

# People

## ■ Corporate Life



RICHARD A. BLOOM

**Chad Mitchell** ▲ is a new director of digital advocacy and outreach in the Washington office of Wal-Mart. Although he will be based in Washington, he will travel periodically to the giant retailer's Arkansas headquarters. Mitchell most recently worked for Illumen, which provides technology to facilitate issues management and grassroots organizing. Before that, he spent about seven years doing grassroots work for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

A native of Vienna in nearby Fairfax County, Va., Mitchell got his start as an intern for hometown Rep. **Frank Wolf**, R-Va. He worked on local and statewide Republican races in Virginia, including the Senate campaigns of **Oliver North** and **George Allen**, and he also spent some time as an aide in the General Assembly. Mitchell, 39, is a Penn State graduate and, not surprisingly, a huge Nittany Lions fan. More surprisingly (for a Washington-area native), he confesses to rooting for the Dallas Cowboys.

Mitchell says he is looking at ways that Wal-Mart can use technology to reach new customers, especially families. "We're trying to develop the gold standard for what is a corporate, grassroots advocacy program, both online and off-line. We're just now dipping our toe into how we can leverage *Facebook* and some of those social applications," he says. "We're thinking of what's the best way to do that. Some people are Twitterers, some people are texters, some people are e-mailers. So we've got to cover the whole gamut." —**Gregg Sangillo**

## ■ Image-Makers

Former White House press secretary **Dana Perino** is launching her own communications firm, Dana Perino and Co. Perino, whose White House tenure ended when **George W. Bush** left office, says that the wisdom of another ex-flack guided her transition from the West Wing: "One of the things **Marlin Fitzwater** told me when I left was that it's very overwhelming to leave," she says of a conversation with the onetime presidential spokesman for **Ronald Reagan** and **George H.W. Bush**.

To avoid a post-Pennsylvania Avenue letdown, Perino, 37, took on a heavy workload. She joined the issues-and-crisis group at Burson-Marsteller and became a contributor to Fox News. After years as a spokeswoman, "it was surprising to see I had a lot of opinions of my own," she jokes. Perino also set up an advisory group for female professionals called Minute Mentoring. But there was a downside: Juggling so many projects, Perino found herself working long hours, just as she had done at the White House. "I just bit off a little more than I could chew at the beginning."

Perino sees her new venture as an opportunity to step back from the chaos and ensure that she is accomplishing her professional goals, which include aiding GOP fundraising and keeping her hand in the communications world. "I'm trying to realign my work life so that I can continue to do the type of strategic communication work I want to do," she says. With her knack for performance coaching, Perino wants to help Washington players push past communications barriers to get their messages across. "Most of the people are professionals who just need some advice as to how to improve their performance." Although she is building her new firm from the ground up, Perino will still maintain a role at Burson-Marsteller. —**Sara Jerome**

## ■ Consulting Game

After five years of heading the well-regarded think tank Education Sector,

## Image-Makers

LAUREN SANDKUHNER



From ◀ **Jake Sargent's** perspective, life is good. He's not only pleased about starting a job at APCO Worldwide, he's thrilled that his beloved Washington Capitals are in first place in their division. "I'm a rabid hockey fan," he says. "Looking toward the new year, [I'm working] at what I think is the top communications firm in the city, and the Caps are on top. So I think it's going to be a good decade." Sargent, 35, is now serving as an APCO vice president, handling crisis and

litigation communications. He most recently worked at the public-affairs firm Brunswick Group.

Sargent, a Washington native, attended the elite Phillips Exeter Academy in New England, but coming of age in the nation's capital certainly had a major influence on his career choice. "When I grew up, my mayor was **Marion Barry** and my president was **Ronald Reagan**. There were some interesting characters. And there were always lively dinner conversations," he recalls. After graduating from Cornell University, Sargent eventually landed in Sacramento, Calif., as a speechwriter for GOP Gov. **Arnold Schwarzenegger**. Writing for the Governor posed unique challenges. "It was a thrill. And it was more difficult than you'd expect. I mean, he's used to Hollywood scripts," he says. "I know one thing speechwriters try to do is to hear the voice of the person they're writing for, and *that* wasn't a problem. You certainly hear his voice in your head." When Sargent headed back to Washington, he served as deputy communications director for then-House Rules Committee Chairman **David Dreier**, R-Calif. —G.S.

co-founder **Andy Rotherham**, 38, will depart in March for another new venture, Bellwether Education Partners. The nonprofit will assist organizations, individuals, and public-sector entities that are focused on improving outcomes for low-income students. "It's a dual-value proposition," he says. "Bellwether will help clients field-build and get their ideas in the marketplace." Although there are countless worthy social causes to support, Rotherham considers low-income children the worthiest of all: "The cata-

strophic failure of our education system to serve low-income kids is a national tragedy—and a threat to our way of life."

Before co-founding Education Sector, Rotherham launched and ran the Progressive Policy Institute's 21st Century Schools Project. He also served as a special assistant to the president for domestic policy during the Clinton administration.

**Kim Smith**, co-founder of NewSchools Venture Fund, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting education entrepreneurs, will join Rotherham as one of Bellwether's

four founding partners. **Mary Wells**, a business management consultant, and **Monisha Lozier**, an executive headhunter, round out the principals. Both Wells and Lozier have extensive experience in education.

**Sara Mead**, now with the New America Foundation, will join the staff as a senior associate partner. Rotherham describes Mead as a "known commodity" and a "high performer," having worked with her on several other projects. Although the location of the group's office has yet to be determined, its principals are scattered in cities across the country—Boston, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington.

This isn't Rotherham's only new undertaking: He's also partnering with **John Bailey** at Dutko Worldwide to launch Education Insider, a subscription-based research project that will provide analysis and forecasts related to K-12 policy. The for-profit research operation will be associated with Whiteboard Advisors, a non-lobbying Dutko affiliate. Loyal followers of *Eduwonk*, Rotherham's popular education blog, needn't worry—it will continue, he notes.

Meanwhile, Education Sector will begin a search this spring for Rotherham's successor and hopes to have someone aboard by summer. —Eliza Krigman

**Robert Bauer** is leaving the Motion Picture Association of America to plan a birthday party. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library has tapped him to be its director of external affairs, and he will work on the library's centennial celebration, marking a century since the late president's birth on February 6, 1911. The project's objective, Bauer explains, is to promote the library—and Reagan himself—to a younger demographic. "The concept is to try to propel the foundation forward and tell a story about Reagan's life," he says.

With corporate sponsors already secured, Bauer, 29, expects a blowout affair. He wants the celebration to highlight Reagan's optimism: "He looked at the world as full of opportunity," he says. Bauer, who has been boning up on the Reagan legend by studying the president's autobiography, has a personal tie to the Reagan era: He interned for Reagan's former deputy chief of staff, **Mike Deaver**, at the PR firm Edelman.

At the MPA, Bauer served as the

Los Angeles-based director of worldwide strategic planning. He landed a job at the association by tracking down its then-president, **Jack Valenti**, while still a Georgetown University law student. “I approached Jack, résumé in hand, after he finished giving a speech on Capitol Hill. I said, ‘My name is Rob Bauer. I’m a law student at Georgetown. I want to work for you, and I’ll do it for free,’” Bauer recalls. “The rest is history.” What prompted such dogged determination to work for the MPAA? He had become fascinated by the intersection of Hollywood and politics while watching *The West Wing*, confesses the longtime **Aaron Sorkin** fan.

The late Valenti has not been Bauer’s only high-profile boss. When he worked for Craig Brownstein, an Edelman vice president who was then a consultant to Afghan President **Hamid Karzai**, Bauer helped plan Karzai’s visit to the United States in early 2002. In that capacity, he assisted in the writing of Karzai’s first address to the United Nations. “I clicked with Karzai, and he ended up asking me to help on a few speeches after that,” he says. —S.J.

## ■ Hill People

**Stephanie Genco** spent the holidays studying. After two years as a minority press assistant at the House Homeland Security Committee, she is committee-hopping over to the House Oversight and Government Reform panel, where she will be press secretary and communications liaison. Over the congressional break, Genco, 25, prepared for her new gig by immersing herself in briefing materials and packing her schedule with coffee dates with the committee’s policy staffers. “I’d tell them, ‘Let’s grab coffee and you



**Genco**

just talk to me—just tell me anything and everything you think I need to know,’” she says. At Oversight and Government Reform, such preparation can mean a lot; the committee investigates issues ranging from ACORN to the financial crisis.

She also seeks out cues from notable press secretaries past. “I look to great communicators to understand how they do it.” Her how-to bookshelf includes volumes by former Bush II administration press secretary **Ari Fleischer** and veteran Republican spokeswoman **Torie Clarke**; Genco admires former Bush press secretary **Dana Perino** as well. Her mentor at the Homeland Security Committee was spokesman **Chad Scarborough**, who is the son of another famous communicator, **Chuck Scarborough**, the *New York Nightly News* anchor.

Genco is a 2007 graduate of James Madison University with a double major in political science and media arts and design. —S.J.

## ■ Techno-File

**Stefan Nagey** is working for a new employer and re-acclimating to life in his native land after three years in Ireland. Nagey, a specialist in Web strategy and Internet technology, has joined Qorvis Communications as a senior director. He and his wife returned recently from Dublin, where he was a member of the senior management team at Full Tilt Poker, an Internet gambling site. In that role, he was involved in search engine and Web development, online marketing, and e-commerce. “Over there, we had several hundred websites for different markets, for different languages [and] needs,” says Nagey, 29.

He hails from Annapolis and attended the University of Southern California. His father was a medical researcher whose career sparked his interest in technology. “The year that I was born, he won a grant for \$10,000 ... and he spent the whole thing on a computer,” Nagey explains. “From a very young age, I was very involved with the way computers affect our world and touch our lives. I kind of grew up with the Web.”

Aside from the joys of life in Ireland, Nagey says that his most recent gig “gave us an absolutely fabulous opportunity to explore Europe.” He and his wife traveled to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France, Germany, and other

countries. One summer they ventured far north of Oslo, Norway, to experience the midnight sun. “We flew in on a Wednesday. The sun rose on Thursday morning, and it didn’t set again until we drove back south again on the following Wednesday evening.”

In addition to Nagey, Qorvis has made several other hires. **Cassie Elliot** is serving as a managing director. She was most recently vice president at RTCRM, where her main account was Abbott Laboratories. Also coming aboard as a senior director is **Max Hancock**, who has experience in Web design and project management. He has represented such clients as AARP, Dell, and Microsoft. **Brock Boland**, a new director, has also developed websites, including one for the Taproot Foundation, an organization that promotes professional pro bono work. —G.S.

## ■ Shorts

**Farmed Out ... Julie Anna Potts** is the new chief counsel at the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee under Chairwoman **Blanche Lincoln**, D-Ark. Potts was most recently general counsel at the American Farm Bureau Federation. She has also worked as an associate in the environmental practice of the law firm Mayer Brown and as an associate in the environmental and litigation practice groups at Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal. Earlier, she was a law clerk at the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Potts, an Alabama native, earned a bachelor’s degree at Bryn Mawr College and a law degree at George Washington University.

**Sollar Power ... Jennifer Sollars** is now a senior adviser with the government-relations firm Strategic Marketing Innovations. She has worked for the Energy Department’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, and also handled transportation and water issues at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. More recently, she has been a registered lobbyist for PPL, a Pennsylvania-based electricity generator. Sollars is a political science graduate of New England College in New Hampshire. —G.S.

*Have a tip for National Journal’s People column? Contact Gregg Sangillo or Sara Jerome at 202-739-8400, or at people@nationaljournal.com.*