

The Voice of the Industry – Always !!!

By: Stewart Yang, PMI President and Vice President Engineering Global Faucets, Kohler Co.



Stewart Yang

Walt Strader, (Pfister, ret.) the 2009 PMI President, appropriately titled his first PMI Newsletter article *Confronting Tough Times by Leading the Legacy*. Who would have thought back in early 2009 that the US housing market and overall economy would still be in such a state? I for sure did not. Back in 2009, I thought that the economy would be roaring back just in time for my term as PMI President.

In 2009, Walt accepted the new challenges facing our industry and the impact it would have on PMI. The PMI Board met several times to address realities head-on and plan the necessary changes. These meetings were the start of many of the changes you see today at PMI. A PMI Think Tank was formed to continually define a roadmap and to keep the organization looking forward. Following Walt were equally dedicated, knowledgeable, and capable Presidents in **Lee Mercer** (Moen) and **Jack Krecek** (Elkay). Both Lee and Jack used the Think Tank and brought additional significant changes to PMI.

However, despite all of the recent changes and improvements, PMI's role as the "Voice of the Industry" remains constant as we work to keep PMI relevant and valuable to its members, the industry, the regulators, policymakers and the public. Slow forward to 2012 and there is not a roaring economy or robust housing market. However, my predecessors have done a terrific job of continually moving PMI in a positive direction. Through strong leadership and planning, PMI has rolled out many recent changes. As President, I look forward to further implementing these improvements and making adjustments as needed. Some of the recent changes include:

- Increased use of electronic media: 2011 Holiday cards, *PMI This Week* and now, *PMI News*!
- New "Allied" Dues Category for certifiers and suppliers
- Increased Marketing member participation through the new Dual Track meeting format
- Continued proactive positions on issues including legionella and hexavalent chromium
- Successes in Advocacy with passage of the Federal Lead Law and harmonization of lead limits nationwide
- Success as a resource for jurisdictions considering water efficiency initiatives
- Worldwide launch of our new name and branding
- Enhanced Web Presence
- Streamlined communications through the new weekly e-newsletter, weekly Technical conference calls and the continuation of monthly advocacy and marketing conference calls
- Building upon established relationships with our international partners including (Bathroom Manufacturers Association and Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating)
- Continually forging relationships with organizations that both support and oppose our viewpoints
- Inviting member CEOs back to PMI in an industry panel setting at the Fall Conference

I am very fortunate to be the new PMI President at a time of positive change. But I also recognize an industry trade organization (or any organization) is only as strong as its member participation. I am asking for everyone's engagement and support. I have already made a special request of the PMI Board members to champion some of our key initiatives. Our Voice only gets louder with everyone's involvement.

Regarding engagement, the venue for our Spring Conference in the Sonoma Valley area of California was specifically chosen with member participation in mind. This venue first used in 2004 still stands as PMI's most well-attended meeting. While maintaining PMI's usual high standards for

Continued on page 2

Twitter, Tweets and Tofu

By: **Barbara C. Higgins, Executive Director**

This month's move to convert the printed *PMI News* newsletter to an online version is a continuation of our exploration of alternative ways of communicating with our members, prospects, policy makers and other industry stakeholders. The marketing team under the leadership of **Rick Reles** (Kohler), **Tim Doyle** (Amerikam) and **Paul Patton** (Delta) is taking a look at a number of exciting initiatives.

The move to an online publication is a significant change to our newsletter which was first published in September of 1998, as the "new" PMI emerged. The familiar 12-page bi-monthly printed issues have been replaced by a monthly 6-page electronic version. We will continue to deliver the same content you have come to expect. As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions!

Social media is also on PMI's radar screen. While the trend is changing, one of the obstacles to PMI's use of social media to reach members is that many corporations block their use by employees on company computers. I'm told that there are ways around the blockade, including using Smart Phones. We will of course, survey our membership prior to any major social media program aimed internally. We have a LinkedIn presence and have started probing its potential and effectiveness by initiating conversation threads. We hope you

will join in, only as permitted by your corporations, of course!

I must admit that it is not readily apparent to me how to apply social media in the context of our industry trade association. I do understand the appeal of Twitter as related to following the likes of **Kim Kardashian**. Having seen the impact of social media while visiting one of our PMI members recently, I have also seen how retail promotions can be created and, if needed to be, adjusted immediately to address consumer feedback, updating programs on-the-fly with amazing and instant results. And I clearly recognize the value in reaching out to the young and powerful legislative gatekeepers in a more appropriate way to ensure that PMI's messages get through to policy makers.

Our Public Relations consultant **Heather West** is a social media guru and has chaired industry panels on the topic. She is an excellent resource for both PMI and the industry. As she explains it, social media is the conduit for information—it takes on the relevance of the information it passes along whether it be frivolous (i.e. Kardashian-watching) or business oriented (i.e. "Don't miss the PMI Spring Conference April 1-4 in Sonoma Wine country").

Sounds a bit like tofu. The communications channel takes on the importance and flavor of its content. Given that

power, it appears that the application of social media is limited only by our imaginations! With that in mind, stay tuned. PMI is continuing to look for new ways to reach out to you and offer value. We will use all of the tools available to us to make sure that we maintain our place in the top of your mind as a valuable, reliable resource.

Here's to an exciting 2012!
Happy New Year!

Congratulations to 2012 Slate of Officers

Executive Committee

President: **Stewart Yang**, Kohler Co.

First Vice President: **Jeff Baldwin**, T&S Brass and Bronze Works

Second Vice President: **Tim Kilbane**, Symmons Industries

Treasurer: **Fernando Fernandez**, TOTO USA

Immediate Past President: **Jack Krecek**, Elkay Manufacturing Company

Directors at Large

Bobbi Bieschke, Amerikam
(10/11–12/12)

Peter Jahrling, Sloan Valve Company
(1/12–12/14)

C.J. Lagan, American Standard Brands
(7/11–12/12)

David MacNair, InSinkErator
(1/12–12/14)

Paul Patton, Delta Faucet Company
(1/11–12/13)

Tim Schroeder, Duravit USA
(1/11–12/13)

The Voice of the Industry – Always !!!

Continued from page 1

meeting content, as added incentive, I am proposing to set the tone of the Spring meeting as "California Casual." With California sunshine, wine, and casual attire and a room rate of \$125.00 per night there is now no excuse for not attending the Spring Conference.

And you will not want to miss the Fall Conference moved to the new Hyatt

just across the street from last year's venue. What more interesting place could there be than Washington DC only a few weeks away from the Presidential election?

So with two great venues, I look forward to seeing everyone in 2012. Remember, we are "The Voice of the Industry".

A Day at Camaraderie and Team Building at Amerikam

Plumbing Manufacturers International Executive Director **Barbara Higgins** enjoyed a day at Amerikam, renewing acquaintances with staff and learning about a number of exciting new initiatives there. Product innovation and creative marketing approaches are alive and well at Amerikam!

President **Stephanie Leonardos** and her talented team are true advocates for PMI. They actively spread the good

word to help build awareness of PMI and to enhance the membership roster. **Tim Doyle**, Quality Manager and **Bobbi Bieschke**, Chief Financial Officer have both recently accepted leadership roles at PMI: Tim as Marketing Committee Chair and Bobbi as a member of the Board of Directors.

Thank you, Amerikam! We appreciate all that you do for PMI!



Barbara Higgins and Stephanie Leonardos, President of Amerikam, discuss a new product.



Tim Doyle, Quality Manager; Mike Regelbrugge, Research and Development Manager; Bobbi Bieschke, Chief Financial Officer; Mike Zolniersek, Research and Development Engineer; Barbara Higgins, Executive Director, PMI; Stephanie Leonardos, President and CEO; Niko Leonardos, Human Resources Manager and Michael Ragon, Account Manager.



Bobbi Bieschke, Amerikam; Barbara Higgins, PMI and Tim Doyle, Amerikam

International Networking: Bathroom Manufacturers Association



Exchanging ideas and best practices at the BMA conference, Christian Taylor-Hamlin, BMA Technical Director; Ian Stuart, BMA President; Yvonne Orgill, BMA Chief Executive; Barbara Higgins, PMI Executive Director; Jack Krecek, PMI Past President and Stu Yang, PMI President.



Attending the BMA gala celebration and awards ceremony at the close of the meeting, Stu Yang, Kohler Co; Barbara Higgins, PMI; Craig Selover, Masco; Yvonne Orgill, BMA and Jack Krecek, Elkay Manufacturing Company

PMI Visits Member Companies to Learn and Serve



Shabbir Rawalpindiwala, Manager, Codes and Standards; Cynthia Bachmann, Vice President of Engineering; Len Swatkowski, PMI; Joel Smith, Manager of New Product Engineering; Lowell Lampen, Director of Engineering; Stu Yang, Vice President, Engineering-Global Faucets discussed Kohler Co's involvement with PMI.



Gathering in the lobby before the start of their meeting, Tim Ferry, President; Dave MacNair, Vice President of Marketing; Len Swatkowski, PMI; Mike Keleman, Lead Environmental Engineer and Casey Furlong, Environmental Specialist.



Victoria Silow, Director of Marketing; Andrea Gafford, Marketing Coordinator; Imants Stiebris, Director of Sales and Rob Cook, President/CEO, all from Speakman Company, take time to pose for a photo during a visit with Barbara Higgins at their headquarters.



Former colleagues and old friends, Dale Gallmann, Product Compliance Manager for Bradley Corporation and Len Swatkowski, PMI.



Ray Fisher, President, Fisher Manufacturing Company and Barbara Higgins at the conclusion of a successful member visit.



Bradley employees fight over Len Swatkowski's holiday cookies while Dale Gallmann looks on.

Save the Date for PMI Spring Conference

April 1-4 at the Doubletree
Sonoma Wine Country in
Rohnert Park, CA

Watch your inbox for
registration information!

PMI Welcomes First Allied Supplier Member: Chase Brass

PMI is pleased to announce that Chase Brass and Copper Company is the first member added to its new Allied Supplier Membership category. Chase Brass will receive a number of benefits of PMI membership, such as access to PMI publications and attendance at PMI's semi-annual conferences.



"Chase began its relationship with PMI with an invitation from PMI Executive Director, **Barbara C. Higgins** to consider membership," said **James Palmour**, Vice President of Sales for Chase Brass and Copper Company. "What we found was a professional organization that could provide Chase a better understanding of the important issues revolving around the plumbing industry. Later the opportunity

arose to provide technical education to the membership and our interest grew into a desire for membership." Chase Brass and Copper Company President, **David Denner**, had this to say about PMI membership, "Chase is pleased to be a new member of PMI and looks forward to adding value to the organization." Barbara Higgins adds, "We are delighted to welcome Chase Brass as a charter Allied Member. Our membership will be enhanced through their participation."

Chase Brass has a strong heritage tracing its roots back to 1837 where the company began in Waterbury, Connecticut. The company gradually moved west, constructing facilities in Ohio, including Cleveland and Montpelier. The brass rod mill built in Montpelier, Ohio in 1965 was the first mini mill concept in North America. It focused on producing large quantities of one product using scrap as the primary input. The company has continued to invest in its facility and human resources to address the changing dynamics in the brass rod industry.

Today, Chase remains a leader in the brass rod industry, producing solid brass



bar stock for machining and forging applications. Chase brass contains copper and zinc plus additional elements to improve machinability and corrosion resistance. Chase products, marketed under the Blue Dot and Green Dot product trademarks, are produced and distributed from its manufacturing facility in Montpelier, Ohio. Chase also has a mill depot located in Los Angeles to support West Coast customers.

KPS Capital Partners is the current owner, which acquired the metals division of Olin Corporation in 2007. They in turn formed the parent company Global Brass and Copper Company, of which Chase is one of three operating divisions.

Continued on page 6

Exciting New Role for Amy Berg-Ferguson

We are delighted to announce that **Amy Berg-Ferguson** will serve PMI in a brand new role. Tapping into her strengths and effective immediately, Amy is responsible for Membership Development.



In her new assignment, Amy will work to build the PMI membership roster by calling on prospective member companies. In addition she will work to encourage increased participation in conferences and workshops by:

- current active members,
- potential first-time attendees from

- current member companies,
- individuals from prospective member companies.

She will also focus on expanding the base of sponsors through a number of existing and proposed opportunities (including event sponsorships and advertising within both the *PMI News* newsletter and the PMI website).

Amy will remain involved with the production of the *PMI News* newsletter and our social media foray into LinkedIn. She will work closely with the Marketing Communications team to produce new and update existing promotional pieces including *Why PMI?*; *Quantifying the Value of PMI*; and *PMI Believes in Green*.

"Membership development is critical to the continued success of Plumbing Manufacturers International. Putting Amy's sales training and people skills to work for PMI results in an ideal win/win opportunity," according to **Barbara C. Higgins**, PMI Executive Director. She adds, "The new PMI Allied Member Category provides some good prospecting ground."

Amy agrees, "I am very excited about taking on this new role at PMI. I am looking forward to reaching out to both potential members and current members to promote our organization."

We are too, Amy! Good luck and go get 'em!

PMI Welcomes Supplier Member: Chase Brass

Continued from page 5

Chase Brass employs over 300 people and is one of the largest employers in rural Northwest Ohio. Chase is a green facility by nature, with all of its products produced being completely recyclable. Chase's goal is to maintain a leadership position in the brass rod industry by providing innovative products supported by world-class quality and service and to exceed customer expectations. They have cultivated a solutions-focused culture that is committed to creating solutions to their customer's raw material challenges.

When asked what the biggest changes affecting the brass rod industry are, the answer was issues related to lead legislation. Changes to NSF PPB (parts

per billion) requirements and National Lead Legislation has required their industry to identify, develop and produce a family of low lead and lead free products to support customers changing requirements. Chase is continually working to ensure material options are available to meet the evolving needs of their customers.

PMI is very excited to welcome Chase Brass and Copper Company as a new member and looks forward to the contributions they will make to the organization. Welcome!

Next month, get to know PMI's new member company LSP Products!

Happy New Year from Jon and Julie Deiter!

PMI Executive Director **Barbara Higgins** and husband **Trey** visited over the Holidays with the **Deiters** in Chandler, Arizona.

Jon is the former President and CFO of PMI member company Gerber Plumbing. **Julie** is part of the administration team at the Phoenix Zoo.

Today, Jon is a partner with B2B CFO®, a national consulting firm of 200+ partners. His focus is on business owners that have too much on their individual plates and need some help with key issues. B2B CFO®'s model of an As-Needed CFO™ is unique and helps provide many benefits to business owners, including increased company value, reduced cash flow worries, reduced stress, more free time and exit strategy planning.



PMI Thanks our Dedicated Vendors



PMI celebrated the holidays with a lunch for our vendors. From left: Bill Grusich, Barbara Higgins, Kevin Lesniewski, Ken Chalmers, Brian Jacobs, Sandy Lesniewski, Mary Zeh, Lori Wodrich, Trey Higgins, Rich Schildgen, Amy Berg-Ferguson, Maureen Baird, Mike Sennett, Len Swatkowski, Betty Swatkowski and Chuck Wodrich.

2012 PMI LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Stewart Yang, Kohler Co.
President

Jeff Baldwin, T&S Brass and Bronze Works
First Vice-President

Tim Kilbane, Symmons Industries
Second Vice-President

Fernando Fernandez, TOTO USA
Treasurer

Jack Krecek, Elkay Manufacturing Company
Immediate Past President

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Bobbi Bieschke, Amerikam
(10/11-12/12)

Peter Jahrling, Sloan Valve Company
(1/12-12/14)

C.J. Lagan, American Standard Brands
(7/11-12/12)

David MacNair, InSinkErator
(1/12-12/14)

Paul Patton, Delta Faucet Company
(1/11-12/13)

Tim Schroeder, Duravit USA
(1/11-12/13)

PMI STAFF

Barbara C. Higgins
Executive Director
bhiggins@pmihome.org

Len Swatkowski
Technical Director
lswatkowski@pmihome.org

Jim Galvin
Senior Technical Advisor
jgalvin@pmihome.org

Amy Berg-Ferguson
Membership Development
abergferguson@pmihome.org

Newsletter Design By:
Maureen Baird Graphic Design
info@mbairdgraphics.com



1921 Rohlwing Road, Unit G
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
Phone: 847 481-5500
Fax: 847 481-5501
www.pmihome.org
www.safeplumbing.org