



**Legends**  
**BOSTON'S WCVB**  
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**Sweeps Stakes**

Fox soars. NBC bores. A look at the winners (*Idol*, below), losers and a few surprises in February sweeps. **Page 18**



"When we come back, the story of the first flying saucers."

—ABC NEWS' PETER JENNINGS, HOSTING THE SPECIAL REPORT *UFOS: SEEING IS BELIEVING*

FEBRUARY 20, 2008

**BROADCASTING & CABLE**



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**Staying Power**

Now entering its seventh season, *The Amazing Race* has proved to be an unlikely success. Co-creators Bertram van Munster and Elise

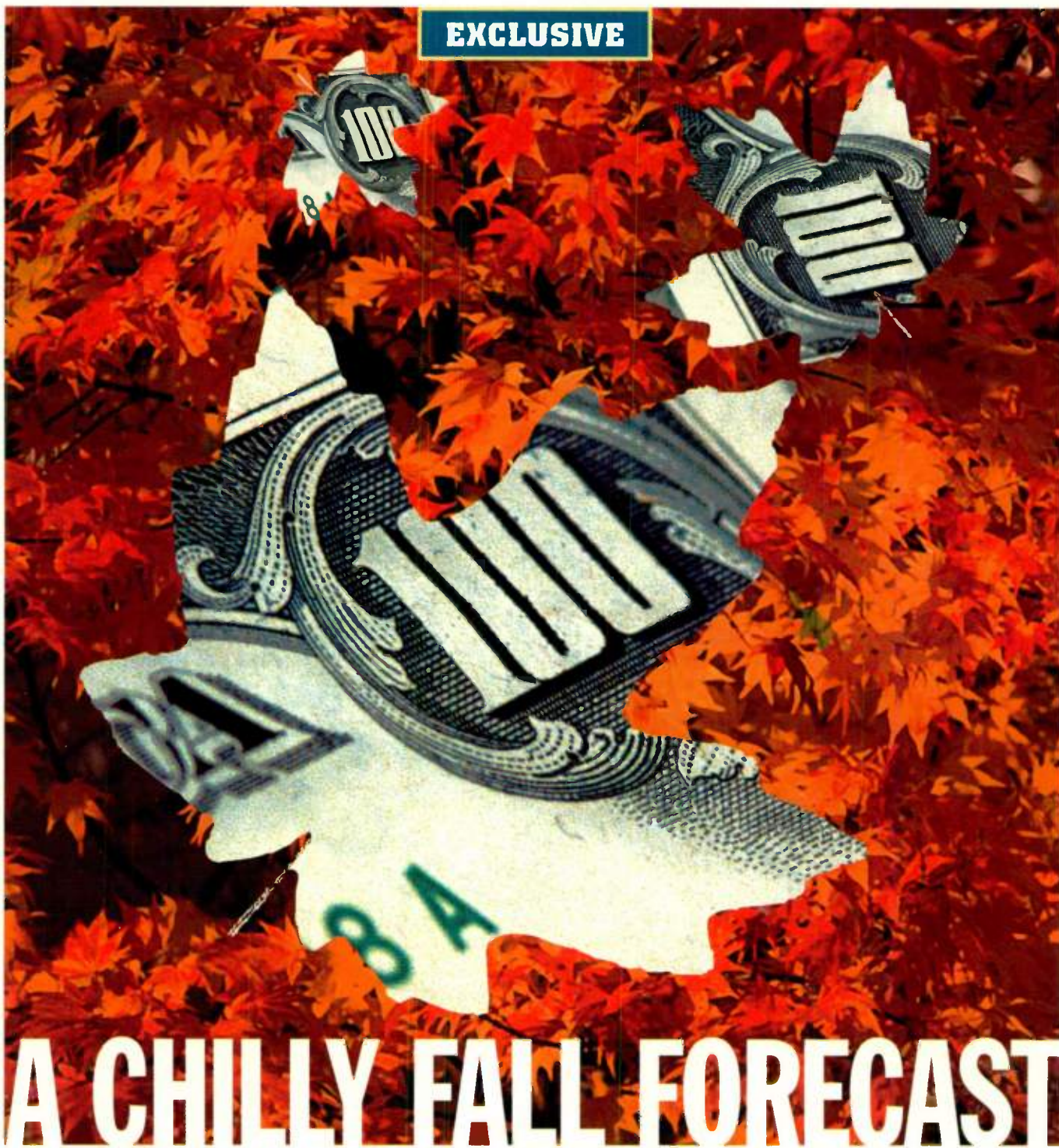
Doganieri, who won the Emmy for best reality series two years running, reveal the secrets behind the show's stamina.

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*Amazing Race 7*

**EXCLUSIVE**



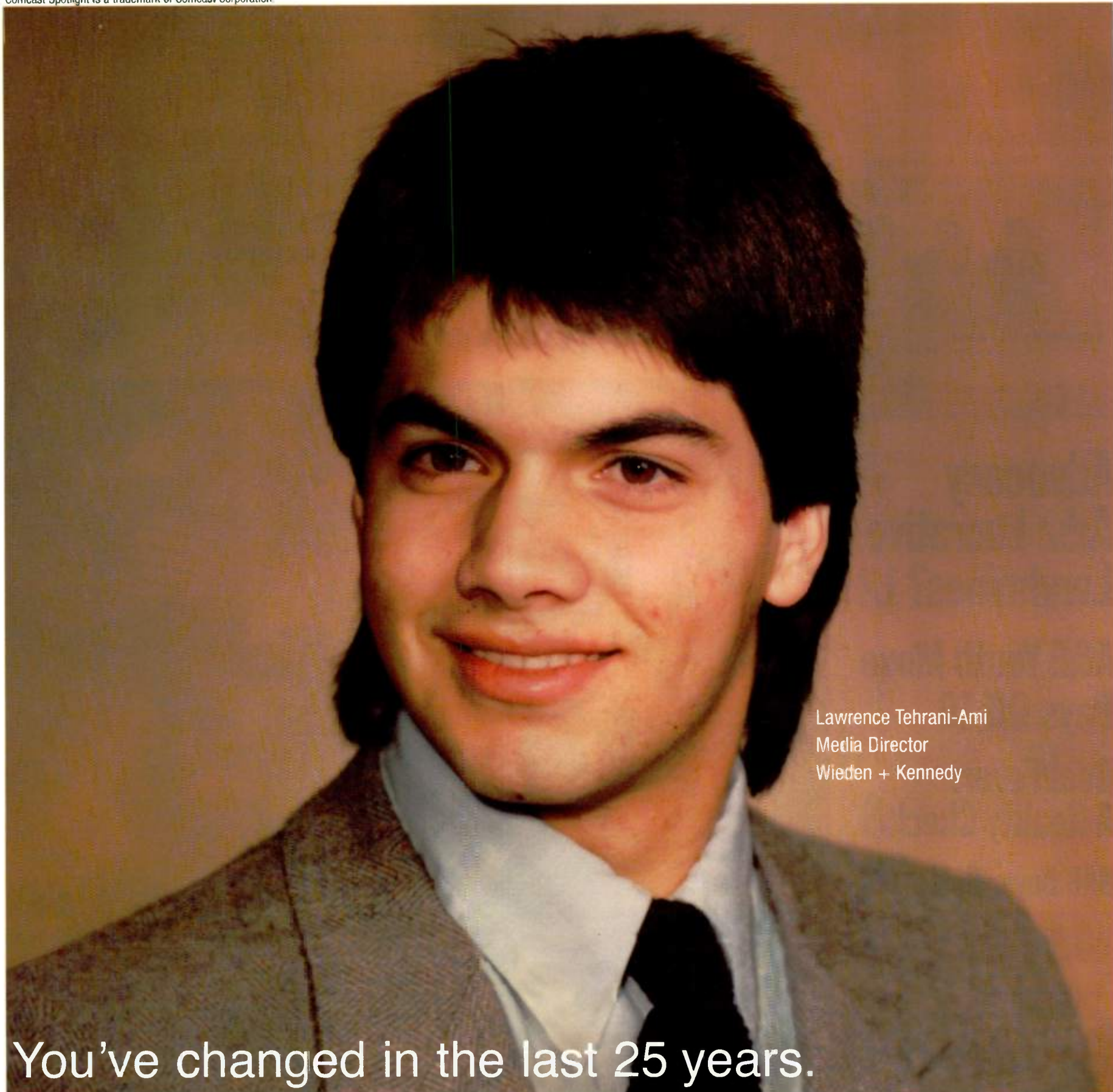
**A CHILLY FALL FORECAST**

**As networks and advertisers brace for battle over ad rates, both sides see little growth. Bad news for broadcasters: Cable's climb continues.**

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**B&C WEEK**

**Where to be and what to watch...**

**Monday, February 28**

Ah, to be a media investor at **The Breakers** hotel in **Palm Beach** today. While your buddies in New York are trudging to work through grey slush, you can order room-service breakfast, maybe hit the spa or play some golf—it's only polite.



**Sumner Redstone**

after all, to allow the mercury to achieve the delightful 78 degrees forecasted before hitting the beach—and then maybe—*Rrrrrrring!* Wake-up call!

Downstairs for the **Bear Sterns & Co.** media conference at 7:30 a.m., you lazy toad! Ad-agency titan and junket spoilsport **Sir Martin Sorrell**, chief executive officer, **WPP Group**, kicks off three days of briefings for investors with the wakey-wakey keynote. At least **Viacom** Chairman **Sumner Redstone** has the decency to wait until after lunch to start putting the best face on the company's recent \$18 billion write-off and rhapsodize about the possibilities of **MTV Africa**.

**Tuesday, March 1**

**NYPD Blue** has been fading to a sort of *aqua* for some time, but tonight's finale—winding up a dozen years on the air—gives **Dennis Franz & Co.** one last chance at a Tuesday-night ratings streetfight [*B&C* columnist **Matt Roush's** tribute is on page 54]. The 10 p.m. (ET) throw-down pits the **ABC** cops against the premiere of **Amazing Race 7** on **CBS** and **Law & Order: SVU** on **NBC**. **David Caruso** will just be glad when the series finally ends and he won't have to be



**David Caruso**

reminded every freakin' week that he could have been pulling down **CSI: Miami**-style paychecks for a decade.

**Wednesday, March 2**

**David Byrne** delivers the 2005



**David Byrne**

**T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S**

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Marshall McLuhan Lecture—*free and open to the public!*—at **New York University** in the Kimmel (not Jimmy) Center Auditorium at 6:30 this evening. The former **Talking Heads** maestro's topic? "I ♥ PowerPoint." Given that one of Byrne's PowerPoint-parodying works includes an endlessly repeated outline of **Dan Rather's** head, this event likely will have better CBS representation than the **William S. Paley Festival**—named for the founder of CBS—at the L.O. Angeles branch of the **Museum of Television & Radio** (founder: Bill Paley). The festival starts tonight, lasts until March 16, and includes screenings and audience Q&A sessions to fete a bevy of TV stalwarts, from the reunited cast of *In Living Color* to that big ol' Sapphic slumber party on **Showtime** known as *The L Word*. But CBS content? Feh.



**L Word's Laurel Holloman**

**Thursday, March 3**



**Jerry Orbach**

A moment, please, for **Jerry Orbach**. His death in December marked, for all intents and purposes, the vanishing of that gloriously oxymoronic entertainment figure, the hardboiled song-and-dance man. Ever the trouper, Orbach reeled off three episodes of **Law & Order: Trial by Jury** before passing away. This latest entry in the *L&O* product line previews tonight on **NBC** (10 p.m. ET), then slips into its regular Friday slot tomorrow.

**Friday, March 4**

Synergy alert! **Fox** brings us a very special presentation of *Assembling "Robots": The Magic, the Music and the Comedy*. (8 p.m. ET), a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the **20th Century Fox** animated feature that will begin accepting your box-office donations at theaters nationwide next Friday.



**Fender of Robots**

—Mark Lasswell

E-mail info for *B&C Week* to [b&cweek@reedbusiness.com](mailto:b&cweek@reedbusiness.com)

B&C Broadcasting & Cable (ISSN 1098-5927) (USPS 0066-0000) (GST #R12339/457) is published weekly, except on special occasions. It is published by Reed Business Information, a Division of Reed Elsevier Inc., 360 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010-1710. Broadcasting & Cable # 2005 by Reed Elsevier Inc., 215 Washington St., Newton, MA 02138-1934. All rights reserved. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post International Product (Canada Distribution) Sales Agreement No. 0607533. Postmaster, please send address changes to: Broadcasting & Cable, P.O. Box 15157, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5157. Subscription rates: USA \$189; Canada \$249 (includes GST); Foreign Air \$360. A reasonable fee shall be assessed to cover handling costs in cancellation of a subscription. Back issues: \$5 each for special issues where price changes are indicated. Single copies are \$7.95 U.S., \$10 foreign. Please address all subscription mail to: Broadcasting & Cable, P.O. Box 15157, North Hollywood, CA 91615-5157 or call 1-800-554-5729. Outside the U.S., call 1-818-487-4552. Microfilm of Broadcasting & Cable is available from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106 (800-521-0600). Broadcasting & Cable was founded in 1931 as Broadcasting The News Magazine of the Fifth Estate. It was named Broadcasting & Cable in 1993. Broadcasting & Cable is a registered trademark of Reed Publishing (Netherlands) B.V., used under license.



FAST TRACK

## First Amendment Award to Bradley

CBS News Executive Producer **Jeff Fager** will award *60 Minutes* veteran **Ed Bradley** the **Leonard Zeidenberg First Amendment Award**, a highlight of the **Radio and Television News Directors Foundation's** annual First Amendment Awards dinner March 10 at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington. The award is named after the late *B&C* senior correspondent. **NBC News** President **Neal Shapiro** will make the keynote speech about new challenges to free speech faced by journalists, including **WJAR Providence, R.I.**, reporter **Jim Taricani**, who was recently found in contempt of court for refusing to reveal a source and was sentenced to house arrest.

Outgoing NAB President **Eddie Fritts** will present **Jim Keelor**, a former news director who now is president of **Liberty Corp.** station group, with the First Amendment Leadership Award. **CNN** host **Larry King** will hand out the First Amendment Service Award to his senior executive producer, **Wendy Walker Whitworth**, a top producer for his show since 1993.



Ed Bradley

**ABC News** veteran **Sam Donaldson** will host the dinner. RTNDF provides training, financial assistance and research for electronic news media.—A.R.

## FCC Queries "No-Power" Low-Powers

The FCC is investigating a California company holding more than 200 low-power-TV licenses nationwide since 2000 but not yet on the air with any of them, according to the **Center for Public Integrity (CPI)**.

Per the center, Los Angeles-based **MS Communications** owner **Mark Silberman**, who began collecting LPTVs in 1992, says he had planned to launch wireless cable networks in underserved areas. He has never broadcast more than a test pattern on any of them, he told the center,

# Viacom's Big Bath

\$18B charge tops week of earnings news

By John M. Higgins

In a final farewell to former President Mel Karmazin, Viacom took an \$18 billion write-off on the value of **Infinity Broadcasting Corp.**, the radio and billboard company he had founded and ultimately sold to the media giant.

Viacom blamed the huge charge against earnings in the fourth quarter to the weak market, acknowledging that they were carried on the its books as worth far more than today's market value.

Viacom was not alone. **Clear Channel Communications** took a similar \$4.9 billion charge against its radio assets. The charges are bookkeeping entries against "goodwill," or the difference between an asset's purchase price and its book value. Accountants record this as a "write-off." Revenues and operating cash flow are not affected.

The giant write-offs reflect how unhealthy certain media sectors—no-

content, the network assets, are firing on all cylinders."

### CABLEVISION

Cable companies posted slightly more upbeat news. When **Cablevision Systems** posted its earnings for the quarter, the company revealed plans to cut a deal to split up its regional-sports partnership with **Fox**. The deal gives **Cablevision** all of the venture's assets in **New York**, the market where all of the company's cable systems are located. **Cablevision** gets **Madison Square Garden** and its accompanying network, **Fox Sports New York**, and the **New York Knicks** and **Rangers**. The cable operator also gets 100% of **Fox Sports Chicago** and a bigger chunk of **Fox Sports New England**.

**Fox Sports** gets 100% of the national **Fox Sports Net** service, plus regional channels in **Ohio** and **Florida**. **Fox Sports** hopes to accelerate the national

channel, possibly by bidding for TV rights to **National Football League** games that are currently held by **ESPN**. Analysts say **Cablevision** is cleaning itself up to be sold given the acrimony between Chairman **Chuck Dolan** and his son, President **Jim Dolan**.

For all the corporate mayhem at the company, **Cablevision's** operating performance was solid during the quarter. **Cable-system** revenues increased a strong 13.5% to \$820 million while cash flow jumped 19% to \$325 million. Much of the growth is coming from the successful rollout of telephone service to all of **Cablevision's** properties over the past 18 months.

### INSIGHT

At **Insight Communications**, financial results were strong, but the company did post another drop in basic subscribers. The cable operator's revenues rose 11% to \$262.5 million while operating income jumped 14% to \$119 million.

**Insight** is recovering from a brutal 2003 and difficult first half of 2004, so its financial results look good by comparison. The company lost another 12,000 subscribers to **DBS** rivals, dropping to 1.27 million. That's partly offset by new revenues from high-speed Internet and digital-cable customers, and the company is planning a heavy promotion of new telephone services this year. ■



Cablevision Systems President **Jim Dolan** is breaking up his sports partnership with **Fox**.

"The vast majority of our content, the network assets, are firing on all cylinders."  
SUMNER REDSTONE, VIACOM

tably, radio and billboards—have become over the past three years, and last week's round of earnings reports don't offer many signs of hope.

At **Viacom**, growth has virtually halted at **Infinity's** radio stations, and most other divisions are growing by single-digit percentages. The big exception is the cable networks, where revenues jumped 15% during the fourth quarter to \$1.9 billion while operating cash flow increased 11% to \$761 million. However, cash-flow growth could slow because **Viacom** has decided to invest in basic cable more heavily.

On the broadcast side, **CBS** network, station and production revenues increased just 5% to \$2.2 billion, but cash flow jumped 19% to \$334 million. That's in large part because of unexpectedly strong political-ad sales in the fall.

**Viacom** Chairman **Sumner Redstone**, ever the optimist, told investors in a statement: "The vast majority of our

saying "regulatory changes and other factors" intervened. The company could lose those licenses if that is the case.

Now **Silberman** appears to be looking for a buyout. He told the center, "There's going to be someone who needs my channels." License-holders are expected to be on the air within three years or risk losing the license, and the **FCC** says **MS** has reported to it that its stations are on the air.

The **FCC** has sent **MS** a letter asking it to explain the reports of its dark stations and expects a reply by March 1, according to **FCC** spokeswoman **Rebecca Fisher**. The center also says that 60 of **MS's** licenses had expired, but **Fisher** says that is not correct.

"They have not yet come to their renewal deadlines. The first batch begins April 1," says **Fisher**. "So I am not sure where **CPI** got that info." **CPI's** **Robert Morlino** says the confusion may have been that the 60 expired licenses are assigned not to **MS** but to **Silberman** personally. **Morlino** says they are listed as "off the air" in the **FCC** database.—J.E.

## Curtis To Front Jackson Re-Enactments

**James Curtis**, a four-year veteran anchor at **Court TV**, will host **E!'s** re-enactments of the **Michael Jackson** child-molestation trial. Based on court transcripts from the previous day's testimony, **E! News: The Michael Jackson Trial** will air weeknights at 7:30 and 9 p.m. ET with a one-hour wrap-up at 10 p.m. on Saturdays. **Curtis** will also conduct discussions with



**James Curtis** anchoring at the network in 2001.—A.B.

legal analysts on the proceedings. He first appeared on **Court TV** in 1995 as a commentator during the **O.J. Simpson** criminal trial and began

## ESPNU Prepares For Kickoff

**ESPNU**, **ESPN's** new 24/7 network devoted wholly to college events, will reach approximately 3 million subscribers when it

Continued on page 48





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World Radio History

*1877 on the Black Hills*



# Nancy Grace(less) at Headline News

Anyone who witnessed legal analyst Nancy Grace's combative performance at the recent Television Critics Association press tour in Los Angeles won't be surprised by the behind-the-scenes reports coming from CNN Headline News' new show, *Nancy Grace*. The diva act continues. But CNN may be inclined to take the bad with the good, because Grace is lifting the beleaguered channel in the ratings.

Just one week into the prime time show (which got off to a rocky start with a glitch-filled premiere), Grace has already had her makeup person reassigned, and laced into a production staffer so mercilessly that he quit the show. (A CNN spokesperson dismissed any talk of problems, saying every new show has growing pains.) In a departure for the traditionally low-glitzy CNN, Grace has commanded a room of her own for makeup. But it's not as if she wants privacy; the host calls her staff in for meetings while she's being spruced up.

As the show enters its second week, CNN staffers expect more tension. "This is cable, honey. Skip the diva business," says one. It was an echo of reactions to Grace's



Legal analyst Nancy Grace



*Lost*'s Jin, played by Daniel Dae Kim



Sun (Yunjim Kim), Jin's wife on *Lost*



Hunter S. Thompson

grande dame manner during the TCA gathering in January.

The good news: "*Nancy Grace* Premiere Week" goosed the longtime ratings laggard Headline News by 81% in the 8 p.m. (ET) time slot and outpaced Keith Olbermann's *Countdown* on MSNBC.

## Translation In 'Lost' Lost

Remember when snow on the screen could ruin a TV show?

Those days were back, sort of, last week for some *Lost* viewers. Fans

of the ABC hit learned about the mysterious past of Korean couple Sun and Jin early in the Feb. 23 episode during a flashback scene, where the conversation in Korean was translated in subtitles on the bottom of the screen. In New

York, however, *Lost* viewers were simply lost. WABC ran a crawl across the lower part of the screen announcing a winter-weather advisory, blocking the subtitles.

Annoyed viewers called WABC to complain, but President/GM Dave Davis says that the number of calls—though he declined to be specific—was not significant. And the calls didn't just come into the switchboard; Davis says he heard directly from some viewers, and he apologized for the inconvenience. But, he adds, "it was done for the right reason, to give emergency weather information."

The snowed-in viewers didn't miss any earthshaking revelations. Though it would have been nice to see the dialogue, the gist of the scene was that Jin asks Sun's father for her hand in marriage. The father demands to know how Jin will support her and suggests he come to work for him. When the episode repeats, this

summer, fans in New York planning to recapture the *Lost* lines had better hope there aren't any severe thunderstorms tracking their direction.

## Dr. Thompson's Twisted Quote

After Hunter S. Thompson committed suicide on Feb. 20, tributes to the godfather of gonzo journalism began to pour in. Many of them quoted liberally from Thompson's work, including this classic:

"The music business is a cruel and shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free, and good men die like dogs. There's also a negative side."

If you're the kind of person who still reads newspapers, you might have encountered this quote in the *Chicago Tribune*, the *UK Guardian*, the *Orange County Register*,

the *Toronto Star*, the UK *Evening Standard*, and many other inky news outlets.

It's a wonderful, vivid, typically Thompsonian journalistic hand grenade. Except he didn't say it. Or write it. At least not about the music business.

No, Dr. Thompson was describing something dear to *B&C*: the television business. And delete the line about "There's also a negative side, too." It's also wrong.

In 2001, *About.com*'s urban folklorist, David Emery, researched the origin of Thompson's famous quote. He found that a line from a Thompson column for the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1985 had been widely misquoted, applied to a variety of industries, including music, radio and public relations. [To its credit, the *Chicago Tribune* ran a correction last week.]

For the record, here's the real quote, bird-dogged by Emery, which you can find in Thompson's *Generation of Swine: Tales of Shame and Degradation in the '80s*:

"The TV business is uglier than most things. It is normally perceived as some kind of cruel and shallow money trench through the heart of the journalism industry, a long plastic hallway where thieves and pimps run free and good men die like dogs, for no good reason."

**FLASH!**



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**1.5**  
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 KING OF QUEENS  
 JANUARY 2004

**maury**  
 JANUARY 2005

**WWTW/W**  
 WOMEN 25-54

NBC UNIVERSAL  
 TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION

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# Rumors and Other Tales

The business is once again awash in talk of multibillion-dollar deals

I think Time Warner is going to buy Tribune," a top media lawyer said to me. We were in a bad hotel bar over a round of drinks with the CEO of a TV-station group.

The idea had never occurred to me.

Time Warner—a massive cable-system, network, movie and online company—would want to take over Tribune Co., an old-line owner of newspapers and TV stations—two slow-growth businesses Time Warner has avoided for years. Why would CEO Richard Parsons do it? The WB, the lawyer replied. Time Warner controls the networks but doesn't own any stations. Tribune—part owner of The WB—owns 19 of them, including big-market outlets in New York, Los Angeles, Boston and Chicago.

Stop. I'm not going into the many reasons Time Warner is very unlikely to support \$18 billion or so on Tribune to support its \$600 million-revenue broadcast network (even if it could flip Tribune's newspapers to, say, Gannett).

The point is, after a fairly quiet couple of years for media dealmakers, the business is awash in rumors about multibillion-dollar deals. Some are clearly well-grounded; some are far more speculative. But the end of the stock slump means that some media companies are getting past memories of the days their stocks were 50%-100% higher and may be willing to use shares as currency again for big takeovers.

I'm not just talking about the deals that people have been buzzing about for months—like whether a telco will buy EchoStar to control a play in the video market. Or whether News Corp.'s Rupert Murdoch will buy Liberty Media. After all, John Malone seems more of a

My favorite rumor of the month came out of the blue. A Wall Street analyst asks about something

he keeps hearing from his clients at big institutional investors: "Comcast and Viacom." Think about it, a \$140 billion combination of the No. 1 cable operator, the No. 1 broadcast network, a lucrative pile of cable networks and a middling movie studio. Comcast CEO Brian Roberts would have control of all kinds of content to stuff into his video-on-demand systems, which

## MONEY TALKS By John M. Higgins



Viacom's Sumner Redstone (left) and Comcast's Brian Roberts could make a \$140 billion combination.

is why he chased Disney.

It wouldn't have been possible two years ago, but a federal court struck down restrictions on ownership of TV stations and cable systems in the same market. Not that Roberts wants to be in the broadcast business. He would regard CBS' TV and radio stations as he did Disney's theme parks: waste.

Nonetheless, would Roberts want to do a Viacom deal? Absolutely. "There's only two problems," says an adviser to Comcast during the Disney fight. "Sumner and Redstone." Both the Viacom CEO and Roberts like control, and Comcast would never do a deal without

a clear path to getting it. That path could be rocky, as ex-Viacom President Mel Karmazin found out the hard way.

At 80 years old, Redstone wants to leave a legacy. What kind is a big question. Would he want to cap off his life with a media megadeal? Or would he rather be remembered as captain of his ship until the end?

Redstone might also buy Univision, some people whisper. Redstone and new Viacom Co-President Les Moonves crave the potential of the growing Spanish mar-

ket, and Co-President Tom Freston has made his career building niche audiences.

Univision doesn't seem quite as far-fetched as a deal as Comcast, because Redstone actually made a \$6.5 billion offer for the Spanish-language broadcaster two years ago. Univision CEO Jerry Perenchio rejected the approach, which has proved to be a good decision given that the two companies' stock prices are moving in opposite directions. (Univision's now worth at least \$2 billion more.)

The major snag is in Washington. Univision and Viacom own too many broadcast stations in the same markets. "There would be triopolies and even quadropolies," says one analyst who dismisses the idea.

Longtime cable partnerships are also provoking buzz now. Lifetime Television CEO Carole Black is leaving, and partners Hearst and Disney have spent a long time choosing her replacement. Hearst is a 50-50 partner with Disney in the network. With such key changes being made, are the two sides discussing bigger issues? Morgan Stanley analyst Richard Bilotti estimates it would cost Disney around \$2.2 billion to buy out Hearst.

### ON SECOND THOUGHT...

Some gossips think this is red hot. But industry executives close to the two companies are cold. "This is coming up because Bob Iger keeps telling people he wants to buy," says a senior industry executive. "But Hearst doesn't particularly want to sell, especially since Lifetime is getting back on its feet." Ratings are perking up after dropping substantially since 2002.

Also, a Lifetime buyout would raise even more thorny issues in other partnerships, such as buying Hearst's 20% share in Disney's ESPN (worth around \$7 billion) and its 33% stake in A&E (worth \$2 billion).

Another partnership conundrum: When will one of the three partners in Discovery Communications decide to sell? Cox—a 25% owner—is a likely candidate given its debt from the Cox Communications buyout.

Finally, here's a tip that's real: Media titans are deal junkies. Wall Street would prefer to see media giants spend extra cash on dividends or stock buybacks, not more takeovers. ■

E-mail comments to [jhiggins@reedbusiness.com](mailto:jhiggins@reedbusiness.com)

## THE B&C

WEEK OF FEBRUARY 18-24

### THE B&C 10

WEEK YTD

-2.9%

-3.3%

### BROADCAST TV GROUPS

WEEK YTD

-1.4%

-4.9%

### CABLE OPERATORS

WEEK YTD

2.0%

2.5%

### RADIO

WEEK YTD

-1.6%

-1.4%

CLOSE WEEK YTD

|           |          |       |       |
|-----------|----------|-------|-------|
| Dow Jones | 10748.79 | -0.1% | -0.3% |
| Nasdaq    | 2051.70  | -0.5% | -5.7% |

### THE B&C 10

CLOSE WEEK YTD

|               |         |       |        |
|---------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Cablevision   | \$30.18 | 9.0%  | 21.2%  |
| Clear Channel | \$33.91 | -1.0% | 1.3%   |
| Comcast Corp. | \$32.24 | 0.4%  | -1.8%  |
| Disney        | \$28.15 | -4.1% | 1.3%   |
| EchoStar      | \$29.18 | -2.4% | -12.2% |
| Fox Ent.      | \$33.31 | -2.3% | 6.6%   |
| Hearst-Argyle | \$24.67 | -4.6% | -6.5%  |
| Time Warner   | \$17.38 | -3.7% | -10.6% |
| Tribune       | \$40.50 | -2.8% | -3.9%  |
| Viacom        | \$35.28 | -4.8% | -4.9%  |

### GOOD WEEK

|              |         |       |        |
|--------------|---------|-------|--------|
| TiVo         | \$4.48  | 23.8% | -23.7% |
| Cablevision  | \$30.18 | 9.0%  | 21.2%  |
| Omnicom      | \$89.48 | 5.9%  | 6.1%   |
| New Frontier | \$7.63  | 4.5%  | -3.7%  |
| Charter      | \$1.68  | 3.7%  | -25.0% |

### BAD WEEK

|              |         |        |        |
|--------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Granite      | \$0.33  | -15.4% | -19.5% |
| Gemstar      | \$4.85  | -12.6% | -18.1% |
| XM Satellite | \$30.15 | -9.3%  | -19.9% |
| Sirius       | \$5.58  | -6.8%  | -26.8% |
| Cumulus      | \$14.04 | -5.8%  | -6.9%  |

## TIVO RALLY

+24%

Old media can out-hype the bloggers. TiVo shares jumped 23.8% on chatter that Apple was considering taking over the ailing DVR company. Given the passion the two companies stir, speculation about a sale has circulated on the Web for a while. But it was only when CNBC picked it up that the market reacted, giving TiVo its first rally in weeks.

**Comcast and Viacom? "There's only two problems: Sumner and Redstone."** COMCAST ADVISER

seller these days, not a buyer.)

Perhaps the most speculation swirls around the Cablevision, run by the Dolan family. You heard it here first: Time Warner is buying Cablevision. I just don't know what year. I chased this story for the first time back in 1989. Given Time Warner's huge cable presence in New York City, various company executives have lusted after Chuck Dolan's metropolitan-New York systems for years. It will come to pass some day, I know.



# Who provides the interactive services today's consumer is looking for?

## You do.

With Turner, you provide your customers with offerings which range from VOD programming for CNN, TBS, Cartoon Network, and Boomerang; one-of-a-kind broadband content brought to you by CNN.com, PGA.com and NASCAR.com; the broadest range of HD entertainment programming found on one network, TNT; and enhanced television offerings for TNT, TBS and CNN. Whatever advanced platform you choose, Turner supports your business growth through continually evolving content.



PGA.com





# Drama Queen

Abbe Raven transforms A&E into a buzz network

**A**bbe Raven, president of A&E Network, knows how to jazz up—and age down—a cable channel. Since she took the reins in October 2002 as EVP/GM of A&E and The Biography Channel, A&E's prime time viewership in the key 18-49 demo is up 88%, with an average year-to-date audience of 523,000.

Raven was promoted to A&E president in September 2004, the same year the network roped in a record 24 Emmy nominations. Under her leadership, viewership continues to climb: In January, 18-49 ratings were up 42% in prime compared with a year earlier. (Total prime time viewership is up 9%.) Plus, A&E, one of a family of networks owned by Hearst Corp., ABC Inc. and NBC, recently won a fierce competition for cable off-net rights to HBO's *The Sopranos*. The A&E chief, who will receive NCTA's 2005 Vanguard Award for "Distinguished Leadership" in April, discussed that programming coup and the network's formula for success with *B&C*'s Anne Becker.

**Some say A&E is all over the map. What does the network stand for?**

There's an emotional connection that differentiates us from other services. On the surface, *Dog the Bounty Hunter* may seem larger than life, but when you really look, it's all about redemption and dealing with people emotionally. Look at HBO as the pay model: quality, the most Emmy nominations, the only other network with a mix of high-quality drama and documentary programming. Set it against A&E, the basic model: high quality, the most Emmy nominations of any basic-cable network in history, and a devotion to documentary, drama and performance. You really can't go to another network, a USA, and say that. I'm not going to be as bold as to say we're the HBO of basic, but our models are very similar.

**Several networks are changing their taglines or logos to better explain their programming. Does A&E plan to do the same?**

We're taking our lead from our viewers. If it's right, we'll evolve. When I was asked to return to A&E in October 2002 after the loss of a big-ticket show [*Law & Order*] and a plummet in ratings, we were A&E for the 50-plus audience. I said we had to refine the brand for the next generation. It's still all about the programming. The first step was to introduce the art of entertainment, emphasizing *entertainment*. We could make our greatest impact immediately in nonfiction. That was the motivation for ramping up alternative development. We got *Airline*, *Family*

*Plots*, [*Growing Up*] *Gotti*. We spent 2004 making a splash by launching a new show almost every other month. That was a bold, risky move, but we've had one success after another. We introduced *MI-5* and started bolstering dramas, acquiring *CSI: Miami* and Miramax movies. We'd have less questioning about the brand if we were 18 months down the road and you saw more drama on the network.

**What do you say to critics who call A&E youth-addicted?**

I tell critics we've become a buzz network. That's a goal for any network, whatever their brand. Over the next few years, you'll see a more defined A&E with *24*, *CSI: Miami*, *The Sopranos*. Take those pieces and juxtapose them against the real-life series, performance programming and original movies. You get a bigger picture of what we are. Critics and competitors point to pieces in isolation, but it's always a mix. In the same way, CBS, a broadcast network, goes from *CSI* to *Survivor*. The key is balance. Because our nonfiction has gotten so much attention, people see it as slightly off-balance; it's not.

**Are there any reality programs you wouldn't do?**

We won't do anything contrived, so we're not doing a game show or a contest. It has to become drama in a nonfiction setting: real people, real situations with an emotional connection to the audience. I call it the A&E voice. The *New York Times* called *The First 48* a near-perfect drama. *Intervention* is a gripping drama about people at a low point in their lives and how friends and family rally to help. We recruit by going to facilities with connections to people with addictions. If there's any indication the subjects think there may be an intervention, we won't do the show. If we're going to have any credibility with our viewers, it has to transpire in a real way. We're not there with our cameras telling people what to do; we're trying to craft a story.

**Do you have a go-to person you run ideas by?**

I have a great team: head of programming Bob DiBitetto and Nancy Dubuc, SVP for nonfiction and alternative programming. We have a building filled with 20- and 30-year-olds. They are our potential viewers, so we have an



**"We had to refine the brand for the next generation."**

—ABBE RAVEN, A&E NETWORK

informal system. From the beginning, I said we are going to make this a network you want to go home and watch. I hired all new, edgy people. We did a workshop. We made a list of 30 pie-in-the-sky ideas. No. 1 on the list was having *The Sopranos*.

**Give me a cost-benefit analysis of *The Sopranos* deal.**

It cost nearly \$200 million for repeats, \$2.5 million an episode. We would never do anything without a financial return. Advertisers that never had a chance to advertise on *The Sopranos* wanted to partner with us. Advertisers that had never advertised on A&E [wanted to] target a younger demo. It becomes a cornerstone to the schedule in fall 2006. If it's on for a few hours a week, there are programming hours we're not investing in. But this is such a great platform to build off and launch originals. It will not inhibit us from growing the network.

**How will *The Sopranos* fit the brand?**

It not only fits, it elevates the bar. I want A&E to continue to be one of the top networks, and drama is a big part of our mix. Our off-network dramas are a cut above. We've always stood for quality and excellence in programming, and there has never been another program that has generated the acclaim, attention or popularity of *The Sopranos*. It has been the jewel in the crown for HBO. There is no property like it on the horizon that will go into syndication in the next few years. We've been trying to take the essence of our brand—stories about people, character development, heritage and biography—and lay that over popular and contemporary culture and *The Sopranos* fits.

**What's on your TIVO?**

24. I watched it last night at 11 because I got home late from work. I'm totally hooked. I'm so happy we bought it. Also, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Desperate Housewives*.

**Do you watch any reality?**

None of the contrived ones. I watched *The Apprentice* its first year. Didn't hold it for me. I got very angry—it portrayed women in business very badly. Carolyn was great, but the women contestants? Just not real enough.

**Any programs you see as a cut above?**

Nothing that jumps out.

**What's coming up on A&E?**

*Texas Roller Girls* just went into production. I love the concept: women in roller derby leagues. They are becoming very hot, especially in the South. By day, they're teachers, lawyers, reporters, social workers, mothers, wives, single. At night, they're competitive in this league. It's like *Sex and the City* on blades. Go Go Lucky [*Laguna Beach*'s production company] is doing it, so it's like film—a whole different look. Nancy Dubuc was circling this, but we put it in a demo tape, and all of us hands down said we have to have it. Then you know you've hit a home run.

**You just got tapped to head A&E's new Crime and Investigation channel. It launched in Australia on Jan. 1 and will be available for U.S. affiliates to preview April 2. Isn't that a lot on your plate?**

We're experts at growing the corporation and launching networks from the mothership. It's one of the things I'm really good at. I was at A&E when we first launched. Also, when we did The History Channel, The Biography Channel and History International. So it doesn't feel daunting. To have a blank canvas is always fun. ■







# Advocacy Ads: Easy Money?

Special-interest spots prove profitable—but painful **By Bill McConnell**

**A**mericans must wait years before President Bush's plan to allow workers to invest some Social Security contributions on Wall Street pays off. But TV stations are cashing in today—thanks to issue advertising by activists on both sides of the debate.

The catch: Station owners must be willing to dodge the crossfire of America's political wars.

Rare for a non-election year, political advertising in 2005 is shaping up to be a cash cow for stations. Free-market activists promise to spend at least \$50 million promoting private Social Security accounts, mostly on TV. Opponents of the White House plan, including AARP and the NAACP, aim to counter them dollar for dollar. Tens of millions more are expected to pour in for ads on

dent's plan, stations can expect a call from us," says Danny Diaz, spokesman for the Republican National Committee (RNC), which shot an ominous-sounding letter to 14 TV stations in Florida, Indiana and Pennsylvania earlier this month.

RNC Deputy Counsel Michael Bayes urged them not to air ads by liberal activist group MoveOn.org, which warned that Bush's plan could cut guaranteed benefits as much as 46%. Republicans cried foul because the first people likely to see cuts that large won't even be born until 2008. "As an FCC licensee, you have a responsibility ... to avoid broadcasting deliberate misrepresentations of the facts," Bayes wrote. "This letter places you on notice" that the MoveOn ad is misleading. "Your station should act responsibly and refrain from airing this advertisement."

None of the 14 stations running the ad honored the

Richard Zaragoza, who represents state broadcasting associations in Washington, says letters objecting to commercials and other content are becoming more numerous. Stations have little to fear because political-issue ads, even if they're misleading, don't break the law in the same way as promos for, say, phony diet drugs. "We are not talking about deceptive practices in a commercial setting," he says.

## PUBLICITY STUNTS

The harassment isn't coming just from conservatives. Liberal activists have cried foul repeatedly over the major broadcast networks' refusal to run ads supporting equal rights for homosexual couples and opposing the White House plan to limit medical-malpractice awards.

A group called Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) asked the FCC to investigate the networks' advocacy-advertising policies after the Big Four broadcast networks refused to air a spot featuring Dylan Malone, whose son had died as a result of negligence. That complaint came on the heels of a PR campaign mounted by the United Church of Christ and its allies during the Christmas holidays after NBC and CBS refused to air spots criticizing other denominations that don't welcome openly gay individuals.

Ironically, the attacks on the networks have been spurred by their desire to avoid criticism by rejecting all controversial ads.

"The networks' policies are inconsistent," says CREW's Naomi Seligman. She complains that the networks routinely run White House-bought spots on controversial issues, such as one explaining the Medicare prescription-drug plan or supporting asbestos reform.

Alan Wurtzel, head of standards and practices for NBC, calls CREW's attacks a publicity stunt. "A lot of these groups are giving us commercials they know we will reject, then asking the press to write about it," he says. "They realize they can get more coverage than if we ran their ad in the first place." Any issue ad on a controversial topic is off limits, no matter the sponsor, he insists.

As for running commercials touting the benefits of Medicare changes, Wurtzel says the spots became acceptable only after the prescription-drug benefit was signed into law. During the debate, NBC left the issue to the networks' journalists. "That's why God invented the news division," he says.

CBS spokesman Dana McClintock explains a similar policy at his network: "We don't want one side with deep pockets to have the advantage formulating the debate."

## SNEAKY IMAGES

But media researchers say the Bush Administration is getting a boost from the networks' policy because many companies are able to sneak brief, usually pro-Republican, references to controversial issues as their tag line in corporate-image ads. In a report to be released on March 16, the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center finds that Republican-leaning business interests outspent citizens groups on TV by a 5-1 ratio.

With the fight over Social Security just beginning and equally bitter battles over other Bush initiatives on the horizon, lawyer Zaragoza predicts the number of complaints over ads will only increase. His advice to stations: Treat factual disputes fairly by vetting complaints with the ad sponsor and correcting statements it can't defend. "That will be the last thing a station hears about the matter." ■



The GOP pressured TV stations to drop MoveOn.org spots on President Bush's plan for reforming Social Security.



The Club for Growth and other free-market activists pledge to spend \$50 million promoting the administration proposal.

tort reform, gay marriage and other hot-button social issues. And millions more will flow when Congress begins rewriting U.S. telecommunications laws this summer.

TV-station owners love the cash but are discovering that advocacy ads can also be a headache. Because of the high stakes, activists not only mount ad campaigns but have taken to public-relations attacks on stations that run opponents' ads or fail to run their own. More worrisome, some activists—on both the right and left—hint they'll force stations to fend off costly FCC complaints or challenges to their broadcast licenses for showing favor. The prospect of paying lawyers' fees and spending months navigating an FCC investigation is a worry many activists don't mind planting in station managers' minds.

"Any time an ad misleads people about the presi-

GOP's request to pull the spots, although NBC affiliate WNDU South Bend, Ind., did ask MoveOn to change the wording. The ads stopped running on schedule, three days after the GOP issued the Feb. 3 letter.

Even though the stations largely ignored the request, Diaz considers the letter a huge success. "Next time MoveOn tries to buy time," he says, "stations across the country will give their claims a very close look."

WNDU GM Jim Behling believes the letter was meant to scare stations. "Our licenses are coming up for renewal soon," he says. "It would be naïve to think the RNC wasn't aware of the timing."

Would the Republican Party really ask the FCC to strip licenses or file false-advertising complaints? Diaz "won't discuss strategy" but says cryptically, "Stay tuned."

**"Any time an ad misleads people about the president's plan, stations can expect a call from us." DANNY DIAZ, REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE**



RATINGS 2/7-13/05

Nielsen Media Research

Top 25 Shows  
ADULTS 18-34

| PROGRAM                                  | AA  | GAA |
|--|-----|-----|
| 1 <i>Sinfeld</i>                         | 4.0 | 4.6 |
| 2 <i>Everybody Loves Raymond</i>         | 3.9 | 4.8 |
| 3 <i>Sinfeld (wknd)</i>                  | 3.3 | 4.2 |
| 4 <i>Oprah Winfrey Show</i>              | 2.8 | 2.8 |
| 5 <i>CSI: Crime Scene Investigation</i>  | 2.5 | 2.9 |
| 5 <i>That '70s Show</i>                  | 2.5 | 3.1 |
| 7 <i>Malcolm in the Middle</i>           | 2.2 | 2.6 |
| 8 <i>King of the Hill</i>                | 2.1 | 2.6 |
| 9 <i>Wheel of Fortune</i>                | 2.0 | NA  |
| 10 <i>Maury</i>                          | 1.9 | 2.0 |
| 10 <i>Will &amp; Grace</i>               | 1.9 | 2.3 |
| 12 <i>Everybody Loves Raymond (wknd)</i> | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| 12 <i>That '70s Show (wknd)</i>          | 1.8 | 2.1 |
| 14 <i>Cops</i>                           | 1.7 | 2.0 |
| 14 <i>Dr. Phil</i>                       | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| 14 <i>Entertainment Tonight</i>          | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| 14 <i>Home Improvement</i>               | 1.7 | 2.2 |
| 14 <i>Jeopardy!</i>                      | 1.7 | NA  |
| 14 <i>King of Queens</i>                 | 1.7 | 2.1 |
| 20 <i>Entertainment Tonight (wknd)</i>   | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| 20 <i>Judge Judy</i>                     | 1.4 | 2.2 |
| 20 <i>King of Queens (wknd)</i>          | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| 23 <i>Fear Factor</i>                    | 1.2 | 1.3 |
| 23 <i>Yes, Dear</i>                      | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| 25 <i>Divorce Court</i>                  | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| 25 <i>Friends (wknd)</i>                 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| 25 <i>Inside Edition</i>                 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| 25 <i>Jerry Springer</i>                 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| 25 <i>Judge Joe Brown</i>                | 1.1 | 1.5 |
| 25 <i>Nontel Williams Show</i>           | 1.1 | 1.1 |

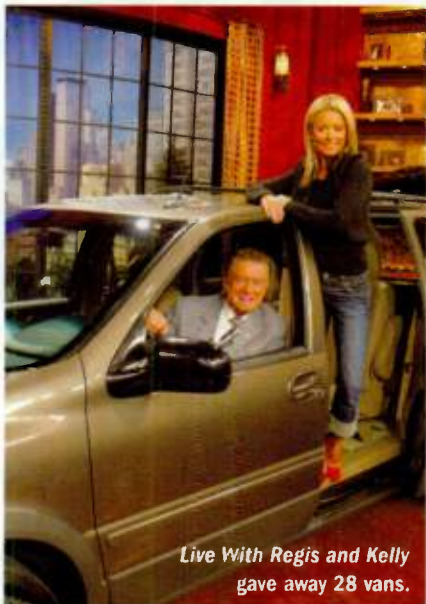
Top Court Shows  
ADULTS 18-34

| PROGRAM                  | AA  | GAA |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|
| 1 <i>Judge Judy</i>      | 1.4 | 2.2 |
| 2 <i>Divorce Court</i>   | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| 2 <i>Judge Joe Brown</i> | 1.1 | 1.5 |
| 4 <i>Judge Mathis</i>    | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| 5 <i>People's Court</i>  | 0.8 | 0.9 |

According to Nielsen Media Research Syndication Service Ranking Report Feb. 7-13, 2005  
AA = Average Audience Rating  
GAA = Gross Average Audience  
One Nielsen rating point = 1,096,000 households, which represents 1% of the 109.6 million U.S. TV households  
NA = not available

# Drive My Car

'Live' contest draws 2.3 million entries **By Jim Finkle**



Live With Regis and Kelly gave away 28 vans.

When Oprah Winfrey gave away 276 Pontiac sedans on her show in September, she scored a TV marketing coup. *Live With Regis and Kelly* used a similar stunt for February sweeps, but its \$1.7 million giveaway of 28 Pontiac Montana SV6 vans didn't get the publicity bounce Winfrey's did. Still, the contest got the largest response from *Live* viewers of any promotion in the show's 17-year history, pulling in more than 2.3 million entries.

*Live* executive producer Michael Gelman sees contests as loyalty programs. Designed to keep viewers tuned in, they can reward those who do. Since the show first went on the air, it has held regular trivia contests for the home audience. The rules get more complicated, and

the prizes get bigger during sweeps.

"I'm much more into giving away my prizes to people who are the viewers at home than I am to giving things gratuitously to the studio audience," he says.

To grab the most attention with his Pontiac contest, Gelman began dropping hints in late December. Hosts Regis Philbin and Kelly Ripa told viewers "something really big" would happen on the show after the holidays. On Jan. 11, the two walked outside their New York studio to a block on West 67th Street where 28 Pontiac Montana SV6s stood. The stunt stopped traffic for about 15 minutes.

During the week of Jan. 17, the hosts gave viewers special car phrases each day. To qualify to win, entrants had to send in all five answers. Throughout the month of February, they handed out a van to one viewer a day.

Each package was valued at almost \$60,000: \$37,000 for the van plus cash to cover the costs of registration and taxes.

Pontiac and Buena Vista won't disclose the financial terms of their arrangement. But Pontiac Advertising Manager Mary Kubitskey says the budget was roughly equivalent to what she would have spent on advertising on the show in a full year.

Kubitskey, who orchestrated the giveaways on both *Live* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, is now working on a strategy for developing the next promotion. She wants the Pontiac car campaign to be wed to the show, not relegated to its ad time. "In these days of TiVo, with people skipping commercials, I've got to find a way to break through and resonate with consumers," she says. "We need to find the next big thing." ■

IN FOCUS

SUZE ON HOLD

Twentieth Television has nixed plans to launch a daily talk show with Suze Orman this fall. The company has had trouble lining up enough stations to carry the program. "Fewer available, attractive time periods in fall 2005 and the current economics of launching a daytime strip constrain the manner in which we wish to bring this very important program to viewers," Twentieth said in a written statement.

The few desirable slots that were available for next season have already been claimed by *The Martha Stewart Show* from NBC Universal and *The Tyra Banks Show* from Warner Bros.

Twentieth had cleared *The Suze Orman Show* in the top five U.S. markets, split between NBC and Viacom stations. But it ran into trouble finding attractive time slots in the second-tier markets, which support fewer stations and have less space. Sony Domestic Television has also had difficulty finding clearances for a talk show starring Robin Quivers.

Although Orman's project is being put on the shelf, she'll continue to appear on a CNBC weekend personal-finance show.



Suze Orman

She also produces programs for PBS, writes articles and appears on QVC.

"There is much greater potential for *Suze Orman* in fall 2006, or possibly earlier, when a number of highly desirable time

periods are slated to become available," Twentieth said in its statement.

King World Productions CEO Roger King has said he hopes to launch a show created by Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Productions in fall 2006. Paramount Domestic Television is working on several projects that could be ready for next year, including a show hosted by entertainment reporter Steven Cojocar.

# #1 to the MACs!

FRIDAY 8PM, RTG

FOX

The Bernie Mac Show

#1 A18-34 2.1

#1 A18-49 2.3



The Bernie Mac Show

PREMIERES THIS FALL

| NETWORK | PROGRAM               | A18-34 | A18-49 |
|---------|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| ABC     | 8 SIMPLE RULES        | 1.4    | 2.1    |
| CBS     | JOAN OF ARCADIA       | 1.1    | 1.7    |
| NBC     | DATeline              | 1.5    | 2.3    |
| WB      | WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU | 1.9    | 1.5    |
| UPN     | ENTERPRISE            | 0.7    | 1.1    |

Source: NTL, Galaxy Explains, 2/11/05, 8-830pm time period rank. Dateline is tied with Bernie Mac in A18-49. Subject to qualifications available upon request.





# A Chilly Fall Forecast

## As the networks and media buyers prepare for battle in the upfront ad market, the victor's spoils won't be much: An early survey of the field reveals only modest growth. And most of that will likely go to cable,

leaving some broadcast networks scratching for gains.

Early assessments of the market—*very early*—indicate that upfront advertising commitments to national broadcast, cable and syndication will hit \$18.5 billion-\$18.7 billion, up 4%-5% from the \$17.8 billion generated last year.

Of the expected gain of up to \$900 million, insiders believe that cable networks stand to scoop up \$600 million or more.

Broadcast networks combined could be flat like last year or up slightly, by as much as \$200 million. But some are likely to be down. National syndication would get the rest. The final tally will come in June.

"I don't think it will be up to the degree it was last year," says Ray Warren, managing director, OMD, pointing to 2004's 6% overall growth. "There is clearly experimentation with other forms of media, partly over TV pricing, partly over the lack of belief that 'I need to do the same thing I did last year.'"

### Changing fortunes

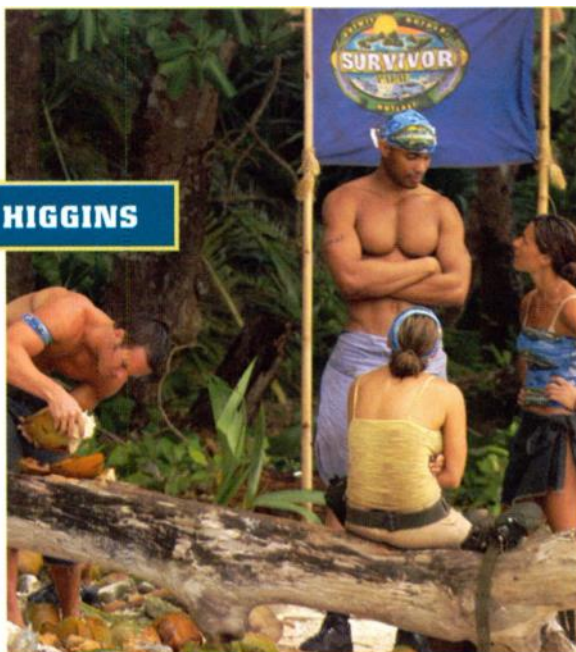
That's not to say there won't be plenty of drama as the networks drive their hardest bargains. CBS is No. 1, but not by much. For the first time in years, ABC suddenly has leverage: Young-adult ratings are up 14%, and advertisers are clamoring for time big-reach shows *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost*. NBC's leverage has dissipated as it has plunged from first to fourth place among adults 18-49.

*American Idol* has saved Fox's Nielsen averages from a disastrous fall season, but that alone won't necessarily rescue the network in the upfront. Much of the rest of Fox's lineup is a yawner.

CBS Chairman and Viacom Co-President Les Moonves crowns about his network's ascent to the top. "We expect a much larger share of the market than we've ever had before," he says, noting that up to 40% of the money advertisers commit during upfront is spent on Thursday nights. "The fact that are now dominant that night is very significant."

Cable networks hope to repeat their success of

BY JOHN M. HIGGINS



CSI (below left) and *Survivor* (above) help CBS dominate Thursdays, the night that accounts for 40% of upfront spending, says Chairman Les Moonves.



last year. Buyers jumped to cable to evade the high broadcast rates. Instead of negotiating with cable only after finishing deals with the likes of CBS and NBC, buyers turned to cable for price breaks and committed hundreds of millions of dollars before broadcast net-

works had even finalized their fall schedules.

Turner Entertainment Sales President David Levy says he wrote more than 85% of his upfront business for TBS and TNT before the broadcast negotiations even commenced. He expects similar success this season.

Broadcast networks haven't lost as much audience to cable this year. Broadcasters have lost only 1.9% of their 18-49 audience this season, versus 6% last year. Meanwhile, cable continues to climb by about 4%. "It's the same trend: We're in a growth mode, they are in a decline mode," Levy says. "There's a diminishing return from broadcast."

There's an increasing disconnect between commercials sold during the annual spring prime time upfront and what networks actually collect by the end of the season. Every year, series get cancelled, and all advertisers have the option of rescinding a big piece of their orders.

Even though the original agreements may be altered wildly by the end of the season, the networks still collect hundreds of millions of dollars in this arcane—some say archaic—bazaar that centers on the second week in May when the broadcast networks unveil their fall schedules.

Right now, broadcast networks are still early in their program-development process, and many advertisers have yet to tell their media-buying agencies how much they're planning to spend.

### Sluggish scatter market

Why such a dull financial outlook? There's little exciting in the broad economy, particularly given the slowdown among the biggest TV advertisers of all, car manufacturers. Further, advertisers are increasingly annoyed at the climbing cost of TV, sending them looking harder at other media, particularly the Internet.

"We don't see anything out of the ordinary that would make it a tremendously bullish marketplace," said Initiative Media SVP Ray Dundas. "We see more

COVER



COUNTERPOINT

# Upfront Forecasters Are All Wet Each year, when the weather gets warm on the streets of Manhattan, otherwise sensible people line up

to play an irresistible con game. No, it's not "Three Card Monte," although the

AD INFINITUM  
BY JOE MANDESE

sleight of hand involved is every bit as deft and the chances of actually coming away a winner are no more assured.

On Madison Avenue, they call this game the "upfront." The deck gets shuffled over and over again until nobody is sure exactly what they got—even when it's over. Part of this is due to the fact that the upfront isn't actually the distinct marketplace many people think but is part of a broader set of future, current and revised markets that make up the network-TV advertising business. And at the end of the year, when all those network ad units are finally bought, paid or exchanged for "make-goods," the final number often bears no resemblance to what the networks say they took in during the upfront. In fact, it never does.

To illustrate this point, I analyzed the past 14 years of network advertising revenues and compared it with their upfront advertising sales claims. There was little, if any, correlation between the two. On average, the network upfront ad marketplace grew nearly 8% a year for the 14-year period between the 1990-91 and the 2003-04 seasons. Actual network advertising revenues for each full year following those upfronts rose at half that rate.

And it's not simply that the upfront overstates actual network advertising sales. Consider this: In upfront sales seasons 1990-91, 1992-93, 1996-97 and 2000-01, when upfront sales volume rose, actual network ad revenues decreased the following year. Conversely, in 1991-92 and 2001-02, upfront sales declined, but network ad revenues rose the following year.

"The network upfront is an artifact," says Dan Hodges, managing partner of Greenwich Consulting Partners, Greenwich, Conn., who consults for advertisers and networks on their TV advertising strategies. "It's more a reflection of what people say they intended to buy than what actually gets bought."

Hodges, a veteran of both selling and buying in the upfront marketplaces, says the final numbers that networks boast about selling in June of each year dissipate when the rest of the network sales cycle is taken into account, including upfront cancellation options, make-good advertising units, and ratings shortfalls that can affect how much the networks have to sell during the scatter marketplace.

"It's really one part of a whole," explains Lawrence Fried, chief revenue officer, national TV, at SQUAD, a Tarrytown, N.Y.-based company that tracks actual TV ad spending for advertisers and agencies. Fried, a former top sales executive at ABC and ESPN, calls the upfront sales figures an "illusion" designed to drive advertising deals by convincing advertisers and agencies that the networks are "selling out" their ad inventory.

"It is an artificial deadline created by the networks to force advertisers to 'pin' advertising in case they need it," says Mike Lotito, president of Media IQ, a New York-based company that monitors TV advertising buys for marketers. "As a result, advertisers often reserve more than they need, knowing they can reduce their inventory via options."

In fact, the market is such a moving target when advertisers make their ad commitments during the upfront that they are allowed to cancel about a third of that time later in the year if they think they over-bought. Typically, upfront advertisers are permitted to cancel up to 25% of their first-quarter buys and up to 50% of their second- and third-quarter buys during the broadcast season.

When the networks fail to deliver on overly optimistic ratings projections, they are forced to give some of their ad inventory back to upfront advertisers as compensation, which depletes what they have to sell in the scatter marketplace. Says Media IQ's Lotito, "The final difference between upfront gains and final revenue is a result of declining ratings." ■

situations where it would be flat to slightly negative."

Perhaps the best evidence of a modest upfront is the sluggish scatter market. In a healthy market, a 30-second spot typically sells for 10%-15% more than spots sold in the previous spring's upfront. Networks report that scatter prices are flat to slightly above upfront prices and there's no shortage of inventory. "There's nobody out-of-sale," says one broadcast sales executive.

And pricing won't be helped by the tightness of the ratings race. The worst of the Big Four broadcast networks lags the best by just 400,000 viewers. A year ago, the gap was triple that.

"Only three-tenths of a rating point separates the four networks right now," says Randy Falco, president of NBC Universal Television Networks Group. "That dampens price. It always has. I haven't seen this kind of network parity since 1991 and 1992."

Less animosity

The nasty tone between buyers and sellers is less pronounced than in the 2004 market. That should be evident this week as ad executives gather in New Orleans for the American Association of Advertising Agencies' convention. At the very beginning last year, agencies declared war on broadcasters and threatened to move \$1 billion from broadcast to cable. They were still burning over the 2003 upfront, when advertisers sharply increased their budgets at the last second and sent upfront prices unexpectedly soaring, with costs per thousand (CPMs) increasing an extraordinary 15%.

The threats largely worked. In 2004, broadcast networks settled for CPM hikes averaging 7%. Cable networks got their now-standard 8% increase and collected an extra \$600 million. (Before the upfront commenced, *B&C* estimated that cable would grow by \$700 million.)

The upfront market balances buyers' and sellers' views of how strong the general ad market will be next fall and winter. If they think the market will be sluggish—as it is today—buyers may be able to get better prices by waiting to buy time in the scatter market. If they see a surge in demand, buyers will want to lock in prices now.

Sellers go through a similar calculus. Facing weak demand in last year's upfront, ABC President of Sales Mike Shaw held inventory back. That bet largely paid off when ABC's schedule hit in the fall and ABC had a lot more ratings points to sell.

But his success was tempered by weak demand in a relatively soft scatter market, keeping ABC from fully cashing in on *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost*.

In the coming selling season, such positioning will be common. Major broadcast and cable networks have about 1.7 million 30-second spots to sell, and buyers have \$18 billion to spend.

"Everybody just can't buy *American Idol*," says Moonves. ■

STORY

UPFRONT LOWDOWN

|             | Sales, in billions |         |         |         |
|-------------|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|             | 2001-02            | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 |
| Broadcast   | \$6.9              | \$8.0   | \$9.0   | \$8.7   |
| Cable       | \$4.0              | \$4.1   | \$5.5   | \$6.6   |
| Syndication | \$2.2              | \$2.1   | \$2.4   | \$2.5   |
| Total       | \$13.1             | \$14.2  | \$16.9  | \$17.8  |

2005-06 (EST.) \$18.5-\$18.7

SOURCE: Merrill Lynch; B&C research



Steady hits like USA Network's *Monk* (above) will keep money flowing to cable, while breakout *Lost* gives ABC new power in the ad market.







WASHINGTON WATCH

# Judges Burn Flag

A new technology meant to protect digital TV shows from illegal Internet file-swapping received a hostile reception from federal judges last week.

The fate of FCC rules requiring that digital TVs and VCRs be equipped to block illegal computer distribution of DTV content is in trouble, if acerbic questioning by two of the judges hearing legal challenges are any indication.

"You crossed the line," Federal Appeals Judge **Harry Edwards** declared, telling FCC lawyers that the commission overstepped its authority by mandating the technology known as the "broadcast flag." In 2003, the FCC required that TVs, personal computers and digital storage devices be equipped to recognize a code, or flag, embedded in TV signals. The flag would indicate to what extent content could be sent over computer networks: unrestricted, one-time copying or none at all.

**"You crossed the line."**

FEDERAL APPEALS JUDGE HARRY EDWARDS

Broadcasters and Hollywood pushed for the requirement, arguing that TV stations will never be granted the right to run high-definition movies until programming is copy-protected.

The FCC's best hope for preserving the requirement: a three-judge panel could rule that groups challenging the broadcast flag face so little risk of harm that they don't have standing to take the commission to court. The panel, which debated the standing question at length, is expected to decide the case in two or three months.

# Social Security Sued Over Delay

The **Social Security Administration** is withholding documents regarding its \$1.8 million contract with PR firm **Fleischman-Hillard** and possibly information on other contracts, an activist group alleges in a federal lawsuit.

**Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)** complains that the Social Security Administration failed to meet a legal deadline for producing documents requested

# Learning Curve

New NCTA chief knows D.C., not cable **By Bill McConnell**

**K**yle McSlarrow, who becomes president of the cable industry's main trade group Tuesday, freely admits: "I don't know beans about cable."

But if the board of the National Cable & Telecommunications Association doesn't see his lack of industry experience as a drawback, the former Energy Department official isn't going to worry about it either.

"I'm mindful I have an enormous amount of learning to do," he said over lunch with reporters at Washington steakhouse Sam & Harry's, a favorite power-dining hangout for lobbyists. "I guess they were looking for someone who can pull it all together."

He replaces Robert Sachs, who stepped down Feb. 28 after leading NCTA for five years.

Because of his lack of industry experience, McSlarrow refused to give opinions on the public policy and industry debates facing cable.

### A VIEWER'S VIEW

The one exception was the ongoing congressional effort to rein in sex and violence on TV. McSlarrow, 44, defended cable's exemption from the type of indecency restrictions that broadcasters face. "I've got three boys, and there's a lot on TV I don't want them to watch." But he's "comfortable" with the channel-blocking technology that cable offers parents: "I don't want to start making decisions about what other people watch."

As for his own viewing, McSlarrow says his family subscribes to the Fairfax, Va., Cox franchise and gets a digital package that includes high-definition service. He also owns a digital video recorder and just started getting his telephone service over cable.

The Sci Fi Channel is his favorite, and he's glued to the tube Friday nights watching *Stargate*, *Stargate Atlantis* and *Battlestar Galactica*.

The first project for NCTA is designing a strategy for navigating a fierce legislative battle over the U.S. telecommunications laws, which Congress will kick off in the next few weeks.

The outcome of the telecom rewrite will be critical for cable as it breaks into businesses dominated by regional telephone monopolies and tries to stave off those rivals' incursion into video

delivery. Lawmakers are expected to set regulation for Internet telephone service, which cable operators would like to see as light as possible. NCTA also is determined to block phone companies' bid to exempt their fledgling pay-TV services from local franchising rules that require cable operators to serve their entire local markets, including low-profit poor neighborhoods.

### OUT OF THE BLUE, IT CLICKED

McSlarrow says he can best help NCTA in the upcoming fight by capitalizing on Capitol Hill contacts developed during his days as a congressional aide and by tapping management experience gleaned from four years as deputy secretary for the Department of Energy.

McSlarrow says there is one similarity between the energy and cable industries that gives him insight into his new duties: Both businesses operate over networks that are heavily regulated by the local, state and federal governments.

Cable and energy industries operate networks that are regulated in varying degrees by the government. Like the cable industry's fight to remain free of access rules that would force operators to carry rival Internet providers on their high-speed networks, energy companies too must grapple with rules governing sharing of pipelines and power grids.

"I was dealing with open access every day," he says.

McSlarrow says the NCTA job was the only post he interviewed for after deciding to leave the Energy Department shortly after President Bush was reelected, although he was approached for energy-related jobs at law firms and other trade groups. The chance to head a well-established, highly regarded trade group with business at the forefront of new technology service was too good to pass up, he says.

A request from search firm Korn-Ferry to interview for the job came "out of blue," he says. Before that call, his only major contact with the cable industry occurred during debate over the 1996 Telecommunications Act, when he was working as deputy chief of staff for then Majority Leader Bob Dole.

Decker Anstrom, former NCTA president who now sits on the board, approached him for the interview. "When they called me," McSlarrow says, "it clicked." ■



**"I was dealing with open access [in the Energy Department] every day."**

KYLE MCSLARROW, NCTA

under a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

CREW is seeking copies of all the agency's contracts with public-relations firms. The request was filed in January after the **Department of Education** confirmed that it paid TV commentator **Armstrong Williams** \$240,000 to promote the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind program. To find out whether other agencies have similar contracts, CREW filed FOIA requests with 21 other federal offices.

FOIA requires federal agencies to respond to requests within 20 days. Social Security spokesman **Mark Hinkle** says the agency isn't stonewalling. Social Security is "actively working" to honor the request.

# Mutual Retreat In Stern Fight

Radio giant **Clear Channel** and shock jock **Howard Stern** agreed to drop their dueling lawsuits generated when the San Antonio-based company removed his program from its radio stations a year ago.

At the time, six Clear Channel stations were under investigation by the FCC for indecency violations during Stern's show. Clear Channel

later paid \$1.75 million to settle resulting fines for those and other violations.

Terms of the settlement were not disclosed. Stern was not available for comment.



Howard Stern

# Stations Draw Fines Over Deaf Alerts

Three San Diego TV stations face the first-ever FCC fines for failing to provide emergency alerts aimed at deaf viewers. The fines, totaling \$65,000, were proposed by the FCC after the stations failed to provide visual warnings during wildfires that struck Southern California in fall of 2003.

The stations can appeal the fines. **KFMB** faces a proposed \$25,000 sanction. **KUSI** and **KGTV** were socked for \$20,000 each. TV stations and cable operators are required to provide people with hearing disabilities the same access to emergency information as those with unimpaired hearing. The FCC allows stations to pick a variety of methods for providing alerts to the hearing impaired, including closed-captioning and screen crawls.



COUNTRY



GAC

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SCRIPPS

NETWORKS

WILL MAKE IT A

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World Radio History



STATION TO STATION

# Ride the TV Train

By Allison Romano

WSB Atlanta is hitting the rails. Come spring, the station's newscasts will be seen by passengers on area commuter trains and subways via The Rail Network, a company that wires mass-transit systems to receive live audio and video.

Atlanta is the system's inaugural market. TRN is installing five flat-screen TVs in each Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) train car and will stream in live content through wireless technology. The system has six audio channels, English- and



Atlanta rail commuters will soon get TV.

Spanish-language channels for the video, and three music channels.

To hear, passengers can tune in with FM radios. The bottom third of the screens will be closed-captions. The service will be free. To hype it, TRN plans to give out more than 200,000 FM radios.

The company's CEO, David Lane, dreamed up the idea while commuting on the N-line subway in New York. "Passengers want to see local, relevant content," he says.

For WSB, train TV is one more way to reach viewers. "There is an unserved audience riding the trains," says Director of Creative Services Steve Riley. "This is an extension of our brand and our newscasts." The station provides its news for free in exchange for exposure and promo time.

MARTA gets a free ride, too. TRN picks up the tab—it won't disclose costs—for wiring and maintaining the system. It will make money selling ad time and plans to share some ad revenue with the transit authority. So far, Chevrolet, Cadillac, Metro PCS and American InterContinental University have signed up.

On weekends, TRN will pipe in entertainment and music programming, possibly from local radio stations or satellite radio. Those plans are still in the works.

Other cities may hop on board soon. Lane says he has pitched every major transit authority in North America. So far, the Wash-

# February Roundup

Fox wins; NBC loses By Allison Romano

What a difference a sweeps makes. After a fourth-place finish in November, Fox is positioned to win the February sweeps in the key 18-49 demo and total viewers.

Fox benefited from monster ratings for the Feb. 6 Super Bowl. Although it's the first time the big game fell in the ratings period, researchers say Fox would probably have won anyway. The reason: *American Idol* on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Now Fox is adding a third installment on Mondays. Says Magna Global USA EVP of Audience Analysis Steve Sternberg, "That may be just what Fox needs to seal the sweeps deal."

After winning November, CBS is placing second in February in 18-49s and total viewers. Season-to-date, Fox and CBS are neck and neck among 18-49s.

ABC sits in third place in February, with *Desperate Housewives* and *Lost* powering its ascent. The network "still needs to strengthen many other hours, and they could use more comedies," notes Shari Anne Brill, VP/director of programming for Carat North America.

As for NBC, its ratings woes continue. After winning the coveted 18-49 demo for the past four seasons, the Peacock is in fourth place. The WB and UPN, both off slightly from a year ago, round out the broadcast standings. February sweeps officially ends March 3. Here's a look, to date, at the winners, losers and a few surprises.

## BY THE NUMBERS


| Sweeps performance |                        |                               |
|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                    | 18-49 RATING/<br>SHARE | TOTAL<br>VIEWERS<br>(MILLION) |
| <b>ABC</b>         |                        |                               |
| 2005               | 3.8/10                 | 10.1                          |
| 2004               | 3.2/9                  | 9.0                           |
| Change             | 19%*                   | 12%                           |
| <b>CBS</b>         |                        |                               |
| 2005               | 3.9/10                 | 12.6                          |
| 2004               | 4.3/11                 | 14.4                          |
| Change             | -9%*                   | -13%                          |
| <b>Fox</b>         |                        |                               |
| 2005               | 7.0/18                 | 16.9                          |
| 2004               | 4.2/11                 | 9.7                           |
| Change             | 67%*                   | 75%                           |
| <b>NBC</b>         |                        |                               |
| 2005               | 3.6/9                  | 10.2                          |
| 2004               | 4.9/13                 | 12.3                          |
| Change             | -27%*                  | -17%                          |
| <b>The WB</b>      |                        |                               |
| 2005               | 1.4/4                  | 3.5                           |
| 2004               | 1.7/4                  | 4.0                           |
| Change             | -18%*                  | -13%                          |
| <b>UPN</b>         |                        |                               |
| 2005               | 1.3/3                  | 3.2                           |
| 2004               | 1.7/4                  | 3.9                           |
| Change             | -24%*                  | -20%                          |


\* Change in rating


SOURCE: Nielsen Media Research data 2/3-23/05, 2/5-25/04


## HOW THE SHOWS STACK UP

- WINNERS**

**American Idol**  
 Reality phenom *American Idol* (left) is Fox's most valuable player, killing the competition on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On Feb. 15, the Tuesday edition nabbed a 5.6 rating/14 share in 18-49s and 14.2 million. The next night, the Wednesday show scored an 11.5/27 in 18-49s and 26.3 million total viewers. Also, medical drama *House* is enjoying a ratings pop as *Idol*'s lead-out.
- SURPRISE**

**Monday Nights**  
 A wasteland earlier in the season, Mondays are now hot. Fox's *24* is flourishing, up 24% in 18-49s from last season. NBC's *Medium* (left) wows, and *CSI: Miami* remains vibrant. ABC struggles to find a replacement for *Monday Night Football*.
- LOSER**

**NBC**  
 The one-time 18-49 king is facing a fourth-place finish. Without *Friends*, Thursday nights are bleak. *Joey* (left) and *Will & Grace* are no match for *Survivor*; the *Law & Order* trilogy has also slowed.
- WINNERS**

**Survivor**  
 The Feb. 17 premiere of *Survivor: Palau* (left) posted the series' best 18-49 numbers—a 9.1 rating/23 share—since 2003's *Survivor: Amazon*. CBS' potent combination of *Survivor* and *CSI* means it dominates Thursdays.

ington, D.C., and Vancouver, B.C., systems are exploring options.

# Sweeps Stunts Turn Ugly

There is no naked anchor, but February still featured noteworthy local sweeps stunts. WAVE Louisville, Ky., got national attention after reporter Eric Flack and his cameraman were assaulted by officials at marketing firm Louisville Pro during an interview. Company founder Eli Ohayon and two other reps allegedly assaulted Flack and his cameraman, who caught the altercation on tape. Ohayon is now facing criminal charges; the company skipped town. WAVE, the market's second-place news station, aired the fight as part of Flack's report. Flack even turned up on NBC's *Today*. CNN's *American Morning* and MSNBC to discuss the incident.

## STUN GUNS

In Columbus, Ohio, and St. Louis, the reporters' pain was self-inflicted. WCMH Columbus reporter Teresa Garcia and KMOV St. Louis reporter Larry Conners

**"It felt as if a bull were goring me."**

**KMOV'S LARRY CONNERS ON GETTING SHOT BY A STUN GUN**

were both "tasered"—shocked with high-voltage stun guns—for stories on the controversial weapons. More than 80 people have died from tasers, per Amnesty International, yet most states allow sales to the public.

In the WCMH report, Garcia and News Director Stan Sanders were zapped, then roiled in pain. "We wanted to tell this story from firsthand experience," says Sanders. KMOV management agreed after Conners arranged for medical workers to be on-hand. He was not injured, but the pain was temporarily paralyzing. "It felt as if a bull were goring me over and over," Conners said in an online account.

## WTKR AUDITIONS

Preferring a more feel-good sweeps promotion, CBS affiliate WTKR Norfolk-Hampton Roads, Va., is pitching its search for a new traffic reporter on-air. The station solicited tapes through mid-February from hundreds of TV wannabes and held auditions at the town center.—A.R.

Send station news to [aromano@reedbusiness.com](mailto:aromano@reedbusiness.com)





AT A GLANCE

The Market

|                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| DMA rank          | 64           |
| Population        | 1,183,000    |
| TV homes          | 481,000      |
| Income per capita | \$15,291     |
| TV revenue rank   | 67           |
| TV revenue        | \$67,800,000 |

Commercial TV Stations

| Rank* | Ch.  | Affil. | Owner          |
|-------|------|--------|----------------|
| 1     | WKYT | 27     | CBS Gray TV    |
| 2     | WLEX | 18     | NBC Cordillera |
| 3     | WTVQ | 36     | ABC Media Gen. |
| 4     | WDKY | 56     | Fox Sinclair   |

\* November 2004, total households, sign-on to sign-off, Mon.-Sun.

Cable/DBS

|                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Cable subscribers (HH)    | 312,650                |
| Major cable operator      | Insight Communications |
| Cable penetration         | 65%                    |
| ADS subscribers (HH)**    | 129,870                |
| ADS penetration           | 27%                    |
| DBS carriage of local TV? | Yes                    |

\*\* Alternative Delivery Systems, includes DBS and other non-cable services, according to Nielsen Media Research

What's No. 1

| Syndicated Show  | Rating/Share*** |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Jeopardy! (WKYT) | 17/31           |
| Network Show     |                 |
| CSI (WKYT)       | 22/34           |
| Evening Newscast |                 |
| WLEX             | 13/28           |
| Late Newscast    |                 |
| WLEX             | 8/26            |

\*\*\* November 2004, total households

SOURCES: Nielsen Media Research, BIA Research



WLEX evening anchor team

Winner's Circle

WLEX grabs top ratings in news race By Allison Romano

In Lexington, Ky., home of thoroughbred racehorses and bluegrass tunes, there is a new champion in local news. In November 2004, for the first time in 28 years, WLEX, Cordillera Communication's NBC affiliate, won top ratings in early morning, early evening, 11 p.m. and weekend news. Gray Television's CBS affiliate WKYT, its rival and former top news station, prevailed at noon. "We've worked hard to deliver a product that resonates with the market," says WLEX President Tim Gilbert.

Part of the station's success is due to the rejiggering of its format. When Cordillera Communications bought WLEX in late 1999, the station had an unusual news lineup: It delayed Nightly News until 7 p.m. to run an hour-long 6 p.m. newscast. By 2000, WLEX opted for a traditional 90-minute news block from 5 to 6:30, running Nightly News live. The station installed a "Coverage You Can Count On" mantra and promoted relentlessly. Now, it can hype its top-rated news.

For the 64th-largest TV market, Lexington boasts a dynamic local TV battle. WKYT remains the overall ratings leader, primed by CBS' strong lineup. Media General-owned ABC affiliate WTVQ, third-placed in news and overall, is mounting an offensive. In the last 18 months, the station installed a fresh evening news team and recruited news director Tai Takahashi, formerly executive producer of news and special coverage for KOMO Seattle. It also upgraded its weather technology and, in October 2004, WTVQ introduced "Action News" branding. "We need to focus on getting the right product out," says VP/GM Mike Pimentel. WKYT produces the 10 p.m. news for Sinclair Broadcasting's Fox affiliate WDKY.

The challenge for stations: covering a far-flung, economically diverse region. "The old joke was Lexington was horses, whiskey and tobacco," says Gilbert. "Now it's a great deal more." The Lexington market includes 40 counties, ranging from coal-mining towns in Appalachia to wealthy Kentucky horse country. Frankfort, the state capital, is also in the market. The University of Kentucky is a nerve center and the city's major employer. "UK sporting events are the biggest events in town," says Pimentel. Printer manufacturer Lexmark is based here and Toyota has a large plant nearby.

The economic mix helps stabilize the local economy. TV stations will earn \$67.8 million in revenue in 2005, up slightly from \$66.8 million last year, according to BIA Financial. The ad market should grow in the low single digits over 2004, excluding political, station execs say.

WLEX is continuing its assault on the market. Halfway through February, the station was holding its November gains.

But don't expect a big celebration if WLEX wins a second-straight sweeps. After last November's victory, says Gilbert, "We had some ice cream in the newsroom and went back to work." ■

NEXT: SAN DIEGO

Sweeps Stories

For February sweeps, two Lexington, Ky., stations seized the opportunity to tie hit network shows into unconventional local news stories.

CBS affiliate WKYT went with reliable star Survivor. An 11 p.m. news story spotlighted Colonel Jack, a local resident trying out for the endurance-testing reality show. "When it comes to dealing with people, I'm slicker than deer guts on a door-knob," Jack told the station.

NBC's new drama Medium inspired local affiliate WLEX to feature area psychics who communicate with the dead, much like Patricia Arquette's character on the show. While it made for an interesting story, WLEX Vice President/General Manager Tim Gilbert says his station tries not to overdose on sweeps-mania.

"I'm not a big believer in tricky stories for sweeps," Gilbert says. "We want to act like we're in a ratings period all year long." —A.R.

THE DEMOS

| WHO            | SHARE OF POPULATION | INDEX* |
|----------------|---------------------|--------|
| Age 18 - 34    | 33%                 | 107    |
| Age 18 - 49    | 61%                 | 99     |
| Age 25 - 54    | 57%                 | 98     |
| College grad   | 18%                 | 73     |
| White          | 93%                 | 112    |
| Black          | 5%                  | 44     |
| Hispanic       | 2%                  | 16     |
| Asian          | 1%                  | 29     |
| \$100K+ HH     | 9%                  | 54     |
| \$50K+ HH      | 36%                 | 74     |
| Below \$50K HH | 64%                 | 124    |

\* Index is a measurement of consumer likelihood. An index of 100 indicates that the market is on par with the average of the 75 local markets.

SOURCE: Scarborough Release 1 2004 75 Markets Report (Feb. 03 - March 04)

HATCHETT RULES RALEIGH!

JUDGE HATCHETT is WRAZ's #1 show before 5:00PM!

3.5 HH RATING!

+25% WEEK TO WEEK!

+17% OVER LEAD-IN!

JUDGE HATCHETT

www.sonypicturetelevision.com



Source: NSI WRAP Overnights, 2/14-2/18/05 HH rating M-F 10:00AM Lead-in= 1/2 hr time period Judge Mathis





# Sony Wants To Command HD Market

Company pitches new high-def products at NAB **By Ken Kerschbaumer**

In the hopes of locking up the HD marketplace, Sony is unveiling a new mid-priced version of its popular XDCAM at NAB in April. The camera fills an important void in the company's HD product line. Estimated at between \$17,000 and \$20,000, the new XDCAM is priced between Sony's low-end HDV, with camcorders costing \$4,000, and its high-end HDCAM, running \$40,000.

"XDCAM is a way to fill that gap," says Alec Shapiro, Sony Broadcast's director of marketing.

Price is one variable; speed is another. The XDCAM disk can transfer low-resolution (or proxy video) up to 56 times faster than real time, a key part of Sony's sales pitch.

And with more than 50% of televisions in the U.S. expected to be HDTV sets by the end of 2006, Hugo Gaggioni, Sony Broadcast chief technology officer, says the market will be primed for HD news, a potential sweet spot for the HD XDCAM, which will probably be available in early 2006.

Until then, Shapiro says stations will be focused on getting their plants ready for HD. "Broadcast stations are still very much in the SD world," he says. "They'll need a total infrastructure change for HD, and we think field acquisition will be the last piece, not the first piece."

## A REFINED XDCAM

In addition to showcasing its HD model, Sony is unveiling several other products at NAB. For instance, the SD version of XDCAM, which will be on display, has been refined. Sony has shipped more than 5,000 XDCAM units since its introduction in April 2004. This year, the NAB exhibit will highlight the growing maturity of the product line.

The biggest change from last year is how quickly stations can edit with proxy video. "Companies like Avid will show how easily the editing can be done," says Shapiro.

Once ingested into the nonlinear editing system, personnel can begin assembling story clips.

When the XDCAM disk arrives at the facility, the high-quality content is inserted in place of the low-quality content for on-air playback. Sony will also demonstrate the ability to send proxy video live from the camera via Wi-Fi to laptops or directly to the station.

Bob Ross, CBS SVP, East Coast operations, is a believer in the XDCAM wireless transmission capability.

"The cameraman can be up on the camera stand with 12 other people and the reporter or editor can be somewhere

is the HDW-S280 half-rack HDCAM VTR, designed for newsgathering and outside broadcast applications. It can record and playback in 1080/24p as well as 1080/60i. There is no 720p option, since it doesn't have a downcon-



Sony's Alec Shapiro

switcher with 16 wipe patterns and an audio mixer which can handle six channels. No announcement yet on prices or ship dates.

For those stations and sports broadcasters

looking to add HD point-of-view shots, Sony has revamped its HDC-X300 compact HD camera. It weighs less than three pounds without a lens and is useful in stadiums or in keeping track of road conditions.

Unlike the original unit, which only had an HD/SDI output and limited cable runs to 900 feet, the new camera, the HDC-X310, has an optical-fiber interface and permits runs of 3,300 feet. The camera will cost \$17,000, and the interface another \$3,500.

## HOLLYWOOD STYLE

Sony will also address the Hollywood production community, from both the TV and movie sides. Each group appreciates the ability to shoot video at 24 progressive frames per second, matching the frame rate of traditional film production.

Sony wants 24p to be one of the buzzwords at this year's convention, so it is extending 24p capability across its product line—from DVCAM to HDCAM. The DSR-450WS (a widescreen version of the DSR-400) can record 24p, 30p or 60i images. And it will cost less than \$18,000. (The DSR-400, for 4:3 production, will run \$10,800.) "We also will have upconversion kits for 720p and 1080i resolutions so our customers can evolve their operations and infrastructure," says Shapiro. Cost of those boards will be \$4,500, with a fall delivery.

While 24p works for those who shoot hourlong dramas and movies, it is of no help to the live production community. That is why Sony is introducing the HDC-1000 studio camera and HDC-1500 portable camera. Both record 1080-progressive lines at 60 fps, a step the company believes will help broadcasters produce sports in either 1080i or 720p.

Available this summer, it will be able to shoot in 24, 25, 30, 50, and 60 frames progressive. Says Gaggioni, "The camera sensor costs an arm and a leg to develop, but we'll leverage it across many products." ■



New cameras being showcased at NAB: Sony X310 and the DSR-450WS

**The XDCAM disk can transfer low-resolution proxy video up to 56 times faster than real time.**

else putting notes into a computer related to the video," says Ross.

Those notes can then be transmitted back to the cameraman and attached to the video file. "You don't need to put that information on a disk or USB card and marry it to the video later," he adds.

A second bonus: The video can be sent back to the station, where the producer can download and edit at the same time it is being shot in the field. In a competitive news environment, that can mean being first to air with a story. And if a station wants to blast live footage straight to the Internet, it can.

## MORE ROBUST

Also new for the broadcast community

verter. (It is priced at \$39,000.)

Another new product is the Anycast Station. Last year at NAB, the company introduced it as a live-content system packaged in a briefcase. Complete with monitor, production switcher and camera controls, Sony believed it was a perfect fit for churches and disc jockeys. But once broadcasters examined it, they began requesting broadcast-style features.

"We spent the past year redesigning it," says Shapiro, "and believe it's a much more robust product."

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**TECH Q&A**

# Rev Up NASCAR's VOD enhances race

NASCAR fans got a treat during the Daytona 500 on Feb. 20. Once again, NASCAR rolled out a

VOD package that enhances viewing. Subscribers can almost jump behind the wheel with some of the

country's hottest drivers for the 36 races that comprise the Nextel Cup series. Jeffrey Pollack, NASCAR

managing director, broadcasting and new media, talks with *B&C's* Ken Kerschbaumer about how the biggest sport in America caters to fans.

**When the VOD package came out two years ago, it seemed like an interesting experiment. Has it worked?**

Both consumer and critical reaction have grown. This is a new type of TV experience, and we're realistic in terms of how quickly it will be adopted. For us, this is all about increased viewer choice and control.

**Any changes to the package this year?**

It hasn't changed much. It's still seven channels of dedicated in-car cameras, live telemetry data and live in-car communications. The focus is on the fans' ability to switch from car to car.

**How much does it cost?**

A full-year subscription is \$99, but we have an early-bird special through Feb. 27 of only \$79.

**Will you add more channels in the future?**

Right now, we're limited by the number of cars with cameras in them. On any given weekend, it could be eight to 12, so we settled on seven channels. But as the seasons roll on, this venture will grow and change. We'll have more room for things, to the extent that set-top box interactive applications become more widespread.

**Is this kind of offering something other sports should be looking into?**

I don't want to comment on others, but we're pretty unique. NASCAR is very fan-friendly. I look at this as akin to strapping a camera onto an NFL or NBA player during the heat of competition.

**You have broadband and wireless services. Is NASCAR a natural fit for new-media technologies?**

We're very bullish on our portfolio of new-media ventures. We have 75 million fans in the U.S., and about 40 million consider themselves hard-core. They spend an average of nine hours a week on NASCAR media. Our job is to make sure we're bringing the sport to fans on platforms that are meaningful, interesting and real. ■

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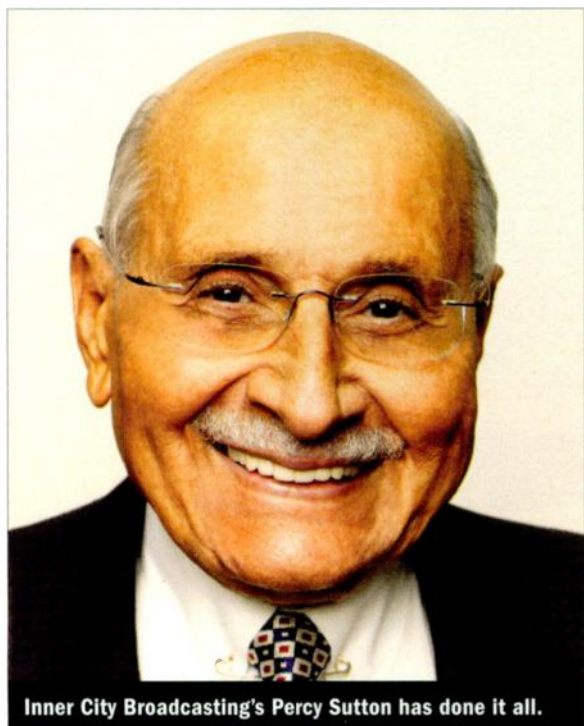
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# Percy Sutton: Hard Work Led to Major Rewards

Nearing 85, this Golden Mike winner is unstoppable **By Stuart Miller**



Inner City Broadcasting's Percy Sutton has done it all.

ily (including his son, Pierre, who now runs the company, which owns nine AM and seven FM stations) are being honored with the Broadcasters' Foundation Golden Mike Award on Feb. 28 in a black-tie fundraiser at Manhattan's Plaza Hotel.

"He was a groundbreaker in the No. 1 media market," says Gordon Hastings, CEO of the foundation, which distributes money to industry employees facing personal financial crises (see story below). "And while we talk in the radio and television business about our commitment to local communities, here is an individual whose résumé—in terms of service to the community—no one can match."

Sutton devotes much of his energy these days running Synematics Inc., a high-tech software/hardware company, but broadcasting has always been close to his heart.

## BIG DREAMS

As the youngest of 15 children living on a farm just outside San Antonio, Sutton used to hold a corn cob to his mouth and state, in his best radio voice, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is Percy Sutton from high in the clouds in the Smith/Youngtown building," referring to a local "skyscraper" that housed a radio station—and that Sutton, as an African-American, could not even enter.

But while prejudice was a fact of life as he grew up, it couldn't dampen his motivation and inspiration to dream big. That came from his father, who was born before the Emancipation Proclamation and became a school principal and undertaker. The Suttons also ran numerous local businesses, putting Percy and his siblings to work—hard work.

For pleasure in his spare time, Sutton, whose willingness to take chances proved crucial to his later success, learned stunt flying. "I have been a risk-taker all my life," he says.

During World War II,

Sutton served as a combat intelligence officer with the Tuskegee Airmen, the all-black combat unit that distinguished itself for its toughness. After the war, he worked his way through college and law school, at one point simultaneously juggling jobs in the post office, as a train conductor and as a waiter. Sutton plunged into the civil-rights movement. He headed New York's branch of the NAACP, joined the Freedom Riders, provided counsel for Malcolm X and got involved in New York politics.

But he never let go of his dream to be in broadcasting. He got on the air on WLIB New York by working for nothing, but he soon realized that "I'd be better off owning the station."

## NO E-Z CREDIT

During the 1960s, Sutton says, he went to dozens of banking institutions looking for backing to start Inner City Broadcasting. Even after he bought WLIB, he ran into doubters on his home turf. When he looked for investors among his black associates, he recalls, "only two believed in me and invested in the company." But Sutton believed in himself: "I knew I had a talent for hiring the right people, and I knew how to make money." He has since donated ICB stock to charity but has not sold any outside his family.

The company eventually expanded from New York, adding stations nationwide.

Sutton also learned how to deal with defeat. He says he poured \$31 million of his family's money into trying to revive Harlem's famed Apollo Theater, with mixed results. The *Showtime at the Apollo* TV program was originally rejected by every white station owner outside of New York because they'd never heard of the theater, Sutton says. He eventually built up the syndicated program, only to become embroiled in controversies over both the theater itself and the rights to syndicate the show, which ICB lost in recent years.

Sutton says he has learned two things: to never look back and that optimism about the future is essential to success. "Don't cry for yourself and don't worry about the indignities of the past," he says. "You have to understand history, but you always have to be forward-looking." ■



As a Tuskegee Airman

**W**hen they write the book on Percy Sutton's life, his founding and nurturing of Inner City Broadcasting (ICB) may take up just one chapter. After all, this guy was a Tuskegee Airman, a Freedom Rider, Malcolm X's lawyer, the head of cable companies in New York and Philadelphia, and a Manhattan borough president. And that's probably not even half of his biography. He is now starting a new career, heading up a high-tech company he plans to take public in 2006.

"Percy Sutton started it all," says Alfred Liggins, CEO of Radio One, now the largest black-owned radio-station group in the nation. "We at Radio One aspired to emulate Percy and Inner City Broadcasting, as did any black broadcaster of any size and scale."

That, in short, explains why Sutton, who turns 85 this year, and his entire Inner City Broadcasting fam-

## Foundation Is a "Godsend" for Those in Need

Organization provides a helping hand just when it's needed

**I**t is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine the impact of the devastating blows Cheri Wyman absorbed in September 2002. First, her husband John, a sales manager at KEZW Denver, suffered a fatal brain aneurysm. Two days later, Cheri was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. But beyond the emotional and psychological challenges of burying her husband and facing a debilitating disease while raising two teenagers was the very practical matter of finding the \$1,400 a month to pay for the medicine that could

help prevent the MS from progressing.

"I didn't know where to turn, but someone at the station told me about the Broadcasters' Foundation," Wyman says. The foundation came to her assistance immediately. "If it were not for them, I could not afford the medication," she says. "They have been a godsend."

The mission of the Broadcasters' Foundation is to provide financial assistance to those in the industry (or their immediate family) who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in acute

financial need, says President Gordon Hastings. Wyman is getting \$1,000 a month, and Hastings says that will continue as long as she needs the help.

## CALAMITIES AREN'T SCHEDULED

The foundation currently helps 28 individuals or families on a monthly basis, along with providing grants on a one-time basis. "That's a big caseload," Hastings says, adding, "What is so important for people to understand is that I have no idea how many new requests will be on my desk each afternoon."

The organization, which relies on members and state broadcaster associations to provide referrals, pays for these grants out of current income raised at events like the Golden Mike Awards gala. It has an endowment of just under \$1.5 million, but Hastings wants to build that up to cope with the swell of baby boomers who will need a helping hand in the future.

In the present, those getting the help can't sing the foundation's praises loud enough. Wyman says gratefully, "I could not have gotten through this without them."—S.M.



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# 'Race' to Victory

## Amazing's co-creators capture the human condition

**A**s *The Amazing Race* launches its seventh trek around the globe March 1, CBS is recruiting contestants to compete in two more rounds. The network recently ordered races 8 and 9 from husband-and-wife creators Bertram van Munster and Elise Doganieri. *Amazing Race* not only claimed the Emmy for best reality series two years running but was honored in January with the 2005 Producers Guild of America award for nonfiction TV.

Van Munster's long résumé includes a stint with Fox's breakthrough series *Cops*, while Doganieri spent a decade in advertising. That changed shortly after she married van Munster. One day, he asked her to pitch him an idea for a TV show. In less than five minutes, she came up with the concept for *Amazing Race*, a global scavenger hunt that forces pairs of contestants to work together in extremely stressful situations. The logistics are so complex it takes about 2,000 people to produce each race.

A ratings winner for CBS since it debuted in September 2001, *Race* ranks among the top 10 shows in any given week. Its co-creators talked with *B&C*'s Jim Finkle about the show's creative challenges and why it works.

**Why do you think this show has performed better in ratings vs. others?**

**ELISE DOGANIERI:** We have a show that's real quality. People want to see quality. They don't always want to come home and be brain-dead. You can feel good about watching it.

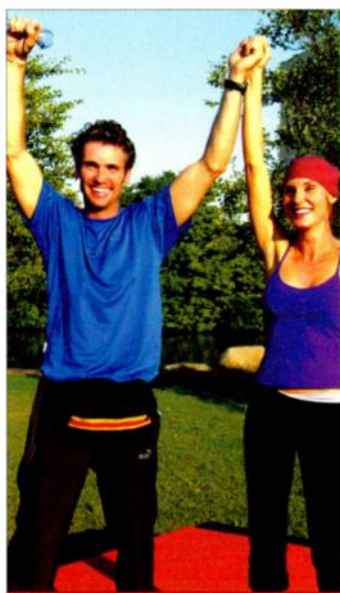
**BERTRAM VAN MUNSTER:** You are also exhausted after you've seen one hour of it. You want to go to bed and sleep peacefully.

**What's the show really about?**

**BVM:** It's all about the story. The world and the situations you put them in are just in the background. The characters and the story are in the foreground.

**What is the theme or nature of that story?**

**ED:** The human condition. How do two people function when they are put under stress? They're tired. They're hungry and faced with financial issues and language barriers.



**Amazing Race 6 winners, Freddie Holliday (left, above) and Kendra Bentley; co-creators: executive producer Bertram van Munster and supervising producer Elise Doganieri.**



**"There is no formula to do this thing. There is fluidity in the show all the time."**

**BERTRAM VAN MUNSTER**

**There was a lot of controversy over the way Jonathan Baker treated his wife during Amazing Race 6. In particular, there was a shoving incident that troubled a lot of viewers. You reprimanded him, but many viewers said they thought you should have kicked him out of the game. In hindsight, do you wish you had thrown him out?**

**Have you made any changes to the game in season 7?**

**BVM:** We made some really, really exciting tweaks that you're going to enjoy.

**Can you tell me about them?**

**BVM:** I'd like to keep it as a surprise. But there are going to be things that are extremely exciting. When I first came up with this, I wasn't sure if it was a brilliant idea. But it turned out to be an extremely good idea.

**What is it like working so closely with your spouse?**

**BVM:** We got married five years ago. It is almost a miracle we're still married.

**What makes it so difficult?**

**ED:** It never ends.  
**BVM:** The work never ends. You take it with you 24 hours a day.

**Do you travel separately when you go overseas to plan the show?**

**ED:** Bertram and I lay out the route. Bertram scouts six of the shows, I scout the other six. We come back and put all the ideas together and make it happen.

**What is the most difficult thing about producing the show?**

**BVM:** Everything.  
**ED:** Creatively, it's a challenge every season. We put a map up on the wall, and we start picking locations. We have to figure out logistics and creative.

**BVM:** And money.

**ED:** It doesn't get easier.

**BVM:** What makes it difficult is that the show is not cookie-cutter. Every 44 minutes that we produce for CBS is almost always an experimental show. There is no formula to do this thing. There is fluidity in the show all the time. The contestants are on the move. We don't know what they are going to do next.

**There was a lot of controversy over the way Jonathan Baker treated his wife during Amazing Race 6. In particular,**

**BVM:** To tell you the truth, to a certain degree he did blindside me.

**In what sense?**

**BVM:** You cast somebody, and they show one side of themselves. Something else comes out when they're under stress. That behavior I could not predict.

**Have you changed your screening procedures as a result of what happened with Jonathan?**

**BVM:** He's actually not a bad guy. But it was very unusual the way he dealt with the stress of the show.

**ED:** We do psychological testing and background checks. That's something we've done from the very start, and that will continue.

**Let's talk about safety. How dangerous is it for your contestants to be driving around in foreign countries in cars they may not feel comfortable driving?**

**BVM:** They may look like jalopies, but these cars have been really tested and carefully checked by us.

**What about the taxi drivers? Some of them seem kind of dangerous.**

**BVM:** The taxi drivers are obviously random. But taxis all over the world are controlled by the very firm rules they have in those countries. Sometimes, it looks like they're driving around in old cars, but all these countries have rules and regulations for their own taxi cabs.

**When you're filming overseas, do people know what's going on?**

**BVM:** They totally recognize us. It doesn't matter where we go. They are people pointing at the flags and saying, "That's the *Amazing Race*."

**ED:** We're always saying, "We don't know what that is, we don't know what those flags are."

**BVM:** And people say, "We know you guys." People get a kick out of it.

**To what extent is what we see on television staged by your players? Are they acting?**

**BVM:** You cannot act in front of these cameras. You can't possibly do that 24 hours a day. Maybe once in a while they'll try, but it immediately looks ridiculous and obvious.

**What do you plan to do beyond The Amazing Race?**

**BVM:** More exciting television. I'm also developing some ideas that could easily translate into a very good movie.

**Scripted or unscripted?**

**BVM:** Scripted.

**Do you want to keep working with CBS?**

**BVM:** Absolutely. We tremendously enjoy working with them.

**Are there similarities to the stress the couples face on your show and the stress you go through as you produce the show? Is there the same kind of tension?**

**ED:** This is a high-stress job for anybody. Even if we weren't married, I think working together we would have our moments. Most of us do on this production. It's just a matter of being able to say, "OK. That was work. Let's go home and go out to dinner, and we can fight about dinner instead."

**BVM:** It certainly has been a phenomenal adventure. I'll be eternally grateful to Elise for coming up with such a simple idea that's so complicated to produce. ■



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# To Vegas, With Money and a Plan

Here's what major networks will be buying at NAB  
Stories by Ken Kerschbaumer and Glen Dickson

If your travel plans include a trip to the NAB Convention in Las Vegas (April 16-21, with the show floor opening on Monday, April 18), you probably know what to expect: attending innumerable industry sessions, walking endless aisles to visit more than 1,400 exhibitors, and trying to get a handle on where the industry is headed.

On the following pages, you'll find our Major Network NAB Buyer Guide. It's the first of five special reports *B&C* will run between now and the show. The first two reports will take an in-depth look at what some of the industry's biggest technical execs are looking for at NAB. Then we'll dive into the exhibitors themselves for our "Road to NAB" reports, rounding up the top gear from the top manufacturers in a wide variety of product categories.

**Coming:**

**March 14:** Major TV Station Group NAB Buyers' Guide

**March 21:** Road to NAB: Newsroom Operations

**April 4:** Road to NAB: Station Operations

**April 11:** Road to NAB: IT Infrastructure

**April 18:** Special NAB Show Issue

## Filling the Gaps

**Ross wants to finish HD puzzle for CBS** By Ken Kerschbaumer

**L**ike a chef shopping for just a few special ingredients to complete a gourmet meal, Bob Ross, CBS senior vice president for East Coast operations, will spend the NAB show finding the bits and pieces that he says will help complete the HD production environment. "We have good cameras and good switchers, but we still need things to tie it all together," he says.

Those things include graphics devices that are a little more HD-friendly and editing systems that can more quickly work with high-def. "We're also looking for price reductions on those things as well," he says. "There's still a bit of a penalty for doing stuff in HD, so we'd like to see it be equal."

With the end of standard-definition analog in sight, he says, some HD gear has become as inexpensive as SD equipment. But some equipment still comes with a 2%-5% premium, while others

can be even more costly depending on the amount of additional processing power needed.

The HDV cameras from Sony and JVC are a perfect example of the kind of pricing structure Ross wants. "You can buy an HD camera for \$3,000 now, and that's how much a DV prosumer camcorder cost only a few years ago," he says.

All the talk of HD is also beginning to spread to the newsgathering side. Although the technology for HD electronic newsgathering (ENG) is in place for building things like HD news vehicles, Ross says, it is still difficult to acquire broadcast news in HD. "I think we'll see some pretty cool stuff at NAB that will allow people to do cost-effective news gathering," he predicts.

Topping CBS' wish list are ways to get news signals back from the field via microwave. Ross has seen some interesting combinations and solutions, but two issues remain. On one hand, the signal has to be

compressed to a manageable size so it can be sent back to the station. On the other, it can't have a lot of "latency," or time delay.

"If there are two seconds of latency because it's getting compressed, you can't do a Q&A with the reporter," he says. "I'm hoping to see more than a couple manufacturers have a solution for that because that's the last real breakthrough we need."

CBS is in the midst of building a new broadcast origination center in New York that will be server-based. While nothing needs to be invented to put it together, Ross is looking for the right pieces. "The technology is changing over so fast that, as soon as you make a decision, you're kind of stuck," he says. "So all the software tools we've been developing are generic from a hardware standpoint."

CBS won't look for tons of storage, since it doesn't keep much programming online. But servers and routers are on its NAB shopping list. Audio and video routers are becoming smaller as IT-based routers gain popularity.

CBS is in an awkward phase. "The problem at the broadcast center is



### Shopping List

- HD graphics gear
- HD acquisition equipment
- HD ENG transmission gear
- Routing switchers
- Video servers

that we're still moving a lot of video around," Ross says. "We'll move some of it around in an IT function, but we still have a huge infrastructure to support for video. We have 40 fiber feeds coming into the building and multiple inputs from different countries in different formats, and all of it needs to be converted to video." ■

**Report continues on page 30**



Bob Ross



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# Fox Hunting

After HD debut, some fine-tuning **By Glen Dickson**

**A**fter last year's show, Fox is due for a stress-free NAB. Having pressed hard to launch HDTV prime time and sports broadcasts this past fall, Fox's technology team can relax somewhat, as the HDTV plant in Los Angeles and the HDTV-receiving and MPEG-splicing gear at affiliates continue to run smoothly.

"We have virtually every component we had in the SD [standard-definition] world, and mercifully, the manufacturers have stepped up and developed products that give us a comparable program to what we had in SD," says Richard Friedel, executive vice president and general manager, Fox Networks engineering and operations.

"One area we are really focused on is an affiliate branding project," says Friedel. He would like to identify technology that will allow Fox affiliates to insert local branding, such as call letters, time and temperature displays,

into local SD and HD broadcasts.

"We're in the midst of planning," says Friedel. "The promotions people are already doing creative, and we're already talking to vendors. There's a lot of stuff in discussion, but we have to find the hardware. We're hoping for a one-box solution for both HD and SD."

Fox wants to find more-effective gear for monitoring audio and video, now that the HD launch has doubled the workload for master-control operators.



**Richard Friedel**

"They could be watching as many as nine football games in HD and SD, with two sets of commercials," says Friedel. "They have to watch the audio, the video and the captioning. It's really difficult to find good ways for one or a few people to efficiently look at all that stuff."

Fox will be investigating virtual monitor-wall technology and brainstorming with vendors like Evertz, Miranda and Barco for new video-monitoring solutions. "We're

trying to find better ways to present information," says Friedel, "but we don't necessarily have a lot of good ideas."

Fox uses various products from Wohler, Dolby and Tektronix to monitor its Dolby Digital 5.1-channel audio output, but Friedel says there is room for improvement. For program layout, Fox is currently relying on Thomson Grass Valley Profile video servers, but the network is looking to purchase additional HD server equipment.

Another hot item is automation software, with a particular focus on systems that are designed for live production and run on robust operating systems, such as Unix or Linux. Says Friedel, "We're not too thrilled about using Windows for a mission-critical, real-time kind of system."

Fox will be shopping for on-air audio-production consoles, where it still relies on 10-year old AMS Neve models for such shows as *Fox NFL Sunday*. It wants to upgrade its sports editing operations from old Grass Valley and Sony linear tape-based systems to non-linear editors and is close to selecting a vendor.

Friedel will look at new digital systems, such as Sony's optical-based XDCAM and Panasonic's solid-state P2 solution. So far, Fox is leaning toward the P2 format, says Friedel,



## Shopping List

- Local-branding solutions
- Virtual monitor-wall technology
- Digital audio-monitoring gear
- HD playout servers
- Audio-production consoles
- Digital acquisition systems

despite the relative expense of the flash-memory cards it uses.

"We really are enamored with the idea of solid-state memory and no moving parts, no thermal or electrical problems, but we don't know how fast that technology is going to roll out," he says. "The company as a whole is taking a strong look at that." ■

# Easy Does It

CNN's Castle aims to integrate, simplify

**G**ordon Castle, senior vice president of technology for CNN, will head to NAB with three things on his mind: integration, extension and simplification. "That's our mission statement," he says.

With CNN relying more on moving content around as files, Castle is heading to NAB looking for tools to make that even easier. Getting content in from CNN bureaus and out to CNN Newsource (the service that provides video to member stations) is one of his top priorities. Enhancing the media-management tools related to such file movement is another.

"Media management, editing systems and so forth are still on our list of things to look at," he says. "There's always new-product appetite for those types of systems."

Media management continues to be a tricky area because it is increasingly

incorporated within products like video servers, editing systems and even acquisition formats. Castle says CNN approaches media management as if it is an entity unto itself and then ties it into those other products.

Two previous projects, an asset-management system based on Informix and Virage technologies, and a digital archive based on IBM and Sony technologies are in place at CNN.



**Gordon Castle**

"Enterprise-level media-management systems are still a developing art," Castle says. "So we're still focusing on it because we don't yet have immediate access to all content by all of our areas."

For example, major bureaus have no problem obtaining access to low-resolution proxy video, but smaller bureaus might have.

As for simplification, Castle and his team will head to NAB looking for journalists' tools. Scheduling, searching



THE WORLD'S NEWS LEADER

## Shopping List

- Media-management tools
- Nonlinear editing systems
- Tools for journalist workstations
- Field production equipment
- HD gear

and media-management functions have been integrated loosely or directly into the Avid iNews newsroom system. But it is still a complex environment, and journalists need to be expert users to understand how to use all the tools.

"We're looking at the integration framework for journalists' tools as well as the tools themselves," he says. Bottom line: CNN wants gear that

connect journalists to the stories they need—faster.

Field production is an important focus, as CNN wants to extend the file-based world out to story sites. The network has found success with laptop-based editing in the field and delivery of some stories as files, but Castle will investigate some of the new tools that use wireless Internet networks to deliver content. "There's still a quality-of-service issue with those networks, but we've had really good luck," he says. "You can still tell a pretty big difference in the live stuff, but it is pretty hard to tell the difference on the store-and-forward stuff." One thing he'd love to see: a Wi-Fi-enabled Firewire connector allowing video to be streamed over a modest distance from a camera to a laptop or other editing device.

HDTV still will be one of the big stories at the show, and while CNN doesn't have an HD plan, it has been laying an infrastructure for HD including routers, cameras and production switchers. HD gets Castle's attention only when the price is right.

"We're already deploying HDV cameras because they're only marginally more expensive than the DV cameras," he says. "And we're starting to see products like that, which can bridge the SD/HD gap, because we can use it for both."—K.K.



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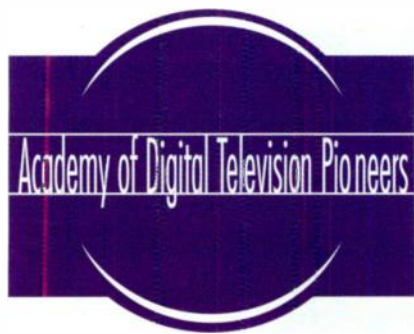
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# What in the World?

At NAB, Discovery aims to meet needs all over the globe



**G**ot glue? That will be the theme of Discovery Networks' NAB hunt as it searches for the tools and methods to connect its facilities worldwide more closely together. Later this year, it opens a new technical facility at its headquarters in Sterling, Va., but it is also rebuilding facilities in Singapore and London. John Honeycutt, Discovery Networks' senior vice president, broadcast operations, says the rebuilds will create a platform for content-sharing, as tools like transcoding engines or asset-management systems become increasingly important.

"We're always looking to see what's happening in asset management, but we also want to explore what we call alternative distribution methods," Honeycutt says. "Things like VOD, cellphones and

broadband are becoming important."

Diane Tryneski, senior vice president, Discovery production group, says those outlets are something Discovery has to think about when it begins the production process. "It's not just a central server that is kicking out material to TV viewers," she says. Discovery has to take into account how it can produce material for different platforms most efficiently.



Diane Tryneski

Honeycutt says Discovery is keeping a close eye on telcos like SBC and Verizon that are looking to use MPEG-4 compression. MPEG-4 encoding and decoding is still in its infancy, but Honeycutt is impressed. "We had the guys from Modulus Video in here, and they're making advances all the time," he says. "We have to watch that technology and make

sure stability is there, but it's clear that the telcos and DBS providers are going

down that road. As content providers, we have to ensure we deliver the content at a quality that gives the best viewing experience for the consumer."

Tryneski will head to NAB looking for new production and post-production tools, and items like the new acquisition formats are always being eyed. "For [freelancers] producing for our network, we have standards that we set," she says. "And when we look at production equipment, a big part is the ability to transcode it for our international services."

Discovery now uses Sony's HDCAM format internally and requires outside producers to send in content at 1080i.

Discovery uses Avid editing systems but is looking at what work the vendors have done around the AAF and MXF formats. It will take a look at Apple's Final Cut Pro editing system and also investigate other less costly systems. "We can start looking at truly consumer software to do cuts for a cellphone video package," says Honeycutt.

## Shopping List

- Asset-management systems
- Nonlinear editing
- Video servers
- New acquisition formats
- MPEG-4 compression gear
- New post-production tools

He says Discovery is looking for open-standards servers because any new servers need to be interoperable with existing equipment. Play-to-air servers will need more horsepower while servers for editing can be less expensive. Says Honeycutt, "Closed systems just aren't going to work here."—K.K.

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# ABC on the HD Lookout

High-def microwave and satellite systems are a priority

Some 40 members of ABC's broadcast operations and engineering group will make the trip to the NAB Show to attempt to uncover some tech gems.

"We always go out to NAB hoping to find something that is not on our radar screen," says Preston Davis, president of ABC broadcast operations and engineering. However, Davis and his team have a few definite items on their shopping list. ABC's successful high-definition broadcast of last month's presidential inauguration, which involved 36 HDTV cameras and four production vehicles, gave the network valuable experience and uncovered a few technology gaps, says Davis.

"We are still looking for HD wireless equipment, like digital microwave systems, that can handle the HDTV bandwidth for the type of wireless HD cameras that would be used on something like the parade route during the



Preston Davis

inauguration," says Davis. "HD satellite newsgathering [SNG] equipment is also still very much on the list."

ABC is still evaluating new digital-storage media for news production and archiving, including Sony's XDCAM optical-based solution, which stores video on special DVD disks using blue-laser technology; Panasonic's P2 system, with records content on solid-state flash memory cards; and Ikegami's EditCam, which stores video on a removable hard disk. ABC is due to receive all three products by early March and will be testing each

in conjunction with Avid Technology's nonlinear editors and iNews' newsroom system, which ABC has been deploying over the past two years. "We'll be testing each as a system, not just as a standard acquisition device," says Davis.

While considering electronic news-gathering (ENG) camera systems, ABC will be looking closely at JVC's HDV as a low-cost, high-definition

acquisition format for news.

With two new production control rooms under construction in New York, Davis is looking for multi-format switchers that operate in both SD and HD modes. ABC wants HDTV graphics devices, including character generators and digital video-effects systems.

"We're hoping to see more devices and low-cost choices for HDTV graphics production, as well as shared storage devices for graphics," says Davis.

ABC also wants devices for sending digital ENG or SNG feeds with less bandwidth or delivering ABC content to wireless devices like PDAs.

The network already delivers content to PDAs through ABC News Now, a broadband-based service it tested as a digital network through the 2004 electoral cycle. It was carried by some 70 ABC affiliates as a part of their DTV broadcasts and was also available to 6.5 million cable subscribers. ABC concluded the broadcast trial late last month, leaving it as an Internet-based service, but the digital network will launch again this spring. Davis is now figuring what receiver



## Shopping List

- HD solutions for ENG and SNG
- Digital acquisition systems
- Asset-management software
- HDTV graphics
- Virtual-monitoring solutions
- Advanced encoding technologies

equipment local stations will need.

As he explains, every new tech attempt is just a test to discover problems. "At the moment," he says, "we're building an ABC News Now pilot system as a way to understand how to manage the bandwidth and what equipment will be needed at the station for a service like that."—G.D.

# Buying in Bulk

NBC Universal will shop for a lot at NAB

NBC Universal's John Wallace is going to preside over a big field trip at the NAB. As executive vice president of television operations and production services, he oversees technology for the NBC network and its 14 owned stations; NBC Universal cable networks; and Telemundo and its 16 stations. He'll take 80 staffers to Las Vegas to help him shop for technology that can solve production and distribution challenges.

Three major areas NBC Universal will be focusing on at NAB are HDTV, multicasting technologies and creating a standardized platform to manage spot sales and playback across all NBC Universal television properties.

"We're looking at solutions for a more complex environment as we explore mobile technologies, targeted ads and interactive mediums like VOD," says Wallace. "The traditional



John Wallace

paradigms of how we broadcast and sell are changing, and there are some interesting thoughts in how vendors are tackling the market."

HDTV production gear is a priority since NBC will launch *Late Night With Conan O'Brien* in HDTV in April and convert Studio 8H, home of *Saturday Night Live* and *Last Call With Carson Daly*, by October.

And to support NBC's high-def broadcast of the 2006 Winter Olympics from Turin, Italy, next February, the network will upgrade its 32-channel Genesis operations center in New York to handle eight channels of HDTV.

"The biggest difference [compared with the Athens Summer Olympics in 2004] is that the NBC television network will do a simulcast in full HD," says Wallace. "This time, we will do all the commercial integration through New York and manage multiple time zones."

NBC Universal is also



## Shopping List

- HDTV graphics and editing
- Digital-asset management
- Traffic and automation systems
- Virtual-set technology
- Low-cost digital acquisition gear

creating a new network operations center (Genesis II) in Englewood Cliffs, N.J., for its cable and Telemundo networks. Due to online

next month, it's designed to handle 64 channels and a mix of standard-definition and HDTV feeds. Initially, it will support 28 channels including Universal HD.

On the station side, NBC Universal is focused on ways to use its digital spectrum for multicasting, with such projects as NBC Weather Plus, the 24-hour weather service it is launching in 14 markets. In that vein, NBC will be investigating "virtual-set" systems.

NBC U is standardizing technology platforms at all of its facilities to streamline the selling and airing of commercials. Wallace wants a system that handles sales, reporting and playback across all broadcast and cable properties and is able to expand to new applications, such as targeted ads, mobile-content services and VOD advertising.


"We want a 'sales-to-playback' strategy that will let us efficiently sell to the customer across multiple digital mediums," he says.

Wallace has digital asset-management systems on his list, too, prices have become more reasonable in that area. Storage is important, but "I'm also looking at the ability to manage content through the enterprise and push and pull material," says Wallace. "If a story is breaking in Birmingham, can I have it in my desktop in New York immediately?"—G.D.



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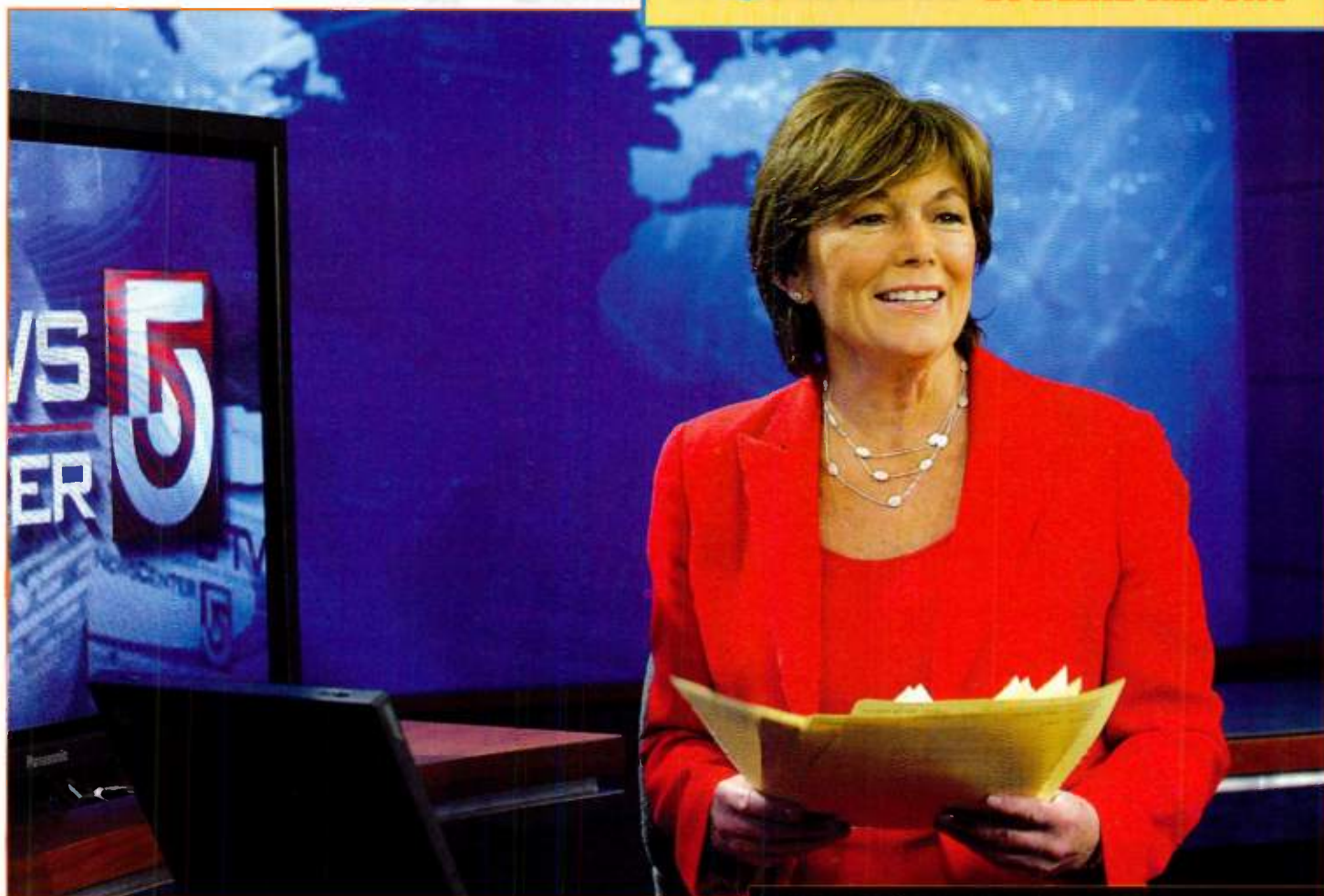
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**LOCAL LEGENDS**

This is the first in an occasional series of stories on TV stations that have long reputations for excellence in the industry and in the community they serve.



Anchor Natalie Jacobson (above) is WCVB's big draw. Below: WCVB's headquarters in suburban Needham, Mass. Bottom: GM Paul La Camera has been at WCVB since it began.

# In Boston, Locals Know WCVB Is There for Them

Hearst-Argyle station puts its accent on community involvement

BY ALLISON ROMANO

It was Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives from Boston, who often said, "All politics is local." The legendary congressman would be happy to learn a version of that maxim is still alive and well at WCVB, the Boston TV station where, it seems, everybody has strong roots to their hometown.

There is no need to coach the staff on the correct pronunciation of Gloucester or Worcester. Most WCVB staffers grew up watching Channel 5 and have Boston—and its quirks—down cold.

Just a couple of weeks ago, over coffee at the station cafeteria called Five & Dine, consumer reporter and noon anchor Susan Wornick watched as colleagues entered for a snack. As they did, she rattled off their hometowns—nearly all from Boston or the surrounding area.

Star anchor Natalie Jacobson is a Boston native. So is chief meteorologist Dick Albert. Weekend anchor Kelley Tuthill hails from Hingham, where she once had a *Boston Globe* paper route. In fact, says Wornick, who was reared in nearby Natick, where she still lives, "most of us grew up here. It matters a lot to the viewers."

In a market proud of its localism, there are fewer places with deeper roots than WCVB. "People define great TV stations, and, over the years, WCVB has been blessed with the best of Boston's TV professionals,"

says David J. Barrett, president and CEO of Hearst-Argyle, which owns the ABC affiliate.

Over WCVB's 33-year history, the station has thrived on a two-pronged approach: heavy local programming and deep community involvement. "My mission is to institutionalize this station in the community," says President/GM Paul La Camera.

WCVB's repertoire of local production is almost unrivaled. Its 23-year-old nightly newsmagazine *Chronicle* is practically one of a kind. In addition to five weekday newscasts—all top-rated in Boston households in January—producers churn out local specials and public-affairs programs.

In 2004, WCVB aired 24 original specials ranging in topics from political issues to health to sports. All aired in valuable real estate between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. WCVB doesn't like to brag about it, but it is a top preemptor of ABC programming.

The station's news operation is first-rate. "There is incredible attention to detail, whether it is big events like the pope's visit or elections or breaking news," says former WCVB News Director Emily Rooney, now host and executive editor for *Greater Boston*, a WGBH local-affairs show.

WCVB has been lauded with a mountain of prestigious broadcasting prizes, including regional Emmys,



Gabriel Awards, DuPont Awards and Edward R. Murrow honors, on display all over the station. In 2001, a live Fourth of July special, *Pops Goes the Fourth*, earned a National Prime Time Emmy nomination, the first for a station.

In the past, WCVB behaved like a mini broadcast network. In the 1980s, the station produced an ABC Afterschool Special, a prime time movie and a local sitcom. ABC's *Good Morning America* was modeled on the station's old morning show, *Good Day!* That's changed some. "We've focused on what we do well:

*Continued on page 38*



# Building a Reputation

WCVB busy with its volunteer Boston "makeover"



WCVB staffers celebrate a recent convent conversion

The challenge: turn a former convent into a home for troubled children in just three days. If this sounds like an episode of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, that is exactly the idea. WCVB has adapted the hit ABC reality show into a new community-service initiative. Its first project, *Extreme Makeover: Boston Edition*, converted a one-time nunnery into a new facility for the Home for Little Wanderers, a local family and children's services nonprofit, in time for Christmas.

"We've tapped into the spirit of the popular show. Boston has never done anything like this before," says WCVB President/GM Paul La Camera.

Fortunately, this is one television station that has a staff knowledgeable about hammers, nails and drywall. For the past five years, the station has worked with Habitat for Humanity to build low-income housing. Each summer, a bus would collect WCVB employees in the parking lot and ferry them to a work site for two-day projects. WCVB allows its staffers to take two work days a year for community service.

Inspired by its Habitat for Humanity experiences, the station was searching for other building projects. Community Affairs Director Karen Holmes Ward hit on the idea for *Extreme Makeover: Boston Edition* one night while watching its namesake show. "We want to do as much in the community as possible. It helps separate us from our broadcast and cable competition," says Holmes Ward, who also hosts a Sunday-morning public-affairs show.

The station quickly mobilized advertisers to help. Sears donated appliances, local furniture company Bernie & Phyl's kicked in furnishings, and Allegheny Contract Flooring provided carpet and tile. Blue Cross Blue Shield sent a crew of volunteers. JetBlue supplied plane tickets for a trip to Disneyland for the disadvantaged kids and their counselors, and Sovereign Bank provided funding for the home's library. The station crafted promotional spots recognizing its advertisers' participation.

To pull off the three-day marathon makeover, WCVB needed all hands on deck. Most station staffers—everyone from star anchor Natalie Jacobson to La Camera—pitched in, as did Boston Mayor Tom Menino. The city helped navigate permits and building codes.

WCVB promoted the project through public-service announcements and reports on its newscast. When the project was complete, the station's evening newsmagazine *Chronicle* recapped the experience.

The station is ready to get back to work. This spring, they will redo a home for the Committee To End Elder Homelessness and another for the Boston Living Center hospice.

The really big project comes this summer: WCVB will rehab an entire city block. The station will solicit nominations on its Web site, TheBostonChannel.com. The winner will receive fresh paint jobs, landscaping and street cleaning. Sears is among the advertisers expected to pitch in again. Beautifying a city block will be a massive undertaking; it also builds a massive amount of goodwill. Says Holmes Ward, "This time, we might need a week."—A.R.

## Locals Know WCVB

Continued from page 37

informational shows and documentaries," says Liz Cheng, VP of programming.

As the local TV business has changed everywhere, so has WCVB. Consolidation forced a new bottom line, which is how WCVB, once owned by local businessmen, became one of 26 Hearst-Argyle affiliates. Some Bostonians say that has changed the station's individuality. But anchor Jacobson won't hear it.

### TRUE-BLUE 'NAT'

"Stations have gone through this agonizing identity crisis," she acknowledges. "Who are we? What are we?" But, she says, "through the passage of time, the changing definition of news and financial constraints, this station has kept its identity. It has always thought of itself as a big part of the community."

Jacobson—or Nat, as she is known to viewers and co-workers—is WCVB's most visible face. She arrived at the station in 1972 and climbed the ranks to the plum 11 p.m. anchor desk, where she reigned from 1978 to 2000. Her marriage to co-anchor Chet Curtis, and their divorce five years ago, prompted lots of headlines. (He went to work for New England Cable News.) Other large-market stations and networks have tried to steal her away, but Jacobson, who has a young-adult daughter in town, says she's just too Boston to leave. (Other WCVB veterans include Fox News host Bill O'Reilly, MSNBC's Keith Olbermann and ABC's Dr. Tim Johnson, who still reports for WCVB on the side.)

The station has rewarded her loyalty with an enviable arrangement. Since 2000, Jacobson works an abbreviated day, co-anchoring the 5 p.m. news with Anthony Everett and a solo newscast at 6 p.m. The rare one-woman newscast is a testament to Jacobson's worth. "Natalie has a long-standing

reputation," says Assistant News Director Neil Ungerleider. "This is not necessarily something you'd do with another anchor." Viewers clearly approve: Jacobson's 6 p.m. news dominates the market. In January, her WCVB newscast pulled in a 10.1 rating versus WHDH's 7.3 rating and WBZ's 4.3, typical results for the time period. Jacobson's contract expires this summer, but both sides seem inclined to continue the relationship.

The fifth-largest TV market in the country, Boston TV sometimes gets rapped for being too tradition-bound, its newscasts a little eggheaded: With nearly 40 colleges in the region, an endless

stream of local experts weigh in on TV reports. The news operations at Boston stations are probably more high-brow than a viewer would find in other cities. But while news trends like increased story counts, shorter packages and more graphics changed news elsewhere, stations in the market held on longer to their traditional ways.

### SLOW TO CHANGE?

One explanation, says new WBZ President/GM Julio Marengi, is the market's ownership mix. A Boston native who started his local-broadcast career in WBZ's mailroom, he can draw off experience in big markets like San Francisco and New York. In other top-10 markets, most stations are O&Os, which often conform to a very specific network style. For many years, Boston stations were all closely run affiliates that did what they wanted. That, says Marengi, allowed the market "to hold on to its old ways for a long time." WBZ and Fox station WFXT are O&Os but have been only since the mid 1990s.

Few people understand Beantown better than La Camera. A third-generation Bostonian, he has worked at WCVB since its first day, starting as public-affairs director. He got his MBA at night from Boston University and studied station operations. His father, Anthony, was a highly regarded Boston TV critic.

"Over-the-air television is an invited guest in the home," La Camera says. "It is a special responsibility." Stations, he says, need to provide quality programming and give back with public service. Rare among station executives these days, he often shares his views in on-air editorials, which he writes and tapes each week.

Boston was rocked in 1993 when Sunbeam Broadcasting owner Ed Ansin bought WHDH and imported a fast-paced, flashy news style from its Fox affiliate WSVN Miami. News Director Joel Cheatwood, famous for his "if it bleeds, it leads" brand of local news, led the charge. "They turned the market upside down with a lot of sizzle—graphics, aggressive reporting and fast-paced presentation—that the market had never seen," says WCVB Creative Services Director Paul Baldwin.

(Further complicating the landscape, WBZ, which had been an NBC affiliate, became a CBS-owned station when Westinghouse bought CBS in 1994 and WHDH switched to NBC.)

The new WHDH caught WCVB and WBZ by surprise. They ratcheted up the look and pace of their newscasts. Some Boston TV observers say WCVB responded by cutting down on its substance for style. "WCVB was

Continued on page 40

**"My mission is to institutionalize this station in the community."**

PAUL LA CAMERA, WCVB BOSTON

## BATTLE FOR BOSTON

The ratings in hyper-competitive Boston seesaw monthly. In recent months, WCVB dominated mornings and early news. In late news, it grabbed households in January, edging out WHDH, No. 1 the two previous months. Total-day ratings are equally volatile.

### HOUSEHOLD RATING, ADULTS 25-54

| TIME PERIOD | NOV. 2004 | DEC. 2004 | JAN. 2005 |
|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 6 a.m. news |           |           |           |
| WCVB        | 5.9/3.8   | 5.3/3.4   | 5.7/3.6   |
| WBZ         | 2.6/1.5   | 2.8/1.8   | 3.3/1.8   |
| WHDH        | 3.5/2.4   | 3.5/2.2   | 3.6/2.1   |
| WFXT        | 1.1/0.8   | 0.9/0.7   | 1.0/0.8   |
| 6 p.m. news |           |           |           |
| WCVB        | 9.1/3.5   | 9.0/3.1   | 10.1/4.0  |
| WBZ         | 4.2/1.6   | 4.0/1.5   | 4.3/1.6   |
| WHDH        | 6.9/3.5   | 6.6/2.9   | 7.3/3.5   |
| Late news   |           |           |           |
| WCVB        | 6.7/4.0   | 6.7/3.8   | 7.9/4.4   |
| WBZ         | 6.9/4.9   | 6.1/3.8   | 6.5/4.2   |
| WHDH        | 7.8/4.3   | 7.5/4.3   | 7.8/4.8   |
| WFXT*       | 3.7/2.9   | 3.1/2.3   | 4.3/3.4   |
| Total day   |           |           |           |
| WCVB        | 4.2/2.3   | 4.0/2.1   | 4.6/2.6   |
| WBZ         | 4.0/2.4   | 3.8/2.1   | 4.2/2.4   |
| WHDH        | 4.0/2.0   | 3.7/2.0   | 4.3/2.4   |

\*10 p.m. newscast

SOURCE: Nielsen Media Research



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## The Most Sleep-Deprived Guy in Town

**Anchor Ed Harding is hard at work, on early-morning newscast and late at night, too**

WCVB news viewers are seeing double. Tune in for the 11 p.m. news, and 17-year station vet Ed Harding co-anchors with Liz Brunner, sportscaster Mike Lynch and meteorologist Harvey Leonard. But early risers can also catch him on the *Eye Opener* morning show from 5 to 7 a.m., with Heather Unruh. In an unusual turn, Harding anchors both. He may have the highest-profile graveyard shift in Boston. He may also be a guy who needs a good nap.

Harding, who had been the station's weekend sports anchor, crossed over to news five years ago to co-host WCVB's *Eye Opener*, the market's top-rated morning show.

But the station used to place second or third at 11 p.m., behind both WHDH and WBZ in hotly contested Nielsen battles. In order to reinvigorate the broadcast, News Director Coleen Marren and Assistant News Director Neil Ungerleider initiated a nationwide search last year for a new male anchor. Last summer, they were inundated with audition tapes; hundreds overflowed from crates in Marren's office. Eight prospects were called in for auditions, but no one clicked. That is when Marren turned to Harding. "The right person was already here," she says.

But, with mornings humming along, WCVB didn't want to disrupt that show's chemistry. "Morning news has become increasingly important," says Marren. So Harding, an empty-nester who lives near the station, agreed to pull double duty. "There is no such thing as a 9-to-5 job anymore," says Harding. "We're living in a TiVo society. I can watch *The West Wing* on Thursdays at 10 a.m. if I want."



Ed Harding (center) with WCVB's Liz Brunner and Mike Lynch.

So last November, Harding joined up with Brunner, who was a former *Eye Opener* anchor herself before she moved to nightside in April 2001. Leonard joined a year later from cross-town rival WHDH, and Lynch is the crew's old-timer, a fixture at the station since 1985.

The "vampire hours," as Harding calls them, are paying off. In January, WCVB grabbed top household ratings in late news for the first time since the late 1990s, when *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire* powered the station's ratings success. There is still work to be done: WHDH won the key news demo of adults 25-54.

Harding works through the night with a small team of producers. Occasionally, he will sneak home—a short four miles away—for a nap. When he gets off, around 8 a.m., Harding hits the gym and then goes home to sleep.

Harding's odd schedule did initially confuse viewers. They would call and e-mail, demanding an explanation. This prompted WCVB's promotions department to intervene. Producers crafted a series of spots to explain Harding's schedule. In one, a young woman falls asleep watching WCVB late news and, when she tunes in the next morning, Harding is still there. A voiceover says, "How does Ed do it?" Bewildered, the woman says, "And why?" In another spot, experts, including a sleep specialist and a career coach, try to explain Harding's willingness to work overnight.

WCVB even enlisted Harding's family for a promo. The spot features his son, daughter, wife and father all offering their explanations. His daughter's assessment: "Dad's always been an overachiever."

Harding's own answer is simple: "I have two kids in college and bills to pay."—A.R.

## Locals Know WCVB

*Continued from page 38*

like the race car in front of all the others with no one on the road ahead. Then they started looking in the rearview mirror," says former WCVB reporter David Ropeik, who spent 22 years at the station and is now a director at Harvard University's Center for Risk Analysis. Ropeik says the station became more homogenized and "designed to appeal to the broadest possible demographic."

These are notions station executives vehemently reject. "Initially, we may have overreacted," says La Camera, "but we found a balance."

### RATINGS BATTLE

On a recent night in February, the 11 p.m. newscasts displayed some of the effects of flashier news presentation. WHDH, WBZ and WCVB all covered largely the same stories—a looming snowstorm, fishermen rescued at sea and a sexual assault in a quiet suburb. Each had gimmicks. On WHDH, an overhead camera zoomed around the studio. A cartoonish graphic chalkboard outlined a suburban school's proposals to make up snow days. WBZ breathlessly hyped an "Only on 4" story about changes to Fenway Park. Beyond repeatedly alerting viewers of fresh reports with "new at 11!" WCVB just seemed calmer, although the station recently added slick new graphics and music. On all three stations, anchors spent part of the newscasts in front of huge video walls. (WBZ says it is phasing out those standups.)

Late-news ratings are a battle. For the first time since 1999, WCVB posted top household ratings in January, edging out WHDH by a tenth of a rating point. WHDH, however, delivered more adults 25-54. But even when ABC was doing badly—like last season—WCVB remained competitive.

Station revenues are equally well-matched. Boston TV stations will take in \$613 million in revenue in 2005, according to BIA Financial. WHDH led the market in 2003—the most recent sales figures available—with \$140.6 million in revenue. WCVB was second with \$117.4 million, edging out WBZ's \$113.5 million.

To grow, WCVB once again emphasizes hometown ties. As more national spot business goes to the broadcast and cable networks, "this market has increasingly gone more heavily local," says WCVB General Sales Manager Andy Hoffman.

In 2004, he says, 54% of market revenue came from local advertisers, up from an even 50-50 split a few years before.

### IMPACT OF PEOPLE METERS

Nothing has affected the local sales scene as much as the arrival of Nielsen's local people meters (LPMs). Boston was the first market to introduce the new measurement system, in 2002, replacing the old paper diaries with a new electronic monitoring system. Initially, Boston stations saw ratings drop (an experience shared in the other LPM markets: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco). One theory is that Nielsen participants used to record broadcast stations in their diaries out of habit disproportionate to actual viewing and LPMs electronically monitor viewing. Boston stations had to cope with lower ratings and pushback from advertisers to adjust rates. "A 10 rating in April 2002 could be a 6 rating [with LPMs]," says Hoffman. Fortunately, he says, 2002 was a big political year, which tightened the

inventory. With LPM experience, the market has settled down.

Long before the Boston news and ratings shakeups, WCVB endured its own tumult. Originally CBS affiliate WHDH (not to be confused with the present-day WHDH), the station was started in 1957 by the Boston Herald-Traveler Corp., which also published a local newspaper. In 1969, the FCC revoked the license over concerns about media crossownership and awarded the station to local ownership group Boston Broadcasters Inc., which promised deep local programming. Boston Broadcasters promptly switched affiliation to ABC, and WCVB signed on on March 19, 1972. In 1981, it was sold to Metromedia.

WCVB's new owner ran the station from afar for several years. Metromedia chief John Kluge rarely visited but, in 1985, decided to unload his station group to Rupert Murdoch, except for WCVB. La Camera and a group of station executives mounted an unsuccessful bid to buy the station, and Kluge sold it to Hearst for a then-record \$450 million. That turned out for the best. La Camera says. When the economy turned sour in the late 1980s, the station would have been over-leveraged. "We would have lost it," he says.

WCVB's ownership saga is documented in two books.

### THE CROWN JEWEL

From La Camera on down to assistant producers, the station's 250 employees are encouraged to participate in civic affairs. Staffers say it is one of WCVB's attractions. "When you interview for a job here, it is almost like they are screening you to be part of the community," says morning anchor Heather Unruh, who interned at the station in college. She participates in up to 10 events a month. One of its largest efforts is Commonwealth 5, a Web site that matches donors with nonprofit organizations. Through the Web site, in-need groups have received athletic equipment, money, game tickets and even farm-fresh eggs. These stories are highlighted in PSAs, which unlike many stations, WCVB often runs at times people are actually awake.

Of all the local efforts, the five-day-a-week *Chronicle* is the station's crown jewel. "In Massachusetts, we consider *60 Minutes* to be merely the national extension of *Chronicle*," says Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), who serves on the House Telecommunications Committee. "It serves as a shining example of excellence in local broadcasting."

*Chronicle* can "let a story breathe," says Managing Editor Susan Sloane. "We delve further and let you experience a story." The show's 25-person staff is separate from the news department. *Chronicle* regularly pulls in an 8 rating in its visible 7:30 p.m. timeslot, outdistancing its competition *Entertainment Tonight* and *Extra*.

WCVB proudly stays ahead of the technological curve. It was the first East Coast station with a mobile satellite truck. In 1998, it became the first New England station to launch a high-definition channel.

The most recent venture is a video-on-demand trial with Comcast Cable in which WCVB's newscasts and *Chronicle* are available for free on-demand. WCVB is the only station involved in the experiment.

"People thought I was a fool to give our product away for free, but I think of it as a brand extension," says La Camera. "And I want to be first." ■

**"When you interview for a job here, it's almost like they are screening you to be part of the community."**

**HEATHER UNRUH, WCVB ANCHOR**





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PEOPLE

# Prince Fights for His 'Dreams'

Producer campaigns to save NBC series **By Jim Finkle**

**J**onathan Prince got his big break in the entertainment business while playing craps. A struggling actor and writer, he flirted with a woman who was in Las Vegas to visit comedian George Burns. Prince unexpectedly met Burns, pitched him an off-the-cuff idea and was hired to write one of the actor's last movies, the 1988 film *18 Again*.

Almost 20 years later, Prince is the creator and show-runner of *American Dreams*, which is in its third season on NBC. *Dreams* is in trouble, and he is campaigning to save it. Season-to-date, it has a mediocre 2.5 average rating among 18-49s, dangerously below the average of two shows already cancelled by NBC this season: *LAX*, with 2.6, and *Father of the Pride*, with 3.0.

The network's decision could come anytime in the next few months. Persuading network execs to keep a show is a daunting task, but Prince is ready.

## SEASONED PLAYER

The son of an eye doctor and a school-teacher, Prince attended Beverly Hills High School, where he got to know Shawn Cassidy and Nicolas Cage. He majored in English at Harvard but also took courses in conflict resolution and diplomacy—essential skills, he says, for any television producer.

He started in TV in 1982 as a production assistant on several of Dick Clark's *Whatever Became of...* celebrity specials. Throughout the early '80s, Prince struggled as an actor, mostly playing precocious kids. Feeling that his repertoire was limited, he decide to go behind the camera.

Meeting Burns was a turning point; after finishing work on *18 Again*, he moved into TV, learning to write, direct and produce. His credits include shows from MTM (*Annie McGuire* and *City*) and Witt-Thomas (*Lenny* and *Blossom*). Prince also perfected his pitch technique. From 1994 to 2002, he helped create and run more than a dozen other pilots, series and specials, such as *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush*, *Youth in Revolt* and *Grown Ups*.

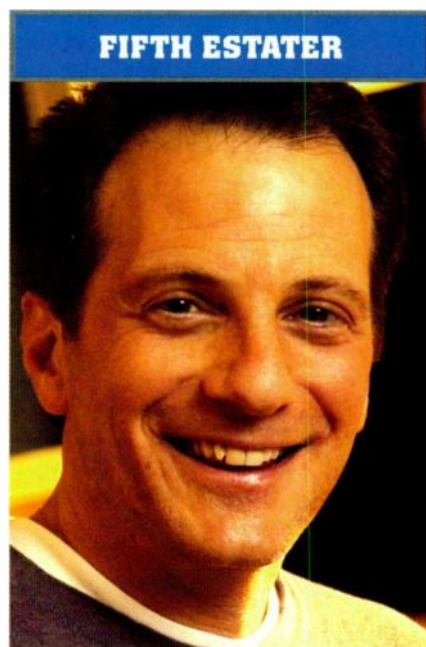
Prince turned to drama in 2002 with *American Dreams*, a vehicle that explores serious topics through the eyes of a Catholic family in Philadelphia during the 1960s. A storyline about soldiers sent to Vietnam parallels the experience of military families whose lives have been uprooted by the Iraq War. The show has also covered women's rights, voting rights for African-Americans and homophobia, relevant themes today.

"Some of our best episodes are about emotions," Prince says. "But empathy on TV isn't really a ratings-buster."

To boost the program's chances of staying on air, Prince has put considerable effort into making *Dreams* an ad-friendly show. "Our job is to sell Coke and cars and floor wax," he says. And he has found creative ways to do it.

## VINTAGE COMMERCIALS

During the first season of *American Dreams*, Prince says, NBC wouldn't



FIFTH ESTATER

## JONATHAN PRINCE

Executive Producer, *American Dreams*, NBC

B. Aug. 16, 1958, Los Angeles

## EDUCATION

BA, English, Harvard University, 1980

## EMPLOYMENT

Film credits include writer/producer, *18 Again*, 1988; director, *Camp Nowhere*, 1994. Television credits include production assistant, *Whatever Became of...?*, 1982; writer/director/producer, *Annie McGuire*, 1988-89, *City*, 1989-90; director, *Dream On*, 1990; writer/director/producer, *Lenny*, 1990-91; writer/director/producer, *Blossom*, 1990-93; director, *Sweet Justice*, 1994; writer/producer, *Something Wilder*, 1995; producer, *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush*, 1995; director, *The Great Mom Swap*, Hallmark, 1995; producer, *Youth in Revolt*, 1996; director, *Party of Five*, 1995; creative consultant, *Pauly*, 1997; writer/executive producer, *Grown Ups*, 1999; writer/producer, *Catch a Falling Star*, 2000; current position since 2002

## PERSONAL

Divorced; one son

let him include footage from a 1963 Coke commercial, concerned that other advertisers might resent the plug. By the second season, he had persuaded the network to experiment with product placement—on the condition that it wouldn't seem out of place on the show. Vintage TV spots from Coke could appear when a character watched television. A glass of Ovaltine and a cheese sandwich using Kraft singles would be appropriate if a character wanted a snack.

Prince then took his ad-friendly quest a step farther, writing storylines around several products, including one about a Campbell Soup writing contest the company actually conducted in the '60s. (In the *Dreams* version, one of the characters wins.) He persuaded Campbell Soup to run the same contest in 2005, this one with much bigger prizes.

While Campbell Soup isn't paying him directly for the advertising, Prince says his show benefits: Millions of cans of soup have "Watch *American Dreams*" printed on their label.

Despite his efforts, it's unclear whether the ad relationships Prince has forged will influence NBC execs about the show's fate. They pulled *Dreams* from the schedule for the February sweeps. When it returns in March, it moves to Wednesdays at 8 p.m. opposite *Lost*, from its previous slot on Sundays at 8 p.m.

Prince, however, has a few tricks that could boost ratings in this season's final stretch.

## CELEBRITY GUESTS

On the March 9 episode, Campbell Soup is announcing the winner of the \$100,000 grand prize in the essay contest it cooked up with Prince. On March 16, Paris Hilton will play actress Barbara Eden, whom the *Dreams*' girls meet on the set of *I Dream of Jeannie* on a trip to Los Angeles.

And if *Dreams* returns for a fourth season, pop superstar Usher has agreed to perform on the show. (Usher has already appeared on *Dreams*, as have The Kinks, John Legend and other entertainers. Prince recruits top artists to sing period hits for his drama.) Prince also wants to keep addressing the cultural revolution of the 1960s, which began with the assassination of John F. Kennedy and ended with the resignation of Richard Nixon.

For now, he is cautiously optimistic about the show's future. "The good news is that NBC asked us to keep the set standing," Prince says, "so we're negotiating our lease for next year." ■

## FATES & FORTUNES

### BROADCAST TV

**WILL SLIGER**, director, creative services, KPHO Phoenix, named VP/director, creative services, WBBM Chicago.

At LIN TV Corp., Providence, R.I.: **SCOTT BLUMENTHAL**, regional VP, Midwest region, named co-vice president, television; **ED MUNSON**, regional VP, East Coast, named co-vice president, television.

At KTVT Fort Worth, Texas, and KTXA Arlington, Texas: **KYLE BRAWNER**, Viacom spot sales account executive, named national sales manager; **GLENN COLEMAN**, account executive, promoted to local sales manager; **DENISE FINCH**, account executive, named local sales manager.

### CABLE TV

At Comcast Spotlight: **LORI BELL SHUK**, senior director, research and marketing, Midwest division, promoted to VP; **DAN BUEMI**, manager, research, Michigan region, promoted to director; **SCOTT HOLMEN**, general sales manager, Chicago, promoted to director, retail sales, Chicago; **SAM BONO**, manager, business operations, Chicago, upped to director.

**RICK ATTANASIO**, senior VP, network operations, Comcast Commercial Services, and VP, engineering and implementation, Comcast Business Communications, joins Comcast Cable, Eatontown, N.J., as regional VP, telephony and commercial service operations, New Jersey region.

At Bright House Networks Florida Group Office, Orlando, Fla.: **BRIAN J. CHANG**, strategic marketing manager, software marketing, Sun Microsystems, Santa Clara, Calif.,



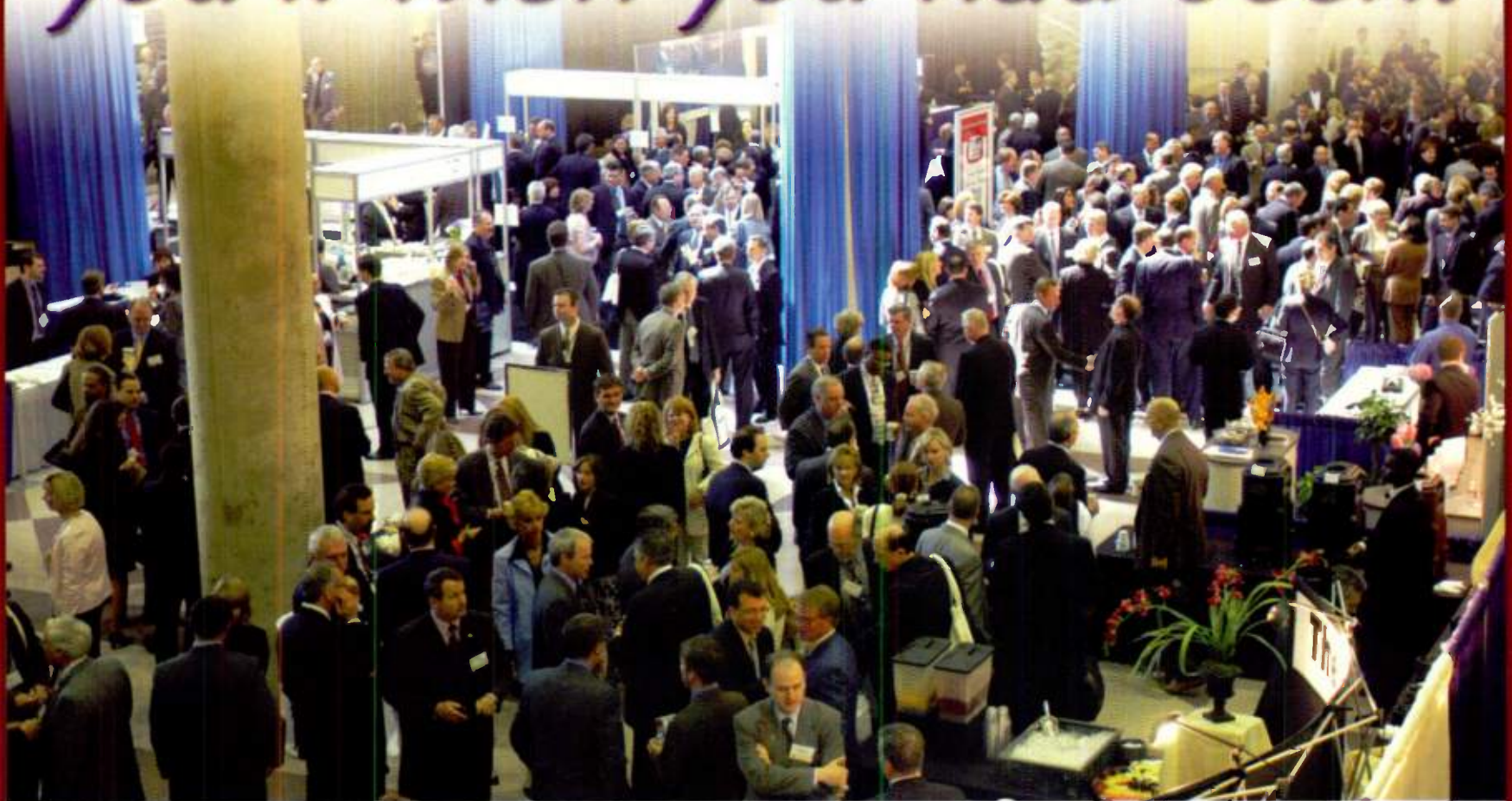
Patrick Younge  
Travel Channel

named senior director, product development; **KELLY CROUSE**, manager, business process improvement, Sprint, Orlando, named director,

*Continued on page 44*



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P E O P L E

**Fates & Fortunes**

Continued from page 42 marketing strategy and development: **KENA LEWIS**, VP, marketing and com-



**Brooke Bowman**  
ABC Family

munications, Heart of Florida United Way, Orlando, appointed director, public affairs and communications: **REINALDO LLANO JR.**, assistant manager, finance and operations, office of corporate responsibility, Time Warner, New York, named manager, community relations: **RICK CHATTIN**, profit and loss analyses/revenue and expense forecasts, Central Florida division, named senior group financial analyst, Florida Group Office.

**KEITH J. COCOZZA**, director, corporate communications, Time Warner Cable, Stamford, Conn., promoted to senior director.

**PROGRAMMING**

**BROOKE BOWMAN**, executive director, programming and development, ABC

Family, Burbank, Calif., promoted to VP.

**PATRICK YOUNGE**, head of programs and planning, BBC Sport, London, named executive VP/general manager, Travel Channel, Silver Spring, Md.

**ANDREW SNYDER**, director, Midwest and East Coast advertising sales, ESPN.com, named VP, iMedia advertising sales, Discovery Networks U.S., New York.

**ROBERT EDNEY**, VP, Eastern regional ad sales, A&E Television Networks, named VP, sales strategy and development.

At CBS Marketing Group, New York: **KATHIE BROYLES**, VP/creative director, print advertising, named senior VP/creative director: **KATHIE CULLETON**, VP, marketing operations and media planning.



**Andrew Snyder**  
Discovery Networks

named senior VP, marketing and media operations: **JEFF KREINER**, VP/creative director, CBS News advertising and promotion, named senior VP/creative director: **ILEENE MITTLEMAN**, VP, advertising and creative services, named senior VP: **JACK PARMETER**, VP, on air promotion, named senior VP.

At Fuse network, New York: **BILL ROSOLIE**, senior VP/director,

advertising sales, television group, TV Guide, named senior VP, advertising sales: **JOE GLENNON**, senior VP, distribution and affiliate marketing, Western division, AMC, Fuse, Fuse on Demand, IFC, WE, Mag Rack and Sportskool, promoted to senior VP, distribution.

**CHARLES HENDRICKSON**, managing director/treasurer, Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette, Boston, appointed chief financial officer, ImaginAsian TV, New York.

**TECHNOLOGY**

**JOHN PENNEY**, VP, business development, HBO, appointed executive director, strategy and advertising management, Project Lightspeed, SBC Communications Inc.

At Media Distributors: **JACK JAMES**, senior account manager, Southeast region, Quantegy

Recording Media sales, named senior account executive, Southeast region: **GLENN STANSBERY**, account manager, Mid-Atlantic/Northeast regions, Quantegy Recording Media sales, named senior account executive, Mid-Atlantic region.

**LEE SALAS**, VP, syndication sales distribution, Modern Video, Burbank, Calif., named U.S. West Coast sales manager, Teletrax, Hollywood, Calif.

**JOURNALISM**

At FSN: **RON GRALNIK**, director, production, FSN, Los Angeles, promoted



**Keith J. Cocozza**  
Time Warner Cable

to coordinating producer, joining *The Southern California Sports Report* at FSN West and FSN West 2, Los Angeles:

**PATRICK O'NEAL**, host, *Totally Football*, *The Ultimate Fantasy Football Show*, Fox Sports Net West, Los Angeles, named anchor/reporter: **PRISCILLA HOJIWALA**, anchor/sports reporter, TVG, Los Angeles, named reporter.

**MONA LEE LOCKE**, First Lady, Washington state, Seattle, becomes anchor and reporter, *Eyewitness News*, KIRO Seattle.

**KERRY PHILLIPS**, anchor, AM and noon newscasts, KOSA Odessa, Texas, and KCRS(AM) Midland, Texas, joins Independent News Network, KLJB Davenport, Iowa, as anchor/producer.

**RADIO**

**KARL GEHRKE**, host/producer, WCAL Northfield, Minn., named producer, classical music service, Minnesota Public Radio, St. Paul.

**JIM MILLIS**, local sales



**Charles Hendrickson**  
ImaginAsian

manager, Regent Communications, WGNA(FM) Albany, N.Y., and WNBT(FM) Wellsboro, Pa., named local sales manager, Time Warner Media Sales, Albany.

**ADVERTISING/MARKETING/PR**

**MICHAEL HAYES**, head of media services and strategic planning, 10th Degree, Irvine, Calif., named VP, interactive marketing, Initiative, Los Angeles.

**MIKE DONAHJE**, sales manager, Petry Television Sales, Boston, named manager, Continental Television Sales, Boston.

**WHAT'S YOUR FATE?**

Send it to Melame M. Clarke, editorial assistant, B&C (e-mail: mediarke@radioinsider.com; fax: 646-746-7028; mail: 360 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010)

**OBITUARY**

Radio host **MARK "THE SHARK" DRUCKER**, 48, died Feb. 23 after a battle with cancer. Drucker's radio career began in 1978 when then-Program Director Howard Stern hired him straight out of college at WRNW Briarcliff Manor, N.Y. He later worked at WMMR Philadelphia, where he served as news director and was heard as "Mark the Shark" on the station's *Morning Zoo* show.

In 1997, Drucker joined KYW Philadelphia with *The Buzz*. He conducted interviews with Paul McCartney, Pete Townshend, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Carlos Santana and David Rockefeller. Drucker also co-hosted and produced comedian David Brenner's syndicated radio talk show.

He is survived by daughter Kendall, 11.



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## DEALS

### TVs

#### WCCL(LP) COLUMBUS, OHIO

**PRICE:** \$500,000

**BUYER:** Daystar Television Network (Marcus Lamb, president/CEO)

**SELLER:** Jonathon W. Owens (Arthur R. Hollencamp, receiver)

**FACILITIES:** Ch. 19, 37.7 kW, ant. 512 ft.

**AFFILIATION:** Ind.

**BROKER:** Larry Patrick of Patrick Communications

#### KMBB(LP) NORTH PLATTE, NEB.

**PRICE:** \$8,000

**BUYER:** Randy L. Birth (Randy L. Birth Sr., owner)

**SELLER:** Brady Broadcasting (William G. Brady, owner)  
**FACILITIES:** Ch. 30, 8 kW, ant. 226 ft.

#### W59DZ REHOBOTH BEACH, DEL.

**PRICE:** \$7,000

**BUYER:** Meyer Gottesman (Meyer Gottesman, owner)

**SELLER:** Trinity Broadcasting Network (Paul F. Crouch, president)

**FACILITIES:** Ch. 59, 1 kW, ant. 153 ft.

### COMBOS

#### WATK(AM) AND WACD(FM) ANTIGO, WIS.

**PRICE:** \$500,000

**BUYER:** Results Broadcasting Inc. (Bruce Grassman, president); owns seven other stations, none in this market

**SELLER:** NewRadio Group (Mary Quass, president/CEO)

**FACILITIES:** WATK(AM): 900 kHz, 250 W day/195 W night; WACD(FM): 106.1 MHz, 10 kW, ant. 276 ft.

**FORMAT:** WATK(AM): Country; WACD(FM): Nostalgia

#### WISS(AM) BERLIN AND WAUH(FM) WAUTOMA, WIS.

**PRICE:** \$288,000

**BUYER:** Hometown Broadcasting LLC (Tom Boyson, member); owns no other stations

**SELLER:** Hometown Broadcasting

LLC (Tom Boyson, member)

**FACILITIES:** WISS(AM): 1090 kHz, 500 W; WAUH(FM): 102.3 MHz, 5 kW, ant. 349 ft.

**FORMAT:** WISS(AM): Country/Nostalgia; WAUH(FM): Classic Hits

**COMMENT:** Tom Boyson is buying Margaret Corrente's 50% interest in Hometown Broadcasting to become 100% owner.

### FMs

#### KXQX(FM) CORCORAN (VISALIA-TULARE-HANFORD), CALIF.

**PRICE:** \$2.1 million

**BUYER:** Mapleton Communications LLC (Adam Nathanson, president); owns 26 other stations, none in this market

**SELLER:** RAK Communications Inc. (Robert LaRue, president)

**FACILITIES:** 102.3 MHz, 20 kW, ant. 381 ft.

**FORMAT:** Mexican

**BROKER:** Patrick Communications

**COMMENT:** Purchase price includes four-year non-compete payment.

#### KTOY(FM) TEXARKANA, ARK.

**PRICE:** \$1.5 million

**BUYER:** ArkLaTex LLC (William N. Cate, member); owns four other stations: KCMC(AM), KTFS(AM), KBYB(FM) and KFYX(FM) Texarkana

**SELLER:** Jo-Al Broadcasting Inc. (Al Davis, president)

**FACILITIES:** 104.7 MHz, 3 kW, ant. 390 ft.

**FORMAT:** Urban

#### WBIE(FM) DELPHOS (LIMA) AND WAUI(FM) SHELBY, OHIO

**PRICE:** \$1.5 million

**BUYER:** Kayser Broadcast Ministries Inc. (Daniel L. Kayser, president/CEO); owns one other station, not in this market

**SELLER:** American Family Association Inc. (Donald E. Wildmon, chairman)

**FACILITIES:** WBIE(FM): 91.5 MHz, 6 kW, ant. 322 ft.; WAUI(FM): 88.3 MHz, 950 W, ant. 135 ft.

**FORMAT:** WBIE(FM): Religion; WAUI(FM): Christian

### AMs

#### KFIG(AM) FRESNO, CALIF.

**PRICE:** \$2.5 million

**BUYER:** Fat Dawgs 7 Broad-

casting LLC (Christopher L. Pacheco, managing member); owns no other stations

**SELLER:** Radio Central LLC (Elihu Harris, member)

**FACILITIES:** 1430 kHz, 5 kW

**FORMAT:** Sports/Talk

**BROKER:** Media Services Group

#### WCOG(AM) GREENSBORO (GREENSBORO-WINSTON-SALEM-HIGH POINT), N.C.

**PRICE:** \$1.68 million

**BUYER:** ABC/Disney (John Hare, president, ABC Radio); owns 72 other stations, none in this market

**SELLER:** Truth Broadcasting (Stuart W. Epperson Jr., president)

**FACILITIES:** 1320 kHz, 5 kW

**FORMAT:** Children

#### WZNN(AM) BLACK MOUNTAIN (ASHEVILLE), N.C.

**PRICE:** \$850,000

**BUYER:** HRN Broadcasting Inc. (D. Mark Boyd III, president/director); owns two other stations, neither in this market

**SELLER:** Zybek Media LLC (Beth Howerton, president)

**FACILITIES:** 1350 kHz, 10 kW day/56 W night

**FORMAT:** Talk

**BROKER:** Josh Wilkey of WilkeySouth Media Brokers and Terry Greenwood of TAG Media Consulting

#### KIRL(AM) ST. CHARLES (ST. LOUIS), MO.

**PRICE:** \$730,000

**BUYER:** Covenant Network (John Anthony Holman, president/director); owns six other stations, including WRYT(AM) St. Louis

**SELLER:** Bronco Broadcasting (Johnny Roland, president)

**FACILITIES:** 1460 kHz, 5 kW

**FORMAT:** Jazz/Gospel

**BROKER:** Ray Rosenblum

### CORRECTION

In the 2/14 issue, the broker for the sale of four Equity Broadcasting stations to Max Media LLC was incorrectly identified. Greg Guy and Larry Patrick of Patrick Communications brokered a five-station swap between Equity Broadcasting and Daystar TV.

#### INFORMATION PROVIDED BY:

BIA Financial Networks' Media Access Pro. Chantilly, Va., [www.bia.com](http://www.bia.com)

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A network by network snapshot on technology needs and purchases planned for NAB 2005. We talk with the top technology buyers from major networks to find out what's on their shopping list.

**MARCH 14, 2005**

### **NAB SELLER'S GUIDE – MAJOR STATION GROUPS**

What are the major station groups looking for in Las Vegas? As these key buyers free up capital spending – they'll tell us what is on their shopping list for the show.

**MARCH 28, 2005**

### **ROAD TO NAB #1 – NEWSROOM OPERATIONS**

Newsroom technology continues to dominate the shopping needs of television technology buyers. We'll take an end to end look at what's ahead at NAB 2005 in this category.

**APRIL 4, 2005**

### **ROAD TO NAB #2 – STATION OPERATIONS**

Our NAB build up continues with a look at TV station operations and the category of products serving these needs including: Servers, Asset management, Production switchers, Routing switchers, Automation, Graphics & more.

**APRIL 11, 2005**

### **ROAD TO NAB #3 – IT INFRASTRUCTURE**

The move to an IT Based Infrastructure is driving the changes in stations and network facilities, we'll examine this movement and the opportunities at NAB 2005 for broadcasters.

**APRIL 18, 2005**

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**Fast Track**

Continued from page 4  
bows March 3, thanks to deals with cable operator **Adelphia** and satellite company **DirecTV**. ESPN is aiming to keep the new network on basic-digital tiers as opposed to more expensive sports packages, says **Burke Magnus**, ESPN VP/GM.

Initial coverage will focus mainly on football and basketball, with plans to branch out into "emerging sports" including softball, lacrosse, wrestling and women's volleyball. Says Magnus, "If we give a meaningful push to these sports, they can really take off."

The move comes amidst competition from **CSTV: College Sports TV**, backed by **Allen & Co.**, and **Fox Sports** digital networks. But several college athletic directors confirmed last summer that they had been contacted by the **Justice Department's** antitrust division, which was investigating how ESPN acquires and chooses to air college football and basketball games. CSTV reaches approximately 10 million households.

Investigators were reportedly looking into ESPN's practice of televising only a small portion of the games it acquires from a conference, then restricting the conference from selling air rights from other games to competing networks. Critics say ESPN was launched to deflect the DOJ. ESPN has declined to comment.—A.B.

**FAST TRACK**

# Adelphia Nixes Triple-X

**Adelphia Communications Corp.** is retreating from its plan to sell triple-X films to cable subscribers, responding to criticism of the recent addition of the most graphic category of adult fare to its programming lineup.

The company, which carries X and double-X films, quietly started distributing triple-X fare provided by **Playboy Enterprises Inc.** at the end of last year. It had planned a gradual rollout in its systems across the country.

Adult films are among the most profitable products that cable and satellite-TV operators sell. They earn relatively low profit margins on their basic plans but keep 80%-90% of the money from adult-programming sales.

Adelphia, which is in bankruptcy

protection and up for sale, added X and double-X rated adult entertainment to its lineup in 2003 in a bid to boost flagging revenues. The **Los Angeles Times** reported Feb. 2 that the company had broadened that lineup to include XXX-rated films.

"Some concern has been expressed over this type of adult programming," company spokesman **Paul Jacobson** Wednesday. "Adelphia will remove it from all of its systems."

Definitions vary, but triple-X movies feature increasingly graphic and detailed depictions of intercourse, oral sex and other practices.

Adelphia said it plans to continue carrying X- and double-X-rated films, which it points out are distributed by other cable and satellite companies.—J.F.



Kelli Arena



Kirstie Alley



Jessica Yellin

**John McLaughlin**, providing analysis.

**Shirley Hung** will be executive producer of the new bureau. Hung has been with CNN for 10 years, most recently as a senior producer in Washington. Correspondents will be **Kelli Arena**, **David Ensor** and **Jeanne Meserve**.—J.E.

## 'Affair' Is Cleared in More Than 50% of the Country

**Twentieth Television** has cleared its revival of syndicated access magazine show **A Current Affair** in San Francisco (KPIX), Las Vegas (KVVU) and Raleigh, N.C. (WRAZ), for 2005, which means that the show is now cleared in about 50% of the country.

The revival of the syndicated half-hour, which aired for 10 years starting in 1986, will begin airing on the co-owned Fox O&Os starting this spring. The three new sign-ups will be able to give the fall 2005 show a summer start if they choose.—J.E.

## ABC Adds White House Correspondent

ABC has made it official: Chief White House correspondent **Terry Moran** is getting some help.

**Jessica Yellin**, who has already been

a general assignment correspondent for ABC's **Good Morning America**, based in Washington, including covering the funeral of former **President Ronald Reagan**, has been named a White House correspondent for **GMA** and other ABC platforms, including broadband service **ABC News Now**.

Yellin replaces **Kate Snow**, who moved to New York in August to co-anchor the new weekend **GMA**. Before joining ABC in 2003, Yellin was an overnight anchor and correspondent for **MSNBC** and before that a reporter with **WTVT Tampa, Fla.**—J.E.

## Preachers Nix Upton's Indecency Bill

Religious broadcasters, represented by the 1,700-member **National Religious Broadcasters (NRB)**, aren't ready to support indecency-enforcement legislation that they fear could be extended beyond naughty content. At their recent convention, they turned down a proposal to endorse the tough new indecency bill proposed by **Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.)** and instead suggested the FCC enforce the regulations already on the books.

Upton supporters point out that their bills do not change the definition of indecency. But bills have been known to change on their way through Congress,

as the indecency bill did last year, picking up provisions on violence and media ownership. It's those potential, unknowable add-ons that scare the NRB.

"While we don't want people to take the Lord's name in vain," NRB President **Frank Wright** said, "we don't want the government to prevent us from praising it either."—J.E.

## 'Fat Actress' Gets Wider Play

Pay network **Showtime** has scheduled a March 4-7 "free view" to give uninitiated cable subscribers a taste of some of its highest-profile originals. That will include the March 7 (10 p.m. ET) debut of **Fat Actress**, the reality series starring **Kirstie Alley**. The show has set the tone for the preview, which is christened the March "Big Fat Free Preview." The show is already getting an online airing via **Yahoo!**, which is streaming the episode.—J.E.

## FCC OKs Clothed Sex With Vampire

The FCC has concluded that it is OK to have sex with a vampire, so long as you keep your clothes on. The agency has denied a **Parents Television Council** indecency complaint against a sex scene in an episode of **The WB Television Network's** drama **Angel** that aired on **WBDC Washington**. The WB no longer airs the show.

The complaint involved a scene in the Nov. 19, 2003, broadcast in which a couple is apparently having sex. PTC described it this way: "Spike is on top of Harmony, their clothes are on, but his body rocks back and forth, and their breathing is heavy. She tries to speak, but he tells her not to spoil the moment. Her eyes start to bleed, and suddenly she turns into her vampire self and bites his neck."

The FCC concluded that the sex scene was not patently offensive because it was brief, contained no nudity and was not sufficiently graphic or explicit.—J.E.

## Corrections

- AIM-Tell-A-Vision distributes an English-language Hispanic show now called **American Latino**. A story on page 30 of the Feb. 21 edition referred to the show by its old title.
- **Tom Rutledge** is chief operating officer of **Cablevision Systems Corp.** He was misidentified on page 2A of the Feb. 21 Top 100 Cable Systems supplement.





# BROADCASTER OF THE YEAR

BROADCASTING & CABLE'S "BROADCASTER OF THE YEAR" AWARD RECOGNIZES THE BEST OF THE BEST. THIS YEAR AT TVB 2005 ON MARCH 31, THE INDUSTRY HONORS POST-NEWSWEEK STATIONS PRESIDENT & CEO ALAN FRANK.



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## SPECIAL REPORT: 2005 BROADCASTER OF THE YEAR

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##### LSM

KGPE, a Clear Channel CBS affiliate in Fresno, California has an immediate opening for a dynamic LSM. The successful candidate will be a highly motivated leader, ready to grow our local sales department to the next level. You must possess a strong knowledge of research, planning and training. Experience with Marketron and VCI is preferred. A solid background of selling NTR and outstanding negotiation skills are a must. Email resumes to: [personnel@cbs47.tv](mailto:personnel@cbs47.tv). Fax: 559-229-0165. No phone calls please. EOE

##### GENERAL SALES MANAGER

WDJT CBS-58 in Milwaukee seeks seasoned GSM. Responsible for multiple stations' revenue goals, working with Managers to achieve goals, all pricing/inventory control and directing the team to success. Must successfully create/meet budgetary goals, proven leadership ability, effective communication skills and ability to motivate the team. Send resume to HR-GSM, 809 S. 60th St., Milwaukee, WI 53214; fax: 414-607-8189 or e-mail: [camps@cbs58.com](mailto:camps@cbs58.com) EOE

#### SALES CAREERS

##### LOCAL SALES MANAGER

Are you good at media sales but have been passed up for management positions at your current station? WSKY-TV 4, Norfolk's fastest growing independent television station, has an immediate opening for a Local Sales Manager with excellent leadership skills and motivational ability. Responsibilities include inventory management, pricing, hiring sales staff and training new personnel. Candidate must have proven television sales management experience, possess strong negotiation, organizational, planning and business development skills. Must be familiar with TV Scan and Nielsen. Advanced computer skills, including knowledge of Word, Excel and PowerPoint, are essential. Don't miss this great opportunity to join the Sky 4 team. Send resume to [glenn@wsky4.com](mailto:glenn@wsky4.com) or WSKY-TV 4, General Sales Manager, 1417 N. Battlefield Blvd, Suite 160, Chesapeake, VA 23320. EOE

##### GENERAL SALES MANAGER

WVUE-TV, FOX 8 in New Orleans, a leading FOX affiliate, is looking for a proven sales professional to join FOX 8 as General Sales Manager. The ideal candidate will help establish and execute station's strategic planning efforts, lead and coach sales managers and the team, have full knowledge of effective sales strategies and their application (pricing, inventory management, ratings and research) and a proven track record of exceeding revenue goals. Previous sales management experience required, with two or more years of GSM experience preferred. No phone calls please. EEO. Please send resume to: Myra Sanchez, WVUE-TV, 1025 S. Jefferson Pkwy, New Orleans, LA 70125. Qualified applicants should apply online at [www.emmis.com](http://www.emmis.com).

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KFVS-TV, CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO, a Raycom Media station, has an immediate opening for a LOCAL SALES MANAGER. 3-5 years of television sales/management experience. Visit [www.kfvs12.com](http://www.kfvs12.com) for more info. Successful candidate must pass drug screen and possess clean driving record. Equal Opportunity Employer. M/F/H/V. Resume to: Human Resources Director, KFVS-TV, P.O. Box 100, Cape Girardeau, MO 63702.

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#### NEWS CAREERS

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##### REPORTER

WRGB "CBS 6" in Albany, NY is looking for a creative, talented and energetic news reporter. Must have a proven track record of developing sources and breaking stories. Strong live reporting skills desired as well. Candidates must have three years of previous TV news reporting experience. EOE. Please send resume to: Beau Duffy, News Director, WRGB/CBS 6, 1400 Balltown Rd., Schenectady, NY 12309. NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.

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WISN-TV, a Hearst-Argyle television station and ABC affiliate, is looking for an Assistant Chief Engineer with drive, ambition and dedication to quality control of local news production and day-to-day engineering operations. The candidate must have an engineering degree or equivalent experience and a minimum of five-years broadcast engineering experience; or an equivalent combination of education, training and experience to meet the requisites of the job. Applicants must have a knowledge of LAN's, WANs and computer networking in general. A solid engineering and broadcast perspective is required with knowledge of digital studio systems. We are looking for a person with a positive, news-oriented team attitude with some skills in business management, accounting, and human relations. Priority will be given to the applicant with previous experience in electronics maintenance, project management, RF engineering and previous technical management. A valid driver's license is required. Fax resume to 414-342-2657, E-mail [tc Coleman@hearst.com](mailto:tc Coleman@hearst.com), or mail to: Tony Coleman, Director of Engineering, WISN-TV, P O Box 402, Milwaukee, WI 53201. EOE

#### PROMOTION CAREERS

##### ON-AIR PROMOTION WRITER/PRODUCER/EDITOR

CBS 4, part of South Florida's Viacom television group seeks a dedicated on-air promotion writer/producer/final cut editor to work on special news series and station image promos. Candidate should be a seasoned creative who can consistently deliver copy that sizzles and visual concepts that stop viewers dead in their tracks. Must also be able to quickly shift gears when necessary and juggle multiple projects simultaneously. 5 to 7 years experience. No beginners or phone calls please. Qualified candidates send resume and demo reel to: Larry Wiener, Creative Services Director, WFOR/WBFS/WTVX, 8900 NW 18th Terrace, Miami, FL 33172. M/F EOE





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# No "Amen" for House Bill

**A**ttention, Congressman Fred Upton: The nation's religious broadcasters do not endorse your new bill cracking down on broadcast indecency and sex.

That bill may have passed overwhelmingly in the House, with conservative Republicans and a lot of Democrats fulminating on the evils of the industry from their political pulpit, but it didn't pass muster with on-air ministers, whose mission includes preaching against the evils of just such speech. Asked to endorse the Upton bill, the National Religious Broadcasters, at their annual convention, said no.

Does that mean the nation's religious broadcasters don't want to clean up the airwaves. Hardly, but if you can't get preachers to say "Amen" to a bill advertised as protecting children from harm, it's a really good sign that something is fundamentally wrong—namely, the threat of putting additional content-control powers in the hands of the government.

Religious broadcasters still believe that profanity, particularly taking the Lord's name in vain, and sexually suggestive material are too evident at times when children are around. They would like the FCC to better enforce the rules on the books and to increase those existing fines. But, no, they aren't ready to support Upton's supercharged indecency-enforcement legislation that they, and we, fear may be expanded tomorrow beyond today's definitions.

In this case, their distaste for Howard Stern and his peers has been trumped by an overreaching government.

It is the sacred equivalent of the secular turnaround by some liberal Democrats on the indecency bill after they realized it was affecting PBS shows like *Mystery* (they sometimes swear on TV, those Brits!) and *Antiques Roadshow* (those Erte naked statues leave nothing to the imagination!).

We welcome everyone into the First Amendment tent.

No, there are no plans in the works for topless religious radio. But religious broadcasters fear that constitutional protections on speech could be threatened by broad new indecency-enforcement legislation. As one 40-year member of the NRB board pointed out to *B&C* last week, their concern is that some future administration might disagree with some religious preaching and classify it as off-limits. "While we don't want people to take the Lord's name in vain," he said, "we don't want the government to prevent us from praising it either."

## EDITORIAL

The NRB, representing 1,700 members, had already drawn up a resolution endorsing the Upton bill, which would raise fines, target performers, put licenses explicitly into jeopardy for multiple offenses (the so-called "three-strikes" provision) and call for a GAO investigation into the FCC's indecency enforcement. "The National Religious Broadcasters strongly encourages the House of Representatives and the United States Senate to move quickly to pass this legislation," the resolution read. But after some thoughtful debate in at least two forums during its annual convention two weeks ago, the resolution was shelved after constitutional concerns were raised.

According to NRB President Dr. Frank Wright, during the debate, several members pointed out that a content crackdown "could come back to bite us if tomorrow's definition of indecent might include some of the thoughts of religious broadcasters."

So religious broadcasters, noncommercial broadcasters, commercial broadcasters, children's-TV advocates, programmers, unions and run-of-the-mill defenders of the First Amendment everywhere are concerned about government intrusion into content. Isn't it time the legislators who represent them started reflecting that concern?

## OPEN MIKE

### FTC Not Picking a Fight

Editor: *B&C* had it right when you reported that the media industry's efforts to screen out false claims for diet products have been successful ["FTC Boss Presses Industry to Self-Police," Feb. 7, page 14].

However, you got it dead wrong when you wrote that the Federal Trade Commission is "considering strikes against snack-food commercials during children's programming, as well as product placements." The chairman said nothing of the sort.

FTC staff have found that ordinary product placements in television programming do not raise deception concerns under the FTC Act.

Though the FTC is reviewing a recommendation from the Institute of Medicine to assess industry self-regulation of children's food ads, that review does not include consideration of an FTC "strike" against snack-food commercials.

**Nancy Ness Judy**  
Public affairs director, FTC

### Slam on News Study Unfair

Editor: Your editorial about the Lear Center Local News Archive's research findings ["An Incomplete Grade," Feb. 21, page 44] would be more persuasive if it actually contended with the facts.

The time period for the month of stories captured was 5 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. It was not chosen by researchers; it was picked by the industry itself. In the 1998 report of the Gore Commission, co-chaired by CBS head Leslie Moonves, broadcasters chose that exact time period, in the month before an election.

Eleven markets of varying sizes were in the 2004 study, accounting for 23% of the nation's TV viewers. The findings were consistent with the 2002 study of 122 stations in the top 50 markets and the 2000 study of 74 stations in 58 markets. If the industry or its apologists wants a [full study of] all stations, it should make itself accountable to the public by disclosing its news content online, and it should call on regulators to conduct such studies. Maybe it should even fund them.

**Martin Kaplan**  
Associate dean, USC Annenberg School for Communication  
Director, The Norman Lear Center

(Editor's note: Viewership patterns and the entire media landscape have changed since 1998 and the Gore Commission. Our complaint was that this study was used by many to tar and feather the entire industry. We are most concerned that results of a limited study could be used by the FCC or Congress to impose new rules for broadcasters everywhere. We don't want the government to tell stations how they should cover campaigns.)

## Why 'Frontline' Used Bad Language

**S**everal months ago, *Frontline* set out to make a film that would bring the real and raw experience of U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq into the homes of public-television viewers. Our *A Company of Soldiers* is a film about young men at war, often in combat and always in danger.

As you might expect, the language of these soldiers is sprinkled with expletives, especially at their moments of greatest fear and stress. As we edited the program, we were judicious but came to believe that some of that language was a part of our journalistic mission: to give viewers a realistic portrait of our soldiers at war. We feel strongly that the language of war should not be sanitized and that there is nothing "indecent" about its use in this context.

PBS stations were given the option of airing an edited or unedited version based on their own community standards. Broadcasting the unedited version carries some risk that the FCC would entertain complaints and levy

a fine. Each public-television station had to decide for itself whether to take that risk.

*Frontline* does not believe the expletives used by the soldiers violate the FCC's "indecency" rule. They are not used in a "gratuitous" manner, nor are they meant to "titillate" or "pander," which are the terms the FCC uses to determine if there has been a violation.

You may be familiar with the recent case of ABC's broadcast of the movie *Saving Private Ryan*, which contained

repeated instances of strong language, used in the same context as this *Frontline*. It was widely reported that a majority of the FCC commissioners decided they would not support viewer complaints about the language in *Saving Private Ryan*, and outgoing Chairman Michael Powell concluded that the agency should not take action against the ABC stations that aired it because the language was part of accurately portraying the story about the Allied

invasion of Normandy during World War II.

*Frontline* appreciates the 43 stations that were willing to broadcast the unedited version, but recognizes the difficulty any station would have in deciding to take a risk that might result in a penalty. We encouraged all stations that could do so to stand with *Frontline* because we believe what is at stake here is not only the particulars of this case but the principle of editorial independence.

We believe that overreaching by the FCC is at its heart a First Amendment issue. We think that the editorial integrity of future *Frontline* reportage is at risk, along with many other types of programs, whether art, science, history, culture, or public affairs. Editorial decisions should be free from influence by the government and should be made in accordance with the standards, practices and mission of public television. We hope you agree.

*Wiley is the executive editor of Frontline.*

**AIRTIME**  
**Louis Wiley**



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S A V E T H E D A T E



# As 'Blue' Fades to Black

Would ABC dare to schedule sexy '93 version in 2005?

**A**nd so it comes to this, after 12 seasons and more than 250 episodes: ABC's groundbreaking *NYPD Blue* signs off Tuesday night, March 1. Like they often say about the month of March itself: Here is a show that came in like a lion and left like a lamb.

Few shows in TV history created a bigger roar than *NYPD Blue* when it premiered in September 1993. It promised to not just push, but shred, the flimsy envelope of prime time content with a crime drama about living, breathing, aching and bellyaching detectives who existed in a gritty world of frank sexuality and realistically coarse language.

Steven Bochco, whose *Hill Street Blues* a decade earlier had changed the tone and texture of TV drama, was determined that network TV should be able to compete with the lure of R-rated cable. *NYPD Blue* was a wake-up call for a medium that needed to grow up. It was drama that was able to ruffle feathers and get under the skin (and sometimes show it).

How ironic, then, that a series initially banned by a number of affiliates for its occasional flashes of bare breasts and buttocks—until it became clear the show was a popular as well as critical hit—would be tamed in its final stretch by the split-second baring of Janet Jackson's breast during a Super Bowl halftime. Could *NYPD Blue* in its bold original form have been launched this season in the wake of that incident and the ensuing FCC witch-hunt? Not likely.

Little wonder that Bochco is now in business with FX, developing an Iraq War drama for the upstart cable network whose *The Shield* (which has aired opposite *NYPD Blue* for three years) has taken the *NYPD* template to a much darker, even more graphic and morally ambiguous extreme.

The last months of *NYPD Blue* have been a curiously sexless affair. But it didn't really matter. Which isn't to say that *NYPD*'s past torrid sex scenes and vulgar language were just gimmicks or beside the point.

For a while, they were very much the point, a device to paint the show's flawed and combustible characters in as complex, honest and complete a way as possible. The intimate moments off the job revealed plenty about what made these people tick and how they coped with everyday pressures.

If current circumstances have been inhibiting *NYPD*'s game, it is not as if there was anything left to prove or anyone left to shock. This final season has served to reinforce the show's reputation as one of TV's most deeply human dramas ever—most notably in the grandly realized character of Andy Sipowicz, played with weary authority by Dennis Franz in a career-defining, mold-shattering performance that instantly achieved and sustained legendary status.

The entire series could be subtitled *The Fall and Rise of Andy Sipowicz*, beginning with his nadir in the opening episode: drinking and smoking like a human volcano of self-destructive impulses, which included bigotry and brutality. Over the years, as he has struggled toward sobriety and respectability, Andy's darker angels have been

supplanted and softened through a series of wrenching personal calamities. The death toll included a son, a wife and two partners. When the actress playing his latest TV wife abruptly left the series, they couldn't kill her off. Andy, and we, had suffered enough already.

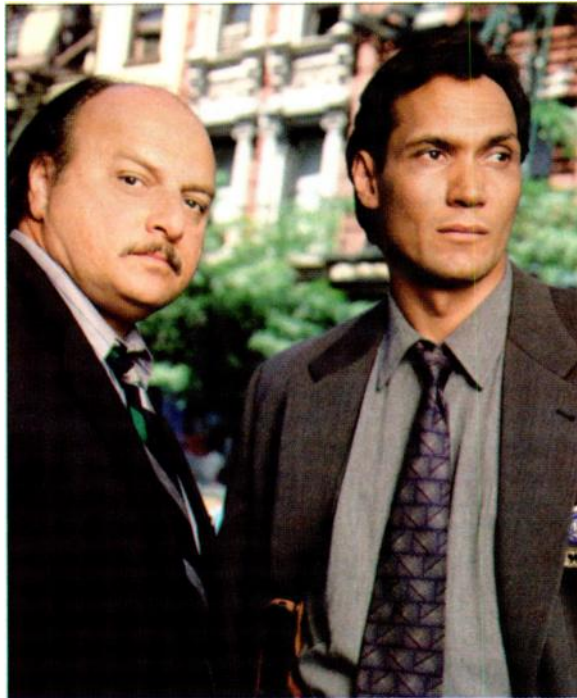
That is why it is at least a few years overdue for the show to wrap. A noble, stable Sipowicz is a less interesting Sipowicz. *NYPD*'s format of detection, interrogation and resolution has grown stale over the years. The bad bosses, the scuzzy perps—they all begin to blur. Time to go.

The valedictory tone of this farewell season was established last November when Andy was visited by the ghost of his most beloved partner, Bobby Simone (Jimmy Smits). Andy, facing a crisis of conscience over a frustrating new boss and a rebellious young partner, was counseled, "Be a teacher." From then on, Andy has been acting as more mentor than loose cannon. He recently earned his sergeant's stripes, and in last week's next-to-last episode, was offered the job of boss at the 15th. "Commanding this squad, teaching them, keeping them out of harm's way, that's my last job," he said earnestly.

It is a satisfying way to go out, with a dignity few would have foreseen in the show's bally early days. *NYPD Blue* has

served a long and proud tour of duty. As Bobby's ghost told Andy, "Life is long...long in possibility, long in those you effect. It's long in what lives on after you're gone." However diminished it might seem now, the legacy of *NYPD Blue* is a powerful and inspiring one. ■

**MATT ROUSH**



Andy Sipowicz (Dennis Franz, above left), with Jimmy Smits, was the often-aching heart of the show.

**'NYPD Blue' was a wake-up call for a medium that needed to grow up. It got under the skin (and sometimes showed it).**

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**Edward Fritts**  
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**ISSUE DATE:**  
March 21, 2005

**SPACE CLOSE:**  
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