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Show your firm's expertise in such specialities as healthcare, tech and finances (as well as 17 others) by taking in part in O'Dwyer's 2023 Rankings of PR Firms. **The deadline to submit is Fri., Mar. 13.**
[View Rankings Instructions \(PDF\)](#).

NYC DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH NEEDS PR

The New York City Dept. of Public Health seeks proposals from firms to provide strategic communications and public relations support to advance its public agenda and build a communications operation better suited to respond to the elevated interest in public health.

It wants to hear from firms with at least seven years of strategic communications experience, preferably with a background relevant to local, state, or federal government agencies, hospitals/healthcare institutions, corporations and/or non-profit organizations or elected officials.

The firm will have expertise in strategy development, executive/crisis communications and media relations.

The Department will give priority to minority and women-owned businesses.

Proposals, due March 8, go to procurement@fphnyc.org.
[Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

EX-SENATOR TARGETS RUSSIAN WAR CRIMES

Norm Coleman, who was a Republican Senator for Minnesota, is repping the London-based Victor Pinchuk Foundation as it works to stage an exhibit in the US Capitol on Russian war crimes against Ukraine.

Pinchuk is an Ukrainian oligarch and founder of both EastOne Group investment firm based in London, and Interpipe Group, steel and pipe company in Ukraine. He also owns media properties in Ukraine, served in its parliament and married the daughter of ex-Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma.

Coleman represents the Foundation through his connection at Hogan Lovells law firm, where he is senior counsel. Hogan Lovells is to engage with members of Congress to help arrange for the exhibit.

That outreach includes a phone call to Minnesota Democratic Senator Amy Klobuchar and email exchanges with the chiefs of staff for Republican Senators Lindsey Graham (SC) and Thom Tillis (NC),

Hogan Lovells is working on the project on a pro bono basis.



Norm Coleman

WPP POSTS 6.7% GROWTH IN '22

WPP reported a 6.7 percent rise in 2022 like-for-like revenues to \$17.3B as clients continued to invest in communications, customer experience, commerce, data and technology.

CEO Mark Read said WPP entered 2023 in a strong financial position with good momentum from its business wins, which include Audible, Danone, Migros, SC Johnson, Nationwide and Verizon.

He sees many opportunities despite some macroeconomic challenges.

WPP's PR units BCW Global, Hill+Knowlton Strategies and FGS Global posted 8.2 percent growth for the year.

Read told O'Dwyer's that PR, PA and strategic communications continue to increase in importance for brands and organisations.

He also noted the "performance of FGS Global in the MergerMarket league tables where it led the M&A tables by some distance globally, and in the key regions."

LANSON'S ADDS TENEO'S VAUGHAN

[Lansons](#) hires Louise Vaughan, who was social and digital lead at Teneo, as a senior campaigning advisor to expand its integrated campaigning offer.

During her 13-year run at Teneo (and formerly Blue Rubicon), Vaughan served as managing director as well as leading its digital team in London. She has most recently served as director of communications and interim CEO of The National Emergencies Trust, a charity set up to better support those affected by UK disasters.

"She is adept across all communication channels and disciplines from paid-for to earned, going well-beyond the traditional boundaries of the comms industry," said Lansons CEO Gordon Temple-Hay. "Her breadth of experience blurs the line between marketing and comms."



Mark Read



Louise Vaughan

CONSUMERS WANT TO BE HEARD

Consumers want to be heard by companies—even if their opinions are at odds. That’s the conclusion of “Collaboration & Consensus: Do Consumers Feel Heard?”, a new survey conducted by Ruder Finn.



More than four in ten of the survey respondents (43 percent) said that as long as a brand “demonstrated that it heard their point of view,” they would feel that the brand had listened to them, even if it wound up taking a stance on an issue that disagreed with their own. When the brand failed to give an explanation, however, only 19 percent of respondents said that they would feel listened to if they were on the opposite side of an issue.

There was also broad agreement from respondents (93 percent) that brands should react to public opinion.

Overall, many consumers are taking an active role in their interactions with brands. More than half (57 percent) said they actively engage with brands either through online commenting or direct outreach.

For many of them, that sense of engagement translated to an improved relationship with the brand. More than half (55 percent) noted that they had “a better opinion of a brand” after engaging with them, as opposed to just 8 percent saying that their opinion of the brand went down after the interaction.

There are obstacles to engagement, however. Only about 1 in 2 say it’s easy to contact brands, with 38 percent of Gen Z saying it’s easy to contact brands compared to 53 percent of Millennials and 58 percent of Gen Xers.

“The results of our latest survey indicate the importance of an empathetic leadership style that demonstrates listening when engaging today’s consumer,” said Ruder Finn CEO Kathy Bloomgarden. “It’s more important to show that you’re listening than it is to speak out. This has significant implications for today’s leadership style and determining how leaders engage with groups with different opinions.”

The survey polled 1,000 US consumers ages 16 and above, who were surveyed on Dec. 19 and 20, 2022.

LAWRENCE (MA) SEEKS COMMS BOOST

Lawrence, which is located 25 miles north of Boston and five miles south of New Hampshire, plans to hire a firm for marketing and advertising services.

Located on the Merrimack River, Lawrence developed as one of the nation’s leading textile producers.



Known as “Immigrant City,” it is home to about 90K people, of which 82 percent are Hispanic.

The RFP calls for a partner to help develop marketing strategies and handle publicity, advertising, social media, and audio visual production on an as-needed basis.

Lawrence plans to issue a contract to cover the rest of 2023. It will retain the option to renew for another two more calendar years.

Proposals are due March 6. They go to: City of Lawrence; Office of the City Clerk; 200 Common Street, Room 107; Lawrence, MA 01840.

[Read the RFP \(PDF\).](#)

ON THE MOVE

Six Flags Entertainment Corporation names **Edith-ann Velez Ramey** as CMO. Velez Ramey most recently served as CMO for On The Border Restaurants, where she led marketing, culinary and catering initiatives. She has also held strategic management roles at TopGolf Entertainment Group, Chili’s Grill & Bar and Maggiano’s Little Italy. At Six Flags, Velez Ramey will be responsible for driving and overseeing the company’s marketing strategy, including guest experience, group sales, and sponsorships, as well as driving growth and brand awareness. “Her experience working with fast-growing and established brands will be critical to our success,” said Six Flags president and CEO Selim Bassoul.

Smokey Mo’s BBQ, which operates 18 locations in Texas, hires **Leslie Ternes Smith** as VP of marketing. Smith was most recently vice president, brand marketing at Tiff’s Treats and she has also served as vice president of global marketing at Juicy Couture. “With Leslie’s proven track record of leading brands through successful marketing campaigns, she is a fantastic addition to the Smokey Mo’s marketing team,” said Smokey Mo’s BBQ president Craig Haley.



Leslie Ternes Smith

FGS Global names former Medtronic chairman and chief executive **Bill George** as a senior advisor of the company. George, currently an executive fellow at Harvard Business School, is the author of “True North” and other best-selling books on business leadership, and has served on the boards of Goldman Sachs, Exxon Mobil, Target, Novartis AG and Mayo Clinic. “Bill George is one of the most successful and well-known business and academic leaders of the last several decades, now advising boards and C-suite executives on challenging situations, crises and general leadership issues,” said FGS Global CEO, Alex Geiser. “As a professor of management practice at Harvard Business School, he has helped prepare hundreds of new CEOs for the challenges they face.”

UpSpring brings on **Christina Cherry** as senior communications director. Most recently a PR, communications and brand consultant at Cherry Creative, Cherry has also worked at M18 Public Relations and NJF. At UpSpring, her client roster includes architecture, interior design, and master planning firms that work in a range of sectors including corporate interiors, hospitality, education, housing, mixed-use, sports and recreation, and retail.

Sage Growth Partners has promoted **John Gonda** to vice president of PR and media relations. Gonda has served as SGP’s senior director of PR and media relations since joining the firm in April 2021. In his new role, he will lead the firm’s expanding earned media and public relations practice. Prior to joining SGP, Gonda held leadership positions with several hospitals, health systems and medical groups throughout Ohio, Florida and Michigan.



Christina Cherry

ANTICIPATE CRISES—AND DRILL TO PREPARE

The case for having a crisis public relations plan—especially in the world of misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and trial by press release—now applies to all organizations.



Robert Durand, Jonathan Taylor

Reputation attacks can happen instantly, launched overnight or within hours against any organization, from litigation and boycotts to demands for remedial legislation and criminal sanctions.

The opposition will attack suddenly, bursting onto the public stage—fast, furious and forceful—but not necessarily factual. The truth may be on your side, but until you respond, public opinion is being shaped by your opponent. You need a swift and strong response, which requires a plan and practice.

Practice telling the truth

Develop, test and regularly drill a crisis response plan so you're ready to react confidently and quickly. Engage swiftly, even if it's a bridge: "Here's what we know now, we hope to know more soon, our next brief will be at 2 p.m." Have an experienced executive team ready to say, "Activate the plan!" The first hours are vital, even critical. An ad hoc or on-the-fly response to a reputation challenge will be chaotic, defensive and overly emotional. Planning and practicing prevent panic.

Institutional reputation takes years to build. Undefended, reputation can be destroyed in days. Make crisis response part of an ongoing reputation management program and not just a binder on the shelf for when an alarm sounds. Response plans must be maintained—regularly reviewed, constantly monitored, carefully evaluated—and vigorously drilled.

Your team is as important as the plan. Your responders must be a team, players who know each other well and have worked together through active exercises at least once a year. And your team needs a strong reserve; today's 24/7 media landscape requires a team that can sustain 24/7 operations until the storm has passed.

Traditional crisis communication—fires, floods, product recalls, accidents and incidents—tends to focus on the emergency. Those "common emergencies" are seldom confined to the event itself and are compounded by reputation challenges.

Anticipate "reflash"

The media and influentials will ask: How could this have been prevented? What warnings were ignored? What's being done to prevent future accidents? How are those impacted being taken care of? These issues can and will appear without warning after the fire appears to be out. Your crisis response needs to anticipate issues and get ahead of them to repair, maintain or even improve your reputation.

A crisis is an unplanned test of every aspect of your organization. We believe that a properly handled crisis can improve your reputation. Leaders gain trust when they demonstrate leadership through moments of public stress.

Again: an effective response takes a plan and practice.

We call our Crosswind program CPR+, which is crisis communication focused on an active, pre-crisis engagement that paves the way for a rapid, organized and smooth crisis response and reputation enhancement. We can help. So can the several experienced specialty firms we work with who share our view that reputation management is an ongoing challenge—and a contact sport.

Whoever first said "A lie can travel around the world and back again while the truth is lacing up its boots" (the quote is often attributed to Mark Twain, Winston Churchill and Thomas Jefferson, but [the actual author isn't known](#)), the wisdom of the phrase is absolute. Misinformation thrives today. It can be spread cheaply and easily, gaining momentum and the veneer of authenticity because it's becoming "common knowledge." Failure to respond—or poorly executed responses that come too late—creates an environment where misinformation and slander can rule the day.

Boots laced, hard hats ready

When more nimble organizations take active charge of their reputations, the price of misinformation goes up. When you have a plan and a process in place to monitor and respond, your boots are always laced up and your hard hat is always within reach. And lies can't get very far when you are ready to answer with authority and truth.

Rear Admiral Robert Durand, formerly Vice Chief of Information for the U.S. Navy, is VP of Corporate Communications at Crosswind Media and Public Relations, where he provides strategic media and spokesperson services. Jonathan W. Taylor, who served his country as a frontline combat medic with tours in Afghanistan, supports Crosswind clients on corporate issues. He was formerly a staff sergeant, combat medic and combat advisor in the United States Army Reserves.

SAN ANTONIO HOUSING AUTHORITY NEEDS PR

Opportunity Home San Antonio, which runs one of the largest public housing authorities in Texas, wants to hire a firm to supplement the work of its in-house PR staff.

The more than 85-year-old organization manages 70 housing communities, 46 mixed-income apartment complexes and administers 14K rental vouchers.



As part of its social mission and federal mandate, OHSA provides economic, training and educational opportunities for low-income people in its communities.

The desired PR partner must be familiar with the San Antonio market, have a minimum of five years of experience working with public sector agencies and possess multicultural/Spanish language campaign expertise.

Proposals are due March 1 at the [OHSA electronic portal](#). [Read the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

SHUMAKER ADVISORS HIRES NRA'S OUIMET

Shumaker Advisors hires Jason Ouimet as SVP of federal affairs, effective March 6.

Ouimet comes to the firm after spending 18 years working for the NRA, most recently as executive director of the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action. He was previously a legislative assistant to former Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) and an analyst for the National Republican Senatorial Committee and Republican National Committee.

"He is hardworking, honest, and decisive," said Ryan Walker, who is also a senior vp of federal affairs at the firm.



Jason Ouimet

LIBYA'S OIL COMPANY TAPS MERCURY PA

Mercury Public Affairs has picked up a one-year agreement to handle strategic communications, media relations, digital services and government relations duties for the Libyan National Oil Company.



Former Louisiana Republican Senator David Vitter, a partner at Mercury, will spearhead the push.

The state-owned energy company is in the midst of a rebuilding and modernization drive in the aftermath of years of political upheaval in Libya.

It has opened an office in Houston to bolster its links to US talent and connections to energy services companies that are needed to revamp LNOC's upstream, midstream and downstream sectors.

Mercury's Feb. 21 agreement with LNOC has not yet gone into effect.

The firm did receive a \$30K fee, which included a one-time \$5K compliance charge, to cover the first month of work.

Omnicom owns Mercury.

BCW'S NORTHRUP SHIFTS TO ROKK SOLUTIONS

Elizabeth Northrup, who was executive VP of corporate affairs at [BCW Global](#) in DC, has joined ROKK Solutions as its first chief client officer.

She has more than 25 years of experience in the areas of public affairs, executive visibility, reputation management, crisis and brand awareness.



Elizabeth Northrup

Northrup also worked as managing director of communications & PA at Signal Group and senior VP-PA and chief of staff to the vice chairman at Hill+Knowlton Strategies.

She held in-house PA jobs at the American Insurance Assn. and American Chemistry Council.

Ron Bonjean, Rokk co-founder, believes Northrup's chief client

role will help guide the firm's growing client base, as the firm charted triple-digit growth during the past two years.

FGS WORKS PROVIDENCE'S STEM DEAL

[FGS Global](#) handles Providence Equity Partners as it makes a strategic investment in Accelerate Learning, a provider of STEM curriculum for the K-12 education market.

More than 750K teachers and 9M students across the US use Accelerate Learning's digital-first platform.



Providence has invested more than \$32B in media, communications and technologies companies since it launched in 1989.

"Accelerate Learning's purpose-built, engaging and easy-to-use platform has a demonstrated record of driving better outcomes for administrators and students," said David Phillips, senior managing director at Providence.

He expects the increased emphasis on STEM in K-12 and the ongoing shift to digital-first providers will drive Accelerate Learning's growth.

FGS Global's Kelsey Markovich, Kate Gorgi and Ethan Hunter represent Providence.



ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

[Ripley PR](#) is named agency of record for the **Blount County (Tennessee) Board of Education**. The agency has been tasked with helping the school system rebrand the district in the community, introducing director of schools David Murrell, creating monthly community newsletters and training groups in verbal and written communication. "It was clear that Ripley PR provided the best solution to help our school system rebrand," said BCS supervisor of elementary instruction and district communications Amanda Vance.



LDPR is named agency of record for **The Ritz-Carlton,**

Half Moon Bay in Northern California and **The Aerial, BVI**, a resort on the private Buck Island in The British Virgin Islands. The agency will oversee PR strategy and programming for both clients, including media and influencer relations, visits, creative brand partnerships and alliances. The Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon Bay is a Forbes Five-Star, 261-room spa and golf resort set on a bluff overlooking the Pacific. The Aerial, BVI is an all-inclusive private island destination with such amenities as nature-immersive activities and island hiking trails.

3rd Coast PR adds **Woodland Tools Co.**, which produces garden pruning tools, to its client roster. 3rd Coast will drive brand awareness of Woodland's products by generating unpaid B2C gardening and lifestyle media coverage. The company's products can be found at Ace Hardware, True Value, Do It Best, Amazon, other regional retailers and at WoodlandTools.com. "Given the team's prior experience with leading national brands and their enthusiasm for our company's story, this partnership felt like a perfect fit," said Woodland Tools Co. president, Mike Kollman.

Trevelino/Keller is engaged by **Boost Medical Group** to provide the company with a 360-degree growth marketing and PR approach, encompassing branding, website development, lead generation and earned media. Boost is an end-to-end diagnostic and case management solution that provides empirical data to attorneys and their clients. "We see a lot of growth potential and the opportunity to infiltrate an industry historically lacking in the technology innovation we bring to the table. We know Trevelino/Keller will be a critical partner in helping us achieve these growth goals," said Boost Medical Group managing partner Bob Hopta.



Matter Health, a part of Matter Communications, is named agency of record for CentralReach, a provider of autism and IDD care software, and Strata, a platform used by healthcare companies. For CentralReach, Matter Health has been enlisted to build the brand and raise the profile of the company, its executives and customers across regional, trade, business and national press. Strata will partner with CentralReach to generate awareness and thought leadership around the company's cloud-based financial planning, analytics and performance tools for healthcare.

Outside PR is named PR agency of record in North America and Australia for **KOO Eyewear**, an Italian brand. The agency will help KOO strengthen its North American network and raise its brand awareness. "The OutsidePR team has a vast understanding and connection to our brand's values, a network of respected media contacts, and shares our passion for the outdoors," says KOO Global marketing manager Simona Tironi.

DENTONS ADDS SUSTAINABILITY CAPABILITY

Dentons Global Advisors has named Olalla Michelena a partner in its European Union PA unit.



Olalla Michelena

Based in Brussels, she will advise clients as the EU implements regulations regarding the “European Green Deal” and funding issues.

Most recently, Michelena ran Octagono Parters, which dealt with EU digital and sustainability matters.

She also served as director of the EU delegation of Make Mothers Matter, an advocacy group focused on work-life balance, and did an eight-year run at Burson-Marsteller, handling pan-European environmental and social issues campaigns.

NH’S TAX COLLECTOR SEEKS PR SUPPORT

The New Hampshire Dept. of Revenue Administration is looking for a firm to handle PR and strategic communications duties. NHDRA says it is committed to transparency and openness as it carries out its mission to fairly and efficiently administer the tax laws of the Granite State.

The RFP calls for a partner to create and maintain an influencer list and a media initiative program, both reactive and planned.

NHDRA requires a firm with at least five years of experience in working with similar governmental entities.

Responses are due March 6. They must be sent in a package marked: RFP#REV 2023-02; Strategic Communications and Public Relations Services for the NHDRA; c/o Roger Marchand, Project Manager; NH Department of Revenue Administration; 109 Pleasant Street; Concord, NH 03301.

[Read the RFP \(PDF\).](#)

SPG WORKS TO FREE JAILED SAUDIS

Sonoran Policy Group represents a Saudi cardiologist in his effort to lobby the US government for the release of his brother and sister who have been imprisoned in Saudi Arabia.

Khalid Aljabri is the son of retired Saudi intelligence officer Saad Aljabri.

The *Guardian* reported that Saad Aljabri, who has close ties to US and British intelligence, had “been in Prince Mohammed’s crosshairs.” He left Saudi Arabia with most of his family but two of children, Sarah and Omar, remained behind to wait for the approval of their US student visas.



Khalid Aljabri

They were barred from leaving the country in what the Khalid Aljabri believes was an act of vengeance by the crown prince.

In May 2020, the SPG landed a \$2M six-month pact to advocate for the release of Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud with US, UK, France and European Union officials.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

Gannett’s digital business had a healthy Q4 2022, despite an overall revenue decline at the company. While the \$730.7 million Gannett racked up in total revenues in the fourth quarter represented an 11.6 percent drop from Q4 2021, digital-only circulation revenues rose 29 percent, hitting \$35.5 million. Gannett ended the quarter with 2.04 million paid subscriptions—up 24 percent from a year earlier. The company’s digital marketing solutions platform brought in \$119.7 million, a jump of 9 percent. Circulation revenues, however, took a 16.5 percent hit, bringing in \$256.7 million vs \$307.3 million in Q4 2021.

NPR has announced plans to shed about 10 percent of its employees—about 100 positions—in response to a \$30 million gap in the organization’s budget. It is not yet known exactly where the cuts will fall, but an NPR spokeswoman said the final decision is to be made by March 20. The organization has already put a near-freeze on hiring into place, along with the elimination of most travel and suspension of internships.

OZY Media chief executive Carlos Watson is arrested on charges of conspiring to commit securities fraud and conspiring to commit wire fraud, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. His arrest comes after former OZY chief operating officer Samir Rao pled guilty to fraud and identify theft charges in federal court. “As alleged, Carlos Watson is a conman whose business strategy was based on outright deceit and fraud,” said Breon Peace, the US attorney for the eastern district of New York. “He ran Ozy as a criminal organization rather than as a reputable media company.”

NEWS OF FIRMS

WPP forms a strategic partnership with *BigCommerce*, an Open SaaS ecommerce platform for B2C and B2B brands. The partnership will give WPP priority access to new product tools on BigCommerce and data feed management platform Feedonomics, and to platform integrations including Amazon, Meta, Google and TikTok. “This partnership with BigCommerce reflects our commitment to continue to develop a unique commerce offering for our clients,” said WPP executive vp, strategic partnerships Nilufar Fowler.

Sensis, a minority-owned advertising agency, acquires **Sharp & Company**, a communications consultancy that works with public- and private-sector organizations in the transportation industry. Sharp & Company will continue as a separate entity, and will be called Sharp & Company, a Sensis Company. Sharp & Company provides public and stakeholder communication and engagement, marketing and PR, translation of technical and complex data for general audiences, creative and graphic design, digital and social media engagement and research to gain audience insights.

[Reputation Partners](#) launches a new website. The site has been updated to showcase the firm’s capabilities (which include PR, crisis communications, labor communications, brand activation) and provide detailed case studies. “Our goal with the new website is to more fully capture the deep experience and wide range of services we provide to our clients” said Reputation Partners founder and CEO Nick Kalm. “We also wanted to showcase the ways in which we are unique.”



COMMENTARY



What PR genius advised Donald Trump to travel to East Palestine on Feb. 22 for a cheap campaign publicity stunt at the site of a possible environmental disaster?

Did the twice-impeached president really pose next to a pallet of “Trump Water,” which is normally quaffed by guests at Mar-a-Lago, that he donated to the people living near the toxic Norfolk Southern train derailment?

At least he didn’t toss the bottles into the crowd, a la his 2017 flinging of paper towels at Puerto Ricans in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

A few lucky folks got MAGA hats and some cleaning fluids, courtesy of the election-denier-in-chief.

Newly elected Ohio Senator JD Vance joined the fun. At a 2022 campaign rally, Trump said this of the “Hillbilly Elegy” author: “JD is kissing my ass he wants my support so bad.” Vance is light on the self-esteem front.

Trump’s phony display of empathy brought to mind his dismal rail safety record while he was in the White House.

Sara Chieffo, VP-government affairs at the League of Conservation Voters, said it was “the height of hypocrisy for Trump to feign concern for the community of East Palestine after years of openly mocking and rolling back environmental safeguards.”

She noted that his administration rolled back rail safety protections, cut funding to the Dept. of Transportation and the EPA, and dismantled nearly 100 environmental protections.

“Trump bent over backwards to cater to corporate polluters at every turn and put East Palestine and other communities directly in harm’s way,” she said.

The PR caper showed Trump as his craven worst. He doesn’t give a fig about the people of East Palestine. But they were needed as his props.

YouTube loves Russian propaganda. NewsGuard’s Misinformation Monitor reports the Russian propaganda channel, RT, produced 50 full-length films justifying the invasion of Ukraine. The videos are available on YouTube.

One of these gems features Russian president Vladimir Putin denying that he started the war.

Other films depict Ukraine as overrun by Nazis, while another has a grieving woman accusing Ukrainian soldiers of killing their own people.

YouTube didn’t reject NewsGuard’s report.

A spokesperson said YouTube teams “have quickly restricted and removed harmful content and our systems have connected people to high quality information from authoritative sources.”

Ron “What Me Worry” DeSantis. Florida’s tough-guy governor ain’t afraid of no Russians. He told the gang at Fox and Friends that Russia is a third-rate military power and downplayed the threat that it poses to American allies.

Of course, does DeSantis know that his third-rate military

power possesses nuclear weapons that could blow the world to bits? And that the guy in charge of those weapons is a lunatic who sees himself as the reincarnated Peter the Great?

Ron may be able to bully Walt Disney Co. on the home-front, but underestimating the capability of Russia to create havoc shows that DeSantis is not ready for prime time.

America and its allies are lucky to have Joe Cool Biden at the helm.

Penguin Random House fixes its PR blunder. The company announced on Feb. 24 that it will publish the original versions of Roald Dahl’s children’s books alongside the new “woke” editions.

The newer sanitized version will remove words currently deemed offensive to some and rewrite some of the language.

It drops the word “fat,” changes “old hag” to “old crow” and cuts references to gender and mental health.

Salman Rushdie, author of “The Satanic Verses,” trashed the PRH’s Puffin Books imprint for its “absurd censorship.”

Francesca Dow, managing director of children’s books at PRH, told the *Financial Times* that her company listened to the debate over the past week that “reaffirmed the extraordinary power of Roald Dahl’s books and the very real questions around how stories from another era can be kept relevant for each new generation.”

Parents and readers are now free to choose the version of the Dahl stories they prefer.

PRH deserves credit for its quick action.

Watch out, Joe. Spiritual author Marianne Williamson on March 4 will officially launch her campaign for the Democratic nomination for president.

Unlike Nikki Haley, who made a lighter-than-air video to launch her run for the Republican nomination, Williamson came out swinging.

She told Medill News Service that she is running because the “country is in the midst of a threat of authoritarianism, where corporate oligarchs, fossil fuel companies, gun manufacturers, and the military industrial complex ‘suck the juice’ out of democracy.”

Run, Marianne, Run.

One out of every 12 Russians knows someone who was killed in Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, Arkady Ostrovsky, Russia editor at *The Economist*, said Feb. 24 during a webinar to mark the one-year anniversary of the war.

There have been 175K to 200K Russian casualties, including 60K soldiers and Wagner mercenaries killed in action.

Ostrovsky said only 25 percent of Russians support Putin’s “special military operation” but 40 percent of the people don’t believe his line about things are going according to plan.

Putin launched the war to combat the “modernization” and liberalization of Russia, especially among young people who are attracted to the values of the West.

He is determined to fight on as a way to keep his regime in power. It’s all about Putin’s survival. —Kevin McCauley