



Jack O'Dwyer,  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

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## US FOREST SERVICES AXES PR RFP

The US Forest Service has axed an RFP for a \$10M five-year PR program for identity development, branding and outreach.

The \$5B agency, which is responsible for nearly 200M acres in 154 national forests and 20 grasslands in 44 states, says it has not accepted any bids and would look for other ways to enhance public access to its lands and generate a greater awareness of its activities.

Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics watchdog groups claims the agency finally listened to its employees and retirees who did not approve of spending money for PR.

They want the \$10M allocated for forest management, road/trail maintenance, firefighting and lifting the three-year wage freeze.

The Forest Service filed the RFP on Nov. 28. Proposals were due Dec. 26.



## ST. PETERSBURG COMBS FOR TRAVEL PR

The "Sunshine City" of St. Petersburg, Fla., is combing for an agency to guide a six-figure branding campaign to attract tourists, new residents and businesses.

St. Pete released an RFP on Jan. 6 dangling a \$125K contract as part of a \$340K campaign to "educate and motivate audiences, starting with our own citizens and disseminating outward to include potential visitors, new residents and business interests to invest in our city by visiting here, moving here and relocating/expanding business here," according to the RFP.



The work will include digital, social, traditional, viral/guerrilla and PR/earned media platforms, the city said. Proposals are due Jan. 20.

A non-mandatory (dial-in option) conference call is slated for Jan. 12. The city said the selected firm must be available to meet in-person for up to three meetings during the year-long contract, although the majority of the work can be performed through electronic media and teleconferencing.

RFP: <http://bit.ly/1x50n9d>.

## NIRI NAMES CUDAHY CEO AFTER SEARCH

James Cudahy, head of the National Court Reporters Association and former marketing and communications VP for the CFA Institute, will take the reins of the National Investor Relations Institute in March as president and CEO, following a search.

NIRI, the Alexandria, Va., trade group for more than 3,300 members in the IR sector, recently approved a new strategic plan for 2015-18 with the intention to create a certification program for IR pros, an industry first.

The 47-year-old Cudahy will take over on March 2 for Jeffrey Morgan, who stepped down from the \$330K-a-year post in October for the Club Managers Assn.

As executive director and CEO for the \$7M NCRA, Cudahy leads a staff of 35 (NIRI has 16 staffers). He was previously VP of marketing and comms. for the CFA Institute.

NIRI chair Mark Donohue said Cudahy brings strategic leadership and extensive experience with certification programs to the table.

Spencer Stuart advised NIRI's search committee.

## FDA'S IMMERGUT TO BAYER US PR CHIEF

Steven Immergut, an agency veteran who led external affairs for the US Food and Drug Administration, has moved to Bayer Corp. in a new post to head its US pharmaceutical business communications.

Immergut will be VP and head of communications for Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals stationed in Washington, D.C. for the Whippany, N.J.-based drug maker.

Kathleen Quinn has taken on Immergut's acting associate commissioner role at FDA.

Immergut was earlier a senior associate for Booz Allen Hamilton and directed Hill+Knowlton Strategies' DC healthcare unit.

## SIMON OF SSPR DIES AT 67

Steve Simon founder/CEO of SSPR in the Chicago area (Northfield) died Jan. 4 from complications from amyloidosis. He was 67.

The former press secretary to the mayor of Memphis launched the firm in 1978. SSPR, which has seven offices, initially specialized in franchise PR and transitioned to tech PR with the dawn of the dot-com era. It also serves clients in the consumer goods, food and packaging sectors.

Wife Linda, son Geoff, daughter Rachel and grandson Cyrus survive Simon.



Simon

## **FIRMS GUIDE BOSTON'S OLYMPIC WIN**

Ad agency Hill Holiday and PR firm Northwind Strategies led the promotional campaign supporting Boston's successful bid to be the US nominee for the 2024 Olympic Games.

The US Olympic Committee on Jan. 8 announced Boston beat out competing bids from Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco in the 22-month competition for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The city, which overcame some opposition from within and faces a Sept. 15 deadline for the global showdown, will square off against bids from Rome, Germany and potential bids from Paris and/or South Africa.

"Boston is a global hub for education, health care, research and technology," said bid chairman John Fish, CEO of building giant Suffolk Construction. "We are passionate about sports because we believe in the power of sport to transform our city and inspire the world's youth."

Karen Kaplan, CEO of Hill Holiday, and Doug Rubin, founding partner of Northwind Strategies, led the Boston 2024 PR and marketing committee.

Rubin is a well-connected PR and political operative who scored wins with the campaigns of Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Rep. Joe Kennedy III and Gov. Deval Patrick, among others, serving as chief of staff to Patrick for three years.

Secretary of State John Kerry's former Senate press secretary Larry Carpman is also a partner at Northwind.

## **JOELE FRANK WORKS COACH DEAL**

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher represents \$3.5B private equity firm Sycamore Partners, which is selling its Stuart Weitzman luxury shoe business to Coach Inc. for \$574M.

The deal is a rare acquisition for mostly hand-bag marketer Coach, which has been under siege by the Michael Kors brand.

Weitzman has been growing at a 10 percent annual clip. It operates near 50 stores in the US (New York, Beverly Hills, Las Vegas and Boston) and about 70 shops overseas.

Under new CEO Victor Luis, Coach has been undergoing a brand transformation program. He's attracted to the size, scope and vibrancy of the Weitzman brand.

Sycamore's roster of companies includes Talbots, Nine West Holdings, Jones New York, Coldwater Creek, Hot Topic, Kurt Geiger and Aeropostale.

Michael Freitag of JFWBK reps Sycamore on its deal.



## **EDELMAN ADDS AD VET HEATH**

Edelman has recruited Catherine Heath as executive VP and planning chief for its western region.

Based in Los Angeles, the Australian will coordinate activities with the independent firm's offices in San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Sacramento, Portland and Seattle.

Heath reports to Cricket Wardein, western region president.

She joins from Brooklyn-based HUGE, where she handled western planning activities for the digital agency with offices in LA and Portland.

Earlier, Heath was planning director for the Microsoft account at McCann Worldgroup, chief strategy officer at Boston's Modernista!, group planning director for TBWACHIATDAY'S VISA Worldwide business.

Heath replaces Mike Casey, who was upped to US strategic planning chief.



**Heath**

## **EMIRATES SEES RED**

Emirates, which bills itself as the world's largest international airline, has landed its PR business at Huntsworth's Red Consultancy following a competitive pitch. FleishmanHillard had the business until November.

Valerie Tan, Emirates' VP for PR, social media and internal communications, said in a statement released Jan. 6 that Red's team "demonstrated a strong grounding and knowledge of the sector alongside strategic thinking, energy and creativity."

Red assumes command of press relations, crisis/issues management, social content delivery sponsorship and development of platforms to promote the carrier's "Hello Tomorrow" positioning.

Emirates CEO Tim Clark counted 45M passengers in 2014 and added Boston, Chicago, Oslo, Brussels, Budapest Kiev, Taipei and Abuja to its service network.

Emirates launched direct flights from Dubai to New York in 2004.

## **CHRISTOU CAPTAINS PR FOR CRUISE BIZ**

Lorri Christou, an executive VP in Edelman's Chicago consumer marketing unit, has moved to the cruise line industry's main trade group in Washington, The Cruise Lines International Association, in a newly created top PR role.

The hire comes amid high-profile changes at the CLIA. CEO Christine Duffy announced her exit in December with plans to helm Carnival Cruise Line starting in February. The trade group, which grew exponentially on the merger of nine cruise industry groups around the globe in 2012, is also consolidating its staff in Washington, combining Arlington, Va., and Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Christou, as SVP of strategic marketing and comms., will lead the group's global comms. strategy.

Research, digital strategy, PR, branding and coordinating its global and member comms. units are all under her purview.

Michael McGarry is senior VP of PA for the CLIA. Finn Partners is the CLIA's outside PR agency.



**NYT ALUM INGRASSIA GOES WEST**

Larry Ingrassia, the 62-year-old former deputy managing editor and business editor at the *New York Times*, has moved to the *Los Angeles Times* for the newly created associate editor for new ventures slot.

He reports to editor Davan Maharaj.

Ingrassia retired from the NYT at the end of last year and earlier did 25-year run at the *Wall Street Journal*.

LAT publisher Austin Beutner called Ingrassia "one of the most accomplished business journalists in the country and a journalistic innovator with an enviable track record."

He is to develop new print/online offerings and help the paper's recruiting and organizational planning efforts.

Upon Ingrassia's departure from the NYT, Dean Baquet, executive editor, credited him with handling the transformation of the International Herald Tribune to the NYT brand and hiring a "generation of young reporters to the Times who have made significant contributions to every aspect of our report."

**ECONOMIST'S CLYNE TO WEBER SHANDWICK**

Adam Clyne has signed on at Weber Shandwick's London office to head its digital offering in the Interpublic unit's 33 offices in the EMEA region.

He joins from The Economic Group, where he was commercial director at the recently acquired TVC digital communications venture.

At TVC International, Clyne developed content for clients such as Coca-Cola, Heinekin, Tesco, Ralph Lauren and Royal Caribbean.

Clyne also founded The Lab creative shop, which he merged into Geronimo Communications.

Chris Perry, global president of Weber Shandwick Digital, predicted Clyne would become an invaluable partner as "more companies build content-driven PR and marketing programs, the greater the need to deliver with exponential inventiveness, flair and impact."

Colin Byrne is chief of Weber Shandwick UK & EMEA.

**NEW REPUBLIC STAFFS UP AFTER SHAKEUP**

The *New Republic* editor Gabriel Snyder has brought in four new staffers, the first major moves since owner Chris Hughes' widely panned ouster of Franklin Foer and staff exodus.



**Smith, Reeve, Stephen, Hong**

Jamil Smith, a producer for MSNBC for "The Rachel Maddow Show" and "Melissa Harris-Perry," joins TNR later this month as a senior editor to write about race, politics and gender, work on the launch of a podcast series, and edit articles.

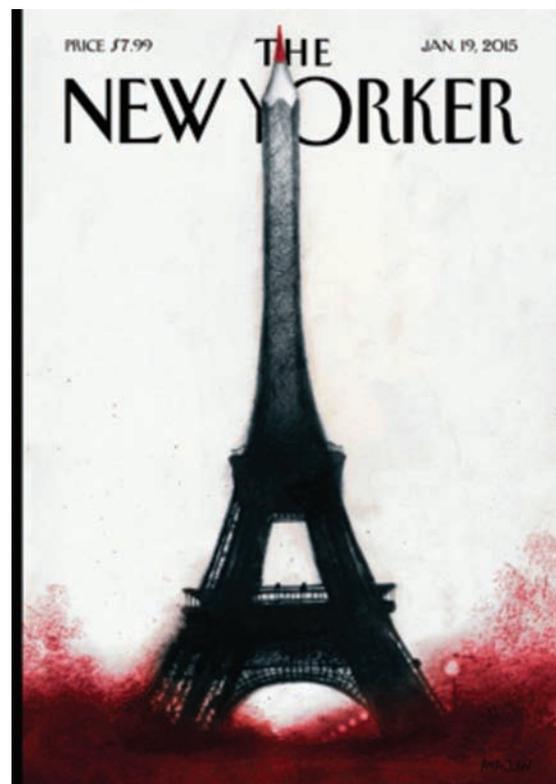
Elspeth Reeve, former politics editor of *The Atlantic's* *The Wire* and a former reporter and fact checker for TNR, returns as a senior editor. She was recently on the staff of *The Racket*, the digital magazine start-up scuttled by First Look Media after the exit of Matt Taibbi.

Also joining TNR is Bijan Stephen, an editorial assistant at *Vanity Fair* who takes an associate editor slot.

Snyder, who called the hires the "first wave" for TNR in New York and Washington, also hired Sarah Lawrence College poetry professor Cathy Park Hong as poetry editor.

**NEW YORKER HONORS SLAIN JOURNOS**

The Jan. 19 cover of the *New Yorker* pays tribute to the *Charlie Hebdo* journalists who were murdered by Islamic terrorists in France and upholds the concept of freedom of the press.



Ana Juan penned the cover, which is called "Solidarite." It hits newsstands today.

**KETCHUM'S RUSSIA PR WORK SPOTLIGHTED**

Ketchum's nine-year campaign for Russian is emblematic of a Washington PR and lobbying scene that no longer feels the stigma of "unsavory" foreign accounts, according to a 5,600-word feature on the relationship in *Politico Magazine* this month.

Ketchum had access to the highest levels of the Russian government as it worked the burnish Russia's image with mixed results, *Politico* reporter Luke O'Brien writes. O'Brien sees the Ketchum-Russia relationship as evidence that the ignominy US lobbyists and PR pros used to fear in representing shady overseas accounts has lifted.

Read the piece at <http://politi.co/14bdv5L>.

## PR & SOCIAL MEDIA VIEWS

### MAINSTREAMING OF SHAREHOLDER ACTIVISM

By Michael Fox

Once derided as corporate raiders, green mailers or simply hedge funds with exclusively short-term interests, the perception of activist investors among traditional institutions has started to change significantly — activism has gone mainstream.

Shareholder activism has become an asset class unto itself, with activist funds amassing more than \$100 billion in combined assets under management, up from \$32 billion in 2008. According to McKinsey, activists launched an average of 240 campaigns a year for the past three years, compared to less than half that number a decade ago and the number of occasions where activists have nominated a full slate of board members has more than doubled in the past two years.

Historically, many of those campaigns called for one-time capital allocation moves like a stock buy-back or special dividend, or the sale of certain assets or the whole company. But now, activists are becoming much more sophisticated and genuinely focused on broader corporate strategy and practices they believe will make the company more valuable.

As a result, traditional institutional investors are increasingly sympathetic to and openly, or covertly, supporting activist campaigns. Proxy firms — like ISS and Glass Lewis, who lent their full support to Starboard in the Darden contest — have also been very supportive.

No public company, large or small, is safe from an activist investor's scrutiny, nor immune to the negative PR from a well-publicized campaign. As with other areas of crisis management, effectively preparing for a potential activist attack requires a thorough risk assessment, contingency planning and a sound communications strategy.

As communications professionals, we can't wait for our clients to become the target of shareholder activism before we act.

Our job is to help management see the businesses through the lens of an activist investor and pinpoint vulnerabilities before an activist comes calling. In a study of 500 of the latest 13-D filings, ICR identified ten categorical similarities across the companies that were targets of shareholder activism. In fact, after analyzing these categorical similarities, it is possible to predict with a high degree of accuracy a company's future vulnerability to an activist. Some of the key areas every public company should regularly analyze to gauge vulnerability:

- Stock price performance and shareholder returns compared to peer group
- Financial and business performance.
- Capital allocation and structural issues.
- Executive pay and corporate governance.
- Shareholder perception and engagement.
- Media perception and commentary.

Companies that proactively evaluate these and other key variables and understand the potential campaigns that may result from areas of weakness are better able to anticipate and respond to activist investor threats.

Read Fox's recommendations at <http://bit.ly/1seFugk>.

*Michael Fox is managing partner at ICR, and also co-heads ICR's crisis and transaction group.*

### DON'T LET YOUR REPUTATION GET HACKED

By Jeremiah McWilliams

You may have heard the saying: "There are two types of companies. Those who have been hacked, and those about to be." Now that we have experts reporting on "60 Minutes" that 97% of American businesses have been hacked, it's clear to see that we live in a world where every major organization is vulnerable.

First, there should be clear protocols for reporting security breaches to top management. If a breach is detected, key decision-makers must get to the table — fast — for a no-nonsense "what do we know" session.

This team of executives should include senior decision-makers from legal, HR, communications, operations, security, IT and all other relevant departments.

As the situation evolves, the team should ask the tough questions, get the facts and stay in constant contact with each other — and with the people addressing the problem on the front lines.

Now, the race to save your client's reputation begins. Below are a few key action points.

**Understand if you are truly on the verge of a crisis situation.** There is a difference between a reputational crisis and reputational challenge. The first step is to understand the situation and potential impact on the organization and its stakeholders, and the interest level the public and/or media are likely to have. Underreacting to a crisis or overreacting to a challenge can harm a company's brand.

**Assemble your external support team as soon as possible.** Ideally, you will have already established strategic relationships with outside entities. Lining up a trusted outside team in advance will help you respond quickly and allay concerns without losing time. You, as the PR point person, can play an important role in vetting these partners and setting up clear lines of communication.

**Set up the response center, and take action to help.** As soon as possible, you should offer credit monitoring and fraud protection to individuals affected by the data breach. As communications counsel, you should help craft the messages for call center responders and prepare them to answer a range of tough questions clearly.

**Remember your internal audience.** Vigilantly communicate with employees so they can serve as ambassadors in the community if the company encounters a reputational crisis or challenge.

Remind employees of the media protocols and ask them to direct all inquiries to the designated company spokesperson(s). This is not the time for employees to freestyle.

**Monitor media coverage.** Task a team to closely monitor any coverage in social or traditional media. If a reporter calls, respond promptly — at least to let them know you have received their inquiry and are working on their request. Silence can be deadly.

Through close monitoring of social media, you'll know when people are saying something about the company that would require an immediate response.

For more tactics, read the full piece at <http://bit.ly/1xReQuR>.

*Jeremiah McWilliams is Senior Communications Strategist at Jackson Spalding.*

## NEWS OF PR FIRMS

### NEVADA ROLLS \$20M PACT TO FAHLGREN

Nevada, home of the Las Vegas Strip, Hoover Dam and Atomic Testing Museum, has rolled its tourism PR and integrated marketing account to Fahlgren Mortine after a review.

Columbus, Ohio-based Fahlgren, which acquired travel specialist Turner PR last January, lands a 28-month pact worth \$20.2M with the Nevada Division of Tourism.

The Silver State released an RFP in August and, among other goals, was eying an overhaul of its online press operations with a goal of reaching Millennial and Gen X visitors.

Burson-Marsteller and RedRock Strategies previously handled the \$7.6M-a-year account.

Fahlgren edged finalists B&P Advertising (R&R) and The Glenn Group.

### DC ETHICS WATCHDOG LAUNCHES PA FIRM

Melanie Sloan, founding executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, has launched Triumph Strategy with Michael Huttner, founder of ProgressNow.

From offices in DC and Boulder, TS offers crisis management and narrative development for private/public companies, trade assns., labor unions and political candidates.

Sloan, who launched CREW in 2003, was assistant US attorney in DC and counsel for the House Judiciary Committee. She is of counsel to CREW.

Most recently Huttner worked on the successful reelection campaign of Colorado's Democratic Governor John Hickenlooper.

His group of state-based communications organizations has more than 3.4M members in 23 states.

### PR FIRM FOUNDER DIES IN PLANE CRASH

Lewis Tonkinson, co-founder of Britain's Pinnacle Marketing Communications, died Jan. 3 when the light plane that he was piloting crashed near Popham Airfield in Hampshire.

Wife Sally was killed, while six-year-old son George survived the crash. He is currently in Southampton General Hospital.

"Lewis and Sally were a hugely popular couple and their tragic and untimely loss will leave a big gap in the lives of the great many people that knew and loved them," wrote Simon Flatt, co-founder, on PMC's blog.

Tonkinson helped launch Birmingham-based PMC, an integrated marketing communications shop geared to tech and life sciences clients, in 1996. He began his career at Lucas Industries in the engineering design unit before shifting to sales and marketing in its automotive group. Previously, he was at Gould Electronics and Lesniak Jones Liddell (ad/tech PR shop) before starting PMC in 1993.



Lewis and Sally  
Tonkinson

## NEW ACCOUNTS

### New York Area

**Cohn & Wolfe**, New York/Pandora, jewelry retailer, as AOR for PR alongside WPP firms Grey New York (advertising) and Maxus (media planning/buying), following a review. The publicly traded company was founded in Denmark in 1982. C&W handles consumer and trade PR, including media relations, influencer relations, events and content marketing.

**Child's Play Communications**, New York/Filip Technologies, for the launch of the FiLIP2 wearable phone, smart locator and watch for kids ages 4-11. Work includes media relations targeted to parents and blogger management.

**5W PR**, New York/Lagostina cookware, for a PR program to reintroduce the 114-year-old Italian brand in the US.

**Germinder & Associates**, New York/The Cat Writers Association, journalism organization founded in 1992 to promote the interests of cats, as AOR for PR, including promoting its new editorial panels at the 2015 BlogPaws.

**Raker Goldstein**, New York/The Flying Meatballs, gourmet foods shop and online retail store, for PR.

### East

**JPA Healthcare Communications**, Washington, D.C./GenSpera, biotechnology developer of prodrug therapeutics for the treatment of cancer, as AOR for PR. Work includes external communications for the San Antonio-based company and its mipsagargin drug candidate in Phase II clinical development for patients with liver and brain cancer.

**Laura Burgess Marketing**, New Bern, N.C./Maryland Firearms Training Academy, as AOR for PR, social media, advertising and marketing for the high-end indoor gun facility.

### West

**W20 Group**, San Francisco/NetScout Systems, publicly traded advanced network, application and service assurance solutions provider, as integrated marketing and PR AOR, including social and digital mktg.

**Shadow PR**, Los Angeles/Windmark Recording, recording studio and event space, for PR. Artists like Coldplay, J. Cole, Jeezy, YG, and Travis Scott have used the facilities started by musician and former Flock of Seagulls drummer Michael Marquart.

**MWW**, Los Angeles/Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, 36-year-old non-profit arts organization, as AOR for PR via the firm's LGBT marketing practice. Media relations work is centered on GMCLA programs like the Alive Music Project, it gets better Tour, and Outside Voices. SVP Stephen Macias heads the practice as SVP.

### International

**Edelman and MEC**, Singapore/Singapore Tourism Board, for its "Singapore: Inside Out" global campaign marking the country's 50th year of independence in 2015. Edelman, the STB's agency of record, handles public engagement efforts for the campaign, stretching to five-day events in Beijing (April 2015), London (June) and New York (September). A 10-day November event in Singapore culminates the effort.

**NEWS OF SERVICES****PRSA COLORADO APPOINTS 2015 BOARD**

PRSA's Colorado Chapter has elected Cara Vrifasi, co-founder of Evoke Creative Services, as president for 2015 to head its board. Nicole Yost, founder and president of Fyn PR, will serve as president-elect while 2014 president Julie Scott of the Bonfils Blood Center Foundation slides into the immediate past-president role.

Suzanne Trantow of Aguilar PR and independent consultant Jerry Brown round out the board as secretary and treasury, respectively. Directors are Michelle Kern, marketing and communications manager, Optis; Claudia Morlan, comms. specialist, Elmore PR; Diane Mulligan, president, Mulligan & Co; Renee Robinson, corporate comms. manager, Ball Corp.; Jessica Sidener, director of comms., Arapahoe Library District, and Jennifer Tillis, account director, Linhart PR.

**NYBJ HONORS TAMRAZ**

Cathy Baron Tamraz, chair and CEO of Business Wire, was named an inaugural recipient of *New York Business Journal's* "Women of Influence" Awards, honoring female business leaders in the New York City area who stand for their achievements in the marketplace as well as their commitment to community and mentoring.

NYBJ is honoring a slate of 78 women Jan. 22.

Tamraz, who leads BW's long-term strategic planning, internet strategy and global branding and sparked its sale to Berkshire Hathaway in 2006, joined the company in San Francisco in 1979 and opened its New York office a year later. She took the reins as CEO in 2005.

Tamraz's philanthropic pursuits center on New York City's "Behind the Book," Girl's Inc., St. Jude Children's Hospital, Doctors Without Borders and Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind.

**ZCOMM CLOSES YEAR ON HIGH NOTE**

Washington-based zcomm landed several fourth quarter 2014 projects, including a marketing video and PSAs assignment for the American Academy of Orthotists & Prosthetists, animated video for the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association, and radio tours for Junior Achievement, Wells Fargo and TransUnion.

The broadcast firm also booked interviews and secured blog posts for the American Veterinary Medical Association and Matrix Medical Network.

Twenty-five-year-old zcomm is led by CEO and founder Risë Birnbaum, a former ABC correspondent.

**GG, CQ PARTNER ON ADVOCACY TRAINING**

Issue advocacy firm Goddard Gunster and CQ Roll Call have partnered to provide advocacy training for campaign professionals and their organizations.

Tom Whitmire, director of marketing at CQ Roll Call, called the combination the "best of both worlds" with GG's advocacy campaigning savvy and CQ's analysis of those efforts "since the end of World War II."

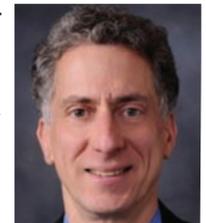
**PEOPLE****Joined**

**Blair Jackson**, independent consultant and former VP of corporate comms. for nursing home giant Golden Living, to the American Health Care Association, Washington, D.C., as VP of public affairs for the trade group of nursing homes and assisted living providers. He was assistant VP for PR at CVSHealth predecessor AdvancePCS and did stints at Arc Worldwide (group supervisor), Golin (president and Philadelphia GM), Rogers & Cowan, FleishmanHillard and Burson-Marsteller. Dutko Worldwide alum Greg Crist is senior VP of PA for the AHCA.

**Jackson**

**Kate Norton**, press secretary for Boston Mayor Martin Walsh, to CK Strategies, Boston, as VP-communications. Her exit is part of a shake-up in Walsh's office as he begins his second year in power. Bonnie McGilpin, deputy press secretary for Gov. Deval Patrick slides into Norton's former post. The mayor also named Laura Oggeri, ex-PR aide to Senate president Therese Murray, communications director.

**Andy Katell**, senior VP of communications for GE Energy Financial Services, to \$11B power giant Entergy to oversee communications for its northern US nuclear power business based in White Plains, N.Y. Entergy's nuclear slate includes Indian Point Energy Center and James A. FitzPatrick nuclear plant (New York), Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station (Mass.), Palisades Power Plant (Mich.), and the decommissioning Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station. He reports to group VP of corporate comms. Necole Merritt, who joined New Orleans-based Entergy in May. At GE Capital, he handled comms. for its power project investments. He was previously a senior VP for FleishmanHillard after 14 years as a correspondent, writer and editor for the Associated Press.

**Katell**

**Anna-Marie Holland**, comms. specialist, Institute for Emerging Issues at N.C. State Univ., to MMI, Raleigh, N.C., as A/E and digital analytics specialist.

**Tim Jeef**, head of online marketing, RED Digital Camera, to Univ. of California, Irvine, as director of marketing and comms. for the Irvine Extension, the school's continuing education arm.

**Robert Grenier**, web developer, Heavy Hammer, to Crosby Mktg. Comms., Annapolis, Md., in the same title.

**Ann Marie Hauser**, PA strategist for Patomak Global Partners and former managing VP at JDA Frontline, to deputy staff director of the Senate Republican Conference under Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.). She was also comms. director for ex-Gov. Tim Pawlenty's presidential bid. **AshLee Strong**, Thune's national communications director, has been promoted to senior communications director.

**Promoted**

**Kevin Grodzki** to VP-communications & PA at Lake Forest, Ill.-based Brunswick Corp., a new position overseeing internal/external PR, government relations, community and industrial ties. The 15-year Brunswick vet joined as president/CEO of its life fitness operation before moving to the company's Mercury Marine unit in 2005.

## **SARD AIDS ACTIVIST IN DUPONT PROXY FIGHT**

Trian Fund Management, the firm of financier Nelson Peltz, has launched a proxy fight against \$36B chemical giant DuPont Co., a showdown the *Wall Street Journal* called one of the biggest battles ever initiated by an activist investor.

Trian, which owns 2.7% of DuPont with a stake worth about \$1.8B, has engaged Sard Verbinen & Co. for PR and

proxy solicitor MacKenzie Partners as it pushes a slate of four board candidates – including Peltz, himself -- and raps the company's current board for not holding management accountable for revenue failures and “underperformance.”

Anne Tarbell heads communications and IR for Trian. Sard chairman/CEO George Sard heads the Trian work at his firm.

Peltz wants DuPont to nix its conglomerate structure and separate into three companies covering agriculture/nutrition/health, performance materials/electronics, and performance chemicals.

DuPont on Jan. 8 defended the board and management's performance, adding its corporate governance committee will review the Trian slate to make a recommendation to shareholders.

“Despite numerous efforts to engage constructively, including multiple calls and meetings with our CEO, CFO and lead independent director, Trian has chosen this path with the potential to disrupt our company at a key stage of execution against our plan,” Wilmington, Del.-based DuPont said in a statement.

DuPont media relations chief Dan Turner has not yet been reached about the company's outside PR counsel.



## **H+K LAUNCHES INDIAN AIRLINE**

IPAN Hill+Knowlton on Jan. 9 launched the maiden flight of New Delhi-based Vistara airlines to become the first the first carrier to offer premium economy seating on the Subcontinent.

The carrier inaugural route (Airbus 320-200) was from Delhi to Mumbai. Ahmedabad service began over last weekend.

Giant India conglomerate Tata Group (51 percent) and Singapore Air (49 percent) are joint owners of Vistara, which stands for "limitless expanse" in Sanskrit.

Mahesh Sharma, India's Minister of State for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, handled ribbon-cutting duties.

While congratulating the Vistara team, he noted India is projected to have the third biggest aviation market by 2020. "The prime minister's vision to develop India as a leading tourism hub and connectivity is imperative to achieve this," said Sharma.

Ratan Tata, chairman emeritus of Tata, said it was a long-cherished goal of the company to establish a "world-class full-service airline in India."

Ogilvy & Mather handles Vistara's advertising.

## **MWW CONNECTS WITH SHARKEY FOR TECH**

Kristen Sharkey, executive VP and tech practice lead at Makovsky, has moved to MWW in New York as a senior VP to lead its East Coast tech operation.

Sharkey was a senior VP at Weber Shandwick, leading a global team on the Honeywell Automated Control Systems account, before joining Makovsky in 2013. She worked on the corporate side in PR at Amdocs and Dun & Bradstreet and logged agency time with Ketchum, Hill+Knowlton Strategies and Porter Novelli, among others.

Molly Mulloy in San Francisco leads MWW's tech practice, which includes SF, Los Angeles, Dallas and NY. Its tech roster includes Nikon, Samsung Mobile and Ancile. Makovsky partner Robbin Goodman oversees its technology operations.

## **UNIVERSITY FIELDS PR FOR SPORTS CRISIS**

The University of Alabama-Birmingham has brought in outside PR counsel as it copes with fallout from its controversial decision to shutter its football program and fire athletic director Brian Mackin.

The university, engaged in a strategic planning study, brought in outside consultants and in early December said it would scuttle its Blazers football, bowling and rifle programs after the 2014-15 seasons to save tens of millions of dollars. The decision, which leaked before an announcement, was met with disappointment and rancor among supporters of the team, students and other stakeholders.

As a result, the school engaged Birmingham-based Direct Communications, the well-connected but low profile firm led by veteran corporate and political PR consultants Rick Heartsill and Steve Raby. The university said DC will help communicate and support the "important dialogue that will lead the strategic direction of the campus."

University president Ray Watts expressed “regret” this week about how the announcement was handled and outlined several moves, including the hiring of DC, to address concerns.

## **EMBATTLED CITY HALL AIDE JOINS MERCURY**

Rachel Noerdlinger, chief of staff to New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray until stepping down in November amid scrutiny of her personal life, has landed at Mercury as a managing director for the Omnicom-owned PR and public affairs operation.

Noerdlinger took an unpaid leave in November after reports she was dating a convicted killer critical of the police and the arrest of her 17-year-old son on trespassing charges. Media focus on the \$170K-a-year city hall aide became a liability for the administration of Mayor Bill De Blasio, who staunchly defended Noerdlinger.

Noerdlinger ran her own PR firm, Noerdlinger Media, for six years prior to joining the De Blasio administration. She was an advisor and spokeswoman for the Rev. Al Sharpton and his National Action Network and earlier counseled the late Johnnie Cochran. She spent five years as a VP for New York PR shop The Terrie Williams Agency.

**Construction of boundaries by Orthodox Jews called eruvim that allow certain activities on the Sabbath are unconstitutional**, says UCLA Law Professor Alexandra Susman.

After reading many thousands of words of legal decisions that Orthodox Jews can affix “lechis” to utility poles and make them “doors,” thereby turning a public domain into a private one, we found a reasonable treatise on this subject by Susman.

Her 34-page detailed and scholarly work, written in 2009 for the University of Maryland Law Journal, is required reading for anyone who wants to voice an opinion on this subject. It sweeps away a vast swath of legal arguments that do not pass the test of common sense. The essay should be carried in full by the Southampton Press and if the paper won't do it Jewish People Opposed to the Eruv should buy ad space for it.

Susman, commenting on the most famous cases on this subject including decisions involving Tenafly, N.J. (2002) and Long Branch, N.J. (1987) N.J., says that courts have failed to develop “a thorough evaluation of an eruv in relation to the Establishment [of religion] Clause and the Free Exercise [of religion] Clause of the Constitution.

City councils and other local legislative bodies that make decisions about eruvim “lack a constitutional framework in which they can decide the issue,” she says.

The conclusion Susman reaches is that “A local government's allowance of an eruv, which converts the public domain into the private domain and into the property of the Orthodox Jewish community, is a violation of the Establishment Clause of the Constitution.”

“It is not the role of American law to alleviate the internal burdens of Orthodox Judaism or any religion. It is the role of the courts and local governments to uphold the Constitution and safeguard all citizens' rights to be free from religion,” she says in the treatise which can be copied and circulated by anyone in full text under the Digital-Commons@UM Carey Law.

### **Legal Decisions Defy Logic**

The Jan. 6 decision in the case involving Westhampton Beach, in which U.S. District judges note that the attached lechis are “nearly invisible” and that “no reasonable person who happens to notice them on utility poles would conclude that the government is “endorsing religion,” rests on the assumption that the community lacks knowledge of what is going on.

However, there has been extensive coverage of the dispute involving the East End Eruv Assn., WHB, Southampton & Quogue in the *New York Times*, *Newsday*, *Southampton Press*, *Wall Street Journal*, local WHB website, hamptons.com, *The Jewish Week* and other media and it shows no signs of abating especially since it's now known that at least \$4 million in donated and charged legal time is involved in the current dispute by both sides. Coverage is likely to increase, not subside.

### **Eruv Opponents Called “Bigots”**

Nathan Diament of the Orthodox Union told *The Jewish Week* in 2002 that “The Tenafly eruv will stay up,

religious bigotry has been defeated, and America is the better for it.”

*The New York Post* editorialized Jan. 9 that WHB and other places where eruvs have been challenged reflect not constitutional concerns but fear of an “influx of Orthodox Jews. The right word for that is bigotry. And as the court has just ruled, the Constitution offers no protection for these prejudices.”

Wikipedia has 328,000 entries under “eruv” and there are 11,900 on eruvim in Long Island.

The decisions of the U.S. Appeals Court in the WHB case and in Tenafly, N.J., appear less rational as publicity on this issue grows and the public is educated as to the nature of an eruv.

A basic position of the courts is that lechis don't convey any religious message and are merely “non-sectarian.” But the meaning of the lechis to the observant is profound and conclusive. Without an eruv, the observant are not likely to settle in the area under question. It is a deal maker or breaker.

Legal decisions rest partly on the conclusion that the public does not know the meaning of those markers on the utility poles. This can be and is being overturned by publicity.

WHB, since there are no sign laws prohibiting this, should attach to all the poles with lechis an explanation of what lechis are and how they turn a “public domain” into a “private domain.”

The signs could give a partial explanation and then provide shortened tinyurls to provide full explanations of the eruvim.

Chabad.org and The Jewish Press provides such background. There is no need for anyone to be ignorant about what an eruv is. Courts understand the religious meaning of the Crucifix, Star of David and star and crescent symbol of Islam but the eruv remains an obscure symbol to them, said a lawyer familiar with the case.

### **Lower Court Backed Eruv Opponents**

Some courts have agreed with towns that eruvim violate the First Amendment. Judge William Bassler of the U.S. District Court sided with Tenafly in 2001 which wanted an eruv dismantled.

He ruled that “Since the Borough Council's decision (by a 5-0 vote) was narrowly tailored to prohibit only the conduct that might generate the appearance of an entanglement between church and state, no constitutional infirmities resulted, and there is no cause for a court to second guess such a decision.”

A U.S. Appeals Court overturned the decision of Bassler and Tenafly had to pay \$300,000+ in attorney fees of the Tenafly Eruv Assn. as part of the settlement, according to Robert Sugerman of Weil, Gotshal & Manges, who is also representing EEEA pro bono in the actions vs. WHB, SH an Quogue.

Andrew Seidel, attorney for the Freedom From Religion Foundation, said “The religious significance of eruvim is unambiguous and indisputable” and it's “absurd” for the Orthodox to “designate public and private property that they do not own as belonging to that sect.”

– Jack O'Dwyer