# Covering the Bases

ports? There are jobs with teams and leagues, of course. But the rise of sports as big spawned opportunities in fields from videogames to the law. Here's a sampling.

now runs. Two and a half years noved to Shanghai to help open ifirst office in mainland China.

DOES: Ms. Yu oversees all TV all media broadcasts for the hina and Taiwan. That means leals that result in broadcasts asts of games, as well as makarchive games available on the rently some 250 NBA games a e carried on television and Chistites.

DOTE: One of the first deals Ms. was with Shanghai TV and its chief, Bai Li. "My boss was in tso I flew to Shanghai myself extremely nervous," recalls Ms. Li was shocked by how young I do talk to him as a peer, but it tough for me. I pushed through nincredible sense of accomplishme we signed the deal, my first."

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 $-Alan\ Paul$ 



THE ARCHITECT

## ORGE HEINLEIN

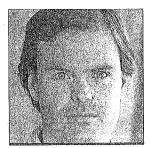
AGE: 43
-incinal 360 Architecture

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THE PRODUCER

### LUKE McDonough

AGE: 33 President, Studio411

PERSONAL BACKGROUND: Grew up in New York and graduated from Colorado College with degrees in economics and political science. In 1998, he co-founded iFilm, one of the original Internet video sites, and one of the few to make it through the dot-com bust. (The site was purchased last year by Viacom Inc.) An enthusiastic skater, surfer and skier.

HOW HE GOT THE JOB: At iFilm, he befriended Casey Wasserman, one of the site's investors and grandson of legendary Hollywood mogul Lew Wasserman. By 2003, Mr. Wasserman had begun buying talent and entertainment firms that specialized in "action sports" such as skateboarding and surfing, and he asked Mr. McDonough to help develop a "digital content strategy" for the new assets. Shortly thereafter, Mr. McDonough joined Wasserman Media Group LLC as an executive.

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BEST PART OF THE JOB: Meeting childhood heroes like 1970s skateboarding legend stacey Peralta, who is now a filmmaker. Says Mr. McDonough: "I had a Powell-peralta skateboard growing up, so finding myself in a long conversation with [Mr. Peralta] about his next movie—that was pretty cool."

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— Jon Wentbuch

Klesko went to San Diego, he brought Ms. Calabrese with him. She worked part time for the team, starting in 2000, until they hired her full time in 2004. "It was the best moment of my career, because I've worked my butt off to get to this point," she says.

WHAT SHE DOES: Ås a full-time massage therapist for the San Diego Padres, Ms. Calabrese does about 15 sessions of deeptissue therapy a day, sometimes more. "My hands just kill all the time," she says. On days when the team plays at 7 p.m., her day begins around noon and lasts until midnight or beyond as she works on, for example, pitcher Jake Peavy's sore right shoulder, or outfielder Mike Cameron's lower back. She tries to exert enough force to increase the blood flow around slightly damaged muscles while releasing the lactic acid that creates tightness and soreness.

COOL ANECDOTE: There are only a handful of full-time massage therapists in the majors, which made Ms. Calabrese all the more proud this spring when, on opening day, she ran onto the field to be introduced as a member of the team training staff. "I still get the chills," she says.

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—Any K. Nelson



THE BRANDERS

## ANDREW BLANCO AND RANEL CASTRO AGES: MR. BLANCO, 35; MR. CASTRO, 24

Senior Designer, SME Inc.; Director of Client Services, SME Inc.

PERSONAL BACKGROUNDS: Ranel Castro (at right in photo), the son of Cuban and Puerto Rican immigrants, was born and raised in Miami, where he fell in love with every local team from the Dolphins to the Heat. While he says bis favorite sport was

team, from its uniforms and emblems to souvenirs and marketing materials. But the artistic component of branding is definitely Mr. Blanco's baby. As senior designer, he's the one charged with conceiving a design that best reflects the heart of the city the team is representing.

cool anecdote: After the 310-day lockout wiped out the 2004-05 National Hockey League season, the Boston Bruins needed help regaining their fan base in a city where baseball and football were more popular. Messrs. Castro and Blanco worked on the marketing campaign with the slogan "...it's called Bruins." Says Mr. Castro: "Bruins was an attitude you had...whether you were white collar or blue collar... If you went to the game, you were blue collar for the night." The SME team chose large, bold fonts and gritty styles for print ads (the texture looks like it could be ice), and used celebrities such as Massachusetts native Denis Leary in the commercials. The Bruins said in a statement that SME has helped position the team for long-term success. Mr. O'Hara says SME and the Bruins have extended their contract to the 2006-07 season

BEST PART OF THE JOB: For Mr. Castro, it's being closely involved in defining the fan experience. "I know that when Miami Dolphins fans go to a game," he says, "a lot of what they will experience from the Dolphin Stadium logo to the Web site to the environment, my company played a hand in defining and I was the project manager." Mr. Castro knows about every initiative before it becomes a reality, he adds. "None of my friends can say that about their desk jobs."

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-Monica M. Clark



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## JULIE SPAR GRAND

Senior Vice President, Deputy General Counsel of NHL Legal

PERSONAL BACKGROUND: Ms. Grand grew up in Silver Spring, Md., and graduated with a degree in economics from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

Now SHE GOT THE JOB: She moved to New York after law school to work at the law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP. "Just by happenstance," Ms. Grand says, she began to work with some of the firm's top sports attorneys on collective-hargaining issues for the National Basketball Association. She also was involved with the trial that decided he National Football League's Los Angeles Rams could move to St. Louis. In 1999, a former colleague from Skadden offered her the job as deputy general counsel for the National Hockey League, and around three years later she was promoted to vice president.

WHAT SHE DOES: "No two days are ever the

New York. She typically travels about five days a month to attend grievance meetings and disciplinary hearings either in Toronto, where the NHL Players' Association is based, or Washington, where the league's impartial arbitrator is located. "When we can, we try to get in a game" of the Maple Leafs or Capitals, says Ms. Grand, who usually catches local games of the New York Islanders or Rangers or the New York Islanders or Rangers or the New Jersey Devils.

worst part of the lob: "I love my job," she says. "Nothing comes to mind."

-Neil Parman



THE ACCOUNTANT

### STEVEN M. PIASCIK

Tax Accountant, President and Founder of Piascik & Associates

PERSONAL BACKGROUND: A licensed CPA and huge Red Sox fan dating back to his youth in Massachusetts, Mr. Plascik worked early in his accounting career with a small Virginia firm that did taxes for many professional athletes. He says it was just luck that he was chosen to work for the pro baseball players the firm served. He later worked as a tax accountant for KPMG in Richmond, Va., but five years ago gave up the partnership track in favor of launching his own company. His childhood hero was Boston Red Sox outfielder Dwight Evans, number 24; today Mr. Plascik wears the number 12 in the adult soccer league he plays in. That's half of 24, he explains, since Mr. Evans's number wasn't available.

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of the Job: Changing the scale ts experience to make it more at a time when most ballparks ans or more, Messrs. Heinlein ik are designing the one in Oak-25% fewer seats. "The problem parks is that when you turn on iter," you usually see all these is," he says. "I'm in love with like Wrigley Field and Fenway is proximity of the fans to the believable."

OF THE JOB: Constant travel that apart from his wife and two 33 and 17. "We left HOK because sing kids and wanted to spend with them," Mr. Heinlein says. In first week we were on our are in Brad's basement when we rom Herb Kohl." The Wisconsin d interviewed the pair at HOK pning a stadium for the Universconsin. "He asked if we were sted and we said, 'Are we ever.'



THE PRODUCER

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President, Studio411

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—Jon Weinbach



THE MASSAGE THERAPIST

## KELLY CALABRESE AGE: 33

Sports Therapist, San Diego Padres

PERSONAL BACKGROUND: A licensed massage therapist for more than 10 years, Ms. Calabrese is believed to be the first woman employed full time in a Major League Baseball clubhouse.

HOW SHE GOT THE JOB: Ms. Calabrese started working with baseball players out of a private practice in Cleveland, when a former client introduced her to Indians infielder Carlos Baerga. Impressed with the results on his back and hamstrings, Mr. Baerga recommended her to other players. Soon it was six degrees of Kelly Calabrese: Alan Embree and Kenny Lofton got traded to the Braves from Clevand and introduced Ms. Calabrese to new teammate Ryan Klesko. When Mr.

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right in photo), the son of Cuban and Puerto Rican immigrants, was born and raised in Miami, where he fell in love with every local team from the Dolphins to the Heat. While he says his favorite sport was football, at 6 feet 5 inches Mr. Castro played basketball in high school. He majored in sports management at New York University, graduated in 2003, and eventually ended up at SME Inc., a New York based pro-sports branding company. "I didn't have any connections or anything," he says. "I just interned, worked hard, got good grades and got good jobs."

Andrew Blanco took a different route. A native of Venezuela, he joined the company 16 years ago speaking broken English and without a college degree or any formal training. He did odd jobs around the office until eight months later, when he got a chance to show his design skills. He was given 10 minutes to create a design for a classical-music station. The client chose it. Mr. Blanco took a four-year hiatus from SME to travel the world with his Latin ska band, King Changó. He returned because his hands were "itching" to create again. "I view design as art," he says.

HOW THEY GOT THE JOBS: They networked. SME Chief Executive and partner Frederick S. Popp was acquainted with one of Mr. Castro's sports-management professors. Mr. Blanco met the chairman and chief creative officer of SME, Edward M. O'Hara, through a family friend.

WHAT THEY DO: Marketing sports teams has its own special demands. "You're talking about something that means a lot to people," Mr. Castro says. His main role is to ensure the timely delivery of all of SME's client projects and to be a part of the creative process, providing ideas, writing and contributing in other ways as well. Both men are responsible for the look of a

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PERSONAL BACKGROUND: Ms. Grand grew up in Silver Spring, Md., and graduated with a degree in economics from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

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WHAT SHE DOES: "No two days are ever the same," she says. Typically, she helps decide which player trades will be approved (the NHL legal department wants to ensure that teams and players understand what each is getting), deals with grievances under the collective-bargaining agreement and oversees any litigation involving the NHL. Currently, she says she is helping the NHL. Decome the first major sports league to implement a league-wide electronic database of players' medical records. "There will be certain anonymous information that will get extracted from those confidential medical records that will enable each team to monitor its own injuries versus those leaguewide at any point in the season," she says. If there's a significant portion of players who incur, say, skate-related injuries, a focus group might be set up to work with equipment makers to help prevent future injuries.

cool anecdote: On July 22, 2005, Ms. Grand attended the NHL Board of Governors meeting in which the hoard unanimously approved a new collective-bargaining agreement. That effectively ended the lockout that had caused the cancellation of the 2004-05 season. "After spending a significant amount of my time over the prior several years working on our collective-bargaining strategy and related matters, and the immediate six weeks of my life working virtually round-the-clock negotiating and drafting the new CBA, it was truly surreat and exciting to be a part of that momentous occasion," she says.

BEST PART OF THE 10B: "No two days are alike," Ms. Grand said recently while seated behind a hockey-rink shaped conference table at NHL headquarters in



THE ACCOUNTANT

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Tax Accountant, President and Founder of Piascik & Associates

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cool anecdote: Sometimes, the coolest thing about rubbing elbows with stars is simply being able to impress his kids. "We were watching a Jets-Redskins game and Brandon Moore was playing. My 7-year-old is thrilled that his dad knows these guys," Mr. Plascik says. And when his 9-year-old daughter went off to basketball camp this summer and he sent a signed 76ers jersey along with her, "she was so proud that her dad does the taxes for this guy!"

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BEST PART OF THE JOB: "I get a lot of cool stuff, like signed balls," Mr. Piascik says. The hallways and lobby in his company's Glen Allen, Va., office are lined with jerseys signed by athletes who are clients of the firm. "But what still gets me," he says, "is that all my athletes have my cellphone number. I'il take a call and a friend will ask who it was and I'll say, 'It's one of my 76ers,' and they'll be floored."

MARCH ENET OF THE 109. Despite the intense

worst part of the Job: Despite the intense travel demands of a business that requires a lot of face time with clients who are themselves constantly on the road, Mr. Piascik doesn't mind being a road warrior. What does get old sometimes is "always being available to the clients." With clients scattered across the country and the globe, he is at the mercy of the multiple time zones they live in. "We like to have our clients not be inconvenienced," he says. "That means we work on their time schedules." Add that to the 12-hour minimum workday that he puts in, and he finds that he's often the one who gets inconvenienced. "Don't get me wrong, I love doing this for my clients," he adds, "but this doesn't allow me even one full day of vacation, and sometimes even I just need a break."

-Alison Overholt