

# ppnnow people

**Nulo Pet Food of Austin, Texas**, has partnered with Olympic gold medal swimmer **RICKY BERENS**. The two-time Olympic gold medalist freestyler, world champion and current world-record holder in the 4-by-200-meter freestyle relay alongside Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte successfully reached the podium in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing and the 2012 Olympics in London. Berens and his labradoodle Dixie now lead Nulo's field marketing and brand ambassador programs.

Rush Direct Inc. hired **ANITA BARKER-JONES** as key accounts sales executive for natural treats. Barker-Jones supports retailers and distributors in the natural treat sector and handles customer relations. Barker-Jones has five years' experience in the veterinary field, four years in pets and many years of direct management. The company also hired **CLARE CHRISTENSEN** as key accounts

sales executive for fashion and discount retail. Christensen spent five years in the promotional products industry focusing primarily on pet and spent 10 years in the pet care industry, where she owned and managed a pet sitting business in the Chicago suburbs.

**GREGORY AUSTIN** has joined Warrendale, Pa.-based Targeted Pet Treats LLC, a maker of dog and cat dental treats and toys, as its new general manager. He most recently served as director of supply chain transformation at Ainsworth Pet Nutrition, the company's majority owner. Previously, Austin was director of contract manufacturing and innovation sourcing at Big Heart Pet Brands in Pittsburgh, where he built supplier relationships in the pet industry and launched more than 200 food and treat items.

Casco Pet has made additions to its management team. **PAUL JONES** is head of operations, **ALAN MCARDLE** is head of finance, and **MATT IVES** is marketing manager.

"These are exciting times at Casco



## A Place for Pampering

In addition to offering comprehensive services for pets, The Puppy Pantry in Georgia keeps an eye on health food and treat trends.

**Heather Nichols, co-owner of The Puppy Pantry, which has locations in Georgia**

**Type of business:** brick-and-mortar

**Years in business:** 4

**Special services:** boarding and day care, in-home pet sitting, grooming, self-service dog wash, occasional adoption days and in-store low cost vaccinations

**Pet Product News: What are the top-selling products in your store right now?**

**Heather Nichols:** Victor dog food, Earth Animal No-Hide Chews, Zignature dog food, Stella & Chewy's frozen raw pet food and Blue Ridge Beef frozen raw pet food.

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

**HN:** Earth Animal No-Hide Chews, K9Natural pet food and Allprovide frozen food.

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

**HN:** We have been watching the increase in consumer interest in raw foods over dry or canned as well as the



Brian and Heather Nichols, shown with their dog Phoebe, co-own The Puppy Pantry with Heather's parents, Tom and Elizabeth Poundstone.

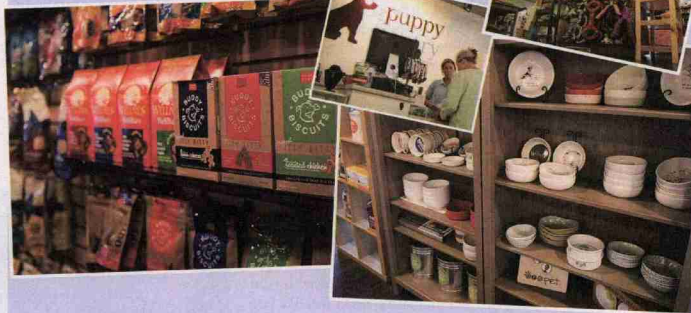
increase in freeze-dried raw and freeze-dried treat and chew products.

**PPN: What business challenge are you currently in the process of tackling?**

**HN:** Keeping up with growth in the grooming department and finding and hiring new groomers.

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

**HN:** We are opening our new Flowery Branch location and want to have success from an early date.



Pet, and I am thrilled to be adding such talent to our management team as we further expand and grow our business," said Matthew Bubeare, CEO of Casco Pet in Horsham, England.



**KRISTEN LEVINE**, founder and president of Fetching Communications in Tampa, Fla., and founder of Kristen

Levine Pet Living, an online platform promoting health and happiness through pets, launched her free e-book, "Beginner's Guide to Influencer Marketing for Pet-Friendly Businesses," in July.

"The old methods of generating awareness aren't working like they used to," Levine said. "In a time of 'banner blindness,' when consumers easily can skip over or ignore ads and block popups, it becomes more important to educate using more appealing, natural methods."

The e-book explains how pet influencer marketing works and how pet businesses and services can take advantage of influencer marketing in six chapters:

- What is influencer marketing?
- Does influencer marketing work?
- Is influencer marketing right for my pet business?
- How can I find the right influencer for my business?
- How to get started
- Influencer marketing ROI—is it working?

The free download is available at [bit.ly/28LFKHT](http://bit.ly/28LFKHT).



**RICHARD WENZ**, 66, a board member of Pet Supplies Plus, passed away on June 30 after a brief illness.

"Dick was the ultimate professional," said Tony Truesdale, chairman of the board. "He was a valued member of the board, and we will miss the guidance and wisdom he provided to PSP over the last six years. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family."

Wenz began his service on the board of Pet Supplies Plus in 2010, which included his role as chairman of the audit committee.

Hyper Pet LLC, a manufacturer of dog toys, collars and leashes in Wichita, Kan., hired **K. SUTHERLAND PR**, a public relations agency in Reno, Nev., to manage and execute all aspects of the brand's media and public relations strategies.

"We look forward to introducing their current and new product lines to more customers who need them," said Kerry Sutherland, principal.

**BRETT KIRK**, founder of Poseidon Aquatics in Gardena, Calif., passed away in June at the age of 75 following open-heart surgery. Kirk served in the U.S. Navy in the early 1960s and, after working as an electrical engineer and raising tropical fish at home in the 1970s, started Poseidon Aquatics in 1980. Kirk was regarded as a pioneer in transshipping tropical fish that sold direct from Los Angeles to pet stores on the East Coast and in the Midwest.

