

Focusing on Core Values; Getting Back to Basics

By: Jeff Baldwin, PMI President and Engineering Manager, T&S Brass and Bronze Works



Jeff Baldwin

In today's world of information overload, it is easy to get caught up in the frenzy and to lose sight of what's important. While we all know that maintaining focus is critical to success, it is easy to become distracted and to be pulled in multiple directions.

As I take over the reins as your president, my vision for Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI) in 2013 is to get back to

basics, continuing the theme outlined by our CEOs and Board of Directors during the June 2012 Think Tank session. In that session, we learned that the value members see in PMI is centered on two key elements: Technical Expertise and Advocacy/Outreach. It is significant and important to note that these key elements are not ranked by our leadership as "One" and "Two;" they are equal in importance.

Traditionally, PMI has focused its resources on the "technical" value we provide. We have established a leadership role in this arena. It is clear however that the growing influence of legislation is a force to be reckoned with in our industry. PMI must reaffirm and maintain its leadership position in the industry as the go-to resource. We must continue to raise our voice and visibility in order to be at the table when important issues are being discussed. PMI's success in the advocacy arena rests in its ability to reach out to build coalitions, leverage relationships, and effectively communicate our positions as well as our successes. Legislation, especially at the state and local levels, has the potential to impact our industry more quickly and more dramatically than codes and standards.

The result of this important revelation is that a healthy portion of the 2013 PMI budget will be "repurposed" and allocated to fund the Advocacy/Outreach initiative. While we of course

have traditionally had lobbyists on the national level and in various key states including California, the outreach effort has not been fully funded. That changes in 2013! Just as we have staff dedicated to the Technical value of PMI, we will now have staff dedicated to the Advocacy/Outreach initiatives. I know you will join me in welcoming **Dawn Robinson** (formerly of Vitra) who has joined PMI as our Communications Manager. You can learn more about Dawn and this important new role in this issue of *PMI News*.

PMI has been a bit of a sleeping giant in years past, we have had an impact on important industry issues. One recent example is the PMI-driven federal legislation to reduce allowable lead content levels in plumbing products. Many people are surprised to learn about the key role PMI and its members played to spearhead the law in the name of harmonization. Since the passage of the law, PMI has been instrumental in an industry coalition to educate the industry about the new law (which goes into effect early next year) to promote compliance.

No longer content to be the wind beneath the wings of the plumbing industry, PMI's challenge is getting the word out; taking credit for the positive effect we have on our industry. Under the leadership of Advocacy/Outreach Champion **Paul Patton**, Delta, and co-chairs **Rick Reles**, Kohler; **Tim Doyle**, Amerikam, together with PMI staff and the PMI Board of Directors, we will aggressively promote our organization and the important role we play. We will focus on what's important and resist the temptation to spread ourselves too thin. Join us as we get back to basics in 2013.

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Hello! Goodbye! The New Year Brings Changes to PMI Staff

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



Barbara C. Higgins

PMI is starting off the New Year with two new staffers, as we say goodbye to another!

PMI is pleased to welcome **Dawn**

Robinson as Communications Manager.

Dawn will help oversee the activities of the Advocacy/Outreach Committee. In her role, she will develop content for PMI publications and websites. Through September 2012, Dawn was Special Marketing Programs and Events Manager at Vitra.

Dawn will be responsible for PMI's communications initiatives in the same fashion as Technical Director **Len Swatkowski** oversees the technical side of the 'house.' Dawn will work with the Advocacy/Outreach Committee with responsibility for our communications efforts including *PMI News*, *PMI This Week* and the two PMI websites. She will work with the PMI Content Committee to produce monthly press releases and white papers and will help us maintain a database of press contacts. She will assist with implementing a strategy for social media – LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

We also welcome **Christine Slabinger** who will support PMI on a part-time basis as Administrative Assistant. She joins PMI from the Non-Ferrous Founders' Society.

Christine will take on many of my current administrative duties and will interface with our outside consultants including our bookkeeper and audit team. Though many of her responsibilities are behind-the-scenes, her role is critical. She will be responsible for daily operations and running the PMI office. We will depend on her to maintain

our office equipment, inventories and database. She will assist with project management, meeting/conference call scheduling and conference execution.

Read about both Dawn and Christine in this issue of *PMI News*. You will meet them at the PMI 2012 Spring Conference in Austin, Texas!

As we welcome Dawn and Christine, we bid a fond farewell to **Amy Berg-Ferguson**, Membership Development, who will be leaving PMI to relocate with her



*Amy Berg-Ferguson,
PMI Membership
Development*

husband to the Washington DC area during the first quarter of year. (Specific departure date to be determined.) Effervescent Amy leaves us after five years with PMI. During her tenure Amy assisted with meetings, communications and membership development. Her wit and charm will be missed!

Times of transition, especially for a small staff like that of PMI, are at the same time exciting and challenging. Thank you all for your continued support of our team as we continue to do our best to serve you.

Please join us in extending best wishes to Amy, Dawn and Christine in their new ventures!

PMI Staff and Vendor Appreciation Luncheon

PMI celebrated the holidays with a luncheon for our staff, spouses and vendors.



Sharing some holiday cheer at Cooper's Hawk Winery!

*Back row: Mary Dudar, Guest; Chuck Wodrich, Owner, W&W Services; Betty Swatkowski, Guest; Lori Wodrich, Guest; Rick Schildgen, President, CL Graphics; Mary Zeh, Project Manager, CL Graphics; Maureen Baird, Owner, Maureen Baird Graphic Design; Lisa Buchanan, Accountant, Paquette & Company; Marc Paquette, Owner, Paquette & Company; Victor Kelly, Account Manager, Switchfast; Trey Higgins, Owner, Falcon Media
Front row: Len Swatkowski, Executive Director, PMI; Mary Ann Dickinson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Alliance for Water Efficiency; Barbara Higgins, Executive Director, PMI; Amy Berg-Ferguson, Membership Development, PMI*

A New Dawn for PMI! Meet Our New Communications Manager

By Amy Berg-Ferguson, PMI Membership Development



PMI has added a new but familiar face to its staff roster; **Dawn Robinson** has joined as Communications Manager.

Dawn will be familiar to many of you, she recently concluded a stint at Vitra as their Special Marketing Programs Manager and has attended PMI meetings in the past. What started out as a freelance writing job for PMI in 2012 has led to Dawn becoming a member of the PMI team and she has hit the ground running.

In her new role, and as her title implies, Dawn will be responsible for PMI's publications, websites, press releases and social media campaign. "We have great un-tapped potential in the area of outreach. Dawn is a welcome addition to the team. Her infectious passion and drive will be a great help in promoting PMI, our mission and our successes," says PMI Executive Director **Barbara Higgins**. "We're glad she's here."

Dawn has been involved with PMI for three years, but just started working with the Advocacy and Outreach Committee this past year. She is a resident of Lakeview, Ohio, having recently relocated from Atlanta, Georgia. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Fine and Applied Arts from the University of Akron's Honors College. After graduation, Dawn followed a career in Interior Design working for Donghia Inc. and the Silk Trading Company, where she specialized in fine fabrics and customized silks. "I have always loved working with fabrics. I'm fascinated by the interplay of colors and textures. I really value my time at both companies because I was able to pursue a personal passion and because they both stood out as ethically sound

companies in a sometimes questionable industry, particularly when it comes to silk. I hold personal and environmental ethics to a very high standard."

She adds, "I enjoy reading and photography, as well as many other outdoor activities—I love the snow! I also regularly participate in road races, everything from a 5K to a half marathon. I feel it is a testament to my stubbornness since that is the only way I am able to finish the 13.1's. I also enjoy doing the crazy races like the Color Run and the Warrior Dash."



Dawn at the conclusion of the Color Run

Her parents and her grandparents are her sources of inspiration in daily life, "I really look up to my parents and grandparents, they have all had to face some pretty intense obstacles in their lives. I admire them not just for facing those challenges and overcoming them, but for the ways they have done it. My mother has a great outlook on life. She is comfortable with who she is and I love that." This leads into her personal credo on life, "there is this song lyric that says 'judge the miracle by feel, not size.' I love that lyric. Life is loud, messy, and unpredictable and it always seems like we are looking for the next big thing or working towards the next big goal. It's so easy to get caught up in this and judge our happiness by these big events when life is made up of so much more. I like to take time to enjoy the now and love all the quiet little miracles that happen every day."

Dawn says she doesn't claim a favorite book or musical interest, saying that

her reading material and music choices are all over the map. She says, "I'm more of a fan of experiencing new things than pigeonholing myself into one particular genre."

Returning to Istanbul, Turkey as a part of a vacation is on her bucket list of things to do. "I spent a lot of time in Istanbul with my previous company and I would love to go back again for pure pleasure." Also on her list of must visit locations is Trinidad and Tobago, "I have a sort of adopted brother who grew up there and moved back a few years ago. I'm really looking forward to seeing him and his family and enjoying the island life."

Dawn is looking forward to her new adventure with PMI, "PMI offers an invaluable service to both the manufacturers who are members, as well as the industry as a whole. I respect the commitment to improving the industry and doing it in ways that are both sensible and ethical," she said. "PMI is an excellent bridge for members to come together to address the plumbing industry's constant changes, as well as the continually developing building and environmental laws. It allows the manufacturers to speak with a louder voice in directing these changes, particularly since PMI is so proactive about their role."

Well said, Dawn. We couldn't have put it any better. Welcome aboard!



Dawn, snowmobiling with Dad, started young. Here she is at three.

2013 PMI Spring Conference Rolls into the Lone Star State

Plumbing Manufacturers International will be heading to the Lone Star State for the **2013 Spring Conference**. That's right, PMI is taking the Spring Meeting to the Barton Creek Resort in Austin, Texas, April 7-10.

We are very excited to announce that PMI will participate in a **Habitat for Humanity** build project on Saturday, April 6. If you wish to participate, we ask that you arrange to arrive in Austin no later than April 5, as we will get an early start on Saturday, April 6. Space is limited for this volunteer opportunity. For more information or to reserve your spot, please contact **Dawn Robinson** at 847-217-6848 or drobinson@pmihome.org.

Barton Creek Resort is located in Texas Hill Country and is just minutes from downtown Austin. This beautifully appointed hotel features recently renovated guest rooms that include top-of-the-line amenities, including hardwood entryways, enhanced lighting, luxe linens and 42" flat-screen televisions.

The Spring Conference will open with a keynote presentation by **Dr. Lowell Catlett**, a Regent's Professor/Dean and Chief Administrative Officer at New Mexico State University's College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environmental Sciences. An exciting futurist, his knowledge of technologies and their implications on the way we will live and work is addressed in his varied and upbeat presentations. Don't miss out on Dr. Catlett's keynote address!

The Conference will once again feature the Dual Track format, but with a twist. Readers will remember that the format was adopted two years ago at the request of members who felt that there were topics uniquely targeted to each of our two core groups: marketing and technical.

Over time, the lines and interests of the two groups have blurred and some of the 2012 Fall Conference attendees

asked that the format be changed. As a result, we are evolving the dual track format based on this input, to keep the two groups effective.

The Outreach and Advocacy Track will run for three hours following an action-packed agenda as set during the planning meeting held at PMI headquarters in January. The focus will be strictly on marketing/communications-type issues. The fourth hour will combine the groups for a discussion of communications issues of interest to the technical group as well, such as the development of white papers and press releases to promote PMI and our initiatives. Conversely, the first two hours of the Technical Track will be structured into two specific topics, with the third hour reserved for some strategic brainstorming.

First, PMI Technical Director **Len Swatkowski** will present the newly-released "Get the Lead Out" presentation developed by the industry consortium. Then **Russ Chaney**, Executive Director, International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), will provide an update on the implications of the acquisition of American Society of Sanitary Engineers by IAPMO. Finally, we'll use a facilitator to spearhead a lively discussion of emerging issues and how PMI and the industry can proactively prepare for them. The last hour will see the groups combined as noted above.

Invited speakers include **Joe Dorn**, Partner, King & Spaulding, with an update on the industry anti-dumping case; updates from Up North, Across the Pond and Down Under from **Ralph Suppa**, President and General Manager, Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating; **Glen Turbett**, Director of Global Business-Plumbing, Construction, Lighting and Wiring, Canadian Standards Association; **Tim Fisher**, President, Plumbing Products Industry Group; and **Yvonne Orgill**, Chief

Executive, Bathroom Manufacturers International.

Registration and hotel information will be available at www.pmihome.org. Please note, the registration deadline for both the hotel and the conference is **March 15**. Remember space is limited for the Habitat for Humanity volunteer opportunity.

We'll see you there!



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2013 PMI Spring Conference Schedule

Sunday, April 7

1:30 pm - 5:00 pm PMI Board of Directors Meeting (Invitation Only)
 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Meeting Registration
 5:30 pm - 6:00 pm First Time Attendee Reception
 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm Cocktail Reception
 DINNER ON YOUR OWN

Monday, April 8

8:30 am - 10:00 am Opening Keynote: **Dr. Lowell Catlett, Futurist with an Upbeat Message for Conference Attendees**
 10:00 am - 10:15 am Break
 10:15 am - 11:15 am Welcome and General Membership Meeting
 11:15 am - 12:15 pm ISSUE COMMITTEE: Fair Trade with Anti-Dumping Presentation Presentation by **Joe Dorn**, Partner, King & Spaulding, LLC
 12:15 pm - 1:45 pm Lunch
 1:45 pm - 3:15 pm Follow Up to “Plumbing as a Profession: How We Can Work Together” with **Tom Bigley**, Director of Plumbing Services, United Association, and guests
 3:15 pm - 3:30 pm Break
 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm ISSUE COMMITTEE: Water Efficiency and Sustainability
 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm Dine Around Austin

Tuesday, April 9

Dual Track Meetings (with a twist!)

Technical Track

8:00 am - 9:00 am Get the Lead Out Consortium Presentation by PMI Technical Director **Len Swatkowski**
 9:00 am - 9:45 am **Russ Chaney**, Executive Director of International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) on their Acquisition of American Society of Sanitary Engineers (ASSE)
 9:45 am - 10:00 am Break
 10:00 am - 11:00 am Emerging Issues: A Proactive Approach

Advocacy and Outreach Track

8:00 am - 11:00 am

11:00 am - 12:00 pm Technical/Outreach Dual Track Joint Session

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch
 1:30 pm - 2:45 pm Updates From Up North, Across the Pond and Down Under
 2:45 pm - 3:15 pm Reports from Dual Track Sessions
 3:15 pm - 3:30 pm Break
 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm Government Affairs Standing Committee
 4:30 pm - 5:00 pm American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association Presentation
 6:00 pm - 7:15 pm Cocktail Reception
 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm Dinner

Wednesday, April 10

7:30 am - 9:00 am Breakfast
 8:00 am - 10:00 am PMI “Green” Codes and Standards Workshop presented by **Len Swatkowski**
 8:00 am - 12:00 pm Board Development Action Plan (Invitation Only)

PMI Welcomes Christine Slabinger: Our New Administrative Assistant

By Dawn Robinson, PMI Communications Manager

Christine Slabinger will begin the New Year as one of PMI's newest team members, fulfilling the role of Administrative Assistant. Having spent three years in a similar role with the Non-Ferrous Founders' Society (NFFS), Christine comes to the team already well-versed in the workings of a trade association such as PMI. She believes in a team environment where everyone works together toward a vested interest, with loyalty and dedication. But she is quick to add that she believes a life balance is important, and so puts events into perspective. Christine says she tries to follow the philosophy, 'Take everything with a grain of salt — nothing is that serious that it cannot be worked out, possibly just not the way you may have first imagined it.'

In her new role, Christine will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of PMI, as well as project management. She will assist with PMI meetings and conferences.

"We are delighted to add Christine to the PMI staff," says PMI Executive Director **Barbara Higgins**. "The administrative function is often unseen and overlooked, but the support provided by the role is critical to the success of any organization. I am personally thrilled to have her onboard to support our organization and streamline processes."

A graduate of the Lake Forest Graduate School of Business where she received her MBA, and from DePaul University where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Management, Christine is now located in Niles, Illinois where she lives with her husband of 14 years, **Peter**, and their two children — **Matthew**, 10 and **Stephen**, 7. She believes that family is the most important thing in her life and always puts them first.

Included in her list of personal heroes are both **Abraham Lincoln** and her grandmother. Christine cites her grandmother as being the most influential person in her life... 'My grandmother survived World War II in Europe and came to the US to make a life for her family without a husband.' Christine's grandmother passed away in late December at the age of 100.



Cooking, scrapbooking, knitting and general crafts are some of Christine's favorite hobbies. She also enjoys relaxing in the tub and a good book—noting **Nora Roberts** as one of her favorite authors. A fan of 80's rock music, particularly **Billy Idol** and **Bon Jovi**, Christine is also an accomplished folk dancer. She says most people would be surprised to know that she enjoys traditional German dancing; which she does dressed in a dirndl (the traditional bodice, blouse, full skirt and apron). Her favorite vacation spots include both Disneyworld and Germany.

Christine lives by the credo, 'Treat others the way you want others to treat you and you cannot go wrong. Even if others decide not to treat you fairly or justly, eventually it will come back to them.' ... an excellent way to go forward. PMI is excited to welcome her to the team and to a promising new year.



*The Slabinger family
(clockwise): Christine,
Peter, Matthew and
Stephen*

2013 PMI LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jeff Baldwin, T&S Brass and Bronze Works
President

Tim Kilbane, Symmons Industries
First Vice-President

Fernando Fernandez, TOTO USA
Second Vice-President

Paul Patton, Delta Faucet Company
Treasurer

Stewart Yang, Kohler Co.
Immediate Past President

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

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

C.J. Lagan, American Standard Brands
(1/13–12/15)

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

Ray Fisher, Fisher Manufacturing Company
(9/12–12/13)

Bobbi Warren, Amerikam
(1/13–12/15)

John Watson, Elkay Manufacturing Company
(1/13–12/13)

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