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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

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VISIT CALIFORNIA OPENS REVIEW

Visit California, the tourism promotion entity for the Golden State, is reviewing its six-figure domestic PR contract with an open RFP process.

The search is targeting New York-based firms with a satellite office in California.

The California Travel and Tourism Commission, claiming an annual \$100M



budget, wants a firm to market the state in the US through a "comprehensive, targeted, creative and brand-aligned PR program," according to the RFP.

The expected \$300K, one-year contract carries three option years. Firms must have at least three years of tourism PR experience and show "financial viability for maintaining an account of this size."

Development Counsellors International is the incumbent. Firms must submit an intent to bid by Feb. 27. Proposals are due April 10.

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

ROBINSON EMERGES AT ICR

Michael Robinson, who has more than 30 years of corporate, PA and crisis experience has joined financial specialist ICR as managing director in Washington.

He did a nearly 10-year stint at Levick rising to the executive VP post and counseling clients such as AIG, Dubai's stock exchange and World Bank.

Robinson became a partner at Omnicom's Chlopak Leonard Schechter & Assoc. in Sept. 2013 and helped it rebrand to CLS Strategies. He recently left the DC firm.

Earlier, Robinson was chief spokesman for then Securities and Exchange Commission chief Harvey Pitt, handling issues connected to Sarbanes-Oxley and Enron/WorldCom collapses; director of communications at Freddie Mac; VP-corporate communications at investment banker Friedman Billings Ramsey; senior media advisor for global PA at Mobil and spokesperson at the Justice Dept.

ICR also added financial journalist (CNBC, *Wall Street Journal*) John Jannarone to its New York office.

He reported for CNBC and contributed to "Fast Money," and "Closing Bell."

In an eight-year run at the WSJ, Jannarone worked from Singapore, London and New York.



Robinson



Boost your new business efforts, join O'Dwyer's PR firm rankings based on '14 net fees

Deadline: Fri., Feb. 27.

FTI STRATEGIC PR REVENUES DIP

FTI Consulting reported fourth quarter 2014 strategic communications revenue fell 1.2% to \$46.3M as president/CEO Steven Gunby expressed "disappointment" for the period.

FTI said currency fluctuations put its communications operation in the red as revenues would have increased 1.7% on a project-related success fee if currency effects are excluded. Across the company, revenues rose 2.2% to \$452.2M for the quarter. Net income swung positive to \$921M after a loss in Q4 2013.

For the year, FTI's strategic communications operation saw a 1.7% uptick in revenues to \$189.4M. FTI has 566 staffers in its PR operation. Full-year revenues across FTI climbed 6.3% to \$1.76B.

"Notwithstanding our disappointment in the fourth quarter, we are making solid progress towards getting to where we need to be to meet the 2015 and 2016 targets we have outlined," said Gunby.

W2O ACQUIRES ARC2

W2O has acquired ARC2 Communications and Media, the Los Angeles-based healthcare PR shop that was launched by two top Hill+Knowlton Strategies execs.

Christine Cassiano and Andrea Rothschild served as senior VPs and west coast health practice leads for the WPP unit and did stints at Amgen, the biopharmaceutical giant. Cassiano also worked at Allergan, Abraxis Bio-Science, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Tickets.com

At Amgen, Rothschild headed the global commercial operations comms. team, handling programming and issues management.

"We're joining the W2O team to reinvent how we communicate, create content and innovate for clients from healthcare to entertainment to global brands," said Cassiano and Rothschild in a joint statement.

Jim Weiss, CEO of W2O, called L.A. the "content capital of the world." The addition of ARC2 is part of his firm's plan to "innovate and challenge the status quo in how we entertain, consume and share content in any industry."

SITRICK REPS BoA MEDIATOR

Sitrick and Company is representing mediator Eric Green as he serves as the independent monitor of \$7B of Bank of America's \$16.65B Justice Department settlement to aid struggling homeowners.

Green, who mediated the Microsoft-Justice Dept. antitrust deal in 2001, released an initial report this week, noting BOA has forgiven about \$12M in mortgage principal from 100 underwater homeowners, worth a credit of about \$9M against BOA's \$7B consumer relief tab. He called his initial examination a "test drive."

New York-based Thomas Mulligan and Angela Pruitt of Strick rep Green on the PR front. Green is a principal of Boston mediation firm Resolutions LLC.

BOA has until Aug. 31, 2018 to provide the \$7B in relief via loan modifications, new loans to low and moderate-income borrowers, and donations to community reinvestment efforts, among other avenues.

Green said "in coming months we should get a clearer picture of how quickly the bank has delivered on its consumer relief obligations, how much of what kind of relief has been delivered, and where relief has been distributed."

PODESTA PROMOTES KENYA

Podesta Group has signed a three-month pact with Kenya to strengthen its ties with the US government, media, non-governmental organizations and targeted institutions involved in the policy community.

The PA firm receives a \$30K retainer through May 2. If neither party terminated the contract, it will automatically renew at the same rate for an additional year.

The outreach effort is on behalf of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Re-authorization of the African Growth & Opportunity Act is among MFIT's priorities. Signed into law by Bill Clinton in 2000, AGOA expires in September.

US Trade Representative Michael Froman has called AGOA the cornerstone of the US/African commercial relationship, added that President Obama supports a "seamless" extension of the measure.

Podesta reports to Kenya's Ambassador to the US, Robinson Githae.

BAY AREA GOVS. SEEK PR COUNSEL

The regional planning agency for the nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area is looking for outside communications counsel for its \$26M energy efficiency program.

The Association of Bay Area Governments seeks the PR support for the Bay Area Regional Energy Network, or BayREN, which is developing climate, resource and sustainability programs for a region that covers 20% of California's population.

The ABAG wants counsel from individuals or firms on developing a communications strategy, presenting BayREN to the public, message development, integrated marketing and plans for "adjusting misperceptions of our value and program success," according to an RFQ released Feb. 18. Proposals are due Feb. 27.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1AnDWT5>.

JOELE FRANK TOPS 2014 M&A ROSTER

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher logged PR duties for 101 deals in 2014 to top *The Deal's* annual league tables.

Sard Verbinnen & Co. followed with 84, ahead of Brunswick Group (38), Abernathy MacGregor Group (35) and Kekst and Company (34).

The Deal, which tracks major deals of more than \$100M via Dealogic, reported that the US M&A market had its best year of the millennium in 2014 up 38% to \$1.29T.

Healthcare led the charge with transactions like Pershing Square Capital's \$66B sale of Actavis and Medtronic's \$42.9B merger with Covidien, the latter one of the more prominent "inversion" deals of 2014. Oil and gas and tech also contributed to the robust market for transactions.

Among proxy firms, Georgeson and MacKenzie Partners worked 54 deals apiece, followed by Innisfree M&A (52), DF King & Co. (36), Okapi Partners (18) and Morrow & Co. (11), according to The Deal.

The Deal's report is at <http://odwpr.us/1AFIYxi>.

DIDIT DOES BRIDGE GLOBAL DEAL

Didit search engine marketing shop has acquired New York's Bridge Global Strategies, which was founded by PR veteran Lucy Siegel in 2004.

The transaction is the second PR firm deal by the Mineola-headquartered shop, which acquired David Grant's LVM Group last February.

Siegel told O'Dwyer's the need for integrated marketing communications savvy drove the merger.

While traditional channels of PR remain vital, Siegel believes her clients are best served by teaming with an agency that offers specialized expertise in a host of digital services.

She first became aware of Didit during a lunch with Grant, who told her his deal is working out nicely.

David Pasternack, Didit president/co-founder, said Bridge Global "brings us international PR expertise and connections with companies around the world."

Bridge Global reported \$500K in fee income from clients such as Japan External Trade Organization, JAL Hotels and New York Pharma Forum.

Gould & Partners served as advisor on the acquisition.

PSAKI RETURNS TO WHITE HOUSE

Jen Psaki is the new White House press secretary, replacing Jennifer Palmieri, who is expected to spokesperson for Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, effective April 1. She had been State Dept. spokesperson and traveled to more than 50 countries with Secretary John Kerry.

President Obama said in a statement that he fully trusts Psaki and is thrilled she's back on his team.

She handled PR for both of his presidential runs.

Before Obama, Psaki was communications director for Congressman Joe Crowley and regional spokesperson for the Democratic Congressional Campaign.

She also launched the DC office of New York's Global Strategy Group.

AMERICA WELCOMES WILLIAMS BACK

More than half of America (52 percent) says Brian Williams should return to his anchor slot at NBC's "Nightly News," according to a CNN/ORCpoll.

Four-in-ten respondents say "no way." Eight percent have no opinion about Williams, who was suspended for six months after falsely claiming his helicopter took a hit in Iraq.

The poll was taken Feb. 12-15.

Meanwhile, Williams' replacement Lester Holt has watched his audience shrink to 9.4M, according to the latest numbers from Nielsen.

ABC's "World News" has an audience of 9M, while CBS's "Evening News" checked in at 7.6M.

Williams' averaged 10.2M viewers during the week of Feb. 2, which was just before his exit.

NBC is currently reviewing Williams' reporting.



Williams

YAHOO SERVES UP SERWER

Andy Serwer, who spent nearly 30 years at Time Inc., is the new editor-in-chief of Yahoo Finance.

He completed an eight-year run as *Fortune* editor last year, succeeded by Alan Murray, who was deputy managing editor at the *Wall Street Journal*.

Kathy Savitt, who announced the new hire via a Yahoo post, noted that Serwer relaunched and re-designed *Fortune's* magazine and website.

"He has the perfect balance of experience and expertise to help take Yahoo Finance to the next level and amplify the stories behind the stocks," she wrote.

Yahoo Finance launched 15 years ago. Time Warner spun off Time Inc. last year.

NBCU NEWS BOLSTERS EVENTS

NBCUniversal News Group slates a series of live events featuring Mika Brzezinski, co-host of the "Morning Joe" program on MSNBC.

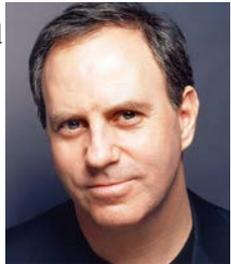
The full-day sessions will be based on the "Knowing Your Value" franchise that was created by Brzezinski, a support of women empowerment. Her *Knowing Your Value* book cracked the *New York Times* best-seller list.

Brzezinski will make a presentation at each meeting, which will also include aspirational speakers covering personal finance/health & wellness, panel discussions, breakouts, training and mentoring opportunities.

The tour kicks off April in Philadelphia and over the course of the year will stop in Washington, Chicago, Boston and Orlando.

Brzezinski said the purpose of the tour is to "create a different kind of national movement that provides tips, training and resources that feel realistic for working women in their everyday lives."

She will release another book, *Grow Your Value* book in the spring.



Serwer

CASSELL TURNS OFF TURNER PR POST

Karen Cassell, senior VP-PR at Turner Broadcasting System, is stepping down after more than two decades of service.

She handled communications for Turner Classic Movies, TBS, TNT and Turner South units.

Cassell, who took the top PR spot in 2003, plans to spend time with her family.

James Anderson is senior VP of communications for Turner.

DE BORCHGRAVE DIES AT 88

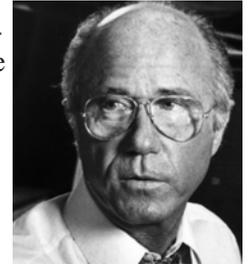
Arnaud de Borchgrave, former editor-in-chief of the *Washington Times* and chief foreign correspondent for *Newsweek*, died Feb. 15 after a long bout of cancer. He was 88.

After did a six-year stint at the daily-owned by South Korea's Unification Church, he left in 1991 to take the president/CEO post of United Press International. At death, de Borchgrave was editor-at-large for both outlets.

As foreign correspondent, he covered both France's and America's war in Vietnam from 1954 through 1975. He interviewed world leaders such as Charles de Gaulle, Shah of Iran, President Ronald Reagan and Muammar Gaddafi.

Larry Beasley, CEO of the *Times*, called deBorchgrave a "giant of journalist," who did globe-trotting journalism to keep Americans informed of world events.

"His tireless work as our editor-in-chief helped put The *Washington Times* on the map in its early days," he told the paper on Feb. 15.



de Borchgrave

DOD CONSIDERS CIVILIAN SPOKESPERSON

Newly minted US Secretary of Defense Ash Carter is mulling whether to install a civilian spokesman to replace the departing Rear Adm. John Kirby, who has been the uniform-clad PR face of the Pentagon since late 2013.

The well-respected, 28-year Navy vet Kirby, who is staying on for a few weeks in a transition period, said in his Feb. 18 press briefing that Carter has not yet made a decision about his replacement as press secretary but wants to "revisit the role of spokesman here" and consider "whether it's appropriate or not to have a uniform up here."

Asked by the press corps whether it has been uncomfortable to wear a uniform and speak for White House military policies, Kirby said it wasn't a big issue. "It hasn't -- it just hasn't been a big problem for me," he said. "And I don't know whether that's because of my experience here in the Pentagon, or whether it's because that I've known all of you for so long and you know where I can't go, I think it's probably a combination of that."

The New York Times, citing unnamed administration officials, said Carter wants a civilian in the chief spokesman role.

PR & SOCIAL MEDIA VIEWS**CAN TRUST BE REGAINED?**

By Ronn Torossian

Trust has been in the news quite a bit recently. More to the point, the question of “trust” related to those who bring us the news.

Since Brian Williams’ well-publicized fall from grace, the conversation has shifted from the severity of his punishment to general questions about media trustworthiness.

Those ready to throw the book at Williams believe media are sacrosanct and must not impose on the trust placed in it. Others believe that media lies “all the time,” so why trust any of them? Just take everything you hear with a grain of salt.

What does that have to do with business leadership? Both of these extreme viewpoints can be found

across a wide spectrum of human activity.

No matter what business you are in, there’s a group out there that will trust you, and for whom that trust is important. Then there’s another group out there who just wants results. They want you to make them feel a certain way.

One key to strong leadership is to understand how to identify and interact with both groups, as well as everyone in between.

In most cases, people fall somewhere between these extremes. They may trust, but there is a point at which trust is less important than results. Or they may not care about trust, but there are some issues that are non-negotiable. If you can’t navigate this particular minefield, you will find your business success and growth potential artificially limited.

Success in this area requires more than ambiguous “people skills.” Leaders must understand the specific levers and buttons related to the various points on the trust spectrum. That can be more difficult than it sounds because those markers may shift from one profession to the next. If your customers don’t understand what you do, they may care less about trust and worry more about results.

However, if they think they understand what you do, they will be more on the lookout for potential breaches of etiquette or what they perceive to be the correct action.

Then you have the wild card. How much your audience WANTS to trust you? That, in most cases, is based on pre-established consumer PR. This can be powerful stuff. It’s arguably the only thing offering Williams hope of a job in media ever again.

Trust is an imprecise science with very real consequences. Gaining it can be difficult. Regaining it can be nigh impossible. But it can be done, as long as you understand where to begin and which steps to take. Those answers are found in a proper understanding of where your audience lands on the trust spectrum.

Ronn Torossian is the CEO of 5WPR and founder of the Ronn Torossian Foundation.

‘No matter what business you are in, there’s a group out there that will trust you, and another who just wants results.’

A-ROD IS THE MOST PATHETIC PR VICTIM

By Fraser P. Seitel

Has there ever been a more pathetic PR victim than Alex Rodriguez? Oh sure the former regular third baseman for the New York Yankees is rich and talented (or at least was the last time we looked) and is guaranteed to make \$80 million over the next three years, no matter how much his skills have eroded.

But nonetheless, A-Rod is one sick puppy, compounding the imminent misery he is likely to suffer in the coming baseball season by continuing to accept horrible PR advice.

Wrongheaded PR has been a hallmark of the Rodriguez comeback initiative ever since the aging star was first charged with taking performance-enhancing steroids.

For one thing, he turned to lawyers – lawyers! – to handle his PR travails.

• **The first attorney**, Lanny Davis, called for a federal investigation to investigate Major League Baseball’s “misconduct” in investigating poor Alex’s relationship with the Coral Gables, FL anti-aging clinic that supplied the juice. MLB responded to Davis’ attempt to deflect attention from his client by suggesting he go pound salt.

• **The second attorney**, Joe Tacopina, accused MLB, its commissioner and the Yankees of staging a witch hunt to destroy his client and dared the league to release Alex’s confidential drug-testing record. When the league agreed, the barrister headed for the hills.

Now it doesn’t take a PR genius to realize that hiring headline-grabbing, self-promoting lawyers to handle your crisis management isn’t a particularly dandy idea. And in both cases, the barristers’ offensive offensive backfired immediately for the already beloved A-Rod.

Today, of course, free-spending Alex apparently has assembled a different PR team to help smooth his entry back into baseball after a one-year suspension.

And rather than counseling their client to hold an obligatory spring training press conference to face the press jackals, acknowledge his wrongs and attempt to clear the air before baseball begins, here was their \$1,000/hour advice:

Handwrite a personal letter of apology! Oy. Oy. Oy.

The not-so-subtle purpose of this device, of course, was to reflect “personalization,” i.e. to present the appearance that Alex penned the letter himself. Which, of course, he probably did – after somebody dictated it to him!!!

Predictably, the ham-handed attempt at damage control only served to intensify the contempt in which the vast majority of baseball fans held the wayward third baseman. Even the talk radio mouth breathers – not the most discerning of PR analyst – weren’t buying the personal letter ruse.

So rather than facing his accusers and beginning to turn the page on his transgressions, Rodriguez’ latest transparent PR gambit only served to dig him into a deeper hole.

Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for 40 years. He may be reached directly at yusake@aol.com.



NEWS OF PR FIRMS

TYLER MOVES TO CLOUD

Janet Tyler, who launched Michigan's Airfoil Group with Lisa Vallee-Smith in the late '90s, has moved to Red Level Networks, as COO in charge of operations and marketing communications.

CEO David King said he hired Tyler for her ability to build brands and develop marketing strategies.

Red Level, which has enjoyed 20 percent annual growth during the past few years, is a provider of cloud computing, hosted applications and advanced IT.

The company employs about 35 people and plans to staff up as it opens in Ohio this year.

PMK-BNC LAUNCHES JETER PUBLICATION

PMK-BNC guided PR for the star-studded launch of the *The Player's Tribune*, the digital publication of first-person stories by professional athletes orchestrated by retired Yankee Derek Jeter.

The Tribune, which has been online for months, held an official kickoff

Feb. 14 in New York with a roundtable and event, red carpet and performance by Com-

mon. Bravo TV host Andy Cohen moderated a discussion with Jeter, Mets ace Matt Harvey and Pirates outfield Andrew Mc-

Cutchen, NFL quarterback Russell Wilson, NBA players Blake Griffin and Jason Collins, and golfer Stacey Lewis. Jeter says the publication will feature the voices of athletes to bring fans closer to the game, a proposition that's difficult in their day-to-day interactions with sports beat reporters. The shortstop was notorious among New York media for his bland post-game quotes and ability to stay under the radar in a hyper-charged media environment. "I do think fans deserve more than 'no comments' or 'I don't know,'" he said in October. "Those simple answers have always stemmed from a genuine concern that any statement, any opinion or detail, might be distorted."

The Tribune has aligned with AOL to produce content featured on both platforms. SiriusXM and The Tribune host a weekly radio show, as well.

Gary Hoenig, an ESPN Publishing, *Newsday* and *Washington Star* alum, is editorial director. Porsche is the publication's first advertiser.

PMK-BNC is a strategic marketing and communications firm of Interpublic that specializes in popular culture and entertainment. Vice president Cliff Carson in New York handles *The Player's Tribune*.

BRIEF: Tallahassee-based Moore Communications Group has acquired Denver-based Financial Social Media, a five-year-old shop led by Amy McIlwain. FSM specializes in digital and social strategy execution and training with clients like Jackson National Insurance, Transamerica Financial Advisors, LPL and Financial, Lincoln Financial Distributors.



NEW ACCOUNTS

New York Area

Hawkins International PR, New York/Flytographer, service to connect travelers with local photographers who capture candid moments during vacations and other travels, for PR.

Raker Goldstein, New York/US Coachways, bus and limousine transportation, for PR.

East

Gregory FCA, Ardmore, Pa./ScripsAmerica, prescription and OTC pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, as AOR for investor relations to pitch the company across retail, analyst and institutional investors.

DBC PR + Social Media, Washington, D.C./Q Drinks, cocktail soda maker, and Kitchensurfing, app-based network of local chefs aimed to give users the experience and convenience of a private chef at an accessible price, for media relations.

Aro, Charlotte, N.C./Parsons Summa, law firm, for website and PR; A Handbook for Life Seminars, for PR and digital for the client since 2009; Simons Chiropractic, for digital; Netsafe Solutions, for content and social media, and Magnaceutical Health for a crowdsourcing project to support military veterans.

Southeast

O'Donnell Agency, West Palm Beach, Fla./Freehold Capital Management, for branding, advertising, social media and PR for a 2,200-home community to be developed in Palm Beach County; Origins Behavioral Healthcare, addiction treatment, and the West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority, a renewal for a three-year term. The firm also picked up a marketing services contract for the City of Riviera Beach; All Aboard Florida, the privately owned passenger rail system that will connect Miami and Orlando; Nova Scotia-based energy supplier Emera; law firm of Ackerman, Link & Sartory, P.A.; Rabbit Coffee Roasting Company, and The Spine Center in Jupiter.

Southwest

Zion & Zion, Tempe, Ariz./Goodwill of Central Arizona, as AOR following an RFP process. Work includes branding, creative, digital and social for the non-profit, which has 63 retail stores in the region.

The Integer Group, Dallas/Deoleo North America, as AOR for brand planning, activation, shopper marketing and media planning for its Bertolli, Carbonell and Carapelli olive oil brands.

Forté PR, Las Vegas/Fitmoo, fitness social network and marketplace, for strategic planning, traditional and social media strategy and executive, and brand and athlete outreach.

West

JMPR Public Relations, Woodland Hills, Calif./Strider Sports International, maker of no-pedal balance bikes to teach bike-riding, for PR and social media, including outreach to national lifestyle, family, outdoor and regional publications, as well as event support.

PMBC Group, Los Angeles/Virtual Piggy, safe technology for youth to make online payments, for a national media relations campaign for Oink, its secure online and in-store digital wallet service and prepaid card aimed at teens.

NEWS OF SERVICES**PUBLICIS ACQUIRES CONTENT SHOP**

Publicis Groupe is acquiring Relaxnews, developer of an online platform combining leisure content, data and services for brands, blogs and media, for \$17M.

The content shop has a partnership with Agence France Presse called the AFP-Relaxnews newswire that serves more than 200 clients including Microsoft, Yahoo and Getty Images.

Publicis CEO Maurice Levy said the deal responds to client demand for richer online content.

Relaxnews will align with Publicis' ZenithOptimedia network.

Jérôme and Pierre Doncieux, Relaxnews co-chairmen, will report to Sébastien Danet, global managing partner at ZenithOptimedia.

They consider the acquisition by Publicis "a wonderful recognition of the Relaxnews adventure."

KENT STATE SEEKS PR SOFTWARE

Kent State University is on the hunt for a PR and media relations software vendor.

The school has an RFP open through March 18 for the contract. A mandatory conference call is set for March 4 (register by March 3). Deadline for proposals is March 18.

Copies of the RFP (#1163) can be obtained from Larry McWilliams (lmcwilli@kent.edu).

PRN REVAMPS MULTIMEDIA RELEASE SERVICE

PR Newswire has revamped its multimedia news release service to include a customized landing page and enhancing reporting capabilities.

"Enhanced reporting capabilities and added flexibility in design give our clients greater control of their messaging and better visibility into outcomes," said senior VP of global product Jason Edelhoim.

PRN said the redesign features and highlights a central "hero" image, promotes additional multimedia content in a gallery on the page, and includes a showcase area for video content.

The streamlined reporting puts all data within its visibility reports platform, making it easier to compare different campaigns.

FILM AD EXECS FORM REC ROOM

Feature film ad agency Big Picture Entertainment, a leading feature film advertising agency has aligned with former 20th Century Fox marketing execs Jonathan Helfgot and Mike George to form REC ROOM, a content agency to operate independently of BPE.

The firm will create original marketing content for film studios, TV networks, digital MCNs and brands looking to move beyond traditional advertising.

Helfgot and George have been building an original content business within Big Picture for the past 3 years. Clients include Sony Pictures, 20th Century Fox, Netflix, LinkedIn, Fox Sports, Red Bull, Google/YouTube and the New York Knicks. Said Ryan Hegenberger, managing partner of Big Picture: "We are all aware that the landscape of nontraditional marketing is constantly changing."

PEOPLE**Joined**

Liz Foster, publicity and marketing director for cookbook publisher Phaidon, to Edelman, San Francisco, as senior VP of consumer media services. Katie Goldberg, senior VP, comms., Major League Gaming re-joins the office as senior VP to oversee West Coast food accounts. She was previously VP for consumer PR at Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia.

**Foster**

Courtney Lamie, communications director for the Application Developers Alliance, to Crosscut Strategies, Washington, D.C., as a director. Lamie built and ran the App Alliance's communications unit as it represented tech giants like Google, Intel and Samsung in the app development space. Nicholas Samonas, media assistant at political ad shop Shorr Johnson Magnus, joins Crosscut as an associate.

**Lamie**

James Miller, VP of comms. & marketing, Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce, to The Florida Retail Federation, Tallahassee, as communications director, overseeing marketing, communications and public outreach, effective Feb. 23.

Craig Wack, e-commerce content coordinator, Academy Sports + Outdoors, to Memphis International Raceway, as director of PR and marketing. He was a PR specialist for Geiger Media Global and motor-sports writer for the *Commercial Appeal*.

Kristina Habermann, previously of PerkinElmer's Diagnostics Division, to Genomind, King of Prussia, Pa., a pharmacogenetic testing laboratory specializing in psychiatry medicine, as VP of marketing and corporate comms.

Luca Biondolillo, head of corporate comms. and PA for Benetton Group, to MSC Cruises, Geneva, as chief communications officer, starting March 2. He previously led financial and corporate comms. for Luxottica Group.

Promoted

Tom Corsillo to associate VP, The Marino Organization, New York. He joined the firm in 2005 and has handled client work for Walmart, Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City, Derek Jeter's "Turn 2 Foundation" and Kingsbridge National Ice Center.

Gabe Tesoriero to executive VP of media and artist relations, Def Jam, New York. Tesoriero, who has repped Kanye West for the artist's recording career, heads media, publicity, creative and imaging campaigns for the label. He takes over for Laura Swanswon, who is now with Epic Records.

Honored

Travis Parman, director of corporate communications for Nissan Americas, Franklin, Tenn., received the Univ. of Tennessee Accomplished Alumnus Award Feb. 19. He is a 1994 graduate of the school's College of Communication and Information. He started out at GM and GMAC before moving to Nissan in 2012.

LAND O'LAKES ACQUIRES MARKETING PR FIRM

Dairy cooperative Land O'Lakes has acquired Ohio-based marketing and PR firm Farmer, Lumpe + McClelland with plans to integrate its staff into the \$14B company.

FLM specializes in PR, media relations, digital, PA and branding work in the agriculture sector for clients like the Illinois Soybean Assn., Farmer Mac and Winfield.

The firm, founded in 2006 with offices in Columbus, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Washington and Chicago, will shutter and its personnel will then operate as a wholly owned subsidiary of Land O'Lakes after the deal closes in the second quarter.

"This partnership with FLM will provide valuable resources within our federated co-op system to drive the growth of our member-owners," said Land O'Lakes CEO and president Chris Policinski.

Land O'Lakes had \$14.2B in sales in 2013 and includes brands like Land O'Lakes Dairy Foods, Purina Animal Nutrition and WinField.

CHOBANI'S SABRESE JOINS PN

Ted Sabarese, who directed experiential marketing and digital creative at No. 1 Greek yogurt maker Chobani, has joined Porter Novelli as North America creative lead. He takes on content strategy, development, brand identity & expression, advertising, experiential marketing and design duties.

Sabarese is based in New York.

The Omnicom unit also added Adam Scholder in Chicago as senior VP.

Most recently, he was senior VP/general manager at Olson Exchange.

Earlier, Scholder worked at Burson-Marsteller, Ketchum, Walt Disney Co. and Widmeyer Group. He's represented MillerCoors, McDonald's Kraft and Whole Foods.

SNYDERS-LANCE SNACKS REVAMPS PR

Snyder's-Lance, the \$2B snack food marketer making a healthier play, has moved its PR account and brought in new digital and advertising agencies in a revamp.

Luquire George Andrews, based in the company's hometown of Charlotte, N.C., takes over PR, which had been handled by Baltimore-based GKV, the company's AOR for advertising and media planning, as well.

In addition LGA, Snyder's moved its advertising account to Barton F. Graf 9000 as it focuses on its core brands – Snyder's of Hanover, Lance, Cape Cod and Pretzel Crisps. Digital agency Tenthwave will handle social, mobile and digital duties.

S-L spun off its private brands business last year and acquired "better for you" baked goods maker Baptista's Bakery, taking a \$250M annual revenue hit and implementing cost cuts to retrench in a market moving toward more healthful and premium offerings. It also unveiled a new logo and a Clearview Foods division featuring organic and "Eat Smart" brands.

Fiscal 2014 net income was a robust \$77M on revenue of \$1.75B, a 7.4% increase.

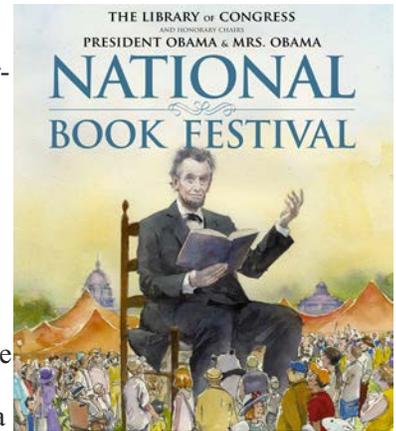
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS BOOKS PR SEARCH

The Library of Congress has booked a review for agencies to handle event planning and PR.

The project-based contract, including a base year with four year-long options, will run from \$5M to \$50M in billings over five years, supporting the 158M-item institution with planning, operation and PR for myriad events in and around Washington.

On the PR front, the Library seeks strategic counsel, research, media relations and executive of PR strategy, according to an RFP released Feb. 12.

Proposals are due March 3. Details of the search are at <http://odwpr.us/1vs0jtb>.



MARYLAND EYES MEDICAL POT PR

Maryland's medical marijuana commission is calling for proposals from PR firms to educate the public and key players as the state prepares to open the industry by 2016.

The Old Line State's Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene houses the Natalie M. LaPrade Medical Marijuana Commission, named after the mother of a state legislator. An RFP released today calls for a year-long, \$25K communications strategy contract overseen by MMC executive director Hannah Byron.

The commission will seek a PR advisor to inform and educate the public about medical pot, keep stakeholders like growers, dispensaries and doctors in the loop, and develop an overall PR plan.

Proposals are due March 9.

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

TONY BLAIR GOES TO WORK ON SERBIANS

Former British prime minister Tony Blair has signed on to represent Serbia under an agreement funded by the United Arab Emirates.

He's to counsel Aleksandar Vucic, Serbia's prime minister. The government wants to buff up its image as part of its push for full membership in the European Union.

The Guardian notes that Blair was a leading proponent of bombing Serbia during the Balkans conflict.

NATO bombed Serbia and its capital city Belgrade in March/June 1999 during the Kosovo War, which resulted from the split up of Yugoslavia.

Vucic was Serbia's information minister during the war and a fierce critic of Blair. *The Guardian* reports the Vucic is listed as editor of a book published in 2005 called "English Gay Fart Tony Blair."

Blair already has a relationship with the UAE. His Tony Blair Associates receives \$1M a year for representing Mubadala, Abu Dhabi's sovereign fund.

Since leaving office, Blair has worked for Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Rwanda, Mongolia and Albania.

The legal assault on three Hampton towns by the East End Eruv Assn. aided by Verizon, LPEG/LIPA and two huge law firms, is an example of lawyers running amok, robbing Americans of two freedoms—free speech and freedom of religion as well as freedom from religion.

Founders of the country wanted to start with a fresh slate—barring the “seditious” libel that led to drawing and quartering of government critics in the U.K. and belief in anything supernatural, which spawned the Inquisition, among other abuses. The word “god” is not in the Constitution.

Under the U.K. system, Parliament had free speech but not the press or people. Offenders were tortured and executed for something they said. The modern Inquisition is the legal system where frivolous lawsuits can bankrupt a company or individual.

Few Trust U.S. Court System

Anti-lawsuit sites such as Faces of Lawsuit Abuse say 87% of the public fears frivolous lawsuits. Only 16% trust the legal system to defend them against such suits, says a Harris poll. They cost Americans at least \$200 billion yearly.

Lawyers started to drag America back to the British system with the Sedition Act of 1798 that allowed Congress to penalize Americans for the “crime” of expressing “dissent.” Libel laws that could be used against the press and others were soon added.

New York Supreme Court Judge Charles Ramos argued in a 5,000 word article in the July 24, 1995 *New York Law Journal* that media should not be sued for libel because free speech was deterred. Half of PR execs polled by the O’Dwyer Co. agreed including Howard Rubenstein, Richard Edelman, PRSA president John Beardsley, Robert Dilenschneider and Mark Ragan, *Ragan Report*. The number of lawyers has now reached 1.22 million. They file 15 million civil lawsuits yearly—a far greater proportion of both than in any other country. Japan has 23 lawyers per 100,000 citizens whereas the U.S. has 391 or 17 times as many. Canada has 26 lawyers per 100,000.

Eruv Lawsuits Are Frivolous

“The U.S is choking on litigation... anyone can sue for anything no matter how absurd or egregious,” wrote *Boston Globe* columnist Jeff Jacoby May 9, 2014.

An example of frivolous suits is the multiple actions against Westhampton Beach, Southampton and Quogue that are now in their fifth year with no end in sight. This has cost the towns and Jewish People Opposed to the Eruv \$1 million+ so far in payments to their law firms. The towns are threatened with millions in penalties and court costs.

The courts unfortunately have bowed to this irrationality in some but by no means all communities. The Federal District Court for Tenafly, N.J., ordered an eruv in that city removed but was over-ruled by an Appeals Court. There are no eruvim in Paris and only two small ones in the entire country. The French know the meaning of “secular.”

Get Those Symbols Off Our Poles!

Despite the hundreds of thousands of words filed in this litigation, it is a no-brainer. Jewish Orthodox markings do not belong on utility poles any more than the sign of the cross or Muslim symbols. One filing, complained Judge Kathleen Tomlinson, was 70 gigabytes. Answers.com said if there are 200 words on a page, one gigabyte would total 125 million pages.

For a sample of tortured logic, legal hair-splitting on what is or is not a sign, specious and fatuous reasoning, plus verbal overkill, readers should explore some of the more than 70 legal links on the WHB website.

What they will find is an almost bottomless swamp of verbiage in which they will quickly drown unless they have some life preservers of logic. That is the object of these massive legal actions—intimidate and discourage examination by citizens. Reporters, who ask a simple question and get “a roomful of information” are familiar with this ploy.

The job of the press and concerned citizens is to cut through this overgrown jungle and get to the heart of the matter. Both press and citizens have to mobilize public opinion. Vigorous public discussion is needed, the bedrock of democracy. Lawyers are often in the position of tamping down public discussion.

Mayor Caved on “Twin Police Chiefs”

Proof that Mayor Marie Moore and the WHB trustees will cave to public opinion is their retreat from the “twin police chiefs” bubble that was popped by 62 citizens at a meeting Feb. 12.

Virtually everyone in the room shot up their hands that night when it came time for public comment. It was the biggest meeting since the 1960s, said local blogger Dean Speir. www.whbqt.info. Our take on this is that the twin chiefs idea was just a ruse to distract citizens from the real problem—the eruv lawsuits that are costly to defend and result in WHB being slammed in the suits and in the press as anti-Semitic. A *New York Post* editorial Jan. 9 headlined “Making room for Jews” accused WHB residents of “bigotry.”

WHB appears to be governed by a team of lawyers. Thomas Moore, husband of Maria, is a law clerk to Suffolk County Superior Court Judge John Rouse. He operates the blog progress4whb.com that covers his wife’s administration. The blog does not appear to accept comments. The only photo of Thomas Moore that we can locate is the property of 27east.com which will not let us use it. A telephone call to Thomas Moore was not returned.

Leading citizens and major taxpayers in WHB should demand that Mayor Moore call a town meeting on the eruv threat.

The new \$7.5 million WHB library is going to be a white elephant if it does not take a lead role in this discussion. The American Library Assn. hosts the annual Gordon M. Conable Award for libraries that have “collections that include diverse points of view” and “programs that promote community dialog on controversial issue.”

— Jack O’Dwyer