



# NEWS

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The Newsletter for PMI Members — by PMI Members November/December 2005



**John Lauer**

## PMI Is On The Move - Keep The Momentum Going

**By: John Lauer, President of the Plumbing Manufacturers Institute and Sloan Valve Company's Director of International Business Development**

As my term as PMI president comes to a close I would like to thank the member-

ship for their continued enthusiasm and support of PMI and its initiatives. The success of an association is dependent upon the participation of its membership. While it is the responsibility of the association to continuously provide value in exchange for membership dues, the success of PMI's various programs and initiatives is a direct result of your commitment and support of the organization.

I also want to thank the entire PMI staff for their hard work and dedication to the organization. While the membership provides the engine, **Barb Higgins** and her staff definitely know how to drive the train!

We have built tremendous and infectious, momentum in recent years at PMI. This year's Fall Meeting boasted record registration — 114 attendees — with 31 of 33 member companies in attendance. If you were at the meeting I'm sure you felt the excitement. If you weren't there, you can get a feel for this response by reading the results of the meeting satisfaction survey contained in this

issue of *PMI News*.

PMI's challenge is to reach out to those who can't seem to find the time to attend a PMI event, as well as to those who have not yet joined our organization. Seeing is believing and for those who attend our meetings, the organization sells itself. (Check out the survey question about whether attendees felt the meeting was worth the time and money invested.) These days, no one has time to waste. Attending a PMI session and absorbing the value there is time well spent.

PMI continues to enhance the value equation for members while (once again) holding dues flat. The last dues increase was in 1997, prior to the emergence of the "new" PMI. Name something else in your world that has not increased in price in nine years! And while we haven't raised dues, one of the outcomes of our last Board of Directors meeting was a decision to make our dues schedule a bit more "user friendly" by streamlining the dues levels through simple rounding. To further our growth, PMI will continue to offer the dues abatement plan to prospective members as an incentive to try out PMI, with the abatement timeframe having been shortened from five to three years.

Initiatives for 2006 include the revamping of the PMI website, looking at alternative revenue streams for the

organization, continuing our outreach internationally, a proposed trade mission to China, and a strategic planning meeting of the PMI Board of Directors. We will continue to build upon and expand the concept of stand-alone forums and workshops which has served PMI members so well. We will build on the valuable outreach we began at the Fall Meeting with the first-ever PMI Water Conservation Summit. And as always, we will continue to look to you, the PMI membership, for input and suggestions.

I have found my years on the PMI Board, culminating this year in my term as president, to be very rewarding. PMI members are effectively represented by a Board of Directors that reflects our industry through a talented cross-section of the plumbing industry. I am proud to be a part of that elite group.

I congratulate both the new and returning members of the 2006 Board of Directors. Whether you are a Board member, committee chair or a PMI member at large, the key to maximizing PMI's value is *involvement*. You get out of the organization what you put into it. I encourage you to attend meetings and forums, ask questions, provide input, and to be involved. Let's keep the momentum going!

*It's the right thing to do!*

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# PMI Water Conservation Panel Hits A Home Run - But We're Not Stopping There!

By: Barbara C. Higgins, Executive Director



**Barbara Higgins**

We did it! We held the first ever PMI-hosted water conservation summit and it proved to be a success on a number of levels. All of those asked to participate,

graciously accepted our invitations – indicating a genuine interest in, receptivity to and need for the summit. Those who participated provided thoughtful, well-planned presentations to the group and engaged willingly in the question and answer sessions.

From the manufacturers' perspective, and as shown on the meeting satisfaction survey (included in this issue of *PMI News*), the summit ranked as a major draw for the Fall 2005 PMI Meeting and resulted in record attendance. The Wednesday "members only" strategic discussion was well-received and productive, despite some Monday-morning quarterbacking. (I'm not sure how we could have or that we would have wanted to orchestrate an open strategic discussion as some suggested).

PMI members and the invited panelists and guests alike, were pleasantly surprised to find common ground on a number of issues, the most important of which was acknowledging the need to work more closely together earlier in the life of a project to ensure a better end result. I have said it before and I maintain that we are more similar than different. Contrary to some popular stereotyping, manufacturers *do* care about public health and safety, water conservation, and innovation. The old paradigm no longer exists whereby external forces must drag manufacturers kicking and screaming to face change. Manufacturers no longer sit back and "just say NO." This shift will no doubt be a disappointment to some in the industry who profit from

running interference and assisting in the negotiations between manufacturers and others, and who thrive on the conflict. Clearly, we cannot do it all alone. We can't operate in a vacuum, but we can certainly do without the various communication layers of yesteryear. With open communications and through our own networking and relationships, we can speak for ourselves. We will look for other opportunities and issues for future summits, given the success of this one. Stay tuned!

PMI has undergone some monumental changes since 1998. With support from the Board of Directors and the membership, PMI has been reinvented and reinvigorated from top to bottom. A new "look" with a redesigned logo was only the tip of the iceberg.

It is important though to keep the momentum going. We cannot fall into the trap of resting on our laurels, touting all of our past great accomplishments. Just as your customers demand of you, PMI staff recognizes that you demand of us "So? What have you done for me lately?" We work hard to stay ahead of that question and ahead of the curve!

An important lesson from my youth was to learn to pay less attention to what the "other guy" was doing and to focus on my own accomplishments.

My brother and I were taught that the key was not in competing with others, but rather with ourselves; continually setting high standards. Even if we got the "B+" when all of the rest earned a "C-", the question was whether we were doing OUR best? Could we... *should* we have gotten the "A"? The message is, don't get caught up with simply trying to outdo the other guy. By focusing on your own performance, the work of continuous improvement is never complete.

PMI has made significant changes to its membership value equation, structure and format. Our success shows. We are frequently consulted by other organizations for "best practices" tips and ideas. Pretty heady stuff! But that in itself does not deliver value to our membership or help member companies succeed within the industry. Only by listening to you and delivering beyond your expectations will we continue to earn your dues dollars.

This is the time of year when members will be asked to renew their commitment to PMI. PMI's commitment to its members extends throughout the years and in all we do. Is PMI worth YOUR dues dollars? If we have served you fully, your answer will be a resounding YES!

Happy holidays to you and yours!

See you next year!

## Lauer/Higgins Attend BMA Conference

PMI and the UK-based Bathroom Manufacturers Association (BMA) share a number of common goals and industry issues. The two groups have pledged to work together through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed last year.

Among the issues facing both groups are: the impact of China, international code compliance, and water conservation.



(l-r) Yvonne Orgill, BMA commercial director, Ted Goold, BMA president and Masco Group V.P., John Lauer, PMI president and Barb Higgins at the October 4, 2005 BMA meeting in Birmingham, England, where Barb made a presentation to the group.

# PMI Gearing Up To Face New Challenges In Standards

By: David Viola, Technical Director

The Plumbing Manufacturers Institute (PMI) and its members take a leading role in the development and promotion of voluntary consensus standards for plumbing products. PMI's role in consensus standards development is one of its most important technical functions. Consensus standards are an essential element in preserving the competitiveness of PMI members and meeting the demands of consumers, while ensuring the protection of health, safety, and the environment.

The standards system in the U.S. is developed in the private sector and coordinated by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Accreditation by ANSI signifies that the standards meet the Institute's essential requirements for openness, balance, consensus and due process. This approach has served the plumbing sector well over the years, as these standards are a key part of every state and local plumbing code and are referenced in federal law.

Unfortunately, the U.S. standards system is faced with new challenges. The ever-changing national and global economies have altered the standards landscape. Moving forward, standards need to be more flexible and timely to keep up with the rapid increase in new technology. Standards also have to be developed in new ways to address the declining investment in standards by industry and government due to continued focus on the bottom line, downsizing and deregulation. Finally, standards need to be harmonized with international standards so that products are acceptable in all markets.

In response, ANSI recently published a draft U.S. Standards Strategy (USSS) to provide a guide for each industry sector's standards-related activities in order to meet these new challenges. PMI is in agreement and supports the goals and objectives of the plan. It reflects on the accomplishments and lessons learned from the use

of the current plan. PMI did submit comments to ANSI to address specific concerns within the plumbing sector. We requested that the USSS be revised to reflect the importance of standards developers adopting clear and concise scopes, and being more proactive in avoiding overlap and duplication.

Our comments to ANSI stated that a problem in the plumbing industry exists because we have six plumbing product standards developers with similar scopes that are accredited by ANSI. This places a huge burden on the industry to monitor and participate in these activities to ensure that:

- \*standards do not overlap or conflict, and
- \*only the standards developer with the requisite expertise takes on a particular activity.

We also urged ANSI to assist PMI in communicating and promoting the role and importance of the U.S. standardization system to government and other stakeholders. This is particularly important for our industry as local, regional and national policy makers gear up to develop mandatory standards in response to emerging national priorities, such as water conservation and water quality.

In response, ANSI included several tactical initiatives in the final version of the USSS intended to better assist PMI and other stakeholders to minimize overlap and duplication, and help promote governmental use of consensus standards.

The final draft of the ANSI USSS is an excellent guide to aid PMI in refining its own standard strategy and tactics for the coming years. At the PMI 2005 Fall Meeting, the Technical Committee agreed to convene a technical strategy meeting to review the ANSI USSS and identify possible implementation strategies for the plumbing sector. The meeting will likely be held in the Chicago area before March 24, 2006 and

representatives from all PMI members will be invited to attend. If you have any questions about the upcoming standards strategy meeting or would like a copy of the ANSI USSS, please contact PMI staff.



David Viola

(ICC Press Release)

## ICC, IAPMO Take Next Step Toward Development Of Joint Plumbing And Mechanical Codes

In response to the signing of an MOU on September 28, the International Code Council (ICC) and the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) will hold a high level, face-to-face meeting on November 19. The organizations solidified their intent to proceed with discussions concerning a potential joint venture to update the Uniform Plumbing Code™, Uniform Mechanical Code™, International Plumbing Code® and International Mechanical Code® to produce a joint code in the respective subject areas.

## It's Wedding Bells For Tim Kilbane



Congratulations and Best Wishes to **Tim Kilbane** of Symmons Industries on his marriage to **Kathy** this past May 5th. We wish them many years of happiness!

# PMI Member Companies In The Industry News

(Speakman Company Press Release)



**Michael Trenham**

The Speakman Company announces that **Michael Trenham** has been named its Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Trenham has been with the company for six years and

most recently was co-manager of its Plumbing Business Unit. In his new role he replaces **David Bailey** who, after 40 years with Speakman Company, will reduce his work activities while continuing on as the company's treasurer. In addition to his industry experience, Mr. Trenham has worked in corporate banking and holds an MBA from the University of Virginia.

The October/November '05 issue of *Executive Traveler* featured an article on **Mr. Herb Kohler** on page 54.

PMI was featured in a supplement to the October '05 issue of *Consulting-Specifying Engineer* titled Plumbing Perspectives and Profiles. The focus of the section is on Water Conservation with a lead off article by **PMI President John Lauer**, Water Conservation is on PMI's Radar Screen, followed by other water conservation articles written by PMI members.

**Barbara Higgins**, PMI executive director, responded to **Bob Miodonski's** editorial in the September '05 issue of *Contractor Magazine*.

**Symmons Industries** was profiled in the October '05 issue of *US Industry Today*. See page 60.

PMI's "Dynamic of Change and Emerging Technologies" Forum was featured in the September '05 issue of *Supply House Times*. See page 32.

(From Plumbing and Mechanical Oct. '05)

**Elkay Manufacturing** has successfully implemented its first vendor-managed inventory (VMI) program for water cooler and fountain products. The pilot program was initiated with Central Supply of Indiana and will enable the Indianapolis-based plumbing wholesaler to maintain optimal inventory levels for water cooler and fountain products. It incorporates an electronic data interchange-based exchange of sales, inventory and order replenishment information. Elkay intends to explore additional VMI opportunities with other customers.

(Fluidmaster, Inc. Press Release)



**Bill Axline**, Executive Vice President & COO of Fluidmaster, Inc. has announced the appointment of **Kathleen**

**Kathleen DeKeyser** DeKeyser as Vice President Global Engineering, Innovation and Quality effective October 1, 2005. **Steve Maple** had announced his retirement several months ago. He will continue with Fluidmaster on a part time basis as Engineering Industry Liaison. Ms. DeKeyser joins Fluidmaster from Black and Decker Industrial Products division in Jackson, TN where she had been Vice President, Woodworking Engineer since 2001.

(From The Wholesaler October '05)

Wal-Mart is famous for rolling back prices, but is also rolling back water use with **Falcon Waterfree** urinals in new, environmentally friendly and energy efficient supercenters. Waterfree urinals are one of several new features with the goal of making the business more sustainable, more economical and more environmentally responsible.

People generally associate waterfree urinals with environmental benefits,

but the overall business case at Wal-Mart also depends on effective cost management," said **Jay Troger**, [former] president of Falcon Waterfree technologies. "Restroom fixtures consume about one third of the total fresh water required in the average commercial building. Some reports attribute 20% of the total water usage to flush urinals alone! The reduced water cost and associated maintenance savings quickly add up."

The Falcon Waterfree urinals in the Wal-Mart restrooms save at least one gallon of water per use, compared to today's low-flush urinals. Because flush valves are not used, installation and maintenance costs are reduced. The only difference that shoppers will notice is the lack of a flush. Studies by the University of Texas and other organizations show that compared to flush urinals, there are fewer bacteria in water-free urinals and the absence of water reduces odors.

(From Plumbing and Mechanical Oct '05)

**Gerber Plumbing Fixtures** announced the opening of its western distribution center in La Mirada, Calif. The center, located in a 200,000 square foot facility near Long Beach, Calif., will serve the west, southwest and northwest areas of the United States with vitreous china products. The La Mirada facility has the latest warehouse management systems, including GPS tracking of all outbound freight.

(From Supply House Times October '05)

Moen Inc. named **Kathy Flinn** director of marketing services - retail and **Tom Liebhardt, Jr.** director of marketing services - wholesale. Formerly, Ms. Flinn served as a Moen consultant, working with the marketing services department. In his new position, Mr. Liebhardt will supervise Moen's wholesale marketing service team, develop communication strategies and implement communication programs.

## Securing The Future: PMI 2005 Fall Meeting Highlights

The Plumbing Manufacturers Institute returned to the Capital Hilton October 16-19, 2005 to enjoy D.C.'s charm and an issue-filled PMI conference agenda. With a record 114 registrants, satisfaction survey results indicated that PMI members characterized this meeting as "one of the best ever" in PMI's 30-year history. The theme for this meeting, "Securing the Future," confirmed PMI's role as the "Early Warning Defense System" for the industry. In celebration of its 30th anniversary, PMI secured for Tuesday's dinner a special keynote speaker, **Governor Tom Ridge**, former Secretary of Homeland Security, who spoke about "The Business Impact of Homeland Security and the Emergence of China." An entertaining and dynamic presenter, Gov. Ridge included a number of personal and timely anecdotes in his presentation.

Among the highlights of the conference was the PMI-hosted Water Conservation Summit panel discussion featuring

prominent water conservation authorities from the EPA, environmentalist groups and more. The session was moderated by **Pete DeMarco** of American Standard, **Shabbir Rawalpindiwala** of Kohler Company and **John Watson** of Sloan Valve Company. Panelists included: **Mary Ann Dickinson**, of the California Urban Water Conservation Council; **Richard Harris** of East Bay Municipal Utility District; **David Broustis** of Seattle Public Utilities; **Jim Hanlon** of EPA; **Stephanie Tanner** of EPA for LEED; and **Vicki Wordon** of The Green Building Initiative. Invited guests included: **Ed Osann**, Potomac Resources Inc.; **John Koeller**, Koeller and Company; **John Flowers**, EPA; **Christine Reimer**,

National Ground Water Association, and **Pete Censky**, Water Quality Association.

"Plumbing manufacturers are often misunderstood with respect to our positions on such topics as water conservation," commented PMI Executive Director **Barbara Higgins**. "We embrace, not just give lip service to, the tenets of the PMI mission statement that we adopted earlier this year. The goal of this summit was to bring closer together PMI and those groups involved with water conservation initiatives. By working together earlier in the legislative, regulatory, and product development process, we feel the result is better for all concerned — consumers, conservationists, manufacturers. The

**Michelle Nellenbach**, Senior Professional Staff Member, who addressed the membership during a luncheon meeting.

PMI welcomed back **Michael Colopy** of International Commerce Consultants for his third presentation on Chinese culture, history and business. Mr. Colopy spoke at the Fair Trade Issue Committee meeting for more than two hours on the impact of the emergence of China and answered questions. Monday's luncheon featured **Tony Luh**, Managing Director of DragonVenture, Inc., who discussed the proposed PMI trade mission to China. The E-Business Issues and Opportunities Standing Committee, also met on Monday, and featured two presentations: **Patrick Yanahan**,

President of USA Strategies, Inc. presented "Move Over UPC, Here Comes RFID, and **Matthew Gonnering**, Director of Sales and Marketing, Widen Enterprises, who gave a demonstration on managing product images also known as digital assets. Both speakers gave encores of their presentations from PMI's successful "Dynamics of Change and Emerging Technologies" August forum.



PMI staff, Water Conservation Summit Moderators, Panelists, and Invited Guests (front row): Barbara Higgins, Christine Reimer, Vicki Worden, Richard Harris, Mary Ann Dickinson, Stephanie Tanner, John Koeller, Shabbir Rawalpindiwala; (back row) David Viola, Pete DeMarco, David Broustis, Jim Hanlon, Pete Censky, Ed Osann, John Watson

dialog at the summit indicates that conservation groups share this view. We are delighted with the response and look forward to continuing to strengthen the communications." Given the positive feedback on this summit, Ms. Higgins indicates that the session and format will likely be repeated in the future.

Forty-five PMI members attended the strategic summit, exclusive to PMI members, which took place on Wednesday morning October 19th to determine next steps.

PMI presented its Legislator Of The Year Award to **Senator James Inhofe** (R-OK) for his support of plumbing manufacturing initiatives in 2005. Accepting on his behalf was

Monday afternoon included an update from the PMI Lead Team who outlined PMI's involvement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other groups regarding future initiatives with respect to lead in plumbing products. **Bob Weed** of the Copper Development Association presented information on the features and availability of alternate alloys.

Other featured speakers at the conference were **Ben Grumbles**, EPA on water conservation issues, **Gary Stanley**, U.S. Department of Commerce, on China and fair trade issues, **Jeff Patchell**, Connection magazine, **Bob Weszley** of the WorldVision Storehouse and **Ike Casey**, PHCC, on ISH/North America and trade show consolidation.



In search of a new co-chair for her Member Services Committee, Suzanne Shaw of Chicago Faucet improvises.



Mike Sennett, legal counsel, (right) greets first time attendee Michael Bauer, Moen.



Rod Ward, Speakman, Marie-Helene Pernin, NEOPERL and Ken Martin, Delta.



PMI welcomes first time attendee Rob Zimmerman, Kohler.



First time attendee Kat Sacco, Elkay Mfg. and Scott Ramsay, Whirlpool.



Danny Gleiberman, Falcon, and John Watson, Sloan discuss the day's events.



Special visit from Will Denham, Speakman, long time PMI member.



Government Affairs are in good hands with Jack Krecek, Elkay, Ben Grumbles, EPA, Lee Mercer, Moen, and Christian Richter.



First time attendee John Wright, Delta, pauses for the paparazzi.



Symmons' Jim Galvin.



Dept. of Commerce's Gary Stanley



Colin Thielmann, Delta, and Scot McLean, Haws, pause for a photo.



Presidents Fred Luedke, NEOPERL and Keith Kramer, Chicago Faucet.



The three amigos (left): Norm Kummerlen, Moen, Tim Kilbane, Symmons and Sally Remedios, Delta.



Caroma's Steve Cummings brings greetings from down under.



Mike Regelbrugge, Amerikam, enjoys his first PMI meeting.



John Petrovic, Alsons, relaxes at the PMI reception.



John Lauer, PMI president and PMI staff, Barbara Higgins, Maria Bazan and Dave Viola.



Wilkommen! Jon Spector (left) and Andreas Dornbracht, Dornbracht Co. with Barb Higgins.



Chris Miedzius, Speakman and Fred Fraisse, NEOPERL compare notes.



Dave Modi, American Standard, first time attendee.



Shabbir Rawalpindiwala, Kohler and Pete DeMarco, American Standard.



Ray Fisher, Fisher Mfg. unwinds after a day of meetings.



All eyes are on Michael Colopy, back again with more insights on China.



Barb Higgins, PMI and Claude Theisen 2006 PMI President share a laugh.



The Masco Team: Lars Christensen, Todd Talbot and Charles Scott.



Michelle Nellenbach accepts an award on behalf of Sen. Inhofe.

## Getting To Know PMI's Committee Chairs: Steve Tokarz

By: Barbara C. Higgins, Executive Director

"Working in the plumbing industry is both my worst nightmare and my wildest dream," says **Steve Tokarz**, Senior Director, Product Development and Engineering, BrassCraft and co-chair of PMI's Fair Trade committee. "My dad and uncle are both plumbers – now retired after 40+ years — and I spent many a day helping out on side jobs," Steve explains. "They are great guys to use for field testing. As the classic Chicago code guys, they have no trouble telling it as they see it. I always get the straight story from them!" Working the Trades in the summers through college Steve notes, "I definitely enjoy the hands-on side of the business."

"I'm truly a lucky man," Steve continues. "My dad always said 'Find something you like to do and you'll never work a day in your life.' Product Development is that for me; I truly enjoy the challenge. Product Development allows you to become acquainted with the whole enterprise and every product becomes a business adventure. To me, it's great to launch a successful product that meets market needs, and that is no easy task for non-decorative building products."

Honesty figures high on Steve's priority list. His ethics were instilled early and throughout his formative years as he grew up in Chicago attending St. Laurence High School, part of the Chicago Catholic League. His sons **Kyle**, 6 and **Ryan**, 4 are involved with the National Heritage Academy Charter School system, which employs a three-pronged approach to shaping youngsters; focusing on morals, parental involvement and academic excellence.



The Tokarz boys

Steve says the boys are well-rounded

and they, like their parents, are "outdoor junkies."

"The whole family loves being outdoors and especially outdoor sports like cross country skiing, camping, canoeing, hiking and biking," says Steve. "Once a year I make a pilgrimage up to the outer regions of Canada to fish for walleye and northern pike. That's *my* Zen time." Steve and his wife **Michelle** enjoy their property on the Au Sable River in Oscoda, Michigan. At first hesitant to reveal the name of this idyllic location, Steve describes the area as a "real gem" with pure sandy beaches and NO CROWDS!

Steve enjoys sports of all kinds. He plays in a golf league, is a sports addict and a rabid Chicago sports fan (and yes, though he roots for the Cubs, he admits that he begrudgingly congratulated PMI Technical Director **Dave Viola** on the recent White Sox World Series victory). His family has held season tickets to the Chicago Bears football games since 1958. He has been involved with "fantasy football" since 1988 - long before it was computerized, he points out.

Pre-kids, Steve and Michelle enjoyed what they called "exploring vacations." The couple would drop in on an area they had researched and then decide day-by-day what to explore. "Traveling provides a sense of adventure and excitement; we can't get enough of it." During one of the pre-kid excursions Steve and Michelle discovered the wine country of Northern California.

"Wine is our hobby—but it's a blessing and a curse. You appreciate the experience of great wine, but can never drink a bad wine thereafter," Steve opines. "It's a hobby that you never master and is always changing. Once you discover a taste you like—you've got to buy it! We have a well-stocked wine cellar now, but there are always new vintages, appellations and countries to discover. And then there is

the pairing of food with wine. The discoveries never end!"

Asked about personal heroes, Steve replies instantly, "People I admire? Where do I start! C.S. Lewis, Einstein, Pope John Paul II and Gandhi, but that's only the beginning." Steve gets frustrated by people who don't seek to understand others and cites perseverance and patience as the keys to success. He feels it is important to continually set high goals saying, "Reach for the stars. At worst, you'll be knocked to the trees."

Both Steve and his wife have set and achieved high academic goals for themselves. Steve graduated from the University of Michigan (where he met his future wife) and earned a BSE in Engineering Physics/Mechanical Engineering. He then signed on with Lincoln Electric in Cleveland as Machine/Product Design Engineer. Steve and Michelle dated for seven years prior to getting married and through those years managed their long distance romance through five different states. Michelle took a job in Philadelphia, later relocating to Indianapolis where Steve joined her to work at Delta Faucet Company. While in Indiana, Steve earned his Masters in Business Administration from Indiana University. The couple relocated to Michigan in 1997 to enable Michelle to pursue a Ph.D., which she has since completed. Having previously attended ABGU (Masco-founder Alex Manoogian's funded grammar school), it was destiny that Michelle's husband would find himself at Delta then BrassCraft, two of the prominent Masco/Manoogian companies.

Steve is among the few people on the planet to actually enjoy and excel at public speaking. "My friends say I'm blessed with the gift of gab." He says the key is speaking comfortably and with confidence. "If you know your subject inside and out, you can be confident in the thought that you are

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# Getting To Know PMI's Committee Chairs: Steve Tokarz

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the expert on the matter.” And taking a page out of Marcia Brady’s book (of the TV family Brady Bunch fame), Steve jokes, “if you need to, you can always picture the audience in their underwear!”

The youngest of his siblings, Steve takes pride in his own children.

“They are buddies. My sister calls them ‘Pete and Repeat’. We’re very proud of them.” Steve says they are a reflection of his Irish, Italian and Polish heritage, describing them as “socially outgoing and confident.”



Michelle, Steve, Ryan, and Kyle Tokarz

These traits come in handy, especially for Kyle who started first grade this year.

Asked about the motivation for his involvement in the Plumbing Manufacturers Institute, Steve says that “PMI truly IS the voice of the plumbing industry. It is the vehicle for getting

things done, and is a great source of product and industry information.” He adds, “The meetings are efficient and well run. The organization is definitely worth the time and dues investment.” Steve said he feels that the information

presented over the years at PMI meetings builds on itself and that PMI staff effectively summarizes and demystifies the myriad of data thrown at plumbing manufacturers. “PMI puts all the issues in perspective,” Steve commented.

As co-chair of the Fair Trade Issue committee Steve, together with his co-chair Chicago Faucet Company’s **Mark Alan**, have breathed new life into the committee, having planted the seed of a PMI trade mission to China. “I feel that the future of PMI is in global involvement,” Steve says.

Thanks Steve! With your vision and commitment, we are sure to extend PMI’s voice and influence worldwide!

## Good News Once Again - No Dues Increase!

By: Maria Bazan, Association Manager



Maria Bazan

For the eighth consecutive year the PMI Board of Directors has held the PMI dues flat! At the recent Fall Meeting, the Board voted to

streamline the dues schedule to round the dues levels to the nearest \$100 for 2006. This rounding will have minimal financial impact on the membership and PMI.

A dues information packet will be mailed to members the first week in January 2006. Please remember that sales of all plumbing products you manufacture which are covered within PMI’s scope, must be included when computing your annual dues level. We ask that you complete the "Verification of Products" form indicating the products manufactured and/or supplied by your company and that encompass the range of products covered. This information will be updated in our

database and used by PMI staff to keep you informed of activities affecting your product lines.

Your dues declaration form, product verification form, and dues payment (full, half, or first month) are to be received at the dues collection address no later than February 1, 2006. Late payments will be assessed a penalty. The forms and your payment should be sent to:

Plumbing Manufacturers Institute  
36644 Treasury Center  
Chicago, IL 60694-6200

The PMI staff is constantly working

to add value to your dues dollars by increasing the services provided such as the topic-specific forums and workshops, along with monitoring administrative costs and cost-cutting efforts at the PMI office.

If you have any questions regarding the PMI dues collection process, please contact Executive Director **Barbara Higgs** at:

(847) 884-9764, or  
bhiggs@pmihome.org

Thank you in advance for your continued support in 2006!



The PMI office will be closed Friday, December 23, 2005 through Monday, January 2, 2006 to observe the holiday.

We wish a great holiday season to you and yours!



# Meet PMI's Newest Team Member: Lori Palcheck

By: Barbara C. Higgins, Executive Director

"Having a good work ethic separates marginal employees from great ones. I believe that work ethic can be taught, but in order for it to 'stick' it has to be incorporated into an individual's value system," says **Lori Palcheck**, PMI's new office assistant. "When a person believes that the quality of the work they are doing reflects upon them personally, it shows!"

Lori joined PMI September 20, 2005 on a part time basis. With a husband and three active children, Lori has her hands full! She learned about the job opening at PMI through a mutual friend of **Barbara Higgins**. She says she had a "good feeling" about PMI the moment she walked in the office to be interviewed. "The mood is very warm and professional," she says "I felt at home right away."

That feeling is mutual! Lori has hit the ground running, familiarizing herself with office operations, in addition to learning the nuances of updating the databases for national rebate programs and state code officials' contact lists, both of which she has taken on as ongoing assignments. Lori is also the new "voice of PMI," serving



Amber, Tony, Lori, Nick and Anthony Palcheck

on the frontline by greeting visitors, fielding inquiries and directing phone calls. With a background in sales, Lori is well versed in the importance of first impressions, members, prospective members, customer service, attention to detail, and follow up. (The fact that an Elvis impersonator appeared at Lori's wedding had nothing to do with her being hired... Really!)

Lori graduated from the University of Illinois/Chicago with a degree in marketing. She began her professional life selling services of the Harrison Conference Center (featured in the Hitchcock movie thriller *North by Northwest*) to meeting planners. She later joined Motorola to market two-way radios and data communications equipment.

Following her marriage to husband **Tony** and the birth of their first child a year later, Lori tried her hand at real estate sales, which she describes as "a great part time job." It turns out that Lori was something of a "natural," quickly gaining distinction of being named "Sales Person of the Year," and also as a member of the Million Dollar Club!

Through the years and between children, Lori has gained experience in accounting, benefits administration, and website maintenance. She holds a teaching certificate and enjoys volunteer work, having served as treasurer and on various committees of the PTA, as well as helping out at school and as a religion teacher at church. Meanwhile, her husband Tony has been climbing the corporate ladder as a Motorola executive, currently specializing in the analysis of potential Motorola acquisitions.

Both Lori's and Tony's parents are in the local Chicago area, a great benefit for keeping the families tight knit. Lori considers herself the 50/50 blend of her mother and father. She particularly admires the nurturing style, sewing prowess and culinary skill of her maternal grandmother who (so it seems) could teach Martha Stewart a thing or two!

Lori lists her primary goal in life as trying to be a good role model and mother for her children and to provide them with as many experiences as she can. Once they are grown, Lori says, she will refocus on her personal goals. Best advice? Words of wisdom? She encourages her children to be tolerant of others. Among her heroes is civil

rights activist Rosa Parks, who passed away earlier this month. "I very much enjoyed reading her biography, and admire her for defending her rights," Lori says. "There were a series of events leading up to the bus incident. Rosa Parks worked vigorously for civil rights long before she refused to give up her bus seat." The Palchecks are active in sports and music. Husband Tony wrestled and played baseball in high school. Today, he and Lori enjoy walking, biking and playing tennis. These days, the couple spends a fair amount of time as spectators of their children's activities. **Anthony**, 15, plays tenor saxophone, is on his high school's winter swim team and the spring water polo team. He hopes one day to be a schoolteacher or a coach. **Amber**, 13 (and like her mother the middle child between two brothers) participates in ballet, tap and jazz dancing. She enjoys springboard diving in the summer and hopes to dive competitively next year when she enters high school. An enthusiastic and successful student, Amber plays the alto saxophone in the junior high school band. **Nick**, 10, also plays alto saxophone. He aspires to one day work for the CIA as a spy, having shifted his focus away from wanting to be a firefighter. (Hey, all you bad guys watch out, Nick's headed your way!)

This active lifestyle doesn't leave much time for leisure but Lori says in her limited spare time she enjoys scrap booking and annual family vacations to different areas of the United States. California, and in particular San Francisco and Los Angeles, rates high on the list.

Add to the list a job at PMI, and it becomes clear that Lori has a very "full plate." With a can-do spirit, seemingly limitless energy and a commitment to excellence, Lori is already mastering her new responsibilities here with style and grace. She is proving herself to be a valuable addition to the PMI team.

Welcome aboard, Lori!

By: Christian Richter, PMI Lobbyist

Feedback from attendees at PMI's 2005 Fall Meeting in Washington, D.C., indicated the event was a success on several fronts. Among them was the opportunity for attendees to hear policy updates and exchange views with decision makers on key issues of concern for their companies. A few general notes from the conference are in order with respect to developments on water efficiency and lead in drinking water.

### Water Conservation

One of the key federal officials to address the PMI Fall Meeting on industry issues was EPA's Assistant Administrator for Water **Ben Grumbles**. As the political chief of the Agency's water office, Mr. Grumbles emphasized his strong interest in advancing voluntary water efficiency improvements and incentives in the plumbing industry, including ultra-low flow toilets and possibly other products.

Mr. Grumbles and his boss, **Steve Johnson**, who heads the EPA, are both committed to bringing some version of a formal water efficiency labeling program forward in the near term. However, several factors have frustrated their efforts to do so in the past year, including legal concerns and some turf battles inside the Agency with the already successful Energy Star program over the possible reach of the water efficiency initiative.

Mr. Grumbles noted that the EPA is interested in continuing to get feedback from the industry and wants to work closely with companies to develop an appropriate approach toward water efficiency. Just last week, following the PMI Fall Meeting, Mr. Grumbles addressed the irrigation industry, and noted that in light of continuing concerns over water quantity and use issues, particularly in western states, EPA wanted to look at partnering with that industry to find solutions for the future. He specifically emphasized the plumbing products industry as another key industry the Agency would like to

partner with in the coming year.

### Lead Regulation and Science

In light of PMI's consistent efforts to guide and educate EPA's Office of Water on responsibly addressing potential lead exposures from drinking water, it was helpful to hear Mr. Grumbles' review of EPA's upcoming proposed revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule. At this point, the Agency intends to focus its LCR package primarily on public notification of high lead levels, sampling and other related issues, and will not include provisions on lead leach levels or other issues related to plumbing products.

Not covered in Mr. Grumbles' overview was that in addition to further EPA scientific and policy input into the technical adequacy of the existing NSF-61 standard, the Agency is moving forward with a high level scientific review of a complex modeling tool – the All Ages Lead Model (AALM) – that purportedly can predict with greater accuracy blood lead levels from exposure to lead from paint, dust, soil and drinking water.

PMI recently attended the discussion of EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB), an independent body within the Agency, which just met in late October to



Christian Richter

determine whether the AALM model may indeed be effective in assessing possible adverse health impacts from lead. The SAB offered some criticism of the tool in its current form, but may give the green light to approve it soon. If so, this rather low visibility project would set the stage for a new EPA "Health Advisory" for lead exposures from various sources, and may touch on potential problems with plumbing products. No word yet, however.

PMI will continue to track these and other issues closely, and will provide up to date information to members on new developments as they arise.

## Announcing PMI's 2006 Board of Directors

### Executive Committee:

(serving one-year terms starting 1/06)

President:

**Claude Theisen**, T&S Brass and Bronze Works

First Vice President:

**Ken Martin**, Delta Faucet Company

Second Vice President:

**Rod Ward**, Speakman Company

Treasurer:

**Bill Axline**, Fluidmaster, Inc.

Immediate Past President:

**John Lauer**, Sloan Valve Company

### New Directors At Large:

**Ray Fisher**, Fisher Manufacturing  
(Term 1/06 - 12/07 completing the term for Bill Axline)

**Walt Strader**, Price Pfister  
(Term 1/06 - 12/08)

**William Ball**, WCM  
(Term 1/06 - 12/08)

### Returning Directors at Large:

**Pete DeMarco**, American Standard, Inc.  
(Term 1/04 - 12/06)

**Tom White**, Haws Corporation  
(Term 1/04 - 12/06)

**Herb Barnhart**, Tempress Ltd.  
(Term 1/05 - 12/07)

## PMI Fall Meeting Thank You Notes

Dear Barbara,

Thank you very much for remembering my request for presentations. **Andreas Dornbracht** [president of Dornbracht] was extremely interested in both the China and the "e-presentations." Thank you again for the excellent organization and attention to detail.

Best Regards,

Jon Spector

President, Dornbracht USA

Hey Barb,

I'm sure you're a bit exhausted right now. Hope the rest of the Fall Meeting went well for you. Thanks again for letting me speak to your group - I think it was very fruitful.

Thanks,

Bob Weszely

The Storehouse of World Vision

Barb, Dave and Maria,

Hope your return flights were hassle free. Great job as usual with the meetings.

Thanks,

Casey Hayes

Haws Corp.

Hi Barb and Maria,

I just wanted to thank both of you for your assistance and hospitality while I attended this week's meeting. You certainly run a tightly formatted program. Everything worked like clockwork and it was a credit to you.

I appreciated the opportunity to expose our magazine plans and I made some excellent contacts to follow up. I hope to drop by for a coffee in the next couple of weeks when I'm through Chicago.

Kind Regards,

Jeff Patchell

Connection Magazine Pty Ltd

## Hurricane Katrina: The Industry Reponds

(Supply House Times online  
October 20, 2005)

Representatives from various PHCP industry organizations participated in a teleconference call on September 2 to shape an industry-wide response to Katrina relief and recover. Coalition participants included ASA, ASPE, ASSE, IAPMO, PHCC, **PMI**, MCAA, MCA of Canada, MCA of Alberta, the World Plumbing Council and the UA. Almost all of those groups had already pledged money and other donations to various relief efforts in the days following Katrina.

The yet-to-be-named coalition aimed to determine if there is any existing infrastructure - possibly through FEMA - to act as a clearing house for PHC industry rebuilding efforts, which could include materials, manpower and money. Other avenues and relief organizations to be contacted included the World Health Organization, the Red Cross, The Army Corps of Engineers and the

Salvation Army.

Details to follow.

(Fortune Brands announcement)

Relief agencies report their most immediate need is cash, and **Fortune Brands** is determined to help make a difference. To help our neighbors in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, Fortune Brands is making a \$500,000 cash contribution to the relief efforts on behalf of everyone in the worldwide Fortune Brands family. These funds, which are in addition to contributions already made by some of our business units, will be allocated to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. We'll explore opportunities for in-kind support when the rebuilding phase approaches.

*Please let PMI staff know what your company has done to assist Katrina/Rita Hurricane victims. We'll feature your stories in the next issues.*

### 2005 PMI LEADERSHIP

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President

**Claude Theisen**, T&S Brass & Bronze Works  
First Vice President

**Ken Martin**, Delta Faucet Company  
Second Vice President

**Rod Ward**, Speakman Company  
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**Jim Westdorp**, Kohler Company  
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(1/05-12/07)

**Pete DeMarco**, American Standard, Inc.  
(1/04-12/06)

**Ray Fisher, Jr.**, Fisher Manufacturing Co.  
(1/03-12/05)

**Walt Strader**, Price Pfister  
(1/05-12/05)

**Tom White**, Haws Corporation  
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