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Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's Newsletter



The Inside News of
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HOTEL BRAND LOOKING FOR PR SERVICES

Luxury hotel company 1 Hotels is seeking proposals from full-service communications agencies that can develop and execute a comprehensive PR plan.



The company's first property, 1 Hotel West Hollywood on Sunset Boulevard, debuted in July 2019. Additional hotels have since opened in New York, Miami Beach and China's Hainan Island. The hotel brand is managed by SH Hotels & Resorts, an affiliate of global private investment firm Starwood Capital Group.

1 Hotels wants an agency with experience working with luxury and lifestyle brands to manage PR strategy. Scope of the work includes coordinating media coverage; supervising the creation and issuance of press releases, pitch letters and media alerts; providing media interview preparation; coordinating and supervising contractor activities; and writing biographies and company backgrounders.

Terms of the contract call for a year-long retainer, with the option to renew if mutually agreed.

Deadline for proposals is Friday, Feb. 14. Proposals should be sent to corporate director of marketing Jackie Schwartz, jschwartz@shhotelsandresorts.com.

Subject line for all proposals should be clearly marked "RFP-1WHPublicRelations."

Questions should be directed to Schwartz by Feb. 7. [Download the RFP \(PDF\)](#).

RUBENSTEIN'S SCHROEDER TO 42WEST

Katie Schroeder has exited Rubenstein after a 13-year run for entertainment powerhouse 42 West.

As executive VP in the strategic communications unit, she reports to Susie Arons, who heads that group.

Schroeder has worked with such Rubenstein clients such as Viacom, Target, Amazon, Universal Music Group, Netflix, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, YouTube and Robin Hood Foundation.

Prior to Rubenstein, she spent nine years at Radio City Entertainment/Madison Square Garden, where as PR director she handled national publicity tours for the Radio City

Rockettes, press relations for "A Christmas Carol" at the Theater at Madison Square Garden and more than 350 events.

Earlier, she worked at Wenner Media, doing publicity for *Rolling Stone*, *Us Magazine* and *Men's Journal*.

Schroeder is based in 42 West's New York office.



CUNNINGHAM TO EXIT SKDKNICKERBOCKER

Jennifer Cunningham, one of the most powerful women in New York politics, is exiting SKDKnickerbocker in March to travel and explore new challenges, according to an email sent to staffers.

The SKDKnick partner is former political director of the powerful 1199SEIU union and a long-time friend of Governor Andrew Cuomo.

She handled Cuomo's first run for governor and the successful 2011 bid to legalize same-sex marriage in the Empire State.

City & State NY ranked Cunningham and then-SKDKnick partner Josh Isay No. 1 in its inaugural Political PR Power 50 list released Jan. 13. It lauded Cunningham as "one of New York's savviest communications strategists."

SKDKnick elevated Isay, who was campaign manager for New York Senator Chuck Schumer, to CEO on Jan. 16 and named five new partners.

Mark Penn's Stagwell Group owns SKDKnick.



Jennifer
Cunningham

EX-TRUMP AIDE TO SQUIRE UKRAINE GROUP

Zeppelin Communications managing director Michael Caputo has signed on to help organize a working visit to Washington in March for a delegation of 10 to 15 Ukrainian political campaign pros to meet with US Senators, Congressmen and members of the Trump administration.

The group is part of the Institute for Democracy and Development, a non-government organization that says it wants to promote democracy and civil society in Ukraine.

Zeppelin, which is based in East Aurora, New York, began its work on Jan. 13 and will continue to represent the Institute through April 30.

It will receive \$1 from the Institute and all reasonable expenses, according of its representation agreement.

Caputo is a long-time Republican operative who served in the Reagan administration as an aide to Oliver North and was director of media services for George Bush I's 1992 presidential campaign.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, he moved to Russia and as a staffer for the US Agency for International Development advised Boris Yeltsin's president run.

Caputo, who led Trump's GOP primary campaign in New York State, is the author of "The Ukraine Hoax: How Decades of Corruption in the Former Soviet Republic Led to Trump's Phony Impeachment."

BOJO AIDE BOUNCES TO H+K

Geraint Evans, who was an advisor to now UK prime minister Boris Johnson, has joined Hill+Knowlton Strategies as strategy director of public affairs in London.



Geraint Evans

As advisor to Johnson, Evans was responsible for the "leveling up" campaign designed to lure Labour party voters in northern England and the Midlands with the promise of investment in those struggling regions.

Evans also served under Conservative party PMs David Cameron and Theresa May. He counseled them in the areas of infrastructure, transportation and energy.

Simon Whitehead, H+K UK CEO, said Evans' understanding of the inner workings of the government will guide clients as they work to help Britain tackle its need to modernize in the post-Brexit era.

TIKTOK TAKES INTERNET ASSN.'S BECKERMAN

Internet Association CEO Michael Beckerman is leaving his post at the trade group to join TikTok social media platform on Feb. 29.

He'll be VP in charge of US public policy, a TikTok spokesperson told O'Dwyer's.

US lawmakers believe TikTok, which is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance, poses a threat to national security. Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) fear that TikTok may be used by China's government, as a tool of espionage and for spreading propaganda.

ByteDance spent \$270K in lobbying during the second-half of 2019 on issues related to Internet technology and learning-enable content platforms.

Beckerman has served as IA CEO since its founding in 2012. General counsel Jon Berroya will slide into the interim president/CEO slot on March 1.

BRUNSWICK REPS NAVISTAR IN VW BID

Germany's Volkswagen is offering \$2.9B to acquire Navistar, maker of the International brand of commercial trucks and buses, based in Lisle, IL

Navistar, which has about 15 percent of the US heavy-duty truck market, confirmed receipt of the \$35 per-share offer from Volkswagen's Traton truck unit and promised to take it under consideration.

Brunswick Group's Kate Beers is working the media for the truckmaker.

Traton already owns a 17 percent stake in Navistar.

It says Navistar's strength in the North American market combined with its leading positions in South America and Europe "would create a leader with global reach and complementary capabilities."

Navistar posted a 9.7 percent rise in fiscal 2019 (ended Oct. 31) revenues to \$11.3B. Net income fell 35.3 percent to \$221M due to a slump in demand.]

The company, formerly known as International Harvester, traces its heritage to Cyrus McCormick's invention of the mechanical reaper.



ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

MWWPR has been selected to lead an integrated corporate reputation program for Virginia-based **Smithfield Foods**. The agency has assembled an integrated team to support the company's corporate affairs strategy. Its services include corporate positioning, executive visibility, issues/crisis management, CSR and sustainability. MWWPR will also provide social, digital, content and creative services, as well as overseeing employee communications and community relations. China's WH Group bought Smithfield for \$4.7B in 2013.

Vanessa Menkes Communications and **LFB Media Group** have announced their joint representation of **The Savoy Hotel – Miami Beach**.

Vanessa Menkes Communications will oversee the hotel's renovation launch strategy and all media relations in the Florida market. LFB Media Group will manage national media relations and strategies across travel, design/interiors, hotel trade, lifestyle and business media.

HKA Marketing Communications is representing **Doug Finke**, publisher of the Quantum Computing Report, a global resource site for the quantum computing industry. HKA will conduct media relations on Finke's behalf, promoting him as a recognized global authority in the field. The agency will also work to publicize his speaking engagements and offer strategies on website design, SEO and social media.

Robertson Solutions and **Advocate Travel Marketing** have been selected as North American firms for **Brisbane Marketing**. The agencies will be part of a global marketing effort to grow awareness of and visitation to Brisbane, Australia. They will work with the Brisbane Airport Corporation to promote \$12B in new tourism and transport projects.

Version 2.0 Communications is now working with AI-powered patient management platform **Current Health** and **Masabi**, which empowers public transit agencies to quickly and cost-effectively bring the latest "tap and ride" technology to riders. V2 is charged with building the U.S. brand profile for both clients.

The Pollack PR Marketing Group has added **The BARR Center** (Building Assets, Reducing Risks), which aims to help schools meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students, to its client roster. The agency will work to raise awareness of BARR's data-driven, personalized and supportive approach to education.

Hemsworth Communications has been retained as agency of record for **Discover Dunwoody**, the destination marketing organization for Dunwoody, GA. Hemsworth will develop and execute a two-tier strategic annual plan to support the destination's leisure tourism and economic development divisions. Located 10 miles north of Atlanta, Dunwoody is near key Georgia tourist attractions, events, and festivals. The city also has more than eight million square feet of office space.



COMMUNICATING AMID CORONAVIRUS FEARS

As the global tourism industry gears up for the inevitable coronavirus (2019-nCoV) contagion in new markets, it's worth noting that the outbreak poses industry risk well beyond the reality of the health hazards involved. The greater threat—the one that's driving elections, impacting industry and, in recent cases, decimating destinations—is our collective psychology of irrational fear.

Consider that, while the coronavirus is serious, it doesn't appear to be nearly as deadly as MERS (with a 34 percent mortality rate) or SARS (with a 10 percent mortality rate). In fact, some scientists are warning that the greater concern this time of year should be the flu, which has killed 8,200 people and hospitalized 140,000 during this flu season alone, according to the CDC.

But why let facts and common sense stop a good social media-driven panic at this point?

In today's information cycle, it's never been truer that perception outplays reality. And no one, sadly, is



**Laura Guitar (left)
and Lisa Ross**

going to compel the masses by sharing scientific data points when alarm draws more attention.

For this reason, travel companies would be wise to align communications to traveler perceptions of the outbreak beyond just the facts of the situation. It's one thing to tell travelers in most of the Western world that they have little to worry about. It's another to do so when speaking to a population awash in ongoing cycles of click-bait headlines and misinformation.

Media outlets refer to the disease as a "never-before-seen strain" and a "mysterious new coronavirus," which are true but lack the context that the common cold is also a coronavirus. Outlets like the *New York Times* run alarmist headlines such as "What if We All Get Sick?"

Social media channels are scrambling to stop the spread of misinformation about the virus on their platforms, amounting to little more than a game of Whac-A-Mole. And the fact that the virus originated in China just compounds the issue. Unfounded rumors that the Chinese government started the virus, unverifiable user photos breaking through its Internet firewall and intentional fake news of a new hospital being built to treat the illness remain front-and-center online.

Which leaves the tourism industry with a question: how to communicate in an era of irrational fear? For example, if we really are more afraid of shark attacks than driving a car—and studies show we are—is it effective to explain how comparatively dangerous driving is? Or should we focus on everything being done to prevent shark attacks? In this case, does it work to put the coronavirus in its appropriate context at this point in time? Or should we treat it as the public believes it to be: a disease that's likely to impact me personally at any moment?

But we can't walk away from the facts: cars are more dangerous than sharks and people should focus on not catching the flu before losing sleep today over the new coronavirus. Yet, if our job is to deliver messages in

a way they are heard by all our stakeholders, that approach alone doesn't work.

Increasingly, issue management in the tourism industry means communicating beyond the facts to address paranoia at the level it manifests. This means speaking to all the quality systems, protocols and procedures we will employ to address an illness, in a way that is outsized to the risk factors at hand. It means that sharing our capacity to respond to a possibility that doesn't exist and may never manifest. It means meeting our stakeholders where they are, even if it's in a whirlwind of irrational fear.

Laura Guitar is Executive Vice President and Partner at rbb Communications. Lisa Ross is President of rbb Communications.

ADVANTAGES FOR CAUSE-DRIVEN COMPANIES

A growing percentage of consumers today are paying attention to companies' stances on social, environmental and political issues, according to a new report by consumer market research agency Horowitz Research.

The report found that six in 10 consumers today (60 percent) reported they make an active effort to understand the environmental, social and political stances of companies they do business with.

Nearly a quarter of consumers (22 percent) said they think companies should take a stand on sociopolitical issues, and one in four consumers (25 percent) also said they go out of their way to buy from companies that support the same causes they do.

An additional quarter of consumers (25 percent) admitted that they've boycotted a company or at least decreased the amount of business they do with it because they don't agree with that company's stances on a sociopolitical issue.

Not surprisingly, some of the greatest support for companies that stand for something comes among young consumers. More than a quarter (27 percent) of consumers between the ages of 18 to 34 think companies should take a stand on sociopolitical issues, compared to 22 percent of 35-49-year-olds and only 17 percent of those over 50.

More than two-thirds (67 percent) of consumers aged 18 to 49 said they actively try to understand the social, environmental and political stances of companies they do business with.

Hispanic, Black and LGBTQ consumers are also attracted to cause-driven messages that represents and welcomes them. About a third of Hispanic, Black and LGBTQ respondents want companies to take a stand on social issues. Additionally, 28 percent of Hispanic, 32 percent of Black and 38 percent of LGBTQ consumers said they go out of their way to purchase from companies that align with their beliefs and politics. And nearly two-thirds of Black (61 percent), Hispanic (61 percent) and LGBTQ (62 percent) consumers said it makes a positive impact on their decision to patronize a company when those companies embrace and support their communities.

Horowitz Research's "State of Consumer Engagement 2019" report surveyed 1,404 adult consumers online in September 2019.



GOOGLE HIT FOR CLIMATE DISINFORMATION

Congresswoman Kathy Castor wants Google CEO Sundar Pichai to “stop promoting climate denial and misinformation videos” on the company’s YouTube platform.



Kathy Castor

“I urge you to ensure that YouTube is not incentivizing climate misinformation content on its platform, or effectively giving free advertising to those who seek to protect polluters and their profits,” wrote Castor, chair of the House select committee on the climate crisis, in a Jan. 27 letter to Pichai.

Her letter follows a Jan. 16 report by Avaaz, online activist group, that charted YouTube recommendations to users searching “global warming,” “climate change,” and/or “climate manipulation.”

Avaaz found that 16 percent of the top 100 related videos for global warming contained misinformation.

The percentages were eight percent and 21 percent for climate change and manipulation, respectively.

The group found that YouTube advertisers including L’Oreal, Samsung, Danone, Greenpeace and Carrefour ran ads linked to the misinformation videos.

Castor said YouTube is “the most social platform in the US.” Three-of-four American adults watch videos on YouTube. Nine out of ten Americans under age 30 use it.

The Florida Democrat praised Google for “leading the fight against the climate crisis” and “displaying an important commitment to shifting the American American economy toward a clean energy future.”

She wants to hear from Pichai by Feb. 7 on his plan to remove climate denial videos from YouTube, stop monetizing misinformation material and correct the record for users exposed to bogus climate information.

RENTON RUNS OUT ECODEV. TOURISM RFP

The City of Renton, located 11 miles from downtown Seattle, wants a “world-class” and “cutting edge” digital marketing services firm to promote it as a destination for tourism, recreation, business opportunity and investment.



With a population of more than 100,000, Renton is a major manufacturing (Boeing, PACCAR, Mitsubishi Aircraft), healthcare (Providence Health System, Kaiser Permanente), shopping (IKEA, Fry’s Electronics) and entertainment (Wizards of the Coast, Seattle Seahawks) center.

Via digital marketing, branding and PR, the firm will position Renton, which is the site of the eternal resting place of Jimi Hendrix, as the community of choice for visitors, residents and businesses and an attractive, affordable tourist destination in the Seattle region.

Send original proposal and electronic PDF stored on a flash drive by Feb. 24 to: City of Renton; 1055 S. Grady Way, 6th Floor; Renton, WA 98057

The front of the envelope must be marked “Proposal for the Renton Community Marketing Campaign.”

Click [here](#) for the RFP.

LEE ENTERPRISES BUYS BUFFETT’S PAPERS

Lee Enterprises is buying Berkshire-Hathaway’s newspaper group of 30 dailies that is spearheaded by *The Buffalo News* for \$140M in cash.

B-H is providing \$575M in long-term financing to Lee, which will use the proceeds to pay for the acquisition and refinance about \$400M in debt.

Lee has managed BH Media Group, which registered \$374M in 2019 revenues and \$47M in EBITDA, for the past 18 months. The deal will boost its daily newspaper portfolio to 81 and double its audience size.



Warren Buffett

B-H CEO Warren Buffett said Lee has done an exceptional job in managing BH Media. “We had zero interest in selling the group to anyone else for one simple reason: We believe that Lee is best positioned to manage through the industry’s challenges,” he said in a statement. “No organization is more committed to serving the vital role of high-quality local news, however delivered, as Lee.”

BH Media’s papers include the *Omaha World-Herald*, *Tulsa World*, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *Waco Tribune-Herald*, *Winston-Salem Journal*, *The Roanoke Times* and *The Press of Atlantic City*.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

The BBC is getting rid of 450 newsroom employees. Among the divisions affected are the BBC World Service and “Newsnight,” the network’s nightly news program. The cuts, part of what BBC News director Fran Unsworth said was a necessary move away from traditional broadcasting and towards digital, follows the loss of 50 positions late last year. The corporation announced in 2016 that it needed to save £800m (about \$1.4 billion), with about 10 percent of that figure coming from news. Just over £40m of the savings required from BBC News have already been found. In addition, BBC director general Tony Hall has announced plans that will likely see at least two-thirds of the corporation’s staff based outside London by 2027.

Craig Newmark Philanthropies is donating \$1 million to ProPublica to support the organization’s Electionland collaboration and related national and local reporting on voting issues around the 2020 U.S. elections. The gift will support a consortium of news organizations that tracks the voter experience and shines a light on practices that endanger voting rights.



BuzzFeed editor-in-chief Ben Smith is heading to the *New York Times* as the paper’s media columnist. Smith succeeds Jim Rutenberg, now a writer at large for the paper, who took the spot after the death of David Carr in 2015. Smith joined BuzzFeed in 2012, and built the site’s news operation. Before coming to BuzzFeed, he was a reporter at Politico, a political columnist and blogger for the *New York Daily News* and a reporter for both the *New York Observer* and *New York Sun*.

ESPOSITO TO LEAD NYPD COMMUNICATIONS

Richard Esposito, a reporter and editor whose experience includes stints at ABC, NBC, *Newsday*, the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post*, has been named to the top spot in the NYPD's press office

NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea announced Esposito's appointment as deputy commissioner for public information on Jan. 27.

In his new post, Esposito serves as the principal communications advisor to the Police Commissioner on all issues of public affairs, media, internal and external communication, and press relations.

He replaces interim deputy commissioner Devora Kaye, who took over from Phil Walzak when he left the job in September.

Esposito was most recently a reporter and producer at ABC News, and has served as a senior investigative reporter at both NBC News and ABC. Earlier in his career, he was metropolitan editor at the Daily News, and worked as a reporter at the Post and *Newsday*.

BAGLIVO ENROLLS AT PACE

Mary Baglivo, one-time CEO Americas for Saatchi & Saatchi, has joined Pace University as chief marketing officer and VP-university relations. She's in charge of marketing, communications, special events, government affairs and community relations for Pace's three campuses (Manhattan, Pleasantville and White Plains).



Mary Baglivo

Most recently, Baglivo was vice chancellor for communications & marketing at Rutgers University and earlier was CMO & VP of global marketing at Northwestern University.

Pace, which began in 1906 as an accounting school, offers its 13,000 students more than 150 majors and programs.

JPMORGAN HIRES ALL-FEMALE FIRM

JPMorganChase, which plans to slash hundreds of jobs in its consumer unit, has hired Avenue Solutions for Washington work on financial services matters.

Avenue Solutions promotes itself as an "all-female, all-Democratic firm specialized in representing pro-business interests on Capitol Hill."

It has worked for ExxonMobil, Merck, American Medical Assn., Environmental Working Group, United-Health Group and Sage Therapeutics.

Founding partners Tracy Spicer, who was political director/deputy chief of staff to ex-Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy, and Amy Tejral, legislative director former Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson, represent JPMorganChase.

Bloomberg reported Jan. 28 that JPMorganChase will notify staffers of the cutbacks on Feb. 6. The reductions are possible as consumers increasingly bank online or via mobile apps.

JPMorganChase ended 2019 with 127,137 workers, which was down two percent from 2018. It also may sell its investment banking headquarters at 383 Madison Ave as part of a facilities review.

FACEBOOK LOBBIES FOR 6 GHZ

Facebook in January retained several lobbying groups as U.S. regulators explore freeing up airspace in the 6 Gigahertz band.

Tech companies in recent months have been pushing the FCC to allocate spectrum in the 6 GHz band to Wi-Fi and other different types of unlicensed uses, which would allow device makers and service providers to move forward with products that operate in the 6 GHz space.

But Wireless carriers—specifically, AT&T—have expressed concerns that allowing too much of this band for unlicensed use could interfere with public safety and critical infrastructure services operating in this spectrum.

Facebook in January hired consulting firm Salt Point Strategies for lobbying issues related to 6 GHz, according to lobbying documents filed with Congress. The same month, it also retained government affairs consulting firm Alpine Group for spectrum issues.

Facebook last year spent \$16.7 million in lobbying expenditures.

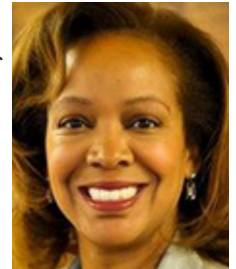
BARKER CRUISES TO CARNIVAL

Carnival Corp. has named Heidi Barker to the newly created position of VP- corporate communications in its ethics and compliance department. She will join the cruise line company in March, focusing on issues surrounding health, environment, safety, security, culture and training.

Carnival's stock has been under pressure after Jan. 29 news that one of its ships in Italy is being investigated for potential cases of coronavirus.

The company previously announced that it suspended operations from Chinese ports from Jan. 25 to Feb. 4. "We also expect that travel restrictions will result in cancellations from Chinese fly-cruise guests booked on cruises embarking in ports outside China," Carnival said in its 10-K filing.

Barker joins Carnival from Cleveland Avenue LLC, a food and beverage venture capital and consulting firm, where she was chief communications officer.



Heidi Barker

IDDLES TO REP ROYAL FOUNDATION

The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge has appointed Edwina Iddles chief communications officer.

Iddles was most recently chief press officer for the UK Home office, which is responsible for immigration, security and law and order. Before that, she was senior press officer at the department for exiting the European Union and began her career as parliamentary assistant to Conservative MP Caroline Dinenage.

The Royal Foundation was formed by Princes William and Harry in 2009 to run their charitable campaigns and ventures, and joined by Kate Middleton when she became Duchess of Cambridge in 2011. It became the "principle charitable vehicle for The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge" after October 1, following the departure of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex from the foundation.

COMMENTARY

Altria Group's \$12.8B investment for a 35 percent stake in Juul Lab, announced November 2018, may be the worst deal of all time.



The parent of Philip Morris said Jan. 30 that it took another \$4.1B write-down in the e-cigarette company. That followed a \$4.5B write down in October. The rapidly shrinking value of Juul is now pegged at \$4.2B.

Altria warned investors that more pain may be in the works. It said the latest charge is primarily due to the increased number of legal cases pending against Juul and the expectation is that the number of legal cases will continue to increase.

The number of lawsuits has jumped by 80 percent since October and there “could be adverse developments in pending or future cases,” according to Altria.

The company did give investors a break. It didn't warn of the many regulatory challenges faced by Juul.

Long-time newspaper champion Warren Buffett is unloading Berkshire-Hathaway's 30-member newspaper group, which includes his hometown *Omaha World-Herald*, to Lee Enterprises, dealing a psychological blow to that troubled media sector.

How eager was the Oracle of Omaha to get BH Media off his hand? He arranged for Berkshire-Hathaway to finance the deal, agreeing to provide a \$576M loan to Lee to help pay off \$400M in debt.

Buffett, who was a newspaper delivery boy, has been a big fan of papers, reading five of them a day.

In 2016, he said the newspaper business was declining at a faster rate than he anticipated with the dailies getting thinner and thinner. At the time though, He promised that B-H would never sell a newspaper. “I want to be the last guy standing,” said Buffett.

Take a seat, Warren.

At long last, the Iowa caucuses are here, and it's not a minute too soon for Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who ranks on top of Group SJR's Storytelling Index.

The WPP unit shared video clips of the top six presidential contenders during their Jan. 14 Des Moines debate with a group of Iowa and New Hampshire, which holds the first primary, voters. It gauged voters on SJR's three pillars of storytelling (wisdom, wonder and delight).

Sanders scored the highest in each, doing especially well in the wonder pillar as his “think big” message inspired voters across demographic groups.

Elizabeth Warren came in second. Addressing the challenges facing Americans and her plans to tackle them was a “textbook case” of conflict and resolution, according to SJR. Her presentation scored high marks among college-educated voters but not so much among those

who did not go to college or non-white voters.

Pete Buttigieg needs to “turn the page.” He scored low among non-whites and less-educated voters, which may not hurt him in Iowa and New Hampshire, but he's toast elsewhere.

Amy Klobuchar did well among voters over 55 in the poll, making her a dark horse for New Hampshire.

Joe Biden came in dead last as his message lacked a beginning, middle and end, according to SJR.

Kudos to Connecticut Senator Chris Murphy, who wants the FBI and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to investigate Saudi Arabia's involvement in the hacking of the phone of *Washington Post* owner Jeff Bezos.

The Senator believes the Saudis may have been out to silence further reporting on the torture, murder and dismemberment of dissident and WaPo contributor Jamal Khashoggi. He fears Khashoggi's murder may have been part of a broader campaign to “intimidate and silence opponents of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”

The United Nations on Jan. 22 released a report with “medium to high confidence” that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a dear friend of presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner, delivered the spyware via WhatsApp (Hello Facebook) to Bezos' phone. Other critics of the Kingdom received the same malicious code.

Murphy is the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Near East, South Asia, Central Asia and Counterterrorism.

He also wants to know if any US government officials or citizens were involved in the sale or deployment of the software to Saudi Arabia.

“My goal for this next decade isn't to be liked, but to be understood,” Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg told investors during an earnings call on Jan. 29. “In order to be trusted, people need to know what you stand for.”

Philanthropist George Soros thinks he knows what Zuck stands for: an unholy alliance with Donald Trump.

In the Jan. 31 *New York Times*, Soros wrote that Zuckerberg stands for the re-election of Trump in return for the president's support of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.

Section 230 is a venerable “stay out of jail card” for Facebook. It shields it and all social media platforms from legal liability for the misinformation, disinformation and fake news they run on their sites.

Soros sees “an informal mutual assistance” pact between Trump and Facebook. “I believe that Mr. Trump and Facebook's chief executive, Mark Zuckerberg, realize that their interests are aligned — the president's in winning elections, Mr. Zuckerberg's in making money,” he wrote.

Nicely put, George.

—Kevin McCauley