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O'Dwyer's

The Inside News of **Public Relations**
& **Marketing Communications** odwyerpr.com

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April 8, 2024 Vol. 57 No. 15

NYS AIDS INSTITUTE SEEKS SOCIAL MEDIA FIRM

The New York State Dept. of Health AIDS Institute is looking for a firm to run a social media campaign to educate people about the syndemics of HIV, hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections.



Another goal: promoting the health of people who use drugs, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender/gender non-conforming individuals.

The RFP notes that many people turn to the internet and social media for health information.

AI wants messaging on HIV, STIs, HCV, sexual health and LGBTGNC health and drug use, which is only effective if it is culturally relevant to priority populations.

The social media content must be capable of being integrated into the DOH.gov website.

The AI has budgeted up to \$120K annually for a five-year campaign.

Responses, due April 17, go to: Michele Kerwin, Assistant Director; New York State Dept. of Health; Office of Administration and Contract Management; AIDS Institute; Empire State Plaza, Corning Tower, Room 359; Albany, NY 12237.

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

INTEL'S ANDERSON TAKES BURSON TECH POST

Laura Anderson, who rose to VP/GM of global communications and events in a nearly 20-year stint at Intel, will take on the Americas technology chair at Burson following the completion of the BCW and H+K merger on July 1. She will join BCW on April 22.

At Intel, Anderson oversaw strategy, content, analyst relations and positioning the company beyond its PC orientation.



Laura Anderson

She also spent two years at DeepMind AI organization as senior communications advisor and acting head of communications.

Anderson was in charge of PR strategy, reputation management and advancing DeepMind's efforts in the life sciences, mathematics, fusion and scientific fields.

Kristine Boyden, Americas CEO of BCW, said Anderson's "expertise in guiding tech brands to overcome issues, realize radical goals and build reputational currency will be enormously valuable for our technology clients."

She will have the same title at Burson, a WPP unit.

KO MERGES WITH SANDY HILLMAN COMMS

KO Public Affairs, a public affairs and government relations firm, merges with Sandy Hillman Communications, a full-service public relations and consumer marketing firm.

The combination of the two Baltimore-based agencies expands KO's footprint beyond public affairs into consumer marketing. The combined

firm will be managed by

KO managing partner and co-founder Steve Kearney. KO partner Rick Abbruzzese will oversee the integration of the firms with Elisabeth Feldman, who was an SVP at Sandy Hillman, serving as head of the consumer marketing and public relations division within the combined firm.

"This merger combines KO's local and regional expertise with Hillman's national footprint," said Hillman. "We are seeing a growing number of businesses and non-profits needing a combination of consumer outreach and public affairs counsel. This merger provides that full complement of strategic communications services."



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SIGNS MONTIETH & CO.

The Dominican Republic's Ministry of Tourism has signed on [Montieth & Co.](#) for strategic communications and media relations.

The Caribbean nation shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, which has descended into anarchy. Gang leader Jimmy "Barbecue" Chérizier controls Haiti's capital of Port-au-Prince.

In response to the Haitian chaos, the DR is speeding up construction of a 250-mile 12-foot-high border wall between the two countries.

M&C's pact also calls for monitoring media coverage and social posts related to the Ministry.

The firm received an initial \$100K retainer, which covers work through June. It also got a \$50K "project fee" for paid media planning and management for three months.

M&C's DR team includes Montieth Illingworth, CEO; Perry Goldman, senior director; Ioana Veleanu Botzoman, senior manager; and Carla Fortuna, senior associate.



CALOPTIMA HEALTH SEEKS PR SUPPORT

CalOptima Health, which is the largest health insurer in Orange County, plans to hire one or more firms for strategic communications services to handle messaging, branding and stakeholder engagement work.



CalOptima Health

The insurer wants proactive media relations outreach that earns coverage of its activities, achievements and initiatives.

That effort includes making media pitches, facilitating interviews and drafting press releases, articles, quotes, op-eds and blog posts. Crisis communications is another priority.

The selected shop(s) will monitor emerging issues relevant to CalOptima, locally, statewide and nationwide and proactively address them to mitigate reputational risks.

Proposals for the two-year contract are due April 11 at the BidSync electronic portal.

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

BRUNSWICK REPS ENDEAVOR IN \$13B DEAL

Brunswick Group represents Endeavor Group Holdings as it agrees to go private via its acquisition by Silver Lake technology investment firm.

The \$13B deal ranks as the largest privatization transaction in the media and entertainment sector.

Since 2012, Silver Lake has had a strategic partnership with Endeavor. Ari Emanuel, CEO of Endeavor, credits that relationship with powering his firm's performance in the media and entertainment space.



Ari Emanuel

Endeavor's properties include the 160over90 marketing shop.

Brunswick partners Jonathan Doorley and Matt Levine represent Endeavor.

The "critical issues" advisory has long ties with Endeavor, working its IPO and the 2023 merger of its UFC brand with World Wrestling Entertainment.

Edelman Smithfield's Jennifer Stroud handles Silver Lake, which has \$102B in assets under management.

WE AND ROKK SOLUTIONS FORM AI VENTURE

WE Communications has partnered with ROKK Solutions to form the WE ROKK AI service.

The offering marries WE's technology expertise with ROKK's policy communications savvy.

Rodell Mollineau, ROKK co-founder, said the partnership with WE will help clients understand how to navigate AI policy. He credited WE for already leading the charge on AI-led storytelling.

WE ROKK AI



WE ROKK AI offers landscape analysis, message development, strategic communications, internal communications and crisis mitigation services.

Kisja Burgess, WE's president of corporate affairs, said her firm and ROKK will guide companies to advocate for AI policy and communicate about responsible AI use.

She said technology companies and DC legislators need to come together to build AI legislation that will have an impact and fuel innovation ethically and responsibly.

ON THE MOVE

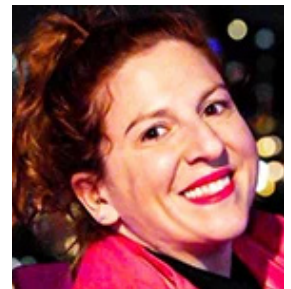
Vail Resorts names **Courtney Goldstein** as EVP and CMO, effective April 29. Goldstein comes to Vail Resorts from Comcast, where she spent over a decade, most recently serving as SVP, consumer marketing. Before that, she held a range of executive posts at American Express, including VP, consumer card acquisition & customer marketing strategy. At Vail Resorts, Goldstein will lead the business, data and analytics, and digital experience for the company's Epic Pass subscription model in addition to marketing for its portfolio of destinations, the company's new My Epic Gear membership business, and its rental, retail, and ski and ride school businesses. "Courtney has a proven track record of growing subscription business models by leveraging data and technology," said Vail Resorts CEO Kirsten Lynch.



Courtney Goldstein

The Harkey Group, a Phoenix-based holding company of agencies, promotes **Meagan Jackman** to president. Jackman previously served as president of O.H. Partners, one of the company's portfolio of agencies, as well as CMO of the holding company. Before joining O.H., she ran her own agency, Jackman Group Marketing & Communications. In her new role, Jackman will oversee The Harkey Group's five agencies and identify acquisitions and other expansion opportunities. "Meagan's exceptional leadership and strategic acumen have been invaluable to the success of our holding company," said The Harkey Group founder and CEO Scott Harkey. Succeeding Jackman as O.H. Partners president is The Harkey Group COO Todd Sommers, who before coming to the company in 2023 was managing director, integrated marketing at Allison.

Madden Media, a destination marketing agency, expands its PR division with the addition of **Lauren Wire** as senior associate director of PR. Wire was most recently an associate VP at Finn Partners, helping lead media relations efforts for large statewide accounts, hotel brands and international clients. She previously worked at MMGY Global and Formula Public Relations. In her new post, Wire will focus on client strategy and relationships, guiding Madden's roster and helping to grow the agency's portfolio. "Lauren offers a wealth of knowledge in the travel and tourism PR sector," said Madden Media PR director Brianna Francis.



Lauren Wire

Matters of State Strategies, a Scottsdale, AZ-based firm that specializes in strategic communications, government affairs and political campaign management, brings on former vice-chairman of the Arizona Democratic Party **Matt Capalby** as VP of government affairs. In addition to having been involved in numerous municipal, state and federal campaigns, Capalby served in former Arizona Governor Napolitano's administration, as the Northern Arizona regional director for the Department of Environmental Quality and a policy advisor. He has extensive experience on issues relating to state legislative affairs, economic development, natural resource management, land use and regulatory issues.

APPLYING ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE TO PR

Public relations firms are increasingly occupying an important seat at the table when their clients confront a crisis of one type or another. The 24-hour news cycle and the constant



(L to R) Daniel Finnegan, Jennifer Klausner & Michael Lasky

availability of “trending” information on social media have only exacerbated the need for effective strategic communications. Crisis work regularly involves legal issues and legal advice.

PR firms need to be mindful of ways their work product may be protected by the attorney-client privilege whenever working with a client’s internal legal team or its external legal counsel.

The attorney-client privilege protects communications between clients and their attorneys which relate to the provision of legal advice. Ordinarily, the presence of a third party other than the attorney and client (such as a PR firm) on a communication will “break” or “waive” the privilege. There are, however, three exceptions that may apply. These are:

1. The exception for aiding in legal strategy, which applies when a PR firm is needed to help provide legal advice or achieve a circumscribed legal or litigation goal;

2. The “functional equivalent” exception, which applies when the employees of the PR firm are considered by a court to be the “functional equivalent” of employees of the client; or

3. The “translator” exception, which applies when the PR firm is necessary to facilitate or interpret communications between an attorney and the client.

A recent court decision illustrates how these rules are applied to potentially extend the attorney-client privilege to PR professionals. In *In re Roman Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of New Orleans*, the Catholic Archdiocese of New Orleans retained legal counsel to represent the Archdiocese in advance of a bankruptcy filing. Before the Archdiocese filed for bankruptcy, the bankruptcy counsel retained a PR firm. The engagement letter stated that the PR firm’s purpose was to be the “sole provider of public relations and crisis communication counsel for the Archdiocese regarding its potential restructuring.” In the litigation following the bankruptcy filing, a dispute emerged over whether certain communications involving the PR firm were privileged, or whether they had to be produced in the litigation. The Archdiocese took the position that these communications were protected by the attorney-client privilege. The court disagreed and ordered the communications with the PR firm to be produced in the litigation.

The court reached this conclusion because it found that the PR firm was working solely to craft responses to media inquiries, and not to aid legal counsel with the legal advice it provided to the Archdiocese.

Steps That a Proactive PR Firm Can Take to Protect the Attorney-Client Privilege

The Archdiocese of New Orleans decision illustrates that courts will strictly scrutinize claims of attorney-client privilege involving PR firms. This means that everyone involved in a crisis situation or a legal matter needs to take proactive steps to protect the attorney-client privilege. It is usually an uphill battle to keep communications involving a PR firm privileged because courts tend to narrowly construe the exceptions to attorney-client privilege waiver. Therefore, it is

important to take each one of the six steps outlined below:

1. PR Firms Should Contract Directly with the Attorney: PR firms should be engaged directly by the client’s attorney, not the client. The PR firm should send its invoices to the attorney, even if the fees are ultimately passed on to their joint client. The invoices should specifically describe how the PR firm’s work helps the attorney to provide legal advice.

2. Describe the Engagement as Legal in Nature: The engagement agreement should describe the PR firm’s work as aiding in legal strategy and services.

3. Always Copy Attorneys: PR firms should copy their client’s legal counsel on all communications involving potential legal matters. Not including the bankruptcy attorneys on the relevant communications in the Archdiocese of New Orleans decision was an important fact relied upon by the court in denying protection of the privilege.

4. Clearly Mark Communications: Legal communications should be clearly marked as protected by the attorney-client privilege.

5. Always Keep Communications Confidential: In particular, the PR firm should never share these communications with any third parties.

6. Always Keep Legal Work Separate: The PR firm should keep legal-related PR work separate from any other PR work it performs for the client. If the legal-related work is intermingled with non-legal work, a court is more likely to find that none of the work is legal.

When a PR firm is contacted to assist with a potential legal matter, the firm should promptly raise the issue of attorney-client privilege and discuss the best steps to protect the privilege. Raising this issue proactively will also demonstrate a PR firm’s experience, expertise and value.

Michael Lasky is founder and chair of the [Davis+Gilbert’s Public Relations Law Practice](#) and co-chair of its [Litigation + Dispute Resolution Practice](#) (mlasky@dglaw.com). Jennifer Klausner is a partner in the [Davis+Gilbert’s Litigation + Dispute Resolution Practice](#) (jklausner@dglaw.com). Daniel Finnegan is an associate in the [Davis+Gilbert’s Litigation + Dispute Resolution Practice](#) (dfinnegan@dglaw.com).

SANTA CLARA SEEKS PR FOR HMO

Santa Clara, which is California’s sixth largest county, is looking for a firm to handle marketing communications for its health maintenance organization.

The partner will propose an initial and ongoing communication strategy for the Valley Health Plan, including market segmentation and targeted marketing strategies, media strategy, and package marketing VHP to individuals, brokers, providers, stakeholders, community/social service organizations, and acquiring new targeted member populations, according to the RFP.

VHP’s target audiences speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, and Farsi.

Santa Clara prefers a firm to have experience in healthcare, but will consider firms with other relevant experience.

The County plans to award a three-year contract with options to renew for two additional one-year periods.

Responses are due April 12 at the [Periscope electronic portal](#).

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



CARLSBAD WANTS GOV RELATIONS PARTNER

Carlsbad, a San Diego County city of 115K people, is looking for a firm to provide government relations and Sacramento lobbying services.



The city features a great climate, beautiful beaches, lagoons, good schools, many family attractions, and abundant open spaces.

The selected firm will advise the city on state legislative, budgetary and intergovernmental matters that could have a significant impact on its fiscal, operational and environmental health, and the overall quality of life enjoyed by residents and stakeholders.

The firm will facilitate meetings, prepare briefing papers and talking points, present testimony, draft letters, and foster direct communication with Carlsbad officials.

Carlsbad wants a government relations shop that is experienced in serving the legislative needs of coastal cities.

Responses are due April 15. They go to [Carlsbad's electronic portal](#).

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

INIZIO EVOKE HIRES SOMMA DISALVO AS CSO

Inizio Evoke, a health marketing, communications and transformation platform, appoints Daryl Somma DiSalvo as chief strategy officer.



Daryl Somma DiSalvo

She joins Inizio Evoke from McCann Health New York, where she also served as CSO. Before coming to McCann in 2018, she held strategic posts at CDM New York and Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising.

At Inizio Evoke, DiSalvo will lead the practice across the agency platform's brand and creative business, overseeing the development of client brand strategies and elevating the global strategy practice.

"Daryl's track record of creating winning strategies for many of the world's highest-profile brands is unmatched," said Inizio Evoke CEO & founder Reid Connolly.

FREEDOM SOLAR PLUGS INTO F/W/V

Freedom Solar Power has handed PR and social media AOR duties to [French/West/Vaughan](#) as the Austin-based renewable energy company expands its footprint across the US.



Founded in 2017 by Adrian Buck, Freedom Solar has more than 600 employees and chalked up \$255M in residential and commercial revenue in 2022. Buck holds the chief installation officer title at the company.

Raleigh-based F/W/V represented Freedom Solar when it moved into the North Carolina market (Charlotte and Triangle). It will now support Freedom Solar's national push from its offices in Denver and Colorado Springs; Orlando and Tampa; Norfolk; and Dallas, Houston and San Antonio.

[F/W/V ranks No. 18 on O'Dwyer's Rankings](#) of Independent PR Firms. It posted \$40M in fee income in 2023, which was up 7 percent from 2022.

TRUMP MEDIA SUFFERS \$58M '23 LOSS

Trump Media & Technology Group reported a \$58.2M net loss on \$4.1M in 2023 revenues, a disclosure that drove its stock price down 22.6 percent to \$47.96.

The owner of the Truth Social site "expects to continue to incur operating losses and negative cash flows from operating activities for the foreseeable future, as it works to expand its user base, attracting more platform partners and advertisers," according to its SEC filing made April 1.

TMTG, which "aspires to build a media and technology powerhouse to rival the liberal media consortium and promote free expression" does not rely on any specific key performance metric to make business or operating decisions.

While Facebook, Google and X gather and analyze certain metrics, TMTG's management believes due to the early development stage of the Truth Social platform, such metrics are not critical in the near future of the business.



EX-AMBASSADOR SONDLAND REPS UKRAINE

Gordon Sondland, who was US ambassador to the European Union under Donald Trump, registered as a representative of Ukraine's cabinet and ministers on March 21.

His job is to meet with members of Congress, European Bank and top Ukrainian officials to secure funding for its war with Russia.

Sondland also will visit front-line Ukrainian troops to build support for the military, according to his Justice Dept. filing.

He does not have a formal contract for the advocacy work and he is working as a volunteer.

Sondland, who is founder and chairman of Provenance Hotels, famously testified against Trump during his first impeachment proceedings.

He claimed that Trump pressured Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate the Biden family's business dealings in his country in return for a White House meeting.

After he refused to resign, Trump fired Sondland.



Gordon Sondland

COZEN O'CONNOR RECRUITS HINTON

Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies, the government and public affairs affiliate of law firm Cozen O'Connor, brings on Tamara Hinton as senior principal to lead its strategic communications practice, based in its Washington, DC office.

Hinton was most recently SVP at DC-based public affairs agency Story Partners. She was previously founder and chief strategist at Comunicado PR and served as communications director for the chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, Rep. Frank Lucas, and his predecessor, Rep. Bob Goodlatte.

"This is a team that understands smart, effective communications is essential for protecting a company's reputation, advancing legislative priorities, and shaping the policy and regulatory landscape," said Hinton.



Tamara Hinton

FINN FILES \$240K BAHAMAS TOURISM PACT

[Finn Partners](#) has filed its six-month contract with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, Investments & Aviation that went into effect Dec. 1, 2023.



It carries a \$40K monthly retainer to boost brand reputation and to promote tourism from the US.

The scope of work covers strategic counsel and leadership, proactive & aggressive media outreach, on-site staffing for events, executive

media training, influencer relations and crisis communications. Virginia Sheridan, Finn's managing partner, handles the Bahamas account.

The firm works with Ministry officials including Latia Duncombe, director general; Valery Brown-Alce, senior director of marketing; Paul Strachan, director of global communications; and Anita Johnson-Patty, general manager US communications.

The contract includes a five percent mandatory charge for fees labeled as database and subscription services.

It cites Cision, Lexis Nexis, and Muck Rack.

PALLADINO TO LEAD NEW RACEPOINT UNIT

Racepoint Global brings on Amy Palladino to oversee its newly launched RPG Prism employee communications and change management services as EVP, strategic services.

Palladino joins RPG from management consulting company Gartner, where she served as VP, communications-re-



Amy Palladino

search & advisory. She was previously managing director, people & change at FTI Consulting and senior director of corporate communications at Heineken.

In her new role, Palladino will work to help C-suite executives, human resources and communications leaders handle a rapidly changing workplace.

"Amy Palladino is an accomplished communications practitioner who has partnered with some of the world's most recognized brands," said RPG president Bob Osmond.

C STREET HANDLES SFC CHAPTER 11 FILING

C Street Advisory Group is working the Chapter 11 filing of Shoes For Crews, Boca Raton, FL-based maker of slip-resistant private label footwear brands for workplaces.



The financial restructuring is expected to lead to the auction of SFC, which produces shoes for New Balance, MOZO, Puma Safety, DeWalt, Ace and Cole Haan, serving the healthcare, hospitality, foodservice, educational and industrial sectors.

CEO Donald Watros said Chapter 11 will help the company get its balance sheet in order.

With the support of new ownership, Watros said SFC will continue its mission of creating a safer workplace by developing footwear "to bring every employee home safely."

SFC founder Stan Smith launched the company in 1984 after he noticed a rise in workplace injuries caused by slips and falls.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

C8 Consulting, which works with "disruptive-tech" companies, is selected to work on delivering a media relations program for **VertiGIS**, a company that develops software solutions and services that enable professionals in the utilities, public sector, telecommunications and infrastructure sectors to connect their business processes with spatial management technology.

C8 will focus on securing editorial placements that resonate with audiences in global, national and trade publications. The goal is to position VertiGIS and its key spokespeople—including London-based CEO Andy Berry—as experts in geographic information systems. Since VertiGIS was acquired by Battery Ventures in 2017 the company has made 10 acquisitions in North America and Europe.

LDPR, a travel and lifestyle PR firm, checks in with **Cayo Levantado**, the Dominican Republic's first all-inclusive luxury wellness resort, and **Sonesta Hotels of New York**. The agency's work for the clients will include media relations, social media/influencer marketing, and collaborative brand partnerships. Cayo Levantado, which opened on a private island off the coast of Samaná in June 2023, features 218 guest rooms and villas, Sonesta Hotels of New York is a collection of four New York City hotels: The Benjamin Royal Sonesta, The Shelburne Sonesta, The Fifty Sonesta Select and The Gardens Sonesta ES Suites.

CIIC PR launches a partnership with **Mondrian Mexico City Condesa**. In addition to working to effectively position the property in the U.S. and Mexican markets, CIIC will manage the Mondrian Mexico City Condesa's social media presence. The recently renovated hotel is located between Mexico City's La Roma and La Condesa neighborhoods. "This partnership marks a significant milestone for our Miami office as we continue to expand our footprint in Mexico," said CIIC PR vice president Amy Sedeño.

IMAGINE PR is named the public relations representative for **W Algarve**, a luxury hotel located in the coastal town of Albufeira in Southern Portugal. The agency will be providing integrated public relations and brand partnerships, among other services.

Specific areas include: strategic communications counsel, media relations and influencer connections, as well as media familiarization trips. Home to 134 hotel rooms and suites plus 83 residences, W Algarve also boasts six unique dining experiences and wellness services.

Walt & Company, a tech PR and social media agency, is selected as PR agency of record by maps and location platform **Mapbox**. The agency will operate as an extension of the Mapbox marketing team, developing and implementing strategic communications to drive brand recognition, manage technology launches and ongoing company news announcements, and drive thought leadership and customer/partner success initiatives. Mapbox solutions are used by companies such as BMW and Toyota in the automotive space, AccuWeather and The Weather Company in the weather monitoring space and Instacart in the on-demand logistics market.



COMMENTARY

Biden stiff press, kowtows to Netanyahu... White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said it's "concerning" that



Benjamin Netanyahu

Israel wants to boot Al Jazeera satellite TV network from the country because it dislikes its coverage of the destruction of Gaza.

That's bunk. What's concerning is the lack of US action in support of a free press and its ability of journalists to do their job in covering the Israel/Hamas war.

Israel's Knesset passed a bill allowing for the temporary shutdown of foreign media deemed to be a threat to national security.

Al Jazeera has provided tough coverage of the carnage in Gaza, which hardly presents Israel in a good light.

So how does Israel respond? It attacks the messenger.

Israel prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called Al-Jazeera a "terrorist channel" and accused it of participating in the October 7 attack on Israel.

The Committee to Protect Journalists has blasted Israel's crackdown on foreign media as a threat to all international media operating in Israel.

CPJ says 95 journalists have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank since the beginning of the Israel/Hamas war.

"Concerning" is the best the Biden administration can do.

That's pathetic and lets Israel off the hook. When does the US stand up to Netanyahu?

The embattled Israeli prime minister claims the horrific attack that killed seven members of World Central Kitchen on April 1 was a "tragic case of our forces unintentionally hitting innocent people."

There's no question about it being a tragedy, but it's hard to swallow the line about the slaughter being unintentional.

Netanyahu is responsible for the deaths of at least 25K Palestinian women and children since Israel invaded Gaza.

The vast majority of those victims were as innocent as the Polish, British, Palestinian, Australian and American/Canadian relief workers delivering food to people starving in Gaza.

They are starving because of the famine conditions that were triggered by Netanyahu's blockade of food shipments to the people of Gaza. WCK has now suspended operations in Gaza. Bibi chalks up another victory in his famine strategy.

Hope returns... Former White House comms director Hope Hicks is expected to testify at Trump's criminal trial alleging the payment of hush money to actress Stormy Daniels.

Hicks was press secretary for Trump's 2016 presidential campaign when the news broke about Trump fixer Michael Cohen's payment to the porn star to buy her silence about an affair with his boss.

Hicks has already testified to a grand jury probe into Trump's interference in the 2020 election.

Jury selection for the hush money trial will begin April 15.

Hicks, Cohen and Daniels rank among the star witnesses for the high-profile case.

Musk Matters... Trump Media and Technology Group, which claims its Truth Social platform is a godsend for Americans looking to freely express themselves without fear of Big Tech censorship, is wary of moves made by Elon Musk's X, the former Twitter.

It notes that X had long suppressed conservative speech (including at the behest of US government officials) through such means as "shadow banning"—a surreptitious process in which users may not even know their posts are being hidden from other users, according to TMTG's Form 10K.

Under Elon Musk's private ownership, TMTG sees X going after its target audience. "Failure to attract a sufficient user base would adversely affect TMTG's business prospects," TMTG said.

DEI Flunks Out at UT... The University of Texas has laid off about 60 people who worked in diversity, equity and inclusion-related fields.

The terminations will occur over the next 90 days, according to the *Austin American-Statesman*.

UT is closing its division of campus and community engagement. University president Jay Hartzell said the funding for DEI initiatives will now be diverted to support teaching and research.

Texas has passed one of the toughest anti-DEI laws in the country as part of governor Greg Abbott's "war of woke ideology."

Our own worst enemy. Five percent of Americans view the US as this country's greatest enemy, according to Gallup.

That the highest percentage since Gallup first asked the question in 2001, and up from one percent last year.

Two percent of Republicans and one percent of Democrats view the US as its own enemy.

For the fourth consecutive year, China ranked as the No. 1 foe, cited by 41 percent of respondents. That is an improvement from the 50 percent score in 2023.

More than two-thirds (67 percent) of Republicans, 40 percent of Independents and 18 percent of Democrats view China as the top enemy. The numbers flip when it comes to Russia. More than a quarter (26 percent) call it the No. 1 enemy, down from 32 percent in 2023.

Ukraine and Israel appear on the 2024 enemy list, but not the 2023 survey. Each chalked up a two percent rating.

Iraq (at one percent) also made the 2024 ranking.

—Kevin McCauley

