

# 1766

Alumni Magazine



The magazine published  
by and for the  
Rutgers Alumni Association

SPRING 2011



## Rutgers Alumni Leading the Way to Economic Recovery

*Across the nation, Rutgers graduates use their expertise in a variety of fields to help put the nation's economy back on its feet*

### **ALSO INSIDE:**

- Interview with SAS Dean Doug Greenberg
- Traffic Reporter Heather O'Rourke
- LGBT Activism & Community Building at Rutgers
- Cap & Skull Decades Dinner
- RAA Happenings ■ Sports Update...and more!



## RUTGERS RISING STARS

# Agatha Asch, RC '08: From New Brunswick to New Media

BY JOYCE ESSIG, LC '05

*Editor's Note: Every day, it seems, brings more bad news about the economy. Young people entering the work force cannot find jobs, people with multiple degrees work retail in big-box stores and "boomerang kids" make their way back to their parents' homes. 1766 has decided to shine a light on young alumni bucking that trend. This new department will feature stories of Rutgers men and women making a big impact in their field within their first ten years of leaving the Banks.*



Last fall, Agatha Asch picked up and moved to Portland, Oregon, with her husband, Peter, and two cats, Luna and Ulysses. In the "City of Roses," Asch embarked on a new chapter in her life, working for global advertising agency, Wieden+Kennedy, best-known for Nike's "Just Do It" campaign.

How did this 2008 Rutgers College/SCILS graduate and self-proclaimed "Jersey girl" find herself 3,000 miles from home?

Here's how it started.

Rutgers was one of seven universities the Hightstown, NJ native considered in her senior year of high school. "I wanted to go to school out of state," explained Asch, "but visited Rutgers and fell in love with the school."

The Communications program at Rutgers was appealing to Asch. Fascinated by communications between individuals, she wanted to explore the discipline further. "Communications 101" solidified her love of communications and appreciation for verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

staff writer. She also had works of poetry published in the *UC Podium* and *Mosaic* publications.

In Spring 2006, while skimming through the *Targum* for summer internship opportunities, Asch found a listing for a Content & Site Manager at a local startup company focused on niche online publications. Asch interviewed with Finally Content, landed the internship and began her foray into online media. She became an expert in search engine optimization (SEO), the art of enhancing a website so that it does well in organic listings on Google, Yahoo and other search engines. During her internship, she reviewed products for the online publications and built relationships with over 200 manufacturers.

Junior year, Asch knew what she wanted and confidently pursued a career in online advertising. She firmed up her portfolio with additional work on websites like Barbecues.com, ChefsCorner.com and Home Décor Products' HomeClick.com. In this position, she earned a reputation as the "Search Girl," helping companies populate product news and company services pages, tailored to key audiences on the web.

It was the buzz she created at Home Décor Products that attracted global agency Wieden+Kennedy to her. After graduating in 2008—and earning membership in the Communications Honor Society and National Society of Collegiate Scholars—Asch accepted the position of Digital Strategist at the award-winning advertising agency. In this position, Asch worked on promoting the ABC and ABC Family channels, focusing on paid and organic searches. Some of her tasks included communicating messages to

target audiences, conveying the brand and building and maintaining relationships with bloggers and influencers.

In April 2010, Asch was promoted to Community Manager/Digital Strategist in Wieden+Kennedy's Manhattan office. A few months after her promotion, Asch was offered the opportunity to work from Wieden+Kennedy's headquarters in Portland where she would provide her skill-set for different clients out of the West Coast office. The new position offered Asch the opportunity to work on blue chip clients like Target and Diet Coke. She also became the voice of Wieden+Kennedy globally on social media platforms, including the company's blog, Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Similar to the lessons in "Comm 101," Asch is now monitoring online behavior—how people communicate, where they congregate, what they talk about and how they like to get their information. As social media (Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare) started to evolve, she stayed on the pulse of what was new and how her clients could be part of it. "Social media," Asch explains, "has changed the game for brands. We inject ourselves in these platforms and learn how to use them as a tool to spread our clients' messages to communities within the channels."

Asch utilizes many lessons from her days at Rutgers in her daily activities in online advertising. "Rutgers provided the foundation," Asch notes, "for the work I do now." Keeping her head in the game and understanding communication models are critical skills she picked up on the Banks. "My college experience taught me to not back down," Asch notes, "to push myself and get to the finish line. It started the race I am in now." ■

*"Rutgers provided the foundation... for the work I do now."*

Asch delved further into the field by assisting her mentor, Jenny Mandelbaum, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communications, as a tutor. "I loved helping other students," Asch recalls, "learn to express their thoughts more effectively." She honed her own skills by working as a *Daily Targum*