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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

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January 6, 2014 Vol. 47 No. 1

REVAMPED CANCER INSTITUTE REVIEWS PR

The Lone Star state's reformed \$3B Austin-based cancer research institute is on the hunt for a PR firm after briefly working with Hill+Knowlton Strategies in 2012.

The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, which hands out \$300M in a year, has released an RFP for its strategic communications account, worth \$375K through fiscal 2015.



The institute, created in 2007 by a \$3B voter referendum, hired H+K's Austin office after a review in early 2012 but the WPP firm resigned the account in December of that year, citing "ongoing issues and challenges" confronting the organization. That followed resignations of top officials and a criminal probe of an \$11M award to a Dallas biotech company.

The latest RFP covers communications strategy, media relations, conference communications and limited design/production services.

The institute underwent reforms in 2013 and is seeking a lower profile and more effective approach as the "second-biggest pot of available cancer research dollars in the nation," according to the AP.

Three option years starting in Sept. 2015 will be attached to the resulting pact.

Proposals are due Jan. 20.

RFP: <http://bit.ly/1efekdg>.

CLS&A BUFFS MEXICO'S IMAGE

Chlopak, Leonard, Schechter & Associates is working to bolster the image of Mexico under a non-written agreement with Consejo de Promocion Turistico de Mexico. The work began Dec. 19 for a monthly retainer of \$40K.

The goal is to communicate the political, social and economic changes in Mexico under president Enrique Pena Nieto, who wrapped up his first year in office last month.

The Omnicom unit is doing outreach to media and third-party stakeholders and distributing information via meetings, events, speeches and interviews.

The firm reports to Jorge Mezher, adjunct director of CPTM.

Crisis PR pro Michael Robinson, the former Levick executive VP and head of its PA group who joined CLS&A in September, signed off on the effort to make Mexico a more attractive travel destination.

SIKHS SEEK PR

The D.C.-based Sikh Council on Religion and Education is talking with AKPD Message and Media about launching a PR campaign to spread awareness of Sikhism.

AKPD is the firm founded by David Axelrod, who was President Obama's top advisor.

A Tribune News Service report says the campaign from SCORE is aimed to prevent hate crimes here against Sikhs.

A U.S. Army veteran attacked a Sikh temple in Wisconsin in 2012, the rampage left six dead and four wounded.

The U.S. Joint Task Force on Terrorism called that carnage an act of domestic terrorism.

First Lady Michelle Obama visited the site to comfort family members of the victims and express support of all Americans for the religious freedom of the Sikh community.

SCORE's PR campaign also will stress the differences between Sikhs and Muslims.

The social activist group says two-thirds of Americans can't distinguish between the two religions.

Founded in 1998, SCORE says its mission is "to represent the Sikh viewpoint in public forums, interfaith discussions and throughout governmental agencies to promote community understanding and a just society for all."

There are an estimated 300K Sikhs in the U.S.

AKPD could not be reached.

CT DISHES OUT \$1M EDUCATION PR PACT

Connecticut is dangling a \$1M contract to promote the "common core" educational standards blueprint that allegedly helps children become "critical thinkers."

The Nutmeg State's Education Department says four firms are under consideration for the work, but refuses to divulge the names of the lucky PR vendors.

The PR push is supposed to target parents with info about the benefits of the teaching standards and how the format will benefit both the kids and the state.

The CT News Junkie site quoted Robert Rader, executive director of the Connecticut Assn. of Boards of Education, saying the common core "will provide a clearer, deeper understanding of what our students will need to enter the global marketplace."

Connecticut will spend about \$15M during the next two years to put the common core into schools.

It is joining 45 states that already have the standards in place.

ICR CRAFTS MICHAELS' SECOND STAB AT IPO

ICR is counseling retailer Michaels Stores as the arts and crafts specialist slates an initial public offering worth up to \$500M.

The IPO follows a March 2012 filing to go public that preceded a reorganization and the incapacitation of CEO John Menzer, who suffered a stroke and resigned.



Michaels has not yet set a price range or date for the IPO.

Michael Fox, a managing partner who leads ICR's corporate communications group, leads the Michaels account for the firm with senior VP Alecia Pulman.

Michaels Stores has revenue around \$4.4B and is No. 91 on *Forbes'* list of America's largest private companies.

AMG, JOELE FRANK IN \$786M CABLE DEAL

Southwire Company and Coleman Cable engaged outside PR support in Southwire's \$786M Dec. 20 acquisition of fellow wire and cable maker Coleman Cable.

Southwire is one of the largest private U.S. companies with annual revenue around \$5B, according to *Forbes*. Publicly traded Coleman logged 2012 revenue of \$915M.

The \$26.25-per-share deal, expected to close in the first quarter of 2014, includes assumption of \$294M in net debt of Waukegan, Ill.-based Coleman.

Abernathy MacGregor Group is bolstering Carrolton, Ga.-based Southwire's communications, while Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher and Dresner Corporate Services (IR) advise Coleman Cable. Gary Leftwich heads corporate communications for Southwire.

The company said it expects to maintain a "significant presence" in Coleman's base of Waukegan.

BROADWAY PRESS AGENT OPENS VIVACITY

Leslie Baden Papa, a veteran of the closing Hartman Group, is opening Vivacity Media Group to pick up the slack.

Fellow Hartman colleague Whitney Holden Gore, who is taking the VP slot, will join her.

Papa was with Hartman since its 2009 start-up, working earlier at Barlow Hartman.

She headed publicity for plays such as "Evita," "Legally Blonde: The Musical," "American Idiot," and "Bring It On."



Papa

Gore also worked the Broadway, TV and entertainment beat, counting credits for "Romeo & Juliet," "Jekyll & Hyde" and "SMASH."

Prior to Hartman, she was publicist at Cohn Dutcher Assocs., where she promoted music and performing arts clients such as The New York Pops and Chicago's Ravinia Festival.

IAC COMMS EXEC FIRED AFTER TWEET

IAC fired a senior corporate communications exec on Dec. 21 after she posted a racially tinged Twitter remark about AIDS and Africa.

"Going to Africa," tweeted Justine Sacco, senior director of corporate comms. for the New York-based Internet company on Dec. 20. "Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!"

IAC quickly fired the PR staffer after the tweet sparked social media outrage and media attention. "The offensive content does not reflect the views and values of IAC," the company said in a statement. "We take this issue very seriously, and we have parted ways with the employee in question."

Sacco, a native of South Africa, had been at IAC for three years. In a statement released in South Africa and to ABC News, she apologized for the message. "Words cannot express how sorry I am, and how necessary it is for me to apologize to the people of South Africa," she said, noting the AIDS crisis on the continent. "Unfortunately, it is terribly easy to be cavalier about an epidemic that one has never witnessed firsthand."

She previously managed corporate communications at WWE and was an account staffer at The Morris + King Company and DKC.

IAC added in its statement: "There is no excuse for the hateful statements that have been made and we condemn them unequivocally. We hope, however, that time and action, and the forgiving human spirit, will not result in the wholesale condemnation of an individual who we have otherwise known to be a decent person at core."

IAC properties include the Daily Beast, About.com, CollegeHumor.com and Match.com, among others.



Sacco

QG&A REPS MUMBAI TERROR VICTIMS

Quinn Gillespie & Associates is working for the families of the American victims of the 2008 Mumbai, India, terror attacks under an arrangement with law firm Kreindler & Kreindler.

K&K has represented the affected Americans in their lawsuit filed 2010 in New York federal court against Pakistan's military intelligence unit and the country's Lahkar e Taiba terror group, which took responsibility for the carnage that led to 166 deaths, including six Americans.

The three-day coordinated attacks by ten terrorists hit the Taj Mahal Palace and Hotel, Oberoi Trident, Leopold Café, Cama Hospital, St. Xavier's College and Nariman House Jewish community center.

One American, David Coleman Headley, received a 35-year sentence for doing surveillance for the murderers.

Jack Quinn is heading promotional work. He was President Clinton's counsel and Vice President Al Gore's chief of staff.

His firm has worked for AT&T, Visa, American Chamber of Commerce, BNSF Railway, Qualcomm, Knights of Columbus, and Sony.

MILLER RETURNS TO NYPD

CBS News correspondent John Miller, who covers the national security/terrorism beat, is returning to the New York Police Dept. with the return of Bill Bratton as commissioner.

He worked as chief spokesperson for Bratton during his first round as the Big Apple's top cop and then headed Los Angeles' counterterrorism bureau when Bratton was police commissioner there.

At the NYPD, Miller, 55, will work in its counterterrorism unit.

Miller has been at CBS since 2011, joining it from the federal Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Miller recently took some heat for a "softball" report on the National Security Agency for "60 Minutes."

He announced his decision to rejoin Bratton during a Dec. 26 send-off segment on CBS.

Miller is leaving because "when you get the chance to serve the largest city in the world, potentially the great terrorist threat in maybe the greatest police department in the world, it's hard to say no."

He's also noted for a 1998 interview with Osama bin Laden for ABC News.



Miller

BLOOMBERG TAKES HOLLOWAY WITH HIM

Cas Holloway, New York City's deputy mayor of operations, will join Bloomberg LP with the end of Mayor Mike Bloomberg's term in office.

He will become deputy COO in late January.

Bill de Blasio, who will be sworn in as NYC's chief on Jan. 1, has named Anthony Shorris as his No. 2 in charge of daily operations of the 8.3M population metropolis.

Holloway, 40, said Bloomberg told him to talk to CEO Dan Doctoroff about a job at the media/financial terminal combine.

Doctoroff also was a former deputy mayor under Bloomberg who left the city's payroll in 2008.

He said in a statement that Holloway has "unique ability to drive creative solutions to the most complex issues."

TABLOIDS ABLAZE AS SPITZER DATES PR AIDE

Lis Smith, the Democratic PR advisor who was spokeswoman for then-New York Mayor-elect Bill De Blasio, is at the center of a media frenzy after reports that she is dating disgraced former governor Eliot Spitzer.

Smith, who was press secretary for Spitzer's attempted comeback in the race for New York City comptroller this fall and as recently advised Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, was hired in September by De Blasio but did not make the move to City Hall as a staffer last week. She previously worked in the Obama campaign's rapid response operation.

Two days after the *New York Daily News* and *Post* broke the story of the relationship on Dec. 22, Spitzer and his wife announced via statement from LAK PR that their "marital relationship has come to an end."

Asked during a press conference Dec. 23 about the relationship between his press aide and the former governor, De Blasio called it a "private" matter and praised her work as a "professional."

Alexis Grenell, a Democratic communications and political adviser, penned an op-ed in the *Daily News* Dec. 23 blasting coverage of Smith in noting that her relationship with Spitzer is irrelevant to her qualifications. "In reality, Smith is just another casualty of the persistent cultural sexism that slut-shames women for having a sex life and being smart, too," she wrote.

NATION SOUGHT \$100K BY DEC. 31

The Nation, facing a \$120,272 postal hike in 2014, asked its readers and others to make special donations to offset that and other costs.

"Chip in today to help The Nation raise the \$100,000 we need by Dec. 31 to stay afloat in 2014," said Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor & publisher in an e-mail to subscribers.

Columbia Journalism Review and FAIR, Fairness in Accuracy & Reporting are also seeking donations beyond subscription prices.

"Black & White and Dead All Over" is an hour-long TV special currently running on Public TV stations.

Vanden Heuvel says that it is getting "harder" every year to reach the 500,000 people who read the magazine on www.thenation.com or in print.

She said 2013 has been "an amazing but trying year—from the achievement of marriage equality in eight states to the Tea Party-inspired government shutdown."

HARPER'S TELLS HOW TO PLEASE RICH

A behind-the-scenes expose of what it's like to work for the rich has been written for the January *Harper's* by John P. Davidson, novelist who has written for *Fortune*, *Rolling Stone*, and other media.

His novel, *The Obedient Assassin*, due Feb. 4, 2014 from Delphinium, traces the life of Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Bolshevik revolution exiled in the late '20s.

The 16-page Harper's article, detailing the pressures involved in working for the rich and famous, will be an eye-opener for PR students although much of the material will not be news to experienced practitioners, who have long lived with such pressures.

Davidson created a phony resume in order to enroll in Starkey International Institute's eight-week, \$16,795 butler course that takes place at a mansion in Denver.

Describing the obsession of the rich with privacy, he confesses early on that he could not reveal his journalist background and expect to be hired by the wealthy.

He invented a past that included being property manager for rental houses in Austin. There was no investigation of this that he knew of and he doubts whether anyone even read his resume.

"Undercover methods" may be used "if open methods will not yield information vital to the public," says the ethics code of the Society of Professional Journalists. This was a big enough loophole for Davidson to drive his investigative truck through.

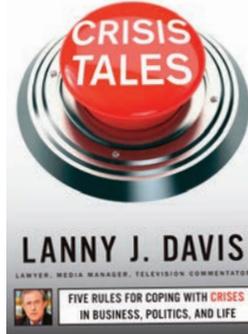
MEDIA NEWS**NY TIMES TO UNVEIL NEW WEBSITE**

The *New York Times* will unveil a redesigned NYTimes.com site on Jan. 8.

The paper of record is pitching the revamp as the next step in its ongoing digital development and a "cleaner, more engaging user experience [that] serves as a foundation for all future development of nytimes.com.

Improvements include faster-loading pages, richer integration of photos, video and interactive story elements, ability to share and comment, and the ability to read articles and comments side-by-side, among other additions.

Said executive editor Jill Abramson: "With more prominent video and photography, the new features are highly immersive and enhance our readers' ability to share and comment throughout articles."

**LANNY DAVIS' MUST-READ CRISIS PR BOOK**

By Ronn Torossian

I've always felt that people who work in the top echelons of political communications are aggressive, bright and great at what they do. It is pressure cooked, intense all the time, and work which is high-profile and cut-throat - so much so that if you do a bad job you'll find yourself out of a job pretty damn quickly.

As such, I found Lanny J Davis' new book, "Crisis Tales: Five Rules for Coping with Crises in Business, Politics, and Life" to be a very enjoyable read, and something I highly recommend to anyone who works in crisis PR. As White House Special Counsel to the Clinton Family, as he put it, his job was "to help reporters write bad stories as completely and quickly as possible."

Many years ago, I read "Spin" by Michael Sitrick, and as an author and PR firm owner, have to say that this book is the next best one I have read since then for people on the front lines of actual hands-on crisis PR work.

Davis outlines his starting point for good crisis management - tell the truth, and "tell it all, tell it early, tell it yourself." He then outlines his 5 Principles for effective crisis communications:

- Get all the facts out
- Put the facts into simple messages
- Get ahead of the story
- Fight for the truth using law, media & politics
- Never represent yourself in a crisis

It was a gutsy move for Davis to spill the beans on many of his clients with the stories he tells of his work as a legal PR agency, with front-line, detailed stories on his work for clients ranging from Royal Caribbean, Martha Stewart and Penn State to the Washington Redskins. While I don't agree with a few of the recommendations the man provided, I admire his gusto in presenting his clients' stories, and his continued spin even until today as he details the background.

As he offers the soundbite on personal crisis management: "when you can't improve on silence, be quiet," this too rang true. Get the book today if you work in crisis pr - or want to learn to get better at it.

A&E JUDGMENTS FALL THROUGH QUACKS

By Bill Huey

After an "indefinite hiatus" that amounted to little more than a coffee break, A&E has reinstated Phil Robertson to its top-rated "Duck Dynasty" series and will begin filming this spring.

Following a news dump at the end of last week, CNN commentator Will Cain said that A&E will "pay no price" for its decision to reinstate Robertson, and that they've gained a month of marketing for the show.

But *Variety's* Brian Lowry said, "once A&E decided to do more than simply say 'We do not share Phil's views,' there was almost no way to escape this mess without winding up with egg on its face."

The *New York Times's* Bill Carter observed, "A&E released a statement, noteworthy both for its concessions to the Robertson family's refusal to accept the suspension as well as its timing - at close of business on Friday of a holiday weekend on the slowest week of the year in the entertainment business."

In case you haven't been following closely, just take a look at A&E's excruciatingly carefully worded statement, contained in a link here to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

You have to love the people who write these things. Heaven knows the substances and sleepless nights that went into crafting a statement like this.

For example, the artfully turned phrase about Robertson's GQ spouting, claiming "misinterpretation of his core beliefs based only on the article." Gosh golly, those sounded like core beliefs to me, spoken straight from the hip—er, heart. Has Commander Phil ever articulated what his core beliefs are? Or does he just shoot off his mouth first and answer questions later? Given his redneck provenance, I suspect the latter.

As for A&E's characterizing the camo caperers as, "a family America has come to love," I am certain they're the same Americans who love Fox, and Limbaugh, and Hannity, and all the other motor-mouths who spew Christian or conservative talking points without respite.

So maybe A&E won't pay a price, but co-owner ABC and its parent company, Disney, just might--eventually. Because once you countenance homophobia and bigotry, you are already well down the proverbial slippery slope, and it's a black diamond run.

Remember the 1993 Baby Jessica case in Iowa, when groups called for a boycott of Maytag washers because they were manufactured in Newton, Iowa? Maytag moved its manufacturing operations to Mexico.

As much as I disagreed with NBC's decision to take Don Imus off the air after his offhanded slur about the Rutgers' women's basketball team, I believe that NBC recognized the fundamental principle that you can't tolerate intolerance and acted on it.

Despite the protestations of the Duck Nation and creepily ambitious politicians like Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, there is no legitimate freedom of speech or religious expression issue here. What it boils down to is standards and judgment, and A&E has demonstrated it possesses neither.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS

OGILVY SPLITS WITH RUSSIAN AFFILIATE

Ogilvy PR cut ties with Russia/Ukraine affiliate SPN Ogilvy on Dec. 31, 2013, ending a nine-year relationship. SPN has been renamed SPNCommunications.

The split came by "mutual agreement," according to the firms.

"We wish SPN well with their new strategy and thank them for being a partner that has always strived to provide the best quality services," said Ogilvy EAME CEO Stuart Smith, who noted Ogilvy & Mather in the region will continue to offer PR services.

PSN CEO Andrey Barannikov said the long-term affiliation was "fruitful and enjoyable" to his firm. "However, we have reached a stage in the development of our business that requires us to develop growth strategies which are best pursued as an independent agency. "

STANTON FURNISHES PR IN BAIN-BOB'S DEAL

New York-based Stanton PR & Marketing furnished PR support for Bain Capital as the private equity firm took a majority stake Dec. 30 in retailer Bob's Discount Furniture, a deal pegged around \$350M.

Stanton CEO Alex Stanton leads his firm's work with longtime client Bain.

Manchester, Conn.-based Bob's has 47 stores on the East Coast and worked with Full & By, Boston, for PR support on the deal.

Bain principal Tricia Patrick said Bob's fills an important need in the market by selling quality furniture at "deep value," and sees "sustainable growth for years to come."

The parties did not disclose the value of the transaction, which is expected to close in the first quarter, but multiple media reports said the sale price could top \$350M.

Bain's retail holdings have included IPO-bound Michaels Stores, Dunkin' Brands Group and Outback Steakhouse, among others.

KEKST, DEVINE WORK BIG HONEY DEAL

Kekst and Company and Devine + Partners advised Peak Rock Capital's Jan. 2 acquisition of revamped honey producer Natural American Foods.

NAF is the successor to Groeb Farms, the Michigan honey giant that filed for Chapter 11 protection in October after it was implicated in a scheme to illegally buy Chinese honey through other countries.

Peak Rock, an Austin-based private equity firm that threw Groeb a lifeline after its bankruptcy filing, relies on Kekst and Company for PR counsel.

Philadelphia-based Devine + Partners worked with Groeb and the newly constituted Natural American Foods, which market the Miller's American brand of honey.

Financial terms of the deal were not released. Court records showed Groeb sales of nearly \$138M in 2012.

BRIEF: Waltham, Mass.-based Inkhouse has partnered with creative and visual storytelling firm Neoscape, which focuses on architecture and real estate, among other sectors.

NEW ACCOUNTS

HAWAII TECH INCUBATOR SEEKS PR ADVISOR

Hawaii's 28-year-old technology incubator covering the Asia-Pacific region has cast a net for PR counsel for its program funding and supporting clean energy startups.

The Pacific International Center for High Technology Research wants to burnish its "Energy Excelsator" program through media relations and other PR outreach.

Budget for the project is \$20K.

Proposals are due Jan. 8. RFP: <http://bit.ly/1cwkgz2>.

New York Area

ICR, Norwalk, Conn./mix1 Life, nutritional products and supplements, for investor relations. The flagship product, mix1, was recently acquired from Hershey.

Havas, New York/Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, as AOR for communications, including advertising, digital, social, experiential and other disciplines, following a review. Green Mountain is parent to the popular single-serve beverage system Keurig.

Whitegate PR, Astoria, N.Y./CoverCouch.com, accessories for IKEA products, for PR.

South

Blue August, Jackson, Tenn./Legion Firearms, rifle and pistol maker, for editorial relations and branding efforts. Legion makes Ar-15 rifle systems and 1911 45ACP pistols.

Midwest

Emerging Insider, Chicago/iPowow, TV audience engagement and participation via the "second screen," as AOR for PR. Work includes reputation and positioning, as well as business media relations. Santa Monica, Calif.-based iPowow works with ESPN, Fox Sports and Red Bull, among others.

Carmichael Lynch Spong, Minneapolis/City of Brooklyn Park, to create and implement a new branding strategy for the sixth largest city in Minnesota (77K).

West

Ketchum, San Francisco/California Sweet Potato Council, for a new campaign including a new logo and outreach to consumers and food bloggers.

Roher PR, Portland, Ore./Cellphone-Mate, maker of FCC-certified signal boosters for use in homes, businesses and vehicles, for media relations and PR in North America. Executive VP Torin Roher heads the account. C-M markets the SureCall brand.

PondelWilkinson, Los Angeles/MusclePharm Corp., sports nutrition, for IR counsel, including strategic communications. The Denver-based company's brands include MusclePharm, Arnold Schwarzenegger Series, and FitMiss.

Citizen Relations, Irvine, Calif./Travelocity, travel booking portal, as North American AOR, following a review. The firm previously handled Canadian PR for Travelocity and replaces Edelman as AOR.

Windmill, Los Angeles/Drinks Americas, broker for Mexican craft beer brands, for public and investor relations. DA handles beverages from the country's third largest brewery, Cerveceria, and includes 32 states. Brands include Day of the Dead, Mexicali, Rio Bravo and Chili Devil.

NEWS OF SERVICES**WEEKEND NEWS UP FOR ANYTHING**

There's a noted lack of urgency in the Saturday or Sunday news cycle. Fewer hours are dedicated to the news, and fewer reporters are on the ground. As a result, there's often a dearth of content available at producers' disposal. The December PCNY panel of news pros said this actually bodes well for publicists and PR pros, as producers of weekend shows are often allowed more leeway in terms of content than their weekday counterparts.

"Weekends for us now allow us to cover about six or seven cultural events," said Tom Farkas, director of programming, NY1 News. "If you have an event that weekend, and if you can get someone to talk to us that morning, we can cover the event and get people in seats. It can definitely sell tickets."

Unlike the Monday-Friday news cycle, weekend producers aren't necessarily tethered to the confines of hard news. Content varies, and as a result, the weekend news has its own style. It's typically more fun, more laid back, and more diverse than what you'd see during the rest of the week.

"I'm always looking for fun, different things," said Rick Homan, editor at the *New York Post*. "The Sunday paper, as opposed to our daily, isn't nearly so harshly news-oriented. It's more lighthearted. You can pitch me a story, and if I've got a guy sitting around doing nothing, he can go out and shoot. It's Sunday, so we'll take whatever we can get."

However, because the weekend news specializes in content you may not find during the week, that means it has its own pitching rules. Carolyn Murnick, senior editor of NYMag.com, said her readers want New York news, but seek items they won't find anywhere else. This means publicists should curate content with a twist.

"Things like theater listings and listings for nightlife activities are always very important, but there are ways you can give twists to that sort of content so that it stands out. Like a list of art shows that are about to close, or readings from first time novelists," Murnick said.

Eric Salzman, executive producer of MSNBC's "Melissa Harris-Perry" program, said his show tackles issues that won't be found during the rest of the week, and has a scope that falls outside traditional political TV milieu. For example, while it's common for most TV shows to only feature guests who are proven behind a camera, Salzman said his show routinely uses new voices who have never been on TV before: "We take pride in being the first place to introduce someone's name into the dialogue. No one wants to be the show that puts someone on for the first time, except us."

While the weekends are their own beasts, publicists should keep in mind that content needs to abide by standard pitching protocols. Jacquelyn Marrero, producer at WNBC-TV's "Weekend Today in New York" said that while her program features a smattering of headline news, trivia, and short pieces, an attention to timeliness is always key.

"Always try to pitch something with a timely or significant twist," Marrero said. "If you're pitching me a chef, is it diabetes awareness month? Try to engage us with news tie-ins."

PEOPLE**Joined**

Alexis Walkenstein, VP of media and communications for The Maximus Group, to Schneider Associates, Boston, as director of media relations. A former TV journalist, Walkenstein previously handled crisis communications as director of comms. and chief spokeswoman for the Catholic Diocese of Palm Beach and Bishop Gerald Barbarito through an embezzlement scandal.

**Walkenstein**

Alia Faraj-Johnson, managing director of PR and PA, Sachs Media Group, to Hill+Knowlton Strategies, Tallahassee, to head the office as senior VP. She was press secretary and communications director to Florida Gov. Jeb Bush after a TV news career.

Marisa Carstens, director of public affairs, American Express, to Child's Play Communications, New York, as a VP. She managed comms. for Amex's travel & lifestyle services unit and was previously director at Harrison & Shriftman.

**Carstens**

Jennifer Furey, formerly of Edelman, GolinHarris and Burson-Marsteller, to digital marketing shop TopFire Media, Homewood, Ill., as VP to head its PR and brand initiatives.

Milt Weinstock, former EVP and global account director at Grey Worldwide, to Tofutti Brands, Cranford, N.J., as chief marketing officer. He was CMO for Sabra Hummus and Pretzel Crisps.

Shu Min, management consultant, to A-Crystal Electronic Technology USA, Fremont, Calif., as director of communications, guiding PR for North America, Asia and Europe.

Yonnie Woo, GM of South Korea for The Hoffman Agency, to Ketchum, in that same title, based in Seoul. Ketchum added South Korea operations with the acquisition of InComm Brodeur in September. Woo reports to senior partner and international CEO Jon Higgins. She was previously a director at Burson-Marsteller handling clients like VISA International Korea, LG Electronics and the Seoul City Government.

Leah Kondes, a Weber Shandwick alum and former marketing director for accounting firm HLB Tatges Redpath,, to Preston Kelly, Minneapolis, as PR supervisor.

Julie Capobianco, PR consultant, to Vistra Communications, Tampa, Fla., as a senior A/E.

Promoted

Naureen Kazi to A/D, Development Counsellors International, New York. She handles tourism accounts like Finger Lakes Wine Country, Ecuador and Visit California, and joined the firm in 2010.

Annie Perkins to VP, Shift Communications, Boston, adding healthcare duties to her consumer role. Clients in the space include M*Modal, HIMSS, and VentureHealth.

BURNSGROUP POWERS CHRYSLER RACING

Chrysler Group's street and racing technology unit has picked Atlanta's BurnsGroup Unlimited to handle the IMSA Tudor United SportsCar 2014 Championship, which kicks off Jan. 23 with the Rolex 24 at Daytona International Speedway.

Barbara Burns is a veteran of the motorsports circuit, handling races here as well as China, Japan, Brazil and throughout Europe.

She also did a stint at the Atlantic Olympic Broadcasting and FIA World Endurance Championship.

Adam Saal, account manager on the Chrysler push, handled events such as the Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach and CART IndyCar/Champ Car. Matthew Simmons, a GolinHarris alum, rounds out the BurnsGroup team.

Ralph Giles is president/CEO of Chrysler SRT Brand and Motorsports.

GEORGE DRIVES PR FOR MADD

Amy George has returned to Mothers Against Drunk Driving to lead marketing and communications as a senior VP for the Dallas-based organization.

George took up the post on Jan. 2 and heads branding, marketing, social media, digital, media relations and internal comms. for the national campaign against underage drinking and drunk driving.

She was previously a communications and PR staffer at MADD from 2002-07, when she departed for VP-marketing and comms. slot at Cooper Aerobics.

George was previously media relations manager at The LeMaster Group and started out in TV journalism in the Lone Star State with KTEN-TV and Texas Cable News.



George

BRUNSWICK FOUNDER KNIGHTED

The U.K. knighted Alan Parker, founder and chairman of Brunswick Group, last week for his service to business, charitable giving and philanthropy in the country.

Parker was awarded an Order of the British Empire as part of a long list of New Year's Honours for "a number of generous personal gifts to Save the Children, in addition to his formal role as chair" of that group, said the Cabinet Office.

Parker was also cited for founding China Now, a cultural festival to "break down barriers" between China and the U.K., served as a U.K. business ambassador, and a trustee of the Diamond Jubilee Trust.

He has also advised British Prime Ministers David Cameron and Gordon Brown.

Parker founded the global PR powerhouse in 1987 after a stint at Broad Street Associates in London and continues to counsel clients as chairman of the firm. He was a rock group manager and oil rig laborer before finding PR. WPP chief Martin Sorrell was knighted in 2000.



Parker

EMPIRE STATE NAMES TECH PR MAVEN

New York State's College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering has named Jerry Gretzinger VP-strategic communications & PR to promote its development of emerging technologies and economics.

He's a TV news broadcaster who's worked in the Capital region (WRGB) during the past 11 years, as well as in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Based at the 1.3M sq. ft., Albany NanoTech Complex, CNSE is a \$17B investment that offers students exposure to more than 3,000 scientists and researchers from companies such as IBM, Intel, GlobalFoundries, Samsung, Lam Research, TSMC, Applied Materials, Tokyo Electron and Sematech.

It claims to be the world's first college dedicated to exploring the disciplines of nano-science, bioscience, economics and engineering.

CNSE has research wings in Buffalo, Utica and Rochester

CEO Dr. Alain Kaloyeros wants Gretzinger to use the media "to spread the word about the leading-edge work taking place here."

Gretzinger also reported from NY's Kingston and Wappinger's Falls and did a stint as PR manager at Six Flags New England.



Gretzinger

LIBYAN FEDERALIST GROUP SEEKS U.S. NOD

The Cyrenaica Transitional Council, a self-proclaimed government in Libya's oil-rich eastern region, is using Canada's Dickens & Madson to gain recognition by the U.S. and Russian governments.

D&M's \$400K contract is to provide media relations and other PR services to "promote federalism in Libya, and the equitable distribution of national wealth and to improve the security conditions in Cyrenaica," according to its U.S. registration filing.

The CTC claims it wants a peaceful resolution to its political differences with Libya's central government in Tripoli. Its aim is a split of Libya into three self-governing regions.

CTC also is using D&M to line up buyers of the region's oil.

Cyrenaica political leaders in November met in Benghazi, formed a government and denounced Libyan prime minister Ali Zeidan. Their militias seized and blockaded Libya's biggest oil-exporting ports earlier this year, dealing a blow to national energy exports.

Libya is producing a daily average of 233K barrels of oil vs. 1.5M under the late Col Gaddafi.

A 12-year veteran of the House Ways and Means Committee's panel on trade joined Liberty Mutual as VP-federal affairs at yearend. Viji Rangaswami, who held the subcommittee's staff director slot since 2009, is in charge of international issues for the Boston-based financial services company.

Rangaswami also worked as an associate in the Carnegie Endowment's trade, equity and developmental projects.

PR OPINION

Bill de Blasio, sworn in as Mayor of New York Jan. 1, focused on the widening gap in lifestyles of New Yorkers and the five speakers who accompanied him echoed the theme.

They talked about “the plantation called New York” and the “proliferation of gleaming multi-million dollar condos” that are being built near “decrepit homeless shelters.”

Income disparity is a political football that will get kicked around plenty in 2014 and it’s a topic that PR students and grads as well as working PR practitioners should follow. PR operates against this economic background.

Many if not most of the employers of PR people will be in the “1%” that the new mayor focused on. New York is not the “exclusive domain” of the 1%, he said, promising that he would “require big developers to build more affordable housing.”

Such remarks were “tub-thumping nonsense,” wrote *New York Post* columnist Michael Goodwin and we agree with him.

As a 50-year resident and homeowner in New York we have seen housing prices hit the stratosphere. We don’t see how they can be made affordable even for the middle class. New York has become the No. 1 destination in the world for capital fleeing from other countries, many of them dictatorships or oligarchies.

Michael Kimmelman of the *New York Times* said Dec. 22, 2013 that the rash of “super-tall skinny” apartments, which he called the “expensive playthings of Russian oligarchs and Chinese tycoons,” is stirring “some populist fury” and that “public oversight” is needed.

One example is needle towers of 40 and 49 stories going up across the street from our apartment at 36th St. and First Ave. A school had already been built on part of the lot and residents were hoping for a public park.

Home Prices Multiplied

Our first home at 44 MacKay Pl. in Brooklyn cost \$24,500 in 1965, which was 2.5 times our \$10K salary at the former *New York Journal-American*. That was a common ratio for home purchases at the time.

It now has an estimated price of \$712,000 or 29 times what we paid for it. This is a far bigger jump than the gain in the Consumer Price Index which was 31 in 1964 and 233 at the end of 2013—a multiple of 7.5.

New Yorkers then typically paid one week’s pay for a small apartment in the city. Our first apartment in 1961, on 12th st. between Fifth and Sixth aves., was \$135 a month, equal to one week’s pay. Today, a 500-sq. ft. studio can cost \$2,000 and more. “Micro apartments” (250-350 sq. ft.) are being offered at \$914 to \$1,873.

A degree from the University of Connecticut had cost about \$4,000 (currently \$100K for state residents). Our wedding reception in 1964 was \$15 per person at a Brooklyn hotel or about \$1,500 for 100 people. We joined a golf club in Old Greenwich in 1980 for about \$5,000 (currently close to \$100K for the first year).

What college graduate can expect to buy a home in Brooklyn such as 44 MacKay Pl. when a 10% down payment of \$70K would leave a mortgage of \$642K or at least \$6K a month?

Average condo prices in the city rose 5.3% in 2013 to \$1.54 million. A modest home in a good neighborhood in New Jersey costs at least \$400K.

Politicized Grads Must Keep Mum

PR and communications grads, many of them already burdened with tens of thousands of dollars of debt for their educations (average debt is \$29,400 but many owe far more) will be wondering about their chances for making a decent living. They are apt to be populists although many of their employers will have politics that are opposite to that.

Odds are they will be going into “service” for the 1% either at their homes or in their businesses.

Proper behavior when serving the 1% has been described in a 16-page article in the January *Harper’s* magazine by freelancer John P. Davidson.

Harper’s only supplies the first two paragraphs to visitors but a year’s subscription is only \$26.99 and would be a good investment for a PR, communications or journalism major.

Mary Louise Starkey, who conducts the Starkey International Institute in Denver, has found a number of errors in Davidson’s expose which he obtained by posing as a former property manager in Austin and getting friends to support this fiction.

The article nevertheless made some key points about the strict behavioral norms required when working for the rich and super-rich.

Grads going into the world of PR and advertising will find that an eerie silence prevails in large parts of it. Speaking out of turn or at all can be career-ending. Whereas the previous goal of PR people was having as many friends in the press as possible, the current goal seems to be having none at all.

The insistence on privacy flows from the top and envelopes entire organizations. Examples include Omnicom and its many ad agencies and PR firms (71,000 employees) and WPP Group (116,000). Any employee who speaks for or about one of their numerous units without authorization will have a quick exit and may never find another job in the industry.

John Wren and Randall Weisenburger, the top execs at OMC, have kept the press at bay from their first days of taking over the company in the 1990s.

O’Dwyer reporters used to cover the annual meetings of OMC since they were only a few blocks away at 347 Madison Ave. Such meetings only lasted a few minutes and questions were allowed only after the official session. Minimal if any answers were given.

Attempts to talk with Wren after the meeting resulted in him walking away. The meetings were moved permanently out of New York after 2002. When OMC and Publicis announced their intention to merge last year, the press conference was in Paris.

– Jack O’Dwyer