin's business model to ProPublica, which runs as a donor-sponsored non-profit, and Vice Media, which has partnerships with Time Warner's HBO and Canada's Rogers Communications.

Irin was founded in 1995 following the genocide in Rwanda. Its UN funding was to expire at the end of the year. Low told the FT that Irin has "the spirit of an NGO and at the same time the intensity of a business platform to ensure that our message gets around the world."

CPI BLOG SHAMES 'NO COMMENT' OFFICIALS

The Center for Public Integrity has created a blog to list officials in public and private institutions who refuse to comment to reporters.

"Lately – whether it's an investigative, nonprofit newsroom like us, an international outlet like the New York Times, or newer media like Politico or BuzzFeed – when journalists call, officials are choosing to comment less for stories on the record," CPI wrote in introducing the new Tumblr blog, "Couldn't Be Reached," published by CPI media relations specialist William Gray and engagement editor Sarah Whitmire.

CPI said the blog will focus on "institutions and people in power – both private and public" who decline to comment for stories in the public interest.

The first entries call out Senate candidate Alison Lundergan Grimes, the American Petroleum Institute, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Edith Jones, among others.

MEDIA CRITIC SHAFER EXITS REUTERS

Media columnist Jack Shafer is leaving Reuters after a three-year stint.

Shafer was Slate's media critic after alt weekly stints at *Washington City Paper* and *SF Weekly*.

"Many thanks to all [at Reuters] for 3-plus heavenly years," Shafer wrote on Twitter.

Shafer told *Capital New York* he does not have any immediate plans.

The *Washington Post's* Eric Wemple wrote of Shafer's Reuters stint: "His columns, stock with historical references, occasionally sharp-edged and particularly authoritative on topics ranging from plagiarism to media moguls, didn't quite fit with the feel of a wire service."

PR & SOCIAL MEDIA VIEWS

THINK CONSUMER WHEN MARKETING B2B TECH

By Gene Carozza

It's a great time to be in technology PR, and sure, these new tactics, tools and technologies are valuable, but when it comes to 99% of the tech world—the B2Bs—who face small budgets, limited resources and a dogfight to gain visibility in a crowded space, the basics appear to remain the same. Or do they?

Diverse audience and channels

Every B2B tech campaign starts with market research and data that defines the buyer or targeted audience. What appeals to a developer is different than a SysAdmin or IT Director or CIO. What is important to one line of business user might not matter to another.

What a benefit as a marketer to get very specific with buyer personas and capture the necessary insight needed to engage. This type of research has traditionally been reserved for consumer PR programs, but now we can understand the IT buyer's purchasing habits, pain points, favorite news sources and their influencers. This information is readily available using a little bit of online digging and perhaps more social stalking than we'd like to admit. Once the buyer persona is developed, the channels for engagement can be decided and prioritized.

Influencer relations management remains a key driver in relationship-to-relationship marketing. Community management is now an essential element of any technology marketing plan. And employee brand advocates are also a staple of technology PR. Now tech companies can know the value of how their employees help them brand and use social channels to further the cause.

Supplementing with visuals, technology

I think the term "storyteller" is overused, but it's the truth: even B2B tech marketers are storytellers for brands. And there's no better way to bring a story to life than using visuals. This is another traditionally consumer tactic that is steamrolling B2B tech marketers. Memes, infographics — shareable visuals — are one effective method. Video can also be used at a moment's notice and shared in real time.

Apps are another new, required tool in marketing tech companies.

We're seeing this now in larger budget programs, but the cost and time savings is so significant we're sure to be seeing this play a larger part in how small to mid-sized agencies are marketing themselves and expanding their services.

Measurement matters

Finally, the way programs are measured has also matured in a big way. Clip counts don't come into play (or shouldn't) as much as the measurement of impact. We're all busy. Why spend time to tally the tactics? Remember ad equivalency? Gone — and good riddance! We're finally able to connect program effectiveness into measureable data that sings to the C-level. In my opinion, the Barcelona Principles have done a lot to advance this way of thinking. This again stems from taking a step back and properly evaluating what matters to advancing a brand, whether it's tech or consumer. There's been a melding of the two, and for good reason. What's good for one is good for the other.

Gene Carozza is Vice President at PAN Communications.

EDELMAN GETS SLAMMED FOR DOING PR

By Kevin McCauley

The media are having a field day, reporting on Edelman's PR program for the TransCanada Energy East Pipeline that is under development to transport oil sands to eastern refineries/export terminals in New Brunswick.

Media savvy Greenpeace obtained Edelman's PR program documents and is deftly spinning it as TransCanada's effort to "adopt the deceitful tactics employed by the oil industry."

Outlets such as Canada's CBC and *Toronto Star*, the country's largest newspaper, took the bait. The CBC quoted a Greenpeace staffer accusing TransCanada of "dirty tricks" while the Star wrote of the effort to "browbeat detractors."

The *New York Times* story highlighted the focus on studying foes of the project and spreading negative findings about them. The reports show the media's poor understanding of strategic communications. PR ain't tiddlywinks. It's more than stunts and publicity.

I've read Edelman's plan for TransCanada. The firm drew up a comprehensive program "from the modern political playbook."

It recommended a "three-track approach" that "strives to neutralize risk before it is leveled, respond directly to issues or attacks as they arise, and apply pressure—intelligently—on opponents, as appropriate." Basic PR.

The media played up the "pressure" portion of Edelman's approach:

"Add layers of difficulty for our opponents, distracting them from their mission and causing them to redirect their resources. We can't allow our opponents to have a free pass. They will use every piece of information they can find to attack TransCanada and this program..."

"To make an informed decision on this project, Canadians need to have a true picture of the motivations not only of the project's proponents, but of its opponents as well. This point should particularly be made in communication to supportive third parties, who can in turn put the pressure, especially when TransCanada can't."

Edelman is describing the classic third party endorsement of PR.

There's nothing underhanded about it.

The media took Edelman to task for its recommendation to obtain detailed background research on opponents of Energy East. The firm isn't exactly relying on undercover agents or moles. The material is to come from public records, media reports and social media sources, financials, affiliations, legal issues, audits, business ties, government contracts, corporate campaigns and leadership. It's called doing your homework.

Edelman doesn't consider its blueprint "a response program but, rather a perpetual campaign to protect and enhance the value of the Energy East Pipeline and to help inoculate TransCanada from potential attacks in any arena." One may disagree with the Energy East Pipeline and TransCanada's development of tar sands.

Edelman, though, is an advocate of TransCanada. Its Energy East campaign reflects that relationship.

It's time for the media to educate themselves about what modern PR firms do.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS

CHARLEY LEVINE DIES AT 62

Texas-born Charley Levine, whom the *Jerusalem Post* hailed as a titan in the Anglo-Israel PR world, died Nov. 16 after a brief illness. He was 62.

The New York University graduate (philosophy) and holder of an MA (journalism) from University of Texas (Austin) handled PR for Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, Hadassah and World Zionist Organization before emigrating to Israel in 1978.



Levine

He served as captain (reserves) in the Israel Defense Forces Spokesperson's Corps. and became friends/media advisors to Israel's former president Shimon Peres and ex-prime minister Shimon Peres.

Levine ran Charles Levine Communications, served as CEO of Ruder Finn/Israel and founded Lone Star Communications. He advised Israel's leader Benjamin Netanyahu and American politicians Hillary Clinton, Michael Bloomberg, Ed Koch and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Kathy Bloomgarden, CEO of RF, said: "We are saddened to hear of the passing of our former colleague, Charley Levine. We extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to his family and friends."

CHICAGO SHOPS MERGE

Chicago boutique firms Prosper PR and Mosher Mullen Strategies have merged to become Prosper Strategies, a digital-savvy marketing and PR operation.

Lindsay Mullen, 30, formerly of Resolute Consulting and Susan Davis International, is co-founder and CEO. Alyssa Conrany, 26, is a Weber Shandwick and Moveo alum and serves as co-founder/president.

Clients past and present include ThinkCERCA, The Illinois Technology Partnership, Mango Languages, Challenge Detroit, and Nonprofit HR.

Info: prosper-strategies.com.

JFWBK IN \$66B ACTAVIS-ALLERGAN DEAL

Allergan is working with Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher on the PR front of its \$66B acquisition by Dublin-based Actavis.

Actavis, which moved its base from New Jersey to Ireland last year, could shave \$240M-\$370M off Irvine, Calif.-based Allergan's tax bill in 2015, said the WSJ.

Allergan makes breast implants and the blockbuster cosmetic drug Botox, logging revenue of around \$6B annually. The Actavis deal means it successfully fended off a \$46B hostile bid earlier this year by Bill Ackman and Canada's Valeant Pharmaceuticals.

Bonnie Jacobs is VP of corporate affairs and PR for Allergan. Actavis has not yet been reached about outside PR counsel for the acquisition. Pharma communications vet Charlie Mayr is chief communications officer for the company.

Top JFWBK brass are advising the Actavis-Allergan deal on communications and handling media relations, including managing partner Joele Frank and vice chair Dan Katcher.

NEW ACCOUNTS

New York Area

Percepture, New York/Kronos America, for launch of the Reebok Watch Collection, a line of timepieces inspired by the fitness brand. Kronos also distributes Charriol and CAT Watches. Percepture is the firm of Weber Shandwick alums Thor Harris and René A. Mack.



Porter Novelli and Shift

Communications, New York/T-Mobile USA, for consumer and crisis PR and social media PR, respectively, following a review. Waggener Edstrom continues on the company's network and business programs PR accounts, while Sard Verbinnen & Co sticks with financial PR.

Rubenstein PR, New York/The Cutting Room, New York City music venue, for a media campaign touting the performance space and a new restaurant and bar concept. TCR opened in 1999 backed by Steve Walter and actor Chris Noth and moved last year to 32nd St. between Madison and Park Aves.

East

PAN Communications, Boston/Kogeto, to support its Jo video conferencing and streaming product; nfras-structure: enterprise IT provider focused on IoT network infrastructure; Keepity, self-service social advertising network; Alexander Mann, UK-based global talent acquisition and management; Tahzoo. Customer engagement agency for *Fortune* 500 brands, and ONvocal, personal audio products, all for PR.

Southeast

Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta/eaHELP, cloud-based executive virtual assistance provider, for PR, including media relations and executive visibility.

JoTo PR, Clearwater, Fla./Florida Road Races, running race management org for Pinellas County, for PR. FRR events include the Florida Beach 5k Race and the Clearwater 50K Ultra Marathon.

Midwest

KemperLesnik, Chicago/Sea Island, five-star resort off coast of Georgia, including Seaside, home of the PGA TOUR's McGladrey Classic, and a new Golf Performance Center, for golf PR targeting pros and amateurs. KL will also focus on developing partnership opportunities with leading golf media and associations.

Mountain West

Verde Brand Communications, Durango, Colo./Keen, socially conscious, Portland-based maker of outdoor and casual footwear and accessories, as AOR for PR and brand communications.

West

PMBC Group, Los Angeles/Reach, app for professionals to connect face-to-face with people in their LinkedIn network, for a national media relations campaign aimed to increase consumer awareness of the

MONUMENT TOUTS STARBUCKS' CSR

Starbucks has hired Monument Policy Group to work Capitol Hill in support of its veteran transition and affordable college initiatives.

The Seattle-based company has pledged to hire a minimum 10,000 vets or military spouses by 2018.

The foundation of CEO Howard Schultz is behind the launch on the Onward Veterans campaign to ease the move to civilian life. He also conducted a national book tour to support his "For Love of Country" collection of profiles of soldiers who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On the academic front, the coffee shop giant's college achievement plan partnership with Arizona State University pays for the tuition of employees.

Monument Policy Group has a 10-member team on the Starbucks business including Stewart Verdery, staffer for former Republican Senators John Warner and Don Nickles, and Katharine Lister, ex-chief of staff for Washington Democratic Senator Maria Cantwell.

PSB: HISPANICS VIEW TV MORE WITH FAMILY

Hispanic parents are more likely to watch TV with their children than families in the general population, according to research by Penn Schoen Berland.

The WPP-owned market research and consulting firm queried 222 English-speaking, Hispanic-American parents and caregivers of kids under 18, finding that more than 60% of Hispanic parents agree that "TV helps me be a better parent," compared with 50% of Caucasian parents.

Forty-five percent of Hispanic parents said their children watch TV when they themselves are watching, while only 32% of Caucasian parents said kids watch TV with them.

"The data supports conventional wisdom that Hispanics are firm believers in the strength of family and will watch TV as well as other streaming devices together," said Walmart EVP and chief marketing officer Stephen Quinn.

About 27% of Latino parents say their kids will keep themselves out of trouble watching TV, compared with 22% of white parents.

For family TV content, Hispanic parents said they look for shows that inspire (57%) or teach a lesson (56%). Hispanic family TV viewing extends to other screens as well, as 45% said their children only use devices at home with parents present. Only 37% of white parents said the same.

Hispanic families watch about 11.6 hours of TV content per week, along with four hours of laptop content, 3.6 hours of smartphone content and three hours of tablet content.

PSB did the research on behalf of the Association of National Advertisers' Alliance for Family Entertainment.

BRIEF: Marketwired inked an exclusive news distribution deal with the Native American Journalist Association, offering the group and its members access to MW services. The NAJA.com portal will include a MW newsfeed and members will receive targeted news releases sent through the service.

Joined

Julie Cunningham, SVP, corporate comms., Lytx, to Alere, Waltham, Mass., as VP of IR for the \$3B, publicly traded diagnostic device maker under new CEO Namal Nawana. The company is in talks to sell off its health management business, reportedly under investor pressure, as former CEO Ron Zwanziger touts an unsolicited plan in September to take the company private in a \$3.8B deal. She was VP of IR and corporate comms. at imaging software developer Mitek and managing dir. for The BlueshirtGroup.

**Cunningham**

Susan Thiele, who led Hill+Knowlton's New York and US health practices before leaving the firm in September, to Inventiv Health, Burlington, Mass., as executive VP in its New York-based Chamberlain Healthcare PR and Shared Voice PR operations. She was a SVP at Chamberlain in the early 2000s and spent four-plus years at H+K, including as SVP and head of its US healthcare practice handling clients like Amgen and Otsuka Pharmaceuticals. She also held senior posts at Edelman, including Wyeth relationship manager, Ketchum and Ruder Finn.

Carrie Blewitt, a former journalist and managing director for Qorvis MSLGroup, to Story Partners, Washington, D.C., as a senior VP. Blewitt, a former Dittus Communications staffer, spent 11 years at Qorvis and was an A/S for Weber Shandwick handling clients like AAA, Kodak and the Rubber Manufacturers Association. She was also a producer for CNN and Newschannel 8 in DC, as well as Seattle's NorthWest Cable News.

**Blewitt**

Diane Russell, VP-product management & development, Cigna to Lincoln Financial Group, Radnor, Pa., as VP-marketing & communications in its insurance and retirement unit. She began her career at McKinney PR & Advertising in Philadelphia.

Herb Asher, SVP, government affairs, Ohio State University, is stepping down Jan. 30. He joined the school in 1970, worked for eight leaders and is founding director of OSU's John Glenn School of Public Affairs.

Ryan Richert to Golin, Chicago, as executive director of global media, starting Jan. 1, responsible for talent across the Interpublic firm's network. He had been traveling the world as buildOn, the digital storyteller non-profit group. Earlier, he led Edelman's media services group and worked at CKPR and as an on-air TV reporter.

Ofelia Casillas, public engagement director at the Labor Dept., to Edelman, Chicago, on Dec. 1 as SVP, crisis & risk management. She previously worked as US media relations and crisis management manager for McDonald's, regional press secretary at Obama for America, and deputy director of communications at the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. Casillas is a former public policy writer at the *Chicago Tribune* and reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*.

FRIEDLANDER TOUTS QATAR TIES WITH US

A Qatari businessman has hired a prominent New York political consulting shop to position himself as the "go-to" person between the US and Arab/Muslim World.

Hassan Ali Bin Ali also wants to boost Qatar's bilateral relationship with the US and "to positively impact its relation between American Jewish communities," according to the lobbying filing of The Friedlander Group.

Ezra Friedlander served on the staff of New York State assemblyman Dov Hikind, who has close ties with the city's Orthodox community, and former NYC Public Advocate Mark Green.

He will conduct meetings with members of Congress, the Obama administration, Jewish communal leaders and officials and important political figures in Israel. His firm will receive \$120K for its one-year effort.

Bin Ali's business holdings include companies involved in construction, lighting, mechanical engineering, drug stores and a chain of boutiques selling European luxury goods.

He chaired Doha's unsuccessful bid for the 2016 Olympics and sits on the honorary board of the International Paralympic Committee. Qatar did land the 2022 World Cup.



Ali, Friedlander

FTI MOVES INTO INDIAN COUNTRY

FTI Consulting has hired Barry Brandon, an enrolled member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and expert in the American Indian PA sector, as managing director in its strategic communications unit.

With more than 20 years of communications experience, Brandon joins from Hvmken Consulting, a firm he launched to work with American Indian and Alaska Native people and businesses.

Brandon also was senior VP at Seneca Gaming Corp.; founding member of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld's Indian practice; chief of staff at the National Indian Gaming Commission, and deputy director of the US Interior Department.

He's represented clients in federal and state matters in the areas of economic development, taxes, law, policy and risk management.

Tom Crawford, FTI senior managing director, said Brandon is part of the firm's commitment to work for clients in highly regulated industries.

MWW GRABS UK'S BRABEN

MWW has acquired UK's Braben Communications, a 20-year-old PR shop with media, technology and advertising clients, a year after the Jersey-based independent firm moved into Britain.

Braben joins MWW's technology, media and telecoms group, and bolsters the number of staffers in London to 24 and fee income to about \$4M.

Founder Sarah Locke takes the global brand ambas-

sador slot to help guide MWW's international development.

Managing director Matt Bourn becomes head of MWW's European media practice.

MWW CEO Michael Kempner praised the duo for their "great strategic vision backed with flawless execution."

Paddy Herridge is MWW's UK managing director now in charge of clients such as BBC, NCR, The Weather Channel, Four Seasons Health Care, News UK, Bauer Media and Starcom Mediavest Group.

MWW acquired Britain's Parys Communication in November of last year.

MCBEE FLIES TO ENERGY POST

Steve McBee, whose DC public affairs shop absorbed PR firm Gibraltar Associates last year, is leaving McBee Strategic for a top post with NRG Energy.

McBee is a former aide to ex-Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.) and founded McBee Consulting in Washington in 2003. He merged with Gibraltar last year to form McBee's PR unit McBee|Gibraltar, parlaying McBee's PA and lobbying savvy with Gibraltar's communications experience.



McBee

The *Washington Post* first reported McBee's move, noting NRG's plans to announce his role with the company at a later date. Politico reported Nov. 11 that speculation about the firm's future is rampant on K Street.

The firm said details are forthcoming.

NRG, a McBee client and one of the country's top electricity producers, is dually headquartered in Houston and Princeton, N.J. Karen Cleeve is VP of communications for NRG based in Princeton. Jerianne Thomas stepped down as VP of corporate communications in Houston this year.

IRAQ'S SHEIKHS TARGET DC

The Iraq Stability and Security Program, a group composed of Iraqi Sheikhs and Sunni tribesmen, is working to raise awareness in official DC, think tanks and media about the severe challenges faced by Iraq.

The tribes, according to IS&SP president Mark Alsalih, represent an untapped intelligence source for the international military coalition that is bombing ISIS.

They could provide information about the location of ISIS forces and where the organization gets funding, Alsalih recently told AI-Monitor.

ISSP stands ready to provide policymakers with the strategic ideas and options that are desperately needed to bring peace and stability to Iraq.

The effort will "portray a very liberal and moderate approach to what is needed for national unity and to eliminate all forms of extremism—religious and political," says ISSP's federal lobbying filing.

ISSP, which has offices in Baghdad, Irbil and Amman (Jordan), says there will be a PR and lobbying team to carry out its work here.

PR OPINION

A black-tie crowd of 1,100 Wall Streeters, financial press and PR people had a night of fun and elbow-rubbing Nov. 21 at the New York Financial Writers' "Follies." This is one of about ten such events that dot the calendar.

The apex of them all takes place Nov. 25 in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria when more than \$1 million will be raised at a black-tie dinner of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

About 1,000 attendees, including many from PR and publishing, will pay \$1,000 each to attend the program honoring journalists hosted by Christiane Amanpour, anchor and chief international correspondent, CNN and a CPJ director. Albert Ibarguen, president of the Knight Foundation and former publisher of the *Miami Herald*, is chair of the event.

CPJ, which is mostly focused on violence and interference with reporters in countries outside the U.S., will add to net assets that were \$14.8 million as of Dec. 31, 2013. This included investments of \$12.8M and pledges of \$2.3M.

Pearlstine, Steiger Active in CPJ, ProPublica

Leaders of CPJ include Norman Pearlstine and Paul Steiger, both ex-*Wall Street Journal*, who are also active in another well-funded J organization—ProPublica.

Last year Pearlstine, who also served as executive VP and chief content officer of Time Inc., presented Steiger with the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award for lifetime commitment to press freedom. Steiger was the founding editor-in-chief of ProPublica and former managing editor, WSJ.

ProPublica had revenues of \$13,765,467 in 2013 which included contributions and grants of \$13,678,241. Net assets were \$7,843,023.

Biggest contribution by far was the \$4 million from the Sandler Foundation. Herbert and Marion Sandler, former CEOs of Golden West Financial, sold the bank to Wachovia in 2006 for \$25 billion, netting \$2.4B for themselves. They committed up to \$10 million yearly to ProPublica, hiring Steiger. They donated \$4M in 2012 and \$5M in 2011, according to IRS Form 990 which lists 82 contributors.

Also large contributors are the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, \$2M, Ford Foundation, \$1.1M, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, \$1M.

Biggest funders of CPJ include Knight Endowment, \$5M; Ford Foundation, \$1.5M and Annenberg Endowment, \$1M. Almost all of the \$14.8M in net assets is in "permanently restricted" funds.

NYFWA, OPC In Different League

NYFWA and some of the other organizations hosting events that raise funds and/or honor people are in another financial league.

NYFWA grossed \$364,635 from its 2013 "Follies" and netted \$100,761 after expenses of \$263,874. Dues income was \$7,635. Members pay \$50 and students, \$10. Net assets were \$588,642. Ten scholarships worth \$3,000 each were awarded in 2014.

The Overseas Press Club of America celebrated its 75th anniversary dinner April 24 at the Mandarin Hotel, New York. Its Form 990 for 2012 showed total revenues of \$306,016, a gain from \$216,162 in the previous year, and net assets of \$108,249, up from \$68,193. Dues income was \$92,034.

OPC in the 1960s had membership of 3,700 including more than 1,000 PR people. It was unable to afford its 12-story building on 40th St. across from Bryant Park and moved to several locations.

Big PR Firms Support Many Events

Many of the biggest PR firms, both independent and conglomerate-owned, had one or more of the 100 tables at the "Follies." More than 10 people were at some tables which accounts for the 1,100 total.

Other events the firms support, with costs running at \$4,000+ per table for the dinner alone, include the PR Council (formerly the Council of PR Firms); Arthur W. Page Society spring dinner; Institute for PR dinner at the Yale Club; Foundation of PRSA annual Paladin dinner; Adrian Awards Gala of Hospitality Sales & Marketing Int'l; prnewsonline "Rising Stars" and "Hall of Fame" lunch Dec. 9 at National Press Club (\$475 single seats); the PR Week/U.S. awards dinner in March and the PRW/U.S. "Hall of Fame" dinner in December.

The PR Foundation's dinner joined the circuit in 2009 when John Graham, with Fleishman-Hillard since 1966, became the first "Paladin."

The Paladins were 12 knights attached to the court of King Charlemagne (742-814) who rules the Frankish kingdom in Central Europe.

The latest arrival on the circuit is the PRW/U.S. "Hall of Fame" dinner which made its debut last year by honoring Harold Burson, Al Golin, Jon Iwata, Marilyn Laurie, Charlotte Otto and Marcia Silverman. To be honored Dec. 8 are Dan Edelman, Bill Nielsen, Ofield Dukes, Margery Kraus and Marina Maher. Tickets are \$449.

Two Dozen PR Groups Disappear

At least two dozen New York PR groups that used to meet in the 1970s and 80s have disappeared. One of the last to close was PR Society: New York, which ended meetings in the summer of 2013 after more than 50 years.

A highlight in the 1960s and 70s was the monthly lunch for nearly 300 at the Waldorf-Astoria staged by the PR Society's New York chapter. Top speakers were featured. The Society's national president addressed the last lunch in June. National Investor Relations Institute had a similar monthly lunch. Publicity Club of New York hosted a meeting every Thursday night.

An attempt to close the gap is being made by meetup.com, which helps bring together people with similar occupations. It claims to have 1,013 members in its "New York Journalism & Media" group; 150 in "Professional Journalists of New York," and 259 members of Investigative Reporters and Editors in New York.

Meetings are mostly in mid-town restaurants and bars.

— Jack O'Dwyer