



Kevin McCauley
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of PR & Marketing Communications



271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

May 10, 2021 Vol. 54 No. 19

DC SEEKS PR FOR BIKE, PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments is looking to hire a PR firm to handle public outreach and an educational campaign designed to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety in the DC region.



The one-year budget for the "Street Smart Awareness Campaign" is expected to be in the \$825K range.

The PR firm will be expected to raise awareness among motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists of the consequences of motor vehicle crashes with bike-riders and walkers, according to the RFP.

It will educate people in the National Capital Region about behaviors leading up to collisions and safety enforcement efforts by the 24 local governments that are part of COG.

The Council also wants its communications partner to help forge Street Smart alliances with businesses, transit operators and community groups.

Proposals are due May 20. Interested parties must register at <https://mwkog.net>.

[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

SITRICK HANDLES PETE AND GERRY'S DEAL

Sitrick And Company is handling Butterfly as the Los Angeles private equity firm takes a majority investment stake in Pete and Gerry's Organics, the nation's top producer of organic, free-range and pasture-raised eggs.

Based in Monroe, NH, Pete and Gerry's partners with 130 small farms across the US that are committed to the highest standards of humane animal treatment and environmental sustainability. The eggs are marketed under the Pete and Gerry's, Nellie's Free Range and Consider Pastures brands.



Butterfly makes "seed to fork" investments across agriculture, aquaculture, food & beverage products, food-service and distribution sectors.

"Pete and Gerry's is a forward-thinking, mission-driven company that provides a better egg to consumers, a better life for hens and a better model for America's small family farmers, said Butterfly co-founder Dustin Beck. Butterfly "is absolutely aligned with their mission and looks forward to supporting the team to continue these efforts," he added.

As part of the deal, British Columbia Investment Management Corp. will become an investor in Pete and Gerry's.

Sitrick's Terry Fahn and Stuart Pfeiffer represent Butterfly, while Jenni Brennan of 360 PR+ handles Pete and Gerry's.

STAGWELL POSTS 1.8% DIP IN Q1 REVENUES

Stagwell Marketing Group reported a 1.8 percent dip in Q1 revenues to \$181.2M and a 63.2 percent decline in net income to \$4.6M due to a tough comparison to a political year and the continued impact of COVID-19 on operations. Organic revenue declined 6.9 percent.

Stagwell attributes the bulk of its revenue decline to a drop in business from its digital content group, which includes its global travel marketing brand.

CEO Jay Leveton expects the recovery of the travel and entertainment business to "begin in earnest in Q2 with the successful rollout of the vaccines in the US."

Stagwell, which includes SKDKnickerbocker, Targeted Victory and Wye Communications, posted an \$8.9M drop in Q1 revenues.

FINN NABS ENVIRONMENTAL HEAVYWEIGHT

Finn Partners has hired Bob Martineau, environmental lawyer who served as commissioner of Tennessee's Dept. of Environment & Conservation, as senior partner.

Based in Nashville, he will support the sustainability & social impact practice throughout the Finn Partners' southeastern region.

Martineau served in the TDEC from 2011 to 2018, was senior attorney at the Environmental Protection Agency and edited the "Clean Air Act Handbook."

Finn Partners, which had 2020 fee income of \$108.9M, is O'Dwyer's fourth-largest independent PR firm. It ranked No. 4 in the environmental/sustainability category, with fees of \$6.7M.



Bob Martineau

BCW RECRUITS DROGA5 TECH ALUM KIEF

BCW has hired Chris Kief, who was head of technology for advertising firm Droga5, as chief technology officer.

At Droga5, he handled the multi-year global redesign and re-platforming of Harley-Davidson.com.

Earlier, Kief was head of technology at 360i, where he headed a team responsible for development of web/native mobile applications, search marketing tools, e-commerce optimization and media data management for consumer B2B and telecom communications.

He has also served as CTO at Saatchi & Saatchi and held tech posts at TBWAWorldwide and Crispin Porter + Bogusky.

He reports to BCW CEO Donna Imperato.

GREENBELT, MD GATHERS PR QUALIFICATIONS

Greenbelt, America's first planned community, developed under president Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal program, has issued an RFQ for PR, marketing and communications services.



The Maryland city of 24K is part of metropolitan Washington, sits at the intersection of the Capital Beltway (I-495) and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

The NASA Goddard Space Flight Center is directly to the east of Greenbelt, and the USDA's Beltsville Agricultural Research Center and Patuxent Wildlife Center are to the north.

Greenbelt takes pride in its environmental sustainability track record, celebration of diversity and volunteerism.

It is looking for a firm to oversee communications outreach, social media and content management, press releases and special events.

Responses to the RFQ are due May 17 at abelton@greenbeltmd.gov. They may also be delivered in a sealed package labeled "RFQ Public Relations, Marketing and Communications Services" to: Anne Marie Belton; Executive Associate; 25 Crescent Road; Greenbelt, MD 20770.

Click [here](#) for the RFQ.

INDIA INKS FEROX FOR US OUTREACH

India, which has been ravaged by COVID-19, has signed Ferox Strategies for outreach on Capitol Hill.

Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India's US ambassador, signed the agreement with Ferox. The firm handles strategic counsel, tactical planning and government relations assistance on policy matters before the US Congress and select state governments, as well as academic institutions and think-tanks.

The \$60K contract runs through June 30 and may be extended for another three-month run.

Ferox CEO Cristina Antelo works the India business. She launched Ferox after an eight-year stint at Podesta.

Antelo is a founding member and former president of the Hispanic Lobbyists Assn. and ex-interim CEO of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.

The US Agency for International Development shipped \$100M worth of medical supplies to India this month.

GILLIBRAND AIDE JOINS SUBJECT MATTER

Keith Castaldo, general counsel for New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, has joined Subject Matter.

During an eight-year run with Gillibrand, he handled coalition building, business outreach, ethics, workplace policy and campaign finance. He also was policy advisor for the short-lived Gillibrand for President campaign.



Keith Castaldo

Prior to joining Team Gillibrand, Castaldo served as an aide to Jersey Rep. Bill Pascrell.

Steve Elmendorf, Subject Matter partner, said Castaldo has been "central to shaping progressive policies for decades, and comes with an impressive background in tech, finance and other influential industries."

Castaldo will join Subject Matter's government relations team on May 17.

NEWS OF FIRMS

IPG Mediabrands says it will work to invest a minimum of five percent in Black-owned media channels in aggregate across all clients by 2023. The announcement follows the division's first Equity Upfront, part of a long-term equity and equality strategic investment initiative designed to foster deeper exposure for and partnerships with Black-owned media partners. In addition to hosting monthly equity sessions that present the content and marketing capabilities of Black-owned media across media channels, Mediabrands and MAGNA, its global media investment and intelligence company, will host inside track sessions to provide learning and growth opportunities.



The Abbi Agency, which has offices in Reno, Las Vegas, New York and the United Kingdom, has joined IPREX. Incorporated in 2008 by Abbi Whitaker, the agency provides services in marketing, public relations, public affairs, social media, web design, creative development, content marketing, data analysis, event promotion and coordination, and market research. The Abbi Agency vice president of client strategy Connie Anderson said the agency has already begun working with IPREX partners to pitch, win and serve client accounts across the business verticals it serves, which include healthcare, government, technology and destination marketing around the globe.

The Center for Public Interest Communications at the University of Florida has awarded University of Southern California assistant professor of Journalism Allissa Richardson its 2021 Research Prize in Public Interest Communication. Richardson was awarded \$10,000 for a paper based on a series of interviews that reveal four women leaders' takes on the textual and visual dismantling of Black respectability politics and how to carve out a new style of political communication.



Allissa Richardson

Ruder Finn launches analytics-driven content marketing offering to help clients develop cross-platform branded content. Under the leadership of executive vice president of brand marketing John Nolan, the team will develop narrative strategies and branded content platforms. Nolan will report to CEO Kathy Bloomgarden, who has driven the expansion of the agency's digital offering, exploring emerging tech in social listening, AI, voice and VR/AR.

Weber Shandwick slates two summer learning programs offering college students and recent graduates a deep dive into the rapidly evolving media landscape. The 2021 Media Genius Fellowship is a six-week, paid immersion in which ten Fellows will work full-time with the agency's Media Genius team to explore new platforms, emerging content formats and evolving uses of tech. Media Genius Exchange, a six-week, discussion-based learning community, will let 50 students examine key issues facing today's media ecosystem.

Luquire George Andrews is rebranding itself to Luquire, a move that the agency says reflects the digitally focused firm it has evolved into over the past several years. As part of the rebrand, Luquire designers created a new logo and the agency has unveiled www.luquire.com, along with updated social channels (@luquireagency).

A PR PRO'S GUIDE TO ANALYTICS

PR and marketing professionals notoriously don't like numbers. We're creatives, storytellers and above all else, words people. Calculus, we hardly knew ye.

But with the advent of analytics and artificial intelligence, numbers are about to become your new best friends. The days of decision by gut instinct are behind us and the communications strategies of the future will increasingly be one part art, one part data science.



Kayla Rodriguez, Sally Slater

Where analytics has gained the most traction in the industry to date is measurement and reporting. Analytics can streamline reporting efforts and provide better metrics.

Relational databases allow us to build dashboards with KPIs tailored to different stakeholders, and data visualizations help us relay the numbers in the most compelling way.

However, reporting efficiencies are just the tip of the iceberg. Here are some of the ways analytics and AI are transforming the communications landscape:

Competitor intelligence

Analytics and AI can accelerate unwieldy competitor audits by automating data collection processes to quickly generate competitive benchmarks and insights on performance. Analyzing earned share of voice with tools like Cision and Meltwater is standard fare at this point. You may be less familiar with SimilarWeb, which lets you spy on your competitors' website traffic or Newswhip, which measures social engagement on your competitors' content and predicts which competitor content will perform best next.

Audience insights

Plenty of social listening platforms will give you surface-level intelligence. But to truly understand what your target audiences care about, who they respect, how they consume content and when, you need to go deeper. With machine learning techniques, you can identify and track hyper-targeted audiences to construct a dynamic view of those structural elements.

Content and media mix optimization

By leveraging analytics to map where key audiences go online to read and share content, you can more efficiently allocate media spend to those channels and outlets. Not only can you drive more website visits, you can drive more of the right visitors to your website. This applies to search strategy and keyword spend as well.

ABM and sales team enablement

Analytics can also be used for strategic buyer intelligence to support an account-based marketing strategy or empower sales teams with insights into the needs and business objectives of their sales targets. Messaging, content and sales collateral can be personalized based on analysis of specific high-value audience segments.

With self-service analytics platforms and data scientists, communicators still don't have to do the math. However, the numbers alone don't tell a story. To get the most value out of your data initiatives, consider these three best practices:

Build the right data foundation. Bad data in equals bad data out. To find meaningful insights, you need to draw from the right data sources—and those data sources need to be accurate, complete, relevant, reliable, timely—and most importantly, accessible.

Break down silos. Data teams can't work in silos and need

to collaborate with account leads and clients to understand the applications of the research and realities of the market.

Start with specific questions and hypotheses to test. The best analytics initiatives are designed to find answers to specific questions or prove hypotheses true or false

Hypotheses don't need to be PhD-level theses. The only prerequisite is curiosity. For example, you might postulate that your audience prefers short-form to long-form content. Analytics can validate—or invalidate—your theory.

The most critical determinant of analytics value is the extent to which the insights uncovered are actionable. You might discover that 55 percent of your customer base prefers dogs to cats, but what can you do with that information? (Unless you're in the business of pets.) In our view, analytics is only successful when it leads to concrete changes that drive better outcomes. AI can accelerate information gathering, but it's on communicators to turn insight into action.

Kayla Rodriguez is Senior Director of Analytics and Sally Slater is Head of Innovation at The Bliss Group.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

The New York Times added 301,000 digital subscribers in the first three months of 2021, its smallest increase since Q3 2019. However, that bump takes it to a total of 7.8 million subscribers across its print and digital platforms, which according to the NYT, keeps it on the path toward reaching 10 million subscribers by 2025. Digital subscriptions hit seven million, with print subscriptions continuing to slide. The company expects ad revenue to grow considerably over 2021, rising between 55 and 60 percent.



Twitter purchases Scroll, an app that lets users read online articles minus interruptions from ads and pop-ups. "We want to reimagine what they've built to deliver a seamless reading experience to our hyper-engaged audiences and allow publishers to deliver cleaner content that can make them more money than today's business models," said Twitter VP, publisher products Mike Park.

New York Daily News staffers vote 55-3 to be represented by the NewsGuild of New York. The move comes as the paper's parent company, Tribune Publishing, faces a May 21 shareholder vote to be acquired by Alden Global Capital, a hedge fund known for slashing costs at its papers. The Guild wants Tribune shareholders to vote against the Alden acquisition and is involved in the search for an alternate buyer.

The Los Angeles Times names Kevin Merida executive editor. Merida joins Times from ESPN, where he was editor-in-chief of the Undefeated, a website that covers sports, race and culture, and oversaw the platform's investigative/news enterprise unit. "Kevin possesses a clear understanding of the rigor necessary for independent journalism and how to translate that journalism to multiple platforms," said Times owners Patrick and Michele Soon-Shiong in a written statement.

Meredith Corp. reaches an agreement to sell its local TV stations to Gray Television for \$2.7 billion. The company says that the deal will allow it to focus exclusively on its publishing division, which includes such titles as *People*, *Entertainment Weekly* and *Martha Stewart Living*. Once the transaction is completed in the fourth quarter of this year, Gray will become one of the top three local broadcasters in the U.S., along with Sinclair and Nexstar.

SERIOUSFUN NETWORK LOOKS FOR PR HELP

The SeriousFun Children's Network, a community of 30 independent camps that serves kids with serious illnesses and their families free of charge, seeks a PR firm to boost its profile among media, prospective partners and general public.

The late actor Paul Newman, who founded The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, helped launch the SFCN.

The PR firm will help SFCN break through its "nice to have" perception but not a real necessity to support and enrich the lives of children living with serious illnesses, according to the RFP.



The PR firm will get involved in storytelling/content development, media outreach, partnerships, social media, thought leadership and support of a virtual event.

SFCN envisions a campaign from July 15 to year-end, though PR success could lead to a longer engagement.

The project is budgeted at \$20K, not including a supplement outlay to support the virtual event planned for September.

SFCN chief marketing officer Tara Fisher wants responses by May 15. She is at tfisher@seriousfun.org.

[Download RFP \(PDF\)](#).

KEKST WORKS EXTRACTION OIL'S MERGER

Kekst CNC handles Extraction Oil & Gas as it combines with Bonanza Creek Energy in what the Colorado companies bill as a "merger of equals."

The combined company called Civitas Resources Inc. will be owned 50/50 by Extraction and Bonanza shareholders and be valued in the \$2.6B range.

Extraction CEO Tom Tyree said the merger will create one of the most durable, profitable and progressive producers in Colorado's Denver-Julesburg Basin. Civitas will be the state's "first net-zero oil & gas producers through the continuing reduction in operational emissions coupled with a multi-year investment in certified emissions offsets," said Tyree.

The deal is expected to close during the third quarter.

Kekst CNC has Daniel Yungler, Jon Morgan, Simone Leung, Hallie Wolff and JM Shekian working the Extraction merger.

DISNEY'S WALKER TO LEAD PICTURE MOTION

Picture Motion, which develops advocacy and marketing campaigns for films, television and entertainment, has hired Brian Walker as chief executive officer.



Adrienne Smith

Walker comes to the agency from the Walt Disney Company, where he most recently served as a stakeholder engagement leader in its enterprise diversity and inclusion group.

Before coming to Disney, he was culture and entertainment advocacy director for online racial justice organization Color of Change. He has also worked at Participant Media as director, digital strategy and partnerships.

Walker will join Picture Motion COO Juliette Richey on the leadership team to oversee the company's vision, business strategy and partnerships. Picture Motion founder Christie Marchese and president Wendy Cohen are transitioning to advisory roles on the board of directors.

ASTRAZENECA ALUM CARVER FLIES TO KITE

Mary Lynn Carver has joined Kite, the Santa Monica-based biopharmaceutical developer of cancer immunotherapies.

Gilead Sciences, which chalked up \$25B in fiscal 2020 revenues, acquired Kite in 2017 for \$12B.

Carver exited AstraZeneca's London headquarters as head of global internal communications in 2009. She was posted for nearly a decade in Wilmington (DE) as executive director of corporate communications for AstraZeneca's global oncology unit.

Following AstraZeneca, Carver was senior VP-strategic communications & PR at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, senior VP-communications & PA at University of Maryland Medical System and global chief communications officer at General Mills.

Most recently, Carver was running her own shop, MLC Strategic Advisors since the beginning of last year.



Mary Lynn Carver

SYRIAN KURDISH MILITIA RECRUITS DORNAN

The Syrian Kurdish Defense Force has hired Jim Dornan Strategies to set up meetings with Members of US Congress to press them for continued US support in the battle against ISIS and their struggle against Syrian president Bashar Assad.

Dornan Strategies is providing government relations, political strategy, outreach to non-governmental organizations and media relations services to the SKDF, which is considered a terrorist organization by US ally, Turkey.

It has received \$7K for its effort.

Jim Dornan was chief of staff to Republican Congressman & now North Carolina Senator Richard Burr.

In his work on behalf of the SKDF, Dornan reports to Nowruz Ahmed, who is general commander of Women's Protection unit, an all-female Syrian Kurdish militia.



Bashar Assad

EVENTS

The National Press Club's communications team is hosting a May 20 discussion in which healthcare pros will talk about how their jobs have evolved and what they want from communicators. The event will be moderated by Karen Addis, president and CEO of Addis Communications. Running from noon to 1 p.m., it is free for NPC members. The \$15 fee for non-members will go to the [NPC Staff Support Fund](#) to assist NPC journalists who have been furloughed due to COVID-19. For more information, or to register, [click here](#).

PRSA books virtual May 19 event, a panel of travel media pros will discuss what the future of travel looks like and how the PR industry can work with them. The event costs \$25 for PRSA members and \$40 for non-members. For more information, or to register, [click here](#).

Women in PR North America is hosting its Modern Day Boss Conference on Sunday, May 16 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The conference will feature celebrities and business executives, and offer business and personal tutorials with tips on how to be a boss in your business, life and relationships. The cost of the event is \$49. [Click here](#) for more information.

METRO ST. LOUIS SEEKS PR FOR RIDESHARING

Madison County Transit is looking for a firm to develop a strategic marketing campaign for its RideFinders commuter rideshare service that operates in metropolitan St. Louis.

RideFinders was created in 1994 to help the nine-county bi-state St. Louis metro region improve air quality by encouraging alternative commuting modes that reduce traffic.

It offers a mix of vanpools/carpools, taxis and Uber/Lyft reimbursements.

MCT, based in Granite City, IL, across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, wants a firm to conduct research to identify new RideFinders customers and create “a roadmap for the marketing and outreach efforts moving forward,” according to the RFP.

It envisions promotional campaigns running for 10 consecutive quarters, featuring “targeted messaging to meet campaign goals through appropriate channels, as well as earned and paid media placements to support the message.”

Proposals are due May 20. They must be labeled “Proposal – Strategic Marketing and Communications Services 21-1-16300” and shipped via FedEx/UPS to: Madison County Transit; Attn: Penny Brown; One Transit Way; Granite City, IL 62040

[Download RFP \(PDF\).](#)

SWAGERT TAKES IPG DXTRA PEOPLE POST

Jean Lee Swagert, who was chief human resources officer for North America at [Weber Shandwick](#), is now chief people officer at IPG DXTRA, Interpublic’s collective of 27 marketing brands that includes PR units such as WS, Golin, Current Global, [ReviveHealth](#), DeVries Global, Rogers & Cowan PMK and Powell Tate.



Jean Lee Swagert

She reports to IPG DXTRA CEO Andy Polansky and succeeds Abby Gold, who will transition into a strategic advisory role.

Swagert helped develop Weber Shandwick’s hybrid remote-working model and supported its initiatives to become an anti-racist organization.

At IPG DXTRA, she will spearhead the effort to attract, empower and retain the best and most diverse talent across its PR, experiential, sports and entertainment, branding, digital experience, social content and influencer marketing offerings.

KEKST CNC VET SEMER TO GASTHALTER & CO.

Mark Semer, a 27-year veteran of Kekst CNC, has joined Gasthalter & Co. financial communications firm as managing director.



Mark Semer

He exited the Publicis Groupe unit as partner/co-head of its alternative investment practice.

Semer has an extensive background in mergers & acquisitions, crisis communications, executive transitions, change management, litigation/disputes, regulatory matters and restructuring-related situations.

He also has advised private equity investors on positioning, as well as transactions, fundraising, crises and special situations.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Emblem Public Relations picks up AOR duties for Brown-Forman’s **Slane Irish Whiskey**. Brown-Forman also manufactures such brands as Jack Daniel’s, Early Times, Woodford Reserve, Finlandia, Korbel and Chambord. Slane was launched in March 2017 and its distillery opened to the public in September 2017. Emblem will also work to promote the company’s commitment to sustainable practices, such as sourcing water from the neighboring River Boyne, and its Slane Castle concerts series. Slane Irish Whiskey senior brand manager Sean Wachsmann said that Emblem principal Colin Baugh and the agency’s team “showcased a strong understanding of our brand and our industry which will build upon Slane’s growth.”



Champion Management Group picks up **Happy Joe’s Pizza & Ice Cream**, which has 34 franchise locations throughout the Midwest. Champion’s scope of work for Happy Joe’s includes franchise development PR, digital marketing and new restaurant opening support. Owned and operated by Dynamic Restaurant Holdings Inc., Happy Joe’s serves pizzas, sandwiches, pasta and ice cream.

Wagstaff Media and Marketing checks in at **Baillie Lodges’ Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge**, located on Canada’s Vancouver Island. Wagstaff is tasked with helping to grow awareness of the property’s grand reopening in June and its new ownership. The account will be led by agency director Ernst Flach, who is based in Vancouver. He will be supported by the Wagstaff network in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and New York. “Wagstaff’s breadth of experience in the luxury space, as well as its network across their five North American offices, including Vancouver, provide us with the on-the-ground support we need to reach our target travelers,” said Baillie Lodges chief operating officer Craig Bradbery.

North 6th Agency picks up **Outmatch**, creator of the Hiring Experience Stack, which provides job seekers with insights to support their career ambitions. N6A will support Outmatch on a variety of external media relations and content marketing initiatives to drive competitive awareness and amplify the company’s growth. “Finding a partner with a deep wealth of experience in the HR-SaaS space was critical to help us share our message effectively and take our company to the next level,” said Outmatch chief futurist Yves Lermusi.



Newlink signs **battleface**, an insurance provider offering services and benefits to travelers visiting or working internationally. Newlink will provide media relations and facilitate strategic partnerships, as well as providing support at trade and consumer shows, content development, and overall strategic efforts. “As we grow our US operation, we needed a hands-on agency with insight into what drives American travel insurance buyers, which will be key to our communication strategies,” said battleface CEO Sasha Gainullin.

Clarity PR has been engaged to handle UK and US communications for Gen Z friendship social media app Yubo. The agency will work with the brand to operate a consumer and corporate press office function on both sides of the Atlantic. Clarity will also work to increase Yubo’s brand awareness and drive user growth through a PR strategy that taps into lifestyle, Gen Z and consumer press, alongside momentum corporate outreach.

COMMENTARY



Hats off to Jacqueline Ortiz Ramsay, who heads public communications at Robinhood, for gamely taking on legendary investor Warren Buffett after he trashed the millennial-favored stock trading app as a casino that encourages speculative bets on the stock market.

Robinhood has “become a very significant part of the casino aspect, the casino group, that has joined the stock market,” he said at Berkshire Hathaway’s May 1 annual meeting.

The 90-year-old BH CEO said American companies are wonderful places for people to invest their money, but they also make terrific gambling chips.

Charlie Munger, Berkshire’s 97-year-old vice chairman, took the Robinhood criticism a step farther, saying it’s “God awful that something like that would draw investment from civilized men and decent citizens. It’s deeply wrong.”

Ramsay countered with, “People are tired of the Warren Buffetts and Charlie Mungers of the world acting like they are the oracles of investing. And at Robinhood, we’re not going to sit back while they disparage everyday people taking control of their financial lives.” Nice touch.

She said Robinhood has opened the doors of financial investing to everyday people, which is “deeply unsettling the old guard who will fight to keep things the same.”

Buffett may have the last laugh. The noted value investor looks forward to reading Robinhood’s initial public offering filing, which is expected to come out this quarter. Will the Oracle of Omaha see any value in Robinhood’s shares?

Another question: Does BH benefit in having Buffett sticking around.

The influential *Economist* doesn’t think so. It ran a “Time’s Up” editorial in its May 8 issue calling for the Oracle of Omaha to “look for the future and step aside at BH.”

Buffett “may want to die at his desk, but the longer he stays, the more he risks becoming a liability,” [noted the magazine](#).

The media are playing hardball with president Joe Biden, according to an April 28 Pew Research Center report.

Nearly a third (32 percent) of Biden’s coverage had a negative tone, while 23 percent had a positive one. Forty-five percent were neutral.

The public’s sense of Biden’s coverage differed from Pew’s content analysis study. Almost half (46 percent) of Americans say coverage of Biden has been mostly positive. Thirty-nine percent rate coverage as mixed and 14 percent believe it has been mostly negative.

Pew found Biden’s coverage was framed largely around his policy agenda and ideology (65 percent), rather than character and leadership (35 percent).

That’s the opposite of how the media dealt with president Donald Trump. Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of Trump’s coverage focused on character and leadership and only 26 percent on policy agenda and ideology.

Pew also asked respondents if the priorities of the Biden

administration are getting too much, too little or the right amount of coverage.

A majority (58 percent) of Americans said COVID-19 coverage got the right amount of information, while racial inequity was getting too much coverage (38 percent).

If you think American politics is best practiced in a steel cage in which Democrats and Republicans battle things out, you ain’t seen nothing yet.

Things are going to get worse, according to a poll released April 27 by Public Agenda, which is dedicated to creating a more inclusive and informed US democracy.

The survey found that Democrats and Republicans agree on only one thing these days: divisiveness and the ensuing gridlock is a major problem facing the nation.

Few expect things to get better anytime soon. Forty-four percent of the poll’s respondents expect more divisiveness over the next decade, while 28 percent see more unity ahead.

What to do about divisiveness? Empowering ordinary people may help fix the problem. Eighty-four percent agree that “giving people a greater voice in the decisions that affect their lives” would reduce divisiveness.

The poll also found a link between the economy and divisiveness. More than three-in-four (77 percent) Americans believe the economy is rigged to benefit the rich and powerful. That view is shared by 88 percent of Democrats and 61 percent of Republicans.

A significant majority (83 percent) say that “improving economic opportunity and security for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, or where they live, would be an effective way to cut destructive disagreements and divisiveness.”

That sentiment is held by Democrats (91 percent), Independents (88 percent), Apoliticals (77 percent) and Republicans (75 percent).

For a guy who graduated from Princeton and Harvard Law, Rafael Edward Cruz is not such a smart fellow.

In his April 28 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece in which he took on “watch-me-woke-it-up CEOs” for opposing Georgia’s racist election laws, the Texas Senator admitted the Republican party is a cesspool of corruption and in the bag of Big Business.

Republicans fight tooth and nail against corporate tax hikes, defending Big Business as job creators, wrote Cancun Cruz.

No mas, warned Texas Ted.

“This time, we won’t look the other way on Coca-Cola’s \$12B in back taxes owed. This time, when Major League Baseball lobbies to preserve its multibillion-dollar antitrust exemption, we will say no thank you. This time, when Boeing asks for billions in corporate welfare, we’ll simply let the Export-Import Bank expire.”

Ted says he has sworn off corporate political action committee cash and wants his GOP colleagues to join him in cleaning up Capitol Hill corruption.

Sleazy Ted wants to remake himself as honest Ted.

More likely, phony Ted wants to lead the GOP fight against what it views as political correctness. —Kevin McCauley