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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

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MASSACHUSETTS ECONDEV UNIT SEEKS FIRM

The economic development agency for the state of Massachusetts has cast a net for a full-service communications agency to polish its image.

The Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, known as Massdevelopment, released an RFP for a firm to develop an integrated marketing plan covering paid and earned media, digital and related campaigns.



The agency wants a firm that “reinforces MassDevelopment as a finance and real estate development entity for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; creates awareness of specific programs and products; and continues to build on relationships with existing customers while addressing new audiences.”

Brenda Doherty, VP of marketing and comms. for the Boston-based entity, is overseeing the RFP process. KHJ of Boston is the incumbent. Proposals are due March 9. RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1CE66ZF>.

SFO TO CREATE PR, MARKETING POOL

San Francisco International Airport, which saw 47M people pass through its gates last year, is reviewing its marketing and PR accounts currently worth more than \$7M with the intent to create a pool of firms.

Burson-Marsteller and San Francisco-based The M Line are three-year incumbents on contracts worth \$2.5M and \$4.8M, respectively.



Firms are required to have a San Francisco Bay Area office and are being asked to create an outline for an integrated communications and marketing plan for the airport, encompassing advertising, public awareness and messaging.

The resulting two-year pacts with SFO will cover brand management, digital communications, media relations and internal comms. Firms can pitch all or individual sections. The airport said specific projects will be assigned to one or more firms selected as the need arises.

SFO had \$770M in revenue last year. Proposals are due March 23. RFP: <http://odwpr.us/19rUeAo>.

IPG's Q4 NET SURGES 56%

Interpublic on Feb. 13 reported a 56 percent rise in Q4 net income to \$331M on a four percent uptick in revenues to \$2.2B.

Organic growth advanced 4.8 percent, sparked by a 6.4 percent jump overseas compared to 3.4 percent in the US.

CEO Michael Roth said IPG's ability to deliver customized integration services to clients resulted in solid gains and new business momentum. He said the "tone of business is solid" for 2015, though there is uncertainty about current fluctuations in the European market.

The ad/combine's constituency management group, which includes PR firms such as Weber Shandwick, Golin, Cassidy & Assocs and DeVries Global, reported a three percent hike in Q4 growth to \$386M with organic up 0.6 percent, down from 5.8 percent to \$1.4B for the year.

WS chief Andy Polansky reported double-digital growth as clients took advantage of its social/digital and content marketing expertise.

Healthcare, consumer, financial, Brazil, China and major US offices (New York, Chicago) were standout performers. Polansky anticipates the firm will continue to thrive in 2015 boosted by its 2014 momentum.

IPG is targeting three to four percent organic growth for the full year

The firm's healthcare, tech & telecom and auto/transportation businesses were its biggest client sectors in 2014, each accounting for 18 percent of revenue from its top 100 clients.

APCO FLIES ETIHAD AIRWAYS

APCO Worldwide is repping Etihad Airways, which US carriers claim practices unfair competition due to subsidies received from its government.

Delta, United and American Airlines want the US to renegotiate the "open skies" market access agreement with Qatar and United Arab Emirates. The US has open skies agreements with more than 100 countries.

Etihad, the UAE's national airline, has flights from New York to Abu Dhabi, Islamabad, New Delhi and Bangkok.

The UAE carrier with Emirates Airline and Qatar Airways are the three fast Persian Gulf airlines to target the US market.

The open skies pact allows them to set prices and fly freely between the US and their respective countries.

APCO's Chris McCannell, former press secretary to Democratic whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland, and Joel Riettmiller, deputy chief of staff for former Indiana Congressman Democrat Baron Hill, handle Etihad.

PUBLICIS BUILDS ON Q4 MOMENTUM

Publicis Groupe reported an 11.5 percent rise in Q4 revenues to \$2.4B, wrapping up what CEO Maurice Levy called an "eventful year" marked by the May collapse of the \$35B merger with Omnicom and the \$3.7B acquisition of Boston's Sapient announced in November. Full year revenue advanced 4.3 percent to \$8.3B.

Organic growth rose 3.2 percent for the final quarter compared to two percent for the entire year.

Levy attributed the weak level of full year organic growth due to a poor performance in Europe, temporary problems at Razorfish in the US and UK and a "slight tailing off" lukechateainof performace at MSLGroup.

The 2015 focus is on development of Publicis' digital offerings. Digital is expected to account for 50 percent of overall revenues, up from 42 percent at end of the 2014.

Levy wants Publicis to become the "only group capable of helping our clients transform themselves through our combination of consulting and technology, strategy and creativity, digital capability and know-how in multi-channel commerce."

Publicis expects the market will strengthen during the year, most notably during the second half.

EX-EMANUEL SPOKESPERSON JOINS ASGK

Sarah Hamilton, who was spokesperson and communications director for Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, is now managing director at ASGK Public Strategies.

Earlier, Hamilton was PA director for the Chicago Police Dept., senior press secretary for Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and deputy communications director at the Clinton Foundation.

Hamilton also worked on Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

David Axelrod, who was President Obama's political strategist, and Eric Sedler, ATT PR executive & Edelman alum, founded ASGK.

Sedler said Hamilton's hire reflects the firm's commitment to lining up the best communications talent.

ASGK has about 50 staffers in Chicago, New York, Washington and Miami.

PHILADELPHIA WINS PITCH FOR DNC

Philadelphia has won a three-way pitch to host the 2016 Democratic convention, where the party will nominate a candidate to succeed President Barack Obama.

The City of Brotherly Love beat out finalists Brooklyn, N.Y., and Cleveland, Ohio, for the confab.

Columbus will host the Republican National Convention July 18-21, 2016.

Democratic National Convention chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz said Philadelphia committed to a "seamless and safe convention" and praised the city's "deep rooted place in American history."

The Democratic convention, centered on the Wells Fargo Center, is slated for the week of July 25.

The PR coup for Philadelphia comes on the heels of The Vatican's announcement in November that Pope Francis will visit in the city at the World Meeting of Families in September 2015.

WEGMANS UNSEATS AMAZON IN REP RANK

Rochester-based grocery chain Wegmans Food Markets has supplanted Amazon atop Harris Poll's annual corporate reputation ranking, while Samsung surged past rival Apple.

Privately held Wegmans, with around \$6B in revenues, topped the Harris ranking's six categories – social responsibility, emotional appeal, products & services, vision & leadership, financial performance, and workplace environment – to edge Amazon, Samsung, Costco and Johnson & Johnson in the top five.

Harris Poll reputation and PR practice leader Carol Gstalter said Wegmans has spent years building a "sterling" reputation "in the communities they serve, through its employees, one shopping experience at a time." [Full Harris report is at <http://odwpr.us/1DBYXu6>.]

Samsung's steady climb in the rankings landed the company at No. 3, while Apple fell from No. 4 to No. 9. Three companies entered the top 10 as Harris expanded its scope from 60 to 100 companies, including LL Bean (No. 7) and Publix Supermarkets (8).

Sixteen companies earned a "poor" reputation score, from Time Warner at 85 to Goldman Sachs at 100. The largest declines came at Coca-Cola, Honda, Hyundai and General Motors. Harris singled out struggling JC Penney, Bank of America, Sprint and BP for the strongest improvement.

By sector, Southwest Airlines topped its airline peers, Honda Motor led car makers, and Royal Dutch Shell topped energy companies. Chick-fil-A topped restaurant reputations, Lowe's was the top retailer and Verizon led telecoms.

LEVICK SERVES PR TO HUNGARY

Levick is providing PR and strategic consulting services to Hungary under a subcontract with SLI Group, which is the firm of former Florida Republican Congressman Connie Mack.

Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orban, who has cracked down on the press and refugees, has close ties with Russian leader Vladimir Putin and opposes western sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. Putin is slated to visit Hungary later this month.

The US slapped a travel ban on some Hungarian state officials in October for their alleged corruption.

Levick is to identify media outlets and thought leaders for outreach to express the point of view and policies on Hungary's government.

Staffers Patrick Hillman and Zachary Scarfo handle Levick's work for Hungary. Mack has taken an executive VP title at Richard Levick's firm.

2015

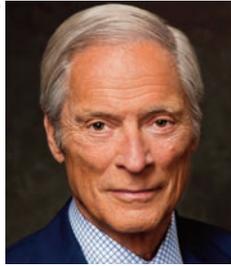
1. Wegmans Food Markets
2. Amazon.com
3. Samsung
4. Costco
5. Johnson & Johnson
6. Kraft
7. L.L. Bean
8. Publix Supermarkets
9. Apple
10. Google

CBS' SIMON KILLED IN CRASH

Bob Simon, correspondent for CBS News and "60 Minutes," was killed Feb. 11 in a car crash in New York City. He was 73.

He was preparing a report for 60 Minutes about the Ebola virus and the search for its cure.

Simon joined CBS as reporter and assignment editor in 1967. He began contributing to the Sunday evening TV magazine in 1996 and became a full-time correspondent on the program in 2005.



Simon

He covered wars throughout the world and was famously held prisoner for 40 days by the Iraqi army during the Persian Gulf War.

Simon, a strong critic of the Pentagon's tight control over wartime news coverage, was captured after he made an unescorted trip to Saudi Arabia's border with Iraq-occupied Kuwait.

Jeff Fager, 60 Minutes executive producer, issued a statement that called Simon "a reporter's reporter."

He said, "Simon was driven by a natural curiosity that look him all over the world covering every kind of story imaginable."

Wife, Francoise and daughter, Tanya, a producer on 60 Minutes, survive Simon.

NYT'S CARR DIES AT 58

David Carr, media critic of the *New York Times* who wrote "The Media Equation" column, died Feb. 12 after he collapsed in the newsroom. He was 58.

The cancer survivor wrote the book, "The Night of the Gun," which detailed his addiction to crack cocaine in the 1980s.



Carr

Carr joined the NYT in 2002 as a business reporter covering the publishing industry. He was featured in the 2011 documentary about the paper, "Page One: Inside the New York Times." Arthur Pinch Sulzberger issued a statement that called Carr one of the most gifted journalists to ever work at the paper.

Born in Minneapolis, Carr wrote for the *Twin Cities Reader* and *Washington City Paper* before the NYT. He contributed to *The Atlantic Monthly* and *New York* magazine.

Carr died after hosting a panel discussion about the movie "Citizenfour" with its subject Edward Snowden, who appeared via video

JONES GETS VICE E-I-C POST

Ellis Jones has been named editor-in-chief of Vice Magazine to become the first woman to hold that post in its 20-year history.

The former intern and managing editor has been running operations since September.

She promises more cutting-edge cultural coverage, sharp humor, hard-hitting investigations and stories written by women.

Jones takes over for Rocco Castoro, who announced his exit during a Feb. 10 panel discussion in Chicago.

TIME INC. POSTS 7% DROP IN Q4 REVENUES

Time Inc. CEO Joe Ripp reported a seven percent decline in Q4 sales to \$895M as circulation and advertising revenues slide. Revenues for the full year were off two percent to \$3.2B.

A one-time gain of \$85M bolstered quarterly net income from \$66M to \$145M.

Ripp calls 2015 "a pivotal year" as the publisher plans the launch of various growth initiatives. He said Time has reengineered its business model in the aftermath of the split from Time Warner. Time reported ad strength in the financial and pharmaceutical sectors while the food/beverage, auto and home categories were weak.

Digital ads rose two percent in Q4 to \$85M and six percent for the year to \$298M.

Time claims a global audience of more than 120M from print and online each from properties such as *Time*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Real Simple*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *People* and *Fortune*.

MCCLATCHY RESTRUCTURES EXEC RANKS

The McClatchy Co. has restructured its executive ranks to blend its digital operations into the company after reporting weaker earnings for the fourth quarter and 2014 overall a day earlier.

The reorganization aims to integrate its digital division into the rest of the company to "meet the changing needs of our readers and advertisers," said president and CEO Pat Talamantes.

Vice president of operations, Mark Zieman, gets an expanded role overseeing its 29 local media properties, digital revenue development and production, as well as corporate advertising. The company is searching for a new VP of advertising. Christian Hendricks, VP of interactive media, adds products, marketing and innovation to his purview, including corporate communications, external partnerships and mobile, among other areas.

Current VP for operations Bob Weill is leaving the company.

McClatchy on Feb. 11 reported fourth quarter revenues fell 5.9% to \$317.6M as ad revenue declined 10.8% to \$209.2M on a "softness" in print retail and national advertising. Digital ads were up 3.4%. For the full year, revenues were down 3.9% to \$1.17B.

McClatchy said it has shaved \$523M off its debt load, which now stands at about \$1B.

SONY PICKS PASCAL FOR SPIDER-MAN MOVIE

Amy Pascal, who will step down from the co-chairman slot at Sony Pictures Entertainment in May following the fall-out from North Korea's hacking attack, will join the production team of the studio's top franchise, Spider-Man.

Pascal oversaw the 2002 launch of the \$4B franchise. The yet untitled film will premiere in 2017.

Sony has the rights to finance and control films featuring Spider-Man, which is a property owned by Walt Disney's Marvel unit.

PR & SOCIAL MEDIA VIEWS**CONNECTION KEY IN SPORTS SPONSORSHIPS**

By David Nobs

The dust has now settled after a busy few weeks here in the Valley of the Sun with the Super Bowl, Pro Bowl, Waste Management Phoenix Open and Barrett-Jackson in town, I've had time to reflect on my favorite aspect of marketing communications – sports.

Whether it's sponsoring the Super Bowl halftime show, breaking new commercials during the game, using golf's biggest event to benefit the underprivileged or hosting customers at the Skybox on 16, one thing jumps immediately to mind – make sure your involvement is memorable.

The keys to success lie in bringing your corporate sponsorship to life in real and meaningful ways, making a connection with your customers and making certain it fits the occasion

The Patriots may have edged out the Seahawks to win the game but Pepsi and McDonald's claimed top commercial honors. Pepsi's Super Bowl halftime extravaganza featuring Katy Perry, along with cameos by Missy Elliott and Lenny Kravitz, made quite a splash with their target audience. According to YouGov BrandIndex, Pepsi had the highest increase in brand awareness based on pre- and post-Super Bowl metrics even though the soft drink company only had one 30-second TV spot in the game, which introduced the halftime show that immediately followed it.

The Waste Management Phoenix Open is like no other golf tournament in the world for a number of reasons, including its status as the largest tournament on the PGA Tour and the 16th hole at TPC Scottsdale – one of the most famous holes in golf.

But to me, what's most impressive is the group that hosts it – the Thunderbirds. This year, 564,368 attended the week-long tournament, which eclipsed last year's record of 563,008 spectators, but, most impressively, the organizers announced that proceeds raised from the tournament will surpass the \$100M mark in charitable giving.

Finally, we had the annual Barrett-Jackson car auction at West World. While it's not quite the Concours d'Élegance at Pebble Beach, it's pretty close. Each year, bidders attend the auction for a chance to buy a wide range of American muscle, European classics, exotic sports cars and custom cars. According to Barrett-Jackson, the 2015 auction was the biggest in the event's 44-year history, recording more than \$131 million in the sale of 1,612 vehicles.

While this year's version included some unforgettable moments, my favorite was in 2012 when two-time Masters Champion Bubba Watson bought the old General Lee from "The Dukes of Hazard" TV show – and was seen driving it around town and pulling up to TPC Scottsdale with his golf clubs in the trunk.

These were memorable sports moments here in the desert over the past few weeks to be sure but the key take-aways are making sure that sponsorship activation, no matter how large or small, is memorable, connects with your target audience and fits the occasion.

Dave Nobs is managing director, business development and head of sports marketing for LAVIDGE, a full-service advertising, interactive, public relations, and multicultural agency in Phoenix.

IS BRIAN WILLIAMS HEADED TO PR?

By Greg Hazley

When Brian Williams emerges from his career dead spin and is left staring up at 30 Rock from the 50th Street sidewalk, where will he go?

PR, of course.

Williams' crossover entertainment talent and penchant for spinning a good tale make him a natural fit for the PR field. PR is storytelling, after all, often pushing the limits of fact and opinion to put a best foot forward.

He also has PR experience. Before his ascent in broadcasting, Williams was a Congressional liaison for the National Association of Broadcasters in Washington.

PR is also in his blood. Williams' father, Gordon, was an executive VP for the National Retail Merchants Association, the predecessor to the trade group juggernaut National Retail Federation.

A key principle of PR is to take a negative and make it an asset. Williams' successful appearances on "Late Night," "SNL" and "30 Rock," dragging on his image at the moment, could be the springboards for his career as a client advocate. PR guru/pundit/journalist/lawyer Dan Abrams told Fox News that Williams' entertainment sideshows make him a bigger target amid the controversy. "If this had all happened to Scott Pelley for example, this never would have received anything like this sort of attention," said Abrams. Why not take that drag and use it?

Sure, he could take the easy route and become a producer or studio exec on the entertainment side. But PR's fast-growing toddler, content marketing, is salivating for the quasi-news and entertainment Williams has been straddling for much of his recent career.

Come to mention it, Williams' current home could probably use some PR counsel right about now. While NBC News' face languishes in a feeding frenzy from all angles, the only NBC name defending (or even speaking about) its top-rated anchor is "Morning Joe" host Joe Scarborough, a friend of Williams." While NBC lion Tom Brokaw came off as a doddering meangirl in remarks -- some hearsay -- about Williams, Scarborough stuck his neck out: "I saw somebody write yesterday saying, a misstatement or an exaggeration about a helicopter is far less damaging to the future of this country than the range of misinformation that were reported leading up to the Iraq War, when a lot of reporters should have been asked a lot tougher questions."

Finally, the bedrock of PR is client loyalty – protecting and nurturing a brand, issue or identity above all others by getting the world to see it as the preferred choice. The past week has likely been a lesson in loyalty for Williams, who reported from around the globe for NBC, kept its anchor chair at No. 1, and burnished its own brand for years only to be rewarded with the corporate equivalent of a shrug.

NBC suspended Williams Tuesday and released its first major statement on the episode, calling Williams' "misrepresentations" "completely inappropriate."

As he claws at the corporate walls caving in on him, PR strategy likely can't rescue him, but the field could give him a new start.

Greg Hazley is a senior editor at O'Dwyer's.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**BRAVO TAPS SUNOCO PR ALUM FOR TX PUSH**

Pennsylvania-based energy sector PR shop Bravo Group has expanded to Texas with the addition of former Sunoco communications chief David Webster.

Webster has been running Aberdeen Strategies since stepping down from the VP of comms. and PA role at Sunoco (a Bravo client) in 2012 on its acquisition by Energy Transfer. He was previously VP of corporate comms. for Centex and held key PR posts at Regions Bank, JPMorgan Chase and Pennzoil.

Bravo president Topper Ray said Texas is a "natural step" for a firm that represents clients from exploration and production to midstream and end users in the energy sector.

The firm, which has outposts in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg and Philadelphia, Pa., has reaped PR success from the Marcellus Shale energy boom in the Keystone State and represents the Pennsylvania Chemical Industry Council, among other clients like Dow, SWN, Sunoco Logistics, and Cabot Oil & Gas.

Weber takes a senior advisor role with Bravo and continues to run Aberdeen.

DC PR VET BROTMAN TO REINGOLD LINK

Charlie Brotman, the veteran Washington sports PR hand and Presidential Inaugural announcer, has joined Reingold LINK as a senior advisor.

Brotman, well known as the former voice of the Washington Senators baseball team until 1971, as well as other DC sporting events, started up his sports PR shop in 1969, merging into Winter Fried Communications in 1992 before the combined firm was sold to Virginia-based Sage Communications in 2011.



Brotman

Reingold president Michael Akin credits Brotman with building the "modern PR industry in DC." He added: "His list of accomplishments speaks for itself and he will add immediate and tremendous value to our clients."

Brotman has served as announcer for 15 Presidential Inaugural parades from Truman to Obama.

BLICKSILVER HANDLES \$2B ENVISION SALE

Financial specialist Owen Blicksilver PR represents Envision Pharmaceutical Services, which Feb. 11 announced its \$2B acquisition by Rite Aid.

The move bolsters the position of the nation's No. 3 drug store chain in the fast-growing pharmaceuticals market. Rite Aid CEO Jeff Standley said the acquisition of Envision's drugs-by-mail capability with his company's more than 4,500 retail outlets is a "compelling pharmaceutical offering."

Envision is projected to have \$5B in revenues this year. Rite Aid 2014 revenues topped the \$25B mark.

Blicksilver VPs Lisa Baker and Jennifer Hurson handle Envision/TPG for the firm.

Harley-Davidson and Wrigley Co. alum Susan Henderson Susan Henderson is senior VP and chief communications officer of Rite Aid.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New England**

LavoieHealthScience, Boston/Cortendo AB, for an integrated communications program, including media relations and digital, as the company, under a new CEO, transitions to a U.S.-based biopharmaceutical company; Cydan Development, orphan drug accelerator, to launch their first company, Vtesse; Biotechnology Industry Organization, for the BIO CEO conference, and Newron, for an overhaul of their corporate presentation, investor targeting and meeting management.

New York Area

Burson-Marsteller, New York/HotelPlanner.com, online services for the global group hotel sales market, as AOR to provide strategic comms. counsel, enhance awareness of the company, convey brand messages and media relations.

MWW, New York/Osteo Bi-Flex, joint health supplement maker, for a national education campaign to encourage consumers of all ages to start paying attention to their knees, ankles and other joints.

Sparkpr, New York/Steaz, organic and fair trade green tea-based beverage company, as AOR for PR. Moo-sylvania picked up social media AOR duties to coordinate with Sparkpr. New England Patriot cornerback Darrelle Revis is brand ambassador for the 13-year-old company.

5W PR, New York/Creflo Dollar, evangelist pastor and founder of World Changers Church International and Creflo Dollar Ministries, for PR via the firm's public advocacy division. 5W chief Ronn Torossian said his firm will "tell the story of its origins as well as what lies ahead for one of the country's most powerful figures."

Nourie Group, New York/Drinker Biddle, national law firm, for business development communications for its white collar practice.

East

Buffalo Brand Invigoration Group, Vienna, Va./Branson/Lakes Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, for a golf destination PR program for the Branson area in southwest Missouri.

French/West/Vaughan, Raleigh/Miami Heat forward Luol Deng, as marketing and endorsement AOR.

Southeast

Ink Link Marketing, Atlanta/Church's Chicken, fast food fried chicken chain, as AOR for PR. Centered in San Antonio, Church's counts more than 100 eateries in seven states and is in the midst of a "rebuilding" phase.

Mountain West

Turner PR, Denver/The Carneros Inn Napa Valley luxury resort; Hyatt Playa Del Carmen, Mexican hotel slated to open in spring 2015; Westgate Park City, luxury Utah ski-in/ski-out property, and Gociety, social network for adventurers developed by two former *Skiing Magazine* staffers, all for PR.

West

Blaze, Santa Monica, Calif./HelloTel App, social networking app for hotel guests to connect with travelers at the same of nearby hotels, for PR.

NEWS OF SERVICES**MARKETWIRED SPLITS FROM SYSOMOS**

Marketwired has split from its Sysomos social, analytics and monitoring platform and named new leadership in a revamp under private equity owner OMERS.

Chief strategy officer Adnan Ahmed, who led development of MW's Resonate platform, takes the president and CEO reins of Marketwired, which will have a "distinct identity and refocused corporate direction." MW for the past two years was led by Jim Delaney, its former COO who was groomed for the top slot.

Lindsay Sparks, a longtime Microsoft hand, has joined Sysomos as CEO in the spinoff.

Marketwired acquired Toronto-based Sysomos in 2010. Ahmed said in a statement that the two companies will operate as two distinct businesses but remain partners. Marketwired's press release distribution platform Resonate will continue to use Sysomos technology.

MW, the former Internet Wire, was acquired by Canada's CCMMatthews in 2003. Toronto private equity firm OMERS acquired CCM three years later.

NY PR INTERNS COPE WITH HIGH LIVING COSTS

PR students who landed internships in New York last summer coped with high housing costs. One intern paid \$1,750 monthly for a 9x11-foot "box" on the upper East Side that didn't include a bathroom.

That was in the hall and she shared it with a dozen others on the floor. The landlord required her to take a six-month lease. The room had a bed, desk, drawers and a closet and reminded her of her college dorm.

Students ran into a key fact of life in New York -- the skyrocketing costs of apartment renting or buying propelled by the influx of billions of dollars of investments in properties by foreign investors often using "dummy" corporations that hide the real owners, as reported in the *New York Times* in the past few days.

The student now says she should have looked for space in Brooklyn or Queens and advised future interns to do so. Initial thoughts were that commuting to the boroughs might be unsafe and too time-consuming. She has now revised those opinions.

Positives about her experience were that the rent also included access to a gym, swimming pool, weight training rooms, and an indoor track. Her building also held lectures, classes and concerts for the residents.

While the rent was a burden, she feels the "wonderful experiences" she had in New York made it worth the price. She liked being close to midtown where she worked and enjoyed going to Soho and downtown for social activities.

Rent was paid by swiping her credit card at the office at the beginning of the month. The paid internship was not enough to cover living costs. Her parents made up the difference.

Another intern ended up paying \$4,200 for a two and a half month stay in NYC, at approximately \$1,680 a month. "Finding affordable housing was crucial to me," she said. "I came from Tennessee and didn't know anybody, I also did not have a lot of money to spend for the internship."

PEOPLE**Joined**

James Rogers, executive director of PR for the Blue Cross Blue Shield Assn., to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., as executive director of PA, a new position. He'll be in charge of strategy and communications messaging. Earlier, he opened the Washington office for Kaiser Permanente and held the communications secretary job at the Jesuit Conference. The USCCB testified Feb. 11 before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security in opposition to bills that would criminalize undocumented people and religious organizations that provide services to them.

**Rogers**

Jon Maron, VP of marketing and corporate comms., INRIX, to W20 Group's Twist Marketing, as managing director to open a Seattle office and build out its technology practice. He was VP-Americas marketing for HTC, senior VP-technology at Ketchum and senior director of North America marketing for mobile phone units at Sony Ericsson and LG.

Stephanie Moritz, who was senior director for PR, social media and experiential marketing at ConAgra Foods, has moved to the American Dental Assn. as chief communications officer. She'll handle PR, reputation and brand management for the Chicago-based organization representing nearly 160K dentists. Moritz reports to executive director Kathleen O'Loughlin. Earlier, she led communications and product publicity for Hershey Co. and Jim Beam Brands.

Meredith Williams, principal associate, Abt Associates, to Crosby Marketing Communications, Annapolis, Md., as an EVP and co-leader of its government practice. She previously led the partner/strategic comms. practice for Gallup's government group.

Promoted

Tim Turpin to GM of Sparkpr's San Francisco headquarters, the first to hold that title. He is a longtime senior managing director of the firm, joining from OutCast Communications, and oversees its venture capital/green tech practice group.

Rachel Deloffre to A/S, Development Counsellors International, Denver. She joined the firm in 2011.

Lacey Hunter to senior advisor, Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Nashville, Tenn. **Shannon Threadgill** and **Renee Adams** join as graphic advisor and account assist., respectively.

**Deloffre****Elected**

Marian Salzman, CEO of Havas PR North America, to executive chair of Tucson Values Teachers, a group that works to recruit, retain and reward educators in southern Arizona. More than a quarter of the teachers in the region say they don't plan to be teaching five years ago. Salzman said her family began a slow relocation to Arizona in 2012. Salzman told O'Dwyer's she plans to keep busy at Havas, which opens a Phoenix outpost this month.

OMNICOM PR REVENUES SOAR IN Q4

Omnicom's PR operations soared eight percent to \$368.1M in the fourth quarter of 2014, an 8.5% organic climb across units like Ketchum, FleishmanHillard, Porter Novelli and Brodeur.

OMC's Q4 revenues companywide, which beat Wall Street forecasts, rose 3.4% to \$4.2B, including an 8.8% jump in the US to \$2.2B that offset a 2.2% decline in the rest of the world to just under \$2B. Net income rose 9.7% to \$329.5M. Omnicom's 2013 Q4 included a \$13.3M charge for its merger with Publicis, which was scuttled last year.

In the fourth quarter, PR's gains outpaced advertising (+5.1% to \$2.1B) and CRM (-1.3% to \$1.4B).

For 2014, PR revenues were up 5% (4.1% organically) to \$1.4B. OMC revenues for the full year were up 5% to \$15.3B and up 7.7% in the US. Net income rose 11.4% to top \$1.1B.

Debt rose to nearly \$4.6B in 2014 from \$4B a year earlier, against \$2.4B in cash and short-term investments. It spent \$227.6M on acquisitions in 2014, including \$83.2M paid in earn-outs on deals made after 2008.

RUSSIA CUTS KETCHUM OUTLAYS

Russia spent \$773,670 for PR outlays at Ketchum during the six-month period ended 11/30/14, according to its recently filed federal document.

The Omnicom unit reported no activity during the period for Gazprom, Russia's state-owned energy giant.

Those two clients combined for \$5.4M in outlays for the comparable year ago period. They spent \$4.1M during the half-year May 31, 2014 ended period.

During the recently ended period, Ketchum pitched the *New York Times*, *Bloomberg*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* and AP regarding the BRICS summit.

The firm contacted Mashable, CNET, TechCrunch, VentureBeat and Investor's Business Daily about the environment in Russia for tech start-ups.

Olives from Spain (\$535,679) was Ketchum's biggest foreign spender. Ecuador (\$215,132), Australia Tourism (\$120K) and Spain Trade and Investment (\$95,250) ranked next.

F5 PLUGS IN WAGGENER EDSTROM

Application delivery networking company F5 Networks has plugged in Waggener Edstrom as communications AOR after a review.

The publicly traded, Seattle-based company, which has grown rapidly through acquisitions over the past decade, makes software and products that help web applications run faster and more securely.



Porter Novelli previously worked with F5.

WaggEd's Portland, San Francisco and Seattle offices service the account as F5 aims to raise its profile in the IT sector.

F5 posted fiscal first quarter 2015 revenues of \$462.8M with net income of \$89.1M. WaggEd called it one of the fastest growing and most profitable public companies in Seattle.

SARD BOOSTS GNC IN SUPPLEMENT PROBE

Dietary supplement retailer GNC Holdings has brought in Sard Verbinen & Co. to help mount its PR defense against a probe by the New York attorney general into the ingredients of supplement products sold by major retailers.

NY AG Eric Schneidermann this month accused GNC, along with Target, Wal-Mart and Walgreens, of selling store brand supplements that could not be verified to contain labeled ingredients or that were found to contain ingredients not listed on product labels. He subpoenaed company records about the origins of ingredients in their supplements.

After an initial response Feb. 4 with its day-to-day PR firm MarketcomPR, Pittsburgh-based GNC, which is publicly traded, more forcefully refuted Schneidermann's claims Feb. 9 with the help of Sard and a point-by-point rebuttal of the AG's letter to the company. The company said it has pulled a small number of affected products from New York stores as it waits to hear a response to their challenge from Schneidermann.

GNC CEO Michael Arcbold said all of the company's products are submitted to "rigorous and generally accepted testing before they reach of our customers." GNC, along with others in the supplement industry, are challenging the DNA barcoding test method relied on by the attorney general as unreliable. GNC said it Rite Aid CEO Jeff Standley said the acquisition of Envision's drugs-by-mail capability with his company's more than 4,500 retail outlets is a "compelling pharmaceutical offering."has sent the AG results of their own testing.

Sard Verbinen managing directors Bryan Locke in Chicago and Bob Rendine in New York are guiding GNC's PR response.

FTI AIDS AMIRA IN 'FRAUD' REPORT

Amira Nature Foods, the 100-year-old, Dubai-based packaged rice exporter, is relying on FTI Consulting as it reels from a damaging report by Prescience Point Research Group alleging phony revenue and export figures.

The Prescience Point report has sparked a shareholder class action and plummeting stock price.

Amira on Feb. 10 blasted the research report as containing "false, factually inaccurate and fictional content obtained from previously released false statements, that have been repacked and distributed with malafide intention."

The company said it intends to "pursue this matter legally."

Prescient Point's 40-page report, titled "Fraudcap Redux," dubs the company a "collection of lies with leverage on top." The report alleges Amira "fabricated" its financials and overstated its Basmati rice sales.

FTI managing director Steven Balet is advising Amira on the PR front during the crisis.

Amira went public in October 2012 on the New York Stock Exchange and the shareholder suit filed last week alleges the company inflated its revenue to boost that stock offering. Revenue for the year ending March 31, 2014 were up 32.3% to \$547.3M.

Shares of the company are trading around a 52-week low of \$9 in the wake of the Prescient report.

Westhampton Beach trustees, faced with overwhelming opposition, killed their proposal to have “twin police chiefs” costing \$350K. It was a ploy to distract from WHB’s real problem—an eruv Jewish religious boundary.

27east.com reported that the board had received “an unprecedented amount of public backlash” to the proposal and killed it at a meeting Feb. 12.

Two reps of odwyerpr.com attended the WHB library board meeting Feb. 11 and offered to give the library several hundred pages on the dispute that has cost WHB, Southampton and Quogue \$884,837 in lawyer fees thus far.

Jewish People Opposed to the Eruv have spent \$100K+ on the battle bringing total costs on the defensive side to above \$1 million.

Since three lawsuits are winding their way through Federal Courts there will be more legal costs. On top of this, Marvin Tenzer of the East End Eruv Assn. says a win for the EEEA could bring a “multi-million dollar award.” Weil, Gotshal & Manges, EEEA’s law firm, says it has “significant” expenses.

WHB library trustees listened to the two O’Dwyer reps but would not accept any materials on the eruv battle such as copies of the lawsuits by EEEA, Verizon and LPEG/LIPA, the replies to the lawsuits, and media coverage.

The trustees refused to engage in any discussion of the subject. The reps were told they could stay for the rest of the meeting but that there would be no discussion of the eruv. The reps left. No other members of the public were present.

Rogers Memorial Library, Southampton, has agreed to keep a “vertical file” of materials on the dispute. It is available if people ask for it but it will not be publicized.

The battle that has raged since March 7, 2008 when the Hampton Synagogue filed with Westhampton Beach for a religious boundary enclosing one of its three square miles.

Library boards, under New York State law, must admit the public to their monthly meetings. But they don’t have to let anyone speak. If they do, the boards are not required to respond.

The NYS Handbook for Library Trustees says: “Board meetings are for the conduct of library business. They are not public hearings about library affairs. The Open Meetings Law makes no provision for public participation...”

The battle over Orthodox efforts to “mark” public territory in WHB as their private “domain” will have its seventh anniversary on March 7.

This is a rich and expensive stew of religion, law, PR, marketing, and local and national politics.

It is being played out also in Miami Beach where foes of eruvim got one taken down in Pine Tree Park last summer, thus invalidating all the eruvim in MB.

However, it’s back up again, MB has told us, even though it can’t locate the needed permit for the eruv.

WHB Library Board Non-Committal

WHB Library trustees include president Joan Levan, who was a WHB village trustee in 2008 when the eruv proposal was put forth, and Mayor Marie Moore, whose husband, Thomas, a lawyer like Marie, was on the village Zoning Board of Appeals from 2007-2010.

The trustees have been sent links to hundreds of pages about the eruv dispute since Jan. 20. Included is the Jan. 22 O’Dwyer exhibit of 20 items such as legal filings, media coverage and our own reports. The trustees have had ample opportunity to be informed on this issue.

Thomas Moore resigned from the Zoning Board three years before his term was up after a dispute erupted about “controversial resolutions” he authored. Local blogger Dean Speir covered the flap in detail. Thomas now operates a blog called progress4WHB that covers his wife’s administration.

The WHB board that Levan sat on rejected the proposal of the Hampton Synagogue which led to lawsuits against WHB, Southampton and Quogue not only by EEEA but by Verizon and PSEG/LIPA which had drawn up contracts to let EEEA attach “lechis” (usually black plastic strips) the entire length of the utility poles. Verizon and PSEG/LIPA demanded that WHB o.k. its contracts with EEEA.

Court decisions thus far are based on the alleged ignorance of citizens about the meaning of lechis. They say “reasonable” citizens cannot know the meaning of lechis on the poles even if they could see them. Court decisions note that lechis are “almost invisible.” The lechis that were supposedly put on WHB poles last August were clear plastic. However, citizens have been unable to find any such strips and no one connected with their alleged erection, including EEEA, Verizon and PSEG/LIPA, will say where they are.

Precedent cases include those settled long before the internet. However, now everyone can know just everything immediately. WHB citizens know lechis establish a “home” for the Orthodox.

Some Urge “Active” Libraries

Libraries should have a role in this battle since they are supposed to combat ignorance and provide “education.” What we are getting instead is politics.

The pro-eruv side is based on superstition and belief in the supernatural. Court decisions are weighed down by precedents established decades ago. America was founded as a secular nation. The Constitution does not mention “god.”

“Libraries should be open to all—except the censor,” said John F. Kennedy. “We must know all the facts and hear all the alternatives...let us welcome controversial books and authors.”

Gordon Conable, VP of Library Systems and Services, urges libraries to get involved in public debate and discussion. “Libraries are storehouses and access-distribution-and-retrieval centers for an exploding body of human knowledge and opinion...the proponents of the various points of view must be able to make their cases...” — *Jack O’Dwyer*