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From the K Street Corridor

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Federalist Group Folks Net \$60 Million

Five senior executives at the Federalist Group, which was just acquired by public-relations giant Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, have been breaking out the champagne and caviar. Little wonder -- as part of the acquisition, Ogilvy forked over \$60 million to these top lobbyists, according to two sources familiar with the transaction. The all-GOP Federalist Group is chaired by Wayne Berman, a longtime GOP fundraising star who became a "Ranger" in the Bush re-election campaign by raising more than \$200,000. In addition to Berman, the heavyweights sharing the largesse are G. Stewart Hall, the group's founder and CEO; Drew Maloney, a former legislative director and veteran fundraiser for House Majority Leader **Tom DeLay**, R-Texas; John Green, a former executive director of the New Republican Majority Fund, the leadership PAC of Sen. **Trent Lott**, R-Miss.; and James Jay Baker, the former top lobbyist for the National Rifle Association.

-- Peter H. Stone

AARP's New Rival on the Right ...

Retired businessman Jerry Barton of Atlanta is ramping up a conservative challenge to AARP, the senior advocacy giant. The former president of General Hardware and a longtime executive with auto-parts company Genuine Parts is putting up his own money to start the National Association of Senior Concerns.

Although other seniors groups with a conservative bent -- the Seniors Coalition, the 60 Plus Association, and USA Next (formerly the United Seniors Association) -- have stepped up their presence in Washington over the past decade, "AARP has not been effectively challenged by those groups," argued media consultant Phil Kent, who is a spokesman for Barton. That's why Barton will be in Washington on September 21 to launch his new group, which Kent says will be a "carbon copy of AARP," but with a centrist-conservative philosophy.

Like AARP, NASCON will sell Medicare supplemental insurance, offer a discount pharmaceutical program, and have a special arrangement with a travel company. While critics often claim that AARP is overly influenced by its "business side," Kent says that seniors look for these benefits, and that they help to fund the organization's mission.

Barton, 77, said in a statement that NASCON will "vigorously speak out and lobby for reasonable Social Security, Medicare, and other senior citizen-related reform." He will unveil an agenda at his Washington press conference. Citing Medicare's long-term financing troubles, Barton said, "A whole new philosophical shift must occur in health care, not only to help older Americans but to secure the future for our children and grandchildren."

Kent says that NASCON, which already has a Florida-based field representative, will soon hire a Washington lobbyist to get things started in D.C.

-- Marilyn Werber Serafini

... As Dobson Calls for an 'Exodus'

Meanwhile, USA Next's aggressive president, Charles Jarvis, has appealed to evangelicals to support his challenge to AARP. Jarvis was recently the featured guest on conservative Christian powerhouse James Dobson's radio show and was slated to fill in for Dobson as host on subsequent broadcasts. Jarvis said he'd received threats because of a USA Next ad that portrays AARP as advocating gay marriage, and he asked listeners to pray for USA Next "to be God's organization in D.C., making a stand for Him." A onetime Dobson aide, Jarvis said his polls show 40 percent of AARP's members are self-identified "traditional values conservatives," but that they don't understand AARP's secular, left-wing agenda. "We need an exodus from the AARP," he concluded.

-- Julie Kosterlitz