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O'Dwyer's Newsletter



The Inside News of
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EDELMAN PLOTS BOEING'S PR COURSE

Boeing has reached for Edelman to map a communications plan to reintroduce its 737 Max to the flying public, once the grounded plane receives regulatory approval to return to service.



A member of Edelman's corporate advisory team declined comment on the work and referred O'Dwyer's to Gordon Johndroe, VP-communications, government operations at Boeing.

"While I cannot comment on any particular firms, we engage a number across the world to assist with strategic communications," he said via email.

Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg has been the point person in the crisis plan, issuing a public apology and making the rounds of airlines to build support for the return of the 737 Max. He told a conference call last month that he wants "pilot voices" to speak for the airworthiness of the 737 Max because they are trusted by passengers.

However, the company may face severe headwinds in its bid to gain the support of passengers after the 737 Max returns to the sky in September.

Barclays Investment Bank released a survey on May 8 that showed 44 percent of the public expects to wait a year or more before flying on the 737 Max. Only 20 percent would board the plane once the grounding is lifted.

More than half (52 percent) of respondents would rather fly another type of plane.

Boeing turned to Sard Verbinnen for crisis support in the aftermath of the Ethiopian plane crash in March that killed 157 people. A Lion Jet 737 Max went down in October with the loss of 189 lives.

MDC SHAVES Q1 LOSS

MDC Partners shaved its first-quarter loss to \$2.5M from \$31.3M a year due to its cost-cutting measures of staff, real estate and corporate expenses put into place during 2018.



Mark Penn

New CEO Mark Penn said MDC is "on the path to return to both bottom and top-line growth and positive cash flow by the end of the year."

He promised new steps to increase efficiencies, bolster intra-agency cooperation and expand the offerings of its lead shops.

MDC's Q1 revenue inched ahead 0.6 percent to \$328.8M. Its PR shops are Hunter, KWT Global, Sloane & Co and Allison + Partners.

BAYER SUSPENDS FLEISHMANHILLARD

Germany's Bayer has suspended FleishmanHillard following reports in France's *Le Monde* that it compiled a dossier of about 200 politicians, journalists and scientists who raised health concerns about client Monsanto's "Roundup" weed killer.

The World Health Organization has called glyphosate, marketed as Roundup, a "probable carcinogen." The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ruled that glyphosate is unlikely to cause cancer in humans.

Le Monde obtained the dossier, which was put together in 2016 ahead of a 2017 vote by the European Union on whether to approve the use of glyphosate for five years. The vote passed.

Bayer acquired Monsanto last year in a \$63B deal.

The German pharmaceuticals and life sciences giant released a statement May 12, acknowledging the French media raised accusations that lists of supportive and critical stakeholders drawn up by Monsanto in 2016 may have violated ethical principles and legal regulations.

Though Bayer has no indication the dossier violated any law, it apologized for it and hired an outside law firm to investigate the matter.

"We have decided to suspend our cooperation with the involved external service providers for the time being," said Matthias Berninger, Bayer's new head of public affairs and sustainability, noting that the person responsible for the dossier left Monsanto before it was acquired by Bayer.

In its statement, FH said is committed to ethical conduct. "We believe in being open, transparent, responsible and legally compliant in our activities, including the use and handling of information," said the Omnicom unit.

BALLARD BATS FOR CUBAN BALL PLAYERS

Florida's Ballard Partners, which is closely connected to the Trump White House, is doing Washington government relations and advocacy work for Major League Baseball on issues related to human trafficking.

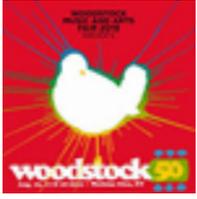
The representation follows president Trump's April decision to cancel the landmark December deal between MLB and the Cuban Baseball Federation in December, designed to curb human trafficking and the abuse of players.

The pact, which was an outgrowth of president Obama's opening to Cuba, allowed for the legal transfer of FBC baseball players to the US, thus eliminating the need for them to defect at great personal risk.

Brian Ballard, who chaired the Trump Victory fundraising organization in Florida, is lobbying for MLB with Syl Lukis, head of BP's Washington office.

SITRICK WORKS WOODSTOCK 50

Sitrick And Company is working with Woodstock 50 founder Michael Lang as he tussles with Dentsu Aegis Network's Amplifi Live unit, which pulled its financial backing for the event that is slated to run Aug. 16-18 in Watkins Glen.



DANAL, a part of Japanese ad giant Dentsu, announced April 29 that despite its "tremendous investment of time, effort and commitment, we don't believe the production of the festival can be executed as an event worthy of the Woodstock brand name, while also ensuring the health and safety of the artists, partners and attendees."

Lang, an original partner of the 1969 Woodstock festival contends DANAL "illegally swept \$17M from the festival bank account" when it announced that it was canceling the festival that is supposed to feature Jay-Z, Dead and Co., Santana, Miley Cyrus, the Killers and dozens of others.

Sitrick's Sallie Hofmeister, former *New York Times* business reporter and *Los Angeles Times* reporter/editor for arts & entertainment, is distributing the letter for Lang's team.

DANAL says as a financial backer it had every right to protect its investment by canceling the event and recovering the funds in the festival account.

Lang told the NYT on May 1 that the show will go on and that he is looking to replace DANAL financially. "We are in talks with investors who are anxious to come in," he said.

BOYNE GOLF SEEKS PR PARTNER

Boyne Golf, operator of three world-class resort destinations and 10 courses in northern Michigan, is seeking a communications partner for breakthrough creative to strengthen its position in the Midwest and Ontario and to broaden brand awareness beyond.

Its properties situated in "America's Summer Golf Capital" include the Inn at Bay Harbor and Bay Harbor Golf Club, Boyne Highlands and Boyne Mountain.

Boyne golfers play over 110K rounds a year during the abbreviated Michigan season with 75 percent of the rounds pre-booked before the courses open in April, according to Boyne's RFP.

The goal is to increase course occupancy by 15 percent, room night occupancy by 10 percent and a net increase in the number of pre-booked rounds before April 30 by 15 percent over the next three years.

Boyne facilities appeal to golfers willing to pay a premium price for an experience, offering both quality and quantity of courses that is unmatched in a single location.

Responses to the RFP are due May 24. Send them in electronic format to Ken Griffin, director of golf sales and marketing, at kgriffin@boyne.com.

Four finalists will be notified in mid-June.

They will receive assignments with presentations set for the second week in August.

Here's the [RFP](#).



ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Current Global and **FCB Chicago** are working together on a nonprofit campaign for the **Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence**. Ahead of National Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 7, ICHV has created *The Gun Violence History Book*. Over 19 chapters and 853 pages, the book details 228 years of gun violence history in America and offers ways to stop it. ICHV is calling it "A book that stopped a bullet," illustrating that concept with a bullet hole that pierces its cover, and then stops inside.



SourceCode Communications has been named agency of record for **Cloudreach** and **MyWallSt**. For Cloudreach, a global cloud solutions provider which partners with Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud Platform, SourceCode has been tasked with increasing brand value and establishing the company as a marquee partner for enterprise businesses in the U.S. MyWallSt brought on SourceCode to help it rebrand and raise awareness in the U.S. for its investing apps.

Diffusion has been named PR agency of record for **Primephonic**, a streaming platform focused on classical music. The agency is tasked with growing Primephonic's brand visibility and user base through a multi-faceted program built on thought leadership, media and influencer reviews and product feature announcements. The campaign is intended to establish Primephonic as the premiere classical music streaming platform.

Version 2.0 Communications has added **SpotOn Virtual Smart Fence**, the inaugural product from New Hampshire-based OnPoint Systems, to its client roster. As SpotOn's agency of record, Version 2.0 is working with its team on brand positioning, messaging and a national and regional launch strategy. OnPoint says the SpotOn system is the first and only all-in-one dog containment and tracking system that lets users take their dog and virtual fence wherever they go.

BackBay Communications has been selected as marketing and PR partner for **StoneShot**. The agency will support media relations and content marketing strategy for the UK-based firm, which focuses on email marketing, event management, and agency services for the financial services industry. BackBay has launched a comprehensive communications program that will highlight StoneShot's industry insights, emphasize its marketing expertise in the financial services arena, and expand its U.S. exposure.

Carolyn Izzo Integrated Communications has added Korean food company **Bibigo** to its client roster. CIIC will promote Bibigo, a global brand of CJ CheilJedang, Korea's #1 food culture company, as the go-to source for Korean food in the U.S. CIIC will spearhead media and influencer relations as well as negotiate key partnership programs for the brand, including AT&T and 3M PGA tournaments, KCON music festivals in Los Angeles and New York, and managing and executing a Student Innovation Challenge and chef cook-off event with the Culinary Institute of America.



THINKING ABOUT THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

As a firm that helps organizations build, grow and protect their brands and reputations, it's common for clients to ask us to help establish them as thought leaders. After all, what company doesn't want to be the go-to expert in their respective space?

But logic suggests that not everyone can be a thought leader, and not every thought leader is the same. Part of determining thought-leadership strategy means looking in the mirror and asking whether you have the discipline, the courage and the vision to make it happen.

Thought leader profiles

If Yogi Berra were still alive, he'd say the best thought leaders are ones with compelling thoughts and strong leadership. Simple, right?



Matt Kucharski

Nope.

First, an organization must come to grips with what kind of thought leader it can be. At Padilla, we generally see three types:

The sage: this is the company with a long history who has seen it all and can put industry change into context. Successful "sage" thought leaders have the courage to question their own status quo, because if they don't, someone else will. Microsoft would fall into this camp as it helps move people from desktop to cloud. Lots of companies came before it, but when Microsoft—the undisputed leader in desktop computing—talked about the value of the cloud, people started adopting en masse.

The disruptor: the new upstart that's challenging the way things are being done today. The truly credible ones do so while at the same time backing up their words with specific actions demonstrating their ability to deliver. That's the "leadership" part of thought leadership. We normally think of Tesla in this vein, though time will tell whether the company can deliver on its promise of a mass-produced, affordable electric car.

The convener: this is the organization that steps forward and brings disparate groups together to solve a common problem. Conveners must set aside their egos and put the cause before their own visibility—otherwise, others won't want to take up their mantle. An example here might be United Way, which serves to help convene organizations around solving hunger, poverty and other pressing social issues. But it also could be Apple (normally thought of as a "disruptor"), who is largely credited with helping solve the issue of digital rights management for the music and entertainment industry.

Having (and sharing) an opinion matters

Knowing what kind of thought leader you want to be is a start, but then you need the courage to express a strong point of view. Thought leaders have a vision that's different than their peers, and they're willing to express that vision even if it makes others (including their own customers and employees) uncomfortable. True thought leaders step outside of their industry norms to share their point of view on where the world, or the industry, or the category, or the consumer (you get the gist) is headed.

Can the market leader also be the thought leader?

After all, thought leaders question the status quo, and market leaders are the status quo. They can, but it requires a willingness to question and strategically disrupt their own status quo. Thought leadership, at its core, is about change and transformation, and that doesn't happen without a strong vision—and most importantly, sharing that vision beyond the walls of your organization. And it means establishing a content and connectivity strategy that builds and grows your reputation as a true thought leader. No organization ever became a thought leader by keeping opinions to themselves.

Own it and act on it

Finally, you need to make a long-term commitment, acting in a manner that supports your thought-leadership platform. Thought leaders without actions are industry pretenders. Market leaders questioning their own status quo must take action to support their long-term vision, and disruptors need to show that they can consistently perform.

The truly remarkable companies convince stakeholders to believe in their view of where the world is going and their ability to deliver on that vision. That is thought leadership, and it's a true competitive advantage for today's best organizations.

Matt Kucharski is President of Padilla.

TX PARKS DEPT. FLIES MULTICULTURAL PR RFP

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the state agency that protects wildlife and oversees natural resources in the Lone Star State, is looking for an agency specializing in multicultural marketing and advertising services in an effort to engage with Hispanic and multicultural markets as well as general demographic and other targeted markets in Texas.

TPWD needs an agency that can provide research/analysis of demographic groups, campaign planning and execution, strategy development, media placement (online and offline), translation services, design and production, event marketing, retail/manufacturer partnerships, sales promotions, sponsorship development and creative services to reach specified target audiences.

Potential paid media outlet placements may include broadcast radio or TV, billboards, web advertising, direct mail, email marketing, social media and search engine marketing.

Terms of the contract call for a commencement date of approx. September 1, and runs until August 31, with the option of an additional one-year renewal.

Deadline for proposals is 2 p.m. (CT) on May 23. Proposals should be mailed to:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.
Purchasing & Contracting C-1
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

All sealed proposals should be marked with the identifying RFP number: 802-20-43555

Updates and addenda can be viewed on the [TPWD vendor portal](#).

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



PRIME POLICY GROUP REPS LIBYA IN DC

Prime Policy Group is doing pro-bono work for Libya's Government of National Accord, which is locked in conflict with a rebel group led by 75-year-old warlord and US citizen Khalifa Haftar.

The BCW lobbying unit, which does not have a formal written contract with the Libyans, introduced deputy prime minister Ahmed Maiteeq to officials in the Trump administration and Congress. He briefed the US politicians on the GNA's interest in peace and a unity government, according to PPG's federal filing.



Charlie Black

Veteran Republican politico Charlie Black, PPG chairman, is among his firm's executives to file as lobbyist for the GNA. Vice chairman and former Congressman John Tanner,

chief of staff Abbi Stuaan, managing director/international relations & trade Lisa Colangelo and director/energy & environment Edward Cox round out the Libyan lobbying team.

Omnicom's Mercury Group in April signed a \$1.8M contract with GNA and received a \$500K upfront fee before launching the effort.

NYCHA SPOKESPERSON JOINS BERLINROSEN

Jasmine Blake, spokesperson for the embattled New York City Housing Authority, has joined BerlinRosen as VP for public affairs.

As deputy chief communications officer, she handled the December rollout of Mayor Bill de Blasio's \$24B NYCHA 2.0 program to fix the city's aging public housing stock.

Blake also saw PR duty connected with Housing & Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson's January installment of a federal monitor to work with NYCHA to overhaul its management, organizational and workforce structures. The City retains day-to-day management responsibility.

She also handled communications connected to de Blasio putting NYC sanitation commissioner Kathryn Garcia in charge of NYCHA on an interim basis. She's on leave from DSNY.

BerlinRosen handled de Blasio's political campaigns.

BOSTON'S REGAN GOES LUXE

Regan Communications Group has acquired Luxury PR Group and launched a new division, Regan Luxury.

Palm Beach, FL-based Luxury PR Group works with such clients as Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Lamborghini and The Residence at Mandarin Oriental.

"The agency and its founder, Mariana Abbate, have a deep understanding of the luxury market both in Florida and nationwide," said RCG Chairman George Regan said. Staffing and the executive team at Luxury PR Group will remain in place, and Regan hopes to expand the office.

Regan Luxury will offer such services as brand cross-promotion, enhanced social media and influencer campaign conception. Its operations will extend across the company's 10 national offices in locations including Boston; New York; Washington, DC and Charleston, SC.

STUDY CALLS DATA ENTRY PR TIME WASTER

PR teams are wasting a surprising amount of time on a rather simple chore: manual data entry.

According to the "The State of PR 2019," a new report from journalist database, media monitoring and coverage reporting platform Muck Rack, 36 percent of PR professionals at agencies are spending as much as 10 hours a week (or 21 days per year) on inputting information.



For an agency with over 100 PR pros on staff, that racks up to a surprising 2,100 days of employee effort annually. Rather than devoting so much time to manual tasks, the study says, PR pros would be better off working to generate coverage and showcase their success.

Muck Rack's study surveyed over 800 PR professionals on topics that include which software and tools they use, their preferred methods for contacting journalists, how they allocate time and money, and what they see as the biggest problems facing the PR industry.

Email remains the top software tool, with 98 percent of respondents saying that they use it on a daily basis. A sizeable majority also cited documents (87 percent) and media databases (69 percent) as central features of their productivity tool kits.

Email also comes out as the top way to contact journalists, with 97 percent of respondents saying that individual one-to-one emails are a preferred way to reach out to reporters. Contact by phone (41 percent) was the next most cited method, with Twitter (29 percent, mass email (21 percent), newswires (11 percent) and LinkedIn (10 percent) following behind. Facebook came in last, with 3 percent calling it an effective way to contact journalists.

Tightening PR budgets were an issue across the board, with 61 percent of respondents noting their concern on that topic. Even so, a quarter of respondents (25 percent) expect their company's PR budget to go up this year, while another 38 percent predict no change, and just 11 percent say they think there will be a decrease.

MUSEUM OF PR SALUTES LGBTQ COMMUNITY

The Museum of Public Relations will celebrate the LGBTQ community and examine how PR strategy was used to frame the narrative of the gay rights movement and build public support for same-sex marriage at a June 6 event.

"The LGBTQ Experience in Public Relations" will feature two panels that will discuss the challenges LGBTQ professionals have faced in the industry as well as looking at how things have changed and what the future may hold.

Panelists are set to include Pfizer chief corporate affairs officer Sally Susman; BCW global president Jim Joseph; Wells Fargo vice president, communications Del Galloway; Nielsen senior vp, global communications Drew McCaskill; and Chiqui Cartegana, former senior vp, political and advocacy at Univision.

The event will run from 6 to 9 p.m. at 150 East 42 St. in New York. Registration is required.

To find out more, [click here](#).

MAGRINO, SUSMAN REP PR AT MATRIX AWARDS

Susan Magrino and Sally Susman were the PR honorees among the eight winners of the 2019 Matrix Awards handed out by New York Women in Communications May 6 at the Sheraton New York Times Square.

Martha Stewart, who has known Magrino since she was her publicist at Crown Publishing, recalled how they traveled “across the country on lengthy and amazing fun book tours where we met the likes of Oprah Winfrey in Baltimore.”



Susan Magrino

The doyenne of the domestic arts became a client at Magrino PR and praised Magrino for being inquisitive, thorough and having a “great business head on her shoulders.”

In presenting the Matrix to Magrino, Stewart said: “Susan was my representative everywhere in my business, to the press, to the public, and to my partners. At first, it was all about books and then it was about everything.”

Magrino told how seizing opportunities, taking responsibility for her actions and forging a support network shaped her career. She credited Crown for launching her and what became her personal brand. “I had the chance to create PR campaigns from start to finish, travel cross country with authors, promote books, learn how every TV and radio station worked and manage book signings.”

Her advice to managers and people on their way up is to “take the risk and take the job even if you aren’t sure you can ace it. There will be someone there along the way to help you succeed.”

Susman Began Career on Capitol Hill

Sally Susman, executive VP-chief corporate affairs officer at Pfizer, began her work life as a legislative assistant on Capitol Hill, where she was “filled with excitement and optimism and brimming with big ideas.”



Sally Susman

Her decision to leave DC was among her “greatest accomplishments.” Susman had met an American Express executive from its New York headquarters who led a global business with reach and impact.

She wanted the same clout. Susman told the executive that she planned to leave the Hill and wanted to work for him. “I want to offer you first dibs on hiring me because I have a meeting with your competitor if you’re not interested,” she told the AmexCo executive.

Susman had no such appointment. “I didn’t know if I would get the job, but my heart was in my throat, my chest was pounding, and I felt fully alive.” A few days later, she received the employment offer.

She urged the scholarship recipients in the audience to “answer from the depths of your heart and the height of your own ambition.”

Invest in Equality Was Theme

Mika Brzezinski, the MSNBC “Morning Joe” co-host and founder of “Know Your Value,” emceed the Matrix ceremony.

“It’s up to us to invest in the concept of equality, to own it, to force change, to be the change and then to pass it on so we can grow those numbers,” Brzezinski said.

She said everyone in the room should give another woman a boost who will then pay it forward someday.

Kathy Ring, Starcom USA CEO; Lisa Sherman, Ad Council CEO; Kate Lewis, Hearst Magazines chief content officer; Padma Lakshmi, “Top Chef” host/executive producer; Janine Liburd, BET Networks chief marketing officer, and Norah O’Donnell, CBS News, round out the roster of Matrix winners.

The ceremony took place the same day that O’Donnell was dropped from the “CBS Morning News” lineup. O’Donnell had asked King in January to be her Matrix presenter, which could have resulted in some very awkward moments. It didn’t turn out that way.

Prior to the event, O’Dwyer’s caught up with O’Donnell and King on the red carpet. “In the seven years that we’ve been together, we never spoke a cross word, so why in the hell would we start today?” said King. “It’s because we are women. This never happens to men.”

During the Matrix presentation: King said, “Norah is fearless in her pursuit of the truth, which makes her one of the most trusted and admired journalists in the world.”



Gayle King (l.) & Norah O’Donnell

ON THE MOVE

Edelman Southwest has added **Kristena Lucky**, **Brooke Taylor** and **Kate Burton** to its leadership team. Lucky, who is a member of Edelman’s U.S. Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Council, has been named executive vice president, head of the Southwest brand practice, based in Edelman’s Dallas office. She most recently served as EVP of the brand practice at Edelman Chicago. Taylor has come on as senior vice president, head of the Dallas corporate practice. Most recently, she was senior vice president, client experience at Weber Shandwick. Burton has been named senior vice president, head of the Southwest health sector, based in Edelman’s Houston office. She most recently co-created and served as COO at MicrobiomeDX, a lab focused on microbiome-based cancer biomarker discovery.

GCI Health has hired **Kirsten Whipple** as executive vice president, wellness and nutrition. Whipple joins GCI from FleishmanHillard, where she was senior vice president & partner and health & wellness practice lead, with clients that included Abbott’s Nutrition division, Walgreen’s and Beech-Nut Nutrition. At GCI Health, she will oversee the growth of the agency’s wellness and nutrition offering. The agency has also brought on dna Communications senior vice president Cindy Romano as a senior vice president. Romano will focus on overseeing some of GCI Health’s work in oncology.



Kirsten Whipple

COMMENTARY

Let's hope Larry Kudlow, Donald Trump's chief economic adviser, is a fan of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes," the tale about the super-narcissist who wanted the most beautiful and elaborately patterned suit.

Our vainglorious leader has been slapping himself on the back for slapping tariffs on China, levies that he believes will put the world's No. 2 economy on the brink.



President Trump with Chinese president Xi Jinping

The president, who fancies himself as the master negotiator, hiked the tariff on \$250B of Chinese goods from 10 to 25 percent and then crowed on Twitter there is no rush to cut a trade pact with China "since these massive payments go directly to the Treasury of the US."

The president seems to think Chinese are making those massive payments, which he believes will top the \$100B mark, to Uncle Sam.

During yesterday's appearance on Trump TV (e.g., Fox News) Kudlow set the president straight, saying the American consumers will pick up the tariff tab in the form of paying higher prices for Chinese-made goods with China taking a hit via diminished exports to the US.

Trump's tariffs are a tax on the American people, which is rich following the *New York Times* blockbuster story on the former real estate maven's tax-dodging strategy.

According to the NYT report, Trump lost more money than any single taxpayer, a situation that allowed him to pay zippo income taxes for eight of the years between 1985 and 1994.

Trump ridiculed the Times piece as "very old information" and a "highly inaccurate fake news hit job."

And, of course, he tried to turn the tables on critics by declaring himself a super-smart businessman, tweeting that real estate developers "were entitled to massive writeoffs and depreciation" that would "show losses and tax losses in almost all cases."

According to the president: "You always wanted to show losses for tax purposes" and "renegotiate with banks." Trump called that "sport."

In other words, only suckers (like you and me) pay taxes.

'But he isn't wearing anything at all'

The royal weavers, in "The Emperors New Clothes" tell the king that his new make-believe suit is invisible to those who are unfit for their palace jobs or are "hopelessly stupid."

The king puts on the clothes and parades before the royal court of yes-men who fawn over their king's garments. The buck-naked ruler parades outside the palace gates before his adoring subjects who sing praises of his majesty's new duds.

A child in the audience outs the king, saying "But he isn't wearing anything at all." Liberated by the child's audacity, the crowd screws up some moral strength and begs the king to get dressed and stop embarrassing both himself and them.

Let's hope Kudlow in calling out Trump's fantasy about tariffs-payers is playing the role of the child in Andersen's story. Other members of Trump's team of advisors should show the same honesty as the people in Andersen's story and call out the president on his whoppers.

China Strikes Back

China today raised tariffs on \$60B in US goods to strike back at Trump's levies, sending the New York Stock Exchange into a tailspin, or as the Trump-cheering *Wall Street Journal* put it, creating new buying opportunities. Geez.

Trump responded via Twitter: "I say openly to President Xi & all of my many friends in China that China will be hurt very badly if you don't make a deal because companies will be forced to leave China for other countries."

China's state-run TV fired back: "Whether the US wants to talk or fight in the next step, or take other action, China has already fully prepared its policy toolbox and prepared a comprehensive response."

Stay tuned.

Tariffs, Trade War Puts Re-Election at Risk

Trump launched his tariff war with China just as his approval rating starting to tick upward.

He ramped up his trade war with a Gallup approval rating of 46 percent on April 30, a two-year high.

The robust economy powered Trump's rating rise, as the first-quarter 3.2 percent GNP topped expectations.

More good news was in the works. The Gallup poll was released before the May 3 job numbers report that showed an unemployment rate of 3.6 percent, the lowest in 50 years.

Despite the media uproar tied to the Mueller Report and fallout over Attorney General Bill Barr's ham-fisted attempt to whitewash the special counsel's findings, Trump had momentum among voters.

Trump is now frittering Big Mo away via that tariff war China and reckless tweets threatening an escalation of the fight. Does the president really want another term in office, or does he want to return to the center of the universe?

—Kevin McCauley