

# ppnnow people



The Look Who's Happy brand of Gainesville, Ga.-based Big Creek Foods, maker of Look Who's Happy Fetch'n Fillets, Tempt'n Tenders and Happy Wraps treats, has appointed Breanna Duffee as its customer service inside sales manager. Duffee will interface with dog owners, answer their nutritional questions and guide them toward the right treat for their pet. She also will help coordinate requests for samples and literature from pet specialty retailers to help them merchandise and sell the natural, made in the USA treats. Duffee previously served on the Chick-fil-A restaurant chain's customer service team.

Timberline Live Pet Foods in Marion, Ill., has hired Andy Pettit as the company's sales manager. As a member of the executive management team, Pettit will be responsible for market development, customer service and initiatives to further enhance Timberline's leadership position in the reptile and amphibian market.

Pettit joins Timberline with more than 10 years of experience building successful relationships with colleagues and customers, developing new business, and training, motivating and managing customer service teams. Most recently, he held the position of associate athletics director at Southern Illinois University.

Eric Cohen, who helped to found Sea Dwelling Creatures, a Los Angeles-area aquarium livestock wholesaler, 22 years ago and served as the company's sales manager for all those years, is moving to Blue Life USA, a distributor of aquarium products based in Los Angeles.

Cohen also frequently made guest appearances for more than two years as a technical advisor for Animal Planet's "Tanked," a reality show that follows the personnel of Acrylic Tank Manufacturing as they install oversized, creatively themed aquariums in homes and businesses.

Vital Essentials appointed Kevin Malnor its vice president of sales and marketing.

Malnor brings more than 30 years of consumer-packaged goods experience with him to the Green Bay, Wis.-based pet food manufacturer.

Malnor has served in sales and marketing roles with Dial Corp., Georgia Pacific, Birdseye Foods, Northland Cranberries and, most recently, Nature's Way, where he spent 11 years.



Petplan, a pet insurance brand out of Newtown Square, Pa., named **Kristen Levine** its brand ambassador. Levine, who owns Fetching Communications, a public relations agency focusing on the pet industry, will share pet insurance information with her audience on Kristen Levine Pet Living (kristenlevine.com), her digital platform that extolls the benefits of pets in people's lives.

Petplan covers hereditary and chronic conditions to alternative therapies and cancer treatment.

ProActive Pet Products Inc. has appointed **Mike Dillon** as president, replacing John Taylor, the exiting president and CEO. Dillon, whose previous employers include Sergeant's Pet Care Products, Purina and Coca-Cola, has more than 25 years of business experience related to consumer products, with a focus on sales and marketing. Most recently, he served as an executive sales consultant with a background in product positioning and sales launches for new items. He led and implemented retail planogram programs, store resets and just-in-time delivery and inventory control at the point of sale for national chains.

**Keith Bornholtz** has rejoined Central Garden & Pet as president of its pet distribution business based at

its corporate headquarters in Walnut Creek, Calif. Bornholtz has more than 25 years of experience in the consumer package goods industry with Procter & Gamble, Clorox, Del Monte/Big Heart Brands, Master Replicas (production of movie prop replicas and high-end collectibles) and most recently Yes To (natural personal care and beauty products).

"We will count on Keith to make recommendations and decisions that will enhance our high-performing distribution organization, increase profitability and grow our business," said Jim Heim, president of business development.

Bornholtz has been involved in a broad spectrum of strategic business activities including sales, marketing, product innovation, mergers/acquisitions and organizational structure. He previously worked at Central in a senior sales capacity leading food, drug and mass channels.

## Great Things in Small Stores

Go Dog Go is a quaint and quintessential single, small, independent pet specialty retailer where cutting-edge nutrition, product quality, a carefully culled selection and customer education reign.

**KATHERINE MANOLA, owner of Go Dog Go in Oswego, Ill.**

**Type of business:** brick and mortar; the building is 100+ years old and was a bank in 1911  
**Years in business:** 8  
**Special services:** classes in nutrition and dog walking, pet sitting and vacation care

**PPN: What are the top-selling products in your store right now?**

**KM:** The grain-free kibble is still our best-seller, but I'm glad to say that frozen raw and freeze-dried raw are coming on strong.

**PPN: What are your favorite products right now?**

**KM:** I believe less is more. I am very pleased with some of the food that is coming out now that does not contain synthetic vitamins. My favorite foods for convenience are the freeze-dried raws; people still have convenience but are feeding their dogs a much better quality food. Moist food [is my favorite] for cats—it's so imperative that cats and dogs have moisture in their food.

**PPN: What are your pet peeves?**

**KM:** Unfortunately, people still believe that kibble keeps their pet's teeth clean. Not so ...

**PPN: What trends have you been keeping your eye on most closely?**

**KM:** It seems like everyone is stepping on the freeze-dried bandwagon, and the big-name food companies are finally catching on about nutrition after 15 years.

**PPN: What business challenge(s) are you in the process of tackling?**



**KM:** Being a small business in a big-business world [is challenging]. Unfortunately, even those who speak about shopping small business still go to the big-box stores. We are more educated, we can help with any problems, and we are way ahead of the trends, as we keep up on educating ourselves.

**PPN: What business goal are you hoping to achieve this year?**

**KM:** To get our name out there even more than we have and to educate more people about nutrition and the health of their pets. I would love to see more veterinarians get on board with our way of thinking.

**PPN: What are you most proud of as a small, independent pet store owner?**

**KM:** I am truly most proud of all the pet parents and pets that we have helped get on the right track with the nutrition and health of their animals.

