

Lobby Firm Aims Big by Going It Alone

By Judy Sarasohn

Thursday, June 3, 2004; Page A17

Having gone with the trend of D.C. lobby shops being acquired by global advertising and PR giants five years ago, **Barbour Griffith & Rogers** is now going in the opposite direction.

After months of negotiations, the Republican lobby shop has bought back a controlling interest in itself from the **Interpublic Group of Companies Inc.** The corporate restructuring was completed last Friday. **Ed Rogers** becomes the chairman of Barbour Griffith, and **Lanny Griffith** is the chief executive. Founder **Haley Barbour** has severed his ties since winning election as governor of Mississippi last year.

Griffith said the corporate restructuring and equity buyback -- he won't say how much the deal cost -- will make it easier to attract and retain big names by being able to offer equity in the company. The lobby shop could not do that when Interpublic owned the whole company.

ISO Better Chemistry

As merger partners, the American Chemistry Council and the American Plastics Council have not been a pliable pair. The buzz around the industry is that the different cultures of the groups, under the ACC umbrella since 2001, and warring factions within the ACC combined with the industry's economic troubles made for some very unhappy campers.

What to do? Get rid of the CEO.

The ACC late last week forced out chief executive **Greg Lebedev** with a terse statement saying that he "has indicated his intention to resign" at the end of May and thanked him for "his leadership during a time of change within the industry and [acknowledged] his efforts to lobby Congress for an improved natural gas policy."

One association executive referred to ACC members as the Hatfields and McCoys. "They have to figure out who they are. Until they do, they're not going to be happy with anyone they get," the executive said.

Another association veteran, **Thomas Donahue**, head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Lebedev's former boss, agreed.

"I'm not sure that with this confluence of events, I would have been able to do this very well," Donahue said of the ACC job.

The trade group named **Thomas Reilly**, the retired chairman of Reilly Industries, as CEO until a replacement can be found.

Lebedev joined the ACC in 2002 after serving as chief operating officer and executive vice president for international policy at the Chamber of Commerce and vice president for management and finance at the American Trucking Associations. He was a deputy assistant secretary of state under Henry Kissinger.

He's not sure what he's going to do next, but Lebedev sounded a gracious note yesterday about the chemical folks. "This is a great group of people and an essential industry," he said. "I'll do what I can to help them move forward."

Budgeteers Join Private Sector

Everybody wants a budgeteer.

James C. Capretta, the Office of Management and Budget's associate director for human resource programs and the lead OMB official on Medicare policy development, is joining **Wexler & Walker Public Policy Associates** June 16 as a managing director.

He's been at the OMB since 2001, and earlier he was a senior policy analyst on the Republican staff for the Senate Budget Committee. Capretta was a former colleague of Wexler & Walker President **Jack Howard** at the White House.

"It was a very demanding job," Capretta said of the OMB post. "After 3 1/2 years, I knew it was time to pass the baton."

At **Edelman**, former Congressional Budget Office head **Dan Crippen** joins the PR giant as a part-time senior counsel.

Since leaving CBO in 2003, Crippen, former domestic policy adviser to President Ronald Reagan, has been serving on two panels advising NASA after the Columbia shuttle disaster and serving on corporate boards.

Crippen said he will not be lobbying but providing advice on policy and health care issues.

Also on the Move

Christine Schmidt, most recently a consultant and earlier a denizen of the Department of Health and Human Services, has joined the American Cancer Society as director of policy research and leader of the group's advocacy policy team. At HHS, she was deputy to the deputy assistant secretary of health policy.

Ryan Ellis, previously executive director of SocialSecurityChoice.org, has joined Americans for Tax Reform as federal affairs manager. He succeeds **Matthew Clark**, who moved over to the Labor Department as a public liaison.

Peter J. Pitts is leaving the Food and Drug Administration, where he has been associate commissioner for external affairs, to join the public relations firm of **Manning Selvage & Lee** June 21 as senior vice president of health affairs.

Richard A. Meserve, president of the Carnegie Institution and former chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is rejoining the law firm **Covington & Burling** as "senior of counsel." He will continue to serve as president of Carnegie. Meserve was appointed NRC chairman by President Bill Clinton and stayed for the first two years of the Bush administration.

Smoking Out House District Offices

Medical marijuana patients and supporters plan to demonstrate Friday at more than 100 congressional district offices in support of legislation to protect seriously ill patients who are smoking weed under state medical marijuana laws from federal prosecution.

Talk about grass-roots lobbying.