

Covering the Bases

sports? 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 moved to Shanghai to help open first office in mainland China.

DOES: Ms. Yu oversees all TV al media broadcasts for China and Taiwan. That means leads that result in broadcasts of games, as well as making archive games available on the rently some 250 NBA games a e carried on television and Chisites.

NOTE: One of the first deals Ms. was with Shanghai TV and its chief, Bai Li. "My boss was in so I flew to Shanghai myself extremely nervous," recalls Ms. Li was shocked by how young it d to talk to him as a peer, but itough for me. I pushed through n incredible sense of accomplish- n we signed the deal, my first."

OF THE JOB: "Meeting a lot of esting people. I have learned rom so many people I have met . It has also been really satisfy- xing to witness the growth of n China. When I started work- ng Kong, there were no NBA employees in mainland China were only four TV deals. Now, n extremely active Chinese-lan- eb site, streaming games on d, 24 TV deals and growing of- ng hai and Beijing."

T OF THE JOB: The time zone. "We y closely with the New York of h is 12 hours behind us," says . "We're basically working 24 ay."

- Alan Paul



THE ARCHITECT

GEORGE HEINLEIN

AGE: 43

Principal, 360 Architecture

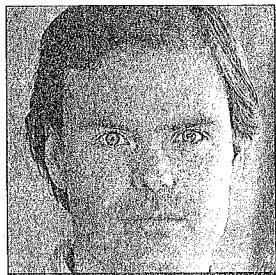
BACKGROUND: Mr. Heinlein, a nansas City, Mo., decided to go tecture at the University of Kan- he realized he wasn't going to fessional basketball player. On n, he took an internship at HOK leading stadium designer. ; I wasn't going to make it to the t me combine my two passions, d architecture," he says.

OF THE JOB: Among HOK's 35 em- r. Heinlein says, "there were a le who'd never been to a profes- rts game in their life." He was HOK in 1986 and stayed there arted his own firm with his long- ness partner, Brad Schrock, in en called Heinlein Schrock their company subsequently th another Kansas City agency, o become 360 Architecture.

DOES: "In general, we're always enhance the fans' relationship players, get them to see some- y don't normally see." While de- r HOK, he came up with a muse- e for the Nashville Arena, and at Schrock he designed innovat

Now, 10 years later, I'm on the road almost all the time meeting with clients."

- Shaun Assael



THE PRODUCER

LUKE McDONOUGH

AGE: 33

President, Studio411

PERSONAL BACKGROUND: Grew up in New York and graduated from Colorado Col- lege with degrees in economics and pol- itical 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 enthusias- tic skater, surfer and skier.

HOW HE GOT THE JOB: At iFilm, he be- friended 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 spe- cialized in "action sports" such as skate- boarding and surfing, and he asked Mr. McDonough to help develop a "digital con- tent strategy" for the new assets. Shortly thereafter, Mr. McDonough joined Wasser- man Media Group LLC as an executive.

WHAT HE DOES: Oversees Studio411, which bills itself as the world's first movie studio devoted to action sports. The company, a division of Wasserman Media Group, fi- nances and distributes DVDs featuring no- table X-Games athletes, like the recent re- lease "Travis and the Nitro Circus 2," a collection of stunts by motocross champion Travis Pastrana and friends. Mr. McDon- ough gets directly involved on some pro- ductions, but more of his time is spent on building relationships with retailers, TV networks, corporate sponsors and anyone else interested in action sports. "The idea is to aggregate all this great content, ex- pand its distribution, and then tie the Tyle- nols and Toyotas into it," he says.

COOL ANECDOTE: Laird Hamilton, the cham- pion surfer and American Express Co. pitchman, recently asked for Mr. McDon- ough's input on a film he proposes to shoot for Studio411 in Indonesia. "That was a pretty great meeting," says Mr. McDonough.

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 find- ing myself in a long conversation with [Mr. Peralta] about his next movie—that was pretty cool."

WORST PART OF THE JOB: Worrying that some veteran producers would be hostile to him and to Studio411. The company has little street cred in an industry in which hard-core action-sports figures don't want corporate types taking over. So far, Mr. McDonough thinks his out- sider status hasn't been a detriment. "The fact that we're organized and we pay on time has endeared us to them."

- Jon Weinbach

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: As a full-time massage therapist for the San Diego Padres, Ms. Calabrese does about 15 sessions of deep- tissue 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 cre- ates tightness and soreness.

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

BEST PART OF THE JOB: As a member of the training staff, Ms. Calabrese has the best seat in the house at games—in the dug- out. Even better are the friendships she has developed with players, whom she calls "family." Mr. Cameron gives Ms. Calabrese arm massages to provide her own tired muscles with some relief. Mr. Peavy often takes her with him to boxing lessons on the road if he needs a good workout. During her time in Cleveland, Omar Vizquel, then the Indians' short- stop, would take his entire family to her parents' home for cookouts.

WORST PART OF THE JOB: There are some who still argue that a woman has no place in a big-league dugout. During an April 22 telecast of a New York Mets game with San Diego, Keith Hernandez, a former player and now an announcer for the Mets, expressed his disgust over Ms. Calabrese's presence among the Padres, say- ing: "I won't say women belong in the dugout." Says Ms. Calabrese: "It was offen- sive, but in retrospect I'm almost glad it happened, because it allowed me to talk about my job and possibly give hope to others that they can do it, too." She adds that it stinks she can't get Nike to make her any team apparel in women's sizes.

- Amy 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 Pu- erto 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

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 de- signer, he's the one charged with conceiv- ing 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 sea- son.

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."

WORST PART OF THE JOB: Deadlines keep getting shorter. "We have to come up with brilliant and original work...and the deadlines become overwhelming," Mr. Blanco says.

- Monica M. Clark



THE LAWYER

JULIE SPAR GRAND

AGE: 36

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 de- gree from the University of Pennsylvania.

HOW 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-bargaining issues for the National Basketball Association. She also was involved with the trial that decided the 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 lo- cated. "When we can, we try to get in a game" of the Maple Leafs or Capitals, says Ms. Grand, who usually catches lo- cal games of the New York Islanders or Rangers or the New Jersey Devils.

WORST PART OF THE JOB: "I love my job," she says. "Nothing comes to mind."

- Neil Parmar



THE ACCOUNTANT

STEVEN M. PIASECIK

AGE: 38

Tax Accountant, President and Founder of Piasecik & Associates

PERSONAL BACKGROUND: A licensed CPA and huge Red Sox fan dating back to his youth in Massachusetts, Mr. Piasecik 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 partner- ship track in favor of launching his own company. His childhood hero was Boston Red Sox outfielder Dwight Evans, number 24; today Mr. Piasecik wears the number 12 in the adult soccer league he plays in. That's half of 24, he explains, since Mr. Evans' number wasn't available.

HOW HE GOT THE JOB: After leaving the small Virginia firm, Mr. Piasecik maintained his relationships with the athletes' managers over the years, and when he began think- ing about going out on his own, he zeroed in on athletes as a potential client group. "I was searching for people who could actually afford our fees and would really need our services," he recalls. "Before I knew it, one company gave me 23 ath- letes, another gave me three, another two." Now, Mr. Piasecik says, his firm has clients throughout the National Football League, National Basketball Association and Major League Baseball, and is mak- ing inroads into professional golf.

WHAT HE DOES: Mainly tax accounting. But another popular thing Mr. Piasecik does is provide his athlete clients, like Jets guard Brandon Moore, with a series of tools to help them get organized about money. "We give athletes a leather portfo- lio to take on the road to record their expenses and help them think about their budgeting and their tax-preparation is- sues throughout the year," Mr. Piasecik says. "If they have a laptop, we can give them the tools on CD. If they don't fill things out, there are envelopes for each month and they can just slip receipts in. We make it simple, and we'll save them tens of thousands of dollars in taxes." Mr. Moore agrees: "My wife helps me stay on top of that stuff now, but he was the one who put me on track to organize things before I was married."

COOL ANECDOTE: Sometimes, the coolest thing about rubbing elbows with stars is simply being able to impress his kids

