



**Kevin McCauley**  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

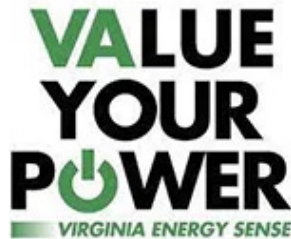
The Inside News of Public Relations  
& Marketing Communications [odwyerpr.com](http://odwyerpr.com)

271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016  
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750  
[www.odwyerpr.com](http://www.odwyerpr.com); [jobs.odwyerpr.com](mailto:jobs.odwyerpr.com)

January 8, 2024 Vol. 57 No. 2

## **VIRGINIA SLATES \$1M FOR CONSERVATION PR**

Virginia is seeking a firm to handle its \$1M annual marketing and outreach services campaign for the "Virginia Energy Sense" consumer education effort.



Established in late 2009, VES is designed to boost the public's awareness of the benefits of energy conservation. It provides a one-stop information resource to help guide consumers through specific steps they can take to increase energy efficiency and reduce costs.

The selected firm will launch a full range integrated communications program that includes PR, marketing and advertising. Proposals must include components for messaging, media plan, market research, digital marketing, website hosting/maintenance, partnerships, and reporting.

Virginia encourages innovative proposals that align with the VES brand identity.

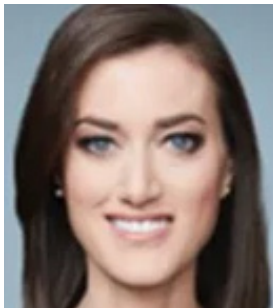
Proposals are due Jan. 18 at the [eVA portal](http://eVA.portal).

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

## **DHS VET SIGNS ON AT BRUNSWICK GROUP**

Samantha Vinograd, assistant secretary for counterterrorism, threat prevention and law enforcement policy at the Department of Homeland Security, has joined Brunswick Group in DC as geopolitical lead.

Prior to joining the DHS, Vinograd led global public policy at financial payments company Stripe, and worked for Goldman Sachs, where she focused on building public-private sector partnerships.



**Samantha Vinograd**

She also was a senior advisor at the Biden Institute and a CNN national security analyst.

Vinograd began her career in Baghdad during the Bush II presidency, working for the Treasury Dept., and she subsequently served on president Obama's National Security Council as director for Iraq, director for international economics and senior advisor to the National Security Advisor.

Brunswick also will add Alex Kazan, chief commercial officer at Eurasia Group, as geopolitical co-lead in New York on Jan. 16. He did time at Goldman Sachs, Daiwa Asset Management and Bear Stearns.

## **GLADSTONE, GAGNIER DEFEND DISNEY**

[Gladstone Place Partners](#) CEO Steve Lipin represents Walt Disney Co. as the embattled entertainment giant announced that it is supported by activist investment firm ValueAct Capital Management in its efforts to fend off a proxy fight with Nelson Peltz's Triun Fund Management.

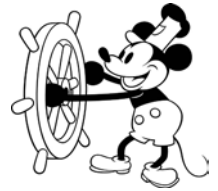
ValueAct Co-CEO & chief investment officer Mason Morfit believes Disney can lead the media industry as legacy technologies transition to digital platforms. Disney chief Bob Iger said Morfit "has been very constructive in the conversations that we've had over the past year."

Gagnier Communications is handling Blackwells Capital as it unveiled three director nominees on Jan. 3 who support Iger's "value creation vision."

A Blackwells' proposal specifies that any incumbent director outvoted by its nominees will be added back to the board following the annual meeting.

Gagnier Communications' Dan Gagnier and managing director Riyaz Lalani handle Blackwells.

Triun relies on [Reevemark](#)'s Paul Caminiti, Pamela Greene and Jacqueline Zuhse in its Disney push.



## **DAVIS WORKS SOLWAY SANCTIONS REBOUND**

Lanny Davis & Assocs. has registered Solway Investment Group, the Switzerland-based mining company, to communicate with the US government regarding sanctions for Russian involvement in its Guatemalan nickel mine and refinery.

The US Treasury Dept.'s Office of Foreign Asset Control issued those sanctions on Nov. 18, 2022. After Solway implemented a series of reforms to improve transparency and accountability, and fired the sanctioned employees, OFAC on Sept. 29 granted a one-year license to operate the mine.

Veteran crisis counselor Lanny Davis told the Associated Press that Solway's Guatemalan companies are eager to resume exports to the US to help supply the nickel that is needed for electric car batteries and other clean energy uses.

In an unrelated matter, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on Dec. 18 ruled that Solway's Guatemalan subsidiary violated the property rights of the indigenous Aqua Caliente community.



**Lanny Davis**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA CASHES IN ON YOUNG USERS**

Social media platforms are making big money off of young users, according to a new study led by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.



**HARVARD  
T.H. CHAN  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

The study, which used public survey and market research data from 2021 and 2022 to estimate Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X and YouTube's number of youth users and related ad revenue, found that those platforms collectively raked in close to \$11B in 2022: \$2.1 billion from users ages 12 and under and \$8.6 billion from users ages 13-17.

For users under the age of 12, YouTube was the biggest money maker, with \$959.1 million in ad revenue. Instagram was close behind (\$801.1 million) and Facebook racked up \$137.2 million. Users between 13 and 17 resulted in the most ad revenue for Instagram (\$4 billion), followed by TikTok (\$2 billion) and YouTube (\$1.2 billion).

When it comes to the percentage of its ad revenue that each platform attributes to young users, Snapchat tops the list, with 41 percent coming from users under 18. Those users account for more than a third (35 percent) of TikTok's ad revenues, with YouTube (27 percent) and Instagram (16 percent) lagging behind.

In terms of overall US-based users under 18, YouTube led the way by a wide margin with 49.7 million. Tik Tok had 18.9 million and Snapchat had 18 million, followed by Instagram (16.7 million), Facebook (9.9 million) and X (7 million).

"Our finding that social media platforms generate substantial advertising revenue from youth highlights the need for greater data transparency as well as public health interventions and government regulations," said lead author Amanda Raffoul, instructor in pediatrics at Harvard Medical School.

The researchers did note the limitations of the study included the reliance on estimations and projections from public survey and market research sources, as social media platforms don't disclose user age data or advertising revenue data by age group.

## **FLORIDA DOT SEEKS CONSTRUCTION PR HELP**

Florida's Dept. of Transportation is looking for a firm to handle communications related to construction projects in Miami-Dade and Monroe (Florida Keys) Counties.

Working on an as-needed basis, the firm will be responsible for communications planning/implementation, PR & community involvement, customer service, media relations, events, and website management.

Interested firms are required to have an office in either Miami-Dade, Monroe or Broward Counties.

At least one member of the bidding team must have major transportation-related communications experience.

The three-year contract will begin in March. There will be

options to renew for three one-year periods.

Firms must register at the My Florida Marketplace portal. Responses are due Jan. 11.

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



## **ON THE MOVE**

The Miami Marlins promote VP of marketing **Tiago Pinto** to the CMO spot. Before joining the Marlins in February 2022, Pinto was CEO of Miami-based BOL Football, which creates products centered around soccer. He has also worked at PepsiCo, where he served as global marketing director for Gatorade and Nike, where he was marketing director. In his new post, Pinto will focus on enhancing the club's brand presence through marketing and community action. He will oversee social media, game presentation, digital marketing and community engagement. "Tiago has brought exceptional leadership and strategic vision to our organization," said Marlins president of business operations Caroline O'Connor.



**Tiago Pinto**

**Vintage Wine Estates** names **Ryan Watson** as CMO, effective Jan. 16. Watson joins the company from Boston Consulting Group, where he was a partner. His career has also included stints at Amazon, Kraft Heinz and Tesco. At VWE, Watson will lead the effort to drive consumer- and demand-centric thinking across the enterprise with responsibilities for insights, data & analytics, brands, innovation and portfolio management, DTC and digital strategy as well as design, public relations and communications

**Dentons Global Advisors** adds **Ashish Bhatt, Linzell Harris** and **Peter Mirijanian** as senior advisors. Bhatt, who specializes in geopolitical strategic advice, commercial growth, intelligence-led investigations, internal and external engagement strategies, as well as leadership and culture, was most recently managing director at Gatehouse Advisory Partners. He is based



**Ashish Bhatt, Linzell Harris,  
Peter Mirijanian**

in London. Harris previously served as SVP of global supply chain and strategy at both AstraZeneca and TEVA Pharmaceuticals, as well as head of global operations for Godiva Chocolatier. Mirijanian leads his own consulting firm, Peter Mirijanian Public Affairs, with a long career of developing and implementing public affairs campaigns, and offering crisis and litigation communications counsel, on behalf of corporate clients and law firms. Harris and Mirijanian are based in Washington, DC.

**BlackLine, Inc.**, a group of cloud platform and customer service help companies, brings on **Emily Campbell** as CMO. Campbell joins the company from Infinite Electronics, where she was also CMO, overseeing global brand marketing strategy, e-commerce, customer experience, communications, inside sales, and technical support. She was previously head of global marketing and digital innovation for Arrow Electronics and spent 14 years in senior marketing and product management positions at Dell Technologies. At BlackLine, Campbell is responsible for driving the company's global marketing strategy, reporting to co-CEO Owen Ryan.



## **AVOID CRISIS BY ENGAGING YOUR PEOPLE**

In 2023, employees showed they could have influence. Consider the whirlwind Thanksgiving week at OpenAI, where Sam Altman was fired as CEO only to have employees threaten to resign en masse. Instead of Altman leaving, employees influenced investors to sack the entire board of directors.



**Jackson Hayes, Ryan Toohey**

Setting aside OpenAI's unique organization, when was the last time employees replaced an entire board?

A lesson for communicators and executives

is employees can be an asset—or a risk if you don't take heed. But if you understand your people and communicate effectively, you can move companies and industries.

### **The employee power trend**

The OpenAI experience is part of a larger pattern of labor's power—real or perceived—that must will need to be managed in 2024.

Auto strikes have long been a classic example of labor power. In 2023, the UAW orchestrated strikes at the Big 3. But this time President Biden and former President Trump both supported workers, sensing a political advantage, showing yet again it's not safe to champion traditionally liberal causes in a blue state or conservative ones in red states.

### **Enter cause fatigue and backlash**

The pandemic produced all sorts of employee activism and brought to light questions regarding the role business should have in shaping societal norms. This led to companies feeling pressured to take on a host of “political” positions, sometimes in haste and without understanding the implications.

Some employees have responded to corporate stances by suggesting employers are telling them how to think. The anti-ESG crusade is one face of this backlash, but there's a Main Street reality to it for some: “Why can't I just go to work anymore?”

However, 58 percent of consumers think it's inappropriate for companies to take a stand on social issues. So, what are you supposed to do?

### **The path forward**

The first step is getting to know your people—customers and your employees. Here are three options for thinking about how to communicate in 2024 and beyond.

**Commit to having a voice—and be okay with being wrong.** You may decide you want to shape the narrative. This might mean a busy year, but it could be worth it. The key may be knowing who you are as a leadership team and employee group and accepting what comes with it over time.

**Identify priority issues you'll take a stance on.** It can be good to take positions, but you need to know what matters to your people. Are you a bank or FinTech? Maybe it makes sense to announce you'll be taking stances only on issues related to access to small business loans and providing banking services in underserved communities.

**Declare your neutrality.** You can come out and state that your business is about the business and nothing more. This is an option, but again, you need to know your people well. It could be viewed as a shrewd decision to focus on what you can control. It could also be viewed as abdicating a leadership role in your community.

Whatever path you choose, each start with a few best practices:

**Establish a cross-functional employee relations working group.** This isn't just HR. The idea is to establish a team that has a holistic view of how your people are thinking and feeling about the business and understand what's coming down the pike. This can—and should!—be a part-time role. Start with something simple—say 30 minutes a week—and be willing to adapt.

**Set up or refresh employee listening groups to help spot issues.** Establish small teams, five to 20 people, placed around the business to give you the real picture. These individuals should be cross-generational and cross-level, but established and mature enough in their career to understand the importance of their role and the confidentiality of their role and discussions.

**Train front-line leaders and communicators to see risks and opportunities** they may not have seen before. Bring the issue to the attention of the employee relations team, which they should view as a resource, who can then make informed decisions.

*Jackson Hayes is an Associate Partner and Ryan Toohey is a Partner at [Dentons Global Advisors](#).*

## **LEGAL DEFENSE FUND NAMES THIGPEN CC&MO**

The Legal Defense Fund, a civil rights law organization that was founded in 1940 under the leadership of Thurgood Marshall, brings on Natalie Thigpen as chief communications and marketing officer.

Thigpen was most recently SVP for culture, engagement, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging at Summit Health and CityMD.

“Her extensive experience and proven track record in driving innovative communication strategies make her the ideal candidate to ensure we continue to reach key audiences and give voice to the most pressing issues of racial justice facing our democracy,” said LDF President and Director Counsel Janai Nelson.



**Natalie Thigpen**

## **AVENUE'S BENNETT RESOLVES FARA CHARGES**

Former Avenue Strategies managing partner Barry Bennett and Douglas Watts, who ran the Urban Media Group, have entered into Deferred Prosecution Agreements to resolve allegations that they failed to comply with the Foreign Agents Registration Act and committed related offenses.

Bennett was charged with “a scheme to falsify, conceal, and cover up material from the Department of Justice's FARA Unit and false statements and material omissions in FARA filings.” He will have that information dismissed with prejudice after amending his FARA filings and paying a \$100,000 fine. Watts, who is alleged to have acted as an agent of a foreign principal without registering under FARA and making false statements to the FBI, faces a \$25,000 fine.



**Barry Bennett**

## **TENEO ADVISES BIRD'S BANKRUPTCY BID**

Teneo Capital serves as financial and restructuring advisor to Miami-based Bird Inc. as the once-high flying e-scooter rental company declared Chapter 11 on Dec. 20.



Bird, which operates in 350 cities in the US, Canada, Europe, Middle East and Australia, had a market valuation of \$1B five years ago.

But it could not overcome cutthroat competition, regulatory requirements, winter weather, safety worries, and concerns about sidewalk litter of its un-docked scooters.

Bird interim CEO Michael Washinushi called the bankruptcy a "significant milestone in Bird's transformation."

The re-org will accelerate Bird's progress toward profitability by right-sizing its capital structure, he added.

Since its 2017 launch in Los Angeles, Bird riders have traveled over 300M miles globally, but the company still suffered a \$73.4M nine-month loss on \$132.2M revenues.

## **ICR CHRONICLES SLIDE IN SPAC VALUES**

ICR released its [January 2024 SPAC Market Update & Outlook](#) report, which found that the average value of SPAC IPOs took a 21 percent slide to \$125 million in 2023. In



addition, only 14 percent of last year's mergers valued companies at \$1 billion or more, down from 50 percent in 2022.

On the up side, merger activity was steady at approximately 24 closed deals per quarter and liquidations decelerated. CleanTech wound up being the hottest sector for SPAC deal activity last year, accounting for \$39 billion of the \$70 billion in enterprise value for 2023. More than half (55 percent) of SPAC IPOs had Asia-based sponsors.

For 2024, the report says that a significant merger pipeline should result in solid activity, with more than 130 public SPACs seeking targets and another 140+ with pending mergers.

## **DIGITAL PRO DUA JOINS SKDK**

Avika Dua, who was digital director for New York governor Kathy Hochul, has joined SKDK as a VP to work on both political and corporate campaigns.

Besides working for the Empire State's first female governor, Dua was digital director for Alex Padilla, the Golden State's first Hispanic Senator.



**Avika Dua**

"continues to offer the most integrated advertising services in the industry."

Stagwell owns SKDK.

During the 2020 Democratic presidential primary campaign, Dua managed \$21M in media spending for Pete Buttigieg's run.

She began her career at Google, handling web marketing efforts.

Pia Carusone, president of SKDK Political unit, said Dua's experience in high-profile campaigns will be invaluable to the firm as it

## **HARVARD DODGES BRAND HYPOCRISY**

There's a fundamental principle of branding: "Don't promise what you can't deliver." The clearer and more aspirational the promise, the harsher the blowback if you fail to deliver.

Harvard University—for generations—has proclaimed its devotion to truth through its motto: Veritas. Truth in research, truth in guiding principles, truth in criteria applied to hiring, grading and pedagogy. It's a noble goal, and it committed the institution to academic esteem. Is Harvard arguably our country's best university? This, in summary, was their answer: Veritas!



**Claude Singer**

President Claudine Gay has been forced out of the Presidency of Harvard. Why did this happen?

Let's set aside matters of race and gender and accept the well-intended elevation of non-traditional candidates to high levels in academia. This is a branding issue. Simply look up the University's motto and you will know that Claudine Gay's presidency was unsustainable.

Principle number one was violated. For the brand to maintain its inherited value, correction in light of these revelations was absolutely mandated. Even in an era notorious for hypocrisy, people expect brand promises to be kept.

*Claude Singer is Managing Partner of [Brandsinger](#).*

## **MZ GROUP HELPS AIRSHIP AI TAKE FLIGHT**

MZ North America handled Airship AI as the video, sensor and data management surveillance company went public via a SPAC merger with BYTE Acquisition Corp.

Redmond, WA-based Airship counts the Depts. of Justice, Defense and Homeland Security, as well as local law enforcement agencies and Fortune 500 companies (FedEx and Home Depot) as customers.

In December, Airship landed a \$10.9M pact with the DHS to provide real-time intelligence systems along the US borders.

Airship CEO Paul Allen said the company has a \$163M pipeline, and operates in a \$7B software/hardware market.

He expects the NASDAQ listing will boost Airship's visibility, selling opportunities and financial flexibility.

MZ's Chris Tyson and Larry Holub represented Airship.



## **ATLANTA MAYOR TAPS FOUCHÉ AS CCO**

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens names Allison Fouché to serve as his administration's new chief of communications.

Fouché was most recently chief communications officer for the City of Memphis, having previously served as deputy CCO. She has also served as strategic marketing coordinator for Memphis Light, Gas and Water, and communications coordinator for the National Civil Rights Museum.

Among her responsibilities in her new post will be developing long-term communications programming strategies for the city and administration.



**Allison Fouché**



## HEALTHCARE COS HEADY ABOUT AI IN '24

Healthcare and life sciences companies are expecting artificial intelligence, along with other technological advances, to give the industry a boost in 2024, counterbalancing the effects of economic and political uncertainty.

That's the conclusion of the [U.S. Healthcare & Life Sciences Industry Outlook 2024](#) study recently released by FTI Consulting.

The general level of optimism of the respondents in the new survey was 68 percent, an 8 percent drop from last year. And while a solid 79 percent say they are optimistic about their own firm's financial performance, that's still down 8 percent from the 87 percent who said that in the last study.

The HCLS leaders still expect market activity to rise in most cases, though just slightly. About two-thirds (67 percent) think that M&A activity will go up, a 4 percent bump from last year. An even smaller hike (1 percent) is expected for IPO activity, which would hit 54 percent. A 2 percent drop in SPAC activity, to 48 percent, is predicted.

Several major risks may be contributing to the optimism slowdown. Foremost among them is general economic uncertainty, which was cited by 40 percent of respondents. Cybersecurity tied for second place on the list with talent scarcity (both at 24 percent), and declining reimbursement rates (21 percent) were also a major concern.



Half of the respondents (50 percent) said they feel vulnerable to a cyberattack or incident. Among the possible effects of cyberattacks to the industry, 56 percent cited data access/exposure, 49 percent said financial costs and 46 percent predicted an impact on patient care.

But technology also has its upside. Two-thirds of the respondents (66 percent) said that AI has the potential to create efficiencies within the drug development cycle, and an equal number say it could also positively affect the industry in areas other than drug development.

The survey also examined the effect of government policy on the financial outlook of the HCLS sector. The Biden administration's impact on the sector is viewed positively by 49 percent of respondents, with 40 percent saying that the impact is a negative one.

The Inflation Reduction Act is also seen as both a good and bad influence. More than six in ten (62 percent) say the IRA will encourage the development and demand for vaccines, and 60 percent say it will do the same for biologics. But nearly as many (58 percent) predict that the IRA will result in more lawsuits being filed, due to its impact on business activity.

In addition, 25 percent think that the IRA will negatively affect patient access to and affordability of care, with 22 percent expecting it to slow down orphan drug development in 2024.

With 48 percent of the companies expecting their expenditures to rise next year, marketing is holding its position as an important part of that spending. While R&D is the top candidate for increased expenditures (48 percent), marketing is a close second (43 percent), with retaining (43 percent) and recruiting (42 percent) talent just behind.

The study was conducted by FTI Consulting's Strategic Communications team between Oct. 9-18.

## ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

**Dolphin Entertainment**, which owns 42West, The Door and Shore Fire Media, is engaged as communications agency of record for **HedoniaUSA Inc.**, a new mental fitness and wellness company. Dolphin Entertainment's roster of agencies will develop and execute comprehensive marketing and communication initiatives, working to amplify HedoniaUSA's brand messages and educate and engage national audiences who currently have or are being treated for depressive symptoms. "Their track record of success, breakthrough creative ideas and innovative approach align seamlessly with our vision," said HedoniaUSA CEO Dany Sfeir.



**Rosebud Communications**, a B2B agency that works with high-growth tech companies navigating the complexities of Series B and Series C funding, signs on as global agency of record for **Lumotive**, a semiconductor innovator in the global 3D sensing market. Rosebud's work for the client will include all news announcement and proactive media pitching, awards applications and speaking proposals, thought leadership, analyst relations and social media support. Lumotive, which is backed by a roster of investors including Gates Frontier, MetaVC Partners, Quan Funds, Samsung Ventures and Unquest has raised over \$50M in venture capital.

**William Mills Agency** is selected as public relations agency of record by **Endurance Advisory Partners**. Endurance, which was founded in 2009, works with financial institutions to help them handle the strategic opportunities and business challenges they face, leveraging their expertise in financial services, the regulatory environment, technology, risk management, corporate finance, and financial markets. "William Mills Agency will be crucial in helping us reach the institutions that need our help," said Endurance Advisory Partners CEO Stephen Curry.

**Crowe PR** is selected to represent **Trace Minerals**, which formulates and develops health supplements that help people achieve and maintain the ideal level of trace minerals in their bodies. The agency will focus on increasing consumer awareness, emphasizing the importance of trace minerals and the brand through media relations, thought leadership and influencer marketing initiatives. The company's products are available through such major retailers such as Amazon, Whole Foods and Kroger.



**IMAGINE PR** is appointed as North American public relations representative for **Cape of Senses**, a spa hideaway located 600 feet above Italy's Lake Garda. IMAGINE PR will be providing integrated public relations, digital marketing and brand partnerships, among other services. Specific areas include: strategic communications counsel, travel recovery services, media relations, event planning and execution, social media content and strategy, and influencer connections. The company will also lead media familiarization trips and tours. The 55-suite, family-owned property, which opened in July, features private pools, jacuzzis and free-standing bathtubs in addition to wellbeing rooms, sunbathing and lounge areas, and rooftop terraces.

## COMMENTARY

**Cheer up, Joe. Things could be a lot worse.** Israel prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu would die for your polling numbers.



A mere 15 percent of Israelis think Bibi should remain in power, once he declares his rampage in the Gaza Strip over, according to a survey conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute.

Biden tops that pathetic number, albeit just barely. Nearly one-in-five (19 percent) of Americans believe that he should run for another term.

Biden may beat Bibi in the polling game but that's about it.

Seventy percent of us don't want Joe to run again. Nearly half (47 percent) of those against Biden running again say he is just too old for another term.

Biden has aged considerably while in office. One sometimes has to do a double take when looking at a photo of the president to make sure that he is the commander-in-chief.

The 81-year-old president may think that wisdom comes with age. That may be the case but 66 percent of seniors don't want him on the 2024 ticket, according to the CNBC survey.

There's still a little time for Biden to do the right thing.

**A picture is worth a thousand words.** Joe and Jill Biden emerged from Air Force One on Jan. 2, looking like a pair of lobsters. That's not a good PR look.

The super-sunburned First Couple had just returned from a seven-day vacation in St. Croix in the US Virgin Islands, where they were hosted by big time Democratic donors Bill and Connie Neville.

The scarlet skin optics are just lousy, especially for a guy who had to have surgery in 2021 to remove multiple non-melanoma skin cancers.

The president may have dodged the bullet two years ago but the American Cancer Society reports that melanoma rates have soared in the US, doubling from 1982 to 2011.

Biden's age group of 80 years and up experienced the biggest jump in cancer rates.

The president's crimson face showed he lacked the discipline to at least apply sunblock while basking in the bright and hot Caribbean sun.

It set a poor example. It brought back the message that Melania Trump sent when she wore her infamous "I Really Don't Care, Do You," jacket.

She donned that outfit while visiting a detention center on the Texas/Mexico border housing immigrant children who had been separated from their parents.

One hopes Melania hasn't tossed the jacket. She will get lots of chances to wear it during her husband's second term.

**Dumbo's revenge...** Wayne LaPierre, the scourge of gun control activists, is stepping down as chief of the National Rifle Assn. Good riddance.

Wayne never regained his PR footing after a video emerged of his failure to shoot an elephant in a preserve in Botswana.

The video was filmed in 2013 by an NRA crew and was designed to attract hunters to the NRA.

The botched shooting never aired, and the footage was obtained in 2021 by [Trace, a non-profit that monitors the gun business, and New Yorker magazine](#).

It showed LaPierre wounding the elephant and then shooting the immobilized animal three times at point blank range but failing to kill it.

A guide put the elephant out of its misery.

LaPierre's wife, Susan, was a better shot She brought another animal down, cut off its tail and shouted, "victory."

The New Yorker reported the video showed LaPierre was "a coddled executive who is clumsy with a firearm."

Wayne will now have plenty of time to sharpen his marksman skills.

**Oops, it does it again...** Xerox, which has been in a restructuring mode since the 1990s, has announced its latest round of cutbacks as 15 percent of its 23K workforce will be cut during the first-quarter.

The job cuts are part of Xerox's "Reinvention" survival initiative, which is supposed to deliver a \$300M improvement in adjusted operating income by 2026.

"Reinvention" follows Xerox's "Project Own It" initiative that was rolled out during the second half of 2018.

Xerox claims Project Own It resulted in \$1.8B in gross savings during the 42-month period ended Dec. 31.

The copier company is masterful when it comes to naming retrenchment moves, but its fundamental problem stems from its name becoming a verb for copying during the 1970s.

If Bandrowczak wants to truly reinvent the company, he should ditch the corporate name.

**Going overboard on Gay coverage...** The *New York Times* has given a lot of coverage to the travails of ex-Harvard University president Claudine Gay, including precious real estate on its op-ed page in which she told of her "wrenching but necessary decision" to resign.

The Harvard saga may be journalism catnip to the Ivy League writers at the NYT and to the school's wealthy alumni-donors. But what about the rest of us?

The Times gives scant coverage to the financing shortfall at the NYC public college system. CUNY enrolls 270K New York students, while Harvard draws 25K students nationwide.

On the same day that the NYT gave the op-ed platform to Gay, New York State Health Commissioner James McDonald released a report showing that a quarter of the people in the state go hungry each day.

The Bronx has the highest rate of food insecurity. Queens and Brooklyn at 30.9 percent and 30.1 percent, respectively, rank among the top five food insecure counties in the state.

While the Times bailed on the food insecurity story, it did run a front page story on Jan. 2 warning Sunday travelers on the New York Thruway to pack a lunch since the Chick-fil-A outlets along the 570-mile roadway are closed on that day.

That story may be useful to drivers on their way to Cambridge, MA.

—Kevin McCauley