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Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

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## LA SEEKS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PR

Los Angeles seeks proposals to facilitate creative engagement and communications to support health and environmental justice land use policy development.



The effort is part of “The Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles” program that links land use to health, wellbeing, equity and environmental justice.

Los Angeles wants to hear from firms that are experienced in managing projects with a strong public engagement component and are familiar with the diverse land use and regulatory framework that is unique to the city.

Team members should include urban planners and community outreach and engagement specialists.

Preference will be given to firms with expertise in racial/ environmental justice, government policy and community outreach.

Strong writing skills and experience developing subject-related outreach for diverse audiences are major plusses.

Proposals are due May 31. They go to [planning.contracts@lacity.org](mailto:planning.contracts@lacity.org).

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

## EX-REP. ROSE JOINS OAKTREE SOLUTIONS

Max Rose, former Brooklyn/Staten Island Democratic Congressman, has joined Oaktree Solutions as managing director for federal and international affairs.

Frank Carone, who was NYC mayor Eric Adams’ chief of staff, founded Brooklyn-based Oaktree.

Republican Nicole Maliotakis defeated Rose in the 2022 election, which was a repeat of his 2020 defeat.



**Max Rose**

In Congress, Rose chaired the Homeland Security subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism and the subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness and Recovery.

He also served in the infantry in Afghanistan and is still a Major in the Army Reserve.

Rose was in the Biden administration as senior advisor on Covid-19 to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

He joins Oaktree from The Soufan Group, which Rose joined in January as vice chairman.

## JASPER JOINS SKDK

Stagwell’s SKDK has acquired Jasper Advisors, which was founded in September 2022 by Brunswick Group veterans David Sutphen and Julie Andreeff Jensen.

The DC-based corporate suite advisory will keep its name and operate as an independent unit of SKDK.

Sutphen headed Brunswick’s Washington office from 2009 to 2017.

Earlier, he was SVP-government relations at Viacom, SVP-government & industry relations at Recording Industry Association of America, and general counsel to Sen. Ted Kennedy at the Judiciary Committee.

Jensen served as partner at Brunswick from 2009 to 2016.

She exited Brunswick for the chief corporate affairs and communications officer post at Citadel and then joined the Washington Football Club as SVP-external affairs and communications in October 2020.

SKDK CEO Doug Thornell has known Sutphen and Jensen for about 20 years and views them as two of the most talented and respected reputation strategists in the business.

The acquisition of Jasper enables SKDK to “offer clients an unmatched and even deeper level of senior strategic counsel, breadth of experience and diversity of executive talent to further strengthen our industry leading capabilities,” he said.



## CARLYLE VET JOINS NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

Chris Ullman, who was director of communications at global investment firm Carlyle Group, has joined Narrative Strategies as a senior advisor.

During his 17-year run at Carlyle, Ullman worked with its private equity, hedge funds, private credit and real estate portfolios.

He led the PR effort behind taking the company public in 2012 and was a key advisor to Carlyle founders and portfolio company CEOs.

Prior to Carlyle, Ullman was director of communications at the Office of Management and Budget, and director of public affairs at the Securities and Exchange Communications.

In 2018, Ullman launched his own firm to counsel clients on crisis management, brand development, reputational matters and internal communications.

He will continue to run Ullman Communications.



**Chris Ullman**

## CEO ACCESSIBILITY VS. EMPATHY IS KEY

An increasing number of both employees and investors say they want CEOs to be accessible—and fewer of them put a high priority on empathy. So says a new report from FTI Consulting.



Consulting.

FTI's "[CEO Leadership Redefined 2023](#)" looked at the qualities stakeholders want in CEOs. The study polled 800 full-time employees working for large companies,

250 institutional investors and 200 D.C. policy influencers.

More than a quarter (28 percent) of employees surveyed said that accessibility was one of the top three attributes that a CEO should have—up 13 percent from a study conducted in 2021. And while accessibility was not as important for investors, it still was mentioned as a major priority by 16 percent of them, an increase from 12 percent in 2021.

The spotlight previously placed on empathy faded, however. It was cited by only 21 percent of employees surveyed, as opposed to 27 percent in the 2021 edition of the report. For investors, that number dropped to 13 percent from 18 percent.

Perhaps not surprisingly, being "financially minded" was the top quality valued by the investors surveyed, staying steady at 32 percent from 2021's mark. Employees did not value that attribute quite as highly, though it still rose to 23 percent from 17 percent in 2021.

But while the bottom line is the most rapidly growing concern in the post-pandemic environment, the concern for employee welfare is still a major factor. The number of employees who said that "strengthening financial performance/profitability" should be a CEO's biggest priority took a big jump from 13 percent in 2021 to 32 percent this year, while investors gave it even greater emphasis—up to 42 percent from 20 percent in the previous survey.

However, the appeal of "strengthening health and well-being" also rose, with 38 percent of employees placing it first on a CEO's priority list, up from 34 percent in 2021. For investors, the hike was more pronounced, going from 14 percent in 2021 to 32 percent this year.

FTI Consulting's digital and insights team conducted the "CEO Leadership Redefined 2023" from Jan. 8 to Feb. 1.

## JOELE FRANK HANDLES VICE MEDIA'S REORG

[Joele Frank](#) is handling the Chapter 11 filing of Vice Media Group as it arranges a \$225M bailout from Soros Fund Management, Fortress Investment Group and Monroe Capital.

The Brooklyn-based company's brands, which include Vice, Vice News, Vice TV, Pulse Films, Virtue, Refinery29 and I-D, will continue producing content during the reorganization.

Vice TV's joint venture with A&E and overseas properties are not part of the Chapter 11 filing.



"The accelerated court-supervised sale process will strengthen the company and position Vice for long-term growth, thereby safeguarding the kind of authentic journalism and content creation that makes Vice such a trusted brand," co-CEOs Bruce Dixon and Hozefa Lokhandwala said in a statement. Vice Media Group expects to complete the sale in two to three months.

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher's Dan Moore and Scott Bisang represent Vice Media Group.

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher's Dan Moore and Scott Bisang represent Vice Media Group.

## KEKST CNC WORKS ATHENEX CHAPTER 11

[Kekst CNC](#) is handling the Chapter 11 filing of Buffalo-based Athenex Inc., a biopharmaceutical company focused on cancer treatments.

The bankruptcy move, which follows the completion of a strategic review, is designed to facilitate the sale of its primary businesses.

Athenex CEO Johnson Lau said the company sought to be a leader in bringing innovative cancer treatments to the market and improving patient health outcomes.

It succeeded in gaining regulatory approval for tirbanibulin ointment in the US, Taiwan and some EU countries but received a regulatory setback from the US Food and Drug Administration for its oral paclitaxel product.

"This significant regulatory setback coupled with challenging biotech markets and the difficult economic environment, put tremendous pressure on our ability to continue to fund our business," said Lau.

The company's manufacturing plant in Clarence, NY, will continue to operate for at least 90 days to provide a supply of tirbanibulin to its commercial customers.

Lau's goal is to identify purchases who will continue to develop Athenex's drug candidates.

Kekst CNC's Daniel Yunger, Wendi Kopsick, Rich Goldman, and Mark Fallati are working the Chapter 11 filing.

Publicis Groupe owns Kekst CNC.



## ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

[Zapwater Communications](#) is selected to lead North American media relations and marketing efforts for Singapore-based **Pan Pacific Hotels Group**, which includes the Pan Pacific Seattle as well as over 50 other hotels and resorts in more than 30 key cities. The agency will also work alongside its Travel Lifestyle Network partners SCOP3 Group in South-East Asia, The PC Agency in the UK and Anne Wild & Associates in Australia and New Zealand to co-ordinate PPHG's international public relations. Zapwater is focusing on curated media trips, events and other brand experience programs as part of the campaign. "The agencies will be our key strategic partners in driving our brand visibility and growth presence in global markets," said PPHG chief commercial & marketing officer Cinn Tan.

[5W Public Relations](#) takes on **Travel Medford**, the largest destination marketing organization in southern Oregon. The agency is tasked with managing Travel Medford's media relations program, raising its brand awareness and positioning Medford as a must-visit destination. "This partnership with 5WPR is an opportunity to elevate our rural community on a national scale," said Travel Medford senior VP T.J. Holmes. "The 5WPR team aligned with who we are as a destination, and we are excited for them to amplify Medford's presence in the travel industry."



**PAN PACIFIC**  
HOTELS AND RESORTS

## TO TWITTER'S NEW CEO: CUT THE CRAP!

Many urgent questions confront Linda Yaccarino, whom Elon Musk tapped to be the new CEO of Twitter (she's expected to start at the end of June).

Can the former top NBC ad executive lure major advertisers back to the platform, while creating new revenue streams such as banking to service the company's pressing debt load from last year's \$44 billion buyout?

Can she turn a profit or get Donald Trump to re-activate his account? Oh, and will she please dump the poop emoji?

For anyone who hasn't seen it – or been on its receiving end – the emoji is the auto-reply image sent to those emailing Twitter's press office. It officially dropped in March via a [tweet](#) by Musk himself after the



**Allan Ripp**

company stopped taking media inquiries altogether following the buyout. Don't look for a press officer's name or phone number, or a generic "thanks for reaching out." Whether that's a comment on press officers or journalists is hard to figure.

Mr. Musk obviously enjoys the stink he's raised with such a provocative and unsightly bot response – just as he does when dueling with the SEC and others he deems unworthy. Reporters covering Twitter contact the company seeking verification of basic information, and instead of recording a simple "no comment," or "no one was immediately available," or perchance an actual fact-based reply, they are forced to state for the record, "Twitter responded to a request for comment with an auto-reply of a poop emoji."

In my own day job handling PR for law firms and other businesses, I've sometimes (to my regret) had to stonewall, divert and challenge reporters looking to confirm details about my clients, though my first goal is to be transparent and truthful. To have no dialogue at all is anathema, and depletes any good will when the time comes to call on the same reporters with real news to share. Musk might say he doesn't need an information office when he can simply tweet out whatever's on his mind to an estimated [134 million followers](#). But there's far greater need to know about an enterprise than what flows from an owner's brain, especially for a business that is supposed to facilitate information sharing on a massive scale.

For Twitter, media relations has become no relations at all, something that should concern the new CEO seeking to improve discourse with stakeholders, including the Fourth Estate.

"Elon has committed to being accessible to everyone for continual feedback," Ms. Yaccarino [said](#) during an April interview with Twitter's owner, in which she also echoed her new boss's view that free speech is a bedrock of American excellence. What does it say when your company's go-to feedback for editorial requests is a scoop of dung?

According to media lore, in the 1970s *New York Times* music critic John Rockwell reportedly did his best to dignify hard rocker Meat Loaf by sometimes referring to him as Mr. Loaf. It showed a wonderful touch of absurdity to the paper's propriety, which I've lately adapted to Musk. Instead of Chief Twit, Elmo or even the billionaire entrepreneur, I've come to regard him as Mr. Poop. Here's hoping that Ms. Yaccarino can cut the crap and help Twitter clean up its act.

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[Allan Ripp](#) runs a press relations firm in New York.

## NY COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEEDS MARKETING

Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY, is seeking proposals from agencies that can provide communication and marketing services.

HVCC is looking for an experienced partner with expertise in enrollment marketing that can develop and execute a multi-faceted annual marketing plan that includes advertising creative development, media buying, digital media and analysis services in an effort to enhance its reputation, capitalize on existing brand equity and boost student enrollment.

Terms of the contract call for a three-year commitment, running from Sept. 1, 2023, through August 31, 2026, with the possibility of three additional one-year extensions.

Proposals are due by 1:30 p.m. (ET) on Wednesday, May 31 and should be submitted electronically through the [Mercecell procurement website](#).

Questions should be directed to: [purchasing@hvcc.edu](mailto:purchasing@hvcc.edu).  
[Download the RFP \(PDF\)](#).



## TRUST RELATIONS PICKS UP OCEANWORKS

Trust Relations picks up Oceanworks, a platform that helps brands take action against plastic pollution. The agency will lead Oceanworks' new public relations program, emphasizing business and consumer media relations and thought leadership initiatives.

It will also support Oceanworks' IMPAC+ program, a turnkey customized solution that provides incentives for properly disposing of plastic waste that might otherwise go uncollected.

"We are thrilled to be working with a disruptive, boundary-pushing PR firm like Trust Relations that is passionate about our mission and 'gets' how important it is for us to get the word out about how Oceanworks is helping leading brands take a stand against plastic pollution," said Oceanworks founder Rob Ianelli.



## LOPEZ GETS CALL FROM AMERICORPS

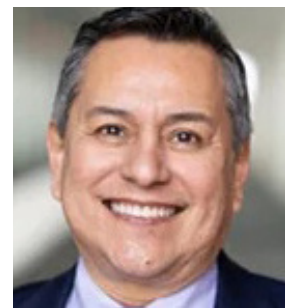
AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism, has named Russell Lopez chief of communications and marketing.

He most recently led the development and implementation of strategic communications for the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Lopez also served as director for the California State Lottery and as deputy press secretary for former California governor Gray Davis.

At AmeriCorps, Lopez will spearhead communications and marketing efforts to activate the national service community and increase recruitment applications.

AmeriCorps also recruited the NAACP's Jonah Bryson as press secretary. He was the on-the-record spokesperson for the civil rights group.



**Russell Lopez**

## **DUBAI OIL TRADER TAPS MERCURY PA**

Coral Energy, a Dubai-based oil trader and storage company, has hired Mercury Public Affairs for Washington representation. The company is among the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabian energy companies to purchase heavily discounted Russian crude oil, according to the [Wall Street Journal](#).



The Persian Gulf countries use the cheap Russian oil for internal use and refining, while exporting their own barrels at higher market rates.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, a move that triggered sanctions from the US and European Union, Coral Energy has handled dozens of shipments of Russian oil to Turkey, Tunisia and some European nations.

Mercury has Toby Moffett, former Connecticut Democratic Congressman; and Bryan Lanza, communications director for the Trump transition team, handling Coral Energy.

Omnicom owns Mercury.

## **UNITED MINDS UNVEILS MYRIANT**

United Minds, management consultancy, has launched Myriant, a business resiliency offering that helps clients deal with risks and opportunities that arise during this era of social and political polarization, misinformation and geopolitical upheaval. Myriant staffers are backed by advisors from business, government, political, civic society and academia, plus exclusive AI-backed analytics.

To support the launch, Myriant co-authored research with the USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism. The study found that 90 percent of investors consider social and environmental impacts important when buying a company's stock, and 70 percent of consumers and employees consider ESG matters when buying a product or service and joining or leaving a company, respectively.

The findings suggest that executives should not be distracted by debates about "woke companies" or the false choice of whether or not companies and investors should "choose" an ESG strategy.

United Minds is part of the [Weber Shandwick](#) Collective.

## **ANDREW JACKSON'S HERMITAGE PICKS F|W|V**

Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, the historic farm and homeplace of the seventh president of the United States, has handed local, regional and national media relations duties to [French|West|Vaughan](#).

The Raleigh-based firm will focus on mainstream consumer markets, as well as travel and event industry channels. F|W|V will also lead influencer marketing and partnership efforts for The Hermitage.

Opened to the public as a museum in 1889, The Hermitage is operated by the Andrew Jackson Foundation and features one of America's first presidential museums along with more than 20 historic buildings, including Jackson's mansion and tomb.

It is one of the most popular presidential homesites, attracting more than 230,000 annual visitors.



## **ON THE MOVE**

**Mercedes-Benz USA** brings on former Cadillac director, brand marketing **Melody Lee** as CMO, effective July 1. Lee was most recently senior VP of global brand & product marketing at design company MillerKnoll. She has served as global COO for design communications agency Camron and VP for brand development at beauty brand Shiseido. While at Cadillac, she also served global brand director of BOOK by Cadillac, a luxury vehicle subscription service. Lee succeeds previous CMO Drew Slaven, who retired from MBUSA earlier this year.



**Melody Lee**

**Verra**, a nonprofit organization that sets standards for climate action and sustainable development, appoints **Hillary Navarro**, who has designed and led communications initiatives at the International Renewable Energy Agency in Abu Dhabi and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as its chief communication officer. Navarro was most recently vice president of member experience at the La Plata Electric Association, a Colorado-based electric distribution cooperative with more than 33,000 members. In her new role, Hillary will oversee the new communications department at Verra.

**Riviera Partners**, a search firm that specializes in executive leadership placements in technology, product and design talent, appoints **Megan Martin** as VP of marketing. Martin joins the firm from Accenture, where she most recently served as executive VP of marketing at Mortgage Cadence, an Accenture company specializing in mortgage technology solutions. In her new post, she will oversee Riviera's global marketing strategy and the implementation of its marketing programs.

**ROKK Solutions** hires **Rebecca Sivy** as senior director of marketing. Sivy joins the agency from Discovery USA, an advocacy firm that is part of Publicis Health, where she was an account supervisor. Before that, she was a senior project manager at GMMB. In her new post, Sivy will lead the strategic marketing efforts for the firm. ROKK is also bringing on Gabrielle Gallone as senior account executive of digital. Gallone previously executed digital plans for congressional campaigns at Targeted Victory and consulted for Republican campaigns and the NRSC.

**The Public Relations Global Network** elects **Andy See Teong Leng**, principal partner and managing director of Perspective Strategies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as its president for the next 12 months. He previously served as secretary since April 2019 and was regional vice president for PRGN's Asia Pacific region from 2020 to 2022. He succeeds former president David Fuscus, president and CEO at Xenophon Strategies in Washington, D.C., who will now assume the duties of immediate past president and chair of PRGN's Advisory Board.



**Rebecca Sivy**

## **THE FEAR OF AI IS OVERBLOWN**

November 1, 2022—a day that lives in infamy in the PR and marketing professions, among others. In the before-time, we never worried about machines taking our jobs. But with the launch of ChatGPT by Microsoft—and with three subsequent upgrades—we have been



**Peter Prodromou**

treated to an endless stream of fear and despair about its potential to replace skill positions in our professions.

It is true that generative AI can write a cogent press release and reasonably decent byline articles. But a cursory review reveals the output for what it is—gathering a series of facts, a la a search engine—and organizing it into cogent paragraphs. The pieces are reasonably good, but lack the nuance and

understanding that a human can apply to writing.

Setting aside the style of writing, there are also questions about accuracy and fact checking. Right now, as we test these technologies, we are closely qualifying outputs to ensure they match the facts. Consider this: are we prepared to simply put these outputs into the wild without quality assurance and fact checking? If the answer is “no,” how then can we be confident about replacing humans with machines?

What I have heard, in travel, speaking engagements and conversations, is that practitioners see the current generation of tools as enhancing productivity through faster, smarter research. Rather than having to rely on conventional search, many are turning to generative AI to aggregate large amounts of data in answer to complex questions.

The reality is, this kind of wholesale replacement is a ways off—if it is to ever occur. Consider the complexities of the clients we work with—healthcare companies, highly regulated financial services groups, complex technology, and more. All require a degree of nuanced thinking and human intelligence as core to the work.

We see the proper focus of AI being on quickly collating and analyzing terabytes of data and delivering them to humans in small, mission-specific categories that focus on our clients’ business opportunities, marketing and communications goals.

I have been in this industry for more than 25 years. Too often we are focused on leveraging new technologies—not on creating value, but on slashing costs. Generative AI and the related buzz is the most recent example of our collective approach to driving down the value of what we deliver by leveraging a technology to replace human beings. It’s a zero sum game that does little to enhance client results and very much to destroy morale and work product.

I am not arguing that we can blindly stand against technology and its inevitability. Rather, I am advising that we, as an industry, focus on things like Performance AI as a means of driving better value through more targeted results. In this context, we should not fear AI but, instead, embrace it, turning the machines to our advantage.

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*Peter Prodromou is president of Boathouse, an independent agency co-founded by former Hill Holiday/McCann executive John Connors. He previously spent more than 15 years helping to build and lead Racepoint Global.*

## **MYRTLE BEACH SETS SIGHTS ON CANADA**

The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce is looking for a qualified, experienced, financially sound and responsible firm to promote the South Carolina destination in Canada.

The campaign will focus on the Visit Myrtle Beach brand through tourism marketing and sales activities, including trade and consumer initiatives that will generate the strongest overall return-on-investment, according to the RFP.

These efforts may include a variety of approaches from PR, consumer sales, group sales and marketing.

The MBACC intends to award a single contract but reserves the right to hire multiple firms.

The contract will run for four years and comes two additional one-year renewal periods.

Proposals are due May 27.

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



## **MEDIA MANEUVERS**

An 82 percent stake in **Forbes Global Media Holdings** is being acquired by Austin Russell, founder and CEO of Luminar Technologies, a company that develops vision-based lidar and machine perception technologies, mainly for self-driving cars. Forbes’s current parent company, Hong Kong-based Integrated Whale Media Investments, will hold on to a minority stake in the company, as well as retaining a seat on its board. The remaining stake in the company still held by the Forbes family will now be owned by Russell, who was named youngest self-made billionaire by Forbes in 2021. However, Forbes Media chairman and editor in chief Steve Forbes will remain involved with the company.



**Austin Russell**

**The Institute for Nonprofit News** formally launches its Rural News Network, a website that will incorporate the work of 68 participating newsrooms operating across 46 states. The initiative, which began as a pilot project in 2021, will be supported by dedicated grants from organizations including the Knight Foundation, MacArthur Foundation and Walton Family Foundation. It will let readers sort stories by state and topic as well as find news outlets that address their interests. In addition, RNN will permit news publishers to republish much of its content for free on their own sites.

**NBCUniversal’s Peacock** signs up as the first streaming service to snag exclusive rights to an NFL playoff game, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. Sources told the Journal that the price tag on the deal is in the neighborhood of \$110 million. While some NFL playoff games have previously been carried on streamers, this marks the first time that a playoff game will not also be carried on a national broadcast or cable network. The game will be played on Jan. 13, 2024 as part of Wild Card Weekend.

# COMMENTARY



**Kevin McCarthy**

**Congressman Kevin McCarthy worked** so hard to get his dream job, Speaker of the House.

But last week he threw it all away by backing an ethics committee probe, rather than an expulsion vote, for the indicted laughing stock of the House, George Santos.

What was McCarthy thinking? Santos is kryptonite to the Republican Party and its slim control of Congress.

The Democratic Congressional Committee quickly cashed in on the McCarthy debacle. It launched digital campaigns on May 19 targeted at Republicans in swing districts who voted in support of the ethics probe, after they publicly said they want Santos out of Congress.

New York Congressmen Nick LaLota, Anthony Esposito, Mike Lawler and Marc Molinaro are the initial targets.

“Vulnerable House Republicans have proven they are too weak to buck party leadership—instead of expelling serial grifter and indicted criminal George Santos from Congress—they are protecting him,” Viet Shelton, DCCC spokesperson, said in announcing the campaign.

The ads will run through Memorial Day.

McCarthy on May 17 posed with former Speakers Nancy Pelosi, Newt Gingrich, John Boehner and Paul Ryan at a ceremony that unveiled a painting of Ryan for Statuary Hall.

He will soon be posing for his official painting.

**Florida strongman Ron DeSantis** is dispatching his army to the Mexican border. It’s the latest desperate publicity stunt designed to boost the governor’s sagging polling numbers.

Since the Sunshine State lacks a national border, Ron is sending his troopers to Texas to protect the “sovereignty of our country and the rule of law,” according to a May 16 press release from the governor’s office.

The release refers to the Floridians unexpectedly bound to the Lone Star State as “over 1,100 assets.”

Those human assets are 800 national guard troops, 200 cops, 20 fish and wildlife officers and 20 emergency management personnel who are leaving loved ones behind so DeSantis can score cheap political points.

They will be joined by 17 drones, 10 airboats/shallow draft vessels, five aircraft and two mobile command vehicles

Florida taxpayers will pick up the tab for the PR caper to combat what authoritarian Ron calls the “impacts of Biden’s border crisis.”

The governor’s view of law and order leans to vigilantism. He tweeted in defense of Daniel Penney, the former Marine who murdered a homeless man suffering from mental health issues on a New York subway.

“We must defeat the Soros-Funded DAs, stop the Left’s pro-criminal agenda, and take back the streets for law abiding citizens. We stand with Good Samaritans like Daniel Penny. Let’s show this Marine... America’s got his back.”

It might be okay to choke somebody to death in the Sunshine State, Ron, but that’s not the way that we do things in New York. Penney has been charged with second-degree manslaughter related to the May 1 death of Jordan Neely.

He is innocent until a jury finds him guilty. We don’t do vigilante justice in New York.

DeSantis also should re-read the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Gospel of Luke’s Good Samaritan binds the wounds and takes care of a traveller who was beaten half to death by robbers.

He didn’t put a fellow traveller in a chokehold.

**Pernod Ricard seeks to recover** from a corporate black eye. The French company, the world’s second-largest marketer of liquor, has dropped plans to resume exports to Russia.

The marketer of Beefeater gin, Jameson Irish whiskey, Chivas Regal Scotch whisky, Absolut vodka and Mumm champagne was the first company tracked by the Moral Rating Agency, the watchdog set up to monitor corporate activity in Russia in the aftermath of its invasion of Ukraine.

“It was an outrageous idea to restart exports to Russia,” said MRA’s Mark Dixon. “Pernod Ricard’s climbdown in the face of a public outcry is a lesson for other companies—no one should be tempted to do the same.”

Pernod Ricard said it stopped all exports of its international brands to Russia at the end of April.

It promised to end the distribution of its portfolio in Russia, a process that it claims could take months to complete.

The MRA plans to monitor the company’s actions in Russia to see that it actually cuts ties there.

Let’s raise a glass to MRA.

**Matthew Myers, one of the good guys** in the world of advocacy, is stepping down as president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids after a 23-year run. He deserves the nation’s gratitude for battling Big Tobacco every step of the way and driving down smoking rates among young people.

During his tenure, Myers led the push for the 2009 law that gave the Food and Drug Administration regulatory authority over tobacco products, helped enact the biggest federal tax on cigarettes in US history, supported state lawsuits that led to the 1998 tobacco settlement, and participated in the federal lawsuit that resulted in a racketeering verdict against cigarette companies.

Bill Novelli, chair of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said Myers and his team “have contributed enormously to driving down smoking rates to record lows among both youth and adults in the US.”

The Porter Novelli co-founder gave Myers the ultimate compliment: “He played a central role in one of the greatest public health achievements of our time.”

Yolonda Richardson, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids executive VP for global programs, will succeed Myers when he steps down on July 1.

Myers will serve as a strategic advisor to Richardson.

—Kevin McCauley