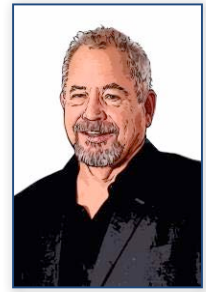


# Random Notes

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*From the desk of Michael Willard, chairman of Willard International. Random Notes are written for a few special friends of Willard (the agency and the guy).*

Nov.-Dec., 2013

## *Fooled Again*

**J**ust think of the comic strip Peanuts and the hapless Charlie Brown character who gets the football jerked away by the little raven-haired Lucy just as he is about the kick the daylights out of it.



– Yep, we, metaphorically, are all Charlie Browns. Lucy, on the other hand, is President Yanukovych or perhaps his several predecessors. A few days ago the European Association Agreement was all but signed, sealed and delivered.

– Then, whisk, the ball was pulled away at the last moment.

– It happens frequently – the most flagrant example being when the hopes of the Orange Revolution were dashed when the then president and his prime minister couldn't agree – again metaphorically – between paper and plastic bagging at the super market, much less on governing.

– Only last month I praised Yanukovych in these Random Notes for standing up to the Russians. I was premature, and hopelessly optimistic. He journeyed to Russia for a semi-secret “come to Jesus” meeting with Vladimir Putin.

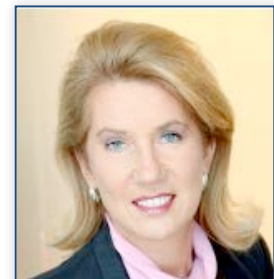
– He got rolled.

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## *Irina Kibina: A Great Addition to the Willard team*

**I**n 2001, Roman Diukarev and I opened a modest Willard office in the World Trade Center in Moscow. We made the big leap without having a single client lined up. It was truly a “Field of Dreams” story of “if you build it they will come.”

– Then we waited – aggressively waited, but waited all the same. We trudged through the snow suggesting we were a public relations company with a difference. I gave out dozens of my new book: “Dancing with the Bear – Crisis Management in Eastern Europe”.



*Irina Kibina*

– Then one day, Irina Kibina came through the door. She was corporate affairs chief for Sun Interbrew. Willard and Irina have been linked ever since that day. We followed her great career after Sun Interbrew to Evraz Group, Russian Sberbank and British Petroleum-TNK where she held senior positions.

– Irina and Roman – president of public relations for Willard – make a great team on corporate and public affairs, on crisis management and on the thousand and one different issues that face a company doing business in Eastern Europe.



– Today, we are proud that Irina has joined up with Willard International as president of Willard Executive Communications Program. As a PR person, I tend to deal in superlatives. But, I have to tell you, Irina is one of the best, not just in Russia, but in Europe.

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## *The Traveling Willard Roundtable*



**A**fter years of nesting at the Maksym Rylsky Museum, the Willard Roundtable – the city’s most interesting dinner and discussion salon – is on the move. We held the latest installment at the Sofiyskiy Fitness Center, a perfect venue for a great dinner and discussion.

– It was a particular interesting discussion since President Yanukovich had just announced he was tilting toward Russia and would not sign the EU Association Agreement.

– We were honored to have the following participant at our November 21 roundtable: Renato Ruzczyk, General Director of Lactalis; Alexander Scherba, chief advisor to the 1st Deputy Prime Minister; Krzysztof Siedlecki, Country Manager at Astellas Pharma; Christos Tsolkas, Managing Director Ukraine, Caucasus, Moldova at Philip Morris International; Iryna Ryabchenko, Fitness Center Sofiyskiy; Taras Lukachuk, Area Director: Ukraine and New Markets, EE & CA at Kraft Foods; Vladimir Lavrenchuk, Chairman of the Board Raiffeisen Bank Aval; Armen Khachatryan, Senior Partner of Asters law firm and Valeriy Zhaldak, executive director of L’viv 2022 Olympic Bid.

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## *What Did You Know?*

**T**here are two questions a company can expect to get from government officials, regulators, consumers and possibly employees in the wake of a crisis: ***What did the company know? And when did it know it?***



*Howard Baker*

– These are the same two questions my old friend and former

U.S. Senate Republican Leader Howard Baker asked during America's Senate investigation into Watergate that led to unraveling a cover-up and caused the downfall of President Nixon in the 1970s.

– These questions are particularly pertinent when the health and safety of consumers are possibly at risk.

– A second rule I always follow when giving crisis advice: ***Short term sacrifice (recall of product, transparency) is always better than long term pain that can cause a company its reputation.***

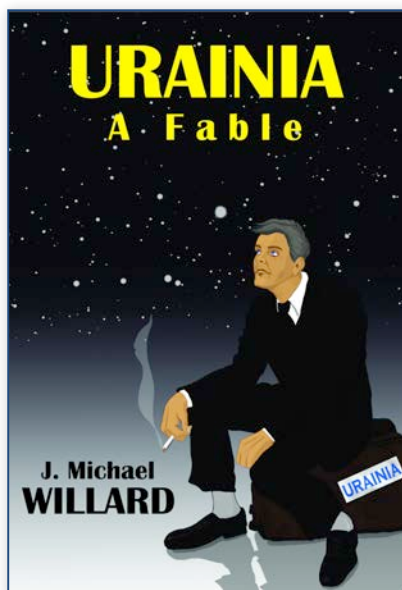
– If you keep these two points in mind, your chance of coming out of any crisis with the company's reputation at stake is increased substantially.

– I like the words of Warren Buffett: "If you lose money, I can be understanding. But if you hurt our reputation, I will be ruthless."

– At Willard, we have the most experienced crisis counselors in the region with experience in virtually every industry.

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### *Urainia: Leaving a Legacy*



**T**he first leader in Ukraine to want to leave an honorable legacy for his or her children or grandchildren will be the father of the country.

– This, in essence, is what "Urainia: A Fable" is all about. I believe it accomplishes this in a unique and entertaining way.

– In all, I have written 10 books. Three are fiction and seven non-fiction. This book is my favorite because it carries a profound message for Ukraine. At the same time, I think you will find it an interesting read. At 50,000 words or 243 pages, it's no *War and Peace*, but an easy couple day read.

– You can order it through Amazon either in soft cover or electronically: <http://www.amazon.com/Urainia-Fable-J-Michael-Willard-ebook/dp/B00DWWD2OY>

– It will be out in Ukrainian in a few weeks.

– I wish the Ukraine leadership had had the opportunity to read it before making the decision they did on the EU Association Agreement.

*Best regards,*



*Michael Willard*

*PS: see you on the Maidan*

