

My Prediction For The Global Economy

By: Jack Krecek, PMI President and Vice President and General Manager - Commercial Channels, Elkay Manufacturing Company



Jack Krecek

Continued volatility will be our constant companion for the foreseeable future.

I harbor no illusion that I will be nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in Economics for that prediction – it's a pretty widely held view. Pick your poison – unemployment, the deficit, housing crises, trade imbalances, commodity prices, healthcare, international banking instability – there's not a

lot out there to be optimistic about. A once slightly favorable view of 2011 has turned muted at best.

As an industry, we have to prepare for continued economic challenges and I think it's a safe bet that most of our member companies are putting together contingency plans, curtailing operating expenses, and looking for new opportunities for profitable growth. Like our membership, PMI as a trade association must take stock of the current environment and create initiatives to ensure the long term survival of the association which can only be achieved by delivering measurable value to its member companies.

The PMI Board and Executive Committee did not wait until the most recent round of sour economic news to begin this process. In fact, a group of PMI leadership including the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, several past PMI presidents and other thought leaders has met four times since 2009 to steward PMI's long term strategy. The most recent round of meetings of this strategic advisory group, informally referred to as the PMI Think Tank, occurred June 9th at the PMI headquarters in Rolling Meadows, IL. I was most pleased with the turnout and engagement of the industry leaders that participated.

What does strategic planning look like for a trade association? Well, not a lot different than strategic planning in a corporation. We review and amend (where necessary) the Vision and Mission, develop a SWOT Analysis (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats), as well as brainstorm and prioritize initiatives to enhance member value. With the challenges in our environment, your association needs to develop and deploy programs that will help our members adapt to the shifting conditions in which we all do business.

So, what did we come up with? PMI has historically relied on membership dues for over 95% of operating revenues. Based on a review of associations within and outside of our industry, this is extraordinarily unusual and, frankly, very risky. This is not new news. It's been talked about at Board and Think Tank meetings for several years. This time we are taking action. We have already deployed vendor sponsorships at our Spring and Fall Conferences, which have met with some success; those will continue and perhaps expand. There are proposals to add advertising opportunities in *PMI News* or banner ads on the website. After years of debate, we are prepared to launch new membership categories to attract allied members who see value in PMI's various offerings. A specific task group is already moving forward on developing recommendations – look for proposals to be voted on at the 2011 Fall Conference. The team continues to look at further educational opportunities, web-based programming, and additional alliances with like-minded trade associations.

A full debrief of a strategy review meeting would take a lot more space than I am allotted here, but rest assured, there are over a dozen senior executives representing the plumbing industry that believe this to be vitally important work, and are committed to the long term viability of Plumbing Manufacturers International. Interested in being a part of the process? Just let **Barb Higgins** know. We welcome thought leaders from every member company at these strategy events.

Krecek and Higgens Attend 79th Annual CIPH Conference

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



O Canada!

Institute of Plumbing and Heating (CIPH). Hosted by CIPH Chairman **Russ Morgan** of IPEX, Inc. and **Ralph Suppa**, CIPH president and general manager, the event was held at the Fairmont Empress Hotel in Victoria, British Columbia June 26-29. As usual, the hospitality extended by our northern neighbors was outstanding and we felt very much like VIPs, as “labeled” on our meeting badges.

Jack effectively addressed the group, highlighting industry issues, PMI challenges and successes, and reinforcing the importance and value of the strong relationship between our two North American industry trade associations.

While there are many similarities between the two groups, there are several notable differences.

First, CIPH membership and the annual conference is open to manufacturers, wholesaler distributors, and manufacturer agents. A total of 148 delegates, allied association guests and trade press attended. Broken out by member category there were 41 manufacturers, 22 wholesaler distributors and 11 manufacturer agent companies that participated.

The result is robust attendance with an exciting buzz of networking between the various groups. The mix draws an impressive number of senior managers and CEOs. Over time and much like PMI, CIPH has developed something of a ‘family’ feel. The CIPH conferences, in

fact, are referred to a “family reunions.” Camaraderie is certainly a key component of our conferences too! Spouses are much more evident at CIPH conferences. There were 98 spouses (including mine) and 17 children in attendance as well. Ralph’s wife **Susie** helps out as part of the CIPH staff, which totals twelve.

Like PMI, the meetings feature stand-alone presentations by economists, regulatory officials, and celebrities (this year, **Dave Williams**, who is both an aquanaut and an astronaut having flown on the Space Shuttle). CIPH and PMI over the years have exchanged leads on great speakers and topics. Portions of the meetings are conducted in both languages of Canada (French and English) which often leads to some good-natured ribbing. The business meeting includes election of officers, a recap of the year and a review of financial status. CIPH wisely has a number of revenue sources in addition to its dues. As you have heard at PMI meetings and have read in PMI President Jack Krecek’s report in this issue of *PMI News*, we too are looking at widening our economic base through new programs.

The CIPH Board is comprised of 17 individuals including a seven member Executive Committee (PMI has an 11 member board, five of whom are considered as the Executive Committee). The CIPH Board also includes the two most recent chairmen who serve as honorary vice chairs in a non-voting advisory capacity. CIPH is headed by a Chairman of the Board and the top staff executive (Ralph) is called the President and General Manager. There is only a single national CIPH conference with regional meetings and four trade shows held throughout the year.

Interestingly, the Immediate Past CIPH Chairman serves as the Treasurer. This model is one for PMI to consider as it makes tremendous sense to assign this important function to a seasoned Board

member, rather than to a new recruit. Like PMI, CIPH is audited annually. CIPH has nine Regions with their own Region Board and supported by part-time staff. CIPH is unique in its provision of Region Programs with offices across Canada. About \$160,000 or 40% of their dues is invested in administration of the Regions.



Ralph Suppa of CIPH; PMI’s Barbara C. Higgens and Jack Krecek; and CIPH Chairman Russ Morgan

Following a long period of sitting and listening, this year a Yoga instructor inspired the group to stretch and move before the next sessions. The three evenings of the conference are offered as free time, a formal banquet and a regional “fun” event plus dinner. The conferences are planned by a committee of six CIPH members who also take part in the program by introducing the various speakers. Eleven other member/volunteers assist with the networking events including golf.

Benchmarking with other successful organizations is essential to PMI’s continued improvement. We are grateful to CIPH President Ralph Suppa who participates regularly in PMI conferences. This past Spring he, together with **Jim Kendzel** of American Society of Plumbing Engineers, shared “best practices” ideas during the marketing track. I was delighted that our 2011 PMI President Krecek was able to join me this year at CIPH, just as 2010 PMI President **Lee Mercer** did last year, to experience the conference firsthand and to explore new

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Changing Roles in Changing Times

By: **Len Swatkowski, PMI Technical Director**



Len Swatkowski

The face of most industries in the United States has changed over the last 30 years. Consolidation, mergers and acquisitions have

changed the depth of our functional leadership which has also had an impact on their roles in industry trade associations.

PMI has seen this happen as it has developed into the “Voice of the Plumbing Industry.” We need to remind our members that the strength of the industry and its trade association lies in its members and their participation. One of the phenomena common during consolidation lies in the tendency for larger and larger corporations to rely on middle managers to assume the role of association liaison as their responsibilities become more strategic and complex.

79th Annual CIPH Conference

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ideas for PMI such as how we might benefit from opening up membership to include new categories. PMI successes, as well as my own, lie heavily with the vigorous networking and the partnerships we have formed. You’ve heard me say it often over the years: we can learn much from other allied groups (as they have from us!) and we have much to gain by working together in joint ventures. These possibilities were explored during the recent Think Tank session (see page 10). Continuous improvement is the key. We are always interested in hearing from you as well!

We’re listening!

This is exactly why, in addition to their working knowledge, we need their support of and participation in the role PMI plays in stateside, national and international regulations. As the roles of senior managers gravitate towards global strategies, PMI needs the participation and support of middle managers as issues with multi-million dollar impacts to the U.S. industry are encountered frequently.

With the international regulatory community focused on the cradle-to-cradle impact of our products, long term strategic issues are part of what PMI continuously communicates with our members. A case-in-point, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for information on hot water fittings and fixture fittings. We were not on their radar before, but we are now. The strategic value of this issue could impact state, federal or global sales of our products.

The number of regulatory bodies around the world was one of the reasons why the meaning of the “I” in PMI has been changed. Along with the change in name comes a responsibility to maintain a strong strategic vision, consistent with the senior leadership of the companies that direct and support PMI. This vision and the top-to-top connections must be maintained for PMI to remain effective in the global market.

A second role changing within trade association membership is also caused by mergers, acquisitions and consolidation: fewer people representing larger companies. On one side of this issue, decisions are easier to obtain since one person can vote for what was several companies previously. There is also less diversity in the mix for traditionally complex and complicated issues. The downside however, is the amount of effort needed to formulate draft docu-

ments, industry responses and codes maintenance is still the same, albeit with less people to spread the work around.

PMI has been fortunate to have several dozen industry-recognized Subject Matter Experts on plumbing codes, standards and regulations provide leadership on behalf of the overall industry. It makes for a healthier, more robust industry. This leadership has given PMI the benefit of many years experience and the base to drive concise and complete responses to the regulatory challenges we face week-to-week.

The third and last role is the evolution of U.S. industry is the future: future codes, future standards, future regulations and future leaders. As noted above we are blessed with the years (and years and years) of experience that our members provide. PMI, as the Voice of the Industry, may have the hearts of the Board and committee members, but may not have recognition within all of the departments of each company. It is up to our current membership to communicate PMI’s purpose and role as THE organization with their voice in the external marketplace. The future technical, marketing and regulatory liaison leaders need to understand today the role PMI will play for them tomorrow.

Our industry and your trade association will remain strong as we understand the changing roles we assume and plan ahead for the future of the U.S. plumbing industry. We only need to maintain our connection with the strategic level of our members through past, present and future mergers and acquisitions and ask that you, our active membership, take opportunities to reinforce the role your industry association, PMI, plays in the global marketplace.

Meet Len Swatkowski, PMI's New Technical Director

By: Amy Berg-Ferguson, Association Manager

There is a new face roaming the halls of PMI. He is the man with the booming laugh and a desire to learn as much about the plumbing industry as he can. He is **Len Swatkowski**, PMI's new Technical Director. Len started with PMI in early June and he has hit the ground running, reaching out to as many members as he can while also learning the in's and out's of PMI's mission.

Len comes to PMI with a background in association work, having spent 10 years with the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM) serving as an executive managing standards, codes, regulations and the appliance industry research on ozone safe, energy efficient refrigerants. He also worked for Whirlpool as an engineering manager for several products. As a side note, he actually interviewed at PMI for the Technical Director position 13 years ago, coming in as a very close "second" to **Dave Viola**, who then served PMI as Technical Director for 10 years.



The Swatkowski Family: Stephanie, DJ, Kiley, Len and Betty

A born and bred Chicagoan with a love for the White Sox, Len graduated with a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology from Western Illinois University. After realizing that his love of learning was not going to be satisfied, he also received a Masters of Business Administration Degree from Western. Now that he is done

with school, Len gets his learning fix by devouring history books, mostly focusing on Irish and Polish history. "I love reading history books written by authors from other parts of the world. It is amazing how world history varies around the planet," he said.

Know your staff's work and related skills, focus on people's strength then the rest of the picture paints itself is Len's management philosophy that has served him well in his career. "The secret to the success I've achieved over the years is simple: set goals and work toward them every day. Produce results that are accountable, transparent and intrinsically linked to the overall goals of your organization. It's that easy," he said simply.

Len has been married to his college sweetheart, **Betty**, for 32 years. "I knew she was the one when I met her. I've enjoyed each and every day with her," he said lovingly. He and Betty are the proud parents of **Stephanie**, a biomedical technician in the Chicago suburbs and son, **DJ**, a mason who lives in Michigan. They are also the proud grandparents of **Kiley**, Stephanie's 10-year-old daughter.

When Len looks to get away to recharge, his cabin in Michigan is the place he will head to with his family to partake of the bass fishing he loves so much. "My granddaughter is my fishing buddy. Anywhere I can put our boat in water is where I will be happy," he said. Also, do not bring a banana on his boat, "Bananas are not allowed. They are bad luck," he said laughing.

When he is not fishing, Len enjoys home improvement projects, walking, going to the movies and occasionally testing his hand at cooking. (Rumor has it he is an award winning accordion player.) A particular type of home improvement project tops his list of pet peeves, "I can't stand hanging wallpa-

per. I would rather move a wall four inches than wallpaper a room."

Len has been lucky enough to have several heroes enter his life in the form of mentors. "I've had several people who mentored me in high school and college that taught me integrity, persistence and the need to help each other. One of my high school teachers mentored me, among others, and showed me the right way to live life with a focus towards helping others. However, my heroes are the selfless thousands of volunteers that dedicate the time and energy to helping those that need it most," he said thoughtfully. This leads into his personal credo on life, "We're not here for ourselves. We're here for each other."



Grandpa & Kiley

Len's enthusiasm and excitement about his new position, and the organization, is obvious to anyone who talks to him. "I have seen, from the outside, the evolution of PMI from its reformation in 1998 to where it is today, a cohesive group that has come together to represent the needs and interests of U.S. plumbing manufacturers. Now the rest of the world is finding out about us," he said.

We look forward to your contributions and can't wait to see how you will shine in this organization. Welcome aboard, Len!

“Talking Turkey” with PMI Member VitrA

By Amy Berg-Ferguson, Association Manager with Contributions by Ece Cokyasar-Potter, VitrA

VitrA is a unique company with an equally unique history. The company that would become Vitra was born in a small workshop opened in 1942 in an effort to supply Turkey with a variety of earthenware products that could not be imported during World War II. After the close of the war, a construction boom and a Turkish economic revival lead the company to pioneer the domestic production of ceramic fixtures. These pieces were more hygienic than traditional marble and were very popular with customers.



Ece Cokyasar-Potter, Vitra's North America Sales and Marketing Manager

In 1966, Vitra was adopted as the new name for the sanitaryware maker, replacing its original name, Eczacıbaşı. The company had almost 25 years of production as the leader of the domestic sanitaryware market. In 1979, a faucet production plant was opened, diversifying their product offerings. Vitra has been a leader in foreign markets since 1983 and now is a leading global provider of a full range of bathroom products, including bathtubs, shower systems, bathroom furniture and tiles. Fifty percent of Vitra's products are sold overseas through their distribution network, which includes showrooms and sales points around the world.

Vitra's point of contact is becoming a familiar face at PMI events. **Ece Cokyasar-Potter** also has a long history with Vitra, “I began working for the company in 1994 when I was still in college. I started in an internship, then came on full time as the area manager in charge of export

markets after I graduated,” she said. “I've worked as an export manager, responsible for the Middle East, Asia and Southeast Pacific markets for about five years. I'm proud to say I'm the one who opened the new markets of Asia and the Southeast Pacific for Vitra. Those years taught me a lot and gave me a great perspective on life, both personally and professionally. I decided to take the next step and move to the United States. I helped build the distribution channels in the U.S. market and now I'm the Sales and Marketing Manager, responsible for all the operations in North America.” (PMI members may also remember **Mert Karsau**, Sales Services Manager, from previous conferences.)

When asked what Vitra's business philosophy was, Ece said, “Our vision is to build our brand in a way that offers whole bathroom solutions and is recognized in all international markets.” The company promotes the unique bathing tradition of its country of origin, which gives it a special vantage point from which to reinvent the bathroom experience using a design approach that combines aesthetic concepts with technology.



From left: Trey Higgens; Kazim Aksoy, Vitra; Barbara Higgens, PMI; Merve Seyhoglu, Vitra

As an interesting side note, the Vitra plant is the world's largest manufacturing facility under one roof. “Our plant has the technology that gives us the flexibility to manufacture according to many different county standards and specifications. We are currently exporting to almost 100 different countries and strongly building our brand in the international markets,” Ece said proud-

ly. PMI Executive Director **Barbara Higgens** recently visited the Vitra plant and detailed her experience in Turkey in the May/June issue of *PMI News*. She said, “I can't thank Vitra enough for their hospitality. What a privilege and thrill to tour this impressive facility and get to know more of the crew!”



Atalay Gumrah, Vice President of Vitra

Ece sees big industry changes coming in the near future, “The world is going green. We believe the market will require more and more green products and it won't be surprising to see even 1.0 gpf toilets being required in the future as the result of importance of water savings. The U.S. market has been technology and functionality driven and we eventually foresee that the design and style features of the products will have an effect in the mind of consumers as it has been the case in Europe,” she stated.

During Vitra's time as a PMI member, the company is getting a lot out of their involvement. Note that Vitra's Vice President, **Atalay Gumrah** and Mert Karsau, Sales Services Manager, will attend the Fall Conference and the Executive Roundtable. Be sure to meet them there. “PMI is a great organization to be affiliated with. Vitra's main reason for membership has to do with legislation, regulations, codes and standards. We feel we are on top of all the recent changes in these fields because of the PMI meetings and publications. Also the networking is great at the meetings and it is remarkable to build a close relationship with your competitors at the gatherings,” Ece concluded.

PMI Heads Back to the Nation's Capitol for Fall Conference

The 2011 PMI Fall Conference is set for September 18-21 at the Liaison Capitol Hill in downtown Washington, D.C. As the conference will take place in the shadow of Capitol Hill, we are taking advantage of our location by offering Hill visits again this year. Please don't leave Washington, D.C. before 4 pm on Wednesday, September 21 to allow enough time to visit your state representatives. Take this opportunity to let your voice be heard!

Highlighting the conference, PMI is very excited to announce that the meeting will kick off on Monday morning with an Executive Roundtable moderated by political pundit and journalist, **George Will**. Invited are **Keith Allman**, Delta Faucet Company; **Don Devine**, American Standard; **Tim Jahnke**, Elkay Manufacturing Company; **David Lingafelter**, Moen Incorporated; **Tim O'Keeffe**, Symmons Industries; **William L. Strang**, TOTO USA; and **Jim Westdorp**, Kohler Co. These industry leaders will address top-of-mind topics, and answer your

questions as well...so come prepared! After the panel discussion, George Will offers a recap and the opening keynote address. This is a very exciting event and we encourage you to take part. It isn't often that an organization can get this many VIP's in one room!

As a result of rave reviews at our Spring Conference, we are bringing back the dual track format for the Fall Conference. Meeting tracks in both marketing and technical subjects will be held Monday, September 19th. We had great attendance for the brand new marketing track at the last conference and we are hoping for an even better turnout for the next conference. We encourage you to make sure an employee from your company with a marketing title attends the Fall Conference to take advantage of this popular format.

PMI's Fall Conference will again be hosted at the Liaison Capitol Hill, an Affinia Hotel, located just 15 minutes from Reagan National Airport. The

newly renovated location features stylish, modern décor, a seasonal rooftop pool and bar and a fitness center. Guests at the Liaison can enjoy their signature-customized comforts, such as the Travel Smart Program, featuring travel amenities such as toothpaste, contact solution, technology chargers and more. In a departure from most hotels, the Liaison offers the dream pillow menu, featuring six choices from classic feather and down to Swedish memory foam pillows. The Liaison Capitol Hill is also home to Art and Soul Restaurant. **Art Smith**, former personal chef for **Oprah Winfrey**, serves fresh and modern cuisine with a southern accent at his namesake eatery.

Registration and hotel information are available at www.pmihome.org. **Please note, the registration deadline for both the meeting and the hotel are August 26.** Register today and make plans to participate in the Capitol Hill lobbying visits. We'll see you there.



*Keith Allman,
Delta Faucet Company*



*Don Devine,
American Standard*



*Tim Jahnke, Elkay
Manufacturing Company*



*David Lingafelter,
Moen Incorporated*



*Tim O'Keeffe,
Symmons Industries*



*William L. Strang,
TOTO USA*



*Jim Westdorp,
Kohler Co.*

Fall Conference Schedule: People + Purpose = Progress!

Sunday, September 18

- 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm PMI Board of Directors Meeting (Invitation only)
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm Meeting Registration
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Cocktail Reception
7:30 pm - 9:30 pm Dinner with Industry Leaders

Monday, September 19

- 8:00 am - 8:30 am Welcome Reception
8:30 am - 10:30 am Emerging Industry Issues: An Executive Roundtable with Q&A Session Moderated by Political Pundit and Journalist, **George Will**

- 10:30 am - 10:45 am Break
10:45 am - 12:00 pm Panel Summary and Keynote Address by **George Will**

- 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch
1:30 pm - 5:30 pm Dual Track Format

Choose One:

Technical Council

- Green Codes
- Hex Chrome
- Contaminants in Water
- Training

Marketing Council

- Open Action Items
- Social Media
- Marketing Initiatives
- Next Steps

- 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Reception
DINNER ON YOUR OWN

Tuesday, September 20

- 8:00 am - 8:30 am Opening Session
8:30 am - 10:00 am Water Efficiency and Sustainability Issue Committee
10:00 am - 10:15 am Break
10:15 am - 11:30 am Government Affairs Standing Committee
12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm General Membership Meeting
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm Fair Trade Issue Committee
3:30 pm - 3:45 pm Break
3:45 pm - 5:00 pm Joint Council Session
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Reception
7:30 pm - 9:30 pm Dinner

Wednesday, September 21

- 8:00 am - 9:15 am Breakfast Buffet
9:00 am - 9:30 am Special Presentation: **Paul Ryan** (R-WI) (Invited)
9:30 am - 10:30 am A View From The Hill: Last Tips for Hill Visits
10:30 am - 4:30 pm Capitol Hill Visits

See www.pmihome.org for more details.

Fluidmaster Announces New President

Fluidmaster® Inc. announced the selection of **Todd Talbot** to lead its global operations as company President.

Mr. Talbot brings to Fluidmaster almost 30 years of building products industry experience, most recently as a Principal Partner since 2009 of MegaWestern Sales, a privately held firm representing manufacturers in the plumbing industry. After launching his career in 1982 as a sales representative for Hoyt Water Heater Company, he moved to Masco Corporation in 1988 where he served in a number of leadership roles over 19 years. Talbot became President of Alsons, a marketer and manufacturer of quality hand showers, shower heads

and accessories and later was President of both the Alsons and BrassCraft business units.

In 2007, Talbot was named President and Chief Operating Officer of CRH Oldcastle Glass, an international supplier of building materials throughout Western Europe and the United States. He was 2002 President and is a former Board Member of **Plumbing Manufacturers International** (PMI) and also served on the Board of the Vendor Member Division of the American Supply Association (ASA).

“Todd will be a great addition to the Fluidmaster team,” said Fluidmaster

Owner and CEO **Robert Anderson Schoepe**.

“Given his deep industry background and leadership experience, we’re looking forward to having him head our customer-focused, global growth initiatives.”



Todd Talbot

Editor’s Note: Congratulations Todd! Welcome back to PMI!

Higgins Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

By: Heather West, Heather West Public Relations



Barbara C. Higgins, Plumbing Manufacturers International's (PMI's) executive director, was recognized with a Crystal Vision

“Robert P. Atkins Life Time Achievement Award.” World Vision presented the award during the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show on April 26 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Higgins was the third person ever to receive the Life Time Achievement Award. The award honors individual dedication to World Vision's mission of “working with children, families and their worldwide communities to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.”

Ms. Higgins was attending the CEIR (European Valve) conference in Istanbul, Turkey and so long time business associate, **Lyle Hunnicutt** of Raintree Associates, accepted the award on her behalf. A video of Higgins' “remote” acceptance speech is available online at www.pmihome.org.

For more than 10 years, Higgins has championed The Storehouse of World Vision, which addresses the needs of Americans suffering from disaster, personal crisis or economic hardship by providing families with supplies, including building products and materials. Companies donate excess inventory or produced-to-give products to The Storehouse's warehouses. The Storehouse, in turn, partners with other nonprofit organizations to install these much-needed products and materials in homes, shelters, rehabilitation facilities, schools, daycares, churches, and other community centers.

Member companies of PMI's voluntary, not-for-profit, international, industry

association represent 95 percent of North America's plumbing manufacturers and produce a substantial quantity of the world's plumbing products. World Vision estimates that more than \$80 million worth of plumbing products have been donated during the past five years.

“Barbara has been involved since The Storehouse's beginnings and is one of the early pioneers of the program. The Life Time Achievement Award was introduced last year, during our 10th anniversary celebration, to honor those with extraordinary commitment to the program, while they are still active and involved,” says **Efrain Perez, Jr.**, World Vision's corporate relations director-kitchen and bath.

“It's been my pleasure to serve as a volunteer and ambassador for The Storehouse of World Vision. The program is the ultimate win/win: The Storehouse provides manufacturers with an efficient channel for repurposing their excess inventory in the most wonderful way,” says Higgins. “PMI members' and other manufacturers' donations through this program truly improve people's lives. Having clean, safe drinking water; a decent kitchen to prepare food and gather together; working, water-efficient lavatories - these are things most of us take for granted. It's been a joy to help connect those who have products to donate with those who need them most.”

“We have been graced and blessed with Barbara's support, advice and encouragement, which has made our Storehouse initiative so successful and so impactful,” adds Perez. “She is always recommending us to companies and networking on our behalf. We absolutely love her.”

“Barbara has been a strong, supportive voice helping connect PMI's members with The Storehouse product donation program. The program offers companies a fast, efficient and responsible business solution to donate products to

assist those in need,” says PMI Board of Directors President **Jack Krecek**, vice president and general manager of commercial channels for Elkay Manufacturing Company. In 2006, Elkay was honored with a Crystal Vision Award. The contributions of PMI members' **Kohler, Moen, MASCO and Globe Union** also have been recognized with this award. Home Depot received the 2008 Crystal Vision Award at a celebration where Higgins served as the event's master of ceremonies.

A respected industry leader, Higgins is known for her work in harmonizing legislation and forging worldwide coalitions. She is a member of the U.S. Department of Commerce Advisory Committee ITAC/9 and the World Plumbing Council; a past member of the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency Committee; a past member of the National Association of Manufacturers' board of directors and past chair of the Council of Manufacturing; a planning committee member of the Electronic Industries Association; and a charter member of Alliance for Water Efficiency.

A well-rounded person, Higgins shares a love of music and travel with her husband, **Trey**. They are members of the Chicago Highlanders Pipe Band and she also serves on the Elgin (IL) Symphony Board of Trustees. When they are not traveling the globe, visiting children and grandchildren across the U.S., or visiting with their snowbird neighbors in Phoenix, Barbara and Trey Higgins make their home in Palatine, IL.

About World Vision: World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. They serve all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. Read more at www.worldvision.com.

The Classics Never Go Out of Style: Loo of the Year

The distinctive and classic-looking washfountain that put **Bradley Corp.** on the map as a handwashing innovator 90 years ago, lives on today as the focal point of one of the trophy-winning restrooms honored in Britain's 2010 Loo of the Year Awards (www.loo.co.uk).

In search of the very best "away-from-home" toilets in the UK, the 23rd annual Loo of the Year Award program, organized by the British Toilet Association, awarded pub chain owner **JD Wetherspoon** the top honor as overall trophy winner for 2010. The men's and women's loos in JD Wetherspoon's Justice Mill Pub in Aberdeen, Scotland – which both feature sleek and modern renditions of Bradley's historic washfountain – were highlighted among the crowned "thrones." (www.jdwetherspoon.co.uk/home/pubs/the-justice-mill). Wether-

Name Change for Price Pfister

Price Pfister, a leader in the residential faucet and fixture industry for more than 100 years, has recently renewed investment in its brand identity. These new marketing efforts aim to best position the company for another century of helping homeowners create spaces they love. In the process, the brand has decided to simplify its name to "Pfister."

"Longevity, in any industry, is a result of a brand's flexibility to evolve and grow while remaining timeless and true to its core values and identity," said **Greg Williamson**, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Pfister. "We're embracing our century of rich history and experience, and using it to propel us forward and ensure that we continue to connect with homeowners and plumbers, and to fulfill our mission of providing lifetime quality products that help make the house a home."

spoon, which runs 790 pubs across the U.K., won the Loo Award out of over 1,400 entries, including restaurants, shopping malls, hotels and government buildings. The pub chain is known for transforming various buildings, such as cinemas, funeral parlors, opera houses and courthouses, into stunning and distinctive pub environments.

"We set out to achieve an elegant and contemporary design aesthetic, and

maximize space in the ladies' and gents' toilets in the Justice Mill. We chose Bradley's Circular Classic Washfountains in stainless steel for their uniquely beautiful and sleek style," says **Eddie Gershon**, JD Wetherspoon spokesperson. "As it turns out, the Washfountains have become shining center pieces – and conversation pieces – in our restrooms."

World Vision Honors Kohler Company

International aid organization World Vision awarded its annual Crystal Vision Award to Kohler Co. in recognition of its outstanding commitment to the StoreHouse of World Vision supporting its mission of serving American children and families affected by poverty. Kohler was StoreHouse of World Vision's first corporate donor and accepted the inaugural award 11 years ago.

"Kohler Co. and our associates around the world believe in enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations," said **David Kohler**, president and chief operating officer of Kohler Co. "Our company humbly accepts the Crystal Vision Award and thanks the World Vision Storehouse for this recognition."

Since 1996, Kohler has partnered with Storehouse of World Vision, a network of eight warehouses across the United States that receives corporate donations of goods made available to local non-profit organizations for distribution to more than 1.6 million people in low-income communities.

Through its relationship with the Storehouse of World Vision, Kohler donates plumbing products for distribution to those in need.



Michael Werner of Globe Union; David Kohler of Kohler Co. and Efrain Perez of Worldvision

"Kohler Co. is not only a global leader in plumbing, but a global leader in their commitment to improve the quality of life of people wherever they do business," said **Efrain Perez**, Corporate Relations Director –Storehouse of World Vision.

Kohler has had a strong culture of stewardship since its inception in 1873, visible globally through the humanitarian efforts of its associates as well as corporate leadership. Whether related to a specific issue, such as water conservation, or to the general well-being of others, the company encourages its associates to take action in and make a positive impact on the communities where they work and live.

PMI Hosts 4th Strategic Think Tank Meeting

The fourth meeting of the PMI Think Tank took place June 9th at PMI headquarters and this year's turnout did not disappoint. The attendees were comprised of Board members, past PMI Board presidents and invited guests.



Barbara Higgins and Bill Ball, WCM Industries

Included were **Jeff Baldwin**, T&S Brass and Bronze Works; **Bill Ball**, WCM Industries; **Lyle Hunnicutt**, formerly with Fortune Brands and now an industry consultant; **Tim Kilbane**, Symmons Industries; **Jack Krecek**, Elkay Manufacturing Company; **C.J. Lagan**, American Standard Brands; **Ken Martin**, Delta Faucet Company; **Scott McDonald**, Fluidmaster; **Lee Mercer**, Moen Incorporated; **Paul Patton**, Delta Faucet Company; **Craig Selover**, Masco; **Mike Sennett**, Jones Day; **Walt Strader**, formerly of Price Pfister; **Stu Yang**, Kohler Co. and **John Watson**, Sloan Valve Company plus PMI staff members **Barbara Higgins**,



Paul Patton and Ken Martin, Delta Faucet Company, Len Swatkowski, PMI

Len Swatkowski and Amy Berg-Ferguson.

The meeting kicked off with a dinner on June 8th at Emmett's in Palatine, IL and a presentation by meeting facilitator **Barton Tretheway** of Bostrum Corporation. Bright and early the next morning, the Think Tank participants got to work with a presentation by the Executive Director of the Hydraulic Institute, **Bob Asdal**. He spoke about the non-dues revenue programs his organization



C.J. Lagan, American Standard Brands

has put in place and what has worked and what has not. He encouraged the group to consider new programs in view of the investment in time and financial resources required.



Scott McDonald, Fluidmaster and Lyle Hunnicutt, Raintree Associates

After Mr. Asdal's presentation, the group discussed the current and proposed new revenue sources of PMI, as well as suggestions for new membership and product categories and ideas for non-dues based revenue ideas. Paul Patton, Senior Product Development Manager for Delta Faucet Company, addressed the attendees about new associate membership categories that could be explored. He also presented a revised sponsorship program for the semi-annual conferences. The group will follow up on the action items that came out of the meeting by holding a conference call in July.



The Think Tank attendees hard at work

It's Official!



Our new Plumbing Manufacturers International sign arrived recently and looks great hanging in our Rolling Meadows headquarters. We had the opportunity to show it off during the recent Think Tank meeting. Stop by to see it if you get a chance!

Higgins Addresses 2011 UAC "Unity" & PHCC Conferences

By S.J Peters, Executive Director, Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Authority of Northern Illinois (PAMCANI)



Barbara Higgins

After a dynamic blend of speakers, session presenters, open forums on industry topics, educational and social functions, a field trip and more, 2011's

"Unity" in Orland Park, IL closed the four day conference with a memorable and varied send off at the Local 597 Training Center in Mokena. When the last note of the concert was heard, attendees continued to linger for a few last conversations – a good sign after a great event.

The Union Affiliated Contractors (UAC) of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling-Contractors (PHCC) National kicked off the conference with the Trustees Board Meeting, leading into the opening reception on May 16. The next morning began early with the Plumbing Industry Council Meeting, and among the attendees in the packed

room were UA General **President Hite**; UAC Chair **Robert Melko**; PHCC Executive VP **Gerry Kennedy**; as well as local and national UA labor leaders and signatory trade association officers and execs, member contractors, and representatives throughout the industry (including International Association of Plumbing Mechanical Officials (IAPMO); American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE); Illinois Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors (PHCC), and many more).



Dave Viola

The opening sessions on day one included a PHCC National Update by Gerry Kennedy; a "Coast to Coast" Industry Report by P&M Magazine Publisher

Bob Miodonski; the luncheon featuring remarks by Plumbing Manufacturers International Executive Director **Bar-**

bara Higgins and IAPMO Director of Special Services **David Viola**; the "Joint Association Board Forum" (of PAMCANI and PCA-Chicago/Plumbing Council of Chicagoland, facilitated by Bob Melko, UAC Trustees **Lori L. Abbott** and **S.J. Peters**, and attorney **James Estabrook**). PAMCANI board members **Dick Browning**, **Paul F. Buddy**, **Todd DeFranco**, **Frank Kennedy**, **David Kerigan**, **Mike Mendel**, and **Tom Swartz** joined in the two-hour discussion. Next, Mr. Estabrook and attorney **Elizabeth Manzo** led the "Fiduciary Duties" session, followed by an address by Chicago Federation of Labor President **Jorge Ramirez**, and the reception featuring remarks by Chairman Bob Melko, Local 130 Business Manager **James Sullivan**, a tribute to retiring UA Director of Plumbing Services **Gary Hamilton**, plus a special visit and performance by U.S. President **Theodore Roosevelt** (portrayed by **Joe Wiegand**).

On June 10, Higgins traveled to Bloomington/Normal, IL to address the Illinois PHCC Convention there. She briefed the group on issues affecting the plumbing industry and PMI's role in addressing them.

PMI Welcomes Member Services Committee Co-Chair



Tim Doyle

Plumbing Manufacturers International President **Jack Kreck** of Elkay Manufacturing Company has made his selection for a new Co-Chair to help lead

PMI's Member Services Committee. **Tim Doyle** of Amerikam will serve alongside existing Co-Chair, **Rick Reles**, vice president, kitchens, cast

iron and corporate accounts worldwide for Kohler Co.

Mr. Doyle is Quality Assurance Manager and ISO Management Representative for Amerikam. He oversees development, implementation and maintenance of the Quality Management System. Together, with his staff, the engineering and manufacturing departments, his responsibilities include development and maintenance of processes and control plans to ensure product meets or exceeds customer and regulatory requirements. "The committee, along with PMI membership, has a unique opportunity to create and stretch in some areas that are non-traditional for

PMI. We will be treading some interesting new ground. I look forward to the challenge," said Mr. Doyle.

While effective immediately, the three-year term for this position officially begins with the 2011 PMI Fall Conference, being held September 18-21 at the Liaison Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. Mr. Kreck's decision to appoint Mr. Doyle was based upon PMI meeting attendance, leadership, expertise and an overall commitment to PMI.

PMI congratulates Mr. Doyle and thanks all those who submitted their names for the available position.

George Leonardos Named Father of the Year



George Leonardos

The American Diabetes Association and the Father's Day Council of Grand Rapids awarded three men for their commitment to help stop diabetes on June 3 at

the Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, MI. One of the recipients of this year's Father of the Year Awards is **George Leonardos**, Retired, Benteler Industries and husband of **Stephanie Leonardos**, President of Amerikam. **Christian Schauer**, CEO, PRO Renewables, LLC; and **Pete Brand**, Co-Founder, Mindscape at Hanon McKendry were also honored.

These fathers were selected based on their ability to balance their personal and professional lives, and serve as a role model for their children, while making

a positive difference in their communities. All proceeds from the event will support the American Diabetes Association and its mission: to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

"We are proud of these exceptional fathers who have demonstrated the ability to balance a high level of success in their chosen careers and serve as great role models in our community," said **Tiana Gee**, Executive Director of the Greater Michigan ADA. "They deserve recognition not only as fathers and community leaders, but for their commitment to change the future of diabetes."

Today, there are nearly 26 million Americans—including 40,000 in Kent County—who have diabetes. While an estimated 17.9 million have been diagnosed, unfortunately, 5.7 million people are unaware that they have the disease. If present trends continue, one in three Americans faces a future with diabetes.

Congratulations George!

PMI Members in the News

Assembled by: **Amy Berg-Ferguson**, Association Manager

InSinkErator announced that it will sponsor a series of online training modules dedicated to the art of making the sale to common customer types, from "bargain hunter" to "reluctant skeptic."

Caroma has made a contribution to Habitat for Humanity in the form of product certificates. The donation comes as part of the partnership that Habitat for Humanity has with the Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating.

TOTO's Maris Collection of toilets, **Moen Incorporated's** Eco-Performance commercial shower systems and Flush-mount body sprays, **Kohler's** Numi toilet and Elevance Rising Wall Bath, and **American Standard Brand's** Fun Bath conversion system were featured in the K/BIS Favorites section of the magazine.

(*The Wholesaler*, June 2011)

Tim Kilbane, **Symmons Industries**, has relocated to Chicago to manage the Chicago sales office.

BrassCraft Manufacturing Company was recently awarded Platinum membership from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the commission's highest level of recognition. This is the second "Clean Texas" honor bestowed on BrassCraft's Lancaster, Texas facility, which was recognized in 2010 with a Bronze membership.

Caroma's water conserving toilets and urinals and **T&S Brass and Bronze Works** Sustainability brochure were featured in the Green Products Showcase section of the magazine.

(*Reeves Journal*, June 2011)

2011 PMI LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jack Krecek, **Elkay Manufacturing Company**
President

Stewart Yang, **Kohler Co.**
First Vice-President

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

Tim Kilbane, **Symmons Industries**
Treasurer

Lee Mercer, **Moen Incorporated**
Immediate Past President

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

William Ball, **WCM Industries**
(1/09-12/11)

Fernando Fernandez, **TOTO USA**
(1/10-12/11)

Casey Hayes, **Haws Corporation**
(1/10-12/12)

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

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

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

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