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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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CONSUMER WATCHDOG SEEKS PR HELP

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the federal watchdog for the banking sector created by the Dodd-Frank Act, is dangling a \$720K, three-year contract for content about consumer or personal finance to educate the public about financial products and services.



The CFPB's Office of Financial Education released an RFP this month to award a single, blanket contract to produce articles, blogs and social media posts, collateral materials, speeches and other content aimed at consumers, stakeholders and other federal agencies. Proposals are due Feb. 9.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1D5WckS>.

UNILEVER PRO IN PN CONSUMER SEAT

Christine Cea, a Porter Novelli alum and senior director of marketing communications for Unilever, has returned to PN to head its global consumer practice in a new post.

Cea spent the last nine years at Unilever in New York and New Jersey, guiding PR, social media and other marcomms efforts for brands like Hellman's, Axe and Dove. In her earlier stint at Omnicom-owned PN, she led its London consumer practice and served as SVP in New York and the UK.

Cea reports to PN CEO Karen van Bergen.

CHINA HIRES VETERAN GOP HAND

China has hired Rogich Communications of Las Vegas, the political intelligence/PA shop of Sig Rogich, 70, as Republicans cement control over Washington.

The former advisor to Presidents Ronald Reagan, George Bush I and II, is tapped to bolster the bi-lateral relationship between China and the US. He also counseled Republican Presidential nominees John McCain and Mitt Romney.

Rogich Communications will help China's embassy effectively present its views to the executive and legislative branches and American business community.

Rogich once accompanied former Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev on a 40-city swing of the US and did a short stint as Ambassador to his native Iceland.

He leads a team that includes VP Christopher Cole and director of government affairs Sean Fellows. It reports to Ambassador Cui Tiakai.

Qorvis MSL has a \$25K per-month media relations contract with China that expires this month.

NEXT FIFTEEN TO RAISE \$6.5M WARCHEST

Next Fifteen Communications Group, citing strong growth, particularly in the US, said it will sell more than three million shares to raise £4.3M (\$6.5M) for digital acquisitions and investments in the US and UK.

The UK-based parent to firms like Text 100, M Booth, The Blueshirt Group and Bite, said three "specific smaller investment and acquisition opportunities" are expected to close in the next six months.

CEO Tim Dyson Next Fifteen's US operations have show strong trading with double-digit organic revenue growth. "The acquisitions we have in mind will continue Next 15's overall drive to create a new type of integrated marketing group which has at its core the technology of marketing: content, data, insight, analytics, apps and content platforms," he said.

NF acquired content ad agency Story Worldwide for \$6.6M in October.

EDELMAN PRO TO BRUNSWICK AS DIGITAL CZAR

Edelman's Michael Krempasky has moved to Brunswick Group's Washington office as chief of its global digital practice.

As general manager and head of Edelman's digital PA practice, Krempasky oversaw online strategy for public policy, reputation and crisis communications.

Prior to Edelman, he was political director of American Target Advertising, a full-service creative direct response marketing firm that's involved with fundraising and advocacy for corporate and non-corporate entities.

Krempasky's experience "will help clients harness the power of digital and social media to engage, educate, and influence stakeholders further strengthens our global capabilities," said Brunswick chief Susan Gilchrist in a statement. He will work coordinate activity with Brunswick's digital/design unit MerchantCantos.

Brunswick has more than 750 staffers in 13 nations.

DOBA TEAMS WITH BLOOMBERG ALUM

Andrew Doba, who was comms. director to Connecticut Governor Dan Malloy, has joined New York City-based Stu Loeser & Co. to expand into the Nutmeg State.

Doba handled issues such as the effort to curb gun violence in the aftermath of the slaughter at Sandy Hook Elementary School, bid to become the nation's first state to pass a \$10.10 minimum wage law, and response to Hurricane Sandy. He has set up shop at Stamford's Innovation Center.

Stu Loeser is the longest running mayoral spokesperson in NYC history, serving Mayor Mike Bloomberg for seven years.

WEBER DELIVERS NIGERIA GOOD GOV PITCH

Weber Shandwick developed Nigeria's online effort to promote its "comprehensive plan to modernize the economy and improve public services" of the African energy powerhouse that is under siege by Boko Haram Islamic group.

The PR firm's London office, on behalf of Nigeria's Transformation Agency, designed, build and launched its website last month.

Weber Shandwick will develop site content and is expect to handle promotion, according to its lobbying report.

Nigeria paid \$617K for the work.

During his Jan. 25 visit to Nigeria, Secretary of State John Kerry warned Nigeria's leadership that further American counterterrorism aid is contingent on a fair and free presidential election next month.

He made that pitch in separate meetings with President Goodluck Jonathan and political rival retired general Muhammadu Buhari.



SORINI SAMET SIGNS BAHRAIN PACT

Sorini Samet & Assocs. has inked a one-year \$120K pact with Bahrain's Economic Development Board to handle provisions of its free trade pact with the US related to the garment sector that are set to expire July 2016.

SS&A has handled textile and apparel negotiations for the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, Trans-Pacific Partnership and agreements signed with Jordan and Egypt on behalf on manufacturers, trade associations, marketers and retailers.

Ron Sorini held positions in the Commerce Dept. and was appointed by President Bush as chief negotiator at the Office of the US Trade Representative. He's a former senior VP for international development & government relations at Fruit of the Loom.

Andrew Samet, one-time advisor to New York Senator Daniel Moynihan, served in the Clinton Administration as Labor Undersecretary for international activities and dealt with global trade matters for the White House National Economic Council.

SS&A is to counsel Bahrain on US policy, draft position papers/talking points and communicate the government's position to US decision-makers and the private sector.

FITZGIBBON OPENS IN UK WITH STONE AIDE

FitzGibbon Media, DC-based progressive PR firm, has opened in London with Suzie Gilbert, who promoted and co-produced films of Oliver Stone, in charge of the outpost.

Gilbert worked on Stone's "Untold History of the US," "W" and "South of the Border." She teamed with Russell Brand on a documentary about Louisiana's Angola Prison.

Gilbert has handled delegations of American actors (Sean Penn) to South America to meet with leaders such

as Brazil's Lula da Silva and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. She also built Hollywood support for whistleblowers Julian Assange and Edward Snowden.

Trevor FitzGibbon believes London-born Gilbert's extensive networks in the UK, South America and Middle East will result in campaigns that "break out and through with audiences across the globe."

EMBATTLED HERBALIFE BOLSTERS PA

Herbalife, the embattled nutritional products company, has added Weber Shandwick alum Marcus Reese in the new post of VP for state and local government affairs.

Reese has consulted for the company for the past year as chief of staff at PA shop Tusk Strategies, where he also handled local issue campaigns for Uber, AT&T and Wal-Mart.

He was senior VP for Weber Shandwick's corporate issues team and senior director at crisis specialists Smith & Co. He worked on the political side for George W. Bush and Staten Island District Attorney Dan Donovan, among others.

Alan Hoffman, EVP of global corporate affairs at Herbalife, which has weathered pressure from activist investor Bill Ackman and suffered on Wall Street, said Reese is an important addition "as we continue to inform and educate key thought leaders about the positive impact Herbalife is having on communities across the nation."

Hoffman, a top policy exec at PepsiCo and former deputy chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden, joined Herbalife in July.

The company employs a successful direct selling business model that has sparked federal and state probes and that Ackman has dubbed a pyramid scheme. A key argument for Ackman is that its model exploits minority distributors of the products.

OBAMA ALUM OPENS LA OUTPOST FOR SKDK

Bill Burton, who was national press secretary for Obama 2008 and White House deputy press secretary during the president's first term is opening a Los Angeles office for SKDKnickerbocker.

After leaving the White House, Burton launched Priorities USA Action, which raised more than \$90M for Obama's re-election bid. Most recently, he has advised *Fortune* 500 companies and non-profit organizations.

SKDKnick has strong ties to the Hollywood entertainment community as evidenced by work for Walt Disney Co., HBO and Motion Picture Assn. of America.

Hilary Rosen, managing director of the firm, formerly headed the Recording Industry Assn. of America and has worked with Live Nation, Facebook and Yahoo.

Burton also worked as Rahm Emanuel's communications director at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and handled communications matters for Democratic Senators John Kerry/Tom Harkin and Congressman Dick Gephardt.

Anita Dunn, managing director of SKDKnick and veteran of Jimmy Carter's White House, served as director of communications, policy and research operations for Obama for America and was a top advisor to the President."

CONDE NAST TO PEN STORIES FOR ADVERTISERS

Conde Nast has unveiled 23 Stories by Conde Nast, a copy shop, to develop content for its advertising partners.

The upscale magazine publisher believes its creative talent can write compelling copy for distribution via Conde Nast's multiple platforms to increase consumer engagement.

The advertising content will be designed to blend in with editorial copy, rather than being tagged as paid advertising.

Pat Connolly, VP-marketing solutions for Condé Nast Media Group heads the operation, reporting to marketing chief Edward Menichesi.

"We are changing the branded content game with 23 Stories by Condé Nast by offering marketers, for the first time, access to our unparalleled editorial assets," said Menichesi in a statement.

The new operation is named after the number of floors that Conde Nast occupies in its new World Trade Center headquarters.

Conde Nast says it reaches 77M people each month via its digital, mobile and video platforms.

The company owns *Vanity Fair*, *New Yorker*, *GQ*, *Allure*, *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Wired* and *Bon Appetit*.

MEREDITH ACQUIRES SHAPE MAG

Meredith has inked a deal to acquire American Media's *Shape*, *Natural Health* and *Fit Pregnancy* titles.

Shape will be distributed with Meredith's *Fitness* magazine starting with the May 2015 issue, boosting Shape's rate base 60 percent to 2.5M. Meredith said the mags' respective digital sites will continue as separate portals.

Tom Harty, national media group president for Meredith, said the deal boosts its reach to millennial women to more than 23M.

Shape's acting editor director, David Zinczenko, will continue in that capacity through his Galvanized LLC operation.

**INDIANA GOV SCUTTLES STATE NEWS OUTLET**

Indiana Gov. Mike Pence reversed course and pulled the plug on plans for a state-run, taxpayer-funded news outlet to disseminate pre-packaged news stories to reporters and outlets in the Hoosier State.

The *Indianapolis Star*, which uncovered the story, reported that Pence would unveil "Just IN" next month, a digital outlet of stories written by press secretaries under the purview of former *Star* reporter Bill McCleery.

Documents outlining the media venture obtained by the *Star* said the site would "break news -- publishing information ahead of any other news outlet." One document notes: "Strategies for determining how and when to give priority to such 'exclusive' coverage remain under discussion."

SKYMALL PARENT CRASHES

The parent of SkyMall magazine is filing bankruptcy due to intense competition for the time of its once-captive audiences of airline passengers.

Founded in 1990, SkyMall catalogs showcase a collection of travel products, electronics, household items, sporting goods, oddities, pet toys, all of which it calls "cool stuff."

The cover of the swansong issue features "kickboard luggage" to allow users to ride from curbside to airport terminal.

"Historically, the SkyMall catalog was the sole in-flight option for potential purchasers of products to review while traveling. With the increased use of electronic devices on planes, fewer people browsed the SkyMall in-flight catalog," said Xhibit in its Securities and Exchange Commission filing.

The company also said competition from Amazon and eBay combined with the cost of catalog printing triggered a liquidity crisis.

Scott Wiley, acting CEO, is hopeful the SkyMall brand will find another home and remain in operation as it has for the last 25 years.

MEDICAL POT CO INVENTS PR EXEC

The *Toronto Globe and Mail* has smoked out a phony PR executive and other falsehoods at medical marijuana purveyor CEN Biotech, which has lost its second PR firm in a month.

The paper reported today that a Dec. 21 press release criticizing *Globe and Mail* coverage of CEN quoted internal PR head Isak Weber, an individual who does not exist at the company.

The made-up PR guru, as well as other misrepresentations found in an earlier *Globe and Mail* investigation into the company, sparked its second outside PR firm, Pathway Group, to part with the client last week. New York-based 5WPR split with CEN at the end of 2014, reportedly after the company issued press releases under the PR firms name without authorization.

The apocryphal December release sent through Marketwired included a Q&A interview with CEN's "internal public relations spokesperson, Isak Weber," refuting *Globe and Mail* coverage of the company as "misleading" and "grossly misstated."

Pressed by the newspaper about Weber, CEN CEO Bill Chaaban called the name a "nom-de-plum," likening the device to executives who use speechwriters or corporate mascots like Ronald McDonald or Mr. Clean.

The newspaper, questioning the relatively unknown companies gunning for federal dollars in Canada's burgeoning medical marijuana field, reported that CEN made false claims about its license status with the Canadian healthcare service.

BRIEF: Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer plans to spin off its remaining 15 percent stake in China's Alibaba's e-commerce operation into a new entity in her program to maximize shareholder value. The scheme will result in a \$16B tax investment on the \$40B Alibaba stake.

ENERGY SECTOR NEEDS TO STEP UP ITS PR

By Renzi Stone

"I know I'm not supposed to say this, since I live in Oklahoma, but I'm really enjoying the low gas prices and hope they stick around for a while."

These words from my millennial friend illustrate the challenge faced by America's energy sector. The sector needs to convince the general public that high commodity prices drive economic opportunity in all areas of the economy, including schools, social services and even PR firms.

My friend knows her economic best interests are tied to a growing, robust energy economy, especially in Oklahoma, but low gas prices are an immediate, real benefit to her pocketbook. How do you compete with that?

By any measurable standard, the shale revolution in the US has created more jobs than every other industry combined. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, from 2007 to 2012, the total annual average employment in all industries decreased by 3.7 million, or 2.7 percent, while U.S. oil and natural gas industry employment increased 31.6 percent.

Oklahoma, Colorado, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas have been the direct beneficiaries, but the impact is broader than any one state. Those jobs are white and blue collar opportunities.

“The economic activity generated by the energy sector is largely discounted and even resented.”

These are pretty impressive statistics, but they describe something that the average American, like my friend, cannot see yet she pays for it.

The economic activity generated by the energy sector is largely discounted and even resented. If anything, people feel it has brought them pain at the pump.

PR firms that understand the industry could do a real service to energy companies of all stripes and help them use this pause in growth to engage with the social-media-fed, bite-sized-information-loving average American.

Whether the subject matter is transportation, exports or environmental, the energy industry faces many communication challenges and has been on the defensive too long.

Occasional spills, lack of transparency and environmental mishaps tarnish the reputation for all. For every company that has strong communications practices, there are five others that literally have no one in charge of communications. Some lack even basic websites.

Energy is a complicated and emotional business, but it's also the backbone of the American economy.

During this growth pause, let's get to work as communicators to re-establish recognition of the energy industry as a vital part of our nation's economy

Renzi Stone is CEO of Oklahoma City-based Saxum, which represents American Petroleum Institute, Williams, American Energy Partners, Pentair Valves & Controls and Enable Midstream Partners.

A PR FIRM'S ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

By Robert Ludke

In 2014 Hill+Knowlton Strategies unveiled its first U.S. sustainability report with two quantitative surveys – one for employees and one for clients – to learn about what issues those audiences wanted H+K to focus its sustainability efforts on and how they want that information conveyed publicly.

The results showed that H+K environmental footprint is of high interest to both audiences. Consider:

- 96 percent of employees said they believe it is important to report on recycling and e-waste in offices;
- 94 percent of employees believe the firm should track and report waste management practices in offices;
- 55 percent of clients believe it is “Very Important” to report on energy consumed in company offices; and
- 53 percent of clients believe it is “Very Important” to report on recycling efforts in company offices.

Armed with that knowledge, the team developing the report began working with the finance department to learn more about the firm's consumption of energy-intensive resources such as air travel, electricity, paper and water.

The initial assumption was that collecting much of that data would be fairly straightforward. However, the team developing the sustainability report quickly realized there was not an overarching process across offices that allowed data to be collected and measured in a consistent manner. As a result, while we knew H+K was making strides to improve its environmental performance, we really had no way of knowing the effectiveness of those efforts. More important, the lack of consistent data made it impossible to establish benchmarks by which we could monitor future performance and, ideally, set goals.

At that point, we faced a fairly significant decision: H+K could either invest a great deal of time establishing a process to measure environmental performance, or we could find a team of experts to help us solve this challenge. With the firm's leadership, we opted for the latter course and enrolled in Environmental Defense Fund's Climate Corps program, a client. Similar to most every participant in EDF Climate Corps, we wanted to not only reduce our environmental footprint but also use the efficiencies from doing so to save money. The expectation is that the reduced consumption of overhead expenses such as paper, water and electricity will result in cost savings for H+K U.S.

This belief gets to the core of our own sustainability work with clients: If done purposefully, operating a business in a sustainable way – including an environmentally sustainable way – will have a positive impact on a company's bottom line.

In recent weeks, H+K has been working with EDF to establish the type of fellow best suited for our needs, and some of our larger offices have begun the process of thinking through what information can be shared when the fellow arrives in summer 2015.

Without a doubt, there will be plenty of challenges in this process, but we are confident measures can be put in place to improve both H+K's environmental footprint and its bottom line.

Robert Ludke is executive VP in charge of governance & sustainability at Hill+Knowlton Strategies.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**O&M SPLITS WITH 'FINDING NEVERLAND'**

O&M Co., the Broadway PR firm of Rick Miramontez working to promote Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein's first musical, "Finding Neverland," resigned last week reportedly after clashing with Weinstein.

The *New York Times* reported that Weinstein was concerned that major magazines were not engaged by the show's PR staff to pen features on the production or its well-known actors, including Kelsey Grammer and Matthew Morrison. Weinstein told the Times that he asked Miramontez and his team "rudimentary questions" like "Who is the editor of GQ?" which they couldn't answer.

Miramontez said his team passed Weinstein's "bizarre pop quiz ... with flying colors." He said Weinstein was demanding cover stories, which was not likely.

Weinstein, who later tempered his criticism of Miramontez to the Times, later said the PR pro was doing a "bang up job" on another production, adding: "I'll be begging Rick to come back by tomorrow."

Weinstein and O&M said in a statement that there are "no hard feelings on either side of the recent theatrics and we all move forward with one mutual desire - for 'Finding Neverland' to open on Broadway triumphantly."

The big-budget musical has been in development for two years.

COURIER GETS HELP IN ACQUISITION BATTLE

Courier Corp., the publicly traded, Massachusetts-based book publishing giant, is relying on Joele Frank for PR support amid a burgeoning acquisition battle.

Courier, the second largest book maker in North America, on Jan. 16 inked a \$260M merger agreement with Quad/Graphics, the \$5B global printing company that wants Courier's digital publishing savvy. But RR Donnelley & Sons stepped in last week with an unsolicited, \$23-per-share bid, trumping Quad/Graphics' \$20.50 pitch.

Courier's board, which approved the Quad/Graphics deal, said the RR Donnelley offer would "likely" be deemed a superior proposal, although its determination is not yet complete.

Joele Frank managing director Averell Withers counsels Courier on the PR front.

Claire Ho directs corporate communications for Quad/Graphics.

Chicago-based RR Donnelley has not commented publicly on its bid.

Courier posted fiscal 2013 revenues of \$275M with net income of \$11.2M.

BRIEF: **Ketchum** signed a deal with Sydney-based The Hausmann Group to be its exclusive affiliate in Australia. The 25-year-old firm led by Judi Hausmann covers PR, experiential marketing and healthcare for clients like MAttell and Microsoft. Hausmann said: "We will remain a nimble, independent operator but with the backing of Ketchum's deep capabilities, creative talent and resources and impressive global client network." Ketchum said it is the latest in a series of Asia moves that included China, India, Korea and Singapore.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York Area**

Finn Partners, Chicago and London/Xchanging, for North American and UK PR for its technology business unit, following a competitive RFP process. The award expands an existing relationship with London-based Xchanging that covers North America at the corporate level and the company's procurement and insurance business units. FP is charged with promoting Xchanging Technology's comprehensive service, consulting and product portfolio, including its Internet of Things and analytics solutions, Education Platform, and Application and Engineering Services.

Nancy J. Friedman PR, New York/The Williamsburg Hotel, for launch of the 150-room property in fall 2015 in Brooklyn, and the Hotel Commonwealth, the Boston hotel undergoing a \$50M renovation to be completed in the fall, for PR.

Liberty Comms, New York and London/Donky, mobile consumer engagement platform of Dynmark, for launch of the company in the UK and US markets and to grow brand awareness, following a competitive pitch process in late 2014.

PCG Advisory, New York/BioSig Technologies, medical devices, for PR, social media, digital and capital markets advisory.

East

Media & Communications Strategies, Washington, D.C./Indian National Bar Association, as AOR for the US. MAC Strategies has a New Delhi office. The INBA is targeting law firms and clients that want to develop and exchange business and legal expertise between India, the US and globally.

Pappas Group, Bethesda, Md./The International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., as AOR, including brand strategy, social media, mktg. and media planning.

JTo PR, Tampa Bay, Fla./Monica Eaton-Cardone, CIO and co-founder of payment processing service Chargebacks911, for PR.

Midwest

AutoCom Associates, Bloomfield Hills, Mich./Emissions Analytics, UK-based automotive data acquisition firm that helps companies analyze fuel-economy and emissions data, as AOR for North America.

Stevens & Tate Marketing, Lombard, Ill./Genieco, home fragrances, as AOR for marketing, including research and social media.

Maccabee, Minneapolis/Summit Orthopedics, orthopedic specialty group with 14 locations and over 600 employees across the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, for PR.

Southwest

Amendola Communications, Scottsdale, Ariz./Recondo Technology, financial management software for the healthcare sector, as AOR for PR, including media relations, events, thought leadership opportunities, content marketing and social media.

West

Blaze, Santa Monica, Calif./rove, mobile lifestyle brand including hydration bottles, mugs, lunch boxes and bags, for PR, including media relations. Blaze president Matt Kovacs said rove is taking "the water bottle to the next level."

NEWS OF SERVICES**AMBROSINI DIRECTS NYU STRAT. COMMS.**

Angela Ambrosini, creative/marketing director for the American Camp Association, has been named director of NYU's School of Professional Studies Strategic Communication, Marketing and Media Management programs.

She replaces Paula Payton, who held the post for about a year and is now chief commercial officer for SmartSports.

Ambrosini has been an adjunct professor in the school's Design, Digital Arts and Film department. Prior to overseeing design, PR and marketing for the ACA, she was associate VP and creative director at Christie's auction house and manager for creative services at the non-profit ARTstor.

The NYU SCPS dropped "PR" from the program's name in favor of "Strategic Communication, Marketing and Media Management" last year.

EPICOMM IS NAME OF THREE TRADE GROUPS

Epicomm is the new name of three printing/ mailing trade groups that had employed Joseph Truncala, who joined PR Society of America Jan. 12 as CEO.

Truncala had been with the National Assn. for Printing Leadership, which merged with the Assn. of Marketing Service Providers and National Assn. of Quick Printers.

"AMSP, NAPL, and NAQP have a long and distinguished history of service to the printing and mailing industry, but that industry is changing and we recognize that, if we are to serve our members' evolving needs at the highest level, our association must change as well," said chairman Tom Duchene.

The new brand was picked after a survey of more than 200 members from all industry segments by a third-party organization that specializes in association branding. "By unifying our combined resources under our new name, which is representative of the 'epic communications' industry we serve, we are launching a new organization that is firmly focused on the future and ready to adapt to its challenges," Duchene added.

"Change is a constant in our industry and tenaciously hanging on to the status quo is a recipe for failure," said Epicomm President and CEO Ken Garner. "We have long advised our members that they must understand and leverage change for success and we're practicing what we preach by proactively moving forward with a dynamic new brand that builds on our proud past and emphasizes our aspirations for an even brighter future.

"We are also looking to the future by launching new member-focused initiatives, including an in-depth member survey that will seek to understand more fully what Epicomm can and should provide its members in today's evolving industry," said Garner.

BRIEF: Shocase.com has launched as the first social network designed for marketing pros, integrated social media platforms like LinkedIn and YouTube. Founder and CEO Ron Young said the vertical network aims to display and share the work of marketers "and those who need their expertise."

PEOPLE**Joined**

Abby Gardner, digital director of *Cosmopolitan/Marie Claire*, beauty director at *YM*, senior editor at *Glo.com* and *fashionista.com* and writer at *Allure*, to beauty, fashion and lifestyle firm Lippe Taylor, New York, in the newly created VP-content post. Most recently, she was consulting publishers on content and development of social media strategies. Gardner will create material for Lippe Taylor clients such as Elizabeth Arden, Deutsch Spirits, Galderma and Allergan. Maureen Lippe founded the New York-based shop after working as an editor at *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*.

**Gardner**

Dan Scandling, veteran Hill aide most recently chief of staff and press secretary for Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), to Ogilvy Washington as senior VP for corporate and PA. He spent the past 25 years in Congress, first as chief of staff and press sec. to Democrat-turned-Republican Rep. Herb Bateman (Va.) and then as Bateman's top aide through the Congressman's retirement last year. Scandling started out in journalism as general manager and editor for *The Caroline Progress* before moving to PR in the late 1980s as PR officer for the Virginia Housing Development Authority.

Kelly Schwager, senior VP/chief marketing officer at Streetline Inc. and VP-global products communications at SAP, to Edelman as general manager of its Silicon Valley outpost, succeeding **Maria Amundson**, who was bumped up to global tech chair in September. She reports to Cricket Wardein, US western region chief. Schwager also handled communications for SAP co-CEO Jim Hagemann Snabe and did stints at Symantec, Veritas, USWeb/CLS and Cunningham Communication.

Julie Green Bataille, director of comms. for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to GMMB, Washington, D.C., as senior VP focused on healthcare. She ran the largest outreach and education efforts in CMMS' history during the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

Justin Wilson, crisis and media rels. specialist, Levick, to Alpaytac, Washington, D.C., as A/D.

Promoted

Max Greenwood to director of governmental and media relations, Arkansas Blue Cross & Blue Shield, Little Rock. The former deputy press secretary for the Clinton for President campaign and Arkansas Democrat reporter joined in 1996 to manage public policy and will continue as ABCBS' spokesman.

Honored

Advertising Age has named PR veteran **Harris Diamond** its "executive of the year" for his leadership of Interpublic's McCann Worldgroup operation, which has 23,000 staffers. Diamond, who was running IPG's CMG division and PR flagship Weber Shandwick, took the McCann helm in 2012. Ad Age said Diamond "infused the network with new blood and fostered a spirit so collaborative that it scooped up the massive global Microsoft business."

PRIVATE EQUITY GIANT SUES PR EXEC.

Private equity firm TPG Global has sued its former global head of public affairs, Adam Levine, alleging in federal court that the former Bush White House spokesman took confidential documents and threatened to disclose information to the press to harm the firm.

Levine, who joined TPG in 2008, made a "series of ominous threats against [TPG] and its employees and began secretly accessing [TPG] proprietary and confidential information" after he was told he would not be elevated to partner, according to the complaint filed in US District Court in Texas, where TPG is based.

The company says Levine on several occasions threatened to leak information to the media to plant damaging stories about the firm.

Levine was managing director of global public affairs before leaving TPG at the end of the year. He told Reuters in early January that he decided to go back into politics.

Levine spokesman Barbara Rohn said Levine is a whistleblower: "Mr. Levine was dismissed because he had alerted TPG senior management to serious issues of non-compliance and defrauding its investors of millions of dollars in fees and expenses."

TPG, which says Levine has contacted other media outlets, said it fired Levine on Dec. 31 in response to "continued threats and taking of TPG's confidential information," according to the complaint.

At one point, the complaint alleges, Levine "commented that he would 'take down' TPG the same way that he took down Scooter Libby," the former aide to Vice President Dick Cheney who did jail time for lying about his role in the CIA-Valerie Plame leak scandal.

Levine, it was widely reported, testified before the grand jury in that case.

Levine was previously VP of corporate communications for Goldman Sachs after his White House stint as assistant WH press secretary and director of TV news. He was a senior producer for "Hardball with Chris Matthews."

TPG wants a court to order Levine to return any documents or files and disclose who he gave any info to. The firm also seeks damages.

The private equity firm said in its complaint that it learned of one instance of Levine's access to confidential materials when a reporter for the *New York Times* who had internal TPG emails contacted TPG in late December.

TPG said a forensic investigation showed Levine forwarded (and apparently doctored) one such email to his own email address 10 days earlier.



'INTERVIEW,' 'SELMA' TOP MOVIE PR NOMS

The International Cinematographers Guild has nominated Sony's "The Interview" among five other films for its coveted top award for studio publicity.

The guild of photography directors, publicists and other film crew members gives the Maxwell Weinberg Publicists Showmanship Motion Picture Award annually for outstanding achievement in publicity and promotion.

Sony's Columbia Pictures will square off against 20th Century Fox ("The Fault in Our Stars"); Marvel – Walt Disney Studios ("Guardians of the Galaxy"); Warner Bros. ("The Lego Movie"); Paramount Pictures, Pathe and Harpo Films ("Selma"), and Universal Pictures ("Unbroken") for the honor.

The top award for individual publicists will go to one of Melissa Kates of PR firm Viewpoint LA; Elaine LaZelle (Walt Disney Studios); unit publicist Sheryl Main; Maureen O'Malley (Warner Bros. Int'l), and Murray Weissman of Weissman/Markovitz Comms.

The guild will present the 52nd annual awards at a luncheon at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Feb. 20. Full list of nominees is at cameraguild.com.

DEBT COLLECTOR CHARGES PORTER

PRA Group, the globally expanding, publicly traded consumer debt collection company, has brought in Nancy Porter as VP of corporate communications.

Porter takes the reins from Rick Goulart, who has left PRA, which changed its name from Portfolio Recovery Associates on the \$1.3B acquisition of Swedish debt collector Aktiv Kapital AS last month.

Porter makes the move from Monarch Financial Holdings, where she was senior VP of marketing for the NASDAQ-traded bank holding company. She ran her own PR shop for three years around stints at Chartway Federal Credit Union, Fareed & Company, and Ogilvy & Mather, among others.

PRA, which buys up "non-performing consumer debt," posted third quarter revenues of \$239M (up 21%) with net income of \$51.2M. Cash collections were \$372.7M at the Virginia-based company.

SVB, JF HANDLE PACKAGING DEAL

Sard Verbinen & Co. and Joele Frank handle media duties regarding the \$16B combination of packaging giants Rock-Tenn Co. and MeadWestvaco.

Rock-Tenn, which has annual sales of \$10B, is the country's No. 2 maker of corrugated boxes after International Paper.

MeadWestvaco trails only Graphic Packaging Holding when it comes to thin paper cartons for goods such as cereal boxes.

Rock-Tenn CEO Steven Voorhees, said deal joins "two highly complementary organizations" that have an "exceptional cultural fit."

He'll helm the combined yet unnamed new Richmond-based company, supported by MeadWestvaco CEO John Luke, who will become non-executive chairman.

SVB's Bryan Locke, Carissa Felger and Elizabeth Smith rep Rock-Tenn, while JF's Steven Frankel and Joseph Snodgrass work MeadWestvaco.

PR OPINION

The reported erection of an Orthodox Jewish religious boundary called an eruv in Westhampton Beach last summer was a “publicity stunt,” local critics initially said. They could be right since evidence of an eruv is lacking.

Residents have scoured the telephone poles in the vicinity of the Hampton Synagogue but can't find any of the 10-15 ft. clear plastic strips called lechis that are supposed to be on the entire lengths of 27 poles. Normally such strips are black plastic and easy to see.

The voluminous legal filings against WHB, Southampton and Quogue by the East End Eruv Assn. stress that the markers are “almost invisible.”

The markers, if there, advertise that “WHB welcomes the Orthodox with open arms,” say critics. No other religion or group would get such a welcome, they add.

EEEEA plans to erect eruvim in Southampton and Quogue. All three Hampton's communities are fighting the moves. EEEA responded to the rejections by filing multi-part lawsuits.

Jumping into the fray on the side of the EEEA have been PSEG/LIPA and Verizon. Public Service Electric & Gas of N.J. is operating LIPA for the next 12 years. Both sued the towns when they wouldn't agree to allow eruvim. Two of the biggest law firms in the world are battling the three towns in behalf of their clients—Weil, Gotshal & Manges and Debevoise & Plimpton.

Libraries, Colleges Have Role to Play

Local libraries and colleges can have a role to play in what has become a complicated and expensive mixture of PR, law, politics and religion. Elected officials are mostly silent on the issue, awaiting court decisions.

Gov. David Paterson of New York was enlisted in the PR campaign by Rabbi Marc Schneier of the Hampton Synagogue. Paterson addressed 1,000 at the Synagogue in early August 2008, saying he supported erection of the eruv. Paterson added, “There is a new sheriff in town” and drew “a roar of approval from the crowd,” the Jewish Daily Forward reported.

Libraries, whose stated mission is “education,” could perform such a role by exhibiting the massive legal actions against the towns and explaining what an eruv is. The filings have cost the towns \$884,837 thus far in fees from outside law firms. Town lawyers are also working on the suits.

Media Coverage Declines

Media have pulled back lately on their coverage of the issue. The *Southampton Press* and its 27east.com online version have carried a number of stories but have yet to cover the legal costs to the towns nor the fact that the towns face paying all the legal bills of the EEEA plus “damages.”

The last story in the *New York Times* on the eruv battle was Feb. 4, 2013. NYT reporter Nicholas Confessore is the son of Quogue Library president Lynda Confessore.

The case is proving to be a bonanza for outside law

firms (78 docket entries for SH and 70 for WH so far).

A similar battle is taking place in Miami Beach where an eruv that was erected in Pine Tree Park drew a protest from the Freedom From Religion Foundation. Supporters of FFRF said the eruv was taken down, thus invalidating other eruvim in Miami Beach. City officials say they are investigating.

Billions have been earned by law firms in the past couple of decades since the average appeal process for a capital case takes 14 years. It costs California \$307 million per execution when life imprisonment would accomplish the same purpose of removing the offender from society. Thirty-two states permit executions.

Stony Brook Is Nearest College

Stony Brook University, a 45-minute drive from WHB, has 24,000 students and a major journalism department. It has no separate PR sequence. The Stony Brook community is surrounded by an eruv.

Among the 33 faculty members is Dean Howard Schneider who was with *Newsday* for 35 years and was the founding dean of the department. Several stories on the eruvim battle have been sent to him as possible subject matter for his students.

Dean Miller, former editor of the Post Register in Idaho Falls, Idaho, heads the News Literacy Center. Other faculty include James Klurfeld who was at *Newsday* 40 years and Steven Reiner who was at CBS News for more than 10 years.

Stony Brook Southampton once had 470 students but it cut most of its programs in 2010 after losing \$55 million in state financing over two years.

The 75 remaining students are on the graduate level in three areas—creative writing, theatre and marine science. The eruv imbroglio would be a good topic for some of these writers. Fiction is often based on factual matter.

Schneier's Problem: Expensive WHB

Rabbi Schneier faces the same problem that SBU faced with its Southampton campus—skyrocketing local costs and a changing population.

Rent for a summer for a typical house on the beach in WHB is \$235,000. Houses inland may rent for \$70K. A small house can be bought for a half million but much of the housing stock is above \$750K and often in the millions.

Even a large group of singles would be hard-pressed to afford a house in WHB, Southampton or Quogue. The towns drove out the singles decades ago with laws that limit the number of unrelated people in a house.

That squeeze closed more than 22 nightclubs and restaurants in Southampton and at least a dozen in WHB including Marakesh, the “Studio 54 of Long Island.”

Schneier, who founded the Synagogue in 1990, looked for something to help bring in congregants. The Synagogue is owned by a private corporation rather than the congregants. It does not have to file public tax documents. If it thought of selling the Synagogue, perhaps to an Orthodox congregation, which would require an eruv, it would have to file financial documents with the state.

— Jack O'Dwyer